



# Critical Incident Stress Management

**Cattaraugus County Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team assists groups and individuals, upon request, with critical incidents and stress.**

## ABOUT THE TEAM

- Team of volunteers with a counseling professional team leader
- All services provided at no cost
- Goals of the CISM Team:
  - Alleviate the impact of stress
  - Accelerate recovery
  - Educate about stress and specific coping techniques
- Members are trained and experienced (past or present) firefighters, EMS, clergy, and mental health professionals

## REACH OUT FOR HELP

- All fire depts and EMS agencies are encouraged to request the CISM Team.
- Examples of incidents the CISM Team can help with:
  - Fatalities
  - Serious injuries
  - Pediatric calls
  - Calls with multiple patients
  - Cumulative stress from response

## REQUESTING THE TEAM

- **Monday—Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
Call Cattaraugus County Office of Emergency Services at (716) 938-2213
- **Off-hours (24/7)**  
Chris Baker at (716) 498-0697  
Cathi Gross at (716) 244-7651
- Request for team activation must come from the Fire Chief, or for independent EMS agencies the request must come from the EMS agency Administrator.
- CISM debriefing should occur approximately 48 hours after the incident
  - Request the team as soon as you determine a need for assistance.
- When making a request, please be prepared to give us the following:
  - Date, Time and General Information about the Incident
  - Number of departments and approx. # of responders involved

**Don't forget to invite involved law enforcement and dispatch personnel as well!**

## WHAT TO EXPECT FOR A DEBRIEF

**Depending on how many people are involved, 2 or more team members will respond.** The team will meet with the FD or EMS agency representative a few minutes before the debrief to gather any up-to-date information on the situation and involved personnel. Then the team will sit down with everyone in a circle for a group conversation. The talk is confidential and will be led by the team members. The room used must be private and no one leaves the group until the debrief is complete, plan for about an hour (sometimes longer) for the debrief.

### Critical Incident Stress

Critical Incident Stress is the aftershock of dealing with an emotional, traumatic, or life threatening event. It is the NORMAL response of the body and mind to overwhelming stress.

1. Acute stress reaction may happen soon after you are directly or indirectly involved with a situation.
2. Delayed stress reaction is when the stress response occurs hours, days, or weeks afterward.

### Symptoms of Acute Stress may include:

panic, hyperventilation, numbness, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure and pulse, inability to function, headache, anxiety, palpitations

### Symptoms of Delayed Stress may include:

anxiety, depression, sensitivity to odors, inability to control emotions, irritability, crying spells, increased or decreased appetite, weight loss/ gain, headaches, flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, poor concentration, severe fatigue, increased alcohol/ drug consumption, guilt, obsessive thoughts of the incident, loss of sense of humor and/or increased use of morbid humor