### Domestic Disturbances

**Course**
- Law
- Enforcement II

**Unit VII**
- Domestic Violence

**Essential Question**
How does an officer safely handle a domestic disturbance call?

**TEKS**
§130.294(c)
(7)(A)(B)(C)

**Prior Student Learning**
- Crimes against the person,
- Types of laws

**Estimated Time**
3 to 4 hours

**Rationale**
Officers go on domestic disturbance calls on a regular basis. Also, they are the types of calls in which officers are most often killed. It is important for an officer to know how to safely handle these calls and take the correct actions.

**Objectives**
The student will be able to:
1. Identify why domestic violence is such a big issue in our society
2. Discuss how an officer safely responds to a domestic disturbance, and what the officer is expected and required to do
3. Formulate a plan for a domestic violence victim to get out of their life circumstance
4. Role play a scenario in which the student is an officer in a domestic disturbance, and must implement the skills and concepts learned
5. Assess other students’ effectiveness as officers in the scenarios

**Engage**

**Key Points**

I. **Definitions**
   - A. Domestic Disturbances – verbal or physical arguments among family members
   - B. Family in the state of Texas
      1. Individuals related by blood or marriage
      2. Individuals who are former spouses
      3. Individuals who are parents of the same child (even if they don't live together)
      4. Roommates and former roommates
      5. Dating Relationships
         a) Length of the relationship
         b) Nature of the relationship
         c) The frequency and type of interactions between the persons involved

II. **Offenses that occur during domestic disturbance calls**
   - A. Most common offenses with contact and injury
      1. Class C Assault – the victim is offended by the contact
      2. Class A Assault – the victim has sustained a bodily injury
      3. Aggravated Assault – the victim has sustained a serious bodily injury
injury or a deadly weapon is used
4. Murder – the victim is dead

B. Others
1. Terroristic threats
2. Harassment
3. Sexual Assault
4. Indecency with a child
5. Anything else involving people
6. Criminal mischief

III. How domestic disturbance calls are different
A. If an officer has probable cause to believe an offense has occurred, he or she can make an arrest right away, even if they did not see it happen.

IV. Common causes of and reasons for domestic disturbances
A. Money issues
B. Extramarital affairs
C. Disagreements over parenting
D. Disagreements about other family members
E. Alcohol or drugs
F. Others

V. A police officer’s role during a domestic disturbance
A. Diffuse the situation
   1. Separate the parties
   2. Remove or reduce other noise
   3. Allow the person to vent to you
B. Determine if a crime has occurred
   1. Some questions to ask
      a) Has there been physical contact?
      b) Are you hurt or offended?
      c) Is it just a verbal argument?
C. Determine the best course of police action
   1. Make an arrest if necessary
   2. Convince or assist one of the persons to leave
   3. Allow everyone to stay if there was no offense
D. Work with backup officers appropriately
   1. Wait for cover
      a) Do not go in by yourself if you don't have to
      b) Go in together when the door opens
      c) Do not make an arrest alone
   2. Communicate effectively
      a) Let the other officer know your party's story
      b) Communicate threats
      c) Agree on the course of action to take
   3. Keep each other in sight
a) Know where the other officer is at all times
b) Tell your partner if you go into another room
c) Know how close the suspect is to both of you

VI. Eliminate threats
   A. Make a safe approach
      1. Listen before knocking on the door
      2. Do not stand in the fatal funnel
      3. Have your gun hand free
   B. Locate weapons
      1. Ask where all the weapons are
      2. Take the weapons away in plain view
      3. Pat down suspects if necessary
   C. Interview in safe areas
      1. Keep away from the kitchen area
      2. Keep away from the garage
      3. Search a couch before they sit on it

VII. Diffuse a hostile situation
   A. Separate the parties
      1. Use justifiable physical force if necessary
      2. Yell to gain their attention
      3. Assert your authority and presence as an officer
   B. Eliminate other distractions
      1. Turn off televisions and radios
      2. Have animals put away
      3. Try to comfort any children who are watching
   C. Calm the person down
      1. Allow the person to tell his or her perspective
      2. Use verbal and nonverbal clues to show that you are listening
      3. Be honest (within reason)

