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LifeNet

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LOOKING FORWARD

By Rick Barton, ICISF Chief Executive Officer

Successfully looking forward requires looking back first. With that in mind, I reviewed my prior contributions to LifeNet, so that I may connect with the view of where we must travel as an organization, and provide an update about our next steps. If you want to know where the ICISF is headed, please keep reading.

George Santayana (Life of Reason, 1905) wrote:

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Winston Churchill also famously made similar comments out of concern that we must understand the circumstances that brought us to this point in life.

Studying the past helps us minimize mistakes, understand trends, and predict positive outcomes. During my two years as the Chief Executive Officer of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, studying the past became a regular occurrence. We must understand the details before making a change that creates challenges.

This plays well with another key consideration related to strategic management and decisions based upon thoughtful planning. We must avoid suffering from the rule of unintended consequences, a term made popular by American sociologist Robert K. Merton. The rule warns us

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CISM LESSONS LEARNED: REFLECTIONS OF MULTIPLE ICU DEATHS

By Chaplain Regina Franklin-Basye, MDiv, MS, FTFellow in Thanatology:
Death, Dying & Bereavement

I will always remember my first encounter with Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). In 2005, prior to becoming a chaplain, I served in pastoral care as the Bereavement Care Specialist at an urban Dallas hospital. In this role I served multiple units of the hospital and in different capacities, ensuring the employees, patients and family members had adequate support and resource information on grief and loss. I also provided bereavement support to employees following a personal loss, and also to family members who had endured the loss of a loved one as well.

I specifically recall a dreary Tuesday morning when I visited the ICU department during my regular shift. As I made rounds visiting with the nursing staff, I immediately noticed that several appeared to be very sad and somber. The mood was intense and heavy, as melancholy and distress became the theme of the day. Some appeared to be exhausted, withdrawn, irritable and sad, all while continuing to care for other patients. There weren't many spoken words, no matter my own personal attempts to brighten their mood, or to address their weariness. Having made the

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REGIONAL CONFERENCE CALENDAR

October 15-18, 2015

-Seattle, WA

Seattle Police & Fire Peer Support Team

November 11-15, 2015

-Baltimore, MD

ICISF

December 3-6, 2015

-San Diego, CA

San Diego CISM Team

2015 Approved Instructor Candidate Program Schedule

Group Crisis Intervention

Approved Instructor Candidate Program

November 12 - 14, 2015

Ellicott City, MD

Pastoral Crisis Intervention I & II

Approved Instructor Candidate Program

Nov 17-19, 2015

Hanover, MD

Advanced Group Crisis Intervention

Approved Instructor Candidate Program

December 2 - 4, 2015

San Diego, CA

**2016 Regional Training and Approved
Instructor Candidate Program Schedule
Available Soon!**

Submit a Letter to the Editor!

ICISF welcomes comments
from our readers. Please
submit your comments to the
editor at (lifenet@icisf.org)

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I LOST A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE TODAY...

I just wanted to let you know I lost a good friend of mine today, Don Gow.

Don loved his God, his Country and his family (Jean, Sissy and Donnie). The rest of us fit in somewhere behind those three, and probably even behind his love for his dogs, Duncan and Pixie.

Don in the truest sense of the word, was a man's man.

He exemplified the words of Honor, Courage, Commitment and 'Always Faithful'. "OO-Rah" (USMC)

Fiercely loyal, truthful and a man of his word are several more traits that made up his character. A word of caution however, you never wanted to ask Mr. Don a question, if you didn't want to hear the answer and quite colorful at times I might add.

He had distinguished career with the United States Marine Corps. I had asked him several times, what had he done and where had he gone in service to his country. As he slowly started to answer my inquiry, he reached for his switch blade and said, "I can tell ya, but I'm gonna have to neutralize ya." Needless to say, I never pursued that line of questioning again.

For over 30 years he served with the Baltimore City Fire Department. I would spend endless hours listening to him talk about 'life in a big city far department'. Silly me, I had asked him one time, had he ever been injured in the line of duty? Well let me tell ya, after 5 pages of injuries and incidents that he recited that happened to him, it's a wonder he even lived through all that to be able to retire. Rumor had it that he had a frequent flier room named after him at Shock Trauma. (Contact me and I can send you his list.)

Jean would take that all in stride when she received those late night phone calls advising of another Firefighter Gow mishap. She finally got it down to a science just merely asking the caller, "Just tell me what hospital he's in this time."

ICISF was most fortunate to have Mr. Don come on board with the foundation dedicating himself to the organization for over a decade. The mission of assisting those emergency services workers, and many other disciplines as well, in their time of need was tailor made for the man with a 'heart' of his size. For it was his giving of himself so completely to ease the pain and anguish that endure him to those he interacted with and made him the valuable asset he became to ICISF. He also was extremely knowledgeable of the CISM resources and experts in and throughout the field, as well as becoming the offices AV and Logistical guru.

He was particularly proud of the property he had deeded to him in Scotland, being of Scottish heritage himself.

Another passion that he shared was during the Christmas Holiday season. He would transform into S-A-N-T-A C-L-A-U-S along with Ms. Jean as Ms. C-L-A-U-S. (The reason I spelled out those words was just in case any children might read this.) I was never quite sure who got the most enjoyment during those times, the children or Mr. Don. Maybe it's both, for Mr. Don was truly a 'kid at heart'.

Another memory, although not a pleasant one, was riding in a car when he was driving. Two times come to mind, the first was when he stopped abruptly in the middle of the road for a 'red light' that just didn't exist. The other time was when he agreed to



I LOST A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE TODAY...

take Ann and I to the train station for a trip. BIG MISTAKE. Let's just leave it at he took us through parts of Baltimore that I didn't know existed, communicating with the locals along the way with his colorful and explicit language and ridiculing every other driver for the crazy and inconsiderate way THEY all drove.

