



EBR EMS CISM TEAM

Serving those who serve others. No one fights alone.

About Us

The EBR EMS CISM Team provides quality trained peer support to emergency responders to effectively build resilience and manage critical incident stress in order to help mitigate the long term effects of stress and PTSD.

The services and support provided by the CISM team will lead to our employees living healthier lives and having healthier families and will strengthen our EMS community. **It is important to note that anything that is discussed in any type of communication with a member of the CISM Team is confidential and cannot be disclosed to anyone including supervisory personnel or in a court of law.**

Mission Statement

The mission of the EBR EMS CISM Team is to provide pre-incident training, on-site support, psychological first aid, peer-to-peer support, and continuing care referrals to those emergency responders who have experienced a critical incident or who are experiencing the effects of unmanaged chronic stress.

Vision

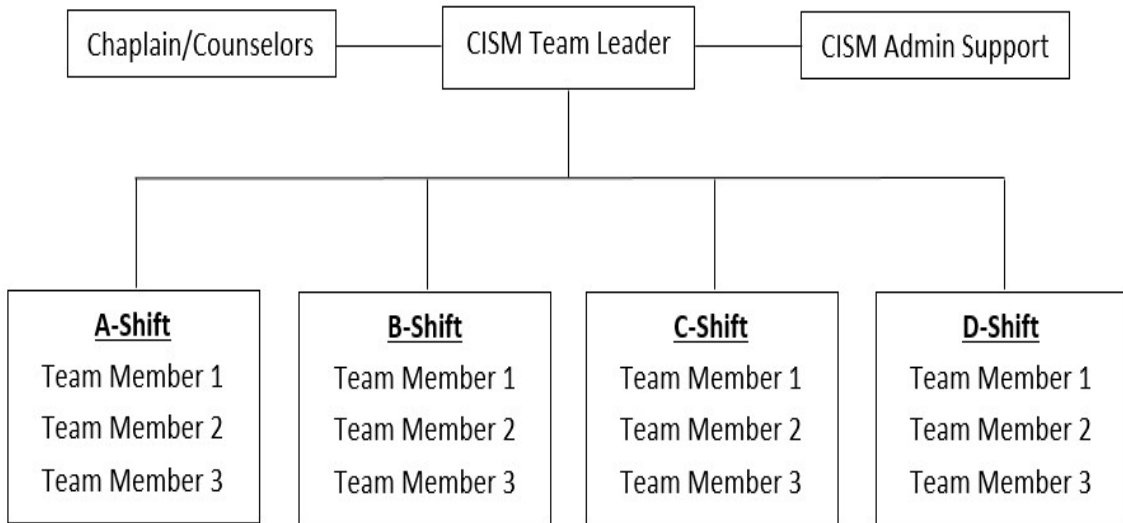
The vision of the EBR EMS CISM Team is to ensure that all emergency responders and dispatchers receive timely and appropriate support following a critical incident or after a specific need of CISM support has been identified. It is the motto of the EBR EMS CISM Team that “No one fights alone”.

What is critical incident stress?

Critical Incident Stress can occur during or after exposure to a life-threatening or unexpected traumatic event. The trigger can be from any type of call no matter how great or minor. It is imperative that the staff of EBR EMS are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of critical incident stress in themselves and in their peers. It is equally important for the staff to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of unmanaged chronic stress. Unmanaged chronic stress is explained in greater detail below. When signs and symptoms of critical incident stress or unmanaged chronic stress are identified, the CISM Team can be contacted to ensure that the employee receives the support they need. Once the CISM team is contacted, they will assist the employee by offering support, which can include a defusing, one-on-one meetings, and referral to continued care as needed.

