

Critical Incident Stress Management

What is a critical incident?

A critical or traumatic incident is a sudden, random and unexpected event outside of the usual range of daily experiences. As such, it may overwhelm the ability of those involved to cope, affect their sense of security and result in feelings of discomfort, powerlessness and helplessness. A critical incident may involve a natural disaster (flood, earthquake, fire), a sudden death, a fatal accident, an act of violence (destruction of property, robbery, physical assault, bomb threats), or any similar event that impacts the workplace.



What are CISM services?

CISM, or Critical Incident Stress Management, services involve one or more debriefing meetings organized for employees affected by a critical or traumatic event. The debriefings are educational in nature and focus on reducing the likelihood that employees experience long-term emotional and/or psychological consequences. Debriefings also offer support, help normalize commonly experienced reactions and provide skills to cope and manage physical, behavioral or psychological reactions. Debriefings are designed not to interrupt trauma responses but to normalize them.

Debriefings can be conducted as group or individual sessions. Individual sessions may last up to 45 minutes, while the group session may last up to two hours. If a group session is scheduled, the group should have no more than 12 participants. Smaller groups allow for increased participation. If the event affects a large number of employees, additional meetings may be scheduled. CISM services are typically scheduled within 24 to 72 hours after the event, when reactions have emerged.

How much do CISM services cost?

All phone consultations with CISM Coordinators are provided at no cost. Additional charges may apply for on-site services; please consult your Account Manager.

How to arrange for CISM Services

Call GuidanceResources® to access services. **The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

A CISM Coordinator will assist you. They will assess the needs of those involved and help you determine a plan of action. When appropriate, a trained professional (counselor) will visit the worksite to provide debriefing services.



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