Needless to say by the time we reached the train station, I was miserably car sick, and Duncan was shaking uncontrollably in the back seats on Ann's lap. Rumor had it as Ann got out of the car, Duncan grabbed her sleeve and tried to pull her back into the car. Ann thought that he was attempting to mouth, "Please don't leave me with this crazy man."

One of Don's greatest passions was that of history, particularly the Civil War, and specifically Gettysburg. Don, Ken Bohn and I would talk for hours about those 'hallowed grounds' and those brave individuals who fought and lost their lives for their beliefs.

He made annual trips to Gettysburg to learn more about its history, staying in a period hotel near the center of town that reputedly had spirits roaming the halls. He had many encounters with the spirits both in the hotel and on the battlefield. He was quite serious about those visions, and I for one are not going to doubt him.

When I received word this morning that he had passed earlier today, my first reaction was, it can't be, let's just give it another 24 hours. For you see, Don had cheated death many times before. He and I talked about that on several occasions as he wondered why he had been spared so many times and asked to stay on earth a little longer.

I like to think it was so he could ease the pain of a few more souls and reach out to be just one more person's friend.

While I am saddened by Mr. Don's passing, but that sadness wouldn't begin to compare to how I would feel if I never had the privilege to know the man and not have been able to call him my friend.

So his greatest gift to me, was allowing me to call him FRIEND.

I must add that we are all truly blessed that the good Lord shared Don with us for all these years!

If any of you ever make it up to Gettysburg, take that stroll through the battlefields and around some of the historic building downtown, and if you have a sense that that you are being guided in a particular direction, maybe, just maybe, it may be Mr. Don reaching out yet again to you, one of his many friends to lend his helping hand.

Thank you Mr. Don, in my heart you shall remain forever.

Don Howell
9/18/15

Share Your Team's Milestone with *LifeNet* Readers

ICISF would like to acknowledge CISM Teams that have reached significant milestones in organizational longevity (i.e. five, ten, fifteen year anniversaries, etc.) in future issues of *LifeNet*. If your team reached such a significant anniversary this year, please contact George Grimm, ICISF CISM Team Coordinator (via email at hotline@icisf.org) and provide the appropriate information so we may proudly list your Team in a future *LifeNet* and provide a Certificate of Appreciation.

"Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity."

- Pema Chodron

MEETING THE NEEDS OF CISM TEAMS THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF

MICHIGAN: MCRAs SUCCESS THROUGH AN ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

By Harvey J. Burnett, Jr., Behavioral Sciences Department - Andrews University

For over 25 years the Michigan Crisis Response Association (MCRA) has provided critical incident stress management training to disaster behavioral health and other crisis response professionals within the State of Michigan through its' annual training conference. In fact, one of MCRAs primary missions is to provide training for CISM teams and other service providers who work with individuals and groups of people affected by traumatic events. Therefore, it is not surprising that since the institution of MCRAs annual training conference, more than 3,000 professionals from a number of disciplines have completed basic and advanced trainings in various International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) based CISM courses. Furthermore, the annual training conference has

helped its' attendees to establish and/or strengthened the effectiveness of their CISM teams, as well as, provided opportunities for attendees to network and receive support from other CISM peers. This article will focus on the MCRA annual training conference evaluation data (2007 to 2014) that highlights what has contributed to its long-term success.

MCRAs annual training conference is similar to most professional conferences that are offered regionally or internationally. There are a selection of training courses to choose from, a keynote address, breakout sessions, and a time for special activities, recognition and awards. However, there are several distinct aspects of MCRAs conference success that is in line with convention research on conference attendance motivation: location, cost, types of

training offered, and the quality of the training experience (Severt, Wang, Chen & Breiter, 2007; Mair & Thompson, 2009).

The first distinction is the location of MCRAs annual conference. MCRA has strategically hosted its yearly conference at the Kettunen Conference Center located in northern Michigan. The Kettunen Center is a 4-H owned and operated retreat facility that provides a beautiful and rustic environment to learn and relax in. The lodging is both hotel-style and dorm-style and excellent food services are available. Access to the media of television is limited, which creates an atmosphere that provides conference attendees more opportunities to network with each other and build inner resilience through exploring the

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A TRAUMATIC EVENT HAPPENS DURING BIBLE STUDY

By Chaplain Rob Dewey, ICISF Faculty & Approved Instructor

Evil struck Charleston on June 17, 2015. A weekly Bible Study was taking place at the oldest AME (American Methodist-Episcopal) Church in the country. For the past 150 years, the Emmanuel AME Church has stood as the 'Mother' Church to all other AME Churches. This was the home Church for freed slaves, and their ancestors who have continued to see it as their safe home for worship.

On this Wednesday night, the Bible study was attended by some 12 persons and was being led by Pastor Clementa Pinckney, who was also a SC State Senator. Attending the study was a white male in his 20s (I will not mention his name). The Church has always been welcoming to persons who are not members of their

congregation. Around 9:00 p.m., the white male stood up and began shooting those who were studying God's word.

I was notified by 5 agencies that there had been a shooting at the Church, which is located in the heart of downtown Charleston. I arrived at the Command Post (CP) within 15 minutes. (Early Intervention!). While driving, I called the Chaplaincy's Office Manager requesting she respond 10 of our volunteer Chaplains; also of note, as I drove the dispatcher was advising "all units to be careful, for the shooter is still at large". I am glad I have taken courses since attending seminary on safety, as seminary certainly did not prepare me for this! I will address a few points on preparation at the end

of this article.

