JOPLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT	11-08 STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE
SUBJECT: Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program	**REVIEW DATE: Annually - November**
EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1st, 2006	**ACTION DATE:**
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I. POLICY

The Joplin Police Department recognizes the harmful effects of stress caused by critical incidents. Joplin police officers are involved in these incidents and therefore subject to harmful stress. To minimize the adverse effects of critical incident stress, the Joplin Police Department has established the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program.

CISM program utilizes a multi-dimensional approach through both a pro-active and reactive format. The program is pro-active by educating members of this department about critical incident stress and stress management techniques. The program is also reactive by activating CISM team members during a critical incident to provide emotional support and professional referrals for those impacted by the magnitude of events.

Without professional intervention, personnel experiencing critical incident stress may show declining work performance, deterioration in family relationships, and increased health problems. The objective of this procedure is to provide intervention after critical incidents to minimize stress related injuries to police department personnel.

While CISM members are required to attend both initial training and continuing education, it must be emphasized that they are not mental health professionals. Each CISM member will be trained to recognize certain signs and symptoms associated with stress. However, when a situation is beyond the ability of a CISM member, it will be referred to a mental health professional.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the CISM Program is to provide department employees, that are exposed to job-related stress or a critical incident (shooting, death, suicide, accident, hostage situation, etc.), confidential programs that will mitigate the adverse effects through peer counseling, CISM debriefings/defusing, Employee Assistance (EAP) services, or the Joplin Police Department's Chaplain Program.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Critical Incident

Any situation faced by public safety personnel that cause them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions that have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later. These situations may include, but are not limited to:

1. Line of duty death,

2. Serious line of duty injury/assault/sexual assault,

3. Suicide,

4. Officer involved shooting/victim of shooting,

5. Disarming/siege/hostage,

6. Significant event involving children,

7. Personal or family tragedies.

B. Critical Incident Administrative Leave (22.2.1 A)

Leave of absence from duty without loss of pay and benefits granted to an employee directly involved in a critical incident when it is determined by the Chief of Police that it is in the best interest of the employee and department. This definition applies to civilian personnel as well as sworn personnel.

C. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

Programs and strategies designed to reduce the effects of stress in emergency services personnel (i.e., police, fire, EMS, telecommunicators, etc.) and to assist them in managing and recovering from significant stress should they encounter it in their work. The three main strategies are critical incident stress debriefing, defusing, and demobilization.

D. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

A group meeting or discussion led by specially trained professionals and peer support personnel (usually held 24-72 hours after an incident) employing both crisis intervention and educational processes. The meeting is targeted toward mitigating or resolving the psychological distress associated with a critical incident or traumatic event and accelerating the recovery of directly involved personnel. A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing for civilian personnel is conducted separately from a debriefing for emergency services personnel.

E. Defusing

A small group process that is led by specially trained professionals and peer support personnel and instituted after any traumatic event powerful enough to overwhelm the coping mechanisms of the personnel exposed to it. A defusing is usually held within one to four hours after the event and lasts 30 to 45 minutes. Defusing must be held within 12 hours of the event. If a defusing is not held within 12 hours, a formal debriefing should be considered.

F. Demobilization

A brief intervention immediately after a disaster or major incident which provides a transition period from the major incident back to the normal work routine. A demobilization is reserved for large-scale events that are on-going (usually more than eight hours). The demobilization usually lasts approximately 30 minutes.

G. CISM Coordinator

A Chaplain with the Joplin Police Department who serves as the manager of the CISM Program including deployment of CISM teams, arranging team meetings, and maintaining related records.

H. CISM Team

Includes, but is not limited to, Chaplains with the Joplin Police Department specially trained in CISM methodology to provide support and assistance to emergency services personnel involved in a critical incident.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General:

1. A critical incident debriefing is not a critique of police department operations. The debriefing process provides formats in which personnel can discuss their feelings and reactions, thus reducing the stress, which results from exposure to critical incidents. All debriefings will be STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

2. Any officer may contact the CISM Coordinator for one-on-one consultation for himself/herself or for another officer. The CISM Coordinator can be contacted by cell phone. It is not necessary to contact communications or go through the chain-of-command.

3. Any officer may initiate the debriefing process by contacting a supervisor at the incident scene. If initiation is not made on the scene, the debriefing process may be initiated through a sergeant, bureau lieutenant, or division commander.

4. Once it is determined that a debriefing is necessary, it is mandatory that all personnel directly exposed to the incident attend. All participants will be encouraged to share their feelings; however, active participation is optional.

5. All statements, facts, opinions, and discussions that are expressed during the debriefing process will be considered confidential, except those involving danger to the employee or others.

6. No written, tape, or other recordings will be maintained regarding individuals' participation or topics of discussion.

7. Media participation will not be allowed. The Public Information Officer, guided by the CISM Coordinator, will handle Media inquiries.

8. None of these procedures will interfere or prevent in any way the voluntary use of or referral to any of the other City of Joplin employee assistance programs.

B. CISM Coordinator:

1. Is responsible for coordinating crisis intervention for critical incidents.

2. In conjunction with the on-scene supervisors, bureau lieutenants, or division commanders will determine if a debriefing is necessary.

3. Will ensure the sharing of any information will not jeopardize an on-going criminal or internal investigation.

4. Provides advice and backup to CISM team members.

5. Leads or assigns a leader for the debriefing team that is assigned to provide a formal debriefing.

C. Sergeants & Bureau Commanders:

1. Are responsible for identifying and recognizing significant incidents that may benefit by CISM intervention.

2. Bureau Commanders will require involved personnel to attend scheduled debriefings (after coordination with the CISM coordinator).

