

## Help For Helpers...

### Accessing Your CISM Team

The SWOCISM Team responds to requests throughout southwest Ohio and southeast Indiana. The SWOCISM Team will respond to official mutual aid requests throughout Ohio, Kentucky and/or when called upon by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. Administrators, Officers and Supervisors may request CISM support directly or by their designee by calling their dispatcher or by calling 888-226-0435 (Ohio only) or 513-820-0030 and pressing in your call-back number and area code. The On-Duty Team Coordinator will return a call to you within 20 minutes or less. The SWOCISM Team Coordinator will ask the following information:

- Your name, title and telephone number
- Your agency name, address and telephone number
- The nature of the incident
- The perceived urgency of the situation, i.e., requiring the most appropriate immediate or scheduled CISM intervention and/or referral
- Location of intervention, number of participants and disciplines represented

### Responsibilities

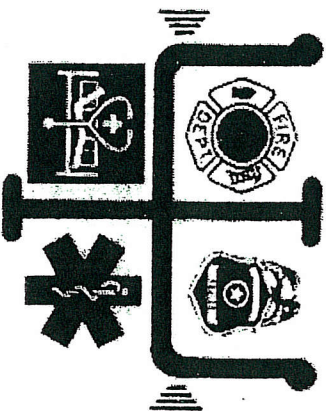
Your agency will be asked to notify all participants invited to attend a CISM intervention regarding time, location or special issues prior to the intervention. The location should be quiet, comfortable, space suitable for the expected group size and free from interruptions. The personnel are expected and will benefit greatly to be off duty during any CISM debriefing. SWOCISM interventions are provided by trained volunteer professionals at no charge to any agency. Donations are greatly appreciated and benefit your SWOCISM team with training, education, pager expense and phone service. Your financial support and generosity can be sent to: SWOCISM Team, P. O. Box 62445, Cincinnati, OH 45262-0445.

All information discussed during a CISM intervention is strictly confidential and will not be discussed with anyone in the intervention. Ohio State Law R.C. 2317.02 and 4117.14 provides testimonial privilege and immunity for critical incident stress management team members that are members of the Ohio CISM Network.

## Southwest Ohio Critical Incident Stress Management Team, Inc.

# HELP FOR HELPERS...

*To accelerate recovery of normal people  
experiencing normal reactions to  
abnormal events*



Non-Emergency 513-563-2172 and Fax: 513-417-8291

Email: [kingedrington@cinci.rr.com](mailto:kingedrington@cinci.rr.com)

Webpage: [www.cism-southwestohio.org](http://www.cism-southwestohio.org)

**Serving:** Community Public Safety Services, Schools, Military, Communication Specialists, Industry, Critical Care Providers and their families. This may include: Police, Fire, EMS, School Community, 911, Hospitals, Critical Care Providers, Flight Rescue, American Red Cross, and the Salvation Army.

A registered member of the International Critical Stress Foundation and a charter member of the Ohio CISM Network.

## Help For Helpers. . .

### *The Challenge. . .*

#### **Unique Stressors Encountered**

Helper professions have become increasingly aware of the toll that stress encountered within their chosen professions takes and how that stress may impact the quality of their lives. The very nature of their jobs expose these individuals routinely or periodically to stressful events which they may or may not be able to work through satisfactorily.

#### **Factors That Cause Stress**

Multiple factors affect an individual's response to stress and include factors specific to the stressor, such as an individual's personal characteristics, intensity of the event, past experiences, learned behaviors and personal and professional resources available. Stress is unique to the individual as beauty is to the eye of the beholder. . . personal. What may stress one individual in a situation may not be stressful to others. Stress can be cumulative over a number of incidents or unusual events over time.

It has been demonstrated that certain events such as the death of a child, death of a co-worker, suicide, high-rise fires, multiple casualties, natural disasters and terrorism are particularly stressful for providers and their families. Any of these events, plus a host of others, may cause or contribute to a critical incident.

A *critical incident* has been defined by Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell, PhD, as, "Any event that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of an individual—and impact their ability to function either during the incident or later." Dr. Mitchell is a researcher, instructor and author on stress and disaster psychology, and founder of the multiple component crisis intervention system of care (CISM) that includes the 7-phase (CISD) process—now referred to as the ICISF (International Critical Incident Stress Foundation) model.

SWOCISM Team Coordinator  
Hamilton County Communication Center 513-825-2260

## Help For Helpers. . .

### *A Solution. . .*

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.

