



Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

ICAO APAC AIG workshop – 27 August 2024

Task-1

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Objectives

Provide an understanding of:

- mental health and wellbeing
- the importance of mental health and wellbeing strategies for transport safety investigators
- how to respond to potentially traumatic events and critical incidents
- how to recognise and respond to early signs of stress.

What is CISM?



Understanding CISM



Education



Debriefing



Tools and resources



Social and organisational
support



Understanding PTEs

A PTE is an event involving actual or threatened death or serious injury.



CISM for Investigations



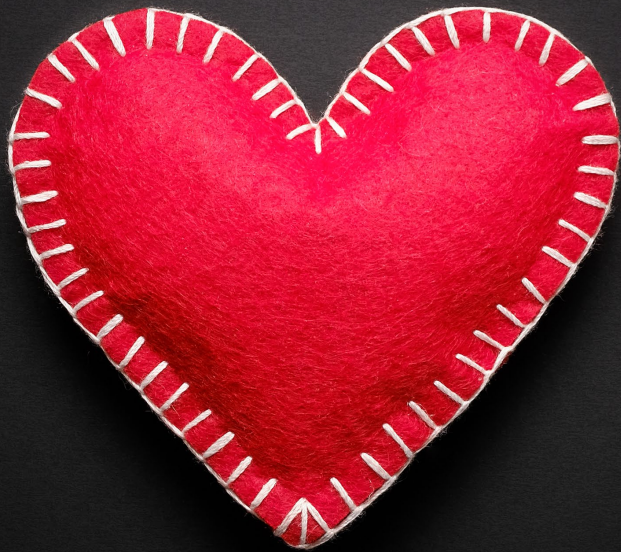
Investigators have a foreseeable and predictable risk of being exposed to accident sites involving horrific injury and death



Question

What is mental health and wellbeing?

Understanding mental health and wellbeing



Active

Responsible

Connected

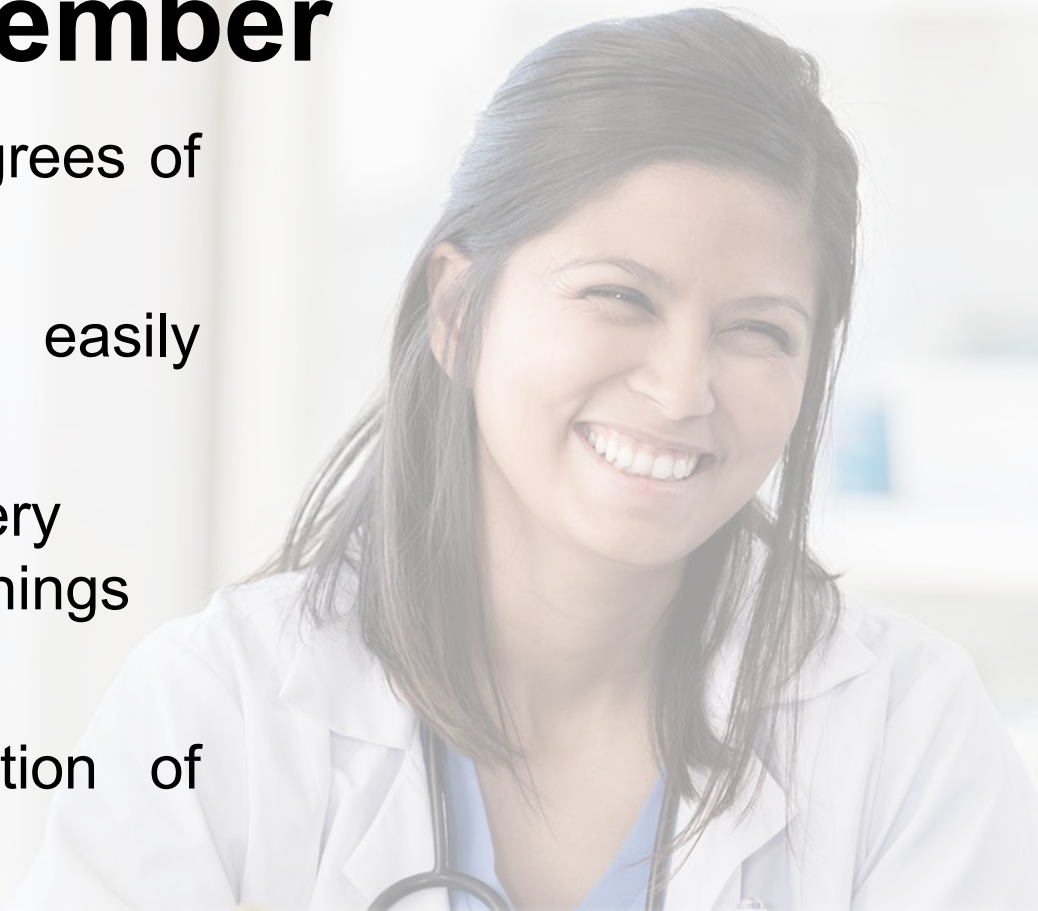
Resilient

Respected

Aware

Things to remember

- We all have varying degrees of health
- Some of us are more easily injured than others
- We have different recovery times and find different things effective
- Injury is not a reflection of failure





Question
What is resilience?

