

	BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE GENERAL ORDER	Distribution	General Order Number
		ALL PERSONNEL	8.19
		Original Issue Date	Reissue/Effective Date
		1/18/22	1/27/22
Order Title: CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM		CALEA Accreditation Standard:	Section
		NA	8
		Section Title PERSONNEL	
Rescinds:		Rebeca Garcia, Chief of Police	

This General Order is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This General Order should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this General Order will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to ensure that the members of the Bridgeport Police Department have access to behavioral health resources and are aware of the methods to access these resources when needed.

II. POLICY

The Bridgeport Police Department is committed to providing assistance to employees dealing with stress associated with critical situations, traumatic events, or the stressful aspects of the overall public safety occupation to minimize the accumulative effects of Critical Incident Stress.

If you are an employee in crisis and/or thinking about harming yourself or others you should contact EAP or 911 immediately for help. Behavior Health Consultants (EAP) 1800-864-2742

An employee in crisis shall be able to access any of these resources at any time. All employees are valued by the Bridgeport Police Department. Employees should access these resources freely with the knowledge and understanding that it will occur in a supportive environment absent of judgement or retribution.

III. DEFINITIONS

Acute Stress Disorder: An anxiety disorder that can result from exposure to a traumatic event that occurs within 30 days of exposure.

CISM Team /Trauma Response Service: An organized group of individuals trained to support public safety personnel who are involved in emergency operations. The purpose of the team is to

assist in mitigating long-term effects of stress. CISM is a broad term for any Critical Incident Stress Management Team, the Trauma Response Service is the name of the crisis team used by the Bridgeport Police Department's Employee Assistance Program.

Critical Incident: Any situation faced by police, fire, EMS, or communications personnel that cause them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions, which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function.

Critical Incident Stress Management: A formal process used to assist an individual who has been involved in a traumatic event to return to or maintain an effective level of functioning.

Debriefing: A process coordinated by a trained facilitator and trained peer provider where personnel can discuss their feelings and reactions regarding a stressful incident, thus reducing the reactions to stress, which can result from exposure to a traumatic event or series of traumatic events. There are no written or recorded notes, and all debriefing(s) will be strictly confidential. A CISM debriefing is not a critique of the incident.

Defusing: A process that is similar to a debriefing but is usually done 3 to 4 hours post incident or before the end of the shift. All defusing(s) will be strictly confidential.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: An anxiety disorder that can result from exposure to a traumatic event and is diagnosed if such symptoms persist after 30 days.

Qualifying Event: An event occurring in the line of duty on or after July 1, 2019, in which a police officer:

- Views a deceased minor;
- Witnesses the death of a person or an incident involving death of a person
- Witnesses an injury to a person who subsequently dies before or upon admission at a hospital as a result of the injury and not as a result of any other intervening cause;
- Has physical contact with and treats an injured person who subsequently dies before or upon admission at a hospital as a result of the injury and not as a result of any other intervening cause;
- Carries an injured person who subsequently dies before or upon admission at a hospital as a result of the injury and not as a result of any other intervening cause; or
- Witnesses a traumatic physical injury that results in the loss of a vital body part or a vital body function that results in permanent disfigurement of the victim.

Qualified Individuals: Any person who is employed as a law enforcement officer.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Generally

1. As soon as it is evident that a qualified individual has been exposed to a qualifying event, the supervisor shall ensure that Critical Incident Stress

Management Program resources are made available to the employee. A supervisor may offer Critical Incident Stress Management Program when available to all affected persons who are present during a qualifying event.

2. After a qualifying event, a qualified individual may seek a referral for mental health care services to a mental health professional such as a certified psychiatrist or licensed psychologist.
3. The Bridgeport Police Department shall assist any qualified individual in finding a certified psychiatrist or licensed psychologist. A list of certified psychologist and licensed psychologists is maintained by the Connecticut Worker's Compensation Chairman.
4. If the qualifying individual is treated by a certified psychiatrist or licensed psychologist that is approved by the chairperson of the Worker's Compensation Commission and suffers from PTSD based on the qualifying event, that individual shall follow departmental policies for reporting. The Bridgeport Police Department shall not discharge, discipline, or discriminate against the employee based on the findings, and all qualifying individuals shall be eligible for workers' compensation in accordance with Public Act 19-17.

B. Critical Incident Stress Management Program

1. The Bridgeport Police Department is committed to providing assistance to employees dealing with stress associated with critical situations, traumatic events, or the stressful aspects of the overall public safety occupation to minimize the accumulative effects of Critical Incident Stress.
2. Command
 - a. The Bridgeport Police Department acknowledges the importance of all employees being medically, physically, emotionally and spiritually ready to respond to the needs of our community. To that end, the Bridgeport Police Department will work with employees to protect the mental health and well-being of each employee and will assist employees in obtaining the resources needed to address the challenges of a career in law enforcement.
 - b. The request for mental health resources shall not be viewed as a sign of weakness, but rather a show of strength and a willingness to ensure that each employee is ready to respond when called upon by our community.

