



# NEW MEXICO CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Secretary  
Alisha Tafoya Lucero

CD-031300 Critical Incident Stress Debriefing	Issued: 02/26/94 Effective: 02/26/94	Reviewed: 09/11/23 Revised: 02/23/15
Alisha Tafoya Lucero, Cabinet Secretary		

## AUTHORITY:

NMSA 1978, Section 33-1-6, as amended.

## REFERENCE:

- A. ACA Standard 5-ACI-3B-16, *Performance Based Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institutions*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.
- B. ACA Standard 4-APPFS-3G-04, *Standards for Adult Probation and Parole Field Services*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

## PURPOSE:

Establish a process by which professional intervention may be obtained after major incidents to minimize stress-related reactions of Corrections Department personnel.

## APPLICABILITY:

New Mexico Corrections Department employees.

## FORMS:

**Critical Incident Debriefing form (CD-031301.1)**

## DEFINITIONS:

- A. *Serious/Critical Incident (Institutional)*: Any incident which threatens to or results in, serious physical harm to any person, or the security of the institution, including extensive property damage that could result in an escape or serious injury.
- B. *Serious/Critical Incident (Probation/Parole)*: Any incident which threatens to or results in, serious physical harm to any person, any gang related incidents, and/or serious Criminal offenses that may have an adverse affect on the public (e.g. Murder or sex related crimes). [4-APPFS-3G-04]
- C. *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)*: A process of therapeutic discussion, counseling, and follow-up designed to reduce stress-related reactions to unusually distressing sights, sounds, and/or events.

- D. *New Mexico Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team*: A private, non-profit corporation made up of volunteer team members including mental health and other departmental staff who are CISD certified and who operate under the auspices of the Public Health Division of the New Mexico Department of Health.

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## **POLICY:**

The New Mexico Corrections Department will make available therapeutic discussion, counseling, and follow-up to minimize stress-related reactions of Corrections Department personnel to unusually distressing sights, sounds, and/or events through the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing process. **[4-APPFS-3G-04]**

- A. The debriefing process shall include coordination and feedback about the incident with a designated staff of the facility as soon as possible after the incident. A debriefing includes, but is not limited to: **[5-ACI-3B-16]**
- A review of staff and offender actions during the incident;
  - A review of the incident's impact on staff and offenders;
  - A review of corrective actions taken and still needed; and,
  - Plans for improvement to avoid another incident.



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Alisha Tafoya Lucero, Cabinet Secretary		<i>Original Signed and Kept on File</i>

## AUTHORITY:

Policy *CD-031300*

## PROCEDURES: [4-APPFS-3G-04]

### A. Managing the Incident:

1. Any incident that causes personnel unusually strong emotional reactions may qualify for "Critical Incident Stress Debriefing." The following are examples of incidents that may be selected for debriefing:
  - a. Serious injury or death of a Corrections Department staff member;
  - b. Sexual assault of a Corrections Department staff member or inmate;
  - c. Mass casualty incidents;
  - d. Suicide of Corrections Department staff member;
  - e. Serious injury, attempted suicide, death of an inmate by suicide or other causes;
  - f. Violent altercation, riot, or hostage situation;
  - g. Loss of life to a patient following extraordinary and prolonged expenditure of physical and emotional energy by Corrections Department personnel;
  - h. Incidents at New Mexico correctional facilities that attract unusual or critical news media coverage;
  - i. An incident in which the circumstances were so unusual or the sights and sounds so distressing as to produce a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction.
2. Minimizing personnel exposure to these stressful incidents results in fewer stress-related problems. Supervisors should reduce this exposure by rotating personnel and by removing initial response personnel from the immediate scene, and temporarily reassigning them to less stressful operations, as soon as possible.

3. All personnel directly involved in high-stress incidents should be considered a high priority for immediate, temporary reassignment/removal from the scene. Temporary relief from duty for these personnel also may be a consideration.
4. On-site evaluation and defusing by a New Mexico CISD Team member should also be considered for some critical incidents, when time and circumstances permit. In such situations, debriefing team members can watch for acute reactions, provide support, encouragement, consultation, and be available to help personnel deal with stress reactions. CISD Team members should be considered a resource available to supervisors.

## **B. Activation of the Debriefing Procedure:**

1. Supervisors bear the responsibility for identifying/recognizing significant incidents that may qualify for debriefing. When an incident identified as a "critical incident" occurs, a request for debriefing consideration should be made, as soon as possible.
2. Requests shall be channeled to an approving authority (e.g. Warden, Probation Parole Region Manager or Division Director). The approving authority or designee shall evaluate the type of debriefing to be requested and initiate a debriefing process using the **Critical Incident Debriefing** form (*CD-031301.1*).

