

## **CISM Peer Supporter Update Fall 2008 – June 2009 Highlights**

Prepared June 2009

NOTE: This is not an all inclusive listing. This is meant to be a summary of some of the things that the US Army Corps of Engineers national Critical Incident Stress Management team has been involved with or accomplished over recent months. The intent is to inform national team members of the recent accomplishments.

### 1- Response to Hurricane Gustov.

Deployed: Jennifer Adams was requested by Emergency Management to work in their office. As part of her duties she integrated CISM into the response plan.

Reach Back: Melissa Salsgiver served as the Reach Back Coordinator and Jennifer volunteered to handle the Returning Home email with attached brochure. The Reach Back effort resulted in 346 contacts provided with CISM contact information and CISM brochure.

### 2- Response to Hurricane Ike.

Deployed: Kris Brown, Chris Smith and Lenny Bonnell responded. Kris Brown had a unique role in that the Galveston District requested that she serve as liaison between Emergency Management and CISM for the Galveston District personnel. It was a daunting task especially when she was a member of the affected district. Chris Smith and Lenny Bonnell were deployed to serve in the traditional manner of reconnaissance team and assisting all personnel without regard to home district status. It was an interesting response with several lessons learned for the CISM community.

Virtual Team: CISM peer supporters from Ft. Worth, Little Rock, Galveston, Albuquerque, Vicksburg, TAC and New Orleans volunteered to be available from their home duty stations to support the deployed team and also provide reach back contacts if necessary.

Follow On Team: After the deployment ended Kris Brown, Louis Petit and Angela Zahid served as CISM contacts within the Galveston District.

Reach Back: Melissa Salsgiver served as Reach Back Coordinator and sent 618 emails with brochures to disaster volunteers returning to their home districts.

#### Statistics:

- Assessment interviews: 70
- One-on-Ones: 89
- EAP Referrals: 7
- Crisis Management Briefs: 13
- Contacts: 540
- Miles covered: 1890
- Reach Back Contacts: 618

3- **Recover Field Office staffing model.** Assistant Program Manager Melissa Salsgiver was able to make some inroads with the emergency management community developing the RFO staffing models. Larry Bogue and Melissa joined a conference call with the national EM team working on the plan and explained the CISM concerns and deployments issues in instances of national consequence. Resulting from that conference call was an invitation to present CISM at the Emergency Management Assistant Leaders conference. SWD SME Chris Smith and Operations and Strategic Planning Chair Lenny Bonnell presented. Overall response to both the conference call and the presentation is that CISM needs to be inculcated into the RFO structure and deployed with FEMA taskers on a routine basis. Coordination continues.

4- **ENGLink Access.** Melissa Salsgiver was able to get additional permissions in ENGLink. This allows access to national reports. Further coordination with the ENGLink administrators is needed to refine the data pulls. Also there is potential for a limited number of the management team to receive automatic notifications of district and division incidents. This would enhance the capability of the national team being aware of incidents where CISM could be offered. Coordination is ongoing.

5- **Suicide Prevention Training.** Several districts utilized the CISM peer supporters to provide the Phase I and Phase II suicide prevention trainings. Nationwide approximately 1000 contacts were logged by CISM peer supporters facilitating Phase I. Many of the same people are conducting the Phase II sessions.

6- Summers **Leaders Conference.** Kris Brown, Lenny Bonnell and Melissa Salsgiver represented the national CISM team at the Summer Leaders Conference in Pittsburgh, PA. They staffed an exhibit, distributed brochures and stress brains, met with many of the senior leaders and attended one session of the Family Readiness Group.

7- **World Congress of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.** Mark Roderick and Melissa Salsgiver represented the USACE national CISM team at the World Congress in Baltimore, MD. This was the first time any of our team attended the event. It was very professionally conducted and both Mark and Melissa strongly recommend more team members attending in 2011. Their after action reports are attached to the email accompanying this report. Please refer to them for details.

8- **Deployments and offers of CISM assistance.** Below is a generic summary of incidents that CISM assistance has been offered or deployed nationally. Due to the dedication of our trained volunteers many abnormal situations were normalized through the CISM peer supporters caring professionalism.

- SWD: 3 employee deaths
  - 1 retired employee death
  - 1 tornado damage
- SPD: 1 Supervisory referral
  - 1 incident of 1 adult and 3 children bodies recovered
  - 2 public suicides
  - 1 public death after CPR
- NWD: 1 employee death
- MVD: 1 employee death
  - 1 infant death after CPR
- LRD: 2 public drownings
  - 2 public suicides
  - 2 employee deaths
  - 1 employee removal
  - 1 employee demotion
- TAC: 1 inquiry pending at time of this report

9- **Management Team meeting.** The national CISM management team meeting was scheduled for late spring. Due to unavailability of some of the key players, it had to be postponed. This was unfortunate but unavoidable. Look for the management team to have one in this FY with an AAR for peer supporters. A very special thank you to Estelle for lining everything up and making ready for the team!

10- **Peer Supporters news:**

Elisa Pellicciotto retired

Terry Holt has seen some progress in his medical treatments and is enjoying retirement.

Jennifer Adams left federal service.

Bev Noel transferred to NWD and has since returned to Albuquerque

Mark Roderick underwent surgery and has recovered.

Lenny Bonnell underwent surgery and has recovered.

Jennifer Walker's husband, who also works for the Corps, has entered the leave donation program. Anyone wishing to donate leave, please, email Larry Bogue for the information.

11- **Peer Supporter self help.** Here are a few things individual peer supporters can be doing to help support the program.

- A- Update your ENGLink profile.
- B- Be sure you have a current medical screening in ENGLink
- C- Discuss your CISM role with your supervisor and clarify any concerns
- D- Honestly access your personal and professional circumstances. If you are not currently interested in being an active peer supporter, let your division SME know.
- E- Take some FEMA sponsored NIMS (National Incident Management System) trainings. Here is a site Kris Brown recently used and she highly recommends peer supporters take advantage of it.

<https://eportal.usace.army.mil/sites/RSC/trainingexer/Civil/level1/default.aspx>

F- Access the NIMS Resource Center to learn more and be better prepared to respond to national emergencies and communicate with other agencies. That link is <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>

G- Catch up reporting. Have done a CISM presentation, provided information, or conducted an intervention? Is so, please take the time to document it on the appropriate form and submit to Mark Roderick, Lenny Bonnell, and Cindy Bethany. It is vital to the program review to properly document CISM activities. Part of our contracted mental health professional's responsibilities is to review our overall program. She needs your documentation to accurately review the program.

12- **Watch for:**

- A- Recruitment opportunities of new peer supporters for divisions that are under represented.
- B- Training of new peer supporters
- C- Possible continuing education of existing peer supporters
- D- Management Team meeting of program managers, SMEs, and committee chairs
- E- Possible SLC exhibit at FY09 SLC???

Respectively submitted,  
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