East Baton Rouge Parish EMS has developed a plan for combatting critical incident stress and unmanaged chronic stress which is explained over the remainder of this document:

Team Structure



Code Green

Code Green is the term that will be used to activate the CISM Team. A Code Green will be utilized at any time when a critical incident occurs as explained below. A Code Green can also be activated when a need is identified that does not involve a specified critical incident such as in the case of unmanaged chronic stress. When a Code Green is called for an employee(s) on duty, that employee(s) will be placed out of service until contact is made with a member from the CISM team. If a Code Green is activated for someone not on duty, arrangements will be made for that employee(s) to be contacted by a member of the CISM team to conduct a peer-to-peer support meeting. The CISM team will assist in the determination of when an employee(s) can return to duty, remain off duty, or when referrals may be needed. If an employee experiences a critical incident and initially feels fine and returns to duty after talking with a member of the CISM Team, they should monitor themselves and their coworkers to ensure that no untoward behaviors arise (anger, inappropriate treatment of patients, inability to perform duties, any other uncontrollable emotions, etc.). If present, the employee(s) should contact the CISM Team member to receive the necessary support.

Critical Incidents

The following incidents will be identified as a critical incident which will mandate that all employees involved with the incident be put out of service and the CISM Team activated to make contact with those employees:

- Response to major injury, major illness, or death of a relative, friend, coworker, or other public safety personnel
- Mass Casualty Incidents
- Assault on an EMS provider or their partner(s)

The following incidents should be considered as potential critical incidents. If judgement on behalf of the crew, supervisory personnel, or MEDCOM establishes the following situations as a critical incident then the employees involved will be placed out of service and the CISM Team will be activated to make contact with those employees.

- Prolonged scene time at a major incident (rescues, extrications, large media response) especially when a death is encountered.
- Significant incidents involving children (pediatric cardiac arrests, major illness/injury, abuse, neglect, etc.)
- Incidents involving EMS providers (MVAs, on-duty injuries, etc.)
- Any other incident warranting activation of the CISM team
 - Can be activated by MEDCOM, crew, or supervisors

Unmanaged Chronic Stress

Unmanaged chronic stress can be defined as ongoing and unwanted signs and symptoms of stress that may or may not be attributed to a specific event. These can be caused by a past event or an accumulation of events, family issues, financial issues, or any other cause of ongoing stress. Those signs and symptoms can include depression, anger, suicidal thoughts, feeling hopeless, feeling overwhelmed, hypervigilance, not acting like your normal self, alcohol/drug abuse, changes in personal appearance and hygiene, changes in work habits, etc. When these signs and symptoms are identified, the employee or coworker should reach out to the CISM Team for support.

Services Provided by the EBR EMS CISM Team

Pre-incident Training

Prevention is key in mitigating the effects of PTSD and ongoing chronic stress. Appropriate training before an incident occurs will build resilience and will prepare the staff to combat the effects of critical incident stress. The staff of EBR EMS will be provided continuous training on critical incident stress and unmanaged chronic stress, how to identify critical incident stress and unmanaged chronic stress in themselves and their peers, what to do and not to do to manage critical incident stress and unmanaged chronic stress, and what short-term and long-term resources are available.

On-site support

When long-term operations occur it is vital to have a member(s) of the CISM Team on-site to provide support and demobilization. The CISM Team will provide support to public safety personnel and victims who are showing obvious signs of stress as well as provide counsel to the command staff. Having someone on scene of a critical incident to help manage critical incident stress can help reduce the long term effects of the event.

Psychological first aid

Psychological first aid is the care and support that is provided immediately following a critical incident. This is what will take place when a Code Green is initially activated. Psychological first aid is commonly referred to as a defusing. During a defusing, those involved will meet with a member(s) of the CISM Team. The CISM Team member(s) will provide those involved with basic information on the signs of critical incident stress, practical stress management tips, and will provide access and information for other resources as needed.

