

Situational Awareness in CERT Activities

Watchfulness and Readiness can
lead to more effective decision
making when critical situations arise

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Agenda

- Introduction – Why is Situational Awareness important
- Definition of Situational Awareness
- The OODA Loop and Situational Awareness in action
- CERT applications of Situational Awareness
- Tips and Techniques
- Summary

Introduction

Why is this important – Why Take this Course?

- Be more effective eyes and ears for the community – part of our CERT role
- Save a life, prevent injury or damage to property
- TO PROTECT YOUR OWN SAFETY
- Slow spread or escalation of an issue that may unfold
- Know when to alert authorities through Incident Command

7-year old drowns in Teaneck NJ Pool with 10 Adults – “No one was paying attention”



Definition of Situational Awareness

- A frame of mind in which you are relaxed yet aware of your surroundings and observant of changes with respect to time or space, the comprehension of their **meaning**, and the **projection** of their future status.
- Being aware of whom or what could be of help to you if a problem should arise
- This will be developed as we continue through this course

The best DEFENSE
is a good OFFENSE



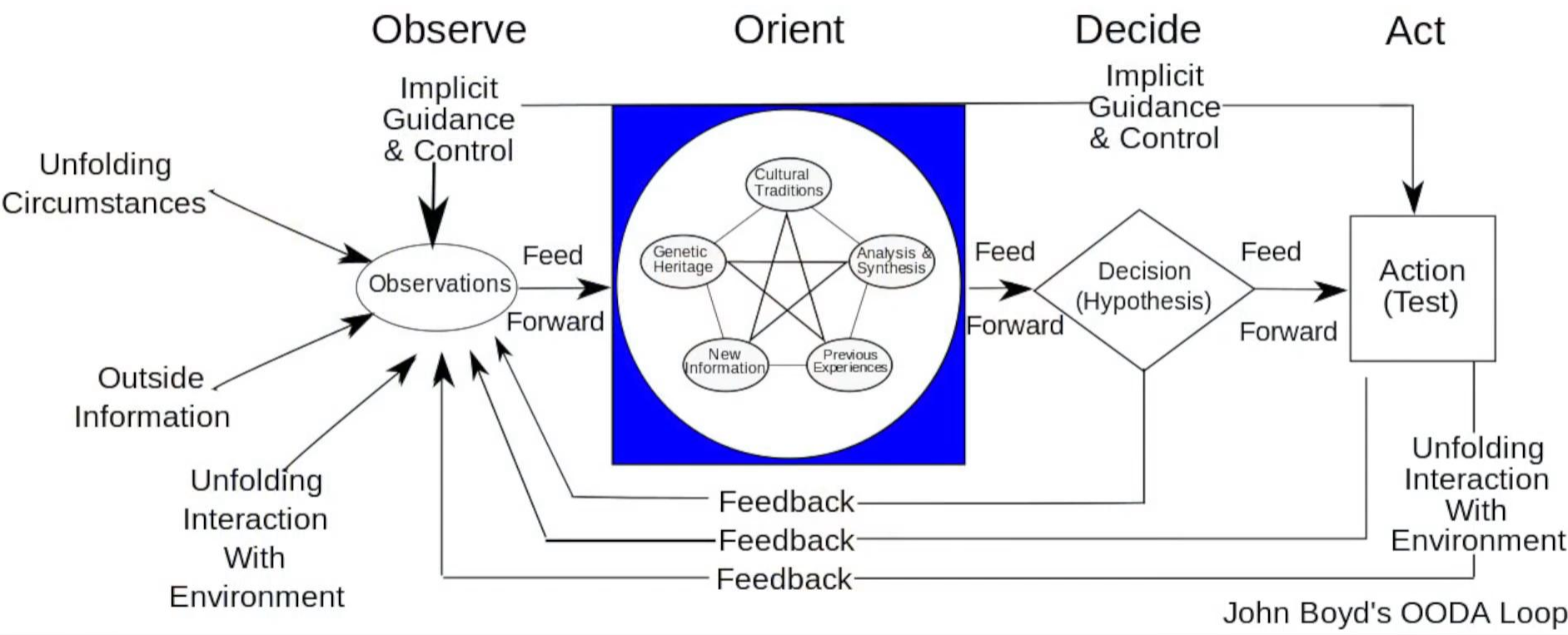
Awareness is a choice and a skill with which we can all become more proficient

