

supervisor tools

Critical Incident Debriefings



What Is A Critical Incident?

Critical incidents are defined as situations that have caused severe stress to employees and may have disrupted work productivity or may affect future productivity if not addressed. Examples of critical incidents include unexpected deaths of coworkers, multi-casualty injuries due to accidents or disasters and complicated cases that have bad outcomes.

What Is A Debriefing?

A debriefing is a meeting where all participants involved in the event or situation are invited to attend. A professional facilitator helps the group focus on the facts of the incident and the subsequent thoughts and emotions of those in attendance. Support and reassurance is shared. Information is also provided about helpful stress reduction activities.

Participation is not mandatory. Confidentiality is one of the ground rules. These debriefings are not critiques of the incident or of the workers. Support is offered, but not therapy. If individuals need additional support or help, they will be referred to other resources.

Why Should We Have Critical Incident Debriefings?

Research has clearly demonstrated the value of debriefing. It allows people to verbalize their distress, validate underlying feelings and understand normal responses to traumas. Ultimately, it helps them work through the trauma and avoid emotional scarring. Other goals can be to provide reassurance, education about the recovery process and share information about other support services in the community.

If We Have An Incident, What Should We Do?

Employees should let their manager know as soon as possible that a critical incident has occurred. The manager will contact Intermountain Employee Assistance Program at 801-442-3509 any time of the day. A debriefing will be scheduled on site quickly at a time that is most convenient to the staffs that were involved. Debriefings can occur as often as critical incidents happen.

