

# Critical Incident Group Debriefing

## Critical Incidents

Critical incidents are any highly distressful or traumatic experience outside our normal frame of reference that challenge us to understand and cope with what has happened.

*Some examples include:*

- Incident involving loss of life.
- Disaster/mass-casualty event.
- Home invasion/workplace robbery.
- Suicide of a friend/colleague.
- Witnessing extreme violence.
- Traumatic event involving children.
- Personal attack.

## Critical Incident Stress

Critical incident stress is caused by exposure to a threatening, powerful, awful or terrifying event that results in marked emotional, physical, and cognitive reactions.

*Critical incident stress is **normal** after trauma but becomes dangerous for people when it is not resolved.*

## Critical Incident Group Debriefing

- Interactive, small group supportive debriefing.
- 4 step model.

## Goals

- Normalize reactions to critical incidents and promote recovery.
- Eliminate misinformation.
- Lessen the impact of the traumatic event.
- Promote processing and sharing of the event.
- Provide information about available resources.
- Develop and provide supports to the group/individuals.
- Help identify individuals needing additional support.

## Planning the Critical Incident Group Debriefing

- Group size: 2-20 people.
- Duration: 1-2 hours.
- Timing: 1-10 days after the incident occurred.
- Location: isolated away from the incident site and distractions.
- Facilitator: any individuals who have been trained in the process.

## Things to Consider

- Not therapy, nor substitute for treatment.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Confidential process.
- Not a "blame" session.