



# CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

## A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

Your EAP program provides a range of services for you and your employees.

One of these is responding to critical incidents in your workplace with a range of interventions to support management and employees.

The services available from EASA through the employee assistance program aim to mitigate the impact of the critical incident and accelerate the normal recovery process of employees.

All people react differently and a critical incident is usually defined as a challenging event with the likelihood to create significant human distress. It is the reactions of individuals that make the incident critical not necessarily the size of the incident.

### What is a critical incident?

Critical incidents in your workplace may include:

- Loss of life of an employee in a workplace accident
- Significant events involving children
- Prolonged events especially with the threat of the loss of life
- Events that create significant media interest
- Any incident that is significant to individuals or a group of individuals.

### What can happen?

- There can be a tendency to blame others for what has happened
- There may also be concerns in the workplace about what should and shouldn't happen
- There will be different and sometimes conflicting expectations.

### What you can do?

- Be part of the solution not the problem
- Call your EASA counsellor for advice
- Find somewhere for people to go and get away from the sights, smells and sounds of the incident
- Provide food and non alcoholic beverages in an area where people can go.
- Have information about the incident available to answer questions and reduce rumours
- Keep details of next of kin and how to contact them during emergencies.

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICES AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**

[www.easa.net.au](http://www.easa.net.au) • [help@easa.net.au](mailto:help@easa.net.au) • PO Box 2077 Greenhills NSW 2323  
Ph 0407 918 998 • Emergency 0407 111 003 • For life threatening emergencies call 000



### What we need from you?

- Phone call - as soon as you think the incident will impact on anyone in the workplace.
- Somewhere where people can go that is quiet and they can feel safe.
- A separate room to hold any small group interventions and discussions
- Information about how many people are involved and any specific information
- How long ago did it happen?
- What happened?
- Do you know how it happened?
- Have the emergency organisations been contacted?
- Do the media know?
- How many people are involved?
- Are there children involved?
- Extenuating circumstances – suicide or acts of malice.

## **TYPES OF ASSISTANCE**

### PROACTIVE WORKPLACE VISITS

EASA counsellors are available to talk to you about critical incident stress to gain a better understanding of critical incident stress and how to manage it. Serious problems that may be built up over time may be reduced when information and support is provided early and you have understanding on how to manage the effects of critical incident stress. Where possible, the EASA representative may be present on-scene to provide immediate support and initial assistance to any distressed members while the critical incident is occurring.

### GROUP INTERVENTIONS

#### *Immediate Small Group Support*

These are typically held within the first 24 hours after a critical incident and aim to help reduce stress and tension and promote a return to normal functioning. These are also provided to help prepare employees and management advice on how to seek further assistance if required and to allow initial ventilation of reactions and for their wellbeing to be checked.

#### *Powerful Event Group Support*

These are typically held from 48 hours and up to 3 weeks after a critical incident. Aiming to help employees and management understand and manage reactions and accelerating the normal recovery process. Emphasis is placed on helping to mitigate distress, build resiliency and set appropriate expectations and identify healthy coping strategies.

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### ONE ON ONE SUPPORT AND FOLLOW UP

One on one assistance can be requested by anyone wanting individual support at any time. This allows for individual attention and can be provided over the phone or in person. You can seek assistance for anyone and you will be asked if you have their permission before they are contacted or how you can support them.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is maintained regarding the support that is provided in the Program. No information regarding individuals, personal reactions, feelings, problems or behaviour is recorded or disclosed, unless required by law, to sustain life or it is the expressed wish and with the consent of the individual concerned.

### INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Further Information about the services available from EASA can be obtained by contacting:

**0407 1111 003 or 0407 918 998**