Upon arriving at the CP, I was advised for all Chaplains to report to the Family Assistance Center (FAC), which was being established at the Embassy Suites. The FAC began at a hotel across the street from the Church, which was quickly deemed too close to the crime scene – thus, the FAC was moved 2 blocks away. Within an hour following the shooting, some 300 relatives, friends and Church members had gathered in the ballroom of the Embassy Suites. The staff could not have been kinder to the grief stricken and those of us attempting to support them.

The sad news began to unofficially get back to the FAC, that in fact 9

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FROM THE HOTLINE TEAM COORDINATOR

By Reverend George Grimm

DID YOU KNOW:

CISM teams that are interested in being made available to the ICISF HOTLINE are listed in a database to which the HOTLINE dispatchers and ICISF staff refer when they receive requests for assistance. The basic requirement for teams desiring to be listed in this database is to file a "Team Information Form", including basic contact numbers and other required information, with the ICISF office at hotline@icisf.org

Effective January 1, 2015 the following designations of teams will be used:

- A team which simply submits the Team Information Form with the information as requested on the form will be considered an ICISF Hotline Team.
- By submitting a Verification Packet which requires additional information such as the team mission statement, team policies and procedures, training practices, member qualifications required by the team and other information, and is signed by the team officers, the team may become designated as an ICISF Verified Hotline Team. After review and approval by ICISF, this "verified" information is used to more closely match the appropriate team to fit the criteria for a specific HOTLINE request.
- A team may, in addition to the above designations, become an active member of the Foundation to receive discounts for ICISF training, quick access to the latest information, consultations and other benefits by completing a Membership Application along with the required fee.

ALL TEAMS must submit an annual form with updated contact and activity information. It is imperative that ICISF have current information when responding to requests for assistance. Teams that do not submit an annual updated form will be indicated as "Not updated". If no report is submitted by a team for 4 years, the team may no longer be considered for referral purposes.

NOTE: The old designation "Registered Team" will be replaced by the "Verified Team" designation, and current "Registered" teams will be changed to the "verified" designation.

ICISF values all teams' participation in the HOTLINE database; however, we cannot, in good faith to those accessing the HOTLINE, provide information to callers that may be inaccurate.

A reminder is emailed to teams as their update is nearing.

Thanks for your help, contact me at hotline@icisf.org if you have questions,
George

SAVE THE DATE 2015 CIMA Conference



Yes, it's that time again! CIMA's Conference Sub-Committee is busy working behind the scenes to bring yet another outstanding Conference to our peers. This year's Conference, **Crisis Response Across the Community: Learning from Experience** will be held in Melbourne on Monday the 30th of November and Tuesday the 1st of December at the City Town Hall.

Further information will be released as soon as possible, but in the meantime, block out these dates in your diaries and watch this space!

ICISF ONLINE SUICIDE PREVENTION COURSE: SAVE A LIFE

BY ALICE FRANKS-GRAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END VETERAN SUICIDE

About two years ago I was out of town, at 2:52 am my cell phone rang and the text messaging on my phone began to blow up with messages. “You should call when you get a minute” “Have you heard yet?” etc... I had no idea why my former co-workers would contact me at that hour of the day unless something was wrong. Something was wrong.

I retired in 2001 but like many others I have stayed connected with the local first response community; those that I had a role in training are now leaders in their departments. I learned a popular, well-known local law enforcement officer had ended his life by suicide. He left two children and a spouse, had been a resource officer within the school system. Layer upon layer of factors compounded the pain of this sudden loss. The people I worked with and who also worked with the deceased wanted me to know and not hear of the specifics via the news media. Daily, people are considering ending their lives.

I am the Executive Director of the National Alliance to End Veteran Suicide, Inc. (NA2EVS); as a result I talk about suicide issues every day. Specifically I talk to Veterans who are coping with the aftermath of uniformed service in the military, but I speak with people in fire, police, and EMS uniforms often because so many of our Reserve/Guard Service members are also local First Responders. I also talk with people who are left to cope with the aftermath of a death from suicide and I attempt to recommend the best resources available to help them as they cope with the profound pain of this type of loss. The best, (yet likely an incorrect estimate) statistic that we have is that 22 Veterans per day end their lives (with less than 50 states reporting their data).

Much has been discussed about

providing better service through the Veterans Administration (VA) to address mental health and traumatic brain injury (TBI), but given the nature of the most recent wars; multiple deployments, the increased use of Guard and Reserve troops, etc., these Veterans are coming back to small towns where the available mental health resources are often limited or non-existent. Rural first responders know all too well the challenge of locating mental health professionals. That challenge was a factor in the development of regional CISM teams in Wisconsin in the 1980/90s. But even when professional mental health resources are not geographically limited, those needing assistance do not always navigate to professional mental health clinicians. Emergency services responders, judges, clergy, a trusted friend, family member or peer may be the first to sense/observe red flag behaviors such as: self-medicating, self-destructive behaviors, etc. They may be the first point of contact an individual or family member may have with a potential helping individual. So it has become increasingly important for persons from a broad variety of human, social, spiritual services gain a better understanding of suicide awareness and establish and improve their ability to communicate with those standing on the edge of an irreversible decision.

I was given an opportunity to take the May 2015, ICISF online Suicide Awareness course and after reviewing many similar classes geared specifically for those in the front lines of response who are not mental health professionals; this is a wonderful course. If you are looking for something that will allow you to sit back and be

talked to or experiment with the latest and greatest piece of equipment available, well, this isn't the class for you. You will be engaged, online courses require you to engage in the chats, communicate, and discuss, being self-directed and motivated to commit the time and attention to the work of the course is important. On the positive side you can log in at any hour of the day or night to work on the course. After completing the course you will be able to recognize “red flag” behaviors better. The course includes, but is not limited to; risk, protective, preventive factors, and assessment for each, in addition to various intervention techniques (SAFER, QPS, ASSIST). The videos of those who bravely share their stories provide a clear insight into the mindset of someone who has lost the ability to find hope. In the process of researching resources available to you at the local and national levels there is a potential to add to your existing organizational resources and partnerships.

