

ECCISM Defusing, Delayed Stress Mitigation, & Disaster Stress Management Guide

Defusing

Defusing – Typically peer led; usually occur within 24-hrs of the critical event. Defusing seem simple in concept; however, they can be difficult in practice or application. A defusing is often powerful for the participants and peers.

Preparation:

Before the Defusing:

- Meet with/introductions of ECCISMA Peers
 - Review the below reminders before allowing participants in
- Gather info from designated person who **was not** involved in the critical event - who, what, when, where, what, politics of the situation
- Set up room – place chairs in a circle and disburse tissue boxes
- Select seats - team members spaced out to easily see one another
- Assign roles (*described below*)
- Allow participants to enter the room

****Reminders for ECCISM Peers**

- During a Defusing, we are peers and are not there in an official capacity
- There are no written records
- Team members have a responsibility to keep everyone safe during the meeting; Will redirect if needed (*monopolizing, over – disclosure, disrespect*)
- Participants should be off-duty
- Request one to two people from requesting organization, and who was not involved in the event, to make sure that people who were not involved does not join the group and help with those that may leave the meeting unattended
- Team will assign roles before the defusing begins (escort if participant leaves; 1:1, who stands/mingles and who sits upon conclusion, etc.)
- If a participant reports suicidal or homicidal thoughts, immanent suicide/homicide threats (not fleeting) must be reported to appropriate authorities
 - A team member will stay with the individual to determine whether the threat is immanent, and the individuals has a plan and the means to carry out the plan.
 - Call the local police department (Be prepared to furnish the person's full name, location and the person's cell phone number, if possible).
 - Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) and encourage the individual to speak with a crisis counselor.

Defusing:

Introduction:

- Introduction of team with names
- State reason for meeting/Defusing
- Introduction of participants with name and organization (excludes media and individuals who were not involved in event)
- **Explain the following guidelines and expectations to participants:**
 - Cannot guarantee confidentiality but participants are asked to have mutual respect for each other's privacy

ECCISM Defusing, Delayed Stress Mitigation, & Disaster Stress Management Guide

- Does everyone agree to respect everyone's privacy?
- Immanent suicide/homicide threats must be reported to appropriate authorities
- Team members have a responsibility to keep everyone safe during the meeting; Will redirect if needed (*monopolizing, over – disclosure, disrespect*)
- Everyone is provided an opportunity to speak
- Please speak for yourself (avoid speaking on behalf of peer or the group)
- Likewise, no one must speak other than to tell their name and organization- have to do that to make sure they belong to the group
 - Is everyone supposed to be here? Were at the scene? Not a reporter, family member, etc.?
- No written, audio or video recordings allowed
- No breaks during the Defusing; No one should leave the meeting unattended
- Turn off all devices, radios, pagers; Participants should not be working or on devices during the process.
- Not a critique or investigation
- Designed for individuals bound by a common experience
 - All personnel are equal; there is no rank during the Defusing

Defusing Questions:

- What did you notice with your five senses (touch, smell, sight, hearing, taste)?
- What was a thought, not feeling, that you had?
- What was an emotion or feeling, not a thought, that you experienced?

ECCISM Defusing, Delayed Stress Mitigation, & Disaster Stress Management Guide

Delayed Stress Management/Mitigation (DSM)

Delayed Stress Management/Mitigation (DSM) (*also known as debriefing*) - Peer led discussion; typically one to two weeks after incident; Mental Health as lead, when applicable

Delayed Stress Management/Mitigation (DSM) Stages:

Performing (*Pre-DSM*):

- Meet with/introductions of ECCISMA Peers and Team members
 - Review the below reminders before allowing participants in
- Gather info from designated person who **was not** involved in the critical event - who, what, when, where, what, politics of the situation
- Set up room – place chairs in a circle and disburse tissue boxes
- Select seats - team members spaced out to easily see one another
- Assign roles (*described below*)
- Allow participants to enter the room

****Reminders for ECCISM Peers/Team**

- In DSM we are peers and are not there in an official capacity
- There are no written records
- Team members have a responsibility to keep everyone safe during the meeting; Will redirect if needed (*monopolizing, over – disclosure, disrespect*)
- Participants should be off-duty
- Request one to two people from requesting organization and who was not involved in the event make sure that people who were not involved does not join the group and help with those that may leave the meeting unattended
- Mental Health typically takes the “lead” role; however, that is flexible based on experience
- Team will assign roles before DSM begins (escort if participant leaves; 1:1, who stands/mingles and who sits upon conclusion, etc.)
- If a participant reports suicidal or homicidal thoughts, immanent suicide/homicide threats (not fleeting) must be reported to appropriate authorities
 - A team member will stay with the individual to determine whether the threat is immanent, and the individuals has a plan and the means to carry out the plan.
 - Call the local police department (Be prepared to furnish the person’s full name, location and the person’s cell phone number, if possible).
 - Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) and encourage the individual to speak with a crisis counselor

