


Chapter:	Staff Safety & Wellness	Classification:	Public Document
Subject:	Critical Incident Stress Management		
For:	Entire Division	 Authorized by Executive Director	

1. Policy

1.1 Correctional Services will respond to critical incidents with the appropriate critical incident stress management (CISM) intervention techniques.

2. General

2.1 The purpose of the CISM program is to provide timely and effective assistance to individuals involved in critical incidents, thereby neutralizing symptoms of critical incident stress (CIS) and prevent help to the development of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

3. Definitions

3.1 **Critical incident:** Any incident that causes unusually strong emotions that can surpass normal human coping ability. Such incidents usually involve deaths or serious injuries or the perception that there was high risk of death or serious injury.


3.2 **Critical incident stress:** A human reaction to critical incidents which overwhelms the coping mechanisms. Characteristics include interference with interpersonal relationships, behavioural changes, absenteeism and psychological and physiological changes.

3.3 **Critical incident stress debriefing:** It is a formal seven step procedure which assists staff in understanding their reactions to a critical or traumatic incident and helps them to cope with post incident reactions. This procedure can be used as a screening tool to identify staff who may require additional assistance.

3.4 **Defusing:** An abbreviated debriefing process used shortly after a traumatic or critical incident.

3.5 **Operational debriefing:** A process that examines the roles that staff are involved in during an incident. Operational debriefings may also be referred to as critiques or evaluations. Unlike CIS debriefings, they do not focus on staff emotional response.

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4. CIS Debriefing

- 4.1 A CIS debriefing may be requested by the following
 - 4.1.1 the manager, supervisor, peer, or any individual who has been involved in a critical incident
 - 4.1.2 this request will be directed to the provincial CIS Coordinator for follow-up planning.
- 4.2 If it is uncertain as to whether a CIS debriefing should be initiated, the decision will be made by the provincial CISM Coordinator, after consultation with the coordinator, manager, or supervisor.
- 4.3 The respective director will be advised of any planned defusing or debriefing session(s) when it is determined that a formal CIS debriefing is to be conducted. In the case of a debriefing, it should be conducted within two (2) to seven (7) days post incident. **EXCEPTION:** When a line of duty death occurs, the scheduling will be determined in consultation with the Provincial Coordinator.
- 4.4 Participation in a CIS debriefing is optional but strongly encouraged by all staff directly involved with the incident.
- 4.5 CIS debriefings will be conducted by approved CIS teams comprised of a team leader and peer debriefers.
- 4.6 Staff who are directly involved in the related incident will not participate as a member of the CIS team involved with that incident.

5. Documentation

- 5.1 Staff reports for official investigative or court purposes will be completed before participating in CIS debriefings.
- 5.2 Reports of critical incident stress debriefs will include only the date, time, place, facilitator(s), peer support people, a description of the incident and the number of participants from corrections and other agencies.

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5.3 Records of debriefings completed will be maintained by the provincial CISM Coordinator. The records will include the date, number of participants, length of debriefing, and names of CISM team members.

6. CIS Team

- 6.1 A provincial CISM Coordinator will be appointed by the Executive Director, Correctional Services. The provincial CISM Coordinator will possess an acceptable level of operational experience.
- 6.2 Peer debriefers will be selected through an expression of interest to assist with debriefings and will reflect the need and staff profile.
- 6.3 Peer debriefers will possess acceptable operational experience and training.
- 6.4 Peer support persons and coordinators will meet at least once a year to review Policy and Procedures and participate in refresher training.