EFFECTIVE CRISIS RESPONSE
FOR GROUPS
A guide for Assessing and Intervening with Groups in Crisis
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INTRODUCTION

DEVELOPERS of this Course

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SETTING EXPECTATIONS

- During this course:
  Classroom management; time management; course materials; participation;
  learning objectives; etc.

- After this course
  Certification; response objectives; continuing education; supervision/
  consultation; follow up support

COURSE OBJECTIVES

☐ Key terms and introductory concepts relevant to the practice of GROUP crisis intervention

☐ Delivering effective large group and small group crisis intervention

☐ Completing effective strategic planning
POP QUIZ

Name: ___________________________                      Date: _________________________

1. Identify one (1) mild, moderate OR severe reaction of the following:
   a) THINKING: ________________________________________________________________
   b) FEELING: ________________________________________________________________
   c) DOING/ BEHAVING: _________________________________________________________
   d) BELIEVING: ________________________________________________________________
   e) BODY: ________________________________________________________________

2. Identify one (1) of the factors that influence the stress response:
   a) EXTERNAL: ________________________________________________________________
   b) INTERNAL: ________________________________________________________________

3. Identify one (1) effective response for the following:
   a) THINKING: ________________________________________________________________
   b) FEELING: ________________________________________________________________
   c) DOING/ BEHAVING: _________________________________________________________
   d) BELIEVING: ________________________________________________________________
   e) BODY: ________________________________________________________________

4. Circle TRUE or FALSE:
   A GROUP is a collection of individuals.

5. What is NOT the GOAL of Group Crisis Intervention:
   a) Lower the impact of the event and lower tension
   b) Return to adaptive functioning
   c) Facilitate normal recovery process
   d) Refer everyone to mental health because Peers & Chaplains are not mental health professionals and therefore, can do nothing to help those in need.

Score: ___________________________
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**KEY TERMS & CONCEPTS**

**WHAT IS A GROUP?**

- A GROUP is a collection of INDIVIDUALS
- Individuals that have various STRESS REACTIONS & certain FACTORS that influence their stress response.

**CHALLENGE OF GROUPS**

- ADDRESS needs of GROUP AND needs of INDIVIDUALS in that group

**TYPES OF GROUPS**

- **Primary groups** - groups in which the members have warm, personal ties with one another; AKA: **Homogeneous**
  - several individuals are united
  - thought of as a unit; work as one
  - members are in frequent contact with one another
  - members mutually support each other
  - members have commonality in interests, beliefs, tasks, training, procedures, etc.

- **Secondary groups** - larger, less specific in which the members are more impersonal towards each other; AKA: **Heterogeneous**
  - more loosely bonded - do not have relationship links similar to primary groups
  - goals are more general; instead of "mission-minded" all working as one
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- Examples - professional associations; school systems; armies; etc.

- Random groups - not really groups in the true sense of the word; instead, they are gatherings of people who have very little that bond them together
  - They are only a "group" because they share some space during some certain period of time
  - Examples - travelers on plane, train; shoppers in a mall; audience in a theatre; etc.

BENEFITS OF GROUP CI
- Rumor control
- Acceleration of recovery
- Normalize reactions
- Encourage emotional ventilation
- Prevention of unnecessary after-effects
- Increase morale
- Access to leadership

Check on Learning:

- Homogeneous Group has all BUT the following in common:
  
a) Mission-oriented; team before the event
b) Experienced the event in a similar way
c) Must be mission-oriented; team after the event
d) Must have same political party affiliation
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EFFECTIVE LARGE GROUP INTERVENTIONS

R.I.T.S
Rest
Information
Transition
Services

• Formerly known as “demobilization” in the ICSIF lexicon
• Passive process lasting 30 minutes or less
• Usually, a one time (end of shift; end of deployment)

  Large-group information process for emergency services, military or other operations staff who have been exposed to a significant traumatic event ...

RITS HELPFUL IN LARGE SCALE OPERATIONS

• Natural or Man-made Disaster
• Terrorist attack
• Major search operation
• Major wild land fire

RITS APPLIED?

