



## Southwest Area Critical Incident Stress Management Definitions

**Critical Incident:** Unusually challenging events that have the potential to create significant human distress and can overwhelm the usual coping mechanisms of an individual or a group. They are typically sudden, powerful events, which are outside the range of ordinary human experiences.

**Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM):** A comprehensive, phase sensitive, integrated multi-component approach to crisis intervention. CISM is a coordinated program of tactics that are linked and blended together to alleviate the reactions to traumatic experiences.

**Critical Incident Peer Support Program:** A coordinated support program bringing together trained individuals in CISM and communication techniques. It is a focused approach to ensure CISM trained personnel are available truly as *peers* to assist individuals or groups in crisis. Peers can bring a level of trust and knowledge when dealing with individuals in crisis as it relates to the work environment.

**Critical Incident Peer Group:** A group of individuals activated by the Critical Incident Peer Support Program Coordinator. This group consists of a leader and one or more members. Often, a designated member will assess the situation and associated response to the traumatic event, and then recommend to the Program Coordinator what the Peer Group make-up should be.

**Crisis Management Briefing (CMB):** This is a structured meeting designed to provide information about the incident, control rumors, educate about symptoms of distress, inform about basic stress management, and identify resources available for continued support, if desired. The goals of a CMB include providing factual information, instill a sense of leadership, reduce chaos, and enhance credibility. The CMB is designed to assist those involved directly or indirectly with the incident and is not intended for the media.

**Defusing:** A 3-step *small group* crisis intervention tool designed to assist a homogeneous group of people *after* an exposure to the same significant traumatic event. The purpose of a defusing is to mitigate the impact of the event, accelerate the recovery process, and assess the need for additional services.

**Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD):** A specific *small group* crisis intervention tool designed to assist a homogeneous group of people *after* an exposure to the same significant traumatic event. It is not a stand-alone process and should only be used as part of an integrated package of interventions within the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program. CISD's generally occur within the first 72 hours after the critical incident.