Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program
Ethics and Conduct

Purpose:

To promote an ethical practice, the National Interagency Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program encourages members to adhere to the following Code of Ethics. The National CISM Program operates on an interagency basis. Critical Incident Peer Support Groups (CIPS) are interagency and comprised of qualified and certified Peer Supporters and CIPS Group Leaders. The National Interagency CISM Program does not recognize CISM personnel who are not certified by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF).

Procedures:

Considerations for selection of CISM program candidates include, but are not limited to, previous education and training; resolved traumatic experiences; and desirable personal qualities such as maturity, judgment, personal and professional ethics, and credibility.

The CISM Program has a responsibility to assure that members are provided a copy of the Ethics Code and applicable training. Program members have an obligation to be familiar with the CISM Ethics Code and its application to CISM program activities.

CISM personnel are encouraged to stay active members of the cadre upon job relocation or reassignment, subject to the approval of the new supervisor.

Informal Resolution of an Ethics Violation: When a member believes there may have been an ethical violation by another member, the member attempts to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of the other member. Handle at the lowest level.

Interagency Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program

ETHICS CODE

1.   General Standards

1.01 Boundaries of Competence. Peer support personnel shall be trained to utilize the critical incident stress management model and protocols as advocated by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF).   Peer support members will not operate outside of these established Standard-of-Care and Boundaries of Competence (ICISF).

Members provide services, training and/ or conduct research only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience or appropriate professional experience.

1.02 Maintaining Expertise. Members undertake ongoing efforts to maintain competence in the skills they are required to use.

1.03 Respecting Others. Members shall respect the rights of others whose values, attitudes, and opinions differ from their own. CISM members shall respect all people, regardless of gender, age, disability, racial, ethnic and religious differences and shall not engage in any discrimination or harassment.

1.04 Sexual Harassment. Members shall not engage in any sexual solicitations, advances, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that occurs in connection with the members activities or roles as a member and which: (1) either is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile environment and the member knows or is told this; or (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act; or of multiple, persistent, or pervasive acts.

1.05 Other Harassment. Members do not knowingly engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning to persons with whom they interact in their program related activities based on factors such as individuals' age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language or socio-economic status.

1.06 Personal Problems and Conflicts. Members shall recognize that their personal problems and conflicts may interfere with their effectiveness. Accordingly, they shall refrain from taking on an activity when they suspect, know, or should know, their personal problems are likely to lead to harming another person or the program's reputation.

Members need to be aware of their personal limitations and should seek advice and counsel in determining when to disqualify themselves from working with problems for which they have not been trained or problems about which they may have strong personal beliefs.

Members have an obligation to be alert to signs of, and to obtain assistance for; their personal problems at an early stage, in order to prevent significantly impaired performance.

1.07 Role Conflicts. Members shall refrain from entering relationships if the relationship could reasonably be expected to impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her role. For example, members avoid religious, sexual, or financial entanglements with receivers of peer support.

Because of potential role conflicts involved in providing peer support, including those that could affect future decisions or recommendations concerning assignment, transfer, or promotion, members should not develop peer support relationships between supervisors or subordinates.

Member's home unit supervisors may have additional requirements regarding the reporting of issues such as sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and workplace injury that may place the supervisor or the agency in jeopardy if the procedures are not followed. Members cannot abdicate their job responsibility as officers or supervisors by participating in the program. In these instances members must recuse themselves and not participate as a peer supporter or other association with the CISM program.

1.08 Solicitations of Clients. There are no fees either financial or in-kind for services provided by the Interagency Critical Incident Stress Management Program. Members may not solicit clients through their CISM interventions should a responder need additional assistance following an intervention. With the consent of the recipient of services, the member shall arrange for a consultation or referral based on the best interest of the person in need. Members may not use their role as a program member to intentionally benefit through personal or professional financial gain.