VIII. Use proper interviewing techniques
   A. Keep your gun side away
      1. Stand at a bladed stance
      2. Be aware of people behind you
      3. Keep your gun hand free when possible
      4. Keep your hands at or above your waist
   B. Ask open-ended questions
      1. Allow them to tell you the whole story
      2. Don't put words in their mouths
      3. Be an active listener
   C. Clarify everything being said
      1. Summarize what they said
      2. Take notes
      3. Ask questions when needed
IX. Determine appropriate action when an offense has taken place
   A. Physical Contact
      1. Look for marks or bruises
      2. Determine if the victim is being honest
         a) Consider possible reasons for the victim to lie
      3. Determine if it is only a verbal argument
   B. Third Party
      1. Ask if the witness saw who was hit first
      2. Determine if the witness is biased
      3. Decide if the marks match the story
   C. Officer's options
      1. Texas has a “no tolerance” policy
      2. Most departments require that some kind of action is taken:
         a) Citation
         b) Arrest or
         c) Disturbance report
   D. Possible solutions or results
      1. Verbal Argument
         a) One of the parties leaves for the night
         b) A family member or friend comes over
         c) Convince them to cool off if they stay
      2. Physical Argument
         a) No offense – disturbance report
         b) Class C – write a ticket or take to jail
         c) Class A or above – jail
         d) An Emergency Protective Order may be required

X. Depart the scene
   A. Leave a blue card with pertinent information
   B. Have everyone’s information
   C. Have photos and written statements

Activities
1. Have the students imagine that they are a person who is a chronic victim of an abusive, controlling spouse. The victim has less than a high school education, very little work history or technical skills, his or her friends and family have been alienated by her partner, he or she has limited or no control over the finances, and he or she is the primary caregiver for two small children. Each student will write an escape plan for the victim who wants to leave the relationship and take the children. It should include the resources available to the victim and how they will assist in the escape. This may be used as a research project. Use the Writing Rubric or the Research Rubric for assessment.

2. The students will pair up and write a domestic disturbance scenario. The pairs of students will take turns acting out the scenario as domestic disturbance participants and responding officers. Use the Role Play
Rubric for assessment.

Assessments
Domestic Disturbance Exam and Key
Domestic Crisis Intervention Study Guide and Key
Research Rubric
Role Play Rubric
Writing Rubric

Materials
Domestic Disturbance computer-based presentation
Computers with Internet access

Resources
Texas Penal Code http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Index.aspx
Law Enforcement Exploring http://www.learning-for-life.org/exploring/lawenforcement/

Accommodations for Learning Differences
For reinforcement, students will research police officer deaths that occurred on domestic disturbance calls and discover what the officers could have done differently. Use the Research Rubric for assessment.

For enrichment, students will research Lenore Walker’s Cycle of Violence and explain it. This cycle includes the following stages: tension building, acute battering incident, and honeymoon. Eventually in the cycle, the honeymoon period gets shorter after each battering event; the battering events get worse until there is no longer a honeymoon stage, and death is the result. Use the Research Rubric for assessment.

State Education Standards
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career and Technical Education
§130.293. Law Enforcement I (One to Two Credits)
(7) The student analyzes procedures and protocols for domestic violence.
The student is expected to:
(A) recognize techniques to enforce domestic violence laws;
(B) diffuse a simulated domestic violence incident; and
(C) apply laws in making an arrest.

College and Career Readiness Standards
I. Writing
A. Compose a variety of texts that demonstrate clear focus, the logical development of ideas in well-organized paragraphs, and the use of appropriate language that advances the author’s purpose.
1. Determine effective approaches, forms, and rhetorical techniques that demonstrate understanding of the writer’s purpose and audience.
IV. Listening

B. Listen effectively in informal and formal situations
   1. Listen critically and respond appropriately to presentations.
   2. Listen actively and effectively in one-on-one situations
   3. Listen actively and effectively in group discussions.
1. As long as Man exists, what will also exist?

