Public Safety Telecommunicator Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Program

APCO ANS 1.119.1-2021

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APCO ANS 1.119.1-2021 Public Safety Telecommunicator Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Program

Executive Summary

On behalf of Public Safety Communications Professionals throughout the United States of America, the APCO Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Working Group has created a standard to address the critical need for these services in Public Safety Communications Centers. The Working Group consisted of Emergency Communications Managers, Supervisors, Trainers, and Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST) from various Agencies across the nation, as well as members of the private sector with information and knowledge pertinent to the development of this standard. Collectively, these individuals brought together a diverse set of perspectives, experiences, and technical knowledge on the topics and issues that a standard for CISD/CISM should address.

The document that follows takes a linear approach in formalizing the provision of CISD and CISM services for any Agency at the local or regional level. It is inherent in the document that from agency to agency there may be nuanced differences impacted by State, County, or Local Laws as well as agency specific policies and procedures. Those differences notwithstanding, from a conceptual standpoint the information contained within the document should give any end-user public safety agency a well-defined blueprint for establishing the critical operational need in protecting the overall mental, physical and emotional well-being of our Public Safety Telecommunicators.

Over the past generation, our industry has seen myriad changes in the way it operates, is structured, and the way personnel are trained. From a time when most utilized paper and pencil, operated basic computers and CAD systems, and had rudimentary training, we have evolved out of necessity to keep pace with our technology driven world as our informational highways and capabilities become larger and faster. This constant evolution, in turn, has placed new and unforeseen stressors of many natures on our Public Safety Telecommunications personnel, and will continue to do so especially with the advent of visual technology arriving at 9-1-1 consoles in real time every day. These changes, along with the critical need of ensuring the mental health and well-being of all our PST personnel, are the touchstone for the creation of this standard.

Agencies are highly encouraged to consider utilization of the resources mentioned on the Acknowledgements and Resources page at the end of the document. These resources and tools provide further detailed information on various aspects of the CISD/CISM topic and may prove beneficial to an agency in developing their respective program as well as from a training perspective.

Additionally, it is the hopeful expectation of the Working Group members that agencies will strongly consider pooling of resources and establishing Regional CISD/CISM teams, to leverage personnel and assets in providing first-class interventional services to ensure the safety and well-being of all Public Safety Telecommunicators across the United States. Most of all, it is our expressed hope that by creating this Standard, as well as others forthcoming, that the issues of dealing with unique workplace stressors in the Public Safety Telecommunications arena will be dealt with proactively, with a comprehensive battery of resources available at the ready to attend to the needs of any individuals 24/7/365.

Chapter One

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1   Scope

This chapter outlines the Agency's responsibilities for establishing a Public Safety Telecommunicator CISD/CISM program and developing CISD/CISM training with respect to agency policies for all employees in accordance with this standard. All training programs should be developed in accordance with Agency policies.

1.2   Agency Responsibilities

1.2.1   General Agency Responsibilities

1.2.1.1   The Agency should create and embrace a culture of CISD/CISM awareness as well as support of the agency CISD/CISM program.

1.2.1.2   The Agency shall provide adequate resources to ensure that all Agency personnel are adequately and routinely trained to identify warning signs and critical incidents that may warrant activation and utilization of the agency's CISD/CISM program.

1.2.1.3   The Agency shall assign an individual to administer with authority and oversight the agency's CISD/CISM program.

1.2.1.4   The Agency shall define appropriate use and activation of any aspect of the CISD/CISM by role and level of authority consistent with Agency policies.

1.2.1.5   The Agency shall provide all personnel with regular updates on information and events related to CISD/CISM. Examples of updates may include new CISD/CISM studies, training opportunities, meetings between agencies and/or peers, or examples of risks and recent incidents illustrating the importance of having a CISD/CISM program.

1.2.1.6   The Agency should consider interaction between all public safety entities and foster partnerships with respect to CISD/CISM as a concept and as a program to mitigate negative responses to CISD that may occur within the course of business.

1.2.1.7   The Agency should have a procedure defining what information regarding a CISD/CISM Incident is shared with involved entities.

1.2.1.8   Unless otherwise provided for within the document, any documentation created during or after an event shall be kept in a manner consistent with practices specified Chapter 4 of this document.

1.2.2   Confidentiality of Process

1.2.2.1   The Agency shall have a policy and procedure in place that addresses the confidentiality of information obtained within the CISD/CISM process.

1.2.2.2   The Agency shall have an established form addressing confidentiality and non-disclosure of information obtained within the CISD/CISM process and shall have said form signed by each member of the CISD/CISM process as well as the person responsible for oversight of the CISD/CISM process.

1.2.2.3   The Agency shall be cognizant of the possibility that some information obtained in the CISD/CISM process may touch, overlap, or expose information of a mental health or medical nature, and therefore should also be cognizant of HIPAA guidelines with respect to medical information and the requirements for maintaining information of this nature securely.

