# Brian N. O'Donnell

Brian N. O'Donnell is a Lieutenant with the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, Police Department. He served as an infantry officer in the United States Marine Corps and has served as a police officer for over twenty-three years. He has a B.A. in economics from Northwestern University, an M.S. in Criminal Justice from Liberty University, is a 2016 graduate of the University of Virginia's National Criminal Justice Command College, and earned the Advanced Specialist designation by the Force Science, Institute in 2018. His current assignment includes supervising the Charlottesville Police Department's Training Unit and Firearms Program. Brian has been instructing police officers and community members for two decades in the motor skills and decision making necessary to navigate violent encounters.

Brian has been a guest lecturer at the University of Virginia for the past five years in the Sociology of Violence and Gender Violence courses. He is a co-creator of the R.E.A.L Self-Defense for Women curriculum that is currently being taught at the University of Virginia for credit. Brian was also a guest speaker at the University of Virginia's Law School prosecutor's clinic for a decade.

Brian's focus for training development is concept and process driven, as consistently successful outcomes are based on a person's ability to fully understand the underlying dynamics of an event and their discipline in adhering to best practices. Shortcuts will predictably undermine those efforts. To this end, every course taught has been thoroughly researched so that participants will understand the "why" of what they are learning, an essential component to achieving intellectual and emotional buy-in, which promotes learning.

Brian has created a modular approach to training in firearm's and defensive tactics which is designed to move a student from a low-complexity, low-stress training environment to high-stress, high-complexity scenario based training. This is done by intentionally incorporating training elements which require working memory and cognitive flexibility, two components of executive function that are often impaired during high stress events. This same approach is used for training those outside of law enforcement for potentially violent events. Brian helped to create, coordinate, and deliver a primer for active shooter events to 200 school faculty and staff, including a Stop the Bleed component. This was followed by reality based training for a shooting threat conducted for all faculty and staff across two campuses in a K-12 environment. One participant noted: "Awesome program you are running. Definitely some of the most worthwhile- and efficient-training that I've done in these professional days."

In order to understand how to best navigate stressful events, students are taught about human needs; how high-stress events can impact physical processes, cognitive function, and sensory perceptions; how experience and context can drive automatic decision making in time compressed situations; and how these can negatively influence decision making and outcomes. Brian creates courses which examine how human factors can best be used to promote successful – or best possible - outcomes during potentially violent interactions, and strategies to accomplish those goals.