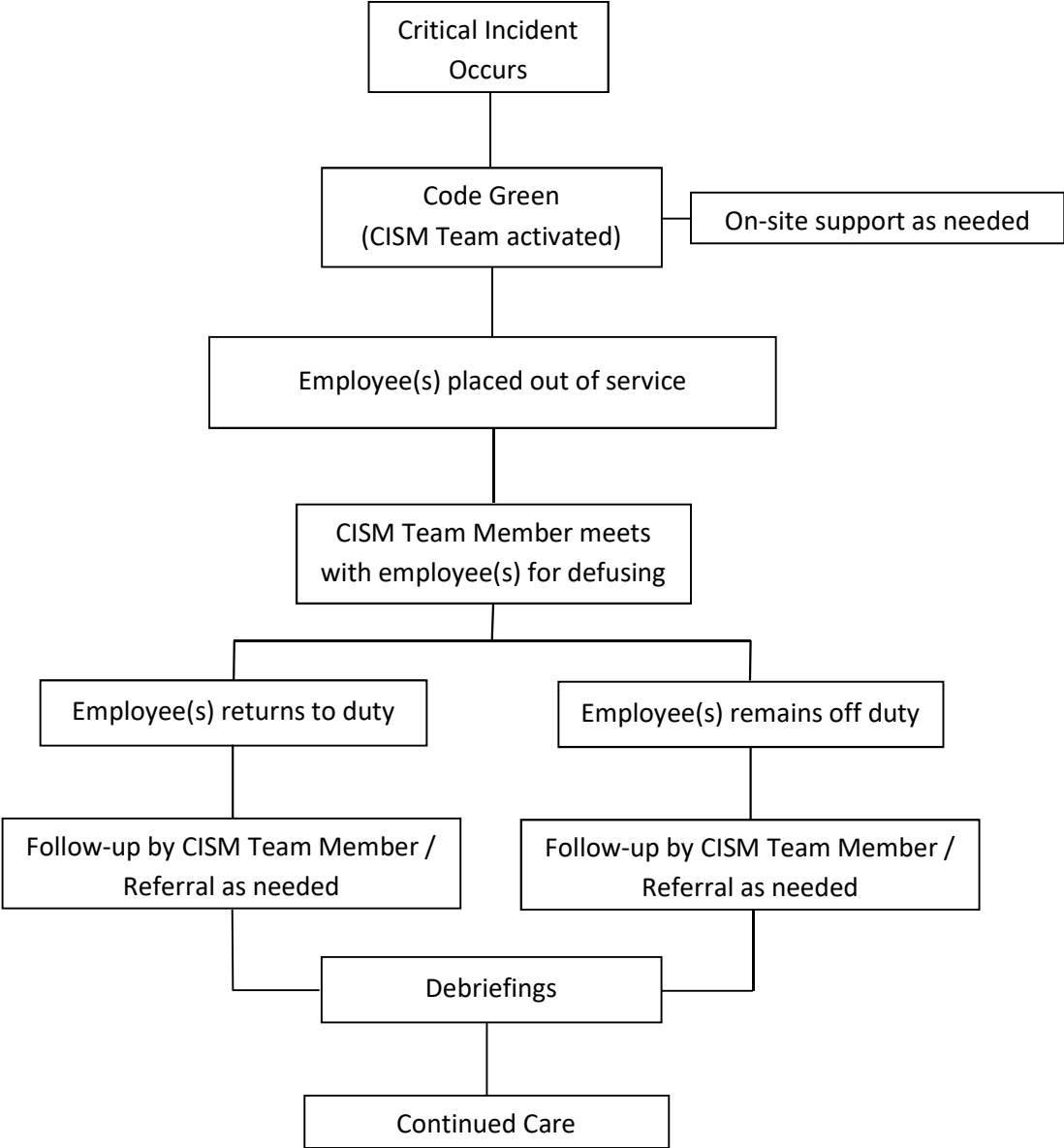
Peer-to-Peer support

Peer-to-Peer support is commonly referred to as a one-on-one meeting. This type of support is provided to anyone who is dealing with signs and symptoms of critical incident stress or chronic stress that does not occur immediately after an event. A defusing (psychological first aid) occurs initially after a critical incident and peer-to-peer support occurs for subsequent assistance or when unmanaged chronic stress is identified. A CISM Team member will schedule a meeting at a location comfortable to the employee(s). The CISM Team member will offer supportive listening and assistance developing and maintain coping mechanisms. The CISM Team member can also provide access and information for other resources as needed.

Debriefing

In the event that a critical incident involving EBR EMS warrants a debriefing, an outside agency, in most cases, will be contacted to come in and conduct the debriefing. It is often not beneficial for an agency to debrief their own personnel. Debriefings are conducted in a confidential manner for those involved with incident to discuss their personal thoughts, perceptions, and feelings. Doing this will allow for everyone involved to talk amongst themselves to discuss all aspects of the incident which will help reduce the effects of stress.

Critical Incident Code Green Activation



Code Green Activation for Other Needs