3. Operations

- a. The Support Services Commander will assist qualified employees with obtaining resources following a qualifying event.
- b. The Support Services Commander will also assist those employees who are exposed to a potentially traumatic event that does not meet the criteria as set forth in Public Act 19-17, but who reach out for assistance.
- c. In coordination with the EAP program (See General Order [8.10: Employee Assistance Program](#)), the Support Services Manager will assist employees who are suffering from other stress related behaviors such as:
 1. Substance use or over-use;
 2. Marriage and/or family issues; or
 3. Suicidal thoughts or ideations.
- d. The Support Services Manager shall also be aware of the specific concerns of employees who are military members and/or families and their particular needs.
- e. The Support Services Manager shall coordinate with the City of Bridgeport Human Resources Department and/or individual vendors to assist employees in need regardless of the causation;
- f. The Support Services Manager shall work with City of Bridgeport Human Resource Department to ensure that they are up-to-date with programs and resources available to employees of the Bridgeport Police Department.
- g. The Support Services Manager will be responsible for developing a plan for the reintegration of any qualified employee who takes an authorized leave of duty following a qualifying event.

4. Finance

- a. Costs associated with the initial Critical Incident Stress Management Program shall be paid by the City of Bridgeport. Costs for follow-up and or additional treatment may be covered by the City of Bridgeport EAP program or the employees individual insurance.

5. Logistics

- a. Critical Incident Stress Management Program services may come from a combination of internal and external sources as are appropriate based upon the extent of the critical incident, the availability of the internal resources and the desire of the qualified employee with internal or external services.

6. Planning

- a. The Sick and Injured Manager is responsible for overseeing the Critical Incident Stress Management program including availability of the program, coordination with outside vendors/service providers, and ensuring that all applicable training for employees and supervisors is completed.

7. Safety

- a. Any employee in crisis will have the full support of the Bridgeport Police Department up to and including time off if needed.

8. Liaison

- a. The Bridgeport Police Department shall appoint the Sick and Injured Manager to work with the City of Bridgeport Human Resources Department and other first responder liaisons to facilitate Critical Incident Stress Management Program

C. Critical Incident Stress Management Team / Trauma Response Service Activation

1. All employees share the responsibility for identifying and recognizing common signs of stress in coworkers, either following a critical or traumatic event, or if a co-worker exhibits signs of stress.
2. When a critical incident is identified, the Communications Supervisor or Shift Supervisor (as the case may be), will be notified of the event and the potential impact to an Bridgeport Police Department employee. The Communications Supervisor or Shift Supervisor, as the case may be, is responsible for notifying the Chief of Police or his/her designee, and activating the local or regional Peer Support/Trauma Response Team.
3. Initial response by the CISM / Trauma Response Team may include defusing, followed by debriefing.
4. In consultation with the CISM / Trauma Response Team, consideration should be given for relief from duty as previously noted in this policy.

D. Authorization for Relief from Duty

1. Relief from duty for exposure to a traumatic critical incident, if necessary, shall be similar to the process for reassignment after an officer involved shooting in General Order [3.10: Officer Involved Shooting](#).
2. Such relief from duty is not punitive or negative. It is considered to be an essential aspect of healing a member to appropriately deal with the stress of a traumatic incident.

E. Confidentiality

Participation in the Critical Incident Stress Management Program is confidential. No information revealed by the employee to the counselor will be shared, either verbally or in writing by the counselor with anyone without the employee's knowledge and written consent. Because of the confidential nature of the program, the counselor will not participate in any disciplinary or grievance procedures.

F. Additional Referral Services

In addition to activating local/regional CISM / Trauma / Peer Support Response Team for defusing or debriefing services, the Bridgeport Police Department provides an Employee Assistance Program for specific referral matters. Specific procedures for using EAP are provided above.

G. Follow-up Action

1. The Shift Supervisors are responsible for ensuring feedback for follow-up action is received from CISM / Trauma Response Teams to further assist the affected member.
2. The Shift Supervisors are responsible for paying close attention to the individual to detect whether or not follow-up action is required based on observable work behaviors or conversations with the affected employee.
3. Employees who wish to continue treatment beyond the Critical Incident and Peer Support program should consult with a supervisor and explore opportunities through the City of Bridgeport EAP program (*See General Order [8.10: Employee Assistance Program](#)*) or their individual insurance. Additional information on these resources can be found in the City of Bridgeport Human Resources Department.

H. Training

1. The Bridgeport Police Department shall provide employees with training pertaining to the negative physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral

reactions that may occur following a critical incident and the uniform procedures of this policy.

2. Supervisors and Administrators shall be trained to identify physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to critical incidents.
3. Supervisors are responsible for making available to their personnel information about the Employee Assistance Program and other mental health services.