



**Missouri Department of
Natural Resources
Administrative Policies and Procedures**

Chapter 1 Employee Relations

Critical Incident Stress Management Procedures

Effective date

Revised

Number: 1.10-01

May 23, 2011

N/A

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a peer-driven stress management program that combines pre-crisis preparation, stress education, and post-event response to assist individuals in recovering more quickly from abnormally stressful job-related incidents and trauma, collectively known as 'critical incidents'. CISM does not replace professional counseling and other services available to employees through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other professional services but rather is offered as a complement to such programs.

REFERENCES

Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2003

DEFINITIONS

Crisis Management Briefing (CMB): A large group crisis intervention.

Critical Incident (adopted from Mitchell and Everly and others): An event or group of events that has or have the potential to overwhelm the abilities of an individual to cope with the event and that could possibly lead to functional impairment.

(Simplified): A normal response to abnormal events.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM): Intervention or assistance by peer personnel trained to recognize and minimize the harmful effects of stress resulting from a critical incident.

CISM Activity: Any response to a critical incident by trained team members.

CISM Team: The trained group of Department of Natural Resources (DNR) employees who are available 24/7 to respond to critical incidents involving other DNR employees.

Debriefings: A consultation held between 24 and 72 hours after the conclusion of an incident. It may require a mental health professional and involves everyone directly involved in the incident including emergency personnel (ambulance, police and fire crew), dispatchers and anyone else directly involved (does not include members of the general public, witnesses, victim's relatives, bystanders, etc.). It is not an operations critique, but rather a discussion of the involvement, thought, reactions and feelings resulting from the incident.

Defusings: A preliminary consultation usually provided within eight hours of the incident. It involves a group of employees or people affected by the incident, allows group to talk about event and team members to provide information about possible stress symptoms and ways to control/reduce them, provides referral information and assesses the need for a debriefing.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Purpose

The focus of the Department of Natural Resources' CISM team is to minimize the harmful effects of stress that results from crisis or emergency situations which may negatively impact job performance. Team members will assist employees in recognizing symptoms of stress, will provide tools to help alleviate these symptoms and will recommend further counseling if they feel there is a need. The highest priorities of the team include maintaining strict confidentiality and respecting the feelings and cultural differences of individuals involved.

Department of Natural Resources Management Role

The DNR Director and upper management play the following role in the CISM team:

- Appoint the CISM Team Coordinator, taking into consideration recommendations submitted by the CISM team;
- Support the CISM team in their efforts;
- Provide the resources necessary to allow the program and its participants to provide services;
- Review and approve team operating procedures;
- Activate the team as they feel necessary even though not directly involved in an incident.

Examples of Critical Incidents

Examples of critical incidents include, but are not limited to:

- An employee is killed or seriously injured as the result of an accident or criminal action;
- Mass casualty incidents;
- Natural disaster incidents such as tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, explosion, etc;
- Suicide of a co-worker or other unexpected death;

- Other death or violence encountered through a work-related event;
- Incidents that attract intensive or unusual amounts of media coverage;
- Any incident in which the circumstances are so unusual or the sights and sounds so distressing as to produce a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction.

CISM Team Structure

Team Criteria

- The team shall be composed of full-time employees of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. All full-time employees, regardless of job category or work location, are potential team members (see *New Members* below). Every effort shall be made to ensure a broad geographic distribution of these employees in an effort to minimize response time to various parts of the state.
- The DNR CISM Team shall meet quarterly and as needed.
- The team shall have a Team Coordinator (TC) and Assistant Team Coordinator (ATC). The TC shall be the primary contact person for all incidents and routine business for the team. The ATC shall fulfill the role of TC anytime the TC is unavailable. The ATC will be selected by the team.
- The team members shall attend training as offered in various related topics (see *Team Training* below).

Team Coordinator (TC) Duties

- TC is responsible for coordinating and reporting all CISM activity.
- Will coordinate or assist in determining the level of response to an incident or need.
- Maintain and distribute to all team members a current list of all team members' names, addresses, their work and home phone numbers, cellular phone numbers and any other contact information that may be used in the event of a call-out.
- If the DNR team conducts a debriefing, the TC will set the time and location and will arrange for a mental health professional to attend, as necessary.
- The TC dispatches CISM team members to critical incidents as needed, taking into consideration the size of the event, the number of employees affected and the geographic location of the event. A CISM team member will not be expected or required to serve in a CISM role when that individual's own facility or staff are involved in an incident.
- The TC coordinates CISM team debriefings.
- The TC coordinates continuing education, training and team meetings, in coordination with the Office of Employee Relations and the Human Resources (HR) Program, Training and Development Unit.
- The TC maintains and distributes to team members current listings of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) mental health professionals, with contact information, in each geographic location for referral purposes.

