

# **GRANT WOOD AREA EDUCATION AGENCY CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM**

## **Operations Manual**

(effective 06/02 - revised 09/06, 6/18, 12/18)

### **I. NEED STATEMENT**

Grant Wood Area Education Agency is aware of difficult and critical situations that may occur in the lives of students and school staff. Highly traumatic events can occur on or off school grounds that involve students or school district staff. When not acknowledged and effectively addressed, these incidents can continue to erode the performance of students and staff-possibly even becoming debilitating. A traumatic stress reaction may be immediate or delayed. Some of the more common effects of traumatic stress are: disruption of teaching and learning, deterioration in job performance, relationship problems, sleep disturbances, personality change, anxiety disorders, depression, grief reactions and increases in suicidal risk.

Responses to a specific situation should be a crisis intervention provided by an organized team. "Crisis intervention is the urgent and acute psychological support sometimes thought of as 'emotional first aid'." (Mitchell and Everly) The goals and outcomes of interventions are to:

- A. Reduce stress;
- B. Stabilize the situation;
- C. Facilitate returning to a more normal routine;
- D. Provide access to a more intensive or higher level of care, as indicated.

### **II. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the GWAEA Critical Incident Stress Management Team is to support GWAEA schools in coping with critical incidents by providing trained, local community response teams.

In order to fulfill the mission:

- We will create and facilitate effective community partnerships that will utilize local resources in responding to crisis.
- We will promote safety and security in schools by linking with other crisis prevention and management efforts.
- We will provide training and follow-up for the local community response teams, utilizing national and local consultants/trainers in Critical Incident Stress Management.

- We will provide to schools, at no cost, access to crisis intervention response teams that use the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) Model of Critical Incident Stress Management as a protocol for operations.

### III. VISION STATEMENT

We envision that:

- All schools within GWAEA will have an effective, integrated community-wide response to a school crisis, based on a plan that provides access to local resources.
- There will be a systematic, consistent approach in the specialized training, follow-up and deployment of response teams.
- Community resources will be organized and easily accessed by school personnel, when needed.

### IV. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS

Stress is a normal occurrence in human activities. It can be described as a state of physical and psychological arousal that follows any demand made upon an individual. When demands become extremely threatening, overwhelming or severe, they often produce a heightened state of physical, cognitive, behavioral and emotional arousal commonly called traumatic stress or critical incident stress.

Some examples of critical incidents impacting the school setting are:

- An accident on or near school grounds (e.g., a student enroute to school is hit by a car; a school bus accident; a tanker loaded with hazardous materials overturns and is leaking)
- A violent incident or threat on or near school grounds (e.g., a shooting)
- The death of a student on or off school grounds (due to suicide, an accident, the result of a violent incident, or as the result of illness)
- The death of a staff member on or off school grounds (due to suicide, an accident, the result of a violent incident, or as the result of illness)
- A natural or man-made disaster, perhaps affecting the whole community.

In recent years, disaster psychologists and other members of the mental health community have focused on the effects of disasters or critical incidents on human beings. Even more recently, the impact on school communities has become a focus. Critical incidents are such intense events that they can overwhelm the strategic planning capabilities and the coping skills of those students and staff exposed to them and set the stage for critical incident stress.

Usually, critical incident stress is a temporary cluster of cognitive, physical, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual responses to overwhelming stress. Most individuals will recover from critical incident stress if the experience is handled appropriately and they receive proper support. Proper support may include school based resources and/or referral to an outside agency for additional supports and services.

## V. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is an integrated system of services and procedures designed to achieve several important goals. They are:

- Prevention of critical incident stress
- Mitigation of critical incident stress
- Intervention to assist in recovery from critical incident stress
- Acceleration of recovery whenever possible
- Restoration to function
- Maintenance of school personnel and student health and welfare

CISM requires a well-trained staff as well as the acceptance, encouragement, participation and support of the school community at all levels.

A comprehensive approach to critical incident stress management includes a strategic plan for a wide spectrum of stress-control components. The following are the most common services provided by the CISM Team:

### A. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Pre-incident traumatic stress education and crisis planning are important components of CISM. Strategic planning also occurs on an ongoing basis during a critical incident response. Strategic planning supports may include: assisting with communication, establishing procedures for students and staff to access additional support, identifying and planning for interventions based on identified needs. The CISM Team provides regular training materials and resources to providers and potential consumers of this service.