1.2.2.4   The Agency should also consider discussion with their respective Risk Management / Legal department prior to commencing establishment of the CISD/CISM program to ensure compliance with any Federal, State, County, or Local laws that may impact parts of the program.

1.2.2.5   The Agency should also consider review of FOIA/FOIL laws, policies, and procedures as they pertain to potential requests from any interested party seeking to obtain documentation as it relates to the program in general, or to a specific incident.

1.2.2.6   The Agency should also consider review of its media relations/social media/press release policies and procedures with respect to disclosure of CISD/CISM services being activated post-incident.

1.2.2.7   The Agency shall also ensure secure records-keeping processes for any documentation created, established, developed, or retained in the course of the CISD/CISM process, and shall also specify where these documents are kept, who shall have short and long term access, define security measures in place, and, if a records retention policy does not cover materials from the CISD/CISM process, establish guidelines for maximum retention of documents related to the CISD/CISM process.

1.2.2.8   The Agency shall also make all parties involved in the CISD/CISM program, inclusive of those receiving services, aware that if an immediate threat to an individual's life is determined to exist, appropriate resources shall also be activated in the best interest of the party or parties involved to ensure their immediate safety and health.

Chapter Two

CISD/CISM Event Management

2.1 Scope

This chapter identifies topics for inclusion in the Pre-Incident Event Management of an established CISD/CISM Program. Training topics relevant to pre-incident event management shall be developed consistent with agency policy and procedures. The topics in this chapter also apply to any Agency staff in administrative positions that are involved in the Agency CISD/CISM program.

2.2 Context for Training

All involved parties should understand the basic concepts and applications of CISD/CISM. The Agency shall commit to the support, development, and implementation of the CISD/CISM program as it best fits the real and practical needs of all Agency personnel, with emphasis on Public Safety Telecommunicators and their needs. The Agency shall also commit to time, resources, and opportunities for training of personnel involved that function as part of the CISD/CISM program.

2.3 Pre-Incident Management

2.3.1 Precautionary & Preliminary Actions

2.3.1.1   The Agency should have expectations and guidelines outlined and in place that are available to all Agency personnel. The Agency should also review these expectations and guidelines annually to ensure they are reasonable and attainable.

2.3.1.2   The Agency shall explain Confidentiality rules to all staff and involved parties, inclusive of Management, as is consistent with those established in Section 1.2.2 of this document.

2.3.1.3   The Agency should recognize that regional CISD/CISM teams and outside resources are not required to report specifics to them about their staff. The Agency shall respect this guideline and their employees' right to privacy and confidentiality in this manner.

2.3.1.4   The Agency shall also be aware of any conflicts of interest or personnel conflicts that may exist between employees in need of CISD/CISM services and members of the CISD/CISM teams. Should a situation like this arise, the Agency shall implement best efforts to ensure prevention or mitigation of any problematic scenarios.

2.3.1.5   The Agency shall ensure that the entirety of the CISD/CISM process shall include Public Safety Telecommunicator Staff and Supervision in order to establish relevant procedures as they relate to the CISD/CISM process and Dispatch Operations.

2.3.2 Training of Personnel & Event Recognition

2.3.2.1   The Agency shall ensure that all staff and Management participating in the CISD/CISM program shall attend training on the basic principles and concepts of CISD/CISM.

2.3.2.2   The Agency shall also ensure that all public safety telecommunicators, inclusive of newly hired personnel, receive information and annual training on CISD/CISM, consistent with Agency policy and procedures as well as with any Federal, State, or Local guidelines.

2.3.2.3   The Agency should attempt to ensure the CISD/CISM Team has training with local mental health providers to better understand available resources and external processes.

2.3.2.4   The Agency shall ensure that all Supervisory personnel has awareness of resources available and shall ensure facilitation of appropriate contact information for 24/7/365 availability in cases of immediate need.

2.3.2.5   The Agency shall ensure that Management and Supervisory personnel shall receive training related to Suicide awareness and resources available in their jurisdictions.

2.3.2.6   The Agency should also consider FEMA Training consistent with NIMS and ICS procedures for disasters and other incidents. Such consideration should be given to FEMA courses IS-100, IS-144, IS-700, IS-800, and IS-1200.

2.3.2.7   The Agency shall set forth guidelines and requirements regarding annual Continuing Education. The Agency within these guidelines and requirements should determine a minimum number of CDE hours necessary for each member to accrue annually. Continuing Education topics and courses are specified further in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.4 of this document.

2.3.3   Employee Training – Stress & Distress Management

2.3.3.1   The Agency should maintain awareness of new training opportunities that exist and consider sending all personnel to such trainings as they become available.

2.3.3.2   The Agency should also consider partnering with local mental health resources to facilitate awareness of stressors in the workplace as well as signs and symptoms that may present immediately following a critical incident.

2.3.3.3   The Agency shall commit to a stigma free environment in the workplace, to facilitate a climate of acceptance for all personnel to feel empowered to reach out for help should the need arise.

2.3.4   General Information

2.3.4.1   The Agency should consider placement of flyers and informational worksheets in conspicuous locations throughout the Agency center that is inclusive of the CISM team's contact information.

