

USDA FOREST SERVICE

Pacific Southwest Region

Critical Incident Stress Management

What is Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)?

Critical Incident Stress Management is a comprehensive, integrated, systematic, and multi-tactic crisis intervention approach to manage stress after

traumatic events. CISM is a coordinated program of tactics designed to alleviate negative reactions to traumatic experiences.



Critical Incidents are unusually challenging events that have the potential to create significant human distress and can overwhelm the usual coping mechanisms of an individual or group. They are typically sudden, power-

ful, traumatic events, which are outside the range of ordinary human experiences that initiate a crisis response. Personnel may experience a critical incident as a result of a line of duty death, off-duty death, or serious accident or injury. The effects of traumatic stress are best prevented and mitigated through the use of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). The use of CISM increases health, morale, and productivity. It may decrease post-traumatic stress disorder, acute stress disorder, and other adverse effects.

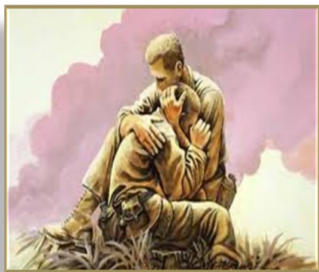
What can the Pacific Southwest CISM do for you?

The primary purpose of the Pacific Southwest Region CISM Committee is to provide critical incident stress management resources for the Forest Service in the Pacific Southwest Region, however, on occasion support may be provided outside of the geographic area if requested. This endeavor is an opportunity to effect change and provide employees the support resources needed during a critical incident; it reflects the region's efforts to move forward as a professional, continuous improvement organization. Our employees recognize that maintaining a healthy work environment requires

strong leadership and that leadership is a shared responsibility. Pacific Southwest Region CISM Support Groups consist of an all-inclusive workforce covering all disciplines of the Forest Service. This program is peer-driven and designed to support other peers after a critical incident.



Regional Forester is Committed to the Development of CISM Groups



The Regional Leadership Team has identified a Healthy Workforce and Workplace as a strategic priority. This priority is forward looking and in alignment with the Cultural Transformation strategy of the Department

of Agriculture and Forest Service. As an agency, we must ensure employee health and welfare in order to successfully accomplish the Forest Service Mission. Consequently, the Regional Forester is committed to the development of Critical Incident Stress Management Groups that are peer-driven and offer a variety of CISM support resources to an inclusive workforce.

What is the Make-Up of Critical Incident Stress Management Group?

The Forest Service does not have established, permanent CISM Support Groups. Instead, the Northern and Southern Operations Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC's) maintain rosters of trained Peer Supporters and have information on pre-identified health care professionals in traumatic incidents. The CISM Peer Supporters are combined with mental health care professionals to make up CISM Support Groups. Additionally, other CISM support personnel may be obtained from outside the region through the appropriate dispatch office. The Pacific Southwest Region

"CISM is a coordinated program of tactics designed to alleviate negative reactions to traumatic experiences."

CISM Support Groups usually consist of a Team Leader, a mental health care professional, and two or three Peer Supporters based on the complexity of the incident. A CISM Liaison may also be named and is usually a member of the group filling one of the aforementioned roles. When possible, it is beneficial to assign trainees. A chaplain can be requested for immediate defusing support at the field office during the incident. This crisis intervention tool is limited to individuals directly involved in the traumatic incident and often done informally at the scene.

Reactions to Crisis and Trauma

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Relational	Behavioral	Spiritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Insomnia • Chills • Nausea • Headaches • Indigestion • Elevated BP • Chest pain • Muscle Tremors • Sweating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaming • Confusion • Poor Attention • Poor Decisions • Lack Concentration • Memory Problems • Difficulty remembering details • Hyper-Vigilant • Nightmares • Intrusive Images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Crying • Numbing • Guilt/Survivor Guilt • Grief • Disbelief • Denial • Panic • Anger • Obsessiveness • Emotional Shock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from Family, Coworkers, Colleagues • Withdrawal from Organizations or other Affiliations • Lack of Community or Involvement • Biases/Stigmas may become prevalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Social • Accident Prone • Loss/Increase of Appetite • Inability to Rest • Change in Speech • Alcohol/Drug Consumption • Recklessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for meaning and hope • Vulnerability and Mortality • Withdraw from faith and religion • Redefining moral values

Why Peer Support Works?

