

Australian Capital Territory

Corrections Management (Critical Incident Debriefing) Policy 2007*

Notifiable instrument NI2007-449

made under the

Corrections Management Act 2007, section 14(1) (Corrections policies and operating procedures)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Corrections Management (Critical Incident Debriefing) Policy 2007*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after it is notified.

3 Policies and operating procedures

Under section 14 of the *Corrections Management Act 2007* (the Act), I make the

CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEFING POLICY

in Schedule 1 to this instrument, to facilitate the effective and efficient management of correctional services.

James Ryan
Executive Director
ACT Corrective Services
17 December 2007

*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60



Belconnen Remand Centre (BRC)
Symonston Temporary Remand Centre (STRC)
Court Transport Unit (CTU)
Symonston Periodic Detention Centre (PDC)



CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEFING POLICY

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Purpose

- To detail the range of critical incidents, which may occur in the correctional environment and potentially impact on a Correctional Officer's emotional and physical well-being.
- To ensure that Correctional Officers in the correctional centres receive appropriate assistance following exposure to a critical incident.

Authority

Legislation

Public Sector Management Act 1994

Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989

Policy

1 Principles

1.1 Responsibilities

- 1.1.1 Under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, public service employees are to be provided with safe and healthy working conditions.
- 1.1.2 Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989*, ACTCS is required to take all reasonable practicable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees.
- 1.1.3 Correctional Officers have a duty of care to the public and prisoners. Providing an environment within all correctional centres that is safe and secure discharges this duty of care.
- 1.1.3.1 ACTCS recognises that Correctional Officers may be exposed to unique situations by virtue of the nature of their work.

2 Critical incidents

- 2.1 A critical incident is any situation that occurs in a correctional centre or in the course of a Correctional Officer's duties that causes an individual to experience strong emotional or physical reactions.
- 2.1.1 These reactions may affect a person either during, soon after an incident, or may be experienced some time following the conclusion of an incident but can be directly attributed to it.
- 2.1.2 The range of situations, which may be classified as critical incidents in the correctional centre, includes:
- hostage/siege situation;
 - riots;
 - assaults to a Correctional Officer;
 - fighting a serious fire;
 - discharging a firearm;
 - serious threat made to a Correctional Officer;
 - discovering a deceased person;
 - discovering a grievously injured person;
 - witnessing or discovering a person involved in serious self-harm;
 - needle-stick injuries;
 - exposure to blood and/or body fluids;
 - administering first aid; or
 - any other incident identified as a critical incident by the Chief, Deputy Superintendent, or Superintendent.
- 2.1.3 The range of critical incidents outlined above is not exhaustive, and reasonable judgment shall be exercised in determining whether an incident is a critical incident.
- 2.1.4 Assistance after a critical incident in a correctional centre shall be provided to all staff that may have been exposed to a critical incident. This includes Correctional Officers, non-correctional staff, and authorised visitors on the premises.
- 2.2 It must be noted that individuals will experience individualised reactions to events.
- 2.2.1 No person will be discriminated against, or otherwise made to feel uncomfortable, because of their reaction to an event.
- 2.2.2 An individual may react acutely to an event that may not elicit a reaction in another person. A person may be adversely impacted by an event whether they have witnessed it or not.
- 2.2.3 All individuals who experience adverse reactions to something they have experienced at work or because of their employment

will be encouraged to seek the assistance of a Peer Support Officer or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

3 Critical Incident Stress De-briefing

- 3.1 Critical Incident Stress De-briefing (CISD) is a confidential discussion about the critical incident with the Correctional Officers. It incorporates discussion of personal reactions to an incident and is conducted by an Employment Assistance Program (EAP)¹ Psychologist.
- 3.2 Non-Correctional staff and authorised visitors who have witnessed an event will be invited to the Correctional Officer CISD as appropriate. Where this does not occur they will be encouraged to participate in their own CISD.
- 3.3 CISD is an immediate crisis intervention and educational process. It is not intended to be a substitute for psychotherapy. It is therefore important to recognise that CISD is part of a package of a wide range of interventions including access to the EAP's individual counselling and ACTCS's trained Peer Support staff.
 - 3.3.1 Any subsequent individual counselling is voluntary and entirely confidential.
- 3.4 If staff are injured during the incident, medical care will be sought immediately after the incident. CISD will then take place shortly afterwards.
- 3.5 The CISD is not an operational debrief. An operational debrief discussing the operational response to a situation will occur separately.

Related policies and procedures

Peer Support Policy

Incident Response Policy

Incident Response Procedure

Code Red: Fire

Code Blue: Officer being assaulted

Code Brown: Hostage incident

Code Grey: Prisoner disturbance/riot

Code Purple: Prisoners fighting/prisoner assaulted

Code Black: Death

¹ ACTCS has contracted Davidson Trahaire Corpsych to provide the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This external provider offers Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) as well as individual counselling.