- We can learn to develop SA and the ability to act quickly
- We can also incorporate these skills into our daily routines
- Increase the likelihood that we can **RECOGNIZE** a situation and **ACT**



OODA LOOP

- Observe, Orient, Decide and Act
- Created as a tool for military applications to improve the process of decision making in critical situations
- For CERT applications the OODA Loop is effective for 'continual size-up' in dynamic situations to anticipate potential outcomes, make decisions and act





OODA Loop



Observe

- Relaxed awareness – active mental state while scanning surroundings
- Determine a baseline (establish a norm of how the event *should* progress)
- Identify Landmarks, try to memorize details and remember to LOOK UP
- Look for any disturbances in (speed, noise level, activity burst, weather, etc.)
- Look for any Anomalies (unexpected actions, stumbling, people looking in ‘unexpected’ direction)
- More likely than criminal activity might be a sick/injured person or lost child

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

PLEASE TAKE NOTE
OF THE NEAREST EXIT.

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING,
SAY SOMETHING!

Additional consideration in Observing

Normalcy Bias can greatly increase reaction time

The Normalcy Bias is a belief people hold that things will always function the way things normally *have* functioned. When facing a disaster it causes people to underestimate both the likelihood of a disaster and its possible effects.

- What is NORMAL?
- What is BASELINE?

- Are there circumstances that can change the definition of NORMAL or BASELINE?

Do children typically behave the same way as adults?

Persons with physical or mental challenges (ie Autism)?

Public Perception

- Be aware of how the public perceives YOU
 - Demeanor
 - Dress
 - Actions
 - Empathy
- Remember YOU represent the City of Novi



Don't get locked on to a popular image

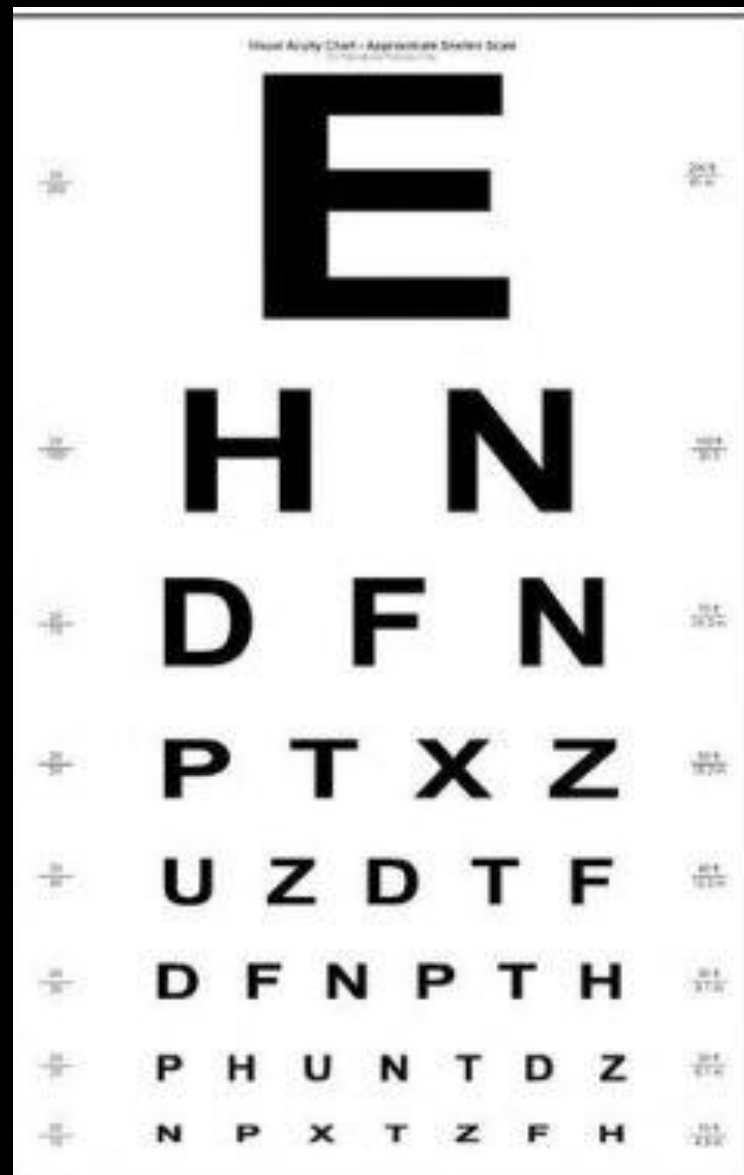
- We are all familiar with certain images
- Yes, we would be watchful for this, an unattended backpack, etc.
- But there are many more likely scenarios that we don't want to miss
- OPEN CARRY IS LEGAL IN NOVI - If sighted we should notify the IC and give a description
- However, don't broadcast "A Man With A Gun"
- "A man with a gun" is someone who has drawn their gun/weapon and is in an active position to use it