Building Resilience

Make connections

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable

Accept change is part of living

Move towards goals

Take decisive actions

Look for opportunities for self-discovery

Nurture positive view of self

Keep things in perspective

Maintain a hopeful outlook

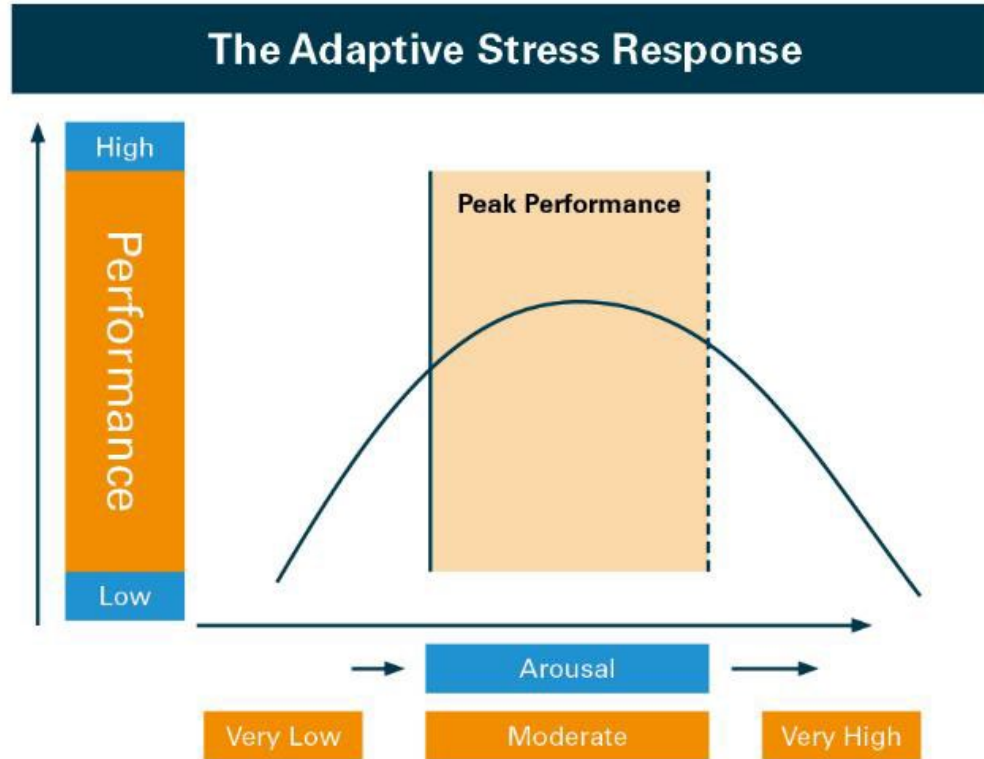
Take care of yourself

Understanding stress

- Physical or emotional strain
- Cause by events that put pressure on our coping resources.
- Stress responses can be adaptive or maladaptive.
- The body's stress-response system is normally self-regulating.
- Chronic stress risks health problems.



When does a stressor lead to stress?



Common stress reactions

- Trouble concentrating
- Indecisiveness
- Recurring thoughts or images
- Disturbing dreams, memories or flashbacks
- Easily startled by noise
- Feeling detached
- Loss of interest in normal activities



Understanding anxiety

Natural and usually short-lived

Feel worried or nervous

New, unfamiliar or challenging situations

Can become chronic and interrupt daily life

Severe and persistent anxiety may be an anxiety disorder.

