

US EPA

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

What Gives??

www.epaosc.net

HQ-ERT CISM

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Critical Incident Stress Mgmt

A comprehensive, organized approach for dealing with potentially harmful aspects of stress for emergency responders

Designed to reduce the potentially harmful aspects of exposure to traumatic stress, mitigate the effects that do occur, and assist with recovery.



HISTORY OF EPA Emergency Response Peer Support Team


- 📄 Stress Management Needs Assessment for On-Scene Coordinators/3 August 2001
- 📄 71% Job interferes with personal life
- 📄 60% Feel a lack of Management Support
- 📄 15% Spend more than 200 days on travel
- 📄 59% Believe quality time with family or friends helps reduce stress upon return.
- 📄 Hard to play catch-up at work and home

Emergency Response Peer Support Team

- 📄 Fear of appearing touchy feely
- 📄 Everyone brings personal “baggage” or issues to the job.
- 📄 Sometimes the little irritations add up and one little issue may set some one off.

Emergency Response Peer Support Team


The purpose is to provide an organized, trained group of OSC & RSC peers and mental health professionals to provide timely and efficient assistance to EPA OSCs and RSC members impacted by casualties, disasters, and other stressors.




Emergency Response Peer Support Team Consist of

- 📄 OSC Peer Team Members
- 📄 Mental Health Professionals
- 📄 Basic and Advanced Training

Emergency Response Peer Support Team

- 📄 New to EPA
 - 📄 Response community has recognized a need to address Critical Incident Stress after an incident to ensure their personnel stay mentally healthy.
 - 📄 Found that if reactions are addressed immediately, healthy people stay healthy.
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Response Support Corp


- ◆ New to EPA response family
 - ◆ ICS and NIMS implementation increased the number of people to the response Impacted by the same thing the OSC experiences
 - ◆ Training being developed
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Colors of Our Personalities



Blue – the Relationship Way





- ◆ Relate well with others
 - ◆ Express Feelings
 - ◆ Sincere and authentic
 - ◆ People Oriented
 - ◆ Express appreciation and approval
 - ◆ Value self-discovery
 - ◆ Cooperate well with others
 - ◆ Maintain high integrity
 - ◆ Value personal relationships
 - ◆ Good group and team participant
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- ◆ Growth oriented
 - ◆ Inspirational
 - ◆ Empathetic
 - ◆ Seeks harmony
 - ◆ Encourages others
 - ◆ Sensitive to other's needs
 - ◆ Trusting
 - ◆ Adaptable
 - ◆ Compassionate
 - ◆ Influencing
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Red – The Action Way





- ◆ Action oriented
 - ◆ Adventurous
 - ◆ Like challenges
 - ◆ Get immediate results
 - ◆ Competitive
 - ◆ Like variety
 - ◆ Need freedom
 - ◆ Able to act in a crisis
 - ◆ Great negotiator
 - ◆ Decisive and quick to act
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- ◆ Quick witted and humorous
 - ◆ Like tangible rewards
 - ◆ Risk taker
 - ◆ Great need for mobility
 - ◆ Take initiative
 - ◆ Seek high visibility
 - ◆ Direct Communicator
 - ◆ Non-judgmental
 - ◆ Spontaneous
 - ◆ Appear Confident
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Yellow – the Organized Way





- ◆ Stabilizer
 - ◆ Responsible
 - ◆ Conservative
 - ◆ Need policies, procedures, rules
 - ◆ Value order and status quo
 - ◆ Well organized
 - ◆ Need to be prepared
 - ◆ Seek closure
 - ◆ Value tradition
 - ◆ Follow through
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- ◆ Detail oriented
 - ◆ Response authority
 - ◆ Strive for sense of security
 - ◆ Prefer a structured environment
 - ◆ Plan ahead
 - ◆ Dependable and reliable
 - ◆ Consistent and predictable
 - ◆ Thorough
 - ◆ Value membership
 - ◆ Strong sense of “right and wrong”
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Green - The Logical Way




- ◆ Inquisitive
 - ◆ Theoretical and conceptual
 - ◆ Can never know enough
 - ◆ Need independence
 - ◆ Intellectual and insightful
 - ◆ Seek “big picture”
 - ◆ Appreciate complexity
 - ◆ Appear calm, cool and collected
 - ◆ Logical and rational
 - ◆ Persistent
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- ◆ Explore all facets before making a decision
 - ◆ Inventive
 - ◆ Need time to think
 - ◆ Standard setter
 - ◆ Visionary and futurist
 - ◆ Analytical
 - ◆ Competent and knowledgeable
 - ◆ Seek information
 - ◆ Use systematic approach
 - ◆ Enjoy solving problems
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Let's Talk About Stress




STRESS AND STRESS REACTIONS

- ◆ Stress is the physical and psychological process that results from perceiving an event as a threat.
 - ◆ Excessive stress and unsuccessful coping strategies may result in illness or dysfunction.
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Stress is.....