Most importantly, you will complete the course with an increased level of comfort in asking: “Are you thinking about harming yourself?” and you will have the tools to move someone toward more skilled assistance. And that holds the real potential to save lives and ease pain.

NA2EVS has a Facebook page and LinkedIn discussion group. I get private emails through those sites. About a month ago I responded to a private message on Facebook from a gentleman struggling with ongoing thoughts of suicide. He described clearly the daily struggle and his means was accessible, way too accessible. He felt stuck, couldn't see a path ahead and was refusing to go to sleep because he didn't want to face the morning. We chatted, back and forth privately for a few hours; simultaneously I opened

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COMMENTS ABOUT SUICIDE AWARENESS COURSES

ICISF has now offered two Suicide Awareness Online Courses. Students have been pleased with the course and would like to offer their comments.

“Thank you much. The saying “timing is everything” certainly holds true for me and taking this course. My daughter-in-law’s sister has been in a deep depression for almost a year and sent a note illustrating everything we learned in the course. I don’t think I would have picked up half of the warning bells if it weren’t for what I learned. I was able to reach out to her family and let them know my concerns and they’re going to speak or write her every day to make sure she knows she has a lot of people around her who love her.

This course just might have saved one more life and if it weren’t possible for me to do this virtually, I wouldn’t have been able to take it. Even with learning pains, it was invaluable.

With deepest respect and heartfelt gratitude!”

“Thanks Michelle it was a great course and I am going to refer my Peer Team members to take it as well!”

“Thank u!!! I love this course!”

BECKY STOLL BIDS FAREWELL AS ICISF BOARD CHAIR; DAVE EVANS APPOINTED AS NEXT CHAIR

Becky Stoll, the Chair of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation’s (ICISF) Board of Directors is stepping down from that post and leaving the Board. Presiding over the Board meeting in May was her last act as Board Chair. Dave Evans, the Board’s Secretary/Treasurer, will step into the role as Chairman. He was elected to that post at the Board’s May meeting. Rick Barton serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the ICISF.

Ms. Stoll is the Vice President, Crisis and Disaster Management for Centerstone, one of the nation’s largest non-for-profit providers of community-based behavioral healthcare. She has served on the Board of Directors for the ICISF for nine years, including seven years as the Chair of the Board.

Ms. Stoll said recently “It has been a true honor to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors for the ICISF. We navigated some rough waters a few years ago but have come out as a stronger organization. Thank you to the membership for their ongoing support and commitment to helping those in need. I know Rick and Dave will continue to grow and improve the ICISF.”

Mr. Evans joined the ICISF Board of Directors in 2013. He is a licensed certified public accountant with more than forty years’ experience with several nonprofit organizations. He was Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the Maryland School for the Blind and was Chief Financial Officer for the ARC Baltimore.

Mr. Evans said “We should be grateful to Becky Stoll for her years of service on the Board and especially for her leadership through some difficult issues for the ICISF. I look forward to working with the Board and with CEO Rick Barton and his staff. Together we intend to continue to strengthen the financial position of the ICISF and getting our story out there through aggressive public relations.”

The Board of Directors currently includes seven members and Mr. Evans indicated that the Board is open to considering interested new members. The Board meets quarterly and oversees the management of the ICISF through their chief executive.



Comments, Questions or Suggestions

Please direct any comments or questions regarding the contents of this issue to the attention of Victor Welzant, PsyD, Editor, at lifenet@icisf.org.

Letters to the Editor are also welcome. Have an idea for an article in a future issue of *LifeNet*? Send your suggestions to the attention of Michelle Parks, Content Editor, at lifenet@icisf.org. We welcome your input.

Thank you!

If your article is approved and used in an issue of the *LifeNet* you will receive a complimentary Level One-1 year ICISF membership (\$50.00 value)

Make Sure We’re Able to Stay in Touch!

To be sure ICISF emails get through to your inbox, be certain to add ICISF email addresses to your address book. If you have a spam filter, adding ICISF.org to your “white list” of acceptable senders will also help to ensure that our emails get through. Thanks!

ANNOUNCING CISM CERTIFICATION

For those of you asking “what’s the next step in CISM?” the answer is here! In response two decades of requests, The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) is offering the first examination-based certification in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). The certification is offered in partnership with UMBC’s Department of Emergency Health Services and UMBC Training Centers.

The goal of the certification is to raise the level of knowledge in crisis intervention, both in general and specifically in CISM. This is a certification of knowledge, not practice per se, relevant to CISM and crisis intervention. It is hoped that the CISM Certification will become an international standard of accomplishment and enhanced quality assurance, especially within organizations which offer crisis response services internally, as well as organizations that provide crisis response services to other organizations and communities. The idea for the certification was not that of ICISF. It was not even the idea of a person who is CISM-trained. Rather, it was the idea of a career educator and highly respected educational administrator who was familiar with CISM and disaster mental health field.

The CISM Certification benefits a wide variety of professionals, such as:

- Emergency responders
- Mental health clinicians
- Public health personnel
- Disaster responders
- Educators
- Clergy
- Employee assistance professionals
- CERT team members and others who are interested in demonstrating knowledge in CISM.
- Organizations who desire to promote and ensure a fundamental and standardized knowledge base among its personnel who respond to crisis and trauma, such as EAPs, SAPs and humanitarian aid

personnel.

Benefits of CISM Certification

- The UMBC certification is an attestation of knowledge. Current certificates in the field are merely certificates of attendance. There is no way of knowing whether anything was actually learned in attendance certification.
- The UMBC Certification is a demonstration that the certificate endorses and is committed to a higher standard in the field other than mere attendance of workshops
- The UMBC certification can serve as an initial international platform for a standard of recognition and care
- Successful recipients of a certificate may use the designation of CCISM to denote their status.
- The UMBC certification may be utilized by employers as a means of differentiating applicants.