1.09 Misrepresentation and Lines of Authority. CISM program members shall not knowingly misrepresent the affairs or operations of the CISM Program. Members are prohibited from going to the scene of an incident to act on behalf of the CISM Program without the prior knowledge and consent of the Agency Administrator responsible for the intervention and without an order from authorized personnel.

2.   Public Statements:

2.01 Definition of Public Statements. Public statements include, but are not limited to, paid or unpaid advertising, brochures, printed matter, directory listings, personal resumes or curricula vita, interviews or comments for use in media, lectures in public and oral presentations, and published material.

2.02 Avoiding False or Deceptive Statements. Members do not make public statements that are false, deceptive, misleading or fraudulent.

2.03 Social Media. Members will refrain from posting any information including photographs related to the assignment and crisis intervention.

3.   Privacy and Confidentiality:

3.01 Confidentiality. Confidentiality is the foundation on which the CISM program rests. CISM principles require that confidentiality and privacy of responders be respected. Confidentiality applies to information received during a debriefing or individual session. Program members have a primary obligation and take responsible precautions to respect the confidentiality rights of those with whom they work. The Agencies will not question the individual(s) involved, or CISM team

members regarding the facts surrounding a critical incident debriefing, defusing, or the individual(s) involved, or referrals made to a mental health provider.

3.02 Discussing the Limits of Confidentiality. Unless it is not foreseeable or is contraindicated, the discussion of confidentiality occurs at the outset of the relationship and thereafter as new circumstances may warrant.

3.03 Minimizing Intrusion on Privacy. Members discuss confidential information obtained from program related contacts only for CISM professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with such matters.

3.04 Maintenance of Records. Client(s) confidentiality must be maintained. However, in order to maintain service continuity and program quality improvement minimal record keeping is necessary. A request for service form including time of event, mature of incident, number of personnel involved, contact person and contact number will assist the team leader in selecting team members and establishing meeting location and time. The service provided form should include information from the request form and a summary or themes of reactions, thoughts, and symptoms presented, educational material provided and coping techniques recommended and if referrals were made. Affected individual(s) names and comments are not recorded.

3.05 Disclosures. Program members disclose confidential information without the consent of the individual only for a valid purpose, such as (1) to provide needed professional services to an individual, (2) to obtain appropriate professional consultations, or (3) to protect the responder or others from harm.

Program members do not share confidential information which reasonably could lead to the identification of a responder, agency or organization with whom they have had a debriefing relationship.

3.06 Use of Confidential information for Teaching or Other Purposes. Program members do not disclose in their writing, lectures or other public media, confidential, personally identifiable information concerning the responders or agencies for whom they have provided a stress management session.

Ordinarily, in scientific and professional presentations, members disguise confidential information concerning persons or organizations so they are not individually identifiable to others and so discussions do not cause harm to persons who might identify themselves.

4.   **Teaching, Training Supervision, Research and Publishing**

4.01 Education and Training Programs. Program Peer supporter personnel must attend and successfully complete ICISF training courses presented by an ICISF certified instructor. The minimum training requirement for a Peer Supporter is Critical Incident Stress Management: Individual and group crisis intervention.

After three or more assignments, members should attend ICISF Advanced Critical Incident Stress Management course to enhance effectiveness in CISM. Following Advanced Training, other pertinent or applicable CISM training topics may be selected/recommended by the Geographic or National CISM

Program Management Staff in order to advance team skill levels. Individual self-development opportunities and in-service training for peer support personnel are encouraged.

Program trainers will maintain a current and accurate description of the program content, training goals and objectives, and requirements for satisfactory completion of the program. This information must be readily available to all interested parties. CISM trainers will present CISM information accurately and with a reasonable degree of objectivity.

4.02 Research Responsibility. Program researchers assure that research is conducted ethically, competently and with due concern for the dignity and welfare of participants.

Whenever possible, there will be an agreement with participants which clarifies the nature of the research and responsibilities of each party.

Program researchers do not fabricate data or falsify results in their reports or publications. Reasonable steps shall be taken to correct errors through a published correction, retraction, erratum or other appropriate publication means.