

## Critical Incident Stress Prevention Tips

- Drink water, stay well hydrated.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it)
- The increased dependence on caffeine to keep going is not healthy.
- Take rest breaks when possible.
- Get as much sleep as possible. Lack of enough sleep can impair performance and safety.
- Do not ignore signs of traumatic stress.
- Find time to take walks to help alleviate stress
- If possible limit exposure to traumatic sights, sounds, and odors.
- Share your reactions with co-workers and be aware of their reactions."
- Give yourself permission to react, don't try and suppress reactions.
- Avoid alcohol and drug use



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

## What is a Critical Incident Stress Management Peer Support Team?

Your local CISM Team consists of US Army Corps of Engineers employee volunteers trained in CISM interventions. The CISM Team provides information about critical incidents and stress reactions that employees can use to help identify healthy life choices. The team provides an atmosphere of concern and caring as well as identifying personal options for dealing with stress including:

***Pre-Deployment Preparation:*** An educational meeting designed to prepare the employee's job expectations and improve coping.

***One-on-One:*** Brief discussion to help an individual deal with the impact of a stressful event.

***Crisis Management Briefing:*** An educational group meeting

***Defusing:*** An informal small group discussion. The goal is to mitigate the impact of the event.

***Debriefing:*** A seven-step process used to facilitate restoration of normal function among a small impacted group.

***Follow-up:*** Assistance to a higher level of care if necessary.



**PEER SUPPORT**

**US Army Corps of Engineers  
Louisiana  
Recovery Field Office**

**To Request Assistance Call:**

## Mission

The US Army Corps of Engineers Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a program designed to provide peer support and healthy life choices in response to stressful work environment incidents.

Critical stress management is a process designed to lessen the overall impact of acute or cumulative stress and to accelerate recovery in people who are having normal reactions to abnormal events.

Critical Incident: Any situation faced by employees which causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which may have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either immediately or post-event. Any incident, regardless of the type, may be defined as “critical” if unusually strong emotions are generated in the people involved, for example:

- High-impact recovery operation, exposure to grieving public
- Traumatic events including disasters
- Line of duty death or serious injury
- Employee suicide or unexpected death
- Significant events involving children
- Extended negative media exposure

## Signs and Symptoms

### Cognitive

- Poor concentration
- Intrusive images
- Hyper-vigilance

### Emotional

- Anger/irritability
- Fear/panic/anxiety
- Depression
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Inappropriate emotional response

### Behavioral

- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Withdrawal from others
- Alcohol and drug abuse

### Physical

- Rapid heart and breathing rates
- Elevate blood pressure
- Dizzy spells
- Chest pain (MEDICAL EMERGENCY)

Have you experienced an incident that caused unusually strong emotional reactions? Have you ever felt overwhelmed by job stressors?

This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates the particular event was just too powerful for people to manage themselves.

These reactions, if not addressed, have the potential to interfere with your ability to function either at work or at home.

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks appear immediately. Occasionally they appear hours or days later. In some cases, weeks or months may pass before stress reactions occur.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last days, weeks, or longer depending on the severity of the event.

With the understanding and the support of peers, stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor is necessary.