## B. ON-SITE TEAM SUPPORT

On-site team support in a school may be needed when a critical incident disrupts the learning environment. School staff and students may feel overwhelmed by a situation and show signs of dysfunction while performing their daily school routines. On-site team support can assist students and school staff while emergency services personnel attend to their duties.

## C. INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS

Individual interventions may be conducted by CISM team members shortly after a critical incident. Team members utilize the SAFER-R (Stabilize, Acknowledge, Facilitate, Encourage, Return or Referral) model in supporting individuals. Individuals needing ongoing mental health support will be referred to mental health services in the community.

## D. DEFUSINGS

Defusings are three step small group interventions that are held within 8 hours of an event and last 20-45 minutes. They are not time-consuming, yet can have powerfully positive results. They are primarily informational, led by a CISM team member, and can be described as a conversation about a particularly distressing event.

## E. REST INFORMATION TRANSITION SERVICES (RITS)

RITS are always associated with large-scale or mass-casualty incidents, and rarely used with schools. Individuals on the GWAEA CISM team may work in cooperation with other crisis response teams, such as Linn Area Partners in Disaster (LAP-AID) in large-scale or mass casualty incidents. RITS are used only when a very large group has been exposed to a highly traumatic event. RITS are designed to provide a transition period from the critical incident back to the world of routine.

## F. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFINGS (CISD)

CISD'S are conducted by trained CISM team members made up of mental health professionals and peers trained in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing. Group sessions that last one to three hours, conducted ideally within 1-10 days of a critical incident for those with similar exposure to the event. A CISD is a confidential, non-evaluative group discussion of each individual's involvement, thoughts and feelings resulting from the incident, stress reduction education, and how to access additional resources.

#### G. POST ACTION STAFF SUPPORT (PASS)

Post Action Staff Support is a group intervention provided to school based crisis teams and/or GWAEA Team members following a critical incident response. The purpose of this intervention is to review lessons learned, explore how the response has impacted individuals and group dynamics, and to encourage/remind team members to use healthy self-care practices.

#### VI. COORDINATING AGENCY

Grant Wood Area Education Agency will serve as the coordinating agency for the Grant Wood AEA Critical Incident Stress Management Team serving the schools and districts in the Grant Wood AEA service area. This area includes Linn, Johnson, Jones, Cedar, Benton, Washington and Iowa counties.

It is the responsibility of the Coordinating Agency to provide the resources necessary for the GWAEA CISM Team to provide the required services. The following services/resources will be coordinated by Grant Wood AEA:

- Office/clerical support for program activities
- Distribution of all correspondence, including brochures for public relations and website
- Classroom/meeting facilities appropriate for educational programs and teams
- Media equipment for educational programs and meetings
- Provision of an on-call system for contacting the GWAEA CISM Team Coordinator
- Access to training for all GWAEA CISM team members
- Solicitation of grants and provision of avenues for funding for the program
- Assistance to maintain close working relationships with the Team Coordinator, Clinical Consultant, and the Leadership Team, including partnerships with other CISM teams in the area.

## I. THE COMPREHENSIVE CISM TEAM

The GWAEA CISM Team is a voluntary partnership between Grant Wood AEA schools and the Grant Wood Area Education Agency, with linkages to established local community CISM Teams and other community groups working together to lessen the impact of traumatic stress. The partnership will help insure that schools will have both adequate crisis intervention training and coordinated on-site support when providing assistance to those affected by traumatic events.

The CISM Team is comprised of trained individuals who fulfill the role of either peer support or mental health professional as defined by the ICISF Model. Additional professional support may be provided to the schools by community members and spiritual leaders specifically trained in CISM intervention. In providing training and soliciting team membership across the many job categories represented in a school setting, the Team is positioned to provide true “peer” support to job-alike work groups as well as assure that students, staff and the local community are supported by well-trained individuals with familiar faces.

The organization of the Grant Wood AEA CISM Team includes a team coordinator, and a clinical coordinator, in addition to mental health professionals, peer support members, and faith-based consultants. An On-Site Team Leader will be designated for each incident. All Team members have made a commitment to volunteer their time to the team as needed and to maintain necessary educational and skills training standards. Team member duties and qualifications are as follows:

**\*\*As of June, 2018.** There are two co-leaders for the GWAEA CISM team. Between them they cover the Team Coordinator and Clinical Consultant roles.