- The TC maintains and distributes to each team member a listing of all outside organized CISM teams who may need to be called in to conduct debriefings for a department-related event or for the purpose of referral if the DNR team is contacted for an incident not involving DNR employees.
- The TC recruits team members as needed.
- The TC coordinates the development of brochures, fliers and other promotional materials and media to educate employees of the purpose and availability of the team and provides contact information.
- Serves as liaison between department management and the CISM team.
- Tracks expenses for all CISM team-related activities.

Membership Selection Committee

Committee Members

- The Departmental Sponsor or Designee
- The Department's Employee Relations Director
- A trained psychologist or counselor
- One current member of the CISM team

Membership Committee Duties

- Screen membership applications and check references
- Conduct interviews of potential members
- Make recommendations for membership

Membership

Membership on the CISM Team shall be voluntary. Members are subject to the following guidelines (see also *Minimum Membership Criteria* below):

- Each member's status on the team shall be reviewed annually by the TC and a representative from the DNR Human Resources Program.
- To retain membership, each member must sign a team member agreement annually.
- At any CISM activity, team members are to wear a name-tag that clearly states their position as a CISM team member.

Member Duties and Responsibilities

- Maintain confidentiality
- Serve as a team member for interventions as requested
- Provide peer support and crisis intervention for critical incidents
- Participate in regular meetings and continuing education sessions
- Function only within the limits of training and competency; seek guidance and assistance where appropriate
- Become familiar with other CISM teams in your area to share information and knowledge
- Keep and maintain a resource kit to take to each incident

- Team members are responsible for keeping the TC informed of vacations and any other situations (as much as is practicable) that would make the member unavailable for response.

New Members

New members shall be added to the team as other members leave state employment, retire or otherwise leave the team. The process for selecting new members will be based on the following:

- Completion of the CISM Team application form
- Review of the application and interview of applicant by the membership selection committee

Before a new member will be allowed to respond to an event as a CISM representative, the member must complete Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Basic Group Crisis Intervention and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support training.

Minimum Membership Criteria

The following criteria should be considered when screening new applicants for the CISM team:

- Has completed the CISM application form
- Has been employed as a permanent full-time employee with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for a minimum of one (1) year.
- Most recent performance appraisal is Successful or above at time of selection. Must maintain Successful or above performance throughout duration of membership.
- Has not received disciplinary action within the previous one (1) year period.
- Has never received disciplinary action for misconduct for threatening or abusive behavior, or other conduct in contrast to the mission and goals of CISM.
- Has no undisclosed criminal history, or a criminal history that includes threatening or abusive behavior, or other conduct in contrast to the mission and goals of CISM.
- Has received permission to participate as a CISM team member from their Division Director
- Is available to respond to critical incidents and team activities
- Has the respect and trust of peers
- Has the ability to express self verbally
- Has exhibited the ability to maintain confidentiality
- Exhibits emotional maturity
- Is caring and compassionate toward others
- Is sensitive to the needs of others
- Follows directives and agrees to follow established criteria
- Has self-identified assets/deficits
- Has the ability to listen empathetically
- The geographic location of candidate is a consideration
- Preferred but not required: Has past experience with emergency response services (i.e. fire department, EMT, first responder, paramedic, law enforcement).

The following criteria must be met to maintain membership in good standing:

- Signed team member agreement
- Signed confidentiality agreement
- Availability for CISM activities
- Attendance at team meetings and training workshops
- Ability to abide by CISM team policies and procedures

Removal from the Team

Members may be removed from the team for cause. Removal may be made after a review of the facts of the situation in question by a peer review subcommittee, appointed by the TC. Peer review subcommittee will report findings to the entire team. The team will take appropriate action. Cause for removal could include, though is not limited to:

- Failure to actively participate in periodic or required training
- Dereliction of duty
- Breach of confidentiality of any CISM activity
- Failure to follow established CISM protocols, the department's CISM policy or other department policies.
- Unethical behavior or behavior that has the potential to damage the reputation of the CISM team.
- The team member is no longer a permanent full-time employee of the Department of Natural Resources.

Team Training

New Members

- CISM Basic Group Crisis Intervention (required) – will be made available annually or on an as-needed basis
- CISM Individual Crisis intervention and Peer Support (suggested)
- After training, new members must attend at least one CISM activity with a current team member prior to being put on the active call-out list. The new member will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to participate in the CISM activity during their first call-out.

Continuing Education for Existing Team Members

Continuing education will be provided at team meetings. Topics of training may include, but are not limited to:

- The nature and causes of stress
- Stress management techniques
- Suicide prevention
- Interpersonal communication
- Role-plays to sharpen skills in a variety of CISM techniques

On a rotating basis, team members may be assigned to present topics of interest at these meetings.