Requirements for taking the Certification Exam:

You must have completed the following ICISF Courses:

- Assisting Individuals in Crisis (formerly Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support
- Group Crisis Intervention

The CISM certification examination, consists of 150 true-false and multiple choice questions randomly selected by the computer program from a larger pool of test items. The Exam will be accessible 24/7 online from anywhere in the world. The examination is an open-book format. There are two sections to the Exam: Assisting Individuals in Crisis (formally individual crisis intervention and peer support) , and Group Crisis Intervention. You must pass both sections in order to obtain the certification.

Four reasons to get a CISM certification:

1. There exists a wide degree of variability in the understanding and practice of CISM. Exam-based certification will, by definition, narrow that variability, hopefully promoting increased understanding and better practice.
2. The CISM certification may stand as a demonstration of higher achievement (compared to passive attendance at a training program alone).
3. Certification might be seen as evidence of a higher commitment to providing the best services possible on the part of individuals who possess the certification, as well as organizations and teams that require its members to possess the certification.
4. Given the timing of the certification, it is a mechanism to update the level of understanding of CISM in the field, especially for those who received CISM training more than five years ago.

There is a cost associated with taking the exam. The exam fee is about the same as the tuition for one ICISF-sponsored training. The fee covers three administrations of the exam within a twelve-hour period, in case you don’t pass the exam on the first try.

To support the certification process, ICISF has available a study guide that serves as a useful updated review of CISM. In addition, ICISF will offer a one day review course if there is sufficient interest in having such an in person review available.

It should also be noted that this certification comes from the UMBC Department of Emergency Health Services in Collaboration with UMBC Training Centers, not ICISF. Further, it does not compete with any other certification or registrations available from other organizations.

To find out more about this exciting development, visit the university website:

<http://cism.umbctraining.com/>

REFLECTIONS ON THE 13TH WORLD CONGRESS

“...interesting and enjoyed the step by step resources and where to find them...”

“ICISF has greatly increased my knowledge about what is going on, how to help them, and how important it is to take care of myself as well. I've wondered who saves the hero, now I know”

“My department is preparing to establish a Peer Support program. We will be training our providers by the ICISF model. I wanted to come to the Congress to get information from experienced people and established teams. I learned a lot this week!”

“I am getting all the training that I can to assist me in the beginning of forming a CISM team. The World Congress was recommended to me as a great place for both training and networking. It has proven to be both of those things and more”

“I am clergy and had a feeling of being 'second fiddle'. This Congress validated the importance of spiritual care”

“I've attended 11 of the 13 World Congress events and look forward to it year after Year. The material is consistently outstanding and I take my commission to provide CISM services with a deep commitment to the Standard of Care and to excellent, compassionate service delivery. I think the real question is why would anybody claiming to provide such services NOT attend!”

“I enjoy coming to Baltimore to hear new ideas, see how other teams are doing things, and network with CISM minded people.”

“I have been a member of our CISM team for several years now and have been increasingly taking on a leadership role. I was given the opportunity to attend this congress ...to provide me a greater base of knowledge and networking contacts.”

“I have been an active CISM member since 2004, and this is part of our training to ensure we are aware of latest techniques, strategies and case studies.”

“This is my second World Congress, and I am so impressed with the excellence of instruction and material. As impressive and inspiring are the instructors' genuine compassion and desire to teach and share all that they can to make this accessible to all who have a passion for this 'calling.’”

“Very good to see the growth. I am very excited to see where we are going to further Crisis Intervention and to help individuals and groups in these troubled days.”

“This was one of the most informative and interesting conferences I have ever attended. I'm already looking forward to the next World Congress.”

“It was my first time being here; and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The information was excellent, very useful and very relevant. I enjoyed getting to know fellow colleagues from around the world and hearing their stories...what they did right and wrong. I learned a lot. It was great!”

“This was my first Congress, but will definitely NOT be my last! Great job!”

“This was my first ICISF World Congress after becoming a member of a CISM team. Being new to this field, I found it to be invaluable in terms of learning, networking, and understanding what resources are available to team members.”

“This experience was above what I expected. It gave me so many new experiences to meet others, learn more about CISM, build upon my education and previous knowledge, and introduce others to using canines in times of crisis and disaster.”

“This was my first time attending World Congress and I loved all of the presentations and the opportunity to meet such amazing people and contributors to the field.”

“The depth and breadth of knowledge was amazing. This was my first conference and seeing the use and benefits of CISM across many different disciplines was a great experience and seeing the benefit of the dogs in this setting was amazing.”

Enjoy the WC photographs in the link below:

<http://icisf.smugmug.com/ICISFs-13th-World-Congress-on->

Thank You to ALL that Attended!

LOOKING FORWARD

Continued from page 1

to carefully identify what can happen as distinct negative outcomes to some positive action we intend to pursue.

Over the past two years, we began updating courses and student manuals, we pursued a plan to create

new delivery systems for courses and materials, we unveiled a new brand identity, we focused upon modern electronic tools, we made substantial changes in our internal office functions, we initiated a fundraising arm of the ICISF, began

a new emphasis on membership, took a modern technology approach to the World Congress, and implemented many other adjustments. The changes became so numerous that sometimes we collectively felt overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of the

LOOKING FORWARD (CONT'D)

challenge. Change always creates stress, and there has been plenty to be found in the ICISF.

