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THE SECURITY MINDSET THAT KEEPS YOUR STUDENTS SAFE

By Dr. Jeffrey Cantor, Personal and International Security Expert

Safety on college campuses is more important than ever. In just the last few decades, we have seen numerous tragic events that have changed the college landscape forever. As a result, students, parents, and administrators alike are forced to turn a more watchful eye to the issue of safety, along with location, student-teacher ratio, cost, quality of education, and ROI.

As college administrators, you too have to constantly worry about student and campus safety. While campus law enforcement does the best they can to alleviate and/or mitigate crime on campus, the fact is that a police force simply cannot be everywhere for every student. In a dangerous situation, where every second counts, helping your students recognize and avoid potentially threatening situations before a confrontation occurs can keep them and other members of your community, like faculty and staff, safe.

The reality is that students can only react to a threatening situation if they are aware of it in the first place. In an age where mobile devices are almost considered part of one's body and distraction is the new attraction, students need discipline to develop a security mindset to protect themselves and others around them. Teaching them awareness skills is not only prudent, but also proactive, and something that must be integrated into their daily lives.

This higher level of awareness is known as the ***security mindset*** and it has three key elements:

1. Recognizing that threats exist
2. Accepting responsibility for your personal safety
3. Listening to the little voice inside of you

Situational awareness is a fourth component of the security mindset that is a building block for your students' personal security. Students must become better at observing their surroundings and detecting when something is not right, out of the norm, or just does not fit. We call this the baseline of the environment, and it applies to more than just an individual, but requires a collaborative effort by all students. Their best defense is often others students looking out for one another.

The key is to have a baseline, combined with situational awareness and the ability to make observations about the people and objects within their environment. Not only is this pretty, it doesn't require turning students into covert operatives to acquire these skills.

HERE IS A MODEL YOU CAN IMPLEMENT ON CAMPUS:

Color Codes Describe the 5 Levels of Situational Awareness

Let's begin empowering a mind for this mission by understanding the color codes of awareness. Originally developed for the military, the color codes serve as a scale of readiness. These codes allow a person to match their level of awareness with the situation — preparing them to transition from one state of readiness to another more rapidly.

The codes are designated with the following colors: **white, yellow, orange, red and black.**

➤ **White** signifies that a student is unaware and unprepared. The student is essentially "unconscious" and unable to react to the changes taking place around them. In this condition, when faced with an emergency situation or threat, the brain cannot switch gears fast enough to adjust to the changes. Ultimately, the person "freezes," hesitates, or, even worse, panics. If they freeze or panic and take no action at all, they will fall victim to the situation.

A stereotypical example of this is a student walking along, texting, and drinking coffee or a soda, who then either trips on the broken sidewalk, or walks smack into someone or, in some cases, a tree. It may seem somewhat comical on Facebook, but it's downright dangerous for personal safety in real life.

➤ **Yellow** is alert and relaxed. The student is scanning the environment, taking everything in and keeping a check on things, but in a calm manner. This way they can recognize a potential threat before it becomes a problem.

➤ **Orange** is an elevated alert status. The student has identified a potential threat and must attempt to avoid it.

➤ **Red** is off-the-charts alert. There is a definite threat. Students must react and try to escape.

➤ **Black** is when the student must defend, fight, and actively engage in combating the threat. This is something we hope a student never has to deal with, but they must be prepared to handle this if absolutely necessary.

The color codes of awareness represent a crucial part of the mindset that is necessary to mitigate danger. Collectively, the ability to recognize, avoid, evade, and, as a last resort, counter when necessary (RAEC) is the basis of our **"College Safety Prep"** program, which prepares students with best safety practices as a first line of defense to prevent and/or mitigate potentially threatening situations, while reducing the liability impact for the college or university.

The Ideal Awareness Level

What level of awareness is ideal for your students and faculty at any given moment?

Yellow – alert and relaxed. It's virtually impossible to be on a high level of alert 24 hours a day. A body and mind require rest. Because of this, the majority of the time your awareness level should be at condition "yellow."

In yellow, students can go about their daily lives without interruption. A yellow mindset can be maintained indefinitely without the stress and fatigue associated with focused awareness or high alert. Relaxed awareness allows them to casually center on what is happening around them and gives them the ability to move through daily tasks, classes, social events, and even parties and life without tiring, while offering an effective level of personal security.



LIMITED TIME OFFER:

DEFENSE COACH UNIVERSITY IS OFFERING A CAMPUS SAFETY EVALUATION PACK AT NO CHARGE. THIS INCLUDES TEN FREE EVALUATION COPIES FOR MEMBERS OF YOUR CAMPUS TO USE FOR A 90-DAY PERIOD. FOR MORE INFORMATION, [EMAIL US](#).



Dr. Jeffrey Cantor, the founder of Defense Coach University, is one of the country's leading experts on personal and international security, including preparation and response to active shooter and domestic terrorism incidents, as well as college safety preparation and kidnap & ransom response.

To learn more about how you can empower your campus and students to be safe in today's challenging world, contact us at info@defensecoachu.com