

	MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES	
	Subject CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	Policy Number GC-22 Effective Date 03-10-23
Related Information Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 38-1111 and 38-962 GC-17, <i>Employee Disciplinary Procedure</i> GJ-2, <i>Critical Incident Response</i>	Supersedes GC-22 (05-05-17)	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Office Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Office to recognize employees who are subject to high levels of stress, in the performance of their duties. The CISM Program has been developed to lessen the effects of stress, on both the employee and their family, after a critical incident has occurred. Its purpose is to provide a controlled setting for a person to vent and discuss their feelings as a result of a critical incident.

DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident: An event producing emotional or psychological distress sufficient to overwhelm an individual's psychological defense mechanisms. Typically, these incidents are sudden, powerful event which are outside the range of ordinary experiences. Because they are sudden and unusual, they can have strong, psychological effects, even on well trained, experienced employees. The term "critical incident," as used in this Office Policy, is not to be confused with the term specified in Office Policy GJ-2, *Critical Incident Response*.

Debriefing: A confidential, structured group meeting which is facilitated by Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team members and is under the guidance of mental health professionals. Those attending the Debriefing will be affected employees, mental health professionals, CISM team members, and may include affected employees from outside agencies. The meeting provides affected employees with an opportunity to discuss the critical incident and share their reactions. The process is based in crisis and educational intervention theory and is designed to mitigate the psychological impact of a traumatic event, prevent subsequent development of stress, and identify individuals who may require a professional, mental-health follow-up.

Defusing: This is a process of steps which occurs during, or immediately following, a critical incident in which informal group meetings are held to discuss a traumatic event, or series of traumatic events. It is directed at stabilizing each participant, allowing them to vent and discuss the feelings that occur, and it assists the CISM team members in determining whether a debriefing may be necessary. Those attending a Defusing will be affected employees, to include employees from outside agencies, and CISM team members.

Traumatic Event: When the event, or series of events, causes a lot of stress, it is called a traumatic event. Traumatic events are marked by a sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of serious injury or death.

PROCEDURES

1. **Primary Objective of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM):** The CISM Program is designed to hasten the rate of recovery for people who are having reactions to abnormal events. Defusing and debriefings are not psychotherapy sessions; their purpose is to provide employees a controlled setting to vent and discuss their feelings related to experiencing a critical incident. Defusing and debriefings can often accelerate the recovery time of an employee from stress-related problems and may permit them to return to work with a better understanding of the emotions they are feeling.
2. **CISM Team:** The CISM Team shall be comprised of the following individuals:
 - A. **CISM Administrator:** The CISM Administrator shall be a coordinator who has completed the stress management training through a recognized organization. The Administrator is selected by the Chief Deputy or designee to oversee the CISM Program. The Administrator shall be responsible for supervising other CISM Coordinators, and recording statistical information, such as the number and types of interventions, and the number of hours worked.
 - B. **CISM Team Coordinators:** The coordinators shall be sworn, detention, and civilian personnel who have completed the stress management training through a recognized organization. The coordinators are selected and appointed by the Chief Deputy or designee with input from the CISM Administrator. CISM coordinators shall:
 1. Evaluate the need for a debriefing or a defusing when an intervention is requested;
 2. Contact CISM team members and coordinate with the appropriate supervisors to facilitate an intervention;
 3. Review and assist in revising Office policy and procedures;
 4. Assist the CISM Administrator in the selection of prospective team members; and
 5. Assist the CISM Administrator in selecting new team members.
 - C. **CISM Team Leaders:** The team leaders shall be sworn, detention, and civilian personnel who have completed the stress management training through a recognized organization. Team leaders are selected and appointed by the CISM Administrator and CISM coordinators. The team leaders shall:
 1. Activate callout for on-scene response, debriefings, one-on-ones, and other needs;
 2. Schedule debriefings;
 3. Assist with reviewing and revising Office policy and procedure;
 4. Assist with the overseeing/oversight of the team members;
 5. Assist the CISM Administrator in the selection of team members; and
 6. Provide input in selection of additional team leaders.
 - D. **CISM Team Members:** The CISM team members shall be made up of one or more employees, screened and trained to provide peer support consistent with the requirements of ARS 38-1111. Team members will complete the stress management training through a recognized organization.