- Camaraderie among peers
- Intervention is directed at individuals with similar backgrounds
- Peers have credibility that academic training cannot create
- Peers understand the unique traumas, fears, and job related stresses



Emergency Service Workers

- The average person will experience 2.4 crises in their life time
- Experience more human tragedy in the first three years of employment than most will see in a lifetime
- Devastating long-term affects can be expected if the tragedy is not dealt with properly

Roles for Requesting CISM Support

Agency Administrator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of Event 2. Notify the Regional Forester 3. Request CISM Support Group 4. Provide Information
Local Dispatch	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify Appropriate GACC CISM Response 2. CISM Response Order
Northern & Southern California Operations GACC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify on Call CISM Coordinator 2. Assist Local Dispatch Center with Resource Orders if Needed 3. Maintain CISM Group Roster
CISM Coordinator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess and Validate Appropriate CISM Response in Cooperation with Agency Administrator or Acting 2. Assign a Lead or Liaison 3. Assemble the CISM Group 4. Work with Local Dispatch and GACC for Peer Resource Orders and Demobilization 5. Work with Unit for Any Logistical Needs for CISM Response
Support Group Team Leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Serves as CISM Lead for the CISM Group 2. Reassess and Determines Appropriate Response in Cooperation with Agency Administrator or Acting as Needs Change 3. Provides Information to CISM Coordinator

Examples of CISM Support

Appropriate: Line of duty, off-duty death, traumatic injury to multiple employees while on duty; medical response by Forest Service First Responders that involves emotional or traumatic incident and has a significant traumatic impact to employees.

Inappropriate CISM (EAP response instead): Employees experiencing personal cumulative stress over traumatic events; individual counseling over work events; stress events occurring a year after a traumatic event.

The Agency Administrator is responsible for notifying the Regional Forester upon identifying an event as a critical incident prior to CISM Group deployment related to the appropriate CISM response.

Definitions

Critical Incident Stress Management: A comprehensive, integrated, systematic, and multi-tactic crisis intervention approach to manage stress after traumatic events. CISM is a coordinated program of tactics designed to alleviate negative reactions to traumatic experiences.

Defusing: A three-phase crisis intervention tool designed to assist a homogeneous group exposed to a traumatic event. This intervention is limited only to individuals directly involved in the incident and are often done informally, sometimes at the scene. They are designed to assist individuals in coping in the short term and address immediate needs.

Crisis Management Briefings: A large group crisis intervention technique. The goal is to provide information, rumor control, reduce sense of chaos, provide coping resources, facilitate follow-up care, generate cohesion, improve morale, assess further needs of the group, and restore personnel to adaptive functions.

Critical Incident Stress De-briefing (CISD): A structured group meeting that emphasizes venting or show of emotions and other reactions to a critical incident. This intervention tool is designed to assist a homogeneous group of people after exposure to the same, significant traumatic event.

It also emphasizes emotional and informational elements which are of assistance to employees in understanding and dealing with the stress generated by the event. Debriefings generally occur within 24-72 hours of the critical incident.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): The Employee Assistance Program is a professional service that pro-

vides problem solving, coaching, information, consultation, counseling, resource identification, and support to employees. The EAP has experienced, licensed, and trained professionals available to respond to a range of workplace issues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Peer Support: Personnel trained to assist their fellow employees by listening without judgment and maintaining confidentiality. They are also trained in positive coping strategies for stress, and to help others validate their thoughts and emotions about an overwhelming trauma or loss. Training is obtained through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.

Contact Information

Pacific Southwest Region Critical Incident Stress Management

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To obtain further information please visit:
<http://gacc.nifc.gov/wgbc/GBCG/cismindex.htm>



Pacific Southwest Region Critical Incident Stress Management Group are trained and certified by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.