

Protocol for Activating the VU-CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) Team

After a crisis or critical incident occurs on the Vanderbilt campus, at the Medical Center, or anywhere that may have an impact on the Vanderbilt community, there may be a need to provide a post-event psychological intervention for the person or persons involved in the incident.

The psychological interventions offered by the VU-CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) Team, could be at a number of levels. In some situations, there will be other university or medical center interventions which would be more effective and appropriate than what could be offered by a VU-CISM Team.

In most serious campus incidents, the Student Residential Life, VUPD, the Hospital Administrator-on-Call etc will be involved.

Anyone familiar with the needs of the faculty/staff/students etc. may initiate a request for an intervention. The final decision on interventions must be cleared through a manager, supervisor or other appropriate administrative authority.

Definitions of Terms

Critical Incident or Traumatic Event: A critical incident is an event that sudden and unexpected that disrupts one's sense of value, disrupt beliefs values and basic assumptions concerning how the world and people within it work and may include elements of physical or emotional loss. What is a critical incident to one may not be a critical incident for another - it depends on one's perception of vulnerability and amount of control over a situation.

Examples of situations where traumatic stress may occur include but are not limited to:

- (a) serious injury or death
- (b) sexual assault or abuse
- (c) violence / threats of violence / rape
- (c) robbery
- (d) any incidents which are charged with extreme emotion
- (e) sudden or unexpected death or suicide of a work colleague
- (f) disasters; mass casualties
- (g) cases with negative outcomes
- (h) high publicity or media attention
- (i) Violence in the workplace
- (j) Other

People who experience a critical incident become unusually vulnerable to the normal pressures of daily living and particularly in their interpersonal interactions. Therefore, the timing and the way in which those with expertise respond after a traumatic incident is a significant factor influencing the long term recovery of staff or students who have been adversely affected by the event.

CISM Interventions: There are a variety of therapeutic techniques used to help with this form of psychological crisis intervention (e.g. education to individuals or groups (CMB-

Crisis Management Briefing), defusing, psycho-educational group debriefing, 1:1 individual supportive counseling, etc). It is important to match the intervention with the situation.

Role Definitions

Contact Coordinator: The person (usually a member of the VU-CISM Team based on the type of incident and impacted population) who is contacted about a potential need for psychological interventions following a critical incident.

VU-CISM Team Coordinator: The designated coordinator is the Work/Life Connections-EAP Organizational Manager (Jim Kendall, LCSW) or designee.

Protocol to Active a CISM Response

1. Member of the VU-CISM Team Advisory Board is contacted with request for intervention.
 - 4 The Coordination for Student Incidents will be handled by the Housing and Residential Education Office at (615-322-2591) or the Psychological and Counseling Center (615-322-2571).
 - 4 The Coordination for Incidents impacting Faculty and Staff will be handled by the Work/Life Connections-EAP (615-936-1327).
2. The Contact Coordinator will gather information from the initiator to help determine if a CISM intervention would be potentially helpful and if so, determine the CISM intervention to be used.
3. The Contact Coordinator may determine that the normal organizational processes (Work/Life Connections-EAP for faculty/staff or the Psychological and Counseling Center for students) will handle the situation or if additional resources are needed from the VU-CISM Team.
4. The Contact Coordinator may consult with the VU-CISM Team Coordinator as to the intervention or need for additional responders.
5. The Contact Coordinator is responsible for arranging the details of the intervention (i.e. time, place, informational materials, etc).
6. The Responding VU-CISM Team will meet briefly in advance of the intervention to clarify roles, review procedures and receive a briefing from appropriate parties.
7. The CISM Intervention occurs including referrals for additional services and plans for follow-up.
8. Following the CISM intervention, the Responding VU-CISM Team will meet after the intervention to debrief themselves, review the situation and to arrange follow-up details as appropriate.

9. A brief description of the Intervention and incident will be sent to the VU-CISM Team Coordinator to be reported at the next quarterly CISM Advisory Board meeting.

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