When Crisis Comes to Your Workplace or Community

Keystone Crisis Intervention Team
2015 Criminal Justice Advisory Board Conference
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Trainer

- Angela Keen Badjie
  - KCIT Certified Trainer
  - KCIT Team Member since 2005
  - Supervisor of Direct Services, Survivors, Inc. Gettysburg, PA
  - Victims’ Services Professional with 17 years experience
Objectives

Attendees will be able to:

- Identify and access resources available in the aftermath of a critical incident
- Describe the physical, emotional and behavioral crisis reactions of staff in the aftermath of a critical incident
- Describe how trauma responses can impact the workplace and/or community
KCIT Mission Statement

KCIT empowers local communities to support crime victims in their recovery from traumatic incidents by assessing the impact of the event on the community; developing an intervention plan; and providing crisis intervention by trained volunteer teams.
Keystone Crisis Intervention Team

- Responding to communities in the aftermath of criminal incidents since 2000
- 24 hour Hotline: 1-855-SOS-KCIT
- www.kcitpa.org
Criminal Incidents can include:

- Acts of terrorism
- Crimes affecting children (i.e. school shootings)
- Workplace shootings
- Arson
- Homicide
- Domestic Violence Related Homicide
- Robbery
Levels of Intervention

- Technical Assistance
- Needs Assessment
- Intervention Plan Development
- Individual and Group Crisis Intervention
- Training and Capacity Building
KCIT Services

- Assistance in connecting with local crisis services
- Assessment of impact of trauma
- Individual and group crisis interventions
- Emotional support for planned events
- Companioning
- Crisis training for local providers
Requesting KCIT Services

- Call the 24 hour hotline: 1-855-SOS-KCIT (767-5248)

- Requests should be made by an individual with authority to request intervention services.
Trauma

“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”

-Judith Herman,

Trauma and Recovery, 1993
Trauma

Individual Trauma:

A “blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such force that one cannot respond effectively.”

- Kai Erickson, In the Wake of a Flood, 1979

Collective Trauma:

A “blow to the tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together.”

- Kai Erickson, In the Wake of a Flood, 1979
Trauma is any event that leaves a person feeling hopeless, helpless, fearing for their life and/or their safety.
Fluctuating Equilibrium

Normal Stress

Eu-stress

Distress
Impact of Trauma on Equilibrium
Sensory Path in the Non-Traumatized Brain

Cortex- Neo Cortex

Thalamus

Amygdala
Hippocampus
Sensory Path in the Traumatized Brain

Cortex - Neo Cortex

Amygdala
Hippocampus

Thalamus
During a Traumatic Event

The pathways between the right and left brain experience a disconnect.

- Right Brain
  - Memory
  - Sensory
  - Affect Regulation

- Left Brain
  - Making Sense
  - Problem Solving
  - Decision Making
  - Language
  - Impulse Control
Remember...

- Trauma is a sensory experience

- It is not cognitive!
Fight, Flight, or Freeze?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39i89NJCnRQ
## Crisis Reactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL</th>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
<th>BEHAVIORAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frozen Fright</td>
<td>Shock – Disbelief – Denial</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbness</td>
<td>Can’t believe this is</td>
<td>Inability to move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer in the Headlights</td>
<td>happening</td>
<td>Inability to make decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorientation</td>
<td>Feeling helpless</td>
<td>Staring into space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Inability to speak</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of control</td>
<td>Time slows or stops</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Problem communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>thoughts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unresponsive to others</td>
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## Crisis Reactions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fight, Flight or Adapt</td>
<td>Cataclysm of Emotions</td>
<td>Ready to Fight or Run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart rate increases</td>
<td>Not Linear – Mixed</td>
<td>Survival behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senses more acute</td>
<td>Fear/Terror</td>
<td>Decisions not moral or values based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrenalin rush</td>
<td>Anger/Rage</td>
<td>Regression in some learned behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urination</td>
<td>Confusion/Frustration</td>
<td>Somatic complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defecation</td>
<td>Guilt/Self Blame</td>
<td>Poor problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regurgitation</td>
<td>Grief/Sorrow</td>
<td>Overly sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunnel vision</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional outbursts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muffled hearing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disassociation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomic System takes over</td>
<td></td>
<td>Controlling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of appetite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exaggerated startle response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crisis Reactions

**PHYSICAL**

*Exhaustion*

Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow

Past-Present-Future

Exhaustion sets in
Creating more adrenalin
Under activity

**EMOTIONAL**

*Reconstruction*

Time begins anew as they start life after the traumatic event

Possible long term reactions
Anxiety
Depression
Numbing
Less trusting
Disassociation

**BEHAVIORAL**

*Surviving or Coping*

Getting back to a new state of equilibrium

Insomnia
Irritability
Poor problem solving
Drug or Alcohol
Eating disturbance
Sexual dysfunction
Obsessive Compulsive Behaviors
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- Basic Survival Needs
- Safety and Security
- Cognitive Functioning
- Love and Belonging
- Self-esteem
- Self Actualization
Loss of Equilibrium in Trauma

Adaptive Capacities

- Basic Survival
- Safety & Security
- Cognitive Functioning
- Love and Belonging
- Self-esteem & Meaning
- Self-actualization

Stressors

- Self-actualization
- Love and Belonging
- Self-esteem & Meaning
- Safety & Security
- Basic Survival
Stressors: Good and Bad

Sure, I can multitask. I can keep these balls in the air for hours on end. I'm just not sure what'll happen when I need to take a break!
Adaptive Capacities

• Physical health
• Emotional health
• Cognitive abilities
• Education/ experiences
• Financial means
• Spiritual connection
• Self-esteem
Maintaining Equilibrium

