

Emergency Debriefing Guidelines

It is critical to go over positive and negative aspects of the SCA incident and determine possible need for changes to the Emergency Action Plan based on the experience. Counseling should also be offered to the Response Team and others who may be emotionally affected by the event.

1. Review the Emergency Summary Form at the debriefing session with your Response Team, ideally within 48 hours of the incident.
2. Discuss what went well, and what you would do differently. Adjust the Emergency Action Plan as needed.
3. If the resuscitation attempt was unsuccessful, affirm the team they did their best, and that many people die despite receiving timely and appropriate care for SCA.
4. If appropriate, and with the help of a School Counselor, follow the steps of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing as outlined by the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress.

Seven Key Points for Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

1. Assess individuals' situational involvement, age, level of development, and degree of exposure to the critical incident or event. Consider that different aged individuals, for example, may respond differently based on their developmental understanding of the event.
2. Discuss issues surrounding safety and security that may surface, particularly with children. Feeling safe and secure is of major importance when, suddenly and without warning, individuals' lives are shattered by tragedy and loss.
3. Allow ventilation and validation for each team member, in their own way, to discuss their exposure, sensory experiences, thoughts and feelings tied to the event.
4. Assist in predicting future events. This involves education about and discussion of the possible emotions, reactions, and problems that may be experienced after exposure to trauma.
5. Conduct a thorough review of the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of the critical incident on the individuals present. Carefully listen and evaluate their thoughts, mood, affect, choice of words, and perceptions of the critical incident and look for potential clues suggesting problems in terms of managing or coping with the tragic event. Refer these individuals to a professional counselor.
6. Provide a sense of closure. Give information about ongoing support services and resources to the response team.
7. A thorough review of the events surrounding the traumatic situation can be advantageous for the healing process to begin.

*Source: Providing Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) to Individuals and Communities in Situational Crisis
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