2.3.4.2   The Agency should also consider having a member or members of the CISD/CISM team facilitate training and information to personnel on what they do when they are activated. This may also be facilitated between teams on a Regional level, if such a structure exists.

2.3.4.3   The Agency shall make every attempt at normalizing the conversation about CISD/CISM and resources available to remove any fear or stigma from utilizing these services from the workplace, regardless of whether a critical incident is occurring or not.

2.4   Peer & Family Support

2.4.1   Peer Mentoring Programs

2.4.1.1   The Agency should consider establishment of peer-to-peer mentoring programs within the organization.

2.4.1.2   The Agency should consider facilitating and/or sponsoring peer/co-worker outings.

2.4.1.3   The Agency should consider new employee family orientation sessions, inclusive of informational packets regarding requirements and demands of working in an emergency communications center, resources available to the employee and family in relation to stressors common to the field of work, and tours of the emergency communications center to afford a visual connection to their family members' workplace and environment.

2.4.1.4   The Agency should also consider creation of spousal/family support meetings and outings to foster awareness of the stressors encountered in public safety telecommunications as well as to foster creation of strong support networks and employee support systems.

2.4.1.5   The Agency should also consider facilitating awareness of online resources in conjunction with professional resources as an additional adjunct tool in the mitigation of critical incident stress for all personnel.

2.4.1.6   The Agency shall offer and place conspicuously throughout the workplace environment crisis resources that are available to all personnel 24/7/365 in cases of immediate need. Such crisis resources shall include, but not be limited to, mental health, substance abuse, suicide prevention, and domestic violence.

2.5   Event Occurrence

2.5.1   During Event

2.5.1.1   The Agency shall ensure that Supervisory involvement and awareness is occurring. Often personnel will not mention they handled a piece of the situation that was significantly impactful or stressful. By ensuring this awareness, the potential occurrence of personnel falling through the cracks is significantly mitigated.

2.5.1.2   The Agency should consider splitting room monitoring or assistance with other Supervisors if feasible.

2.5.1.3   The Agency shall consider basic needs of on-duty personnel, such as refreshments and the need for breaks.

2.5.1.4   The Agency shall consider the creation of a quiet room for all personnel as a place to decompress and alleviate stress.

2.5.2 Immediately After Event

2.5.2.1 The Agency shall ensure that action is taken to observe staff and note which personnel are taking the most potentially stressful calls and handling the most potentially stressful events.

2.5.2.2 The Agency shall facilitate an immediate debriefing prior to leaving at the end of shift, in an environment away from the main operations floor, if feasible.

2.5.2.3 The Agency shall consider peer support from co-workers as is feasible.

2.5.2.4 The Agency shall consider and reasonably grant rest and time off for affected personnel depending on the severity of the event and need.

2.5.2.5 The Agency shall ensure that Senior management and Supervisory personnel reach out and check in with affected personnel as is appropriate and reasonable based on training and policies and procedures established by the Agency.

2.5.2.6 The Agency shall ensure that Supervisors, Support Staff, and personnel not directly involved in the incident are kept in the loop, with PHI redacted to remain compliant with HIPAA rules and regulations.

2.5.2.7 The Agency shall consider requesting neighboring agencies send CISM dispatch personnel to the affected center in the immediate time frame after the incident to be available if needed to serve as a presence of support and understanding.

2.5.3 After Event

2.5.3.1 The Agency shall ensure that formal debriefings are conducted.

2.5.3.2 The Agency shall consider participating in neighboring agency debriefings or the need for regional support, if such support exists.

2.5.3.3 The Agency shall participate in Departmental or Inter-Departmental debriefings in a lead or assistive capacity.

2.5.4 Post Event

2.5.4.1   The Agency should consider neighboring agency or regional support outside of the after-event time frame; e.g. visits in the days after the event, checking in with affected personnel, assess the need for interaction and discussion, and to observe and look for outward signs of struggles or difficulties.

2.5.4.2   The Agency should also consider mindfulness activities being offered to personnel, such as exercise, massage, etc.

2.5.5 Post Event Follow-Up

2.5.5.1   The Agency shall ensure Supervisory and Managerial Staff should check in with employees involved and consider a time frame of bi-weekly or monthly as is deemed appropriate.

2.5.5.2   The Agency should consider informal gatherings such as luncheons with staff affected to continue fostering support of affected personnel.

2.5.5.3   The Agency should consider Anniversary dates that may have an impact on staff.

2.5.5.4   The Agency should consider interactions with outside agencies on debriefs and hotwashes.

2.6 Recognition of Stressors in Staff

2.6.1 Signs to Recognize

2.6.1.1   The Agency should take notice of affected staff with an increase in usage of leave time for medical purposes or absence.