Anxiety disorders = most common mental health disorder

Causes of anxiety



GENES



THINKING
STYLE



COPING
STRATEGIES



STRESSFUL
LIFE EVENTS

Disorders associated with traumatic stress

- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Acute stress disorder
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Alcohol and other drug abuse

Factors influencing outcomes

PRE-EVENT

EVENT RELATED

POST-EVENT



**What are some
exposure risk factors
for investigators and
other transport
safety personnel?**



Potentially traumatic events



Sites

Photos and other
media

Personal
connections

Interacting with
people

- Next of kin
- Operators

Potential risks: On site



Prepare for what to expect

Consider all five senses

Impact of repeat exposure

Environmental stress

Personal connection to events

Potential Risks: Interacting with people

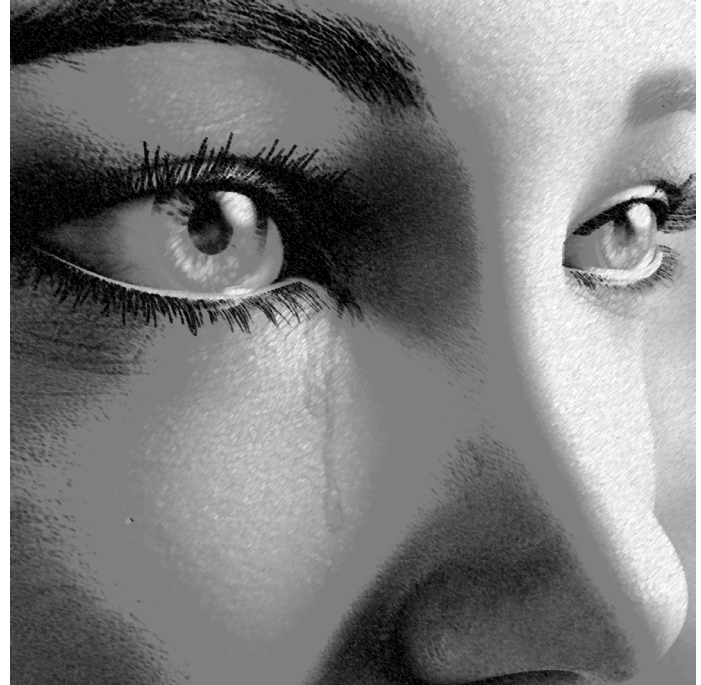


- Who might you need to interact with?
- What might make those interactions potentially traumatic events?

Interacting with Next of Kin

The investigator needs to understand:

- Responding to grief reactions
- Maintaining the relationship
- Recognising your limitations



Examples of grief responses



- Emotional responses
- Cognitive changes
- Physical and behavioural responses
- Spiritual or philosophical views

Grieving process

Grief is not a linear process and does not follow a specific timeline or schedule.



Don't

Do

Try to fix it

Be supportive

Be directive

Acknowledge feelings

Try to rationalise/explain loss

Admit can't make it better

Be judgemental

Recognise the loss

Minimise the loss

**Be respectful of religious / spiritual beliefs
that don't match your own**

Put a timeline on the loss

**Check for safety, and allow for changes in
time if a person is very distressed**

Share some tips from your experience



What are some things that you could do to make it easier when interacting with next of kin, colleagues or bereaved?

Operational stress



There are other significant sources of stress in the job, the impact of which may be different, but not necessarily less.