ECCISM Defusing, Delayed Stress Mitigation, & Disaster Stress Management Guide

Norming (*Introduction*):

- Introduction of team with names
- State reason for meeting
- Introduction of participants with name and organization (excludes media and individuals who were not involved in event)
- **Explain the following guidelines and expectations to participants:**
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 - Does everyone agree to respect everyone's privacy?
 - Immanent suicide/homicide threats must be reported to appropriate authorities
 - Team members have a responsibility to keep everyone safe during the meeting; Will redirect if needed (*monopolizing, over – disclosure, disrespect*)
 - Everyone is provided an opportunity to speak
 - Please speak for yourself (avoid speaking on behalf of peer or the group)
 - Likewise, no one has to speak other than to tell their name and organization- have to do that to make sure they belong to the group
 - Is everyone supposed to be here? Were at the scene? Not a reporter, family member, etc.?
 - No written, audio or video recordings allowed
 - No breaks during the DSM; No one should leave the meeting unattended
 - Turn off all devices, radios, pagers; Participants should not be working or on devices during the process.
 - Not a critique or investigation
 - Designed for individuals bound by a common experience
 - All personnel are equal; there is no rank during the DSM

Storming (*Fact Phase, Thoughts, Reactions and Symptoms Led by Team/Team Lead*):

- Ask about incident and each person's experience:
 - Who are you? What was your job or responsibility?
 - Sensory Memories
 - What happened?
 - Thoughts during and after event
 - What was your first thought when you had time away or had a break?
 - Behaviors during and after event
 - What did you experience at the scene? The next day? The next week? Currently?
 - Cognitive or mental
 - Physical
 - Behaviorally

Performing (*Fact Phase, Thoughts, Reactions and Symptoms Led by Team/Team Lead*):

- Participants enhance each other's stories
- Mutual support; Encourage to speak for self
- Be ok with silence; Team lead will move process forward
- Active listening by team members

ECCISM Defusing, Delayed Stress Mitigation, & Disaster Stress Management Guide

Restoring (*Re-Entry*):

- Provide educational info. based on problems described in session
 - Stress management
 - Stages of Grief
 - Expected reactions (Acute Stress vs PTSD)
- Ask for questions and comments (“As we get close to the end...” allow for an opportunity for anyone who has held back or has anything else to say.)
 - Does anyone have any questions or have a need for clarification?
 - Does anyone have any statements to add? Would anyone like to share anything additional?
 - Does anyone have anything else to say?
- Review what has taken place during the session
- Inform participants that team members will be available upon conclusion

End session (*Post*):

- Inform participants that support is available if they find that they need to talk in a few hours, days, weeks, months
- Some member stands up (*officially ends session, and talks with people who may need a private conversation*) and some member remains seated (*for people with questions/ concerns to be able to come to for help*)
- Inform participants of handouts or brochures, if applicable

ECCISM Defusing, Delayed Stress Mitigation, & Disaster Stress Management Guide

Disaster Stress Management/Response

Preparation: Complete FEMA Trainings: ISC-100, ICS-200, ICS-700

Considerations:

- During the first three days of Disaster Response, stay out of the way.
- Do not ask, “How are you feeling.”
 - Disaster responders enjoy disaster work are fine early on during the response
 - First responders in disaster response are the people in the local community, not emergency responders.
 - Disasters can bring out the best in people during the first seven to 10 days
 - After seven to 14 days, some interpersonal issues could arise, in which responders will be more emotionally vulnerable due to the fatigue of chronic stress; thus, normalizing responses is important.
 - The biggest conflict in disasters is not with the responders and workers but with the politics of disaster response
- Most of disaster stress management is done after the disaster responders’ shift at restaurants and bars.
 - Senior management needs to support and endorse disaster stress management to assist buy in from response workers
- **Disaster Stress Management is similar to the “water boy” role: hang around near the kitchen, offer water, be where the people are, over several days (vs several hours for a Defusing or DSM).**
 - Wipe off tables, sweep floors, scrub tables, take out trash
 - Be of service to the organization
 - If individuals want to talk, they will. Be there to support/listen as/if needed
 - Have access to workers to be supportive and have general conversations
 - Disaster Stress Management workers need to be calm and offer support in a meaningful manner

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- **Unlike a Defusing or DSM, Disaster Stress Management is not about a crisis, but long-term, cumulative stress**
- Create orientation signs and place the signs near a clock. The signs should be updated daily and include:
 - “This is mm/dd/yyyy”
 - “The x Day”
 - By day three of cumulative stress, time perception slows down.
- Document the hours that have been worked during Disaster Stress Management since reimbursement might be available via the Federal Government