

APEX 2020
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Employee Communications




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Critical Incident Stress Management

CISM

Critical Incident Stress Management





The Idaho Transportation Department held its annual Safety Stand Down for employees on Dec. 19, 2019. ITD Leadership chose to focus the event on the importance of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), specifically geared toward the 1,100 employees we have in our Division of Highways who operate along the roadsides daily. The importance of CISM to them was self-evident.

The challenge was to find the connection to the safety event for the remaining 500 employees who live in an office/cubicle world. Why would or should they care?

The following articles were produced and distributed to employees across the organization in the weeks leading up to the event in order to bridge that gap and establish relevance for them.

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ITD unveils first-ever Critical Incident Stress Management class for first responders

By: Reed Hollinshead
ITD Office of Communication (HQ)



On Oct. 17, after several years of development and planning, the department launched its first-ever Critical Incident Stress Management class. The three-day course taught the 47 ITD members in attendance how to reach out and offer assistance to fellow employees traumatized by what they have seen and experienced as responders.

“The Peer Support Team is a group of ITD volunteers who have recognized the need to provide help to co-workers who have experienced a traumatic event,” explained ITD Safety Manager Randy Danner. “For many at ITD, especially those in maintenance, it is not a matter of if, but when they will see things that can’t be unseen — scenes that are shocking, upsetting and disturbing.”

“Not every scene will produce a strong stress response in everyone. Not everyone who experiences those kinds of events will need help to get past them. But there will be those incidents that will impact us physically, cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally or spiritually and overwhelm our best efforts to cope,” Danner added.

The course was taught by Boise Police Capt. Ron Winegar, a nationally recognized instructor for the International Critical Stress Foundation. Attendees included employees from all districts and divisions throughout ITD, as well as two people from Idaho State Communications.



Frequently, ITD workers are the first to arrive at the scene of a crash or other incident, and can be traumatized by what they see and experience. This first class taught a group of volunteers the basics of the roles of peer support, confidante and friend, and how to take those skills back to their districts and divisions to help others dealing with the aftermath of a traumatic event.

“When we are affected, there are healthy and unhealthy ways of coping. That is where the Peer Support Team comes in. The Peer Support Team is not there to do psychotherapy or take the place of your mental health professional. They are not therapists, they are co-workers who have been there, who know what it is like and can provide some help in dealing in a healthy manner with those distressing events,” Jim Phillips said. Phillips was the co-creator of the ITD program along with Danner.

Phillips stressed that there is absolutely no mandate to attend or seek out help.

“It is strictly voluntary. An employee may choose not to participate and will not be penalized for opting out. The Peer Support team is there to help. They will operate in total confidentiality. It should just be considered another resource.”

Creating the Peer Support Team is recognition that as a result of doing your job, you are placed in situations that have the potential to adversely affect you,” Phillips explained. “The department wants you to go home at the end of the day safe and whole. This program is another way the department is taking care of its employees.”

Danner said the feedback after the class was positive, and included statements like these:

Would you recommend this course to a colleague?

“Yes, it was the most instructive course I have ever taken at ITD.”

“Yes, definitely because it changed my life personally.”

“Yes, it gave me valuable information I know I will use throughout my life.”

What would you change regarding this course?

“Nothing, this has been one of the best training courses I’ve ever taken.”

Additional comments?

“Great job! One of the best classes I’ve ever attended.”

Below is a list of Peer Support Team Members for those who want to reach out for assistance:

ITD Critical Incident Stress Management Support Team	
District 1	Dave Bohrn & Gary Davis - Sandpoint Mike Lenz & Keith Viebrock - CdA Shannon Thornton – Athol/Spirit Lake
District 2	Bruce Bovey - Lucile Taylor Dollar - Bovill Bud Converse, Cesar Loza & Mike Towne - Lewiston Dave Vance & Ty Winther – Moscow Jon Kleppel – Powell
District 3	Tony Anchustegui & Greg Clark – New Plymouth Mike Benton - Marsing Zeb Jerman - Weiser Eric Copeland, David Dansereau, John Hall & Mariah Rutledge– Garden City Jeanne Fisher & AJ Hutchinson – Mountain Home Randy Gehrke - Banks Kyle Hobeck – Boise/Orchard Bill Nicholson – Lowman
District 4	Lisa Kidd & Chuck Sharp - Shoshone Brian Davidson - Rupert Allen Ploss – Jerome Joe Sabala – Bliss
District 5	Jerry Bauer, Sandy Jenkins & Rod Richardson - Pocatello Ty Averett & Ryan Burgin - Blackfoot Emberly Bertasso – POE Pocatello Shane Brown – American Falls Richard Gleed & Ron Manchester - Montpelier
District 6	Anthony Black & Ronnie Butler - Rigby Dallas Dupree - Salmon Thomas Jarvis - Mackay Sheldon Jones - Leadore
Headquarters	Randy Danner Jim Phillips

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On **December 19 at 9 a.m.** MST, the department will conduct an all-employee Safety Stand Down featuring the new Critical Incident Stress Management program.

Following a video teleconference involving many sheds/district main locations, peer-to-peer support team members at each location will share information about CISM and answer questions. **Employees are strongly encouraged to attend if circumstances allow.**

All of ITD gets ready for 2019 Safety Stand Down Dec. 19

The department's annual safety stand down is slated for the morning of **Thursday, Dec. 19**. A video teleconference will kick things off at locations statewide. The first item on the docket is an overview of the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program and how it can help department employees who respond to an incident and may be traumatized by the experience. A group of 47 ITD employees volunteered for CISM training last month and will lead these discussions.