2.6.1.2   The Agency should take notice for increased call off activity.

2.6.1.3   The Agency should take notice of outbursts directed at other personnel.

2.6.1.4   The Agency should take notice of employees appearing to be withdrawn or disengaged.

2.6.1.5   The Agency should take notice of any personnel asking for help or assistance passively or indirectly.

2.6.1.6   The Agency shall take notice of any personnel exhibiting any signs of physical tension, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, fear, irritability, or anger.

2.6.1.7   The Agency shall take notice of any personnel exhibiting avoidance, inclusive of talking about it.

2.6.1.8   The Agency shall also take notice of any observed behavioral changes in affected personnel.

2.6.1.9   The Agency shall above all be mindful of remaining in an assistive and supportive role and not to handle any actions in a disciplinary manner unless otherwise unavoidable.

2.6.1.10   The Agency shall attempt to utilize external or regional resources if available; to reach out to family or other support systems; consider Human Resources involvement should the affected employee refuse or refuse to acknowledge the need for help or assistance.

Chapter Three

Training Procedures for CISD Team

3.1 Scope

This chapter identifies the topics that should be covered in establishing training for all members of an Agency's established CISD/CISM Team. Appropriate training is necessary to ensure that all members possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to facilitate the appropriate resources to affected personnel before, during, and after a critical incident.

3.2 Context for Training

As peers of affected personnel, members of the CISD/CISM team bring with them their collective experience base to be able to relate to peers affected by a critical incident that need CISD/CISM services. As the services are of a specialized nature, appropriate training is necessary in order to provide members with the appropriate tools to recognize signs of critical incident stress as well as the appropriate tools and skills to assist all affected personnel.

3.3 Team Membership

3.3.1 Application & Approval Process for Membership

3.3.1.1 The Agency shall create an appropriate application for membership on the CISD/CISM Team complete with criteria for membership.

3.3.1.2 Prospective member applications should be accepted by the Agency from personnel who are in good standing as determined by standards set forth in writing by the Agency.

3.3.1.3 The Agency should consider requirement of a letter of interest for membership, meet the required years of experience (as determined by the Agency), a complete resume, areas of specialized training with copies of certifications (as determined by the Agency), and a letter(s) of recommendation from the prospective member's immediate Supervisor, Director, and/or Department Head (as specified by the Agency.

3.3.1.4 The Agency should establish an interview panel (comprised of appropriate interviewers as determined by the Agency).

3.3.1.5 Selected applicants should meet or exceed recommended guidelines as established by the Agency.

3.3.1.6   The Agency should determine, by simple majority of the interview panel, selected candidates for final approval for membership on the CISD Team.

3.3.2   Team Training Requirements

3.3.2.1   The Agency shall require minimum mandatory certifications/classes to be obtained by prospective applicants, inclusive of training in Ethics & Confidentiality, Stress Management, and Conflict Resolution.

3.3.2.2   The Agency should also consider mandatory certifications & classes in the following areas: Peer-to-Peer Debriefing, Group Crisis Debriefing, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, CIT – Crisis Intervention Training, Suicide Awareness in Public Safety, Suicide Intervention, Survivor's Guilt, Line of Duty Death, and/or any other relevant coursework, seminars, or training as are deemed relevant by the Agency.

3.3.2.3   The Agency should consider the following topics for Continuing Education hours: Updates on PTSD, Suicide Intervention, Conflict Resolution, Stress Management, Current Crisis Related Topics, CISD Programs, Defusings, and 1-on-1 debriefings, or any topic(s) deemed appropriate by the Agency.

3.3.2.4   The Agency should also consider creation and appointment of a Team Leader Position, determined by the Agency's Senior/Command Staff.

3.3.2.5   The Agency should also establish roles and responsibilities in writing of the Team Leader, which may include, but not limited to, the following: Leadership of Team Meetings, Interviews, Coordination with Team Members for on-call rosters for Team Activation or Requests, Coordination of Records Keeping on member participation, training, and attendance, delegation of duties to Team Members.

3.3.2.6   It is recommended that each Agency should appoint an Agency Designee for the CISD Team. This may be the Agency's Training Coordinator if already an established position or a Team Member willing and capable of accepting the responsibilities.

3.3.2.7   The Agency Designee should assume all of the following responsibilities: Maintain an active current list of team members, maintain training records, maintain and track all CDE hours, schedule and coordinate all classes and trainings, make proper notifications to team members as to trainings, requirements, and responsibilities, coordinate with outside resources as to their training and responsibilities, maintain all archived team member records and training files, list of events members have participated in, and maintain confidentiality of the records and other documentation.

3.3.3 Membership of External Resources

3.3.3.1 The Agency, in conjunction with Team Membership, shall determine whether to include a religious representative or not.

3.3.3.2 The Agency shall consider having religious representatives participate in "sit-ins" in the 9-1-1 Center and participate in "ride-a-longs" to gain exposure and familiarity with the daily functions of public safety personnel and what they may encounter.

3.3.3.3 The Agency shall decide if there is to be an application process for religious representatives or how they will be determined suitable for membership on the team.

3.3.3.4 The Agency shall also ensure that religious representatives receive the same training and adhere to the same continuing education requirements for membership.