Orient



Orient

- Always know your global position (North East South West) street location, nearest cross road and your orientation to the event, as a whole
- Memorize details around you in order to form your baseline so you may detect changes more quickly
- When possible, increase your vantage point from time to time to confirm details – 360 degree view
- The better your orientation and attention to details, the better you can communicate to IC if a situation arises
- Pre-think where you would retreat to/nearest place of safety





OODA Loop

OBSERVE vs ORIENT

- While observing and establishing a 'baseline'
- WHAT are we looking at?
- WHAT is the CONTEXT?
- What do we DO with INFORMATION?
- Don't ignore INTUITION

Remember: You may loop back to OBSERVING to
recalibrate situation



DECIDING and ACTING
can be the most difficult
phase of the OODA Loop

Decide

- Do you detect a discontinuity - people looking in alternate direction, people running, etc. / continue monitoring and “size-up”
- Evaluate what type of help may be needed (Medical/Police/Fire)
- If the situation continues to escalate - evaluate if the change appears to be leading to a threat
- Organize information to communicate to the IC
 - Situation details
 - Accurate location
 - Type of help needed

Act

- Notify Incident Command and provide pertinent information and location
- **YOUR SAFETY IS ALWAYS FIRST**
 - If the scene is safe you may assist
 - If scene is unsafe withdraw to safety (the location you have previously evaluated)
- **NEVER ENGAGE IN A POTENTIAL THREAT**

Application to CERT Assignments

- These techniques apply to more than just hostile situations, these also improve CERT effectiveness in supporting public events:
- Helps support our role as extra ‘eyes and ears’
- Detects when aid may be needed, ie medical emergency
- Traffic /Crowd management
- Personal safety of ourselves and others

SUMMARY

- Definition of Situational Awareness and its importance
- Skills to increase SA using the OODA Loop techniques
- How to apply these skills presented to make us better citizens, parents, neighbors, etc.
- While no one can predict future events we can use these SA skills to better PREPARE, PICK UP CLUES or ACT, if needed
- Hopefully this will help you better serve in your upcoming CERT assignments

THANK YOU!



Sources

- City Prepping 31MR2017 “How to Develop Situational Awareness” video on YouTube
- Kim’s Game - www.boyscoutstrail.com
- Photos taken at previous Novi CERT Events



Kim's game

- **Kim's Game** is a **game** or exercise played by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides, and other children's groups. The **game** develops a person's capacity to observe and remember details. The name is derived from Rudyard Kipling's 1901 novel **Kim**, in which the hero, **Kim**, plays the **game** during his training as a spy.
- **Kim's Game** Instructions: Collect a number of items and place them under a tarp or sheet. Have the **scouts** gather around and uncover the items for 1 minute.