The result of the strategic management effort includes a new design and function for the website, using social media as a key way to communicate, the introduction of the Academy of Crisis Intervention as an organizational gathering of ICISF educational programs, the creation of members-only content on the website, an E-registration system for membership, renewing and expanding the relationship with the University of Maryland Baltimore County Training Centers, the introduction of the 5th edition of the Group and Individual course of study and the supporting manuals (this was the first update in seven years), the expansion of the scholarship program including sponsors, Approved Instructor programs in Germany and Ireland, creation and delivery of Suicide Awareness as an online course, and a very successful 13th World Congress held for the first time in May that will continue to provide benefits for many months.

The staging of the World Congress in May directly competed with other events and activities that serve our clientele. Shortly after I arrived at the ICISF in 2013, I questioned the February World Congress date as a weather risk. Because hotels book conferences far in advance, the only week available in May 2015 was the date we ultimately selected. The 14th World Congress will again be in Baltimore in May 2017, but this time during the 1st week of the month.

Despite the schedule conflicts, the World Congress attendance was good, the program offered excellent educational sessions, and the professional contact networking was priceless. Several new ICISF programs and activities were created there, especially international programs such as the Approved Instructor training in Ireland.

My previous offering in *LifeNet* mentioned that we would pursue new delivery systems, and that is underway. The Suicide Awareness course, taught by Dr. Victor Welzant, was offered as an online program hosted by the UMBC Training Centers (UMBC-TC) in June of 2015. The course was offered again in September, and will continue to be part of our E-Learning menu.

A CISM review course, intended to be a refresher of the Group and Individual courses, is being created as the next online course and will also be hosted by UMBC-TC. Developing this method of delivery is a technical task and is relatively expensive to create. However, online courses are essential to reach people who have difficulty travelling to traditional classroom training.

We have also begun to create and offer webinars, starting with an assembly of the general session presentations that occurred at the World Congress. Webinars, as a key component of new methods to deliver our products, will continue to grow as a learning opportunity and a way to offer continuing education credits.

Instructors, faculty and participants in every facet of the ICISF have found that we are increasingly moving into the digital age. Many of the changes, actions, and initiatives described in this article include the use of computer-based communication. Electronic communication and delivery of services enables us to reach people anywhere in the world, expanding our ability to truly be an international foundation. This emphasis will ultimately enable us to ship manuals, certificates and other documents digitally to any location that has Internet access. We recognize that not every location has that technology, but we must take full advantage of the technology that exists. Instructors should no longer worry about how to

receive shipments of student manuals and certificates over long distances. That becomes easier as we develop the process to ship manuals and other products as digital files.

Both the E-Learning offerings and updated traditional courses are part of the ICISF Academy of Crisis Intervention. The "Academy" includes new programs such as the online courses and webinars, programs to train new instructors (Approved Instructor), courses taught by Approved Instructors, Speaker's Bureau programs, and Regional Trainings. The Academy is essentially a way of packaging the products under one heading as a coordinated effort.

The image of figurative people embracing the globe emerged as the ICISF logo during the branding changes. This symbol does not exclude traditional partners and clients; the message is that the work of the ICISF includes everyone. We added a tag line, "Helping Save the Heroes", to honor many of the people that have received and will continue to receive support from the professionals who provide CISM support.

"Riding with the Heroes", is organized as a local motorcycle ride in Howard County, Maryland, and the first of an annual signature fundraising event to support ICISF scholarships. Sponsors donated funds to provide scholarships at the World Congress, and we are expanding that effort. Additionally, scholarships awarded at the Regional Trainings will be offered in honor of a local notable hero. We understand that "heroes" are often the people who don't survive, but we also know that many of the men and women who benefit from CISM are indeed heroes in the eyes of our communities.

The ICISF benefits from the services of a dedicated team of experienced employees. It often surprises people that we have only six full time employees, although several

LOOKING FORWARD (CONT'D)

part-time staff members support us at the ICISF. A key component of our work remains the large network of independent instructors who train. We intend to maintain that method of service, and plan to help our instructors with a more modern approach to ordering and delivering course materials and class registration.

The UMBC-TC recently introduced an online exam that when successfully completed results in a CISM certification. Dr. George Everly and Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell developed the exam. The certification is a documentation of knowledge and not validation of competency. In concert with this program, the ICISF is offering a CISM Study Guide to anyone who wants to obtain that publication as both a CISM review and exam preparation manual.

Dr. Everly and Dr. Mitchell remain closely involved with the ICISF. Their work offers the centerpiece of the courses of instruction, they were

featured at the World Congress, they are prominent at regional trainings and speaker's bureau trainings, and continue to develop new products and courses. They are instrumental in developing the CISM Refresher course mentioned previously in this article.

We recognize the value that CISM brings to the community, far beyond the traditional support for first responders. Helping responders, helping the heroes cope with the challenge of their duties, offers a healthy life to those who give so much. The same principles of CISM also serve people who experience an unexpected trauma from incident or disaster. This is not a new revelation, but one that the ICISF recognizes as a gap. A population of people may benefit from programs specifically designed for victims of critical incidents, and an entire community may suffer as victims.

If you remain interested and committed to critical incident stress

management, then please help us grow. Become active as a member. Encourage other people to join even if only to support the ICISF, a non-profit educational foundation. Follow us on Facebook, share your observations and comments, check our website regularly, and engage people who share your passion. Please be patient as we evolve and grow. Our hand is reaching out, inviting you to walk with us into the future.



CISM LESSONS LEARNED: REFLECTIONS OF MULTIPLE ICU DEATHS

Continued from page 1

rounds throughout this fourteen bed unit, I remember engaging personally for an extended period of time with one nurse. She personally invited me to the break room within the unit, and it was during this conversation I learned this team had just endured five patient deaths within a short 24 hour period. The staff members were grieving the deaths of patients they cared for, many of whom were there for an extended period of time. They not only provided clinical care, but they touched, engaged, held hands, and often times prayed with and for their patients and family members. The staff became close to their patients and family members, as they were now left to grieve multiple losses within a short 24 hour period. This small unit, including individual 9 x 12 foot rooms, captured loving relationships

developed over brief and sometimes extensive periods of time.