A. Team Coordinator

1. Expectations

- A. general management of the CISM team
- B. maintaining up-to-date list of team members available for response
- C. receipt of service request
- D. assessment of the need and type of service to be offered
- E. scheduling of time, date, location of service
- F. notification of all involved personnel
- G. assistance with planning and scheduling Critical Incident Stress Debriefings debriefings and Post Action Staff Support sessions as needed.
- H. completion of post-incident report, kept for reporting to GWAEA leadership, GWAEA administration, and ICISF
- I. coordination of follow-up services
- J. assistance with development of team membership
- K. representation at community meetings
- L. assistance with continuing education opportunities for team members
- M. coordination with clinical consultant to assure appropriate support services
- N. assistance with development of policies and procedures
- O. coordination of appropriate services to distressed team members
- P. facilitation of periodic team meetings, co-leading meetings with Clinical Consultant
- Q. maintaining association with national organizations which foster critical incident stress work.
- R. maintain confidentiality

2. Qualifications:

- A. completion of the CISM Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support course, or CISM Group Crisis Intervention course. (Both courses are encouraged.)
- B. Mental health or peer support team member who has advanced training and skills in Critical Incident Stress Management, as well as a good understanding of emergency services –and school operations.
- C. demonstrated skills in leadership abilities and adult education methods

## B. Clinical Consultant

### 1. Expectations:

- A. provision of clinical expertise and consultation to the CISM Team
- B. maintenance of close working relationship with team coordinator in determining the appropriateness of a request.
- C. monitoring of Critical Incident Stress Debriefings and other services provided as needed, offering suggestions for improvements, and the need for follow-up services
- D. assistance with development of appropriate CISM Team continuing education
- E. provision of some of the continuing education for the team
- F. assistance with development of written policies and procedures for the team
- G. assistance with the selection of team members
- H. provision of periodic reviews of team records and services
- I. maintain confidentiality

### 1. Qualifications:

- A. completion of the CISM Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support course, or CISM Group Crisis Intervention course. (Both courses are encouraged.)
- B. At least a Master's degree and current licensure/certification in one of the following disciplines :
  - i. School Psychology or Psychology
  - ii. Social Work
  - iii. Mental Health Counseling
- C. GWAEA employee
- D. training and experience in Critical Incident Stress Management
- E. knowledge and experience in stress management, group processes, communication and CISM intervention strategies.



C. GWAEA CISM Leadership Team/Regional Representative

1. Expectations:

- A. attend Leadership team meetings
- B. communicate w/ region staff at region mtgs
- C. serve as RA partner; point of contact during an event
- D. participate in on-site team leader training
- E. be an on-site team leader for events in their region
- F. AEA-wide back up to Team Coordinator

2. Qualifications

- A. completion of the CISM Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support course and CISM Group Crisis Intervention course.
- B. Completion of the GWAEA On-Site Team Leader training
- C. mental health or peer support member of the team designated by the Team Coordinator or Clinical Consultant, at the time of a request for Team intervention, to perform the duties of On-Site Team Leader.
- D. agreement to follow established policies and procedures
- E. training preferred in the following areas:
- F. psychology and/or social work
- G. human communications skills
- H. traumatic stress
- I. crisis intervention
- J. peer counseling skills/techniques

#### D. Mental Health Team Members

##### 1. Expectations:

- A. psychological leadership during the debriefing as needed
- B. assistance in identifying mental health referral services onsite during a response
- C. assistance with follow-up services after any intervention as needed
- D. attendance at team meetings, at least one per year
- E. provision of clinical guidance to peer team members who have intervened in traumatic events.
- F. Ability to maintain confidentiality

##### 2. Qualifications:

A.completion of the CISM Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support course, or CISM Group Crisis Intervention course. (Both courses are encouraged.)

##### a. At least a Master's degree in one of the following areas:

- i. School Psychology or Psychology
- ii. Social Work
- iii. Mental Health Counseling
- iv. Faith-based Counseling
- v. Psychiatric Nursing
- vi. Training and certification as a physician who specializes in Psychiatry
- vii. School Counseling – with the following conditions met:
  - a) the focus of the practitioner's school counseling degree is on counseling/clinical assessment, rather than exclusively guidance; and,
  - b) the school counselor has the authority by policy or certification, to make clinical decisions regarding psychological follow-up services.