Team members are encouraged to attend and participate in other stress management training, CISM workshops and related seminars.

Pre-Incident Preparation

Pre-incident education of all DNR employees regarding stress, recognition of stress-related symptoms, and stress reduction strategies is an essential ingredient in minimizing the impact of critical incidents. Literature and programs explaining the CISM process and team should include discussion of how to contact the team, on-scene considerations, critical incident debriefings, etc. Literature and programs should be directed to the appropriate potential audience.

Critical Incident Response by the CISM Team

Any employee of the Department of Natural Resources may request assistance from the team through their chain of command. The appropriate district/program manager will request activation from the TC. The team will not be dispatched without a request from someone involved or upper management. If a team member is contacted with a request for activation, the team member should contact the TC as soon as possible.

Types of CISM Interventions

One-On-One Sessions

Team members will find a quiet areas to have a one-on-one discussion with employees affected by the incident, listening intently to their concerns, comforting them, looking for signs of stress and advising them regarding the possible stress reactions and coping mechanisms. Team members may need to refer employees to professional counseling through the Employee Assistance Program.

Defusings

Usually provided within eight hours of the incident; involves a group of employees or people affected by the incident; allows group to talk about event; team members provide information about possible stress symptoms and ways to control/reduce them, provides referral information and assesses the need for a debriefing.

Components:

- Introduction
- Introduce facilitator
- State purpose
- Describe process
- Motivate participants
- Set rules

- Stress confidentiality
- Reassure participants it is not an investigative process
- Finish the process
- State goals

- Offer additional support

Exploration:

- Ask personnel to describe what occurred
- Ask a few clarifying questions
- Share experiences and reactions
- Assess need for more help
- Reassure as necessary

Information:

- Accept/summarize their exploration
- Normalize experiences and/or reactions
- Teach multiple stress survival skills
- Stress importance of diet and the need to avoid alcohol, fat, sugar and salt
- Rest/family life
- Recreation/exercise

Debriefings

Held between 24 and 72 hours after the conclusion of an incident; may require a mental health professional; involves everyone directly involved in the incident including emergency personnel (ambulance, police and fire crew), dispatchers and anyone else directly involved (does not include members of the general public, witnesses, victim's relatives, bystanders, etc.); is not an operations critique, but rather a discussion of the involvement, thought, reactions and feelings resulting from the incident.

DNR CISM Participation in Debriefings

- If there is a local CISM team in the area of an incident that occurred at a DNR facility or site, or that involved DNR staff, a DNR team member will invite the local team to conduct a debriefing. If a team is available, DNR CISM team members may ask to sit in on the debriefing as a member of the team
- If no local CISM team exists, the DNR team may assist a mental health professional facilitate the debriefing with the understanding of local emergency personnel that the DNR CISM team is usually only available when an incident involves DNR employees. If debriefing requests are received by the DNR team that does not involve DNR employees, the requester will generally be referred to an existing community team or organization.

Components (Mitchell and Everly)

- Introduction. Introduce intervention team members, explain process and set expectations
- Fact..... Describe traumatic event from each participant's perspective on a cognitive level
- Thought Allow participants to describe cognitive reactions and transition to emotional reactions
- Reaction..... Identify the most traumatic aspect of the event for the participants and identify emotional reactions

- SymptomIdentify personal symptoms of distress and transition back to cognitive level
- TeachingEducate as to normal reactions and adaptive coping mechanisms, i.e., stress management
- Re-entryClarify ambiguities, prepare for termination, facilitate, “psychological closure”, i.e., reconstruction

Crisis Management Briefing (CMB)

The CMB is designed for large groups (up to 300 people) of primary victims. It may be implemented after mass disasters or for employees after a work-related crisis and should last no more than 60-90 minutes.

Overview

Goals:

- Provide information
- Rumor control
- Reduce sense of chaos
- Provide coping resources
- Facilitate follow-up care
- Engender increased cohesion and morale
- Assess further needs of group
- Restore people to adaptive functions

Process

- Step 1: Assemble participants
- Step 2: Provide facts regarding crisis
- Step 3: Discuss and normalize common behavioral and psychological reactions
- Step 4: Discuss personal and community stress management, and direct to further resources

Method

The DNR CISM team will use the AIRS method of organizing and holding a CMB. This method follows the process items listed above.

- A...Assembly: Choose a location appropriate to the situation and the anticipated number of participants.
- I....Information: One of our team may coordinate the meeting, but information about what has happened should be the person or persons best suited to do so, i.e., local manager, etc.
- R...Reactions: Have someone who is known and accepted by the group talk about what sorts of reactions people should look for and let them know that such reactions are normal.
- S...Strategies: Have someone who is known and accepted by the group talk about ways members of the group can manage their stress, both collectively and individually. Offer other options if group members feel they need more assistance.