

## CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Critical incidents are unusually challenging events that have the potential to create significant distress and overwhelm a person's normal coping mechanisms and ability to function.

### **INCIDENTS THAT MAY RESULT IN CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS (CIS) INCLUDE:**

- Serious injury of emergency personnel
- Line of duty death
- Death of a child or violence inflicted upon a child
- Mass casualty incidents
- Mass fatality incidents
- Suicide of an emergency responder
- Loss of life of a patient following extraordinary and prolonged rescue efforts
- Terrorism
- Incidents which attract unusual, prolonged or critical media coverage
- Responder identifies person or event with own personal experience
- Any other event that causes unusually strong reactions

## COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS

### **You may experience these symptoms while you are involved in an incident:**

- Tunnel vision
- Paresthesia (numbness)
- Chest pain, palpitations\*
- Nausea, vomiting
- Elevated blood pressure and pulse\*
- Time distortion
- Headache
- Anxiety

\*Indicates need for medical evaluation

### **You may experience these symptoms after your involvement in an incident:**

- Increased irritability, anxiety, grief or depression
- Obsessive thoughts of the incident
- Poor concentration
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Severe fatigue
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Headaches, stomach aches
- Increased alcohol or drug consumption

## CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a comprehensive approach to manage critical incident stress after significant events. The provision of CISM services by specially trained team members can help mitigate CIS symptoms with the goal of accelerating the recovery process.

### **Elements of CISM include:**

- Pre-incident education and preparation
- Assessment
- Strategic planning
- Large group interventions
- Small group interventions
- One-on-one assistance
- Family CISM
- Organizational, community intervention, and consultation
- Pastoral crisis intervention
- Follow-up and referral

**WESTERN NEW YORK  
STRESS REDUCTION  
PROGRAM, INC.**

*Mission Statement*

The Western New York Stress Reduction Program (WNYSRP) is dedicated to providing critical incident stress management services to emergency responders in Erie, Wyoming, Niagara and Genesee Counties on a 24/7/365 basis.

The WNYSRP Team is comprised of specially trained peer and mental health volunteers committed to helping the helper.

CISM services will be held at the nearest appropriate location (ambulance station, fire hall, etc.). All responders who have been involved in the incident will be invited to attend.

All CISM services are  
*confidential.*

**IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE**

**Erie County**  
MERS Control  
**716-898-3696**

**Wyoming County**  
Emergency Services  
**585-786-2255**

**Niagara County**  
**716-898-3696**

**Genesee County**  
Genesee County Emergency  
Communications  
**585-343-3311**

**INFORMATION  
&  
EDUCATION**

Division of Emergency Medical  
Services  
**716-681-6070**

**WEB ADDRESS**

[www.erie.gov/depts/  
wnystress/](http://www.erie.gov/depts/wnystress/)

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**DEDICATED TO PROVIDING  
CISM SERVICES TO  
EMERGENCY RESPONDERS**

*Helping the helper*

