Risk Management: The Traumatic Aftermath

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The Traumatic Aftermath

What are your processes and protocols for addressing the traumatic impact on clients, staff and responders (including YOU) in the aftermath of a critical incident?
Trauma

“I did live in Washington for a time and learned that a lack of knowledge about a subject is no impediment to talking about it.”

Neil Armstrong
Goal

This training is designed to give participants tools for effective engagement of traumatized people.
Victim Relations

A deliberate and equipped engagement process that builds mutually beneficial relationships amidst organizations (and individuals) with those who may or have experienced trauma, loss and/or harm.
Objectives of this workshop

Reinforce that—

**Trust** matters:
Show benevolence and competence

**Awareness** is required:
Learn two diagnostic tools

**Protocol** is expected:
Use three mitigation techniques

**Self Care** is essential:
Implement three behaviors

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Trust Matters: Trust, Respect and Affection

The extent to which I believe you care (Benevolence)

(Affection)  Trust

(Distrust)   (Respect)

The extent to which I believe you are capable (Competence)

Low ← Aptitude → High

Low ← Benevolence ↑ High

Awareness is Required

Something is traumatic because it is...

Unexpected, out of control

Beyond one’s capacity to respond

Could not be prevented
Awareness is Required

- Trauma for victims is commonly related to loss and perception of potential loss (e.g., near miss)
- Timely response to victims recognizes cohesion to an incident and/or cohesion to a loss
- Effective processes for victims affirm control and cohesion (where possible)
Awareness is Required

Two diagnostic tools:

Control and Cohesion
Awareness: Control [dis]Continuity

Loss of Financial Control  Loss of Physical Control  Loss of Life Control  Loss of Emotional Control  Loss of Innocence Control

Key: We cannot fully discern for others the impact of their particular loss(es).
Awareness: Cohesion Grouping

Key: ALL responders are in a Cohesion Group.
Protocol is Expected
Three mitigation techniques:

Promote Safety and Security*

Facilitate Ventilation and Validation*

Provide Prediction and Preparation*

Five Essential Elements: 1) a sense of safety, 2) calming, 3) a sense of self- and community efficacy, 4) connectedness, and 5) hope.
Examples of what NOT to do!

1) Sense of safety: “At least you’re not dead.”
2) Calming: “Just calm down!”
3) Self- and community efficacy: “Just think about the less fortunate.”
4) Connectedness: “You’ve got a lot of friends.”
5) Hope: “Things will get better.”
Promote Safety and Security

Using cohesion groupings (where possible)—

Discuss/Provide Safety **needs**: Basics

Recognize Security **perceptions**: We tend to believe what we perceive.
Facilitate Ventilation & Validation

Using cohesion groupings (where possible)—

Promote permission to express **reactions** and **concerns**—appropriate **facts** (NOT a ‘debrief’)

“What were/are your **reactions** to this situation?”

**Never**: “How do you feel?” or “How are you feeling?”

Acknowledge reactions as common—nearly all are!

“This is a **common** reaction to an uncommon situation (i.e., it is new to the person).”
Provide Prediction & Preparation

Using cohesion groupings (where possible)—

A common question after a trauma:  
*What will happen next?*

Inquire about the immediate **future**

Ask: “What kinds of things do you think will be helpful in the future?”

Educate on **resources** (do you have a list?)
Self Care is Essential

What is Self Care?

- Monitoring your exposure to trauma
- Taking action to mitigate impact of exposure

How many trauma Radiation Absorbed Doses can you absorb, Risk Manager?
Essential Self Care Behaviors

**Insulating** Behaviors-keep out

**Purifying** Behaviors-take out!

**Endurance** Behaviors-stay out!

ENDURANCE
Self Care: **Insulating Behaviors**

Immediately *prior* to exposure

- Incremental goals (e.g., “I’ll follow my checklist.”)
- Mental rehearsal (e.g., “I’ve prepared for this.”)
- Positive Self-talk (e.g., “I **CAN** do this.”)
- Controlled breathing (e.g., “Take deep breathes.”)

*Seal Team candidate research*
Self Care: **Purifying Behaviors**

Immediately *following* exposure

- Safety: Order your little kingdom
- Security: Comforting sights, sounds & smells
- Ventilation: Acknowledge challenges
- Validation: Review the good work
- Prediction: Engage humor/express emotion
- Preparation: Transition to off-duty
Self Care: **Endurance Behaviors**

- Safety: Physical and emotional rest AND activity
- Security: Limit exposures to essential trauma only
- Ventilation: Humor, laughter and emotional expression
- Validation: Relational, spiritual & emotional connections
- Prediction: Training and education
- Preparation: Training, education & evaluation
Where’s the fit?

What’s your crisis management *aftermath* plan?

**Trust:** Benevolence and competence?

**Awareness:** Diagnostic tools?

**Protocol:** Competent mitigation techniques?

**Self Care:** Healthy behaviors?
Thank you!

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