

Critical Incident Stress Management

Presented by Officer Robert “Chip” Thrasher, Deerfield Police
Department

Introduction

- Officer Robert Thrasher, Deerfield Police
- Graduate of Northeastern University with 39 years in Massachusetts law enforcement
- Attended the Barnstable County Police Academy working at the Yarmouth Police Department, followed by 34 years at University of Massachusetts @ Amherst retiring in 2017 as a Lieutenant and Commanding Officer of the crowd management team
- Post retirement work as a part time officer with DPD and the MPTC's Instructor Development Team

Introduction

- We will review the following
- What is Critical Incident Stress
- The Western Massachusetts CISM Team and the who, what, where, how and why you should utilize the WMCISM Team
- Available resources to the First Responder in addressing Critical Incident Stress

Critical Incident Stress

- Critical Incident Stress is a normal reaction to an abnormal incident.
- Most Police Officers handle serious incidents daily without issue.
- A Critical Incident can include;
 - Death of a peer
 - Death of a child
 - Mass casualties
 - Prolonged situations
 - Events that bring intense media attention/perceived administration betrayal

The Western MA. CISM Team

- The WMCISM is based out of WMEMS in Northampton.
- The team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week made up of Police, Fire and EMS peers, mental health professionals and area clergy.
- Since the founding of the team it has grown providing service to the four western Massachusetts counties police, fire, EMS and dispatchers. We utilize the Mitchell Model
- The team responds to any police, fire or EMS department as well as area SAR Teams, Ski Patrol and similar emergency responders

What does the WMCISM Team provide

- Education on stress in emergency services
- Support Teams at the scene or immediately following the incident
- Defusing, Debriefings and One on One services
- Resource and Referral Networks including area clinicians with a background in helping 1st Responders, in and out patient programs like On Site Academy.

What does the team bring to a response?

- The team are all volunteer, ICISF trained and qualified
- The interactions are all confidential under Massachusetts General Law
- The team is made of up of veteran responders with experience.

How does the WMCISM provide service?

- If an agency has an incident and feels they need a team response the first step is to call 1 413 586 6065. After hours this will page Lisa at WMEMS.
- The second step is to determine what resources are needed. This can include;
 - Defusing
 - Debriefing
 - One on One

Defusing

- This is done in an more informal method following an incident with a couple of keys points
- Ground Rules
- Confidentiality
- Not an operational review
- Share information

Debriefing

- This is a larger, more formal program with a substantial education block focusing on what is a “normal” response to a critical incident
- Same ground rules and confidentiality
- 6 stage process

Why does this work?

- Hearing what the other responders heard, saw and did
- Learning that feeling like s#\$ after some calls is normal and in fact healthy.
- How to get help within the police or fire “world” before you can’t deal with it.

How does CISM and CIT come together

- Some calls requiring a CIT response may require a CISM response later.
- You may respond to another 1st Responder in crisis and need someone with information on a referral .

Questions

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