



Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation Australia Newsletter

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Special Points of Interest in the President's Report

- *The Challenge of Diversity in CISM Interventions*
- *Mr Jim Keatch – Trainer in Pastoral Crisis Intervention*
- *CISMFA Conference*
- *Feature Articles*
- *Train the Trainer Participant Profiles*

PRESIDENTS REPORT Robyn Robinson

One of the interesting challenges we face in our field of peer support and crisis intervention is to appropriately tailor CISM interventions in ways that respect the cultural and religious diversity of participants. On the occasions that I have been involved in defusings and debriefings where there was diversity in nationality and/or religious belief, or when working with people from other countries, what has struck me most is the commonness of human response to psychological trauma. The thoughts, the emotions and the bodily reactions to extreme danger and loss seem to be a great leveller. Nevertheless, in setting up support processes, it can be important to take into account particular beliefs around who can talk together in a group, what may or may not be expressed by members and religious explanations of critical incident events.

There is emphasis today, within the CISM model, of pastoral crisis intervention. Most programs incorporate this dimension either by having team members with this expertise or liaising with those who do.

Mr Jim Keatch, from South Australia, joins the team of CISMFA trainers. He is the only ICISF/CISMFA accredited trainer in Pastoral Crisis Intervention in Australia. We eagerly await his workshops.

With the conference almost upon us the CISMFA Office is particularly busy.



We are looking forward to seeing those members who are coming along and indeed to meeting all delegates. There have been more registrations from overseas than has occurred for previous conferences and we appreciate the long distances travelled by our international guests.

This edition features an article by Karen Ott who reviews one of the CISM responses to the Canberra fires and lessons learnt. Michelle Tuckey poses some thoughts about the stressors involved in critical incidents for police. Finally, Amanda Allen draws our attention to the difficulties of humanitarian workers and of a conference on this theme.

A fourth Trainer the Trainer program was conducted in July and there is a brief profile of the people who completed the course.

"ACT"ing as Peer Supporters!

Karen Ott BSc(Hons), ACT CISM Information Service Inc

The ACT CISM Information Service Inc. functions primarily as a library and mail-out service. We also provide a gratis critical incident service to some community organisations and small businesses that do not have an employee assistance scheme.

We experienced a number of problems when trying to respond to the Canberra fires:

- *Communication difficulties*
- *Availability of the CISM team*
- *A high volume of traffic*

In Canberra we have a small group registered as the ACT CISM Information Service Inc., which looks to CISMFA as their peak body in Australia. This article is about the group's experiences over the last 12 months, following the Canberra Bushfires.

The ACT CISM Information Service Inc. functions primarily as a library and mail-out service. We also provide a gratis critical incident service to some community organisations and small businesses that do not have an employee assistance scheme. To facilitate this service we have a local CISM team of volunteers with a duty coordinator who carries a mobile telephone. The local ACT Fire Services Team has a similar set-up.

Saturday, the 18th of January 2003, the day of the Canberra bushfires, was particularly memorable for our group. Although the fires around Canberra were evident on the morning of the 18th, there were no indications that the suburbs would be in any danger. Later in the day complete darkness descended. Several homes were destroyed in the fire and a State of Emergency was declared.

We experienced a number of problems when trying to respond to this emergency. In the first instance our responses were hampered by communication difficulties. Several of our members attempted to call the ACT CISM Team mobile, but mobile telephone services were down, and no calls were able to get through until the following morning. Some members were able to make contact through landlines, but some suburbs also lost telephone connections. The ACT Fire Services Team encountered similar problems.

Our second problem was that the majority of our CISM team are also active members of the ACT Emergency Services. If we had been asked to field a team it may have been difficult to get sufficient members together. We intend to look at these issues in review and make contingency plans for the future.

Another potential problem related to the hindrance of evacuation efforts by a high volume of traffic. Despite this two of our members were successful in the evacuation of a colleague and his family.

The day after the fires started we notified the Department that we were available to assist in any way. We were asked to supply volunteers to operate telephones if needed. The Department and every Community agency was inundated with offers of help and in the end our support was not required.

We received the first of many requests for information from our library service about 10 days after the fire. In the next 12 months we posted out material in response to 53 queries for information, the majority being requests for articles related to trauma and children. Other requests related to critical incident support, pastoral care, and pet loss/grief. We referred many people to the ICISF Inc. website and the articles available there. During this time our CISM team provided critical incident stress management training for several groups following the fires.

The ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety quickly produced some excellent resources, including a newsletter that

"ACT"ing as Peer Supporters! (cont).

was distributed regularly to residents and community organisations. They also provided some excellent training seminars on disaster recovery, which our members were able to attend.