A debriefing shall include, but is not limited to: **[5-ACI-3B-16]**

- A review of staff and offender actions during the incident;
  - A review of the incident's impact on staff and offenders;
  - A review of corrective action taken and still needed; and,
  - Plans for improvement to avoid another incident.
3. Several types of debriefing may be conducted depending upon the circumstances of a particular incident. They may be conducted on an individual one-on-one basis or, more typically, in small groups of not more than 25 members; but may vary in size according to the incident. The following five types of debriefings, singularly or in combination, are most commonly used:
    - a. On-Scene or Near-Scene Debriefing: On-site evaluation and counseling by a debriefing team member (trained mental health professional also should be considered for some critical incidents, when time and circumstances permit). In such situations, debriefing team members may watch for acute reactions, provide support, encouragement, consultation, and be available to help personnel deal with stress reactions.
    - b. Initial Defusing: Conducted shortly after the incident. Primarily informational, it consists of a status report of the incident. A brief review of stress-related symptoms will be provided by a CISD Team member.

- c. Formal Debriefing Meeting: Usually conducted within 72 hours of the incident. Confidential, non-evaluative discussion of involvement, thoughts, and feelings resulting from the incident. Discussion of possible stress-related symptoms and methods to reduce these symptoms also occur in the formal debriefing process.
- d. Follow-Up Debriefing: Conducted weeks or months after the incident. Concerned with delayed or prolonged stress symptoms. It may be done informally.

A two-week follow-up debriefing shall occur to review the validity and appropriateness of all policies, plans, and information used during the critical incident and immediately after. **[5-ACI-3B-16]**

- e. Individual Consultations: Available at any time, as needed. One-on-one counseling for any concerns related to the incident.
4. Upon determination by the approving authority or designee as to the type of CISD to be requested, the approving authority or designee shall call the CISD Team 24-hour emergency number, 505-827-9384, to schedule the debriefing. CISD Team members are dispatched statewide from this number.
  5. When calling the CISD Team to request a debriefing, the following information should be provided:
    - a. Title and name of the person calling;
    - b. Location and contact telephone number;
    - c. Brief description of incident and number of people to be debriefed;
    - d. Any special considerations.
  6. CISD is not a critique of the Corrections Department operations at the incident. Performance issues will not be discussed during the debriefing, nor will rank be considered during the debriefing. The debriefing process provides a group format in which personnel can discuss their feelings and reactions and, thus, reduce the stress resulting from exposure to critical incidents. All debriefings will be strictly confidential.
  7. All critical incidents shall be reviewed by the administration, security, and health officials. **[5-ACI-3B-16]**
  8. Attendance at a debriefing generally should be required for all personnel who were directly exposed to the traumatic aspects of an incident selected for debriefing; however, participation at the debriefing is optional. Exceptions to mandatory attendance may be granted following assessment by the debriefing team. All Corrections Department personnel required to attend a debriefing will remain in pay status during the initial debriefing process.

9. Debriefings may be conducted anywhere that provides ample space, privacy, and freedom from distractions and interruptions.
10. Additionally, mandatory counseling may be made in the form of a management referral through the employee assistance program if the employee refuses treatment and a supervisor sees visible signs that the employee has had a negative reaction to the incident.

### **C. Mandatory Management Referrals**

1. In addition to mandatory counseling in accordance with Paragraph B.10 of this policy, management reserves the right to refer an employee for mandatory counseling if there is a reasonable belief that the employee's behavior, conduct, actions, statements, etc., could be a threat to themselves, others or the security of the facility.
2. If an employee is referred for mandatory counseling, the employee will be advised as to the reason for such referral.

An employee who refuses to comply with a mandatory referral to EAP, or fails to attend the counseling may be disciplined, up to and including dismissal.

**NEW MEXICO CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT**  
**Critical Incident Debriefing**

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of inmate(s) involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of staff member(s) involved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Coordination and feedback about the incident were conducted with the following designated staff on \_\_\_\_\_ (as soon as possible after the incident):

	Name(s):		
Warden	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Deputy Warden(s)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Chief of Security	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Shift Supervisor(s)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Health Services	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Mental Health	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

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1. Review of staff and offender actions during the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Review of the incident's impact on staff and offenders: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Review of corrective actions taken and still needed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Plans for improvement to avoid another incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_