Critical Incident Management: Advancing Expertise in a Global World

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Brainstorm

- What critical incidents impact our work in higher education?
  - Examples: bomb threats, CI’s on other campuses, suicide attempts, riots, weather related, fires

- Who is affected by these incidents?
  - Examples: community members, students, law enforcement, parents, faculty/staff

- Who must respond to these incidents?
  - Examples: leadership is from SA, PR/communications dept., police (campus & community)
Types of Crises and Potentially Traumatizing Events

- **Individual**
  - Auto Accident
  - Sexual assault/abuse
  - Life threatening experience
  - Robbery
  - Serious physical injury/abuse
  - Perception of serious threat to self or significant other
  - Psychological abuse
  - Severe injury/death of one’s own child
  - Suicide of family member or co-responders
  - Multiple homicides within a community
  - Injury or death to a child
  - Observing an incident of individual or community trauma

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Types of Crises and Potentially Traumatizing Events

- **Community**
  - Earthquake
  - Hurricane or tornado
  - Fires
  - Flood
  - Large scale environmental pollution
  - Multiple injury/fatality accidents
  - Terrorism
  - Child related events
  - Homicides in the community
  - High publicity crimes of violence or sex
  - Community wide disasters
**Important Terms**

- **Stress** – A state of physical, cognitive, and emotional arousal

- **Critical Incident** – An event that has the power to overwhelm the coping abilities of an individual or group. The starting point for the development of a crisis response

- **Crisis** – An acute emotional reaction to a critical incident
Important Terms

- **CISM** – Critical Incident Stress Management
- **CISD** – Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
- **CIMT** – Critical Incident Management Team
Types of Stress

- General Stress
- Cumulative Stress
- Critical Incident Stress
  - Physical Signs & Symptoms
  - Emotional Signs & Symptoms
  - Cognitive Signs & Symptoms
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
  - Intrusion Symptoms
  - Avoidance Symptoms
  - Arousal Symptoms

Chevron Publishing, 2002
Critical Incident Stress Reaction

- **Physical**
  - Excessive sweating, dizzy spells, increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, rapid breathing

- **Cognitive**
  - Confusion in thinking, difficulty making decisions, disorientation
Critical Incident Stress Reaction

- Emotional
  - Emotional shock, anger, grief, depression, feeling overwhelmed, hopelessness/helplessness

- Behavioral
  - Changes in ordinary behavior patterns, changes in eating, decreased personal hygiene, withdrawal from others, prolonged silences
How do you Cope With Stress?

- The purpose of this activity is to see how effectively you cope with stress. After completing the following checklist, you will have identified ways you cope with stress.

- This is a health education survey, not a clinical assessment instrument.

International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, 1998
How do you Cope With Stress?

- +10 if you feel that you have a supportive family.
- +10 if you actively pursue a hobby.
- +10 if you belong to some social or activity group that meets at least once a month (other than your family).
- +15 if you are within 5 pounds of your “ideal” bodyweight, considering your height.
- +15 if you practice some form of deep relaxation at least 3 times a week (meditation, imagery, yoga, etc).
- +5 for each time you exercise 30 minutes or longer during an average week.
- +5 for each nutritionally balanced and wholesome meal you consume during the course of an average day.
- +10 for each time you do something that you really enjoy, “just for yourself” during an average week.
- +10 if you have some place in your home that you can go to relax and be yourself.
- +10 if you practice time management techniques.

International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, 1998
How do you Cope With Stress?

-10 for each evening during an average week that you take any form of medication or chemical substance (including alcohol) to help you sleep.

-10 for each pack of cigarettes you smoke during an average day.

-10 for each day during an average week that you consume any form of medication or chemical substance (including alcohol) to reduce your anxiety or calm you down.

-5 for each evening during an average week that you bring work home; work that was meant to be done at your place of employment.

_____ Total Score
Life Stress Inventory

**Holidays**
- Vacation 13
- Major Holidays 12

**Your Family and Personal Life**
- Death of Spouse / Partner 100
- Death of close family member 63
- Divorce 73
- Marital separation 65
- Marriage 50
- Marital reconciliation 45
- Retirement 45
- Pregnancy 40
- Gain of new family member 39

Holmes and Rahe, 1967
# Life Stress Inventory

## Your Family and Personal Life (continued)

- Death of close friend 37  
- Change in # of arguments with spouse 35  
- Child leaving home 29  
- Trouble with in-laws 29  
- Outstanding personal achievement 28  
- Spouse / partner starts or stops work 26  
- Revision of personal habits 24  
- Change # of family members 15

## Your Health

- Personal injury or illness 63  
- Change in health of family member 44

Holmes and Rahe, 1967
# Life Stress Inventory

## Your Living Conditions
- Change in living conditions 25
- Change in residence 20
- Change in recreation 19
- Change in religious activities 19
- Change in sleeping habits 16
- Change in eating habits 15

## Your Work
- Fired from work 47
- Business reorganization 39
- Career change 36
- Change in job responsibilities 29
- Change in work hours or conditions 20
- Trouble with boss or supervisor 23

Holmes and Rahe, 1967
Life Stress Inventory

Your Finances
- Change in financial state 38
- Mortgage more than $120,000 31
- Foreclosure of mortgage to loan 30
- Mortgage or loan less than $120,000 18

Your Education
- Begin or end school 26
- Change in schools 20

Your And the Law
- Jail term 63
- Minor violations of the law 11

Holmes and Rahe, 1967
Life Stress Inventory

If your score totals 150 or more...

You have a 50-50 chance of developing an illness

If your score totals 300 or more...

You have a 90 percent chance of developing an illness

Holmes and Rahe, 1967
Critical Incident vs. Crisis

What is the difference between a critical incident and a crisis?

- A critical incident is the event
- A crisis is the individuals’ response
Crisis Intervention

- Definition: An active and temporary entry into the life of an individual or a group during a period of significant stress.
- It is designed to assist the person in a crisis state to return to adaptive functioning.
Crisis Intervention

Objectives

- Stabilize the situation
- Mitigate the impact
- Mobilize resources
- Normalize reactions
- Restore to adaptive function
Crisis Intervention

- Key Crisis Intervention Principles:
  - Simplicity
  - Brevity
  - Innovation
  - Pragmatism
  - Proximity
  - Immediacy
  - Positive outcome expectancy
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

- Definition: CISM is a comprehensive, systematic, and multi-tactic approach to managing traumatic stress within an organization or a community.

- CISM is a specific program of crisis intervention tactics which focuses on assisting individuals and groups that have experienced a traumatic event.
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

- **Tactics**
  - Pre-incident education/preparation
  - On-scene support services
  - One-on-one support
  - Staff demobilization after a disaster
  - Crisis Management Briefings (CMB’s)
  - Defusing
  - Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
  - Significant other support services
  - Follow-up services
  - Referrals according to need
  - Post-incident education
Core Competencies of CISM

- Ability to properly assess both the situation and the severity of impact on individuals and groups
- Ability to develop a strategic plan
- Large group, small group, and Individual crisis intervention skills
- Referral skills
Incorporation of CISM Components

- Before a Critical Incident
- During a Critical Incident
- After a Critical Incident
Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

- CIMT at Syracuse University
  - Foster informal and effective relationships to react to crises
  - Created after September 11, 2001 as an ad hoc committee
  - Supports on-going work of the SU Logistics Committee
The Critical Incident Management Team is charged to develop and recommend a crisis response plan that manages the preparation for, response to, and recovery from critical incidents that impact Syracuse University, members of the campus community, and/or University property.

Specifically, the CIMT is to consider the following issues:
First Issue, SU CIMT

- Who should coordinate, oversee, and manage Syracuse University’s response to critical incidents, including responsibility for communications with both on-and off-campus constituencies?
What policies and protocols are needed (after reviewing and assessing existing protocols and the September 11, 2001 team reports) to create a generalized university-wide crisis response plan?
What training should be offered to various campus constituencies including, but not limited to, new employees, essential staff (e.g. Office of Residence Life, Department of Public Safety, etc.), and the Critical Incident Management Team?
Roles and Responsibilities of the SU CIMT

- Manage and direct response activities
- Provide resources & training
- Support emergency operations
- Assess aftermath
- Provide communication
- Update protocols
- Maintain a list of networks
CIMT Response Process

- Logistics Committee
- Infrastructure Protocols
- Human Response Protocols
- CIMT

The diagram illustrates the relationship between Logistics Committee, Infrastructure Protocols, Human Response Protocols, and CIMT.
Critical Incident Simulation
Overview of the Simulation

- Prepared for a Master’s level Higher Education class
- You will each have an assigned role
- You will have time to get to know your character and the campuses involved
What to Expect

- Get into your character, don’t hold back.
- Utilize your expertise and knowledge of your own campus.
- We intentionally gave you some information, but you will not know everything right away.
- Use resources that your character would have available, but be realistic.
- Ask us questions, even if you need to step out of character.
- We will answer questions relevant to the simulation on behalf of any characters you introduce to the scenario.
- We will redirect you if you get off track.
- There will be staged interruptions, such as private conversations, phone calls, and requests from the press.
- You should take this simulation seriously, but have fun!
Experience with Tragedy

- Pan Am 103 terrorist bombing
  - December 21, 1988 over Lockerbie, Scotland
  - 270 fatalities (259 in aircraft), no survivors
  - 35 from SU, 4 Colgate, 2 from SUNY-Oswego flying home from study abroad in London
  - SU had no crisis response team prepared
SU and SUNY-ESF at a Glance

Syracuse University
- Independent, privately endowed university founded in 1870
- 11,400 undergraduate students, 4,600 graduate students
- Students from all 50 states and more than 100 countries (international students represent 14% of student population)
- Approximately 500 residential students remain on campus during spring break.

SUNY-ESF
- Public university founded in 1911
- 1,500 undergraduate students, 600 graduate students
- All first-year students and some upper-class students live in SU residence halls directly adjacent to the ESF campus.
- Long-standing partnership with SU to provide ESF students with opportunities to take SU classes, use SU resources, and live in SU residence halls.
The Simulation Begins

- Review your materials
- Get to know your character and campus
- Ask us questions!
Simulation Debriefing

- What are your initial reactions? How do you feel?
- What knowledge or skills were most important to your character?
- How did your prior knowledge and experience affect your response?
- What would you do differently?
- Who would you want on your CIMT?
- What are the benefits and challenges of involving your chancellor or president on the CIMT?
Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)

- CISD is a specific small group crisis intervention tactic consisting of seven phases
- Not therapy
- ALL CISD team members must be trained regardless of background and other types of training

Chevron Publishing, 2002
Goals of a CISD

- Mitigate impact of a traumatic event
- Accelerate *normal* recovery processes in *normal* people who are experiencing *normal* reactions to totally *abnormal* events.
- Identify individuals who may need additional services and/or referral for professional care
Peer and mental health combination is essential

- Mental health professional always required
- Peer always required in emergency services, hospital based, military, and disaster field workers debriefings
- Peer not always required for commercial, business and industrial settings depending on circumstances
7 Phases of CISD

- Introduction
- Fact
- Thought
- Reaction
- Symptoms
- Teaching
- Re-entry

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Other CISD Concepts

- Three hours or less
- All team members active in process
- Avoid probing
- Do not ask too many questions
- Facilitate group discussion
- Do not aim at getting individuals to disclose personal information
- Focus on participants needs not teams needs
Other CISD Concepts

- Do not argue with perceptions
- Provide information and people can change their own perceptions
- Deal only with material brought out by participants
- Avoid detailed operational or investigative information
- CISD is not a critique of the incident

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Other CISD Concepts

- Stick with the model
- Keep the process moving
- Confidentiality is vital
- Do not take notes
- Provide follow up
- Reserve debriefing for serious events
- Remember the group is normal not pathological

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Other CISD Concepts

- Keep debriefing conversational and flowing
- Do not theorize, moralize, psychologically interpret, or judge
- Instead team should listen, stabilize, inform, normalize, recover
- Do not engage in telling “war stories”
- Team talks actively – beginning and ending; less in reactions phase

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Other CISD Concepts

- Teach according to the needs of the group
- Immediate follow up with most seriously affected personnel
- Be familiar with and follow CISD guidelines

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Questions