

Exposure to Critical Incidents

At some point, most wildland fire personnel will, at some point in their career, be directly or indirectly affected by a “critical incident” and traumatic stress.



Exposure to Critical Incidents

- How affected they may be will depend on how we:
- Prepared them through pre-incident education.
- Instill resistance, resilience, and positive coping skills.
- Respond and support both during and after a critical incident.



Critical Incident Stress



- Across the stress continuum, certain traumatic events have the potential to affect those involved tremendously.
- These events are referred to as critical incidents, and the state of cognitive, physical, emotional, and behavioral arousal that accompanies them is known as **critical incident stress**.

A man in a military uniform is shown in profile, looking out at a sunset. A helicopter is visible in the sky, and a bright light source is visible on the horizon. The man's uniform is olive green, and he has a beard. The background is a warm, orange glow from the setting sun.

Minimize Effects and Promote Well-Being

CISM is designed to help people deal with their trauma one by one by allowing them to talk about the incident when it happens without judgment or criticism.

Designed to enhance natural resilience and provide specialized support to:

- **Lessen** the impact of the critical incident
- **Normalize** instinctive reactions to the incident
- **Encourage** the natural recovery process
- **Restore** the adaptive functioning skills of the person and/or group
- **Determine the need** for further supportive services or therapy