- E. CISM Mental Health Professional: The CISM Mental Health Professional may be employed by the Office, through contracted services with the Office, or through employee benefits and must be licensed pursuant to ARS 38-962. A mental health professional is not required to be at a defusing; however, when available, shall attend debriefings based on the complexity of the situation.
3. **Activating the CISM Team:** Team members may respond when there is a reasonable likelihood that an employee may be, or has been, subjected to a significant amount of abnormal stress. Activation may be made by the Communications Division and may be during or following a critical incident and/or traumatic event.
- A. Supervisors shall request that the CISM Team be activated in any of the following situations:
 - 1. Officer-involved shooting;
 - 2. Line-of-duty death;
 - 3. Serious line-of-duty injury;
 - 4. Prolonged or violent tactical operation; or
 - 5. Critical incident scene as defined in this Office Policy.
 - B. Supervisors may request that the CISM Team be activated in any of the following situations:
 - 1. CPR being administered; or
 - 2. Incidents involving death or serious injury to a child.
 - C. Any employee can arrange a one-on-one defusing by contacting the Communications Division and obtaining the phone number of an available CISM Coordinator. Employees requesting the assistance of CISM are not required to identify themselves or provide any information that would violate the employee's anonymity when contacting the Communications Division. The CISM Coordinator will make all necessary arrangements for the employee to receive the appropriate assistance.
 - D. All or part of the CISM Team may be activated depending upon the type and scope of the critical incident or traumatic event and the number of employees either directly or indirectly involved in the incident.
 - 1. The supervisor requesting the call-out shall notify the Communications Division supervisor to contact a CISM Coordinator and advise them of the nature of the incident.
 - 2. The CISM Coordinator shall evaluate the situation, determine what actions are needed and, if necessary, contact the CISM team members.
 - 3. The CISM Coordinator shall contact the supervisor in charge of the investigation to coordinate on-scene defusing.
 - 4. The CISM Coordinator shall send a minimum of two team members for any activation.
 - 5. The CISM Administrator or Coordinator can request the activation of CISM team members from another agency.

- E. At the conclusion of an incident, a supervisor may request a debriefing be held for employees who were either directly or indirectly involved in the incident. Debriefings will normally be held within three working days of the incident.
 - F. Every effort shall be made to minimize the use of overtime, and use on-duty personnel first, if available, before utilizing off-duty personnel to conduct the CISM Program.
4. **Confidentiality:** Any information obtained by CISM team members during the course of defusing or debriefing shall be kept strictly confidential to protect the employee and any other persons involved in the critical incident. CISM team members, who violate the confidentiality of an employee, shall be subject to criminal and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, as specified in Office Policy GC-17, *Employee Disciplinary Procedures*. The release of confidential information shall require the consent of the employee, or that employee's legal representative, in writing, except, as specified in ARS 38-1111.
5. **CISM Selection Process:** CISM Team Applicants will be selected in accordance with guidelines established by the CISM Administrator and Coordinators. Generally, the selection process will include the following steps and considerations:
- A. Any Office employee who is not on initial probation will be eligible to apply.
 - B. When it becomes necessary to select employees for the CISM Team, the CISM Administrator shall be responsible for coordinating the effort. Announcements shall be published in the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Administrative Broadcasts and must include the information required from the applicant. The applicant must receive a positive recommendation from both their immediate and second-level supervisors.
 - C. The applicant is required to submit a memorandum through the chain of command to the CISM Administrator. The applicant's education, experience, and background shall be evaluated by a panel consisting of team members designated by the CISM Administrator.
 - D. Qualified applicants will be invited to participate in an oral interview.
 - E. The CISM Team selection panel will select the most qualified individuals and present those names to the Chief Deputy or designee for final approval.
 - F. Once selected, the applicant is required to attend and successfully complete a certification course through a recognized organization that delivers critical incident stress management training, prior to becoming a member and performing any duties.
6. **CISM Team Member Requirements:** Team members shall be required to complete the following:
- A. Annual continuing education training on the CISM subject. The amount of annual training will be dependent on the availability of training.
 - B. Annually attending three call-outs, at a minimum.
 - C. Annually attend 50% of the Office CISM Team meetings.
 - D. Annually attend 50% of the state-wide, quarterly CISM meetings.
7. **CISM Performance Evaluation:** The CISM team Administrator shall provide supervisory notes for each CISM team member through Blue Team. The direct supervisor of the CISM team member will use the

supervisory notes to assist in preparing the employee's annual performance appraisal to document their performance as a CISM team member.

8. **Unsatisfactory Performance:** CISM team members who fail to perform satisfactorily shall be removed from the team with the approval of the Chief Deputy or designee. Members removed from the team shall be issued a letter of removal from the CISM Administrator through the chain of command. The following may be considered as reasons for removal as a CISM team member:
 - A. Failure to attend three call-outs annually.
 - B. Failure to attend 50% of the Office CISM Team meetings annually.
 - C. Failure to respond to employee needs as required by certification.