

What is Critical Incident Stress Management?

A PRIMER ON CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM)

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As crises and disasters become epidemic, the need for effective crisis response capabilities becomes obvious. Crisis intervention programs are recommended and even mandated in a wide variety of community and occupational settings (Everly and Mitchell, 1997). Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) represents a powerful, yet cost-effective approach to crisis response (Everly, Flannery, & Mitchell, in press; Flannery, 1998; Everly & Mitchell, 1997) which unfortunately is often misrepresented and misunderstood.

What is CISM? CISM is a comprehensive, integrative, multicomponent crisis intervention system. CISM is considered comprehensive because it consists of multiple crisis intervention components, which functionally span the entire temporal spectrum of a crisis. CISM interventions range from the pre-crisis phase through the acute crisis phase, and into the post-crisis phase. CISM is also considered comprehensive in that it consists of interventions which may be applied to individuals, small functional groups, large groups, families, organizations, and even communities. The 7 core components of CISM are defined below and are summarized in TABLE 1.

1. Pre-crisis preparation. This includes stress management education, stress resistance, and crisis mitigation training for both individuals and organizations.
2. Disaster or large-scale incident, as well as, school and community support programs including demobilizations, informational briefings, "town meetings" and staff advisement
3. Defusing. This is a 3-phase, structured small group discussion provided within hours of a crisis for purposes of assessment, triaging, and acute symptom mitigation.
4. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) refers to the "Mitchell model" (Mitchell and Everly, 1996) 7-phase, structured group discussion, usually provided 1 to 10 days post crisis, and designed to mitigate acute symptoms, assess the need for follow-up, and if possible provide a sense of post-crisis psychological closure.
5. One-on-one crisis intervention/counseling or psychological support throughout the full range of the crisis spectrum.
6. Family crisis intervention, as well as, organizational consultation.
7. Follow-up and referral mechanisms for assessment and treatment, if necessary

What Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Courses are offered in Alaska?

- 1) Individual Peer Support
- 2) Small Group
- 3) Advance Group
- 4) Patoral Critical Incident Stress management
- 5) Suicide Prevention; Postvention and Intervention
- 6) Three Day Combned Individual and Group CISM
- 7) National Guard Model: Trained CISM Responder (TCR) CISM course
- 8) Bi-Annual ICISF Conference; normally held in Anchorage

Who can take the courses? The audience for CISM courses vary depending on interest, previous training, classes include both emergency services, military, and business/industrial peer support personnel without formal training in mental health, as well as mental health professionals, who desire to increase their knowledge.

The Advanced Group Crisis Intervention training program has been designed to provide participants with the latest information on critical incident stress management techniques and post-trauma syndromes. The program emphasizes a broadening of the knowledge base concerning critical incident stress interventions as well as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder which was established in the basic program and/or in publications. At the conclusion of this educational program the participants will have been exposed to specific, proven strategies to intervene with those suffering the ill effects of their exposure to trauma. The emphasis will be on advanced defusings and debriefings in complex situations.

The Advanced Group Crisis Intervention training has been developed for EAP, human resources and public safety personnel, mental health professionals, chaplains, paramedics, firefighters, physicians, police officers, nurses, dispatchers, airline personnel and disaster workers who are already trained in the critical incident stress debriefing format. It will also be useful for those who are working extensively with traumatized

When and where are the courses offered?

Organizations and communities contract APFCM to provide CISM and other training throughout Alaska; e.g., Homer, Juneau, Bethel, Kotzebue, Barrow, Ketchikan, Nome, Palmer, and Valdez. Several ICISF/CISM Courses are offered in the Spring and Fall in Anchorage each year.

How do I register and what is the cost?

You can register on-line or contact APFCM at apcm@apcm.org ; also contact APFCM to be notified about course schedules or arrange for training in your area. Also, watch our website www.apcm.org . Our individual cost is on our website; multiple course discounts, group discounts and agency sponsored training cost are reviewed and offered on a case by case basis.

Who are the trainers?

Chaplain Bert McQueen, CMC, MSW is a Recognized Trained Trainer for the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation courses.

Chaplain Bert McQueen, CMC, MSW is a Certified Master Chaplain with the International Conference of Police Chaplains'. He is a recognized instructor with the ICISF for the "Small Group" CISM and "Individual/Peer Support/Crisis Intervention Strategies" and the National Guards "Trained Crisis Responder" and the "Pastoral Crisis Intervention" and the "Advance Group" CISM and "Suicide: Prevention, Intervention and Postvention" courses and has earned a "Certificate of Specialized Training" in "Terrorism and Mass Disaster" from ICISF.

Chaplain McQueen is the founder of several programs in Alaska; The Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains' Ministries, that provides Chaplains' services throughout Alaska, The Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains' Association, that promotes standardization and professionalism in the law enforcement and fire chaplaincy, the Alaska CISM Teams Network, the Palmer/Wasilla CISM Team and the Anchorage CISM team that provide a complete program for stress management for the Alaska Law Enforcement and Rescue community and the communities they serve.

Chaplain McQueen has served as a Police and Fire Chaplain in Alaska for thirty years, and is considered one of the leaders in the field of Emergency Services Chaplaincy and Traumatology in Alaska and has received national recognition for his leadership in Law Enforcement Chaplaincy and from the ICISF organization. Chaplain McQueen is also the Lt Col. (Command) Chaplain for the 49th Readiness Brigade, DMVA, ASDF.

Other ICISF Trained Trainer qualifications: When ICISF Conferences are offered; APFCM coordinates with ICISF to provide individual experts in a variety of courses; e.g., CISM – application; School, Law Enforcement, Rescue-Emergency Services, Terrorism and Mass Disaster, Grief, Line of Duty Death, Complex PTSD, Psychotraumatology and others.