As death was pronounced for several patients, their dying trajectories had reached a peaked end. The staff, offering condolences and support to the family members, had also experienced distressed and tearful experiences of their own. Staff members had experienced complicating elements of multiple deaths. As caregivers, so often times we compartmentalize our emotions. We abruptly move on by caring for the next patient who fills an empty bed, giving ourselves little time to mourn our losses or to touch our own emotionality.

While I knew very little about CISM, I certainly understood the importance of it, and immediately contacted one of our staff chaplains for an intervention. As the staff

members later huddled together for this intervention, I was not only grateful for this powerful concept of allowing individuals to come together, but also grateful for their willingness to share and support one another while utilizing their ability to process their own painful emotions.

As I sat in the midst of this community, hearing their personal stories and shared experiences, I immediately learned the power and the importance of CISM. My first experience left a lasting impression on me as I now serve as an acute care chaplain myself. We oftentimes forget that while occasionally our patient's lives may end in death, it is appropriate and meaningful for a CISM intervention to take place when death happens in colossal numbers, and within a compressed period of time.

Continued from page 4

forest type landscape and clear lake for relaxation purposes. This is critical since the training attendees receive is intense and focuses on building skills to assist people who have experienced traumatic events. Hence, there is always an element of exposure to traumatic information vicariously that can have an impact on those who attend. Yassen (1995) has posited that engaging in relaxing activities and environments can help to reduce developing compassion fatigue (also known as Secondary Traumatic Stress). For MCRA, the Kettunen Center has been the ideal location to not only train crisis responders, but also to provide a training environment that helps to reduce their stress.

Based on MCRA's conference evaluations for the past eight years (2007 to 2014) regarding location, the average rating of using the Kettunen Center for its annual conference was 96% as "Excellent." Furthermore, the use of the Kettunen Center accommodations for training and other activities had an average rating of 94% as "Excellent."

The second distinct aspect is the cost of the conference. Most conferences can be very expensive based on the registration fees alone. Then add on top of that the cost of lodging, airfare or mileage, and meals – all of which will vary based on the length and location of the conference. These factors can greatly impact a self-paying individual's decision to attend or an agency's ability to send its personnel, especially if training funds within their budget are limited. With these crucial factors in mind, MCRA's conference committee has always established a budget that allows for the creation of a conference

package that helps to keep costs at a minimum. The conference package typically includes registration cost for the ICISF courses being taught, training materials, lodging and meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner). The conference committee also works tirelessly to recruit high-quality approved ICISF trained instructors and faculty who reside in Michigan to teach the majority of the core level courses (i.e., Assisting Individuals in Crisis and Groups Crisis Interventions courses) at practically minimal cost. As a result, MCRA has been able to provide a high quality three-day training conference below \$400 for over 25 years.

The third distinct aspect is the type of training courses available. Pollock, Paton, Smith and Violanti (2003) have suggested that the implementation of training programs that facilitate the development of resilience is essential for the structure and management of a team. MCRA has traditionally provided a variety of ICISF courses to address the needs of individuals attending the conference for the first time and for those who return each year. In fact, out of the 656 conference attendees who completed a conference evaluation over the past eight years, 51% were first-time attendees, 30% had attended between 2 to 4 years, 11% had attended between 5 to 9 years, and 8% had attended 10 or more years. More interestingly, over the same time period attendees have consistently indicated that the top two reasons for attending the conference are to "Update Skills" and the "Courses Offered."

With this in mind, MCRA's conference committee established four-year curriculum plans that indicates when core ICISF courses are being taught that can assist attendees in planning their training needs, such as planning when to receiving initial training in a core course or

when to take training courses that update and strengthen their skills. This also supports our attendees' access to professional development opportunities, such as offering courses that help them to meet the requirements to obtain an ICISF Certificate of Specialized Training in CISM and offering Continuing Education Units. In fact, between 2007 and 2014, on average 92% of conference attendees "Strongly Agree" that they found the training course attended beneficial. More recently, MCRA has begun to incorporate non-ICISF courses at our conferences as well to help address the diverse needs of those who attend (i.e., offering courses in Assisting and Managing Suicide Risk and Two the Rescue).

The final distinct aspect is the quality of the training experience. Over time, the MCRA annual training conference has morphed to ensure that those who attend will receive a high quality conference experience that will lead to strengthening their CISM teams and its members, as well as, enhancing their ability to respond locally when called upon. This not only includes the aspects previous discussed, but has also included: the implementation of evening programs (i.e., keynote addresses, orientation to the nature activities available at the Kettunen Center, ice breaker/ socialization activities, providing a simulated debriefing role play, and awarding the Responder of the Year); CISM Town Hall meetings; conducting an MCRA Board of Directors business meeting that is open to all attendees; and providing semi-structured evening recreational activities (i.e., karaoke, Euchre tournaments, and socialization time around a fire pit), in addition to the training courses and break-out sessions. This has resulted in MCRA providing a high quality training annual conference

MEETING THE NEEDS OF CISM TEAMS... (CONT'D)

that appeals to both, first time and returning attendees.

Eight years of MCRA conference evaluation data supports the notion that the annual conference is of good quality and reputable. For instance, between 2007 and 2014, the average rating by attendees regarding providing a quality "Excellent" conference was 91%. Furthermore, during this same time period, interchangeably the third and fourth reasons consistently indicated for attending the conference was "Previous Attendance" and "MCRA Reputation." The conference evaluation also asks the question, "Would you recommend this conference to a colleague?" For attendees who responded to this particular question, 72% indicated that they would do so.

