

**Expanding the Usefulness of a CMB
(but still keeping it as an Informational Response)
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Historically, we have promoted the CMB as a large group intervention model in which the participants were largely on the receiving end of an educational presentation designed to help them tap into their natural resiliency and recover from any aftereffects of a disruptive event.

We would work with the on-site leadership to deliver the opening statements of fact around the event and have them introduce us. We would then launch into our educational discussion covering issues like:

- *Introduction and statement of condolence*
- *Some of the most common reactions that people have are . . .*
- *Some of you might be having reactions and some of you might not.*
- *If you are having reactions or not having reactions does not mean there is anything wrong, it merely means that you are processing the event in your own manner.*
- *Here are some things you can do to take care of yourself.*
- *Here are some things you can do to take care of each other.*
- *Here are some things you can do to take care of your colleagues who might be more impacted by the event.*

Other than perhaps opening the presentation to questions the end, it has largely been seen as a passive experience for participants and in fact, been promoted as being most appropriate for employees in the second or third “tier” of the event rather than people most impacted by the event.

This approach has worked pretty well but I have come to believe that we can improve it.

So how do we do that? Good question!

We do that by inserting some open-ended questions, some of which we expect people to nod or raise their hands acknowledging that they have or are experiencing the reactions, and some that we might expect that some of them might answer. Unlike a Defusing or Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, when they answer the question, we are not expecting them to self-disclose and further discuss the issue.

So how does this work? What is the structure that we should now be using?

We still want the involvement of the on-site leader to do the initial overview of the event and introduce us as we did in our previous approach. But after the introduction when we begin to speak, we will be using refinement of the original model and might go something like this:

- *Introduction and statement of condolence*
- *We find that some of the most common reactions that people have to an event like this are . . .*
- *HAVE ANY OF YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THESE REACTIONS SINCE THE EVENT?*

- *Here you will see head nods or people raising their hands, do not call on them to disclose those reactions, the goal is to acknowledge that they are in fact common occurrences.*
 - *Your task here is to determine that some people have experienced them on a continuum of little reaction to significant reaction.*
 - *Some of you might be having reactions and some of you might not.*
 - *If you are having reactions or not having reactions does not mean there is anything wrong, it merely means that you are processing the event in your own manner.*
- *HAVE ANY OF YOU EXPERIENCED ANYTHING LIKE THIS IN YOUR LIFE?*
- *You will need to tailor this question to the situation i.e. if you are responding because of a completed suicide of a colleague, you might ask if anyone has experienced friend or family member completing suicide, then follow up with HAVE ANY OF YOU EXPERIENCED THE SUDDEN UNEPCTED DEATH OF A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER?*
 - *Again, here you are not looking for them to talk about the loss at this time merely identifying their history.*
- *FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THIS TYPE OF EVENT, THINK BACK FOR A MOMENT ABOUT WHAT YOU DID, OR WHAT PEOPLE SAID THAT WAS MOST HELPFUL FOR YOU TO GET BACK TO YOUR MORE NORMAL SELF?*
- *WOULD ANY OF YOU BE WILLING TO SHARE IT?*
- *Again, no extensive self-disclosure, merely what was helpful.*
 - *Repeat what they have volunteered, and sometimes you can expand it a little for teaching.*
 - *You are looking for 3 or 4 examples at maximum.*
- *FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THIS TYPE OF EVENT, THINK BACK FOR A MOMENT ABOUT WHAT YOU DID, OR WHAT PEOPLE SAID THAT WAS NOT HELPFUL FOR YOU TO GET BACK TO YOUR MORE NORMAL SELF?*
- *Again, no extensive self-disclosure, merely what was helpful.*
 - *Repeat what they have volunteered, and sometimes you can expand it a little for teaching.*
 - *You are looking for 3 or 4 examples at maximum.*
- *Here are some OTHER things you can do to take care of yourself.*
- *Here are some things you can do to take care of each other.*
- *Here are some things you can do to take care of your colleagues who might be more impacted by the event.*
- *REASSURE THAT YOU FULLY EXPECT THAT EVERYONE WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE PAST THE REACTIONS THAT THEY ARE HAVING AT THE MOMENT*

- *THANK THEM FOR SHARING THE TIME WITH YOU AND STATE THAT IF ANYONE HAS ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ANYTHING YOU TALKED ABOUT, YOU WILL BE AVAILABLE AT . . . whatever location you will be.*

So, the changes may seem minor, but they have a very powerful effect on the participants.