When the stress level exceeds our coping ability, signs of strain emerge

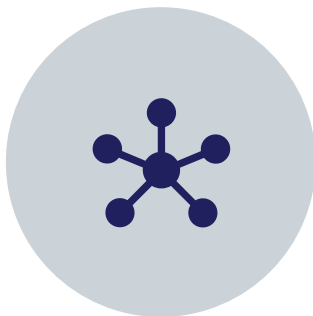


This can lead to changes in emotional wellbeing, thinking, body and behaviour

Work environment stressors



JOB DESIGN



CONNECTEDNESS



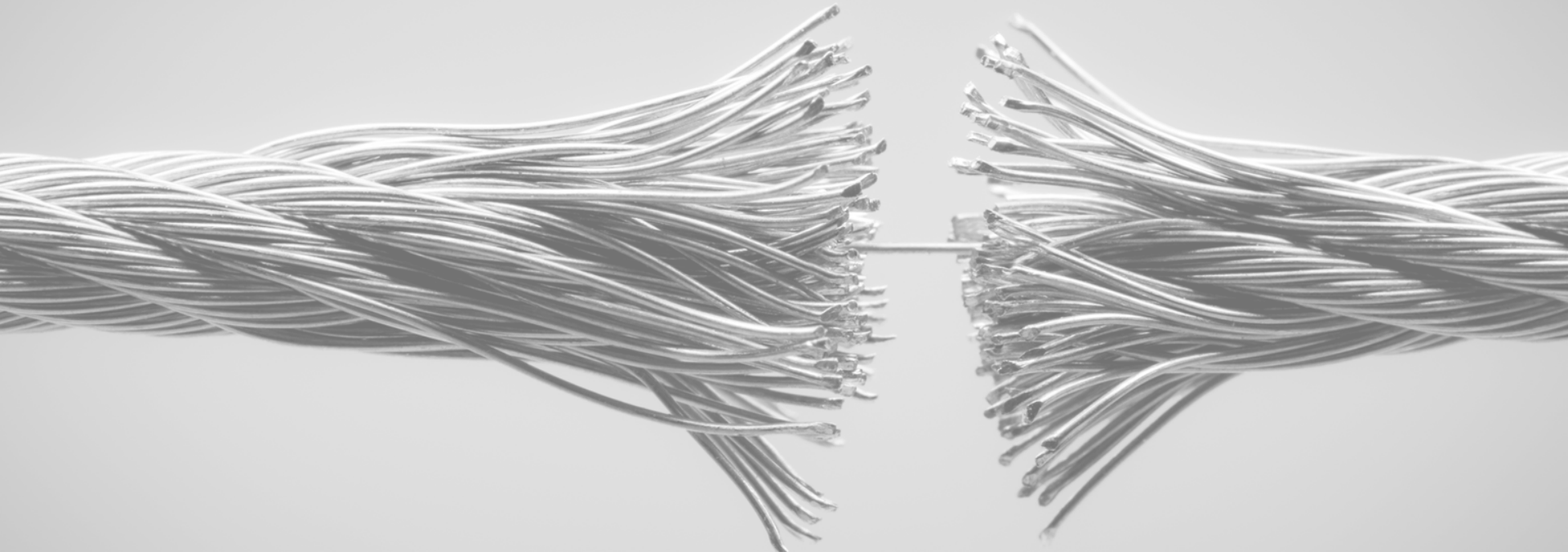
MENTAL
STRESSORS

Compassion fatigue



- Can develop when commonly exposed to ongoing suffering
- Can result in reduced capacity to bear the suffering of others
- May be described as “too tired to care”

What to look out for



Indicators of stress and anxiety

- Difficulty concentrating
- Restlessness
- Rapid heartbeat
- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling light-headed or faint
- Numbness or nausea
- Sweating
- Avoidance



What can you do?



Pillars of Support

Self care /
resilience

Peer support

Workplace
support

Community
support /
healthcare

Arousal reduction



Physical techniques

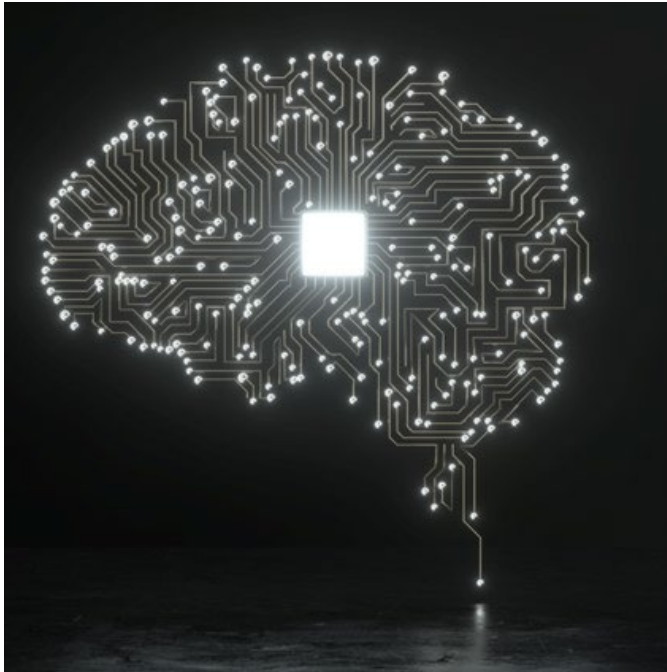


**Controlled
breathing**



**Progressive
muscle relaxation**

Cognitive techniques



Thought stopping



Distraction

Psychological First Aid



- Ensuring safety
- Promoting calm
- Promoting connectedness
- Promoting self-efficacy and group efficacy
- Instilling hope

Peer support



Peer support: Things to look out for



Withdraws, isolates themselves, or seems quieter than usual

Appears distressed

Is agitated or irritable

Is having difficulty managing the work workload

Is more argumentative, aggressive or gets into conflicts

Is confused, unusually forgetful or has trouble concentrating

Is behaving in a way that is out of character

The CISM Toolkit

Common
Reactions &
Coping Strategies

Trauma Screening
Questionnaire

Investigator
Personal Plan

Psychological
First Aid Checklist

Controlled
Breathing

Suggestions for
Self-Care

Questions?