



## CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION** By team leader (see "Introduction Phase Rules")
- II. FACT PHASE** Who are you? What is your job?  
(Go around in circle) What happened from your point of view?
- III. THOUGHT PHASE** When you came off auto-pilot what were your first thoughts?  
(Go around in circle) Have you had any thoughts you can't shake off?
- IV. REACTION PHASE** What was the worst part of this situation for you, personally?  
(Go around in circle) Without changing the outcome, what part would you eliminate?  
What part of the event has bothered you the most?
- V. SYMPTOM PHASE** Repeat what you've heard people talking about. Has anyone had OTHER symptoms?  
(Go around in circle) Describe common physical reactions. Did anyone experience anything like them at the scene?  
Is anyone having any reactions now?  
Has your life changed in any way since the Incident?  
Unusual things you are experiencing now at home or at work?
- VI. TEACHING PHASE** Address reactions described by group. Address anticipated reactions;  
Normalize reaction or non-reaction  
Grief and survivor issues; Family issues (communication, isolation).  
Provide basic stress management suggestions (what to do; not to do).
- VII. RE-ENTRY PHASE** Comments, questions; may recycle through previous phases.  
Remind of confidentiality.  
Emphasis on positive learning aspects
- 

## CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING INTRODUCTION PHASE – "RULES"

- A. Introduce self as team leader. Point out other team members who will introduce themselves as you go around.
- B. State reason for being there (identify the event).
- C. **MANDATORY TOPICS** (each point **MUST** be covered **OR** the narrative must be read – **NO EXCEPTIONS**)
1. Mandatory Topics
    - a. Everyone reacts to critical incidents differently
    - b. Debriefing is to help you better understand any reactions you may be having
    - c. Debriefing is NOT therapy and is not designed to prevent serious complications like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
    - d. NOT a critique of event or judgment of others
    - e. Participation is VOLUNTARY; NOT required to participate
    - f. Confidentiality; everything said in this room stays in this room
    - g. Only emergency service personnel INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT should be in the debriefing
- D. **Suggested Introductory Topics**
1. No reporters, recording devices, or note-taking by anyone
  2. Session may last several hours. The CISM team may stay around afterward.
  3. NO breaks
  4. Please turn off radios, pagers, and cell phones (if possible)
- E. **Suggested Introductory Topics**
1. Address reluctance to attend/participate. Emphasize support to co-workers.
  2. Be careful what you say. Do not jeopardize a job, reputation, or investigation.
  3. No rank – just people trying to understand and deal with a potentially difficult situation.
  4. Educational handouts
  5. Anything else as appropriate



## Post Stress Management Session Review

The Post Debriefing Review is intended to provide an opportunity for the CISM Team members to discuss everything involved in the authorized intervention that was just completed. Due to confidentiality, only members of the CISM Team providing the authorized intervention participate in the Post Debriefing Review.

- a) How did this one go?
  - b) How are we responding to what was just done?
  - c) What worked well with this one?
  - d) What could we do better next time?
  - e) What follow-up is needed on this one?
  - f) If follow-up is planned, who will do it? When? Who is contacted?
  - g) Anything else you want to share before we leave?
- 

Statement (to be read verbatim at the beginning of every DEBRIEFING Stress Management Session *in lieu of* covering the seven previous points)

*“Everyone reacts to critical incidents differently. The purpose of this meeting is to help you better understand any reactions you may have regarding the incident. Please understand that what is done in this meeting is not therapy and is not designed to prevent serious complications like post traumatic stress disorder. This is also not meant to be a critique of the event or judgment of others. Your participation in this group is voluntary. You are not required to participate. Everything said in this room stays in this room.”*

*“Finally, it is important that only emergency service personnel who were involved in the incident are now in the room. Is there anyone here who was not involved or who do not recognize as part of the incident?”*

*The statement above is intended for print on the back of the Debriefing Card.*