

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEFING?

The purpose of a debriefing is to offer emergency service personnel the opportunity to come together as a group and to identify their own personal reactions to the event.

Being involved in a critical incident:

- can make a person feel isolated
- trigger responses that are unfamiliar and frightening.

A debriefing:

- provides information about normal human responses to abnormal events,
- helps emergency service personnel understand what they are experiencing,
- accelerates the normal recovery of people with "normal reactions to abnormal events",
- helps emergency service personnel develop strategies for coping with their reactions to the event.

There is a lot of evidence that having strong social supports after a traumatic event helps people reestablish a sense of psychological well-being and regain equilibrium.

Emergency service personnel say that it is difficult to share these events with friends and family who weren't there and wouldn't understand. They don't want to expose them to the details of these situations.