3.3.3.5 The Agency should have at least two mental health clinicians as members of the team, with credentials to be pre-determined and verified in advance in conjunction with Professional Mental Health providers associated with the program.

3.3.3.6 It is recommended that the Agency verify and receive written documentation from participating mental health clinicians that they are self-insured or possess malpractice insurance.

3.3.3.7 The Agency shall ensure that mental health clinicians participate in "sit-ins" in 9-1-1 Center Operations as well as "ride-a-longs".

3.3.3.8 The Agency should select mental health clinicians that have a neutral/positive view of Public Safety Personnel.

3.3.3.9 The Agency shall establish an application and interview process for prospective mental health clinicians considered for membership in accordance with recommendations from Professional Mental Health providers associated with the program.

3.3.3.10 The Agency shall determine if one of the two (or more) mental health clinicians who are members can serve as the clinical director of the team.

3.3.3.11 The Agency shall ensure that mental health clinicians shall also receive the recommended training classes and continuing education requirements for team membership.

3.3.3.12   The Agency shall also ensure that HIPAA rules, regulations, and guidelines are adhered to, inclusive of records keeping, sharing of documents, and any information that may include PHI.

3.3.3.13   The Agency shall determine any other roles and responsibilities for mental health clinicians upon recommendation by Professional Mental Health providers affiliated with the program as is deemed appropriate.

3.3.4   Team Meetings

3.3.4.1   The Agency shall ensure mandatory meetings are held at least every quarter. Dates should be selected by the Team Leader and the Agency Designee.

3.3.4.2   It is recommended that team members shall attend no less than three meetings per year to maintain active membership unless approval from the Team Leader and/or Agency Designee is obtained in advance.

3.3.4.3   Team Leaders should use these meetings to hold trainings as is feasible.

3.3.4.4   Team Leaders should also ensure that future meeting dates shall be announced before adjournment to ensure notice has been given to all team members.

3.3.4.5   Team Leaders shall keep minutes of each meeting, which shall be kept confidential, and should adhere to general business rules for meetings, e.g. Roberts Rules of Order.

3.3.5   Ethical Considerations

3.3.5.1   The Agency shall ensure that each team shall provide a written statement of compliance with all relevant ethical and professional guidelines. This shall also include a signed confidentiality agreement.

3.3.5.2   The Agency shall ensure that any breaches or violations of confidentiality are reported as soon as they become known to appropriate Agency staff and to the affected individuals involved.

3.3.5.3   The Agency shall investigate any breaches and violations of confidentiality. If, after the completion of an investigation, it is determined that any ethical standard and/or confidentiality has been intentionally breached or violated, the Agency shall strongly consider removal of person(s) responsible, especially in cases of intentional malfeasance or intent to cause irreparable harm.

Chapter Four

CISD/CISM Team Responsibilities

4.1   Scope

This chapter identifies the topics that should be implemented when defining the roles and responsibilities of CISD/CISM Teams.

4.2   Context of Training

The Agency, along with the Team Leader and Agency Designee, shall ensure understanding of each of the roles and responsibilities of each Team Member. Roles and Responsibilities should be established in writing, provided to each member, and reviewed periodically for compliance, procedural, and agency-specific accuracy.

4.3   Critical Incident Assessment – CISD/CISM Situations

4.3.1   Initial Determination

4.3.1.1   It shall be established by the Agency that all of the following types of incidents require CISD/CISM intervention; suicide of a departmental member, any police related shooting resulting in injury or death to an involved party, line of duty injury or death, MCI, natural disasters, death or severe injury to a child, any accident or event resulting in multiple deaths; riots, hostage situations, aircraft crashes, terrorist events, or any incident deemed necessary by the Agency in conjunction with the Team Leader and Agency Designee.

4.3.1.2   The Agency, once a qualifying event has occurred, shall then proceed to Activation of the CISD/CISM Team.

4.3.2 Activation of the CISD/CISM Team

4.3.2.1   The Agency should acknowledge that a request for activation can be made by any employee and is not bound to the Agency's Organization Chart or Command Hierarchy. Once the request has been made, the Team Leader in conjunction with the Agency Designee, shall make the determination to activate the CISD/CISM Team or not. In the event a full Team activation is denied, the Agency should, at minimum, facilitate an informal meeting with a representative of the CISD/CISM team and the individual making the request. The Agency should also consider development of a CISD/CISM activation request form for tracking and documentation purposes.

4.3.2.2   The Agency shall ensure that policies and procedures are in place to notify duty Supervision and duty Command Staff that the CISD/CISM Team has been activated or a request has been made and denied.

4.3.3 Notification of the CISD/CISM Team

4.3.3.1   The Agency should consider multiple methods of notifying Team Members such as texting, paging, and phone calls, while being mindful of confidentiality requirements.

4.3.3.2   The Agency, through the Team Leader and Agency Designee, shall maintain an updated roster of CISD/CISM Team Members inclusive of all available contact information.

4.3.3.3   Once the CISD/CISM Team has been activated, the Team will assess the scope and severity of the services needed and determine if any additional outside resources are required.

4.3.3.4   The CISD/CISM Team, with support from the Agency will identify and obtain an appropriate venue/meeting space for the CISD/CISM process to occur.

4.3.3.5   The CISD/CISM Team shall make notifications to appropriate Agency personnel and shall ensure CISD/CISM services are offered to all affected personnel.

4.3.3.6   The CISD/CISM Team, if necessary, shall contact appropriate command staff / supervisors to arrange for coverage of personnel so that they may attend the debriefing.

4.3.4   Defusings

4.3.4.1   The CISD/CISM Team should provide on scene defusings that last no longer than 30-60 minutes.

4.3.4.2   The CISD/CISM Team should discuss with and remind personnel involved in the incident signs of stress as well as tips on how to reduce stress.

4.3.4.3   The CISD/CISM Team should consider, based on assessment, whether a debriefing should be scheduled.

4.3.4.4   The CISD/CISM Team should identify anyone in the group who may be in need or benefit from additional support services or referral to other resources or professional services.

4.3.5   Debriefings

4.3.5.1   The Agency shall define the level of formality of the debriefing process and ensure it is offered to everyone affected by the critical incident.

4.3.5.2   The Agency should strongly consider that any debriefing occurs within 24-72 hours after the incident.

4.3.5.3   CISD/CISM Team Members should advise participants that debriefings usually last between 1-3 hours, and should explain the confidentiality of the event, expectations of the debriefing, and that the debriefing is not a critique or post-analysis of the incident.

4.3.5.4   CISD/CISM Team members should focus on reducing stress reactions and providing tips and tools to help cope with the incident.

4.3.5.5   CISD/CISM Team members should encourage affected participants to talk and share with those present but should also be clear that this level of participation is not mandatory.

4.3.5.6   CISD/CISM Team Members, in conjunction with mental health clinicians should determine if follow-up or referral to other resources and services are needed.

4.3.5.7   CISD/CISM Team Members should also make themselves available after the event to speak one-on-one with those involved.

4.3.5.8   CISD/CISM Team Members shall provide hand-outs and literature on coping tools, stress management, as well as how to identify stressors for every attendee to access, if they so choose.

4.3.5.9   The CISD/CISM Team Members should also consider providing Crisis Hotline information (such as Toll-Free numbers, local resources, inclusive of addresses and phone numbers, and EAP, if available) for any after-hours professional services needed. The resources should be reconsidered Post-Event consistent with established guidelines in Subsection 2.5.5.

4.3.6   Paperwork & Documentation

4.3.6.1   The CISD/CISM Team will maintain all confidential paperwork which will be kept securely as determined by the Team Leader and Agency Designee.

4.3.6.2   The CISD/CISM Agency Designee shall maintain training files on all Team Members.

4.3.6.3   The CISD/CISM Agency Designee, in conjunction with the Team Leader, shall ensure that all records are updated for accuracy and compliance on a routine basis, but no less than quarterly, unless information is otherwise provided by a member.

4.3.6.4   The Agency Designee, in conjunction with the Team Leader, should ensure that any documentation or paperwork that contains any confidential information, inclusive of PHI, is not shared across public devices, E-mail clients, or Agency issued devices, to ensure any content will not be discoverable in a FOIL/FOIA request received by the Agency. If, after legal review by the Agency, or by judicial authority, information is compelled to be made public, any and all efforts shall be made to redact PHI from the documents in order to ensure compliance with any legal requests and the confidentiality of the person(s) involved.

Chapter Five

Regional CISD/CISM Team Development & Procedures

5.1 Scope

This Chapter defines and outlines the creation and implementation for Regional CISD/CISM Team Development & Procedures. Regionalization of the CISD/CISM process allows all participating Agencies to leverage resources collectively for the benefit of providing necessary CISD/CISM processes to any Agency or Agencies in need.

5.2 Context for Training

Participating Agencies committed to the concept of a Regional CISD/CISM Team shall utilize the best practices listed below as a template for creation and development of their respective Regional CISD/CISM Team. Once created, participating Agencies shall utilize the procedural guidelines listed below in consideration of activation and deployment of Regional CISD/CISM Team resources.

5.3 Establishment of Regional CISD/CISM Team

5.3.1 Needs Analysis & Establishment of Basics

5.3.1.1 The lead Agency shall determine and assess for Regional partners, preferably within a geographically defined area with similar interests.

5.3.1.2 Representative Agencies shall select a liaison and should consider selecting an alternate liaison to serve on the Board of Directors. A liaison's primary responsibility is to represent their specific Agency as well as the Agency's team members.

5.3.1.3 Goals for the Regional Team should be clearly stated and should clearly identify those who are to be served.

5.3.1.4 Guidelines should be established for team membership and the specific roles to be performed, such as administrative structuring, response and activation functions, clinical mental health oversight and involvement, and team member selection.

5.3.1.5 Determination should be made as to how the team will be constituted within policy and legal requirements.

5.3.1.6   Determination shall be made how the Regional Team will be funded.

5.3.1.7   Determination shall be made in establishing activation criteria.

5.3.1.8   Determination should be made in cases of mass disaster or where normal communications practices are disrupted.

5.3.1.9   Stipulate guidelines and procedures for follow-up for team members after a crisis response.

5.3.1.10   Agencies should acknowledge the continued need for ongoing in-service training of team members.

5.3.1.11   Agencies shall create a clear, practical operational manual that outlines policies and procedures.

5.3.1.12   Agencies shall establish a Board of Directors for oversight of Regional Team Operations.

5.3.1.13   Agencies shall establish By-Laws and incorporate any relevant mutual aid agreements into operational standards. Agencies shall also establish meeting schedules for the Board and general membership in advance. Agencies shall consider mini-trainings during the General Membership meetings.

5.3.1.14   Agencies shall also establish a request for activation process to be shared with all surrounding agencies whether members of the Regional Team or not. This process should be distributed to all potential Agencies in need of the Regional Team's services.

5.3.1.15   Agencies shall establish a Peer Review process regarding performance of members.

5.3.1.16   Agencies should register on-line with the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.

5.4   Member Selection

5.4.1   Prospective Member Criteria

5.4.1.1   Prospective Members shall be affiliated with an Agency that is part of the Regional CISD/CISM Team.

5.4.1.2   Agency permission and approval shall be required to join the Regional Team.

5.4.1.3   Prospective Members shall be subject to a background check prior to becoming a member of the Regional Team.

5.4.1.4   Participation shall be required in a peer review by current Regional Team Members.

5.4.1.5   Prospective members shall be interviewed through a formal process, to be established by the Agencies.

5.4.1.6   The Agencies, during the application process, shall consider allowing prospective member to attend any general meeting to afford the prospective member the opportunity to obtain further information about the Regional Team and its mission.

5.4.2   Ethical Standards for Members

5.4.2.1   The Agencies shall ensure that all Regional Team Members will adhere to a strict foundation of confidentiality and privacy that applies to all CISD/CISM interventions, discussions, and related tasks.

5.4.2.2   The Agencies shall ensure that Regional CISD/CISM Team Members will only disclose confidential information without the consent of the individual(s) under exigent circumstances, or where required by law.

5.4.2.3   The Agencies shall ensure that Regional CISD/CISM Team Members will recognize their own limitations in their abilities to provide CISD/CISM interventions. All Members will also refrain from involving themselves in interventions which they would reasonably believe that their own personal feelings may cause the intervention to become ineffective or compromised.

5.4.2.4   The Agencies shall ensure that any CISD/CISM Regional Team Member who may have a vested interest in a specific intervention, inclusive of any familial or personal relationship, shall not participate in that specific intervention.

5.4.2.5   The Agencies shall ensure that the Regional CISD/CISM Team Members are required to respect and promote the integrity of the well-being of all personnel engaged in any part of the process.

5.4.2.6   The Agencies shall ensure, that if/when Regional CISD/CISM Team Members are confronted with a situation or course of action which would violate any ethical standard, the member(s) must consult a Regional CISD/CISM Team Leader and a member of the Board of Directors or their designee prior to taking any course of action.

5.4.2.7   The Agencies shall create a document of attestation that all Regional CISD/CISM Team Members shall review, sign, and date prior to commencement of their membership and activity on the Regional CISD/CISM Team.

5.4.3   Membership & Term Limits

5.4.3.1   The Agency shall solicit from all participating Agencies potential membership on the Regional CISD/CISM Team via official posting, Email, or any preferred method of communications with potentially interested individuals.

5.4.3.2   The Agency should consider establishment of membership requirements, to include, but not limited to, minimum years of experience within the Public Safety Telecommunicator position, minimum term of commitment, duration of training, requirements of continuing education, attendance at Regional Team meetings, deployment requirements, and adherence to any and all rules and regulations as established within the program.

5.4.3.3   Selection of Team Members should be established by the Board of Directors and voted upon as vacancies occur.

5.4.3.4   The Board of Directors should determine term limits to afford opportunities to participate on the Regional CISD/CISM Team as well as to serve on the Board of Directors.

5.4.3.5   The Board of Directors should also establish procedures for the removal of any Team Member or Board of Director, should the need arise.

Acronyms

ANS   American National Standards

ANSI   American National Standards Institute

APCO   Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials

CAD   Computer Aided Dispatch

CDE   Continuing Dispatch Education

CISD   Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

CISM   Critical Incident Stress Management

CIT   Crisis Intervention Training

EAP   Employee Assistance Program

FEMA   Federal Emergency Management Agency

FOIA   Freedom of Information Act

FOIL   Freedom of Information Laws

HIPAA   Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act

ICS   Incident Command System

IS   Independent Study

MCI   Mass-casualty Incident

NIMS   National Incident Management System

PHI   Personal Health Information

PST   Public Safety Telecommunicator

PTSD   Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

SDC   Standards Development Committee

GLOSSARY

Confidentiality As it relates to the telecommunicator, confidentiality is the obligation to not disclose or communicate protected information. Involved personnel providing CISD/CISM resources shall demonstrate comprehension and application of the Agency's confidentiality policies and rules regarding the discussion or release of information acquired through the process.