Adaptive Capacities

- Basic Survival needs
- Safety & Security
- Cognitive Functioning
- Love and Belonging
- Self-esteem & Meaning
- Self-Actualization

Stressors
Dimensions of Trauma

- The impact of trauma is no different whether actual or perceived
- Potential for reoccurrence
- Extent of social disruption
- Potential of recurrence
- Magnitude of number of people affected
- Extent of community harm
Impact of Exposure to Trauma

- **Highest Exposure**
  - Witnessing death
  - Actual injury
  - Survival by freak circumstance
  - Threat to life
  - Panic, loss of control
  - Duration of exposure/media exposure
  - Safe by chance
  - Awareness of traumatic event

- **Lowest Exposure**
Proximity Effects

Risk of long-term crisis reactions

Community at Large

Immediate neighbors

Eyewitnesses and rescuers

Victims (injured, dead, loved ones)
Goals of Crisis Intervention

- To lower emotional arousal so that cognitive process can take place
- To reduce stress and to build adaptive capacities
- To assist in establishing a narrative of the event
- To assist individuals with interpreting the event in order to derive and create meaning
- To help individuals in the integration of traumatic events into their “life story”
Basics of Crisis Intervention

- Establish sense of safety
- Promote a sense of control
- Assist victims establish a linear narrative
  - Past
  - Present
  - Future
- Normalize common crisis reactions
- Provide possible solutions to practical issues
- Inform victims of local resources
- Identify coping strategies
Elements of Crisis Intervention

- Safety and Security
- Ventilation and Validation
- Prediction and Preparedness

Applies to individuals, programs/agencies and communities
Safety and Security

• Safety - “physical” issue:
  • Physical safety and medical needs
  • Survival needs (food, clothing, sleep, etc.)

• Security - “emotional’ issue:
  • Privacy
  • Confidentiality
  • Need for information and communication
  • Sense of control
Establish Safety & Security

• Ensure the workplace is safe for staff
• Provide factual information in a timely manner
• Quiet rooms/spaces
• Flexible/alternate staff schedules
• Designate support people
• On-going staff check-ins to assess their needs/concerns
• Facilitate connection
Ventilation and Validation

- Ventilation - identifying appropriate words to express experiences, reactions, responses
  - Compassionate presence
  - Speaking style
  - Effective words and listening style

- Validation - helps survivors understand that most reactions are not uncommon
  - Content specific
  - Reflective listening
  - Careful choice of words
Establish Opportunities for Ventilation & Validation

- Slow down
- Just being there or having someone there
- Provide opportunities for staff to talk about the incident
- Normalize common crisis responses
- Provide education about crisis reactions
- It’s about them and their experience
Prediction and Preparation

• Prediction - Identify future practical issues and concerns
  • What happens next?
  • Problems in next few days/months
  • Concrete information

• Preparation - Problem solve and plan practical solutions
  • Provide information
  • Answer practical concerns
  • Referrals
Establish Prediction & Preparation

- Impact on family and community
- Employment and financial concerns
- Criminal Justice System
- Identify coping strategies
- Long term stress reactions
- Provide information about local counseling resources
- Schedule regular supervision times
- Model self care
- Instill hope
Signs of Trauma Reactions in the Workplace

• How does trauma impact staff in the workplace?
  • What signs/symptoms might present?
• How does trauma impact Agency function?
  • What signs/symptoms might present?
• What does it look like when staff are overwhelmed?
• How does the work day look different during times of stress?
Assessment Tool

• Injuries/Fatalities/Witnesses/Groups
• Cultural Considerations
• Spiritual Issues
• Sensorial Issues
• Typology
• Conceptual Issues
• Duration Issues
• Proximity Issues
• Convergence Issues
Possible Pitfalls Following a Critical Incident

• Assuming staff will respond in a prescribed or uniform manner
• Assuming staff will re-establish equilibrium in the same time frame
• Avoidance of addressing emotional impact on staff
More Pitfalls

- Just “not dealing with it”
- Discounting the “trauma history” of staff individually or collectively
- Discounting the impact of the cumulative stress from everyday job responsibilities
- Assuming supervisors are “handling it”
A Crisis Response Plan is Vital

- Decision making and communication during and after a critical incident
- Decrease additional trauma
- Available resources: short- and long-term
- Increase on-the-job productivity and decrease down time
- Liability issues
Do’s & Don’t’s

• Communication

• Crisis Intervention

• Staff Support

• Operations
Community cohesion is the most important asset during recovery after a critical incident.
Resiliency & Coping

Resiliency:

A person’s inherent capacity to moderate and recover from a traumatic experience.
Resiliency & Coping

Coping:

When a person constantly changes cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific extern/internal demands that are taxing or exceeding the resources of that individual.
Resiliency & Coping

Biological Vulnerabilities

+ Perceived Stressors

– Coping

= Severity of Impact
Resiliency & Coping

Motivation

Permission

Education

Courage

Hope
Resiliency & Coping

• When faced with a problem, people:
  • Define the problem
  • Try to solve the problem
  • Try to live with the problem
  • Try to hide from the problem
  • Quit trying all together
Resources

- Keystone Crisis Intervention Team [www.kcitpa.org](http://www.kcitpa.org)
- Office of Victims of Crime [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov)
- Holly Hart Consulting [www.hollyhartconsulting.com](http://www.hollyhartconsulting.com)
- Psychological First Aid [www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid](http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid)
- OMHSAS, A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professions
- USDOJ, FBI, Office for Victim Assistance, Crisis Response Training Manual
Contact Information
Michelle Kern, KCIT Project Coordinator
Network of Victim Assistance
2370 York Road, Suite B-1
Jamison, PA 18929
215-343-6543
michelle@novabucks.org
www.kcitpa.org