I was further involved in the follow up community support when I volunteered to work for the ACT Recovery Centre. I spent part of January and February doing "rural visits". It was great to see first hand the magnificent work of emergency and other services in the recovery efforts. In April I returned to the ACT Recovery Centre, but this time as an Anglicare Volunteer. I witnessed the remarkable resilience of fami-

lies who had faced such great hardship over the last year. The pattern of community recovery was similar to that reported in other communities worldwide. Perhaps the most difficult thing for many people was the recognition that things would never be exactly the same as they used to be.

The last year has been a busy time for our team and many of our members. The ACT CISM group has recognised a need for change, particularly in the way we handle our communications. For Canberra the landscape and community has changed, and many lessons have been learnt. We have survived.



The Importance of the Organisational Environment in Critical Incident Stress Management

Michelle Tuckey, PhD, Senior Research Officer, Australasian Centre for Policing Research

Policing is a unique environment which gives rise to a variety of challenges when considering the "right" response following a critical incident.

There is a consistent finding within the general police stress literature that stress is more likely to result from factors associated with the organisational work environment (e.g., organisational processes and procedures, management decisions, co-worker support, performance feedback), rather than aspects of policing work unique to this occupation (e.g., making arrests, dealing with victims of crime, attending dangerous incidents). This includes research with Australian police officers. In other words, police officers' psychological responses to the job seem to result from the organisational context in which the operational tasks occur, rather than from

job characteristics unique to policing.

Police organisations may not automatically consider this issue in their critical incident response. This finding does, however, have a number of important implications. For instance, it suggests that stress arising from the experience of a critical incident may be outweighed by internal organisational processes that follow the incident.

This idea was confirmed during a recent conversation with a psychologist colleague. During our chat, the psychologist described a situation where a group of police officers were involved in a high speed pursuit. The pursuit ended in the death of the individual the officers were pursuing. And, although the officers were upset about the individual's death, the internal investigation processes that followed were con-

Police stress is more likely to result from factors associated with the organisational work environment rather than aspects of policing work unique to this occupation.

The Importance of the Organisational Environment in Critical Incident Stress Management (cont).

sidered equally (if not more) stressful.

Immediately following the incident, in the middle of the night, the officers had to submit to a five hour process of questioning and drug testing. They then had to wait for the outcome of the internal investigation. This anecdote provides a good example of how police officers' psychological responses to the job can be more influenced by the organisational context than by the operational characteristics of the job.

Thus, although a critical incident stress debrief (CISD) was an appropriate response to the pursuit incident, the psychologists involved had to be mindful that an equally important stressor in this case was the internal investigation process. They had to take steps to ensure that any stress associated with the internal investigation was also appropriately addressed.

Another important consideration which is commonly acknowledged by police organisations is the potential for evidence to be contaminated during a CISD. CISDs include a detailed discussion about the facts, thought processes, and reactions to a potentially stressful event. During this detailed discussion, police officers will hear

accounts of the event that may differ from what they have personally experienced. It is possible that police officers' memories of the event may be altered by these discussions. For example, there is the possibility that officers may confuse the facts reported by other people with those stored in their own memory, or that they will store new information in memory to supplement their own knowledge of the event. This highlights the potential for contamination of information that may later be required as evidence. Police managers will therefore need to think carefully about organising a group CISD for incidents in which contamination of evidence is likely to be a key issue.

Thus, there are a number of issues associated with the police organisational environment that have important implications for police. As outlined above, these include the potentially stressful nature of aspects of the organisational context and the potential for contamination of evidence. These issues present additional challenges for police organisations when making decisions regarding the best way to support police officers after exposure to potentially stressful events.

Another important CISD consideration is the potential for contamination of evidence that may later be required in evidence.

8th World Congress on Stress, Trauma & Coping Crisis Intervention: Best Practices in Prevention, Preparedness & Response

February 16-20, 2005
Baltimore, MD USA

World Congress Major Content Themes
Emergency Services, Public Safety
Mass Disasters, Terrorism,
Homeland Security
Military
Business, Industry, EAP
Faith-Based Community
Family, Children, Schools
Hospitals, Healthcare
Mental Health, Community Crisis Response

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Humanitarian Work Takes Its Toll

Amanda Allan PhD, Psychologist, University of Melbourne

As the world watches the international theatres of war, conflict and disaster from the comfort of their arm chairs, there are many men and women who work on the front line attempting to minister humanitarian aid to those who suffer multiple trauma, cumulative stress, loss of home and family, grief and often loss of hope. Unlike our professional domestic rescue staff, many of those who opt to work in the humanitarian aid sector are inadequately prepared for the roles and the unpredictable circumstances they face and are frequently under resourced to meet the demands of the field. Burnout, psychosomatic disorders, compassion fatigue, risk taking behaviour, acute stress disorder and post-traumatic stress affect not just the individual worker. The also impact on the agency, its capacity to deliver sustainable aid; the recipients of aid as well as the aid worker's family, their relationships and their propensity to return to work.