Conflict of Interest Any individual with competing spheres of influence or interest that may cause bias or prejudice in the decision-making process in provision of any of the services described in this document.

CISD/CISM Critical Incident Stress Debriefing/Management: Critical Incident Stress Debriefing/Management is a process some agencies use to help employees get through highly stressful, traumatic times.

Debriefing A formal meeting that takes place after a specific crisis, disaster, or incident to obtain information and insight into what occurred.

Defusing An intervention to reduce stress, tension, or danger in a difficult situation.

HIPAA Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act: A United States Law designed to protect privacy and confidentiality standards to protect patients' medical records and other health information provided to health plans, doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers.

ICS Incident Command System: It is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective.

Malfeasance Wrongdoing, especially by a public official.

NIMS National Incident Management System: It is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines.

Peer Review A process by which a person's work is checked by a group of individuals in the same field to make sure it meets the necessary standards.

PTSD Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A mental health condition that is usually triggered by a terrifying event --- either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, insomnia, depression, irritability, as well as uncontrolled thoughts about the event.

PST   Public Safety Telecommunicator: The individual employed by a public safety agency as the first of the first responders whose primary responsibility is to receive, process, transmit, and/or dispatch emergency and nonemergency calls for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, and other public safety services via telephone, radio, and other communication devices.

Stress   Stress is the response of the brain to demands made on it. For the telecommunicator, stress may be mental (fatigue, sleep disturbance, etc.) or physical (pain in the back, neck, or shoulders, among others.) Secondary stress refers to experiencing stress as a result of exposure to the trauma suffered by other people.

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Jane F. Siling
Executive Director
Tampa Bay
Regional Critical Incident Team

International Critical Incident Stress Foundation
www.icisf.org

FEMA Emergency Management Institute
https://training.fema.gov/

KLOVE Training
http://www.crisisresponse.org

Frontline Helpline
https://frontlinerehab.com/helpline/
800-273-8255

Sean Riley
https://www.safecallnow.org
(206)-459-3020 (24/7 helpline)

Adam Timm
http://www.thehealthydispatcher.com

The Code Green Campaign
https://codegreencampaign.org/

Fire/EMS Helpline
https://www.nvfc.org/fireems-helpline/
888-459-3020 (24/7 Helpline)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
800-273-8255

Shannon Boos, RPL
Chair
Airport Operations Center
Tampa International Airport
Tampa, Florida

D. Jeremy DeMar, MA, CPE, ENP
Vice-Chair
Springfield Emergency Communications,
Springfield, Massachusetts

John Halaychik III, EMT-B, ED-Q
Technical Editor
Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response
Ithaca, New York

Wendy Bundy
Former 9-1-1 Dispatcher
Luray, Virginia

Christine Brazil, RPL
Lake County Emergency Communications
Crown Point, Indiana

Tina DeCola
Las Vegas Fire and Rescue
Las Vegas, Nevada

Janelle LaPlante
Chandler Police Department
Chandler, Arizona

Tess Poland
Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care
Skokie, Illinois

Ralene Poncelow
Weld County Regional Communications Center
Greeley, Colorado

Melanie Pumphery
Clay County Sheriff's Department
Liberty, Missouri

Samantha Reynolds
Fort Lauderdale Police Department
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Tara Vann, RPL
Frederick County Public Safety Communications
Winchester, Virginia

Laura Webster
Knox County 9-1-1
Mount Vernon, Ohio

APCO Standards Development Committee

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Karen Allen SRP Security Services Phoenix, Arizona	**Stephen Ashurkoff, ENP** Comtec Safety and Security Technology	**Gary Bates** Pyramid Consulting
Lisa Cahill Marion County Public Safety Communications Ocala, Florida	**Stephen Devine** FirstNet	**Cheryl Giggetts** CTA Consultants
Bud Hicks, ENP Grundy County 911 Morris, Illinois	**James Leyerle, ENP** OnStar, Retired	**Nathan McClure, ENP** Past APCO International President AECOM, Retired
Daniel Morelos Tucson Airport Authority (retired) Tucson, Arizona	**Kim Ostin** Sterling Heights Police Dept. (Ret) Sterling Heights, MI	**Jackie Pace** Redwood City, California
Erica Stolhand Hood River County 9-1-1 Hood River, Oregon	**Sherry Taylor** Cayman Islands Department of Public Safety Communications, George Town, Grand Cayman	**Judith Weshinskey-Price** Pinellas County Regional 9-1-1 Largo, Florida
Megan Bixler Standards / ACS Program Manager APCO International		

Notes

APCO International

APCO International
351 N. Williamson Blvd
Daytona Beach, FL 32114

www.apcointl.org