• Immediately after a unit completes first shift
• Before unit is released to go home or assigned to non-disaster duties
• One-time offering
**RITS—SET UP**

- Large room/area with chairs for informational sessions, if possible
- Large food service room for rest and refreshment
- Ample supply of food and fluids for hungry and tired crews

**PARTS OF RITS**

- A 10-minute info session on operation, as well as info on stress & stress management
- A very brief period of instructions from unit leaders on either a return to non-disaster duties or release to home
- Time for rest period with food and fluids

**POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP INTERVENTIONS FOR RITS**

- Small group discussion
- 1-on-1 support
- Follow up large meetings
- Post incident education programs

**CHECK ON LEARNING:**

1. R.I.T.S. stands for:
   - R: ______________________
   - I: ______________________
   - T: ______________________
   - S: ______________________

2. Circle TRUE or FALSE:
   - RITS intervention can be used as a large group intervention as often as needed.
RESPITE CENTERS

- On-going and less structured than RITS
- Most commonly used for on-going events
- Provides areas for rest and / or diversion (e.g., TV, games) appropriate for use in ongoing event
- Provides food and fluids
- Large group briefings may take place here
- Provides informational handouts
- Provides opportunity to assess physical and psychological status/ needs of personnel

CHECK ON LEARNING:

- If you were to set up a Respite Center for a disaster event in your area, who would you count on to provide “supplies”?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

- If you were to set up a Respite Center for a disaster event in your area, who would you count on to “staff” it?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
CRISIS MANAGEMENT BRIEFING (CMB)

- May be utilized with a traumatic event of any size that impacts a large number of people
- Applicable to school, business, church, industrial, organizational and community based populations
- Has military and emergency services applications as well

CMB GOALS
- Provide information
- Provide a sense of leadership
- Reduce sense of chaos
- Enhance credibility
- Rumor control
- Provide coping resources
- Engender cohesion, morale
- Re-establish a sense of community
- Psychological screening

AVERAGE TIME FOR CMB
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10-30 minutes -- Depending on circumstances & needs of the group

CMB IS NOT:

- **NOT** a press conference. Media are not permitted
- **NOT** psychotherapy
- **NOT** a focus group

PHASES OF THE CMB

1. **ASSEMBLE** groups
2. Credible rep. presents facts of the situation
3. Team member reviews impact of event and typical symptoms
4. Suggestions are provided for coping and stress management, and resources for follow-up are reviewed

Opportunity for Q&A

PHASES OF A CMB INFO PUSH

- “Start with your heart” (when loss)
- Statement of expectation
  - Event unexpected
  - _________ reactions are expected
- Suggestive &/or Directive guidance (here & now)
- Identify strengths / instill hope
- Summarize (mention handouts, contact info, etc.)
- Back to leadership for Q&A
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Caution:

Never allow a CMB to degenerate into name calling, accusations
And/or a general forum for organization or leadership bashing

LAB:

Write “Info Push” –
CISM section of RITS & CMB then...Present to group

Check on Learning:

• Write the “info push” of a CMB for the following scenario:

“Officer dies in car accident and wasn’t wearing a seatbelt”

According to reports, Officer Toby Jacobs was killed in his marked cruiser during a crash which occurred near mile marker 79 at about 2:15 a.m. Saturday. He was not wearing his seatbelt.

Officer Jacobs had just completed a traffic control assignment and was driving back to his assigned area when the crash occurred. The officer’s canine partner sustained very minor injuries.

Officer Jacobs was hit by a Honda driven by a 32-year-old woman reportedly going the wrong way on the interstate just minutes before.

There are reports that he was being followed by a colleague who had just been on the same detail and the second officer pulled the fatally injured deputy from the cruiser. The deputy was flown to Memorial Medical Center where he died.
3-PHASE SMALL GROUP

- Formerly known as “Immediate Small Group Support”
- Which was formerly known as “Defusing”

3-PHASE
- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION following critical event
- TIMING: Typically provided immediately to 12-hours following event
  Ideal for SHOCK & DISRUPTION state!!
- STRUCTURE: 3 phases
- DURATION: brief (often 30 min or less)
- LOCATION: Best in secluded room adequate for the purpose
- GROUP: Homogeneous group only

3-PHASE GOALS

- Normalization / lower tension
- Set expectations, provide information
- Discuss coping methods
- Identify those who need additional support
THE 3-PHASES:

1. INTRODUCTION – Introduce team; lay out the guidelines; lower anxiety about the process

2. EXPLORATION – Allows a brief discussion of the experience. A brief “story” of the event

3. INFORMATION – Provide information, normalize, teach, guidance, summarize key points

INTRODUCTION PHASE:
- Introduce team members
- State purpose / describe process
- Set ground rules
- Stress confidentiality
- Be quick

EXPLORATION PHASE:
- Ask for brief description of event
- Ask clarifying questions
- Group members share experiences of the event only as much as they wish
- Look for themes / concerns
- Assess need for more help
- Reassure as necessary
EXPLORATION

DON'T FORGET ACTIVE LISTENING & CRISIS COMMUNICATION:

- Mirroring
- Use of Silence
- Reflection of Emotion
- Questions & Furthering Statements
- VALIDATE; VALIDATE; VALIDATE!

INFORMATION PHASE:

- Identify FACTORS & REACTIONS
- Verify & validate experiences and/or reactions
- Teach key stress survival skills
- Emphasize taking care of self
- Rest / family life / stress management
- Offer additional help such as one-on-ones

ADDRESS the REACTIONS:

- THINKING - cognitive reframe; provide information; explore options
- FEELING - VALIDATE; label emotions; anticipate reactions
- DOING / BEHAVING - ID coping skills; encourage routine; establish a “Plan of Action”; avoid risk-taking; impulsive behaviors
- BELIEVE - Instill HOPE; engage people, places and things that bring peace and/or energize spirit
- BODY - breathe; stretch; hydrate; nutrition; exercise (walk - bi-lateral stimulation); sleep; minimize alcohol, sugar, processed foods; etc.
Check on Learning:

- ROLE PLAY 3-PHASE - (for background, see CMB Scenario):
  “Officer dies in car accident and wasn’t wearing a seatbelt”

Role #1:
Your name is: ______________ and you’re the officer who was following Officer Toby Jacobs when the crash occurred and pulled him from the vehicle. You performed first aid on Officer Jacobs but he was not responsive. You assisted in caring for his K-9 partner.

ROLE #2:
Your name is: ______________ and you’re the officer who was originally dispatched to the traffic control assignment but decided to conduct a traffic stop on a suspicious vehicle. Because you were on that traffic stop, the dispatcher re-assigned the traffic control assignment to Officer Jacobs.

You learned about the accident over the radio moments after it happened. You responded to the scene as Jacobs’ body was being loaded into the ambulance. You see the 2nd Officer with Jacobs’ canine partner and you learn from him/her that Jacobs was in fact dead.

ROLE #3:
Your name is: ______________ and you are Officer Jacobs’ Training Officer and mentored him for four months during the Field Training Officer (FTO) program. You were responsible for teaching him operationally all of the things that he learned in the academy, although you did not insist that he wear his seatbelt because you did not wear your seatbelt. You wanted him to be able to jump out quickly and “catch the bad guys”.

You became close friends because you both enjoyed fishing and camping with your families and even spent a couple of vacations together when your kids and his kids were out of school for the summer. You had plans to camp with his family in the mountains this weekend. You were off duty when Jacobs was transported to the hospital and died. You went as soon as you heard and met the family in the ER.
7-PHASE SMALL GROUP

- Formerly known as “Powerful Event Group Support” (PEGS)
- Which was formerly known as “Critical Incident Stress Debriefing” (CISD)

7-PHASE GOALS

- Mitigate distress
- Facilitate psychological normalization ...
- Set appropriate expectations for psychological / behavioral reactions
- Serve as a forum for stress management education
- Identification of coping resources
- Serve as a platform for triage and referral

7-PHASE TEAM

- Minimum: 2 CISM trained team members
- At least 1 Mental Health Professional (MHP) or qualified Chaplain
- Other team member(s) may be “peer support personnel,” spiritual leader/chaplain another mental health, or physical health professional
ALL TEAM MEMBERS MUST BE TRAINED IN the 7-phase small group process!
PLANNING THE 7-PHASE

- SIZE: Small group (3-20)
- DURATION: range 45 min – 1.5 hours
- TIMING: 1-10 days for most incidents ... Timing has more to do with PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS than the passage of time
- LOCATION: Room with chairs placed in a circle or around a table, isolated away from incident site and distractions
- GROUP: Homogeneous groups only!

THE 7-PHASES

1. INTRODUCTION
2. BRIEF SITUATION REVIEW
3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS
4. “GREATEST” IMPACT
5. Signals of Distress
6. Teaching / “Info” Push
7. Strengths & Summary
INTRODUCTION

- Introduces team members
- Sets expectations
- Describes “ground rules”
- Ground rules anticipate potential problems and attempts to address them in advance
- Addresses confidentiality
- Participation in discussion is VOLUNTARY
- Preview questions

FACT PHASE

- Possible prompt:
  “Tell who you are and what happened from your perspective”

- May still be used when group exposed to multiple stressors, as in disaster out processing, or culmination of a tour of duty

THOUGHT PHASE

- “What was the first or most prominent thought that entered your mind regarding the incident?”

- Any unusual or disquieting thoughts?

REACTION PHASE

- “What was the worst part of this event for you?”

- Any aspects of the event that have caused you the most pain or distress?

- If you had the power to erase one single aspect what would you most want to eliminate from the total experience?
**SYMPTOM PHASE**

- “What physical or behavioral changes have you experienced since the event.”
- Or, “What has life been like for you since the event?”
- Or, “What signals of distress have you noticed in yourself since this happened?”

**TEACHING PHASE**

- Team members normalize reactions, provide anticipatory guidance, teach stress management, describe external resources available.
- The group should be used as a resource to identify coping techniques that have been useful in the past.

**ADDRESS REACTIONS:**

- THINKING
- FEELING
- DOING/BEHAVING
- BELIEVING
- BODY

**ADDRESS FACTORS**

- EXTERNAL
  - Sensory info; Proximity; Frequency; Expectancy; Severity / Intensity;

- INTERNAL
  - Personal perspective
  - Personal connections

  Personal belief systems
STRENGTHS & SUMMARY

- Reiterate normalization
- Q & A, if indicated
- Summarize key points, “lessons learned”
- Offer cognitive reframe if useful to facilitate closure, reconstruction
- Foster group cohesion, if indicated
- Instill hope...

Check on Learning:

1. TRUE or FALSE: A 7-Phase is intended for a Heterogeneous population.

2. When does the 3-Phase timing end and the 7-Phase timing begin? ________________

3. Use this space to write your prompt for each of the following prompts:

   - FACT PHASE: ________________________________
   - THOUGHT PHASE: ______________________________
   - REACTIONS PHASE: ____________________________
   - SIGNALS OF DISTRESS: ________________________
ORGANIZING & DEPLOYING

- ROLES:
  - Incident Commander (IC) or CISM Coordinator - best practice for “call-out” with multiple teams / multiple interventions running at once
  - Operations
  - Liaison
  - Planning
  - Logistics
  - Admin/Finance

INCIDENT COMMANDER

- Responsible for the CISM Team
- Determines IF / WHEN Team will respond
- IC is responsible for ensuring that Team members are properly trained and have adequate resources for successful and safe intervention

OPERATIONS

- Responsible for carrying out the strategic plan of EACH INTERVENTION
- At “Staging”:
  - Responsible for briefing Team re. incident / event and people impacted
  - Responsible for assigning roles re. interventions
  - Ensures Team members have resources (like “prompt-sheets”; handouts; water; etc.) needed to ensure successful intervention
OPERATIONS

- Following Intervention:
  - Responsible for return of all Team members to “staging” area
  - Responsible for ensuring ALL Team members have access to a Post Action Staff Support (PASS)
    (Operations does not have to perform the PASS, but Operations does ensure there is personnel to perform the PASS)

LIAISON

- Maintains direct contact with the agency/organization in need of CISM response
- Provides “pre-education” to leadership (if needed)
- Responsible for communicating any updates that may require changes to planning

PLANNING

- Responsible for devising a “strategic plan” and report plan to IC and Operations
- Responsible to devise an after-action report for IC (if needed)

5 T’S OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Target
- Type
- Timing
- Theme
- Team
5 T’S OF
STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Target** – What target populations will most likely be in need of assistance/support?

- **Type** – What specific types of interventions will be needed, e.g., demobilizations, town meetings, hotlines, CISDs, etc?

- **Timing** – When will each of the selected interventions be implemented so as to be most effective?

- **Theme** – Themes are factors which may serve to modify the psychological impact of the event or the nature of the intervention (child fatalities, mass disasters, biological contagion)

- **Team** – What resources will it take to provide the right interventions at the right time? Internal vs External resources.

**LOGISTICS**

- Responsible for procuring items/resources needed to ensure success
  - List of items / resources provided by Operations or Planning
  - Responsible for procuring items; delivering items to assigned areas; room set-up; communication set-up (if needed); etc.

**ADMINISTRATION**

- Responsible for maintaining current contact info on ALL CISM team members
  - Responsible for contacting CISM Team members when needed for response - “mobilizing team”
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- Responsible for disseminating information re. incident; staging area; time; intervention types; etc. (if known)

PASS

- Post Action Staff Support (or “Debrief for the Debriefers”)

- Can be similar to 3-Phase and/or 7-Phase OR can be similar to an Operational Critique

PASS AS OPERATIONAL CRITIQUE

- What was your specific role in this intervention?

- How did the intervention go?

- Problems encountered in giving support?

- Steps taken to overcome obstacles?

- Anything innovative in conquering problems?

- Staff sufficient to provide the support?

- Anything you wish you had done differently?

- Anything that worked particularly well?

- Anyone on your team that you are worried about?

- What are the “take-aways” - the lessons learned from this response?

- Anything you may have experienced that could be useful to you for future CISM response work?
PASS AS SMALL GROUP INTERVENTION

- What was your role in this intervention?

- What was one distressing or recurring thought you kept having (or still have) during or following the response?

- What was the hardest (or most difficult) part for you?

- What have you noticed different about yourself since returning from the response?

- Identify your (& Team’s) greatest strength in today’s response?

Check on Learning:

1. What are the 5 T’s of strategic planning:

   - T: ____________________________

   - T: ____________________________

   - T: ____________________________

   - T: ____________________________

   - T: ____________________________
REFERENCES


The amazing men and women in federal, state, local and campus law enforcement that both Dorie and Joey have the privilege to work along side. These trained responders are our greatest reference for effective and compassionate crisis intervention.
Dorie Jones is partner and co-founder of Crisis Support Solutions, LLC, and has worked for the past eight (8) years as a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Specialist and Peer Support Program Coordinator at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) with the US Department of Homeland Security, Glynco, GA. As a CISM Specialist, Dorie counsels both students and staff on various issues ranging from stress/trauma, depression/anxiety, relationship/family, grief/loss, victimization, etc. As Peer Support Program Coordinator, Dorie manages each CISM Response Team at all four (4) FLETC sites and serves as the program’s Training Coordinator as well. Dorie also serves as a course developer and lead instructor for basic, advanced and coordinator peer support crisis intervention training programs. Dorie is an approved instructor with ICISF and is approved to deliver various courses on individual and group crisis response. Dorie is also a Compassion Fatigue Educator with the Academy of Traumatology. Dorie has earned a Masters in Social Work (MSW) from Savannah State University, Savannah, GA and a Masters in Divinity (M.Div) from McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University, Atlanta, GA.

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