Surprisingly, many international aid organizations have not advanced policies and practices in a systematic way to address these organizational, social and ethical issues. As a starting point, a three-day Non-Government Organisations (NGO) Psychosocial Forum was held in Melbourne late last year. The goal of the forum was to bring together Australian NGOs and others affiliated with the humanitarian aid sector to

raise awareness and work towards developing a sustainable Australian network of support. A key aim of the longer-term initiative is to develop, coordinate, and implement policy, best practice and research initiatives that advance the psychosocial support and psychological adjustment of expatriate and national humanitarian aid workers. This forum was facilitated by the International Conflict Resolution Centre at the University of Melbourne with major sponsorship from AusAID, the Antares Foundation (Amsterdam) and Monash University.

Emerging from conversations with aid agencies and recent international forums addressing this topic is the desperate need to consider not only the psychosocial issues facing expatriate staff, but to pay equal attention to national (locally based) staff who are often faced with the dual challenge of living and working in the disaster context. Worthy of note, the majority of humanitarian staff working for large International Non Government Organizations (INGOs) is not from first world countries.

Endeavouring to raise awareness and understanding of the issues facing national staff, a conference focusing on cross-cultural and psychosocial issues of staff who conduct humanitarian work will be held in Melbourne, 16-17 November 2004 (details page 6).



Many of those who opt to work in the humanitarian aid sector are inadequately prepared for the roles and the unpredictable circumstances they face and are frequently under resourced to meet the demands of the field.

Congratulations to Paul Scott

Paul Scott received the Commissioner's Commendations for services to the NSW Rural Fire Service. His citation included the following " Operating in an environment of crisis situations, and frequently giving of his own time, he has successfully managed to ensure that these support services (to staff) are available on a 24 hour basis, are compassionately delivered and are of the highest professional quality. Mr Scott's leadership has been outstanding."

CONFERENCE

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Psychosocial Issues of Humanitarian Staff Care

16th-17th November, 2004

Melbourne, Australia

The conference aims to increase the awareness of how best to support the wellbeing of national (locally based) staff who work for western humanitarian NGOs. It will examine ways in which humanitarian organizations that employ personnel for the field can better prepare and support staff for cross-cultural interactions at the interpersonal as well as team and organizational levels in order to effect meaningful and sustainable aid intervention.

Conference Topics

- the impact of global security issues on international staff wellbeing
- understanding concepts of stress and resiliency from national staff perspectives
- processes of selection of expatriate and national staff for cross-cultural work
- debriefing in cross-cultural contexts
- managing conflict in cross-cultural teams

For more information and registration details go to www.psychology.org.au/news/conferences Or contact Amanda Allan at aga@unimelb.edu.au

New CISMFA Trainers

The following people successfully completed the CISM: Basic Train the Trainer Course - July 2004

Ms. Alexina Baldini. Alexina is a psychologist and Director of Caraniche, a private practice with a specialized workplace support team that consults, trains and provides comprehensive CISM and EAP programs in government, non-government, industrial and commercial settings. Alexina has a background in youth work, disability services, health services and human resources. She is the current Australasian President of the Australasian Critical Incident Stress Association.

Ms. Heather Bancroft. Heather is a Clinical Psychologist who has been involved in CISM since the mid eighties. Currently she is in private practice where she provides training, de-

briefing and post traumatic stress counselling for individuals and organizations. In addition, she is Clinical Director of the Victorian Ambulance Crisis Counselling Unit, a role which involves her in overseeing the 24 hour crisis counselling service and Peer Support service for the Metropolitan Ambulance Service and Rural Ambulance Service.

Ms. Filomena Bua. Filomena is a psychologist with a prior background in nursing. Filomena's experience includes private practice, secondary consultation, group facilitation and teaching. She has specialized within the trauma management and response field over the last 7 years and currently works exclusively in this capacity. She is currently Peer Support Co-

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New CISMFA Trainers (Cont).

Ordinator for the Western Health Network and Staff Psychologist for the adult services of the Salvation Army.

Ms. Christine Ellingworth. Christine is a Senior Psychologist and currently Co-Ordinator for Critical Incident Response Team, Access Programs (Centacare Catholic Family Services). Access Programs is a national EAP in Melbourne and is predominately involved in providing assistance to staff in the health, welfare and education areas in Melbourne. She has been involved in CISM for the past 3 years within a variety of organizations.