It should be noted that promoting a conference is another important aspect of providing a successful conference. This article does not specifically address this issue in terms of how this is related to MCRA's success in providing a quality annual training conference. However, based on MCRA's conference evaluation data for the past four years (2011 to 2014), the top four methods of how attendees learned about our annual conference was through "Colleague Recommended," "Previous Attendance," "Email from MCRA, and the "MCRA Website." Thus, it appears that at least previous satisfactory conference experiences

advocated by peers and the use of technology has contributed to some of the sustained success for MCRA's annual training conference.

In conclusion, MCRA has developed a very successful and high quality annual training conference that has been sustained over a long period of time. As a result, over 3,000 professionals throughout the State of Michigan have completed CISM training. MCRA's ability to provide such accessible training on a regular basis has contributed significantly to the building of more resilient individual CISM responders, but has also enhanced the resiliency of their local CISM teams, agencies and organizations (see Everly, 2012 or Chapter 7 of Everly & Lating, 2013 for more information regarding the concept of resilience). Although the success of MCRA is limited to Michigan, the concept can be replicated within other states and internationally. Visit MCRA's website at www.mcrainc.com or email us at info@mcrainc.com for more information regarding our awesome annual conference.

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ICISF ONLINE SUICIDE PREVENTION COURSE: SAVE A LIFE

Continued from page 4

a conversation with the Veteran's 24/7Crisis Line via their online live chatting (VeteranCrisisLine.net or text 838255). Eventually he agreed to accept a call from the good folks at the Veteran Suicide Prevention

Hotline (1-800-273-8255 press 1). I heard from him again last week, things are better – not perfect, but improving. He said there is always another path available it just may take someone with "fresh batteries to shine a light on the other paths..."

"Suicide Awareness: An Introduction for Crisis Responders" will be offered again, this course is an excellent tool for anyone who has the potential to make a difference to someone requiring assistance in finding that other path.

A TRAUMATIC EVENT HAPPENS DURING BIBLE STUDY

Continued from page 4

persons had been murdered. The Coroner's Office took 2 of the side rooms and began individually meeting with immediate family members of the 9.

About 2 hours into this horrific ordeal, several AME pastors arrived. They were led by Rev. Norvel Goff, who is the Presiding Elder. He led all of us in prayer. Those in the ballroom (ages 2-92) prayed earnestly with Rev. Goff, and "amens" were heard throughout the room. To conclude the impromptu prayer time, Rev. Goff led all in singing a very moving rendition of the old song 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'.

Family members, and those responding to support them, began leaving the FAC around 4:30 a.m. At 10:00 a.m. a meeting was held at another Church for all of us who had been requested to respond to support this Traumatic Event – attending the meeting were representatives from mental health, victim advocates and chaplains. A huge service was held at 11:00 where the chaplains took several positions inside and outside the church to offer support.

Following this service, Rev. Goff requested the Chaplains attend the upcoming 9 funeral services and offer the same 'Ministry of Presence'.

A few takeaways for me from this CISM event:

- We never do too much Pre-Incident Education. Since beginning the Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy in 1990, I have always wanted to learn more on how to be a better Chaplain. Also, how important it is in our role as CISM providers to constantly let our Agencies know why we exist. On this night, the Chaplaincy received notification from 5 of our 38 Agencies.
- A key element to a successful ministry during a prolonged event it is to attend any Command staff meetings to which you are invited.
- To have your team vetted and trained prior to Events. During the Event is not the time to vet and train.
- Be ready for individuals and groups to self-deploy. This did not happen with this tragedy, but it has occurred several times

in the past, including this past April when a white police officer killed a fleeing black suspect.

The final "takeaway" for me is the importance of Self-care. I did not do a good job of this. Prior to this massacre, there were 5 officer-involved shootings to which our Chaplaincy responded beginning in April. Going into these 9 murders, I was exhausted; just having finished 2 weeks as Chaplain-in-Residence at the FBI Academy. I had Compassion Fatigue, but did not know it. One of the offshoots of my not having good self-care is I became dehydrated. I ended up getting fluids in the emergency room. For me self-care includes nutrition, exercise, time-off and spiritual time – none of which was done well. The result was, I took some time off and came back to "work" on light duty = not taking any calls, and allowing our 19 volunteer Chaplains to do the leg work.

Charleston Strong is our saying. We are strong and will be better as we reframe this evil we have witnessed. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue on this road we have been given.



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CISM: A PRACTICAL REVIEW AND UPDATE

By Richard Barton

You now have an opportunity to update your knowledge with a CISM: Practical Review and Update course. You may be a member of a team or otherwise involved with CISM and took the training several years ago. You want an update. Now you have one, and conveniently available via an online delivery method.

For more than two decades, the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) has offered core programs of CISM study. The ICISF Founders, Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell and Dr. George Everly created those courses and continue to teach those programs around the world. A refresher course will soon be available to serve as an update.

Over the years, hundreds of

thousands of people have taken either Group Crisis Intervention or Assisting Individuals in Crisis or both. These courses serve as the core focus of the educational functions of the ICISF, now featured as part of the ICISF Academy of Crisis Intervention. Both courses, and the support training materials, were updated as part of new 5th edition products earlier in 2015.

A refresher course seems like the next best step, especially for people who have taken the core courses and want to remain up to date. CISM: A Practical Review and Update will do exactly that for participants. Dr. Everly and Dr. Mitchell have created the course and ICISF offers the program for the first time on

November 15, 2015, hosted by the UMBC Training Centers as an online course. Some of the pertinent details are not available as LifeNet went to print, so watch the ICISF website for that information.

CISM: A Practical Review and Update intends to instruct people who have taken the core ICISF courses, and are seeking an update. There are no restrictions on who may sign up for the course, although people who are new to CISM should start by taking the full live courses.

Staying current with CISM knowledge, and maintaining confident training levels has never been easier. Sign up, sign on, and join the march into the future.

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