



Critical Incident Stress Management

Rationale:

1. The Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases (TasCAHRD) recognises that employees, volunteers, clients and Board members may be exposed to incidents involving a threat to life, safety and well-being and that TasCAHRD has a duty of care to minimise this threat and its impacts.

Preamble:

2. TasCAHRD's aim is to lessen the impact of 'critical incidents', to minimise their potential long-term effects and to promote a healthy, supportive work environment. This policy provides a range of services to fulfil this purpose. They include:
 - a) Assessment and Notification;
 - b) Defusing and Debriefing (group and individual), and
 - c) Follow-ups.
3. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for furnishing Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) personnel with the names of all employees who attended or were involved in the incident.

Aim:

4. The object of critical incident stress management intervention immediately after a critical (or traumatic) incident is to assist TasCAHRD employees minimise the impact of the incident upon them, and enable them to deal with the incident efficiently and effectively thereby promoting health and well-being.
5. Critical incident stress management services assist in:
 - a) Lessening the impact of a critical incident;
 - b) Facilitating recovery of employees who are experiencing normal reactions to abnormal events, and
 - c) Preventing the development or persistence of unresolved problems.

Guidelines:

Assessment and Notification.

6. Employees and volunteers are required to report any stressful or critical incident to their supervisor, the Chief Executive Officer or President. Supervisors informed of an incident must report the incident to the Chief Executive Officer or President immediately.
7. TasCAHRD have agreed on standard criteria for mandatory notification of CISD personnel. The Chief Executive Officer shall notify the CISD personnel as soon as practicable after or during the occurrence of any of the following types of incidents:
 - a) The death of, or serious injury to an employee, volunteer, client or Board member;
 - b) Any incident involving threat from firearms or other dangerous weapons;
 - c) Any other situation in which there is a threat to the life or safety of an employee, volunteer, client or Board member;
 - d) Any other situation that, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer has the potential to produce, or has produced, a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction in employees, volunteers or clients.
8. TasCAHRD will provide the services of an external consultancy agency capable of providing professional Critical Incident and Stress Debriefing Services, with details of the current agencies being noted at the end of this policy
9. The Chief Executive Officer will maintain written records of each incident along with the actions taken in relation to each incident in a confidential file, and of actions taken to reduce the likelihood of an incident being repeated.

Attendance at Defusing or Debriefing Sessions.

10. The service to be provided by CISD personnel in response to a critical incident is determined by the external consultants.
11. Affected individuals may request to be accompanied by a personal supporter or buddy provided that such a person was not involved in the incident.
12. Where the Consultant has determined that an incident warrants a group defuse or a group debrief for any or all of TasCAHRD employees, it is mandatory for all personnel involved in the incident to attend.
13. Follow-Ups: Employees may request follow up contact with CISD personnel through the Chief Executive Officer if they believe that there is an ongoing situation (resulting from a critical incident) that results in a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction in employees, volunteers or clients.

CISD Personnel Activation.

14. CISD personnel shall be activated by contacting the Chief Executive Officer and requesting CISD personnel.
15. In the absence of the Chief Executive Officer a Program Coordinator may activate CISD personnel by telephoning the number shown below, reporting to the Chief Executive Officer at the earliest opportunity.

Approved: 28 March 2001

Amended: 31 March 2004

Policy: OHS 08

Consultancy Agencies as at 31 March 2004:

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) Australia	Telephone: 1300 365 361 (24 hour number)
Advanced Personnel Management	Telephone: 6224 4131
Total Outcome	Telephone: 6231 2073