This stand down will not be delivered to individual desktops, so it is encouraged that all employees gather in these designated locations:

Headquarters & Aeronautics:

- HQ Auditorium
- HQ Room 209
- HQ Room 212
- East Annex

District 1

- Coeur d'Alene EOC
- St. Maries shed

District 2

- Lewiston Main Conference Room
- Moscow shed

District 3

- Boise Large Conference Room
- Mountain Home shed
- Caldwell shed

District 4

- Shoshone EOC
- Twin Falls shed

District 5

- Pocatello EOC
- Preston shed

District 6

- Rigby Large Conference Room
- Ashton shed
- Salmon shed

If you have any questions, please contact Randy Danner at (208) 334-8038.



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Safety Stand Down
Dec. 19
9 a.m. MST

SAFETY FIRST

ITD Safety Stand Down: Critical Incident Stress Signs

By: Reed Hollinshead
 ITD Office of Communication (HQ)



On Dec. 19, ITD will hold its 2019 Safety Stand Down with an agency-wide event at 9 a.m. MST. A video teleconference will kick things off with a discussion of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). Peer-to-Peer support team members will lead discussions and answer questions following the brief introduction.

Forty-seven employee volunteers from various districts and divisions who constitute the Peer Support team will oversee the discussions in the various locations around the state.

"Although the critical incident or traumatic event may be over, employees may experience a strong stress reaction manifesting itself right then, or long after the event in a number of ways — physical, cognitive, emotional or behavioral," said Phillips. "It is very common for people to experience aftershocks when they have been involved in a traumatic event. These signs and symptoms may appear immediately following or long after the event."

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last days, weeks, months and even longer, depending on the severity of the traumatic event to the individual. With understanding and support, the stress reactions usually pass more quickly.

Below are a few of those signs and symptoms:

Common Signs and Symptoms of a Stress Reaction

Physical*	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioral
Fatigue	Blaming others	Denial	Substance abuse
Insomnia	Confusion	Anxiety	Change in speech
Muscle tremors	Poor attention	Grief	Suspiciousness
Twitches	Inability to make decisions	Survivor guilt/self-blame	Emotional outbursts
Difficulty breathing	Heightened or lowered alertness	Severe pain (rare)	Change in communication
Elevated blood pressure	Poor concentration	Fear of loss/of going crazy	Withdrawal from others
Rapid breathing	Forgetfulness	Uncertainty	Inability to rest
Rapid heartbeat	Trouble identifying known objects or people	Loss of emotional control	Changes in normal activities
Chest pain	Increased/decreased awareness of surroundings	Emotionally numb	Intensified startle reflex
Headaches	Poor problem solving	Depression	Appetite disturbance
Visual difficulties	Disorientation of time/place/person	Lack of capacity for enjoyment	Decreased personal hygiene
Nausea/vomiting	Disturbed thinking	Apprehension	Erratic movements
Thirst	Nightmares	Intense anger	Pacing
Hunger	Inescapable images	Irritability	Changed sexual behavior
Dizziness	Flashbacks	Agitation	Antisocial acts
Excessive sweating	Suicidal ideas	Feelings of worthlessness	Prolonged silences
Chills	Disbelief	Mistrust	Accident prone
Weakness	Change in values	Helplessness	
Fainting	Search for meaning	Apathy/boredom	

*Any of these symptoms may indicate the need for medical assistance. When in doubt contact your physician.

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Why Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) applies to us all

By: Reed Hollinshead
ITD Office of Communication (HQ)



The 2019 Safety Stand Down is just around the corner, on **Dec. 19 at 9 a.m. MST**. As the event time approaches, one of the common questions from office dwellers like myself is how CISM relates to those of us who likely never will be the responder to a crash scene. Yes, the majority of ITD works in the Division of Highways, so response to the scene is a very real likelihood for them, but how does CISM apply to the 500 of us who are not Highways employees?



The answer is much like a family dynamic, where if something befalls any member of the family, it affects everyone in the family who cares about that individual. Similarly, even if you'll likely never roll up on a crash scene as a first responder, you can play a significant role in identifying and helping a co-worker cope with the trauma they experience. A list of tips and tactics is listed at the end of this article. Here are some [signs and symptoms](#) listed last week in the Transporter.

Also keep in mind that trauma can happen in any environment, and takes many different forms. "First responder to a crash scene" is just one example, but by no means is that all that CISM addresses.

"It could come from home, a car accident, something we encounter on the road, or an employee getting killed or injured," explained D4 District Engineer Jesse Barrus. "Yes, the risk is higher with those working on the road daily, but it could happen to any of us at any time."

“Too many employees approach safety with the attitude that ‘It won’t happen to me’ or ‘it doesn’t apply to me’ — To that end, CISM is similar and is for everyone when the need arises,” Barrus added.

Helpful Hints for Immediate Handling of Stress Reactions

For Yourself:

- ◆ Within the first 24-48 hours engage in both vigorous physical exercise and rest more often than you usually do.
- ◆ Structure your time; keep busy.
- ◆ Express your feelings as they arise.
- ◆ Reach out; people do care.
- ◆ Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- ◆ Spend time with others.
- ◆ Keep a journal; write down your feelings.
- ◆ Do things that feel good to you.
- ◆ Don't try to fight reoccurring thoughts, dreams, or flashbacks—they are normal and will decrease over time and become less painful.
- ◆ Don't make any big life changes
- ◆ Get plenty of rest.
- ◆ Be aware of numbing the pain with the overuse of drugs or alcohol.
- ◆ Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it).

For Family Members & Friends

- ◆ Listen carefully.
- ◆ Spend time with the traumatized person.
- ◆ Offer your assistance and a listening ear even if they have not asked for help.
- ◆ Reassure them that they are safe.
- ◆ Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, minding children.
- ◆ Give them some private time, but don't allow self-isolation.
- ◆ Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.
- ◆ Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse." A traumatized person is not consoled by those statements. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them.