

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

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Critical Incident Stress Management

DISASTER

“ A disaster is a traumatic event that affects a whole community or communities”^(a)

“An occurrence such as a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, explosion, hazardous material accident ... that causes human suffering or creates collective human need that requires assistance to alleviate.”^(b)



(a) "SURVIVING FIELD STRESS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS", AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCE AND DISEASE REGISTRY, MAY 2005

(b) "ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA), SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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STRESS

Psychological stress is a normal reaction to a threat or disturbing change in the environment.

Stress produces both psychological and physical responses

These responses lead to a biochemical cascade which sets off:

- A flight - fight or
- Freeze reaction

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NATURAL DISASTERS ... CONCERN ABOUT “INCIDENT STRESS” IS PART OF RECOVERY

GENERAL POPULATION:

-- Try to get victims back to “as near normal” as possible quickly after the disaster

CHILDREN:

- School counselors monitor students: signs of stress from the incident
- Schools may have children talk about the incident, describe their feelings, and address their concerns (as much as possible)

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BUT WHAT ABOUT THE “TOUGH GUYS”

Law enforcement

Fire fighters

Emergency medical services (EMS)

Telecommunicators (dispatchers)

Other public safety personnel

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FIRE FIGHTERS, EMS & OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

- Normally trained to work as a “team” ... assist in the performance of the defined emergency duties
- Incident Command System (ICS) used at all multi-agency incidents in wake county

LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

- Routinely work alone or with a single partner
- First on the scene ... first to identify the “emergency situation”

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RESULTS OF “STRESS” ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

- In United States, 2/3 of officers involved in shootings suffer moderate or severe “stress”^(c)
- About 70% leave the force within seven (7) years of the incident^(c)
- Twice as many officers, about 300 annually, die by their own hand as are killed in the line of duty^(c)
- In new york city, the suicide rate for police officers is more than double the rate for the general population^(c)

^(c) Miller, Laurence, Ph. D., “Law Enforcement Traumatic Stress: Clinical Syndromes and Intervention Strategies”, American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, September 2000

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MANY POLICE DEPARTMENTS AS PART OF PRE-EVENT TRAINING HAVE...

- Professional psychologist(s) on staff to identify problems and offer assistance to officers
- Some departments have created “marriage education” programs
- Some departments have created “healthy family relationship” programs

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Critical incidents are traumatic events that cause powerful emotional reactions in people who are exposed to those events

Every profession can list their own “worst case scenarios”

**EMERGENCY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
USUALLY LIST THE “*TERRIBLE TEN*”**

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THE “TERRIBLE TEN”

1. Line of duty deaths
2. Suicide of a colleague
3. Serious work-related injury
4. Multi-casualty / disaster / terrorism incidents
5. Events with a high degree of threat to the organization’s personnel
6. Significant events involving children
7. Events in which the victim is known to the organization’s personnel
8. Events with excessive media interest
9. Events that are prolonged and end with a negative outcome
10. Any significantly powerful, overwhelming distressing event

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**BUT OTHERS IN PUBLIC SAFETY FACE
“INCIDENT STRESS”**

FIRE FIGHTERS

Deaths because of fire ... why could I not save that person?



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FIRE FIGHTERS AND EMS:

- Multiple vehicle accidents
- Pinned or entrapped victims
- Teenagers or young children
- Driving-while-impaired (DWI) accidents



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LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE FIGHTERS, EMS



DROWNING



--- Flash flood incidents

--- Swimming pool/lake incidents (especially young children)

--- Home “bath tub” incidents (especially young children)

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HOW BIG OF A PROBLEM IS DROWNING IN THE UNITED STATES ? ^(d)

- In 2007: 3,443 fatal unintentional drowning (non-boating related)
- Averaged 10 drowning's per day
- An additional 496 died from boating-related accidents
- More than one in five drowning victims are children 14 and younger
- For every child who dies from drowning, another four receive emergency department care for nonfatal submersion incidents
- More than 55% of drowning victims treated in emergency departments require hospitalization



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HELP FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

- National Organization for Victim Assistance (**NOVA**)
- Division of nova: Crisis Response Team (**CRT**)
- Nova's CRT personnel: trained specialists
- CRT consists of 10 specialists to work with community resources in identifying issues and developing a response plan
- Responded to "high profile" tragedies: Air Florida crash, Mount St. Helens eruption in 1980, Arkansas middle school shooting violence, etc.

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ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

Jeffery T. Mitchell, Ph.D.

- Began as an elementary teacher ... 6th grade science
- Became a volunteer firefighter ... 9 ½ years
- Became interested in the stress of emergency services personnel
- Ph.D. Dissertation on paramedic stress
- Met George Everly ... working on identification and treatment of victims
- Since 1982, together working to assist first responders



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ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

GEORGE S. EVERLY, Jr. Ph.D.

- **Trained in business administration**
- **Intrigued with human behavior within business organizations**
- **Interested in clinical psychology ... especially psychophysiology**
- **Worked in laboratory ... studied biofeedback applications, blood pressure and general stress**
- **Went to conference with Dr. Mitchell in Australia on emergency service stress**
- **“These people are at such high risk, occupationally and there doesn’t seem to be anything in place to really assist them.”**
- **In 1989, the international critical stress foundation was formed**

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WHAT IS CISM ?

