

CAP's CISM Program

- Availability mandated throughout the organization with voluntary participation by individual members.
- Implementation by CAPR 60-5.
- All personnel are encouraged to receive CIS Awareness training.

CISM Goals

- **Mitigate** distress
- **Facilitate** psychological normalization & lower tension
- **Accelerate** the recovery process
- **Provide** information and set reactions.
- **Educate** on stress management and coping skills.
- **Control** rumors.
- **Engender** increased cohesion and morale.
- **Reduce** the sense of chaos.
- **Psychological** triage and referral if needed.

CISM Menu of Services

"Tactics"

- Pre-event Planning, Preparation and Education
- Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Large Group Crisis Intervention
- Small Group Crisis Intervention
- Individual Crises Intervention
- Family Crisis Intervention
- Organizational / Community Intervention, Consultation
- Pastoral Crisis Intervention
- Follow-up and Referral



For more information concerning:

- CISM Service for you or your group
- Team Membership
- Training Opportunities
 - Overview of CISM
 - Intro to CAP CISM
 - Command Officer & IC CISM
 - Official ICISF classes
 - Other trainings

Visit the National CISM web site:

www.cism.cap.gov

Contact your local Wing or Region CISM Officer at

Texas Wing

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Southwest Region

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Thank you for your service to CAP and America!



Critical Incident Stress Management

A comprehensive, multi-component, phase sensitive, integrated, systematic, peer-driven support program for our most valuable assets-our members.

What is a critical incident?

"Any event in which there is a stressful impact that is sufficient enough to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of either an individual or a group." (Everly & Mitchell 1999)

Crisis Intervention

Crisis intervention can be considered psychological or emotional first aid- a "booster shot" for the member's normal coping skills. It is temporary but active and supportive during a period of extreme distress. Normal psychological healing (coping) is supported and encouraged while monitoring for potential problems later on- a type of psychological damage control.

The goal is to assist CAP members in returning to the tasks they enjoy after psychological traumatizing event, a critical incident.

Crises intervention is provided by specially trained peers and mental health professionals.

What do I need to know?

Anyone, no matter how healthy or psychologically well adjusted, who is exposed to a critical incident or trauma, may have reactions to the event. Approximately 80% to 85% of those exposed to a critical incident will have reactions (although not necessarily dysfunctional or disabling) within 24 hours. It is important for you to be aware of the stresses around you. If you experience any kind of reaction beyond what you believe is “normal”, it is important for you to get appropriate assistance.

A common **misunderstanding** about critical incident reactions is that there is personal weakness in the individual. The implication is that a healthy functioning person will be unaffected by the traumatic or critical incident no matter how gruesome, gory, or disturbing the scene may be. This is just not the case.

How could it affect me?

Everyone will respond to trauma or a critical incident in his or her own way. Some reactions to critical incidents are perfectly normal, but not everyone experiences the incident in the same way. Some reactions may indicate problems coping with the incident.

Variables that affect all of us include:

- Our support or lack of support,
- The extent of the trauma,
- Our prior exposure to trauma,
- How we psychologically processed prior traumas,
- How much the current incident reminded us of some past personal issue.

These variables coupled with the current event **and** our current life stressors have a bearing on our reactions.

Critical incident stress reactions may include:

- Physical reactions**
- Cognitive reactions**
- Behavioral reactions**
- Emotional reactions**
- Spiritual reactions**

What can I do about this?

It's true that people can work through critical incidents on their own with the assistance of their previously learned coping mechanisms. Research has proven that healing and recovery is much more rapid with some people when it is processed in a group or with another person who has had a similar experience. The processes of critical incident stress management (CISM), whether one-to-one or in a group, is a private conversation about the critical incident. Specific gruesome details do not have to be relived. Discussion of how the incident does or does not fit with your world view may help alleviate psychological tension. CISM is not an operational critique to assign blame or criticize. Personal records are not kept. CISM is not psychotherapy—nor a substitute for it.

Stress reduction takes practice:

- **Relax** during stressful time by using deep breathing exercises. Try taking a 4 second breath in, holding it for 4 seconds, and releasing it for 4 seconds. Repeat.
- **Eat nutritiously:** Fresh fruits, vegetables and fiber. Limit your caffeine, alcohol and sugar intake.
- **Exercise regularly:** Vigorous exercise is especially beneficial after an incident.

- **Keep** a regular sleep schedule. Stay rested. Nightmares are a common reaction to a traumatic stress. Insomnia will probably resolve itself in a few days.
- **Enjoy life outside of work:** Be kind to yourself, go to a movie, a play or out to dinner, etc. Diversions can be healthy coping mechanisms.
- **Develop support mechanisms:** Share your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust. Make sure that the other person understands that you are not asking for a solution to your feelings, just an opportunity to express how you feel.
- **Structure your time:** Get back into your normal routine. Familiarity and routine predictability will aide in quicker return to normalcy.
- **Give yourself time.** You may sense yourself being “off balance” psychologically for a while as you think about the event and what it means to you personally. Verbally “bouncing ideas off” trusted friends or colleagues can help your own processing of the event.
- **Spend time with others.** Being and talking with others who experienced the same event can be comforting and helpful to everyone. Being around others who did not experience the event can also be helpful in seeing that there is life after the event.
- **If you do experience uncomfortable reactions, contact a CISM team member.** Sometimes a combination of current life situations, coupled with an event in CAP, can be too much to deal with. CISM team members, just like other job duties in CAP, are specifically trained in how to help.