

## USACE Critical Incident Stress Management Team

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) provides confidential and discreet peer support in response to stressful work environments or incidents.

CISM is intended to lessen the overall impact of stress and accelerate recovery in people who are having normal reactions to abnormal events, such as work stress.

Any incident, regardless of type, may be defined as "critical" if unusually strong emotions are generated in those involved, for example:

- Line of duty death or serious injury
- Employee suicide or unexpected death
- Significant events involving children
- Traumatic events including disasters
- Exposure to grieving public
- Extended negative media exposure
- Family / loved one stress

The USACE CISM Team is a group of peer supporters, Corps employees representing all mission areas, who have undergone special training to assist their fellow employees.

The USACE CISM Team provides information about critical incidents and stress that employees can use to help cope. Support is provided in an atmosphere of empathy and care to identify personal options for dealing with stress to include:

- Resiliency and stress education
- Confidential group support
- Confidential one-on-one support
- Emergency mobilization
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referral
- Suicide Prevention Education

## Critical Incident Stress Response Reduction Tips

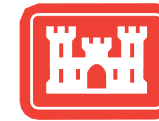
- Physical activity followed by relaxation reduces some physical stress
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it)
- Take rest breaks
- Do activities you enjoy
- Keep your life as routine as possible
- Confide in someone you trust
- Structure your time; keep busy
- Limit exposure to unpleasant sights and sounds.
- Share your feelings with co-workers and loved ones
- Give yourself permission to be emotional; don't try and hide your feelings
- Consider using the Crisis Text Line by texting "hello" to 741741 for discreet and confidential help
- Avoid alcohol and/or drug use



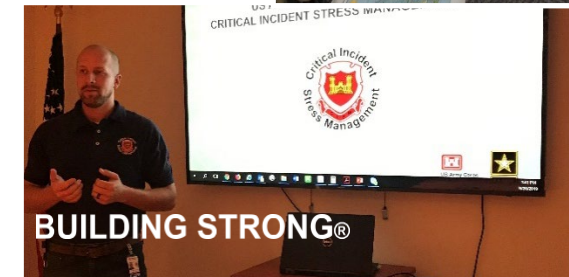
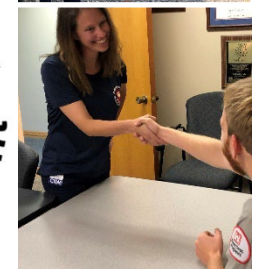
To contact a Peer Supporter or activate a CISM Response Team call: 1-314-925-5250 or email [cism-vm@usace.army.mil](mailto:cism-vm@usace.army.mil)

For more information about CISM, email [CDL-CISM-SeniorLeadership@usace.army.mil](mailto:CDL-CISM-SeniorLeadership@usace.army.mil)

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## US Army Corps of Engineers®



## What is Stress

Our bodies react in specific ways to things happening around us. This is called stress and it normally goes away quickly. If you are subjected to a serious event or an ongoing series of events, it can overcome your body's functions and not allow a return to normal. This is called critical incident stress.

Although the event may be over, you may experience some very strong reactions. It is very common for people to have uncomfortable feelings when they have experienced a traumatic event.

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

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



## Signs and Symptoms of Stress

These signs are temporary and should go away with time. If these continue or interfere with your home or work life, please contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), your healthcare provider and/or your spiritual or religious leader.



Intellectual Symptoms: Your Mind	Emotional Symptoms: How You Feel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memory problems</li> <li>• Difficulty making decisions</li> <li>• Inability to concentrate</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Seeing only the negative</li> <li>• Repetitive or racing thoughts</li> <li>• Poor judgment</li> <li>• Loss of objectivity</li> <li>• Desire to escape or run away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moody and hypersensitive</li> <li>• Restless and anxious</li> <li>• Depressed</li> <li>• Angry and resentful</li> <li>• Easily irritated and "on edge"</li> <li>• Sense of being overwhelmed</li> <li>• Lack of confidence</li> <li>• Apathetic</li> <li>• Urge to laugh or cry at inappropriate times</li> </ul>
Physical Symptoms: Your Body	Behavioral Symptoms: Your Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Digestive problems</li> <li>• Muscle tension and pain</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• High blood pressure</li> <li>• Weight gain or loss</li> <li>• Mild shortness of breath</li> <li>• Skin problems</li> <li>• Decreased or increased sex drive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in eating habits</li> <li>• Sleeping too much or too little</li> <li>• Isolating yourself from others</li> <li>• Neglecting your responsibilities</li> <li>• Increased alcohol and/or drug use</li> <li>• Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)</li> <li>• Teeth grinding or jaw clenching</li> <li>• Overdoing activities such as exercising or shopping</li> <li>• Losing your temper</li> <li>• Overreacting to unexpected problems</li> </ul>
Spiritual Symptoms:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious or spiritual frustration</li> <li>• Loss of meaning and/or purpose</li> <li>• Withdrawal from place of worship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anger at spiritual or religious leader</li> <li>• Questioning beliefs</li> </ul>