- A comprehensive, integrative, multicomponent crisis intervention system
- CISM interventions range from the pre-crisis phase through the acute crisis phase, and into the post-crisis phase
- Considered comprehensive and consists of interventions applied to individuals, small functional groups, large groups, families, organizations and even communities

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7 CORE COMPONENTS OF CISM

1. Pre-crisis preparation ... stress management education
2. Disaster or large-scale incident ... school and community support programs
3. Defusing ... 3-phase, structured small group discussion
4. Critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) ... the “Mitchell Model”
5. One-on-one crisis interventions/counseling
6. Family crisis interventions
7. Follow-up and referral for assessment and treatment

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“THE MITCHELL MODEL”

- DEFUSING
- DEBRIEFING
- FOLLOW-UP



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DEFUSING

- Done the day of the incident before the person(s) has a chance to sleep
- Designed to assure the person/person(s) that their feelings are normal
- Provides them with potential warning signs to look for over the short term
- Offers them a “lifeline” (telephone number and/or contact) they can reach and talk
- Limited to only the individuals directly involved in the incident
- Often done informally, sometimes at the scene

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DEBRIEFING

- **Second level of intervention**
- **For those directly affected by the incident and may also be for those not directly affected**
- **Normally done within 72 hours**
- **Gives individual or group an opportunity to talk about their experience**
- **Brainstorm coping mechanisms**
- **Identify potential members of the debriefing group who may shows signs of being at risk**
- **Follow up with persons identified above the day after the debriefing**
- **From debriefing, may identify individuals that need referral to professional counseling**

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FOLLOW-UP

- Final step of “Mitchell Model”
- Generally, done with the organization leader within a few days following the debriefing, to find if individuals are exhibiting warning signs
- A “check-in” again with the organization leader, about a week after the debriefing to see if there are any observed problems on the part of those who participated

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AMERICAN RED CROSS DEBRIEFING MODEL



**American
Red Cross**
Triangle Area Chapter

- 1. INTRODUCTION:** Establish agreements and confidentiality
- 2. FACT PHASE:** Have each person talk about roles they assumed in the incident talk about where they were, what they heard, what they saw, what they smelled, etc.
- 3. FEELING PHASE:** Encourage the sharing of feelings ... how are you feeling now? ... Have you every felt this way before?
- 4. SYMPTOM PHASE:** Encourage each person to share and talk about any physical symptoms they may have experienced sin the incident

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AMERICAN RED CROSS DEBRIEFING MODEL

4. SYMPTOM PHASE:

Some people are scared by their own physical and emotional reactions. It is very important to let them know that whatever they are experiencing is a natural reaction.

5. TEACHING PHASE: Provide education on stress response syndrome ...

Abnormal reactions that people might be experiencing are normal reactions to abnormal situations.

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AMERICAN RED CROSS DEBRIEFING MODEL

PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING CONCRETE ADVICE:

- Do not use alcohol or drugs to cope
- Do not isolate yourself from friends, family or co-workers
- Prevent yourself from becoming obsessed with the incident
- Eat well, exercise
- Assess work situation, do you need time off?
- Watch for fixation of the incident, don't become obsessed with finding reasons for the tragedy, allow time to pass



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AMERICAN RED CROSS DEBRIEFING MODEL

PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING CONCRETE ADVICE:

- Give yourself time to heal, don't have unrealistic expectations for recovery
- Expect the incident to bother you
- Learn about what you are going through
- Get help if necessary you don't need to be a "tough guy"



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AMERICAN RED CROSS DEBRIEFING MODEL

6. **RE-ENTRY PHASE:** Ask the participants what they want to do from the session ... do they feel a need for another debriefing?
7. **GROUP FACILITATORS** Should provide debriefings with each other after the debriefing session share observations and recommendations for follow-up.



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CISM/CISD CRITICISM

- Some studies have shown that CISM has little effect
- Some studies claim that CISM may actually worsen the trauma symptoms
- Several meta-analysis in the medical literature either find no preventative benefit of CISM or negative impact for those debriefed
- It has been argued that CISM has beneficial effects when conducted with emergency services personnel, but does more harm than good with accident victims

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WHERE CAN PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL IN WAKE COUNTY OBTAIN CISM ASSISTANCE ?

- **NORTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY PATROL**
- **AMERICAN RED CROSS --- TRIANGLE CHAPTER**
- **TRIANGLE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

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WAKE COUNTY PROCESS FOR CISM/CISD SUPPORT

CONTACT:

- **WAKE COUNTY FIRE MARSHALL OFFICE (WC-1)**
 - Call “911” on non-emergency telephone line ... (919) 831-6311 ... ask that wc-1 contact you and provide a contact phone number
- **WAKE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAFF DUTY OFFICER (WC-3)**
 - Pager (919) 647-2020 (24/7)
- **WAKE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES, CRISIS ASSESSMENT CENTER ...**
 - (919) 250-3133 (24/7)

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QUESTIONS ? ? ?

THANK YOU