##### c. Provision of services in one of the following areas:

- i. Social services
- ii. Psychological
- iii. Crisis Intervention services including CISM team services
- iv. Faith-based counseling
- v. Other counseling services

##### d. Professional training in the following areas is essential:

- i. Crisis intervention
- ii. Stress management
- iii. Group processes
- iv. Communication skills
- v. Familiarization by shadowing more experienced CISM Team members.

##### e. Professional training in the following areas is beneficial:

- i. Substance abuse and addictions
- ii. Family therapy

##### E. completion of the CISM Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer

Support course, or CISM Group Crisis Intervention course. (Both courses are encouraged.)

E. Peer Support Team Member

1. Expectations:

- A. initiation of first contact with school personnel showing signs of distress after exposure to a critical incident.
- B. assistance with assessment of the need for defusings, debriefings, individual consults, family support services, referrals, etc.
- C. provision of services including interactive and informational groups
- D. provision of basic on-site support services to individuals who are showing signs of distress during an incident
- E. request mental health assistance when appropriate
- F. assistance with follow-up services as needed
- G. assistance to the team coordinator and mental health professionals, as requested
- H. reporting of interventions to mental health professionals on the team, as assigned
- I. functioning only within the limits of training
- J. Ability to maintain confidentiality

2. Qualifications:

- A. completion of the CISM Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer
  - a. Support course, or CISM Group Crisis Intervention course. (Both courses are encouraged.)
- B. willingness and ability to learn about psychosocial behavior
- C. agreement to work only within one's limits and in cooperation with the On-site Team Leader, Clinical Consultant and Team Coordinator
- D. agreement to follow established policies and procedures
- E. training preferred in the following areas:
  - i. psychology and/or social work
  - ii. human communications skills
  - iii. traumatic stress
  - iv. crisis intervention
  - v. peer counseling skills/techniques

E. On-Site Team Leader

1. Expectations:

A. coordinate the activities of the CISM Team at the incident site. This is often, but not exclusively, the regional representative to the GWAEA CISM Leadership Team.

B. collaborate with school administration, other service providers and emergency personnel responding to the incident.

C. maintain contact with the Team Coordinator and Clinical Consultant regarding the on-site Team intervention and the need for additional Team resources.

2. Qualifications:

A. mental health or peer support member of the team designated by the Team Coordinator or Clinical Consultant, at the time of a request for Team intervention, to perform the duties of On-Site Team Leader.

B. Completion of the On-Site Team Leader training is preferred but not required.

II. PROCEDURES FOR INITIATING GWAEA CISM TEAM INTERVENTION:

A. Telephone contact is made to Team Coordinator (or designee) at GWAEA.

(\*If a CISM Leadership team member, CISM team member, or Regional Administrator is contacted first, they will contact the Team Coordinator (or designee) to avoid redundancy and miscommunication in planning effort)

1. Checklist will be used to initiate a response plan.

2. Assesses specific needs with caller.

3. Determines available CISM-trained AEA/LEA/Community staff available.

4. Identifies and contacts the on-site team leader.

5. Initiates written CISM Incident Report.

B. Team Coordinator consults with On-Site Team Leader about intervention plan:

1. To determine specific types of interventions to be provided.

2. To determine number of staff to deploy.

3. Contacts CISM-trained staff to be deployed.

4. Notifies Regional Administrator and/or GWAEA Public Relations Coordinator, who will contact other AEA staff assigned to building(s) impacted by the response.

5. Continues support response with written documentation, staffing needs, etc as needed.

C. On-site Team Leader, along with other CISM team members, are deployed to the intervention site. CISM interventions are implemented as per On-site Team Leader checklist, collaboration with school administrators and consultation with Team Coordinator and Clinical Consultant as needed.

D. End of day review of intervention plan by on-site CISM Team members.

1. Planning for the following day, if needed.

2. Completing Incident Report with information from the day.

- E. When the GWAEA CISM team is ending their involvement in a response:
1. Develop follow-up plan with school district principal or facility initiating the contact.
  2. Student contact forms are shared with the building's counselor or other staff designated to continue follow-ups with identified students and staff
  3. Complete written CISM Incident Report by all on-site team members at completion of interventions.
  4. Completed CISM Incident Report is forwarded to CISM Team Coordinator.

III. MEMBERSHIP ON THE GRANT WOOD AREA EDUCATION  
AGENCY CISM TEAM

Categories of Membership: Individuals may apply for membership on the Team in one of two categories: Peer Support Team Member or Mental Health Team Member. Qualifications for each level of membership can be found in sections VII C and VII D of this Operations Manual.

