

Who are we?

We are a team of statewide Connecticut Department of Correction (CTDOC) and University of Connecticut Correctional Managed Health Care (CMHC) employees, who have received training to respond and support affected staff members during a traumatic event while utilizing evidence based best practice critical incident response techniques.



What services does CIRST provide?

The Critical Incident Stress Response Team (CIRST) deploys to many different types of incidents at all CTDOC facilities and parole offices throughout the State of Connecticut. The team provides individual support and group debriefing to all affected parties following a traumatic event. In addition, CIRST also provides grief support following the death of a coworker.

Support Resources

Should any **Connecticut Department of Correction (CTDOC)** or **University of Connecticut Correctional Managed Health Care (CMHC)** **employee** or **immediate family member** need any further assistance, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will provide 24/7 confidential counseling, support, and professional services.

For CTDOC Employees:

Toll-free: 1-888-327-1060

www.PublicSafetyEAP.com

For CMHC Employees:

Toll-free: 1-800-852-4392

Local: 1-860-679-2877



For any additional information regarding the Critical Incident Stress Response Program or Team, please contact Counselor Supervisor Jacqueline Jennett.

(Email: Jacqueline.jennett@ct.gov)



Critical Incident Stress Response Program

Mission Statement

The **Critical Incident Stress Response Program** shall provide support for staff adversely affected by a traumatic event. Interventions are conducted in a safe atmosphere to promote staff wellbeing.

What is a critical incident?

A critical incident is any event or circumstance that can cause psychological stress and can interfere with a person's normal coping abilities. The response may occur right after the incident, or days and weeks following the incident. Correctional staff members face a wide range of complex stressors that often build over time; sometimes leading to a cumulative stress response.



Stress Management Plan

The signs of stress reaction may last a few days or longer depending on the type of the incident. When stress management techniques are implemented, the stress reaction usually subsides more quickly.

Sometimes, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance is indicated. This does not imply weakness or craziness, it means that the event was too powerful for the person to manage him or herself

The first 24 hours following a traumatic event:

- * Give yourself permission to feel rotten.
- * Communicate with other affected persons. Reach out to others.
- * Get plenty of rest. Eat Healthy.
- * Structure your time. Keep busy.
- * Be aware of numbing the pain with overuse of alcohol and drugs.
- * Do not make life changes or big decisions.
- * Realize that you may be under stress and stress response is completely normal.

How can you support a fellow staff member?

- * Communicate with your coworkers. Ask how someone is doing.
- * Show concern in your own way.
- * Be a good listener; sometimes it is the best way to help.
- * Avoid cliché phrases, such as: **“Lucky it wasn't worse”** or **“Don't worry, you have nothing to worry about.”**
- * Be supportive and suggest that a struggling coworker seek help if necessary.
- * If you feel a staff member is being severely negatively impacted by this event, let a supervisor know immediately so that help can be given to your fellow staff member.



Common Signs of Stress Response

Physical:

Fatigue, headaches, dizziness, weakness, chest pain, difficulty breathing, increased heart rate.

Cognitive:

Intrusive thoughts or images, nightmare, poor attention, span, confusion, difficulty focusing.

Emotional:

Anxiety, guilt, fear, uncertainty, depression, irritability, feeling overwhelmed, anger