Through the ICISF—CISM process, individuals are provided a tool that can potentially alleviate overwhelming physical, cognitive, behavioral, psychological and spiritual reactions. The CISM process addresses very real issues that may contribute to the loss of valuable employees and organizations, thereby preserving careers, resources, expertise and human caring.

#### **The Process**

The Stress Management Team consists of a highly competent team of volunteer professionals trained in the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation models for crisis intervention. They maintain a high level of competence through regular continued education and continued quality reviews. These individuals are carefully selected from the following disciplines:

*Police, fire, EMS, school administrators, teachers, staff,  
hospital critical care providers, 911 communication  
specialists, social services, licensed/certified mental  
health providers, chaplains, industrial first responders  
and military professionals*

The SWOCISM Team provides a multi-component full service crisis intervention team made up of peer professionals, mental health, chaplains/clergy and peer family members. Agencies, departments, individuals and family members can access any of the following services:

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Pre-Incident Education and Preparation               | Disaster Management      |
| On-Scene Support Services                            | Demobilization           |
| Individual Crisis Intervention                       | Debriefing               |
| Crisis Management Briefings                          | Debriefing               |
| Administrative Staff Consultation                    | Family, Schools, Student |
| Emergency Responders In Need—Substance Abuse Program |                          |

Southwest Ohio Critical Incident Stress

## 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        |
| "Emergency Responder In Need" - Substance Abuse/Addiction |                          |

### 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.

Southwest Ohio CISM Team, Inc.

P. O. Box 62445

Cincinnati, OH 45262-0445

24 On-Duty Team Coordinator—Hamilton County Communications

Center—513-825-2260

Non-Emergency Information—513-563-2172

Email: [kingeddrington@cinci.rr.com](mailto:kingeddrington@cinci.rr.com)

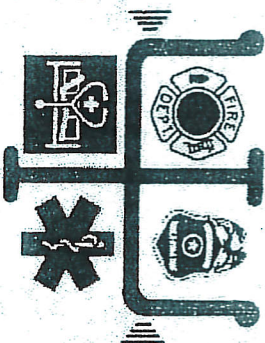
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Southwest Ohio Critical Incident  
Stress Management Team, Inc.

# 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.

24 Hour—Team Coordinator

Hamilton County Communications Center 513-825-2260

## 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:

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Poor Concentration                     | Cognitive                      |
| Poor Attention Span                    | Difficulties With Calculations |
| Slowed Problem Solving                 | Difficulty Making Decisions    |
|  | Memory Problems                |
| Guilt                                  | Emotional                      |
| Depression                             | Feeling Lost/Overwhelmed       |
| Grief                                  | Anxiety/Fear                   |
| Anger                                  | Loss Of Emotional Control      |
| Muscle Tremors                         | Physical                       |
| Gastrointestinal Distress              | Chest Pains                    |
| Headaches                              | Difficulty Breathing           |
|  | Elevated Blood Pressure        |
| Excessive Silence                      | Behavioral                     |
| Extreme Behavioral Change              | Sleep Disturbances             |
| Withdrawal From Contact                | Changes In Eating Habits       |
|  | Change In Work Habits          |
| Uncharacteristic Religious Involvement | Spiritual                      |
| Sense Of Isolation From God            | Anger At Clergy                |
| Loss Of Meaning Or Purpose             | Questioning Basic Beliefs      |
| Withdrawal From Place Of Worship       | Faith Practices Seem Empty     |
|  | 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

## Hearts and Sirens — A Family Program

### Benefits of a CISM Intervention:

- Reduces stress experienced at work and home.
- Reduces feelings of isolation and abnormality.
- Prevents onset of delayed psychological reactions.
- Improves coping skills for future incidents.
- Reduces effects of stress-related diseases.
- Reduces early retirement due to job related stressor, accidents, injuries and/or disease.
- Enhances job satisfaction.
- Supports professionals and their families in time of need.
- Provides educational and psychological support for job related stress.
- Promotes educational and psychological support for job related stress.
- Promotes support for on-going research that will aid the provider.
- Promotes and supports on-going research that will aid the management of job related stress and diseases for the professional and their family.