Selection of Members: The Team Leader will share the applications for membership with the Leadership Team. The Team Leader, Clinical Consultant and Leadership Team will assure that all applicants possess the minimum qualifications for the membership category for which they are applying. The Team Leader will notify each applicant of the outcome of his or her application for Team membership. All membership decisions will be made according to the Statement of Equal Opportunity found in this Operations Manual.

Maintenance of Membership: Active membership on the Grant Wood Area Education Critical Incident Stress Management Team requires an ongoing personal commitment to professional crisis intervention skill enhancement. To ensure the quality of CISM services provided by the Team, the following requirements must be met in order to maintain active Team membership:

1. Maintain knowledge and skill level by participating in any two of the following in any combination annually:
  - respond to a crisis event
  - attend large group CISM team meeting
  - GWAEA crisis response courses
  - other courses/workshops that relate to school crisis response
  - additional skill building exercises as identified by the CISM Leadership Team

Revocation of Team Membership: Team members may have their membership revoked under the following circumstances:

- failure to meet the minimum annual requirements listed above for active team membership
- inappropriate use/practice of the CISM model
- failure to adhere to the procedures adopted by the GWAEA-CISM Team when responding as a GWAEA-CISM Team Member
- failure to represent the GWAEA CISM Team in an expected and professional manner.

STATEMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: Grant Wood Area Education Agency extends equal opportunities in its employment practices, educational programs and services and does not discriminate on the basis of color, gender, race, national origin, religion, creed, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability, or as otherwise prohibited by law.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Membership Application Form

GRANT WOOD AREA EDUCATION AGENCY  
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM

REQUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP

Thank you for your interest in the Grant Wood Area Education Agency Critical Incident Stress Management Team. Accompanying this Request for Team Membership is a copy of the GWAEA Critical Incident Stress Management Team Operations Manual. Please read the Manual and familiarize yourself with Team organization and procedures.

Maintenance of Team Membership

Active membership on the Grant Wood Area Education Agency Critical Incident Stress Management Team requires an ongoing personal commitment to professional crisis intervention skill enhancement. To ensure the quality of CISM services two of the following requirements must be met on an annual basis in order to maintain active team membership:

- respond to a crisis event
- attend large group CISM team meeting
- GWAEA crisis response courses
- other courses/workshops that relate to school crisis response
- additional skill building exercises as identified by the CISM Leadership Team

Applications for Team Membership will be reviewed by the GWAEA-CISM Leadership Team assembled by the Team Coordinator. You will be notified of your membership status following review by the team. Please return your completed application to:

Katy Lee or Sharon Clark  
CISM Team Coordinator  
Grant Wood Area Education Agency  
4401 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

(06/02 rev. 09/06, 06/18, 12/18)



GRANT WOOD AREA EDUCATION AGENCY  
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name:

Home Address

Phone (Home)

(Work)

(Cell)

E-Mail Address

Employer: School District / Bldg.

AEA

Address:

Job Title

Team membership category for which you are applying: (Please refer to the GWAEA CISM Team Operations Manual for specific guidelines regarding qualifications for membership categories)

Peer Support Team Member

Mental Health Team Member

If you are applying as a Mental Health Team Member, indicate in which discipline listed below you have earned a Master's Degree or higher and the institution issuing the degree:

Psychology

Social Work

Psychiatric Nursing

Pastoral Counseling

Mental Health Counseling

School Counseling:

Training and Certification as a physician who specializes in psychiatry:



List all of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation sanctioned coursework you have completed and where the training occurred:

(Please include copies of Certificates of Course Completion if the course you attended was NOT provided through Grant Wood Area Education Agency):

List of any additional coursework / degrees or continuing education in the area of counseling, grief, trauma, stress management etc.

Indicate if you have had experience providing any of the following:

individual counseling

small group counseling

family counseling

traumatic stress management

In making this application, I certify that the information I have provided is factual. I further agree to adhere to the Critical Incident Stress Management model as designed by J.T. Mitchell and G.S. Everly and to maintain my membership on the Team by adhering to all team membership guidelines.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return application to:  
Katy Lee or Sharon Clark  
CISM Team Coordinator  
Grant Wood Area Education Agency  
4401 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW  
Cedar Rapids, Ia. 52404



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