

Critical Incident Stress Management Services: FAQ

What is Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)?

CISM is a service that helps you handle the impact of any workplace event that you believe may disrupt the present or future productivity of your workforce due to psychological stress or trauma. Incidents like these take a toll not only on individual employees, but on the organization itself. Critical Incident Stress Management services may reduce the potential for absenteeism, presenteeism, low morale, diminished productivity, employee turnover, and disability claims.

How do I access CISM services?

Your management staff calls your EAP toll-free number and asks for our Employee Assistance Consultant team. A consultant will work with you to determine the most appropriate level of response for the specific incident.

What CISM services are provided by the EAP?

- Management consultation/needs assessment
- Onsite group and individual support
- Group or individual support by phone
- Customized seminars regarding grief and loss, managing change, stress management, resilience, and more
- EAP handouts with additional support and information
- Community resource referrals

How does CISM help?

A range of interventions are used to minimize and manage stress from critical incidents, and to assist in the recovery of individuals and the organization as effectively and efficiently as possible. The goal is to prevent or minimize long-term stress responses, enhance employees' overall adjustment at work and home, and support the normal functioning of your organization.

Examples of critical incidents

- Death of an employee (on or offsite)
- Industrial accidents
- Workforce reduction/reorganization
- Natural disasters
- Threats of violence
- Robberies
- Homicide
- Suicide
- Acts of violence or terrorism

There may be other incidents, in addition to those listed above, that can cause stress, grief, or trauma. Call to consult with an EAP representative to determine the best response.

What happens during an onsite debriefing?

Debriefings provide an opportunity for attendees to talk about what happened and to process the emotional and psychological impact of the event.

A debriefing offers a safe environment for employees to share thoughts and feelings and support one another. The facilitator helps to normalize their responses to the event, provide information about stress management and/or coping with grief, and inform about possible resources including the EAP. These services can be delivered to a group of employees or individually.

The facilitator also provides educational handouts specific to the incident, such as “Death of a Coworker,” “Witnessing a Traumatic Event,” “Coping after a Robbery,” “Coping with Suicide,” “After a Disaster: Stress Reactions and Self-Care Strategies.”

How quickly can the EAP respond to a critical incident?

EAP Employee Assistance Consultants are immediately available by phone for response planning and crisis management. Studies show that the most effective time for an onsite debriefing is 24 to 72 hours after the critical incident. Sooner than that, employees are still in shock and too emotional to focus on facts and recommendations. However, we will attempt to accommodate the time frame you request.

The EAP CISM services are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Call your EAP toll-free number and ask for our Employee Assistance Consultant team.