

Critical Incident Stress Management in the Natural Resource Management Community

Peggy Plaisance

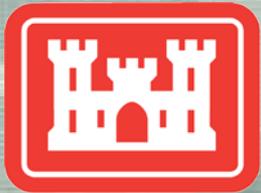
MVN, RN, COHN, Peer Supporter

Chris Smith

SWD SME, Peer Supporter

Mark Roderick

MVS, National Program Manager



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Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

- **Goal:** provide knowledge of the USACE CISM program, how it works and its employee benefits.
- **Objectives**
 - ▶ Define CISM & Identify uses
 - ▶ Identify Crisis Response
 - ▶ Explain How CISM Works
 - ▶ CISM History



What is CISM?

- An adaptive short term helping process that focuses solely on an immediate and identifiable problem. It spans pre-incident preparedness to acute crisis to post-crisis follow up.
- It's purpose is to enable people to return to their daily routine more quickly and with less likelihood of experiencing PTSD or severe anxiety disorder.



CISM Definition

- *a personal definition*

“Corps employees helping Corps employees in time of need as peer supporters/co-workers, utilizing prescribed methods to assist with returning to “a new normal”. The Corps Family helping the Corps Family.” *Chris Smith, USACE CISM Team*



What Triggers a Crisis Response?

A Critical Incident - Critical Incidents are traumatic events that cause powerful reactions in people who are exposed to those events.

A Crisis Response (powerful reaction) is a response to an event where:

- An individual's psychological homeostasis (*balance*) is disrupted.
- An individual's usual coping mechanisms have failed.
- There is evidence of distress and significant functional impairment.
- There is an "event which has the potential to *cause* a crisis response." 1

Everly, G.S. & Mitchell, J.T.,(2001). "The Basic Critical Incident Stress Management Course: Basic Group Crisis Intervention (3rd Edition)" International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.



Critical Incidents

- Local Incidents

- ▶ Line of duty death/suicide
- ▶ Serious employee accidents
- ▶ Public Fatalities
- ▶ Events involving children

- Civil Emergencies

- ▶ Earthquakes (Haiti), Hurricanes, Floods

- Civilian Deployment to War Zones

- ▶ Iraq and Afghanistan



Crisis Response

- **Acute stress reaction** is a psychological condition arising in response to a terrifying or traumatic event. The onset of a stress response is associated with specific physiological actions in the sympathetic nervous system, both directly and indirectly through the release of epinephrine.
- **Grieving Process** Grief is actually a healing process. Grief is the emotional suffering we feel after a loss of some kind. During grief, it is common to have many conflicting feelings. Sorrow, anger, loneliness, sadness, shame, anxiety, and guilt often accompany serious losses. Having so many strong feelings can be very stressful.
- **Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is a severe anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to any event which results in psychological trauma. It is the mind and body's response to feelings (both perceived and real) of intense helplessness.

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How Does CISM Work ?

- **Goals**

- ▶ Relieve impact of event by helping people deal with their trauma one incident at a time and allowing them to talk about the incident without judgment or criticism in a safe & confidential environment.
- ▶ Help the normal recovery process for people who are having “normal reactions” to abnormal events.
- ▶ Restore employees to “new” normal. Normal is different for everyone. Critical incidents raise stress levels dramatically in a short period of time and after intervention a new *normal* is established.



CISM Peer Support Team

- The USACE CISM Peer Support Team consists of USACE 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 a confidential atmosphere of concern and caring as well as identifying personal options for dealing with stress.



How Does CISM Work ?

- **What is Crisis Intervention:**
 - ▶ It is a comprehensive approach to managing critical incident stress after traumatic events.
 - ▶ It is temporary, but active and supportive contact with individuals or groups during extreme stress.



How Does CISM Work ?

- **Types of CISM Interventions**
 - ▶ Pre-crisis preparation
 - ▶ Demobilizations
 - ▶ Crisis Management Briefings
 - ▶ Defusings
 - ▶ Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (CISD)
 - ▶ Individual Crisis Intervention
 - ▶ Follow-up – handing off



Defusing> Debriefing> Follow-up

- Defusing-** The defusing is designed to assure the person/people involved that their feelings are normal, tells them what symptoms to watch for over the short term and to offer them a lifeline in the form of a telephone number where they can reach some-one to talk to.
- Debriefing-** A debriefing is normally done within 72 hours of the incident and gives the individual/group the opportunity to talk about their experience, how it has affected them, brainstorm coping mechanisms, identify individuals at risk and inform them about EAP and professional counseling services available in community.
- Follow-up-** The final step is to follow up with them after the debriefing to ensure that they are safe and coping well or to refer the individual for professional counseling.