2. What is any action or activity that is incompatible between two or more persons?

3. What may an aggressor see himself as when facing a law enforcement officer?

4. In the past, what would a victim have to file in order to prosecute?

5. In most states, law enforcement officers are __________ to make an arrest under penalty of law.

6. With the new laws, __________ is reduced.

7. What kinds of skills are essential?

8. What begins with a dispatch call and continues throughout the process of conflict management and resolution?

9. An officer should identify possible what?

10. What are bystanders often not?

11. What may be accomplished by your mere presence as a law enforcement officer?

12. What should you do if something is not working?

13. Who is not accountable for their actions?

14. What is of paramount concern?

15. What kind of person needs to vent?

16. What is the starting point for dealing with any conflict?

17. What is an option if the elements of a crime exist?

18. What offers the best long-term solutions to most problems, if all parties are willing to participate?

19. What is it called when neither side seems willing or able to see the other’s point of view or make a compromise?

20. What kind of solutions should be used to reopen the channels of communication?
Domestic Crisis Intervention Study Guide Key

1. Conflict
2. Conflict
3. A victim
4. A complaint
5. Mandated
6. Discretion
7. Interviewing skills
8. Data gathering
9. Escape routes
10. Objective
11. Distraction
12. Try something else
13. Anonymous people
14. Officer safety
15. Angry
16. Diagnosing the nature of the conflict
17. Arrest
18. Negotiation or mediation
19. An impasse
20. What if
Domestic Disturbance Exam

List 4 types of people Texas law would consider a family member.

1) ____________________________
2) ____________________________
3) ____________________________
4) ____________________________

5) What are dating relationships based on in Texas?
   a) When the couple agrees that they're in love
   b) It is a dating relationship after two or more dates
   c) Length of the relationship
   d) None of the above

What are the 4 most common offenses that occur during a domestic disturbance?

6) ____________________________
7) ____________________________
8) ____________________________
9) ____________________________

10) Johnny and Jenny are married and get into an argument. Jenny cuts Johnny with a knife. The police are called out and discover what happened. The police will have to get an arrest warrant before they can arrest Jenny.

   a) True
   b) False

List 2 things that may contribute to domestic disturbances.

11) ____________________________
12) ____________________________

What are the 3 things a police officer should do during a domestic disturbance?

13) ____________________________
14)________________________________________
15)________________________________________

If there is physical contact, what 2 things determine the severity of the crime?

16)________________________________________
17)________________________________________

If there is physical contact, what are your options?

18)________________________________________
19)________________________________________
20)________________________________________
Domestic Disturbance Exam Key

1) Spouse
2) Individuals related by blood
3) Ex-spouse
4) Roommate
   (Other possible answers: ex-roommate, parents of the same child, dating relationship)
5) C
6) Murder
7) Aggravated assault
8) Class A assault
9) Class C assault
10) B
11) Money problems
12) Extra-marital affairs
    (Other possible answers: alcohol, drugs, disagreements over family members,
     disagreements over parenting)
13) Diffuse the situation
14) Determine if an offense has occurred
15) Take the proper action
16) Offended
17) Pain
18) Jail
19) Ticket
20) Disturbance report
# Research Rubric

**Objectives**

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<td>Student identified and communicated a question or goal of the research</td>
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<td>Student used a variety of methods and sources to gather information. Student took notes while gathering information</td>
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<td>Student drew insightful conclusions and observations from the information gathered. Information is organized in a logical manner</td>
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<td>Student communicated the information gathered and summary or conclusions persuasively. Student demonstrated skill in the use of media used to communicate the results of research</td>
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<td>Student reflected on the importance of the research and its potential application</td>
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**Total Points (20 pts.)**

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<td>Relates to the audience</td>
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<td>Provides fluent rendition of the scenario</td>
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<td>All required content is included</td>
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<td>Acts with feeling and expression</td>
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<td>Varies intonation</td>
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<td>Presents characters appropriately</td>
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<td>Gives the scenario its full range</td>
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<td>Breaches are easily identified</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points (32 pts.)</strong></td>
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Comments:
# Writing Rubric

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<th>Objectives</th>
<th>4 pts.</th>
<th>3 pts.</th>
<th>2 pts. Needs Some Improvement</th>
<th>1 pt. Needs Much Improvement</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<td>The writing has all required parts from introduction to conclusion in smooth transition.</td>
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<td>The writing is interesting, supportive, and complete.</td>
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<td>The writing demonstrates that the writer comprehends the writing process.</td>
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<td>Accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation</td>
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<td>The content of paragraphs emphasizes appropriate points.</td>
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<td>The writer shows an understanding of sentence structure, paragraphing, and punctuation.</td>
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<td>All sources and references are clearly and accurately documented.</td>
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### Total Points (28 pts.)

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