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Harford County Department of Emergency Services Guidelines: Critical Incident Stress Management Team

CISM Mission: To create a harmonious and strong support system to assist personnel who may be affected by a critical incident or personal event, with emphasis on confidentiality, compassion and access to vital resources. CISM Peers would be a “Buoy” for personnel going through times of distress, by providing solutions or alternatives to issues professionally or personally.

General Provisions:

- A. CISM shall not interfere with any on-going criminal or internal investigation.
- B. This Guideline is not to interfere in any way with the voluntary use of/or referral to any other related programs or services offered by Department of Emergency Services.

Confidentiality and Responsibility:

- A. Members who choose to use CISM services must be made aware we have no legal binder allowing complete confidentiality.
- B. The agency and team members must agree within the team that confidentiality is top priority so to protect the participant. This is needed to gain the trust and to have continued support with our team from our participants.
- C. Peer Providers will reiterate to Agency Personnel that all conversations and sessions are strictly confidential with the exception of :
 - 1. Imminent harm to participant or other members of Emergency Services or family members of participant.
 - 2. Information advising of situations requiring legal action/reporting to law enforcement.
- D. Information shared between peer support providers to obtain experience and training from each other will be general in nature, shall not include names or other identifiers and shall not be discussed outside of team members meetings.
- E. If at any time there is a violation of confidentiality involving sensitive information being released by any member shall result in immediate suspension of members status as a CISM team member until issue is solved or confirmed.

Responsibility of the Agency

- A. Shall consider communications between a participant and peer counselor as private and will be expected not to question the peer in an effort to obtain information.

- B. Shall ensure all employees involved with an incident are required to attend CISM activation but recognize and reassure personnel that active participation is not mandatory and nobody is required to speak.
- C. No notes or recordings shall be taken during a session; no reports will be filed regarding cases.
- D. Shall support scheduling and training requirements of the team and its members.
- E. Shall make provisions for a mental health provider to support the team who is not associated with any fit for duty evaluation.

Responsibility of the Coordinator:

- A. Will ensure CISM members comply with guidelines set forth.
- B. Will monitor CISM members to see they meet requirements of their regular duties and remain eligible for participating with the team.
- C. Will ensure CISM member performance and up keep of training .
- D. Will monitor team to ensure the team is not emotionally overwhelmed by CISM duties.
- E. Shall provide assistance to a CISM member reporting confidentiality exceptions previously described in these guidelines.
- F. Shall be ultimately responsible for the administrative and logistical needs of the team, maintain roster, timely notifications of scheduled meetings and training.

Annual Report:

- A. Shall submit an annual report to the Department of Emergency Services by mid-January yearly consisting of:
 - 1. Number of Team members
 - 2. Number of Critical call outs
 - 3. Number of Peer Support contacts
 - 4. Amount of training obtained by the team
 - 5. Total number of CISM man hours accounted for
 - 6. This report will be only for administrative purposes and will not contain any personal information of past participants or issues.
 - 7. Any monetary expense to include overtime/comp/flex , training or equipment

Responsibilities of Team Members:

- A. Shall sign a membership terms and conditions agreement as part of appointment to the CISM team.
- B. Shall notify coordinator immediately of issues that may impair or affect his/her ability to operate as a peer support provider
- C. Shall recognize they are not a mental health provider and operate within the limits of their training
- D. Shall not take notes during sessions
- E. Shall notify coordinator and shift manager once information is shared by a participant causing concern for their wellbeing or anyone else within the Agency or family.

Training:

- A. All training shall be provided by recognized professional organizations and individuals working in the CISM field.

- B. Initial training shall consist of a basic course conducted by recognized CISM instructors and approved Department of Emergency Services
- C. Team meetings and training shall be conducted on a quarterly basis

Team Selection:

- A. Team shall be composed of employees from the Department of Emergency Services, not including a Voluntary Clinician.
- B. Members must be in a non-probationary status and in good standing within the Department.
- C. All applicants meeting requirements shall be reviewed by the team and discussed with the Coordinator, all active members and the Clinician.
- D. Individuals selected thru this process shall be offered training after they have agreed to, and signed, a terms and condition agreement.
- E. Individuals selected must complete a sanctioned training course before becoming operational with the CISM team.
- F. If at any point any team members wishes to relinquish the membership from the team, a written resignation will be accepted.

Team Notification Procedures for Critical Incidents:

- A. Team members will respond to the Operations Center/site and set up a work area.
- B. Team members will make the proper notification of their arrival and availability to meet with participants.
- C. Team members will keep all information confidential, unless the exception policy is presented at any time.
- D. Team members will complete a call out form to track man hours for the CISM Team monthly/yearly report.
- E. Team Coordinator will be responsible for updating and maintaining CISM Team Roster.
- F. Notification and CISM Team response shall be mandatory for : ????????
(Line of Duty Death, Serious on job injury)

One to One Contacts:

- A. Participants may approach any Peer Support Provider at any time.
- B. Peer Support Providers are NOT mental health providers. They shall encourage participants to seek professional assistance when appropriate.
- C. Peer Support is NOT any part of Employee Assistance Program (EAP). (can work in conjunction with if needed/sought out)
- D. Follow up Service will be provided in accordance with the guidelines and may include mental health or other professionals deemed appropriate or requested by CISM providers and affected participants.