

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		
Policy Number: GA-17	Effective Date: September 1, 2017	Version: 3.0
POLICY TITLE: CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE		
OVERVIEW: The Department of Child Services (DCS) will utilize aspects of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) to provide supportive interventions to employees when work-related critical or high stress incidents occur.		

I. DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM): An intervention developed specifically for processing traumatic events. CISM is a formal, highly structured, and professionally recognized process for helping those involved in a critical incident to share their experiences, vent emotions, learn about stress reactions and symptoms, and receive referrals for further assistance, if necessary. It is not psychotherapy. It is a confidential, voluntary, and educational process, sometimes called “psychological first aid” (<https://www.icisf.org/>).

II. REFERENCES

[Critical Incident Protocol](#)

III. STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

- A. DCS will provide supportive interventions to employees when work-related critical or high stress incidents occur.
- B. The DCS Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is comprised of Family Case Managers (FCMs), FCM Supervisors, Local Office Directors (LODs), Division Managers (DMs), and Regional Managers (RMs) from across the state, as well as, Central Office employees (including Child Support Bureau [CSB] staff) trained in CISM.
- C. Only DCS staff trained in CISM will respond to critical incidents.
- D. Any DCS staff may request a CISM response by contacting the CIRT Liaisons. A CISM response may be appropriate for incidents including, but not limited to:
 1. The fatality of a child involved with DCS, including a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) or Informal Adjustment (IA) case, or during the course of an assessment;
 2. A child fatality assessment;
 3. Threat of harm or actual harm to an employee, during and/or related to his or her performance of DCS duties;
 4. Any case receiving a high degree of media scrutiny aimed at a particular office or employee(s);
 5. An unexpected death of a co-worker; and
 6. Any other work-related critical incident resulting in an increased stress response.
- E. The DCS Staff or an employee’s Supervisor, LOD, DM, RM, or Deputy Director, on behalf of the employee, should contact the CIRT Liaison within **24 hours** of the incident, when appropriate.

- F. The CIRT Liaison will determine if the request is appropriate and, if appropriate, initiate the CISM response by contacting the CIRT to secure responders and schedule the response.
- G. The CISM response is a confidential service. As with any confidential service, if issues of safety to the employee, a child, or any other person come to the attention of the responder, the responder has a duty to inform appropriate parties.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Requesting a CISM response:

1. DCS staff or an employee's Supervisor, LOD, DM, RM, or Deputy Director, on behalf of the employee, may request a CISM response by contacting the CIRT Liaison at (317)407-6237 or DCS.CIRT@dcs.in.gov (it is recommended that the request is made within 24 hours of the incident).
2. The CIRT Liaison will determine if the request is appropriate by contacting the requestor within one (1) business day of the request to evaluate the appropriateness of a CISM response.

Note: If there is a concern about the appropriateness of an intervention, the concern should be reviewed by the Deputy Director of Field Operations and the Deputy Director of Permanency and Practice Support.

3. The CIRT Liaison will schedule the CISM response, if the request is appropriate, and contact the CIRT to secure responders.

Note: If the requestor is not a Supervisor, LOD, DM, RM, or Deputy Director, the CIRT Liaison will contact the appropriate management team member to ensure the employee/employees will be able to attend the CISM response and that a room in the office will be available.

B. Response of the CIRT:

1. If a CISM response is appropriate, an individual or team of individuals who have been trained and certified in CISM will respond. The need for, and appropriateness of a CISM intervention, is based on how individuals are coping with the critical incident, not solely on the incident itself.
2. Following a CISM intervention, the CIRT Liaison will follow-up with the requestor, and when appropriate a member of the management team, to determine whether further intervention is needed.

V. FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

N/A

Date: July 20, 2017
Mary Beth Bonaventura, Director
Department of Child Services

A signed copy is on file.

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