### REQUEST FOR SERVICES:

Request for CISM Information and Services:

24 hour On-Duty Team Coordinator Hamilton County Communication Center 513-825-2260

Non-Emergency Office 513-563-2172 and Fax 513-417-8291

Email: [kingeddington@cinci.rr.com](mailto:kingeddington@cinci.rr.com) or [mike.kroeger@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:mike.kroeger@cincinnati-oh.gov)

Webpage: [www.cism-southwestohio.org](http://www.cism-southwestohio.org)

Address: P. O. Box 62445, Cincinnati, OH 45262-0445

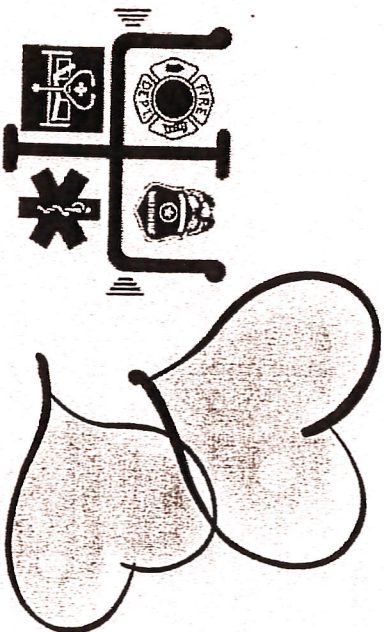
### SERVING SOUTHWEST OHIO:

- A Registered Member of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation
- A Charter Member of the Ohio CISM Network
- A 501C3 Not for Profit Agency #31-1426113

Southwest Ohio Critical Incident  
Stress Management Team, Inc.

# HEARTS AND SIRENS

*A Service Dedicated to the Laid Ones  
of Helper Provider 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.

24 Hour—Team Coordinator

Hamilton County Communication Center 513-825-2260

## Hearts and Sirens — A Family Program

### *Your Loved One has experienced a Critical Incident*

#### **What is a Critical Incident?**

A critical incident is defined as any event that overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms and may have impacted the ability to function effectively during the critical incident.

#### **Informational Facts:**

- He/She may be experiencing some NORMAL stress responses to such an event. Critical incident stress affects up to 87% of all helper professionals.
- No one is immune from the impact of critical incident stress regardless of past experiences or years of service. Your loved one may experience critical incident stress at any time during their career.
- Your loved one may experience a variety of thoughts and reactions of a stress response OR they may experience numbness or absence of any response.
- You may not understand what your loved one is going through at this time, but offer your love, support and acceptance.
- Don't be afraid to ask what you can do that they would consider helpful.
- Accept the fact that life will go on; theirs, yours, your children, and others around you.
- Attempt to maintain or return to normal routine as soon as possible.
- Avoid entering into major decisions following a critical incident. Your loved one's ability to process information, problem solve, and make decisions may be hampered at this time.

## Hearts and Sirens — A Family Program

#### **What is Helpful...**

- Talking is GOOD medicine. . . LISTENING is the KEY...
- Encourage well-balanced and regular meals that include foods they enjoy.
- Encourage plenty of rest.
- Provide some "Private Time".
- Exercise together even if only a brisk walk.
- Suffering? Don't take their anger and frustration personally. Talk to a trusted friend or pastor.
- Encourage, but do not pressure your loved one to talk about their experience.
- Offer expressions of support and that you are sorry such an event occurred and you want to understand.
- Avoid trying to fix things! AVOID statements such as, "It could have been worse." OR "It's fate." OR "They asked for it." OR "It's God's will." OR "Quit if it bothers you that much!" OR "Don't take it out on us."
- Reassure them they are safe.

#### **Remember...**

- Suffering from the effects of critical incident stress is "individual" and completely normal.
- Your loved one is probably not the only one that may be experiencing critical incident related stress. They are probably sharing some of their thoughts and reactions.
- The thoughts and reactions will normally subside and disappear in time. All phases of our lives overlap and influence each other: personal, professional, family, financial, spiritual, etc.
- The impact of critical incident stress can be intensified / influenced or mitigated by our own personal perspective and the status of family, profession, financial, etc.
- If the signs of stress that your loved one is experiencing do not begin to subside within a few weeks OR if they intensify, consider seeking further assistance through your CISM Team, EAP, or managed care system of care.
- The Southwest Ohio CISM Team, Inc. can help you, your loved one, or child find a professional who understands critical incident stress and how it can impact you and your family.
- Need Help? Call 24 hours a day call Hamilton County Communication Center 513-825-2260. The On-Duty Team Coordinator will return your call in less than 15 minutes.