

CISM Early Intervention

Early on in EVERY rescue or disaster relief mission, the consideration for Critical Incident Stress Team (CIST) involvement must be made. Whoever is assigned to the task of potentially involving the team should be in contact with the wing CISTC (CIST Coordinator) or GLR CIST Director if there is no one qualified on hand to make that assessment. If it is a small-scale mission without some of the criteria for team deployment (as noted below), the CIS Team may not get involved. If it is large scale or potentially traumatizing, early contact with the CIS Team will assure successful intervention, as it is a logistical challenge to activate members, arrange for a meeting site, assure transportation, lodging, etc. Either way, our ES personnel should get into the habit of notifying the appropriate CIS personnel of the situation at hand so that when a team needs to be deployed, everyone is familiar and comfortable with the process. This is true for training missions as well.

ICISF labels CISM as an *“early intervention strategy, often employed within hours of the traumatizing event ...”* which is the model we are directed by regulation to follow. Involving the CIST at the onset of a mission will also give the CISTC/Director the opportunity to assign a CIST member to the mission to be their eyes and ears. That person would be watching for the need (and arranging for the provision) of on-scene support services and follow up. Waiting until the mission is over and everyone has gone home, especially in large-scale situations, is far too late. It becomes an almost impossible task to gather all the participants and information after the fact to *most* effectively intervene. It is never *too* late, but in all aspects of our emergency services missions, time is a crucial element; early notification increases success rates exponentially. The regulations provide for the inclusion of CISM as follows:

CAPR 60-15 4. a. Support Requests. During, or immediately following each rescue or disaster relief mission, a review of the need for CIS intervention should be made for all personnel participating in the mission whether or not the mission was concluded successfully.

Some criteria that will be considered in regards to team involvement or activation follow:

- Mass disaster (flood, fire, tornado, terrorism/weapons of mass destruction, etc.)
- Multiple injuries/fatalities
- Death or injury to a child
- Serious injury or line of duty death
- Prolonged SAR time
- Excessive media attention
- Outsiders or family members interfering with operations
- Victim known to the members or personal identification
- Members exhibiting signs/symptoms of traumatic stress
- Member(s) requesting CISM intervention
- Any incident grotesque by sight, smell or other circumstance likely to produce an emotional (memory) input.

We understand that this is still a new program about which many members are not entirely clear. Please continue to post these monthly training items everywhere CAP members meet, so that the CISM program will become familiar to them, and ultimately comfortable for them should they find themselves directly involved. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Regards,

Lt Col Sherry Jones, RN, CAP
GLR CISM Director
sjones@glr.cap.gov
<http://glr.cap.gov/cism>