



An Introduction to CISM/Peer Support

Critical Incident Stress Management

- Critical Incidents
- Crisis
- Stress
- Critical Incident Stress Interventions

Stress

- Stress is a state of physical, cognitive, and emotional arousal.
- Once these changes take place, behavior changes.

Why stress?

- Survival Mechanism
- Protection
- Generates Fight or Flight Reaction
- Enables rapid reactions
- Enhances Survival thinking
- Enables perceptual focusing to eliminate distractions

Four Primary Types of Stress

- General Stress
- Cumulative Stress
- Critical Incident Stress
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

General Stress

- Everyone has it
- Positive and Negative
- Normal condition of life
- Easy to cope with

Having Stress is not bad in itself.

- What is bad is experiencing excessive or prolonged stress.

Major Negative Stress Categories

- Cumulative Stress
- Critical Incident Stress
- Post-Traumatic Stress

Cumulative Stress

- Piled up, unresolved general stress
- Takes time
- Produces negative changes in:
 - Mental and physical health
 - Performance
 - Relationships
 - Personality

Critical Incident Stress

- AKA-Traumatic Stress
- Begins with exposure to a traumatic event
- Normal response of normal people to abnormal event
- Painful, but people recover
- Reactions can be reduced by early intervention
- Critical Incident Stress can be an opportunity for positive changes and growth

Physical Signs of Critical Incident Stress

- Thirst
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- GI distress
- Racing heart
- Tremors
- Sweating

Emotional Signs of Critical Incident Stress

- Depression and Sadness
- Frustration
- Anger/Rage
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Withdrawal

Cognitive Signs of Critical Incident Stress

- Mental Confusion
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor attention span
- Inability to calculate
- Time distortions
- Difficulties problem solving

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Starts with exposure to a critical incident
- Severe, destructive pathway of stress
- Caused by unresolved critical incident stress
- Symptoms last longer than 30 days
- Disrupts normal life

Critical Incident

- An event that has the power to overwhelm the coping abilities of an individual or group

Crisis

- An acute emotional reaction to a critical incident

What makes it a crisis?

- The usual coping methods no longer work effectively
- Individuals exposed to the traumatic event are mild to moderately impaired in daily life

Factors that Affect Crisis Reactions

- Suddenness
- Intensity
- Duration
- Level of Loss
- Age
- Injury or death to relatives or friends
- Availability of resources
- Level of training or education
- Availability of coping mechanisms

Crisis Intervention

- Emotional First Aid designed to assist the person in a crisis state to return to adaptive functioning.
- Formal crisis intervention services have been successfully utilized with a wide range of populations in many cultures around the world for more than 100 years.

Crisis Intervention Objectives

- Stabilize situation
- Mitigate impact
- Mobilize resources
- Normalize reactions
- Restore to adaptive function

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a form of crisis intervention developed in the 1970's. CISM utilizes the core principles and objectives of crisis intervention.

CISM

- Comprehensive, systematic, and multi-tactic approach to managing traumatic stress within an organization or community
- Specific program of crisis intervention tactics which focuses on assisting individuals and groups that have experienced a traumatic event

CISM Tactics

- Pre-incident education
- On-scene support services
- 1 to 1 support
- Staff demobilization after a disaster
- Defusings
- Crisis Management Briefings (CMB)
- Crisis Management Debriefings
- Significant-other support services
- Follow-up services
- Referrals according to need
- Post-Incident education

Tactics used Before a Critical Incident

- Education
- Team training
- Planning
- Administrative support
- Protocol development
- Policy development

CISM Tactics used During a Critical Incident

- On-scene support
- 1 to 1 crisis intervention
- Advice to supervisors
- Support to primary victims
- Provision of food, fluids, rest and other services to operations personnel

CISM Tactics Used After a Critical Incident

- 1 to 1 crisis intervention
- Demobilization (post-disaster, large group)
- Defusings (small groups)
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (small group)
- Crisis Management Briefings (CMBs)
- Significant other support
- Post-incident education
- Follow-up services
- Referrals according to needs

A few words on Debriefings

- A specific, 7-phase group crisis intervention tactic which utilizes a specially trained team of support personnel

Debriefing is....

- A group process
- A part of a comprehensive program of crisis intervention
- Support service
- Aimed at enhancing group performance and cohesion
- Requires follow-up services

Debriefings are not.....

- Psychotherapy
- a substitute for psychotherapy
- a stand alone
- a cure for PTSD

Debriefings

have far more to do with group support and assessment than with treatment and cure.

IMPORTANT!

All CISM services should be provided only by people who have been properly trained in Critical Incident Stress Management and are ICISF certified!

PEER SUPPORT

- **None of us have to struggle alone.**
- The **North Carolina Firefighter Peer Support (NCFFPS)** Team is available when you need us.
- There are going to be times in our lives when we experience tough times
 - As professionals and human beings.
- Strength is not shouldering another burden;
- It's strength in letting go and asking for help.

Explanation of NCFFPS:

North Carolina Firefighter Peer Support is defined as assistance provided by a trained individual or group of trained firefighters and emergency responders who answer the call to their brothers and sisters in need, regardless of the need.

The team is made up of Fire Service and EMS Brothers and Sisters:

NCFFPS is made up of fire service and EMS members just like you. If you need a peer to talk with and someone who can understand what you are experiencing because they have been there; we are here.

Mission Statement:

North Carolina Firefighter Peer Support (NCFFPS) mission is to recognize that all fire service and emergency medical service members are human beings who will be exposed to, and experience emotions. NCFFPS will provide a safe, non-judgmental and confidential environment where members can engage in a healing conversation with a peer. NCFFPS also seeks to share the concept of peer support and the structure of our program with those that request.

Vision Statement:

North Carolina Firefighter Peer Support seeks to contribute and provide ongoing emotional wellness resources that are readily needed in the fire service and for emergency responders.

Value Statement:

North Carolina Firefighter Peer Support values the concepts of Making it Safe and Making it Matter. These values are upheld by an understanding that we have a calling to care for all firefighters and emergency responders equally, and that we are all deserving of genuine support by our peers in a time of need, no matter the need.

For more information or assistance:

NC PEER Support

<http://www.ncffps.org/>

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CISM

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Firstline is our 12-week faith-based first responder trauma healing course that specifically addresses the critical incident stress and trauma faced by those in the law enforcement, firefighter, EMS, 911 communications, hospital emergency staff, and corrections communities.

****A program of REBOOT Combat Recovery.****

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