What Interventions Offer

- ▶ **Confidentiality** – antidote for fear of exposure
- ▶ **Reassurance** – antidote for anxiety
- ▶ **Structure** – antidote for chaos
- ▶ **Thinking** – antidote for dysfunctional emotions
- ▶ **Catharsis** – antidote for tension and frustration
- ▶ **Information** – antidote for loss of control
- ▶ **Acceptance** – antidote for alienation
- ▶ **Action** – antidote for helplessness



Signs that an Employee Needs Help

Decline in Productivity
Increased Sick Leave
Functional Impairment
Anger
Loss of Appetite
Insomnia
Frustration
Acting Out
Social Withdrawal
Violence to Others or Self
Increased use of Drugs and Alcohol
Loss of Employee from Organization
Bottom line – There is a direct connection between stress and one's health and productivity.



Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- ▶ CISM complements and supplements the EAP.
- ▶ CISM is designed to enable handoffs to the EAP and mental health professionals.
- ▶ A mental health professional/trauma specialist participates in CISD interventions.
- ▶ Follow-up with affected employees post-incident.



CISM and EAP Working Together

Peer Support

- **Crisis intervention and education**
 - ▶ Immediate short term
 - ▶ 1-2 visits
- **Emphasis**
 - ▶ Prevention and education
- **On location USACE-wide support**
- **Provide EAP contact information**
- **Peer Supporter guides process**

EAP

- **Therapy**
 - Long term
 - 12 or more visits
- **Emphasis**
 - Treatment
- **Clinical Setting**
- **Symptoms Worsen**
 - Treatment continues
- **Therapist guides process**



CISM Advantages

- All aspects of the CISM program support the Corps to be one team “Relevant, Ready, Responsive, and Reliable.
- CISM – a first step for employees needing someone (trained in CISM by ICISF) to talk to, but does not want to see a therapist.
- CISM (Peer Supporters) are present in daily situations.
- CISM is like first aid. It can lessen the first emotional reactions to a situation becoming a serious psychological problem requiring mental health assistance.



CISM Time Line



2000 – SWD CISM Initiation/
First Activation

*May 2000,
I 40-Bridge Incident, AR*

- **September 5, 2003** - CISM PDT authorized by Chief of Engineers, LTG Robert Flowers – established USACE CISM program model for potential implementation.
- **May 15, 2006** - LTG Strock authorizes nation wide implementation of a CISM program
- **Today**, earthquake, hurricane and local responses continue.



Participating USACE Major Subordinate Commands (MSC)

- **Southwestern Division (SWD) – National Operations Center**
 - ▶ Mark Roderick, MVS; Larry Bogue, SWD; and Melissa Salsgiver, LRP Program Managers.
- **Trans-Atlantic Command (TAC)**
 - ▶ Vacant
- **Southwestern Division**
 - ▶ Chris Smith
- **South Pacific Division (SPD)**
 - ▶ Phillip Turner
- **North Atlantic Division (NAD)**
 - ▶ Estelle Capowski
- **Mississippi Valley Division (MVD)**
 - ▶ Kevin Eubanks
- **Pacific Ocean Division (POD)**
 - ▶ Sam Mills
- **Great Lakes & Ohio River Division (LRD)**
 - ▶ Melissa Salsgiver
- **South Atlantic Division (SAD)**
 - ▶ Non-participating
- **Northwestern Division (NWD)**
 - ▶ Non-participating



Who Uses CISM

- American/International Red Cross
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- FAA
- EPA
- FEMA
- Many Airlines
- Emergency Medical Services
- Motorola Communications
- United Auto Workers
- US Navy
- US Air Force
- US Coast Guard
- US Army
- US Dept. of Agriculture
- Homeland Security
- FBI
- Police Depts.
- National and International Relief Agencies
- Martin Marietta Corp.



What are People Saying

- “ As we move forward, we will be one team focused on taking care of our people. This includes leaders ensuring employees have the right tools and meaningful work in a safe environment. It also includes teammates taking care of each other and employees living a healthy and balanced lifestyle.” Former Chief of Engineers, LTG Strock**
- **“Some folks have stigmas with regard to seeking counseling. Your group provides a gentle alternative. The more training on CISM that you can get, all the better. ”**
 - **“I truly hope that this program remains intact, for lack of a better term, and, unfortunately, I feel that you all may be needed again in the near future to help with acute stressful incidents related to the war. ”**
 - **“I view it as Corps employees helping their own.”**
 - **“It is a helpful and very worthwhile team to have available to COE members especially during stressful times.”**
 - **“ The CISM program shows our leadership cares about its employees.”**



Employee Stress Reduction



=viktor=

Photo by Vincent Laforet / The New York Times



Employee Stress Reduction

- Relax!
 - ▶ Take time for family and friends
 - ▶ Healthy eating and sleeping habits
 - ▶ Have close friends you can talk to
 - ▶ Don't work through breaks
 - ▶ Take time to **PLAY**
 - ▶ **Don't be afraid to ask for help**



CISM Peer Supporters

USACE CISM Program Management Team

- ▶ **Mark Roderick, MVS 618-724-2493**
- ▶ **Larry Bogue, SWD 469-487-7062**



Questions