Ms. Jo Field. Jo is a U.K. trained Social Worker/Psychiatric Social Worker with 30 years experience, especially in the area of trauma. The Birmingham Pub Bombings was amongst her first experiences. She is employed part time as Staff Counsellor for Cairns District Health Services. She also has a private practice providing therapeutic, training, CISM and EAP services throughout Far North and North

Queensland and Papua New Guinea. She works with peer support programs from emergency services and is President of ACISA Queensland Division and Chairperson for Far North Queensland Critical Incident Stress Team.

Ms. Kim Groves. Kim is the principal psychologist for Darwin Consultant Psychologists. She has been conducting trauma counselling for the private sector, and government organizations across the Northern Territory, for the past seven years through the provision of EAP and consulting psychology service. The practice provides a full range of services for the treatment of adult clinical disorders, as well as assessments in the area of forensic psychology and psychogerontology.

Mr. Jeff Halmarick. Jeff is a Senior Sergeant with Victoria Police and is currently the Peer Support Co-Ordinator. He has a keen interest in peer support and has actively developed the program in Victoria Police since taking on the position, including development of peer training. He has been associated with CISMFA through his participation on the 2004 planning conference committee.

PASTORAL CARE AND RECOVERY CONFERENCE

Tuesday 28th September to Wednesday 29th September 2004

The chaplaincy role in response to disasters and critical incidents (traumatic events) can be an important contributor in community and individual recovery. The conference provides an opportunity for both practitioners, and new chaplains, to explore best practice and establish support networks. The conference program includes: Rev Dr Geoffrey Glasscock (Anglicare NSW) on "Managing the whole person in the aftermath of trauma". Rev Dr Rowland Croucher (John Mark Ministries) on "Caring for yourself to care for others". Chaplains from the 2003 Canberra Bushfire, the Thredbo landslide, and other events. Specialists from other fields to speak on liaison and community cooperation.

- Early bird" registration, before 1st July 2004 is \$203.50 (inc GST), registration after 1 July 2004 is \$220.00. *Registration includes program, conference package, m/tea and lunch for both days.*
- For more information or to request a pamphlet call Karen Ott 62914300 or write to CONFERENCE, ACT CISM, Calwell Community Centre, PO Box 22, Calwell ACT 2905.

Our New CISM Trainers are:

- *Ms Alexina Baldini*
- *Ms Heather Bancroft*
- *Ms. Filomena Bua*
- *Ms Christine Ellingworth*
- *Ms Jo Field*
- *Ms Kim Groves*
- *Mr Jeff Halmarick*
- *Mr Rod Kershaw*
- *Mr Cliff Pinkard*
- *Dr Rosemarie Stynes*
- *Mas Nyanna Wati Ahmad*



New CISMFA Trainers (Cont).

Mr. Rod Kershaw. Rod is the Manager of the CISM Program with South Australian Ambulance Service and has been with the ambulance service for 34 years. He has a Graduate Diploma in Social Science (Counselling). Positions within the ambulance service include Paramedic, Communications Supervisor, Station Officer, Regional Training Officer, Regional Officer and District Manager. Awards include "Award for Excellence" from Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation Australia in 2002.

Mr. Cliff Pinkard. Cliff was an operational Ambulance Officer for the South Australian Ambulance Service for 11 years and in the Ambulance Operations Support Area for 14 years. Currently he is second in charge of their peer support program and staff officer dealing in legal and financial issues. He is also a trainer – Certificate IV managing personal stress in the workplace involving student Ambulance Offices and their induction.

Dr. Rosemarie Stynes. Rosemarie is a Clinical Psychologist who has

worked as one of the first crisis counsellors for the Victorian Ambulance Crisis Counselling Unit since 1986. She also does debriefing and supervision work for other organizations such as the Victorian AIDS council and has worked in private practice since 1983. She has worked for many years at Bouverie Child and Adolescent Centre and has an interest in training programs for health professionals.

Mas Nynna Wati Ahmad. Nynna Wati Ahmad started the Malaysia Airlines Peer Support Group in 2003. Malaysia Airlines Flight Operations peer support group handles operational incidents or accidents in the workplace and during the emergency operations e.g. turbulences and disruptive passengers. During emergency operations the peer support group also provides a stress management service to volunteers and staff involved with the emergency operation. She believes that the biggest challenge is to provide the best intervention at the right time.

Reflections

*Life is
change.*

*Growth is
optional.*

*Choose
wisely.*



*Ten courses
were conducted
between 1st
April 2004 and
30th June 2004.*

*This included
nine CISM Basic
Courses and one
CISM Advanced
Course.*

CISMFA Courses April — June 2004

There were ten courses recorded for this quarter including 9 CISM Basic Courses and 1 CISM Advanced Course.

This included courses for South Australia Ambulance Service, Victoria State Emergency Service, Queensland Firecare, Bayside Health Services Queensland, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne.