





**2016 Indian Nations Conference**

**Cultural Debriefing for Service Providers in Indian Country Who Are Impacted by Serving Mass Victimization, Critical Incidents, and Crisis Response**

**Presented by:**


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This workshop will provide discussions related to cultural debriefing for service providers in Indian Country who are impacted by serving mass victimization, critical incidents, and post-traumatic stress disorders.

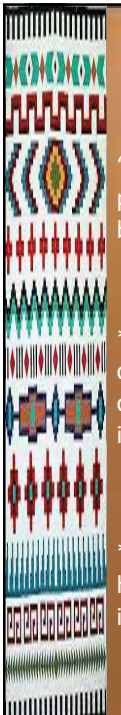
Many service providers/helping professionals are strengthened and energized by the work that they do when trauma responses are acknowledged and processed. Which are positive aspects of working in this field.



**Two(2) Main Topics Are:**  
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING - CISD  
CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT -CISM

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Define the terms Trauma, Critical Incidents, Stress Debriefing
- What are three (3) types of traumatic events in Indian Country?
- What are three (3) modules for Cultural Debriefing?
- What are three (3) crisis characteristics?




**TRAUMA**  
**DEFINITION OF TRAUMA**

“The experience of overwhelming demands on the physiological and psychological systems of the body resulting in a profound felt sense of betrayal, vulnerability, and immobilization.”  
- Robert. D. Macy, Ph.D. Trauma Center, Justice Resource Institute, Brookline, MA

\*Psychological trauma is a type of damage to the mind that occurs as a result of a severely distressing event. Trauma is often the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved with that experience.  
-Psychology Today [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)

\*Trauma is a very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes someone to have mental or emotional problems usually for a long time or medical which is a serious injury to a person's body.  
[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma)



## TYPES OF TRAUMA


**Type I – Single event**  
A single traumatic event that is sudden and unexpected, for example, witnessing a homicide and incidents that service providers and emergency responders experience.

**Type II – Repeated event**  
The repeated occurrence of a traumatic event; for example, repeated sexual abuse or domestic violence.

**Type III – Complex**  
The repeated abuse/neglect from within the family or supposed safety system. Can also include community tragedies, etc.

**Historical/Generational Trauma**  
Multiple, successive traumatic events occurring across generations.  
*"The accumulative emotional and psychological pain over an individual's lifespan and across generations as the result of massive group trauma."*

- Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart



## WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

A "critical incident" is any event that has significant emotional power to overwhelm usual coping methods. These include a sudden death in the line of duty, serious injury from a shooting, a physical or psychological threat to the safety or well being of an individual or community regardless of the type of incident.

Moreover, a critical incident can involve any situation or events faced by emergency or public safety personnel (responders) or individual that causes a distressing, dramatic or profound change or disruption in their physical (physiological) or psychological functioning. There are often times, unusually strong emotions attached to the event which have the potential to interfere with that person's ability to function either at the crisis scene or away from it.

Ways cumulative stress from trauma effects our agencies, programs and family and or work relationships.

## Symptoms of Critical Incident Stress

Critical incidents produce characteristic sets of psychological and physiological reactions or symptoms (thus the term syndrome) in all people, including emergency service personnel. Typical symptoms of Critical Incident Stress include:


- Restlessness
- Excessive Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Muscle Tremors
- Vomiting
- Suspiciousness
- Irritability
- Sleep Disturbances
- Startle Reactions
- Moodiness
- Difficulties Concentrating
- Diarrhea
- Nightmares

These same symptoms are also debilitating (making illness or weakness) for many of our family relationships and for our allied partner programs.

## OTHER HARMFUL SIDE EFFECTS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:


- attrition
- low morale
- liability
- suicide and other physical and financial manifestations (an event, action, or object that clearly shows or embodies something) which are debilitating (making illness or weakness) to the individual, the family and the Tribal Program or Department.
- unnecessary sick leave
- substance abuse
- failed relationships

These same factors are also debilitating for many of our allied partner programs.



**TYPES OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS IN INDIAN COUNTRY RELATED TO WHAT CRISIS AND DISASTER, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND VICTIM ADVOCACY PROVIDERS EXPERIENCE AND TO WHICH THEY RESPOND**

- A Single Event (a disaster, vehicular accident, rape, suicide or loss of a loved one)
- A Single Event is also one service providers personally experience such as personal victimization and losses
- Prolonged traumatic experiences such as forced assimilation, historical events such as removal from homelands, relocation, or massacres that includes Historical Trauma
- Cumulative effects (high rates of and exposure to violence, such as domestic violence and community violence and community tragedies).
- Youth suicides and multiple suicides and school shootings
- Violence deaths (homicide, suicide, unintentional injuries) and Accidents
- Multiple experiences of victimization or mass victimization




**MODULES FOR CULTURAL DEBRIEFING**

- Group Debriefing by trained debriefers or cultural debriefers
- Individual Debriefing due to specific needs of individuals
- Tribal Talking Circles
- A cultural activity specific to each tribe.
- Any cultural activities listed on the next slide would occur after the basic activities and phases which are discussed in presentation



### CULTURAL/TRADITIONAL PRACTICES THAT COULD BE INCLUDED

- Sweat Lodges
- Cultural Healing Ceremonies
- Smudging/Brushing/Herb Therapy
- Dancing/Stomp Dances/Pow Wows
- Story Telling
- Arts and Crafts/Healing in the Arts
- Meditation
- Singing / Chanting/Drumming
- Prayer
- Active Outdoor games
- Cultural Healing Ceremonies
- Others



### CRISIS CHARACTERISTICS

- A time of intense difficulty, trouble, danger, or victimization or mass victimization
- A stressful situation or emotionally hazardous event which poses a threat to an individual
- An extremely dangerous or difficult situation

#### 7 PHASES OF CRISIS

- ANXIETY AND STRESS
- POWERLESSNESS
- SHAME AND GUILT
- AMBIVALENCE (having feelings of confusion and uncertainty and/or mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something)
- HOPELESSNESS
- GRIEF AND SADNESS
- NEED FOR HEALING

## PTSD-POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

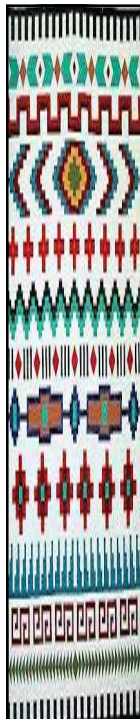
[www.PTSDAlliance.org](http://www.PTSDAlliance.org)

PTSD is a prevalent and serious health condition that Evokes emotional psychological and physiological responses Resulting from trauma. PTSD results from exposure to a traumatic or extremely psychologically Distressing event. Extreme trauma can lead to the Development of PTSD evokes intense fear, horror or sense Of helplessness. Its aftermath can leave the person Overwhelmed, affecting that person's ability to cope with daily life.

Those at risk for developing PTSD include anyone who has been victimized or has witnessed a violent act, has been Repeatedly exposed to life threatening situations. It is also noted that not everyone who experiences a traumatic event will develop PTSD but many people do develop PTSD.


### Those at risk for developing PTSD include :

- Survivors of Crimes such as domestic and intimate partner partner violence, child abuse, rape or sexual assault, other violent crimes and random violent acts such as those that take place in public, public schools or workplaces.
- Survivors of unexpected events in daily lives; Car accidents or fires; Natural disasters such as tornadoes or earthquakes; Major catastrophic events which can include plane crashes or terrorist acts.
- Combat veterans or civilian victims of war
- People who learn of sudden tragic deaths of a family member or close friends
- Those diagnosed with life threatening illness or who have undergone invasive medical procedures
- Professionals who respond to victims in traumatic situations including emergency medical service workers, police, firefighters, military, search & rescue workers and victim advocates



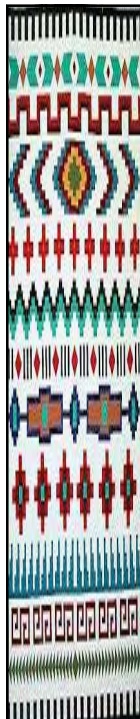
## DEBRIEFING - CISD

Debriefing is Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD). Debriefing is a specific technique designed to assist others in dealing with the physical or psychological symptoms that are generally associated with trauma exposure. Debriefing allows those involved with the incident to process the event and reflect on its impact.



In addition to victims who often develop long-term crisis reactions, emergency workers, public safety/law enforcement personnel, victim advocates, child welfare and social services, and responders to crisis situations, rape victims, abused spouses and children, stalking victims, media personnel as well as individuals who are exposed to a variety of critical incidents (e.g., fire, earthquake, floods, industrial disaster, workplace violence, school shootings, terrorism) can develop short-term and sometimes long-term crisis reactions which should include debriefing.






Debriefing can be done in large or small groups or one-to-one depending on the situation.

An appropriate and effective protocol is to be created and followed when assisting responders and service providers of any critical incident by a debriefing activity.

During a debriefing event, ventilation and validation are important to individuals as each, in their own way, needs to discuss their exposure, sensory experiences, thoughts and feelings that are tied to the event.

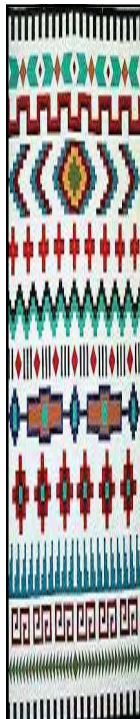
Ventilation and validation are necessary to give the individual an opportunity to express emotion.



A Debriefer assists the support personnel and responders in predicting future events. This involves education and discussion of the possible emotions, reactions and problems that may be experienced after traumatic exposure for the potential psychological and physical reactions in the future.


**Debriefing Conductor:**

- Someone specifically trained to do debriefing
- Mental Health Professionals
- Peer Support Personnel
- Cultural Healers
- A Pastor or Chaplain may be requested to conduct a prayer




**A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) has three main objectives.**

- 1) The mitigation (reducing the severity, seriousness, or painfulness of something) of the impact of a traumatic incident.
- 2) The facilitation of the normal recovery processes and a restoration of adaptive functions in psychologically healthy people who are distressed by an unusually disturbing event.
- 3) A CISD functions as a screening opportunity to identify group members who might benefit from additional support services or a referral for professional care.



**Required Conditions for the CISD (Critical Incident Stress Debriefing) Process of the Critical Incident Stress**

- 1) The small group (about 20 people) must be homogeneous (similar), not heterogeneous (dissimilar).
- 2) The group members should not be currently involved in the situation. Their involvement is either complete or the situation has moved past the most acute stages.
- 3) Group members should have had about the same or similar levels of exposure to the experience.
- 4) The group should be psychologically ready and not so fatigued or distraught that they cannot participate in the discussion.




### **PHASES IN THE CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING**

A CISD is a structured process that includes the cognitive and affective domains of human experience.

1. INTRODUCTION
2. FACTS
3. THOUGHTS
4. REACTIONS
5. SYMPTOMS
6. TEACHING
7. RE-ENTRY

These phases are available to view in this training handout




### **WHY ADD DEBRIEFING TO YOUR PROTOCOL?**

It is Due to Negative Impact of Trauma Work

Such as: Secondary stress; Burnout; Compassion fatigue; Vicarious traumatization

Cumulative stress, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder,

Let your program be on the forefront of adding Cultural Debriefing for Service Providers to your response protocol. Which are positive aspects of working in this field. Many in “helping professionals” are strengthened and energized by the work that they do when trauma responses are acknowledged and processed.




**YOURS' IS IMPORTANT WORK**

Debriefing is the key to being able to do this work well and continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those where you are most needed- at home and at work.

**WADO!**

(Thank you in Cherokee) for all your dedication, commitment, and all the great work that all of you do.



**RESOURCES USED FOR THIS PRESENTATION**

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF EXPERTS IN TRAUMATIC STRESS [www.aaets.org](http://www.aaets.org)

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION/SAMHSA [www.samhsa.hhs.gov](http://www.samhsa.hhs.gov)

PTSD [www.PTSDAllianceorg](http://www.PTSDAllianceorg)

Robert. D. Macy, Ph.D. Trauma Center, Justice Resource Institute, Brookline, MA

[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma)



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