



Great Lakes Critical Incident Stress Management Team

Letter of Introduction

Dear Community Member,

The Great Lakes CISM Team has been serving communities in Bay and Arenac counties for three years. This letter of introduction is intended to communicate the presence and availability of the Great Lakes CISM Team to provide critical incident stress management (CISM) services in the event of a critical incident in the community. CISM services are available for individuals, as well as small and large groups. Services are available upon request 24 hours a day and can be provided within hours or days of a critical incident.

Critical incidents are unanticipated crisis events which can overwhelm a person emotionally or physically. A few examples of critical incidents are natural disaster, death or suicide of a co-worker, plant closing or downsizing, and robbery. Negative effects of a critical incident can significantly alter a person's perspective in life and inhibit their ability to cope with daily activities if left unattended. Physical symptoms following exposure to a critical incident can include fatigue, nausea, headaches, and thirst, whereas emotional symptoms could present as anxiety, guilt, grief, denial, fear, emotional shock, intense anger, or irritability. Still other symptoms could present cognitively, behaviorally, or spiritually.

The goal of CISM services is to mitigate the impact of an individual's or group's exposure to a critical incident by focusing on individual or group response to the crisis event. Secondly, CISM services help to facilitate normal recovery processes in normal people who are having normal reactions to abnormal events. Lastly, CISM services are intended to restore adaptive functioning following a period of extreme emotional distress.

To determine if CISM services are needed in the event of a critical incident, community members are encouraged to contact the Bay-Arenac Behavioral Health 24/7 Hotline at 989-895-2300 or 800-327-4693. A Bay-Arenac Behavioral Health Emergency Services Worker will collect some basic information and then contact the Team Coordinator for Great Lakes CISM Team for follow-up.

If your agency or organization would be interested in learning more about CISM services, please contact Michael Swank, Team Coordinator to request a brief presentation. Michael can be reached at 989-891-3675 or by e-mail at mSwank1955@charter.net. A electronic copy of our team brochure has been attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Swank, Team Coordinator
Great Lakes CISM Team