



## The Sullivan County CISM Response Teams

Sullivan County BOCES, working in conjunction with school districts in Sullivan County, has organized a Countywide School CISM Team to respond to the needs of students and staff in the event of a critical incident. Team members include school personnel who have been trained in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). CISM is a standardized and internationally recognized process designed to:

- ⇒ lessen the impact of major events on students and staff, and
- ⇒ accelerate the recovery of people who are experiencing high levels of stress after a critical incident.

Teams are activated when district superintendents determine a need and request assistance through BOCES Superintendent Dr. Martin Handler.

### SULLIVAN COUNTY BOCES COUNTYWIDE SCHOOL CISM RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

For information, contact:  
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Sullivan County BOCES Prevention Services  
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## Resources for Confidential Counseling

### Licensed Mental Health Centers

- Sullivan County Department of Community Services 845-292-8770

### Information and Referral Services

- Mobile Mental Health Team (24-hr. Crisis Hotline) 845-791-7123
- Friends and Advocates for Mental Health 845-794-1029
- Teen Link to Community (TLC) 845-791-7429
- Safe Passage Domestic Violence Program 845-292-5700
- Rape Intervention Services & Education (RISE) 845-791-9595
- Action Toward Independence (ATI) 845-794-4228

### Drug and Alcohol Centers

- Dynamite Youth Center 845-434-3370
- New Hope Manor 845-557-8353
- Veritas, Inc 845-557-3535
- Daytop Village 845-292-4060
- Recovery Center 845-794-8080
- Inward House 845-292-6000
- Sullivan County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services 845-292-8770 Ext. 4104
- RCWARD Addiction Treatment Center 845-341-2500

### Hospitals

- Catskill Regional Medical Center 845-794-3300

### Grief Support

- Hospice of Orange in Hudson Valley & Sullivan County 845-561-6111  
800-924-0157



Prevention Services

# CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS

Critical Incident: "Any situation faced by any person that causes them to experience unusually strong reactions that have the potential to interfere with their lives."

Jeffrey T. Mitchell, PhD

Sullivan County BOCES

Handout 2006-07

## Some Symptoms of a Stress Reaction

- High level of anxiety
- Irritability
- Increased absenteeism
- Depression
- Feeling of apathy
- Guilt
- Sleeplessness
- Headaches
- Nausea and vomiting
- Poor appetite
- Excessive sweating
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling of isolation
- Poor communication skills
- Poor concentration
- Indecisiveness
- Confused thinking
- Calculation difficulty
- Increased alcohol use
- Flashbacks
- Fear
- Withdrawal
- Blaming
- Poor problem solving
- Dizziness or weakness
- Intense anger
- Chills
- Thirst
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Chest pains

## Coping with Stress After a Critical Incident

When you experience a traumatic event or a critical incident, you may experience strong emotional or physical reactions. It is quite normal for people to experience emotional aftershocks hours, days or even months after a horrible event. Below are suggestions for coping with these stress reactions. Remember that occasionally the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This is not a sign of weakness, but indicates that the event was too powerful for you to manage by yourself. The back of this handout lists resources for confidential counseling.

### Self Care after a Critical Incident

- Talk to people—talk is the most healing medicine.
- Alternate periods of relaxation with appropriate physical exercise.
- Structure your time—keep busy.
- Remember that you are normal and having normal reactions to an abnormal event.
- Don't try to numb pain with alcohol and drugs; it will only complicate problems.
- Reach out—people do care.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Spend time with others.
- Check on others who shared your experience and see how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others.
- Keep a journal—write away those sleepless hours.
- Do things that feel good to you.
- Realize that those around you are under stress.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Get plenty of rest and eat regular, well-balanced meals.
- Make small daily decisions that will give you a feeling of control in your life.
- Understand that recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal. Don't fight them—they will decrease over time and become less painful.

### When Friends or Family Members Experience a Critical Incident

- Listen carefully; offer assistance and a listening ear if they have not asked for help.
- Spend time with the traumatized person, but be sensitive to needs for private time.
- Reassure them that they are safe.
- Help with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, minding the children.
- Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.
- Don't say, "You're lucky it wasn't worse." Instead, say that you are sorry such an event has occurred and that you want to understand and assist them.