



City of Madison Employee Assistance Program

Critical Incident Response for Managers, Supervisors, and Leads

Critical incident stress management (CISM) services are offered by the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for helping the organization and its employees prepare for and recover from traumatic events in the workplace.

A critical incident is an event which is outside the usual range of experience for most people and would be considered markedly distressing to almost anyone. A critical incident usually results in employees feeling strong emotions after the event, which may or may not be outwardly apparent.

Examples of a critical incident might include:

- Serious injury or death of an employee or member of the public while performing job duties
- Suicide/homicide of an employee
- A rescue attempt on the job
- Any incident which can be considered a serious physical or psychological threat to an employee while performing work duties

It can be helpful for supervisors to activate a CISM response for their employees because it can accelerate the recovery process and help employees return to work in a productive state more quickly.

Immediately Following a Critical Incident	
Collect information	Time and date of the incident Where was this located? What happened, who was involved, are there injuries? What level of involvement or exposure (direct/indirect) did each staff have to the incident? What symptoms, behaviors, or concerns are being voiced, if any? Are there any other important circumstances EAP should know?
Inform the supervisor or manager	Are immediate or timely safety plans needed? Consider if staff should be sent home, offer this as an option if appropriate. Refer to your agency's administrative leave policy for time off following a critical incident.
Inform/consult with other relevant agencies as needed	EAP: The incident will then be evaluated by EAP/CISM staff along with the supervisor/other staff to determine an appropriate level of response Human Resources: Benefits, personnel issue, medical leave, etc Risk Management: If there is an employee injury, potential workers comp claim, safety concern, etc. Professional Association or Union Mayor's Office: If the incident may make the news, or if it is a very significant event
Fill out relevant incident documentation:	Relevant documentation may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incident report• Employee injury report (employee) + Employee injury report (supervisor)

Employee Assistance Program

2300 S. Park St., Suite 111
Madison, WI 53713
Phone: (608) 266-6561

- Medical Status Report
- Safety Action Form

These forms can be found at:

City of Madison Employee Net > Finance > Risk Management and Workers' Compensation

Email to staff

Contact the EAP if you would like guidance on sending an email out to staff informing them of the incident. Use caution with private information.

Follow up with employees

- Ask how they are doing and what you can do to support them
- Remind them of EAP and provide contact information
- Explain what their options are if they need to request off from work
- Inform them if any changes are being made or considered to better support them
- Assess if a return to work conference would be appropriate
- Next step arrangements to pass along to staff (funeral, go-fund me, court date, office changes, or training needs, etc)
- Be on the lookout for
 - Loss of concentration, focus, decision making ability
 - Visibly upset, irritability, anger, sadness, fear, behavioral changes
 - Withdraw from other staff
 - Requests to go home
- Assess if an after action review with management is needed

Setting Up a Defusing or Debriefing

Always consult with EAP before scheduling a defusing or debriefing

A **defusing** occurs the same day a critical incident occurs, before staff have left to go home. This is when a counselor checks in to provide immediate mental health care.

Language for defusing:

- Because this was such a significant event, someone from the EAP is going to come on site to check in with you before you go home. Though they will be coming in at our request, your participation with them is completely voluntary and confidential.

A **debriefing** occurs a few days (or at times longer) following a critical incident. Only staff present during and involved in the incident attend this.

Language for debriefing:

- “Per the Critical Incident APM, a debriefing will be held due to the nature of this incident. Your attendance and participation is voluntary.”
- *Confidentially* to an employee: “I know you have a **example: kid that age, parent with that condition, knew the victim, have been on a few infant PNB calls lately** and some people find it helpful to just check in with EAP, you can always give them a call.”

Even if staff state they are “fine” consult with EAP if you feel a defusing may be necessary.

Please try to find a private close doored space for EAP to debrief staff away from coworkers seeing or hearing. If no space is available, see if arrangements can be made for involved staff to come to the EAP office.

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