

On-site Support Critical Incidents & Trauma

Trauma can strike organisations in many different ways. From natural disasters to workplace fatalities, traffic accidents and personal bereavement, critical incidents can have a devastating impact both on individuals, their teams and their families.

For this reason, CiC offers a combination of rapid response, on-site intervention and longer-term clinical support.

On-site support following a critical incident provides guidance for management and team leaders as well as support for the individuals impacted by the incident.

Managers may find it extremely helpful to understand the psychological impact of trauma, talk through the planning of communications, identify team members they are concerned about and ensure that the greatest number of employees are offered support.

In addition it is helpful to have someone available for managers to rehearse conversations with, talk in confidence to and to act as a reminder to the manager of the existing support available to the teams, including, where applicable, the EAP, which provides a 24/7 helpline.

Since every incident is unique, each organisation and situation will require its own response designed to accommodate and suit the needs of those involved. An initial assessment/conversation with a senior clinician will provide the guidance and help to ensure the most appropriate course of action is taken, dependent on the incident and organisation.

Continued overleaf

On-site Support Critical Incidents & Trauma

Initial Visit

- The aim of on-site work is to support individuals and managers with their general and specific concerns – both personal and organisational.
- Employee support can be offered in groups or to individuals – a combination of both is often the best solution.
- Group work covers more general information – for example reactions to trauma, emotional concerns, impact on family (and the wider community), the range of likely responses and the resources available to support people.
- Individual sessions usually include a personal risk assessment and provide an opportunity for individuals to talk about concerns that would be difficult to disclose in an open arena. The session focuses closely on what the incident means to the individual and provides an opportunity to assess for mental health problems or vulnerability. Referral recommendations are also part of this intervention. People often think of this processing of the incident as the first phase of recovery.
- CiC use specialist trauma counsellors and psychotherapists with experience in work related issues and where necessary will take a coaching approach to the sessions. This encourages people to look at their personal coping strategies and helps them to access these as well as helping to access external resources.
- Providing on-site support following a traumatic or critical incident demonstrates best practice, supports employees and managers, and shows that the organisation has considered the welfare of their staff in such a challenging situation.

- Those immediately involved or who have witnessed the incident as well as those who may have experienced something similar previously or who are vulnerable for other reasons, have an opportunity for support.
- On-site counsellors are a “walking advert” for the EAP, if one is in place, and usage is likely to increase following an on-site intervention.

Follow Up Visits

The follow up visit usually occurs four to six weeks after the first visit. However, it is important that each situation is individually assessed. The on site trauma consultant will guide the organisation as to the best time to arrange a follow up visit. The on site counsellor will:

- Meet with managers to help identify any problems and ensure that any one causing concern is prioritised for support.
- Assess for delayed or worsening reactions and identify further support options for the individual as necessary.
- Ensure that any individual needing further support is referred to the EAP and or GP as appropriate.
- Will help the organisation to maximise learning from the incident should anything similar happen in the future.
- Will see team members who were absent when the incident or initial visit occurred.
- Meet with the people that were most affected to ensure that recovery is in place.