- ◆ Necessary for our growth, development and ultimate survival
 - ◆ BUT.....too much is unhealthy
 - ◆ And the effect is cumulative.
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Psychosocial Stressors

- ◆ Conflicts within family or within important relationships
 - ◆ Illness – caring for an aged parent or sick child
 - ◆ Conflicts with management or fellow workers
 - ◆ Lack of appreciation
 - ◆ Work that requires extended absence from home and family
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Personality Stressors

- ◆ Inability to say "NO"
 - ◆ Need to be liked and needed
 - ◆ Anxiety over competence
 - ◆ Sensitivity to criticism
 - ◆ Extremely high expectations
 - ◆ Feelings of guilt if the operation fails
 - ◆ Keeping thoughts and emotions private or unexpressed
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TRAITS OF EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

- 📄 Action-Oriented – Quick decision-makers under pressure, very task oriented.
- 📄 Easily Bored – Will usually choose work over sitting around the house, station, hospital, etc.
- 📄 High Need for Stimulation – Want to keep busy and see results quickly.


TRAITS OF EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

- 📄 Risk Taking Behavior – Frequently exposing themselves to danger in an attempt to help others. Even leisure time is spent on high-risk sports and activities.
- 📄 Highly Dedicated to Emergency Work – When asked to place things in order of importance #1 Job; #2 Natural Children; #3 Spouse #4 Themselves


TRAITS OF EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

- ☞ Strong need for immediate gratification.
- ☞ Has a “Rescue Personality”
- ☞ Strong need to be needed and liked.
- ☞ Needs to be center of attention. Enjoys telling “war stories”
- ☞ Emotionally guarded
- ☞ Resistant to change
- ☞ Duty driven/mission oriented


PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

- ◆ Excessive sweating, dizzy spells
 - ◆ Increased heart rate, blood pressure,
 - ◆ Rapid breathing
 - ◆ Fatigue
 - ◆ Headaches
 - ◆ Digestive problems
 - ◆ Insomnia
 - ◆ Sexual dysfunction
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Cognitive Symptoms of Stress

- ◆ Confusion in thinking
 - ◆ Lowered concentration
 - ◆ Difficulty making decisions
 - ◆ Memory dysfunction
 - ◆ Decreased problem solving ability
 - ◆ Decline in job performance
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Left untreated these symptoms could lead to:

- ◆ Changes in ordinary living patterns
 - ◆ Changes in eating habits
 - ◆ Increased use of alcohol or other drugs
 - ◆ Decreased personal hygiene
 - ◆ Withdrawal from others
 - ◆ Prolonged silence/moodiness
 - ◆ Aggressive outbursts
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To De-Stress



Talk Openly to Family and Friends



Realize what you're feeling is normal



Keep to a Normal Routine



Exercise



Eat Right



Moderate Use of Alcohol or Any Other Mood Enhancer



Get As Much Rest As You Can



Scenario

- ◆ Your region is responding to a very large incident – similar to Hurricane Katrina. You are coordinating the CIC portion of the response and CIC staffers from other regions are poring in. Knowing what you do now – about yourself and others in the room – how would you talk to them, explain their function and get their buy-in?

Emergency Response Peer Support Team Activities During Katrina & Rita

- ◆ **Being there – providing an ear when responders needed to talk/vent**
- ◆ **An advocate for the responders**
- ◆ **Facilitated variety of recreational events that contributed to stress reduction such as...**
 - Bowling & Dancing Night
 - Movie night
 - Bagels and coffee briefing
 - Ice Cream Breaks
 - Raffle for extra shower time, EPA products
 - Provide a fact sheet about healthy and fun activities to do during your rest time

Lessons Learned from Katrina & Rita Hurricanes Response

- ◆ Initially, the RSC was not factored in the response family
- ◆ Management was not able to define expectations during the first implementation of ICS
- ◆ Unable to prepare the RSC members appropriately
- ◆ Limited communications with responders
- ◆ Reassignment occurred after RSC arrived

Emergency Response Peer Support Team Recruitment

- ◆ CISM members nominate and sponsor new recruits
 - ◆ Recruit's supervisor approves the extra activity
 - ◆ Team Leader interviews and accept recruits
 - ◆ CISM training coordinated
 - ◆ Monthly team conference calls
 - ◆ Annual team conference
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