



Resources



EBRP EMS CISM Team Main Number

225-389-5155 x3000

Employee Assistance Program

225-927-0160

Code Green Campaign

206-459-3020

Fire/EMS Helpline

888-731-3473

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

Veterans Crisis Line

800-273-8255 (then press 1)



Who We Are

About Us

The EBRP 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.

Mission

The mission of the EBRP 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 EBRP 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 EBRP EMS CISM Team that "No one fights alone".



EBRP EMS CISM TEAM

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East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Services

CISM TEAM



Managing Chronic Stress Handout

*-Serving Those Who Serve Others.
No One Fights Alone*

Contact Information

Main Line – 225-389-5155 x3000

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What is Stress?

Stress is primarily a physical response to an actual or perceived threat. An accumulation of minor stressors or events can have the same impact as a single more significant event. During a stressful event the body goes into a “fight or flight” response. During this response the body releases hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. Adrenaline is necessary for the “flight or flight” response which increases your heart rate, blood pressure, and boosts energy supplies. Cortisol increases sugars in the bloodstream, enhances your brain’s use of glucose, and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues. Cortisol is also responsible for curbing non vital functions such as altering the immune system, suppressing the digestive system, suppressing the reproductive system, and slowing growth processes. This response is usually self limiting and goes away once the threat is over. When the body remains in this state due to reoccurring stressful incidents or during normal everyday exposure to the stresses of EMS, we can fall victim to unmanaged chronic stress and suffer from its harmful effects.



What is Unmanaged Chronic Stress?

Unmanaged chronic stress is the physical and psychological effects of an accumulation of stressors over a period of time. In our industry we will always be exposed to stressful events and daily stressors. The goal is to learn how to prevent and mitigate the effects of chronic stress. During unmanaged chronic stress, the body’s defense mechanisms do not turn off which can lead to many physical and psychological complications such as anxiety, depression, digestive problems, headaches, heart disease, sleep problems, weight gain, and memory or concentration impairment.

Signs & Symptoms of Unmanaged Chronic Stress

- Insomnia or not sleeping well
- Disturbing dreams
- Chronic fatigue / Lack of energy
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Pessimism or hopelessness
- Feeling isolated or detached
- Anxiety
- Depression or feeling worthless
- Loss of enjoyment
- Unwarranted anger or irritability
- Frequent illnesses
- Chronic symptoms or illness flare up
- Unexplained headache/stomachache
- Frequent chest pains
- Muscle soreness, tightness, or cramping
- Diminished sex drive
- Overeating/Undereating
- Increased alcohol, tobacco, or drug use
- Avoidance behaviors
- Trouble concentrating / disorganization
- Poor judgement
- Changes in hygiene or behavior

Stress Management Strategies

- **Take a break**
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Give your body the fuel it needs.
- **Get regular exercise.** The goal is to burn off any extra adrenaline or other stress hormones and to allow for a release of endorphins that will make you feel better.
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Remember good sleep hygiene such as removing electronics, making the room comfortable, and eliminating noise when appropriate.
- **Avoid** excessive alcohol or prescription use and abuse
- **Practice relaxation techniques** such as yoga, deep breathing, getting a massage, or learning to meditate.
- **Take time for hobbies** such as reading a book, listening to music, or doing something you enjoy
- **Hang out** with friends
- **Make sure to laugh** and have a sense of humor
- **Volunteer** in your community. Doing this can give you a sense of pride and joy.
- **Seek professional help and counseling** when needed. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. The worst course of action is to keep everything you’re experiencing bottled up inside.

Advice for family and friends

- Listen carefully
- Spend time with the person and offer assistance and a listening ear
- Reassure them that they are safe and know they will get better
- Help them with everyday tasks
- Give them private time
- Don’t take their anger or other feelings personally