

Stress and Burnout for Front-line Staff

As numbers and complexity of cases continue to grow, frontline staff across campuses may experience stress and burnout. CICMH and our partners have put together this info sheet in order to highlight possible interventions and build coping skills.

DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident (CI): An event that is outside the range of normal human experience which has the potential to induce unusually strong physical, emotional and cognitive reactions.

Critical Incident Stress (CIS): Physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral reactions to a critical incident. These reactions have the potential to interfere with an individual's ability to function effectively.

Defusing: A brief structured intervention designed to take the fuse out of the emotional bomb. It occurs shortly after the CI and is conducted on or near the scene of the event. It is designed to alleviate the immediate stressors experienced by some staff.

Debriefing: A structured psychological intervention designed to reduce the intensity and duration of reactions to a CI. It consists of an organized group meeting held usually 24-72 hours post-trauma.

Defusing



Debriefing

Fact Phase - Allow the person to tell their story: "Tell me about the facts of the call" (or situation)

Fact Phase - "Just the facts"

Thoughts - "What were your thoughts at that time?"

Thoughts - Insight to negative thought processes ("bad recordings")

Reactions - "Where did you notice you reacted the most?" or "What was the hardest part for you?"

Reactions (Somatic) - Insight to possible development of increased anxiety ('biological intelligence'; "When did you react the most?")

N/A

Feelings - "What were you feeling at that time?"

Symptom Education - Explain common reactions after a trauma

Symptom Education - Common reactions

Current Functioning

Current Functioning

N/A

Re-entry Phase - Short term coping strategies

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SEVERITY OF A CIS REACTION

- Severity and nature of the event or incident
- Role of worker (ie. degree of personal danger)
- Level of responsibility associated with the incident
- Physical and psychological proximity to the event
- Workers previous experience with personal crisis
- Workers life at the time of the crisis (ie. divorce, death, all impact the degree of stress and can reduce one's coping ability)
- Availability of appropriate support services (eg. EAP counsellors, CIS response)
- Support or isolation from friends, family or general public
- Media involvement
- Management's attitude and knowledge towards traumatic stress

COPING STRATEGIES

- Recognize that it happened
- Look calm
- Talk about it with colleagues
- Stay fit - exercise
- Be patient and present with yourself
- Prayer
- Meditation
- Give your feelings/reactions a name - "They are part of you but they do not define you"
- Don't fight it - "It's going to be a wild ride so strap in!"
- Music
- Eat right
- Take time for yourself
- Take breaks when needed
- Keep alcohol, caffeine and nicotine consumption to a minimum
- Spend time with family, friends and co-workers
- Keep a journal - "Dream journal"
- Do whatever works for you provided it's safe
- Don't be afraid to learn about CIS - "It is the unknown that we are afraid of"
- Take time to grieve
- Heal at your own pace

WATCH THE WEBINAR!

To learn more about stress and burnout for front-line staff, be sure to watch our webinar recording with Jason Carey at <http://campusmentalhealth.ca/webinar/stress-burnout-front-line-staff>

Credits for all content here go to our speaker, Jason Carey, Ph.D. Good2Talk Counselling Manager and ASIST Trainer.

This webinar is a collaboration between the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health and Good2Talk.
campusmentalhealth.ca