



The following power point training presentations must be viewed at unit training and/or under the supervision of an OSRT Officer.

Members viewing the presentations must sign a OSRT sign in sheet. The completed sign in sheet must be submitted to the OSRT Planning (Training) Section to receive credit for the training.



Critical Incident Stress Awareness

A Rescuer's Silent Injury

LATF3 appreciates the use of this program. We thank our brothers and sisters from **Ohio Task Force 1** and the following course developers:

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Reference: MRA 105-1, Para.
I.3.f.xv;

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Objectives

- Define the “critical incident.”
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of critical incident stress.
- Define Critical Incident Stress
- Management, its utility and limitations.
- Learn what to expect when attending a defusing or debriefing.
- Learn internal mechanisms to survive an exposure to a critical incident.



Background

- During WWI, the medical community began to recognize a link between the behavior of soldiers and the psychological trauma they encountered.
- Sometimes called “shell shocked”





Background



- Formal CISM for emergency service workers has roots in the 1980's.
- 30% Emergency Services workers will burn out in less than 7 years.
- 10% will commit suicide due to critical incident stress.
- Steve Forbes & Robert O'Donnell.

Background



- In the days following the Oklahoma City bombing, Robert O'Donnell voiced the desire to assist with the rescue operations, but could not go.
- He took his own life due to post traumatic stress events that returned to the surface following the OKC bombing.

What is a “Critical Incident?”



- Any event outside the usual realm of human experience that is markedly distressing and exceeds normal coping mechanisms.
- The individual defines what “their” critical incident or event is. An incident that you may be able to easily cope with, noticeably affects another individual.



Critical Incidents

Line of Duty Death.

- Serious injury in the line of duty.
- Suicide of a peer.
- Serious pediatric illness, injury, or death.
- Multicasualty event that has a high profile in the media.
- Incidents with particularly gruesome injuries or deaths.



Critical Incidents

- Treating or extricating someone you know that is seriously ill or injured.
- Terrorism
- You name it



Physical Symptoms

- Chills
- Thirst
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fainting
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Headaches
- Elevated B/P
- Rapid Pulse
- Visual Disturbances
- Difficulty Breathing
- Profuse Sweating

These may indicate a serious medical condition.



Cognitive Symptoms

- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Uncertainty
- Hypervigilance
- Suspiciousness
- Blaming someone
- Poor problem solving
- Poor attention
- Poor concentration
- Disorientation
- Difficulty identifying
• Objects
- Heightened or
lowered alertness
- Intrusive images

Emotional Symptoms



- Fear
- Guilt
- Grief
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Depression
- Intense anger
- Apprehension
- Emotional outbursts
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Inappropriate emotional response

Behavioral Symptoms



- Withdrawal
- Antisocial acts
- Inability to rest
- Erratic movements
- Change in social activity
- Loss or increase in appetite
- Increased use of alcohol
- Hyper-alert to environment
- Change in usual communications

What is Critical Incident Stress Management?



- It's an organized approach directed at reducing and controlling the harmful effects of stress involving emergent situations.
- It's based in psychology and crisis intervention theory.
- It's education in awareness training, demobilizations, defusings, debriefings, and support services.

What is Critical Incident Stress Management?



- It helps speed the recovery of **normal** people with **normal reactions to abnormal events**.
- Layman's terms – Keeps the rescuer's head in the game so they can come back to work tomorrow and continue to be a good rescuer.

Critical Incident Stress Management – What It's Not



- For only those who “can’t take it.”
- A sign of weakness.
- Counseling.
- Psychotherapy.
- A critique of the response to the incident.

Defusing and Debriefing



- The “bandage” that stops the psyche from bleeding.
- The emotional first aid following a traumatic event or a sequence of traumatic events of a “smaller” scale.

Defusing and Debriefing



- Defusing – A process immediately post event (12-24 hours), symptom driven, that allows for symptom mitigations, possible closure, and identifying those needing further intervention.
- Debriefing – A process within a day to 4 weeks following an event, depending on the size, that facilitates psychological closure, symptom mitigation and identifying those needing further intervention.

Defusing and Debriefing



- Utilizes peer counselors and mental health specialists that have an extensive CISM background and past EMS/Fire/Rescue experience.
- People that understand where you are coming from.

Defusing and Debriefing



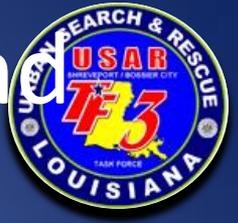
- Without exception, includes only those directly involved in the incident.
- Confidential – no paper, recording devices, etc.
- Safe – allows rescuers to open up.
- Non-judgmental – not a critique of what occurred.

Defusing and Debriefing



- Provides the opportunity to vent the trauma and to learn ways to cope.
- Provides follow up and further help if needed.
- Helps to strengthen the bond of the group and help each other.

Defusing and Debriefing – Ground Rules



- Pagers, radios and phones off for the duration of the session.
- Those in the session are “off duty” to prevent disruption of the group.
- No “rank” exists – everyone is on the same level.
- Participation is voluntary, but encouraged.
- Defusing lasts about 45 minutes.
- Debriefings last about 90 minutes.

Surviving the Critical Incident



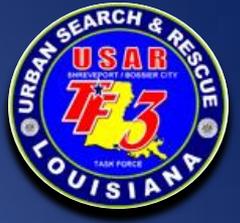
- Do your best to keep work, play, and stress balanced and in control.
- Be aware of critical incident symptoms in yourself and your peers.
- Maintain good nutrition and meal schedules, even when you don't feel like it.
- Exercise
- Rest
- Be good to yourself.



Surviving the Critical Incident

- It is our responsibility to ourselves, our family, and the victims we rescue to remain in the game by staying healthy.
- Look out for your partner and other team members. Ask them if you can help or if they'd like a CISM team.

Recover Emotionally...



But Never Forget