

Self Care Following A Critical Incident

ICISF / CISM Intervention Process

Is Confidential	Educational
Is Peer Driven	Not A Critique
Is Educational	Available At No Charge
Allows Ventilation	Allows Peer Support
Insures "we" are not alone	Provides Follow-Up

CISM Core Elements

Pre-Incident Education/Preparation	Defusings
On-Scene Support	CISM Debriefings
Family Education/Support	School Crisis Management
Disaster Demobilizations	Chaplain Services
Crisis Management Briefings	Follow-Up Services
Industrial Consultations/Support	Referral Services

Family and Friends

- ◆ Listen Carefully
- ◆ Spend Quality Time With Loved One
- ◆ Reassure Safety
- ◆ Allow For Private Time
- ◆ Avoid Critiquing, Probing Or Attempting To Fix The Problem
- ◆ Support With Everyday Tasks, e.g., Cleaning, Cooking, Children, Household
- ◆ Avoid Statements, e.g. "God's Will, "Could Have Been Worse", etc.

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SELF CARE FOLLOWING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

What Is A Critical Incident?

A critical incident is a "turning point" event often referred to as a crisis event. Any event which has a stressful impact sufficient enough to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of either an individual or a group of individuals may be considered a critical incident. Critical incidents are typically sudden, powerful events which are outside the normal range of ordinary human experiences. Due to the sudden and unusual events they can escalate a strong emotional effect even on well trained professionals.



Our Mission Statement

The Southwest Ohio Critical Incident Stress Management Team, Inc. was established in 1986 to provide an organized system of crisis intervention to assist helper provider professionals reduce the number of job related stress casualties among professional ranks.

Self Care Following A Critical Incident

Common Signs/Reactions And Symptoms/Thoughts Of Concern

Critical incidents may produce a wide range of stress symptoms. Stress symptoms usually occur in five different categories: Cognitive (thinking), Physical (body), Emotional (feelings), Behavioral (actions), and Spiritual (relationship with God). The more symptoms experienced, the more powerful the stress reaction. The longer the symptoms persist, the more potential there is for lasting harm. The following is only a sample of stress symptoms that can show up after a critical incident:

Cognitive

Poor Concentration	Difficulties With Calculations
Poor Attention Span	Difficulty Making Decisions
Slowed Problem Solving	Memory Problems

Emotional

Guilt	Feeling Lost/Overwhelmed
Depression	Anxiety/Fear
Grief	Loss Of Emotional Control
Anger	

Physical

Muscle Tremors	Chest Pains
Gastrointestinal Distress	Difficulty Breathing
Headaches	Elevated Blood Pressure

Behavioral

Excessive Silence	Sleep Disturbances
Extreme Behavioral Change	Changes In Eating Habits
Withdrawal From Contact	Change In Work Habits

Spiritual

Uncharacteristic Religious Involvement	Anger At Clergy
Sense Of Isolation From God	Questioning Basic Beliefs
Loss Of Meaning Or Purpose	Faith Practices Seem Empty
Withdrawal From Place Of Worship	Anger At God

Thoughts and reactions in relation to a stressful event may last a few days, weeks or months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event. With understanding and the support of loved ones, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be beneficial and necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. The need simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the individual to manage on his/her own.

Self Care Following A Critical Incident

Taking Care Of Yourself. . .

- ◆ Vigorous Exercise (especially within the first 24 hours)
- ◆ Plenty of rest
- ◆ Normal routine
- ◆ Structure your time, keep busy
- ◆ Use Vitamins B & C to increase resistance decreased by stress.
- ◆ Spend time with trusted family, friends, co-workers
- ◆ Share your thoughts with trusted family, friends
- ◆ Deep breathing exercises
- ◆ Relaxation
- ◆ Meditation
- ◆ Do things that feel good to you
- ◆ Reach out—avoid isolation
- ◆ Avoid life altering decisions
- ◆ Avoid / Reduce the use of caffeine, drugs, alcohol
- ◆ Keep a personal journal—write your way through sleepless nights
- ◆ Maintain good posture—removes the weight from your shoulders
- ◆ Watch out for your peers / co-workers
- ◆ Remember it is okay to smile and laugh—laughter increases oxygen to your brain
- ◆ Recognize you are experiencing stress

Avoid Negative Stress Copers

- ◆ AVOID—Denial or ignoring the problem
- ◆ AVOID—Fault finding or complaining, or criticize or judgmental
- ◆ AVOID—Indulging or buying on impulse or wasting time or sleeping in
- ◆ AVOID—Passivity or procrastination . . . Hoping it gets better
- ◆ AVOID—Revenge or getting even or talking mean—sarcasm
- ◆ AVOID—Stubbornness or rigidity or demanding your own way or refuse to be swayed
- ◆ Watch out for illnesses, developing headaches, stomach disorders, accident prone