3. The Bureau Commander will schedule the debriefing for a time and location not interfering or impeding the criminal or internal investigation.

4. Prior to a briefing, the Bureau Commander will make the CISM Coordinator and team members aware of all information relative to the incident, including, but not limited to:

   a. Pictures

   b. Diagrams

   c. Incident reports

   d. Audio/radio tapes or

   e. Newspaper articles.

D. CISM Activation:

1. When a critical incident, as defined in II.A. occurs, the bureau lieutenant will immediately contact the CISM Coordinator to determine which personnel/services are required.

2. The CISM Coordinator will immediately:

   a. Assess the need for on scene support services.

   b. Assess the need for demobilization, defusing, debriefing, or individual consultation.

   c. Make the appropriate team assignments.

   d. Notify the appropriate command staff of the activation.

3. Defusing/demobilization

   a. Upon request, the program coordinator, or designee, will respond to the affected employee's location. In complex cases, response will be supplemented with other CISM peer support personnel.

   b. CISM personnel will inform on-scene supervisors of their arrival.

   c. Contact will be made with the affected personnel to:

      i. Assess the emotional needs

      ii. Support self-esteem and self-reliance

      iii. Offer team services as appropriate and

iv. Activate their social support network.

d. The defusing/demobilization will be confidential. The only information released will pertain to notifying the employee's chain of command regarding:

i. Return to duty or

ii. Initiating a request for administrative leave, as appropriate.

iii. CISM will remain available to the employee and/or family members for follow-up services during the readjustment period.

e. CISM team members will not interfere with any on-going criminal or internal investigations.

4. Critical Incident Stress Debriefings

a. After the initial defusing occurs, the next level of intervention involves a critical incident stress debriefing (CISD). This is a structured group discussion for all involved personnel that takes place as the emotional impact sets in. Depending on personnel needs, logistical considerations, and legal issues (e.g., waiting until investigative statements have been taken), the CISD usually occurs within 24 to 72 hours after the incident.

b. The CISD promotes normalization and recovery by having involved personnel discuss such issues as their roles in the incidents, their thoughts during the events, their emotional reactions, and the stress symptoms they experienced. In addition to educating these employees about coping strategies, the CISD enables CISM team members to determine who may benefit from referrals for further care and to plan for other follow-up support.

5. Peer or One-on-one Support

Following the debriefing, the CISM team may meet individually with the employees involved in the incident. Often, a team member who has experienced a similar critical incident will provide the one-on-one support. Peer guidance proves particularly effective in helping personnel normalize their reactions to the trauma. This support has tremendous credibility coming from a fellow employee who has "been there."

6. Family Assistance

In the law enforcement profession, an employee's most vital support system, the family, often remains neglected. Individuals adversely affected by critical incidents bring the trauma home to their families. The CISM team provides debriefings for family members as a group and one-on-one to help them cope with their reactions to a family member's involvement in a critical incident.

7. Manager Support

a. The CISM team consults with managers about their roles in supportively handling the emotional aftermath of critical incidents. Managers must coordinate communication, timetables for crisis services, appropriate ongoing interventions, and other support programs. Experience has shown that recovery occurs more rapidly when concerned managers actively nurture their employees following a

traumatic event. Moreover, additional traumatic stress may result when employees perceive managers as distant or insensitive.

b. Additionally, managers must remember that critical incidents, especially those involving death or serious injury to co-workers, can significantly impact the entire office. Appropriate and timely intervention by both managers and the CISM team can minimize the negative consequences for office personnel and others affected by the incident.

8. Referrals and Follow-up Services

For many individuals, defusing, debriefings, and one-on-one support lead to closure and resolution of the traumatic incident. Through this assistance, the traumatic incident is processed and becomes integrated; specifically, negative emotions, thoughts, and images fade. The individual retains what is useful, learns from the incident, and resolves the event.

However, for others, these interventions represent only a beginning. The intense physiological and psychological arousal of a critical incident can impair their information-processing mechanisms. Consequently, information taken in during the trauma (e.g., sights, sounds, emotions, sensations, and beliefs) can be "frozen" in the brain and not processed normally. Rather than fading, these sensory impressions can continue to intrude, resulting in flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and other post-traumatic symptoms. A central component of the trauma can be negative, irrational self-beliefs having to do with an individual's participation in the event (e.g., "It's all my fault...I'm still not safe...I'm helpless"). At this point, referral to mental health professionals with specialized experience and training becomes necessary.

a. Follow-up services will be provided to ensure all personnel who need or want additional support are given support from the team or community based professional resources.

b. Follow-up services will be provided to participants of the debriefing immediately after the debriefing is complete. Follow-up services include but are not limited to:

i. District or work location visit

ii. Telephone call

iii. Chaplain visit

iv. Individual consultation

v. Referral for therapy

vi. Additional meeting with group and/or

vii. Family session.

c. Follow-up service may be initiated by:

i. A participant in the form of a telephone call or personal appearance

ii. A request by a Bureau Commander or a Chief that a team member checks on a participant

iii. A team member or

iv. The program coordinator for the purpose of quality assurance.

V. COMPLIANCE

Violations of this policy, or portions thereof, may result in disciplinary action as described in the City of Joplin's Personnel Rules or the Joplin Police Department's Rules and Regulations and General Orders. Members of the Joplin Police Department, while assigned to or assisting other agencies, shall comply with this policy.

VI. APPLICATION

This document constitutes department policy, is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It shall not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims insofar as the employee's legal duty as imposed by law. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only form a basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.