Navigating Critical Incident Stress

Support Strategies Before, During, and After the Event

Presented for NOLS WRMC – October 2026

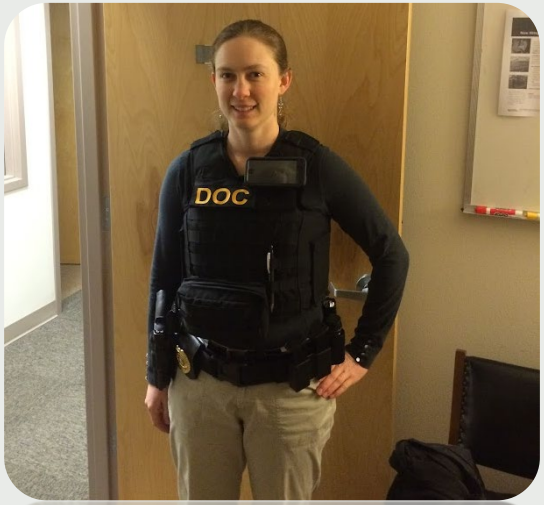
By Katja (Hurt) Linacre

Because three of my bosses said so:

The perspectives shared here are my personal views and should not be interpreted as representing the stance of any agency, organization, or employer.





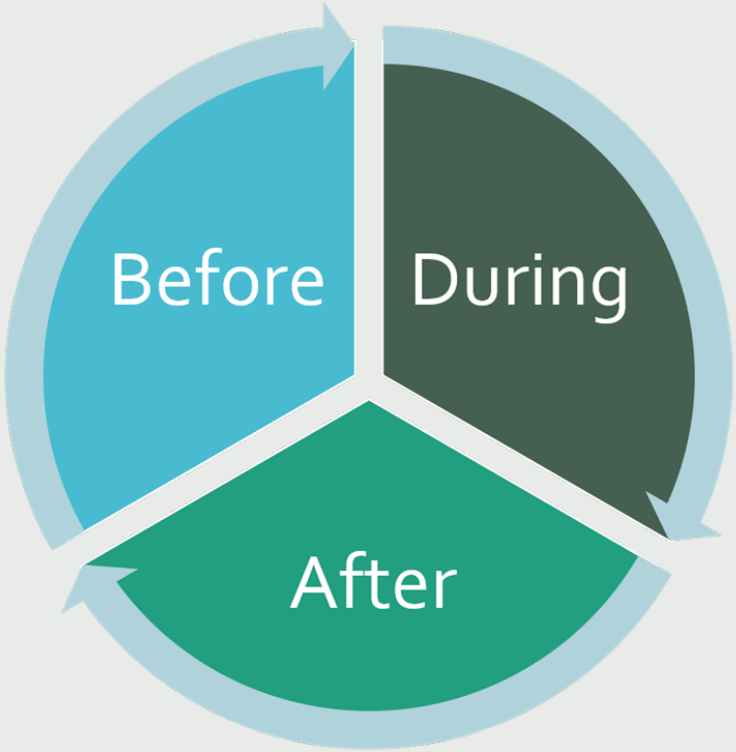


CISM is a body of work/knowledge, not a single program.

There is no single solution.

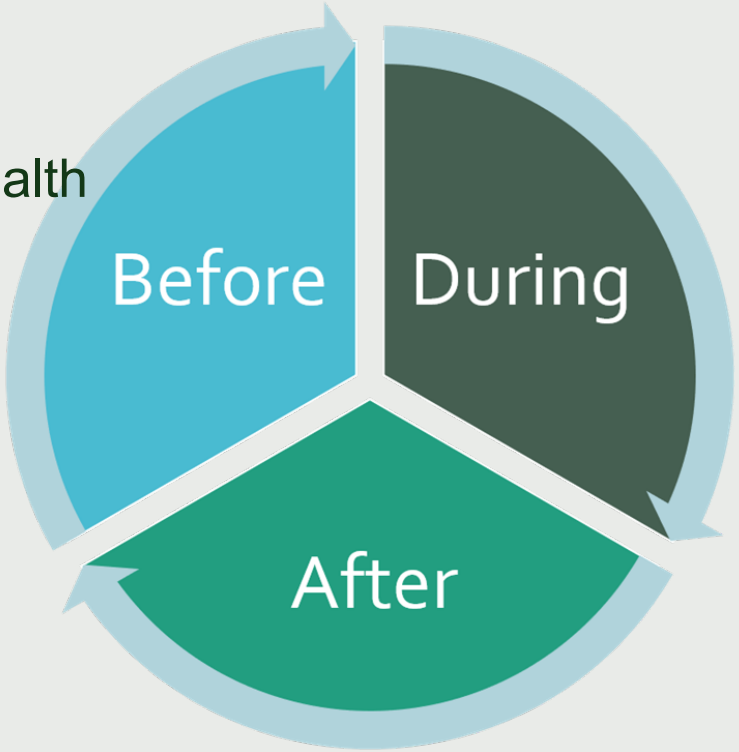


Managing Incident Stress



Managing Incident Stress

Stress Immunity
Resilience, Battery Health
& Green Practices



Stress Immunity



Realistic Expectations

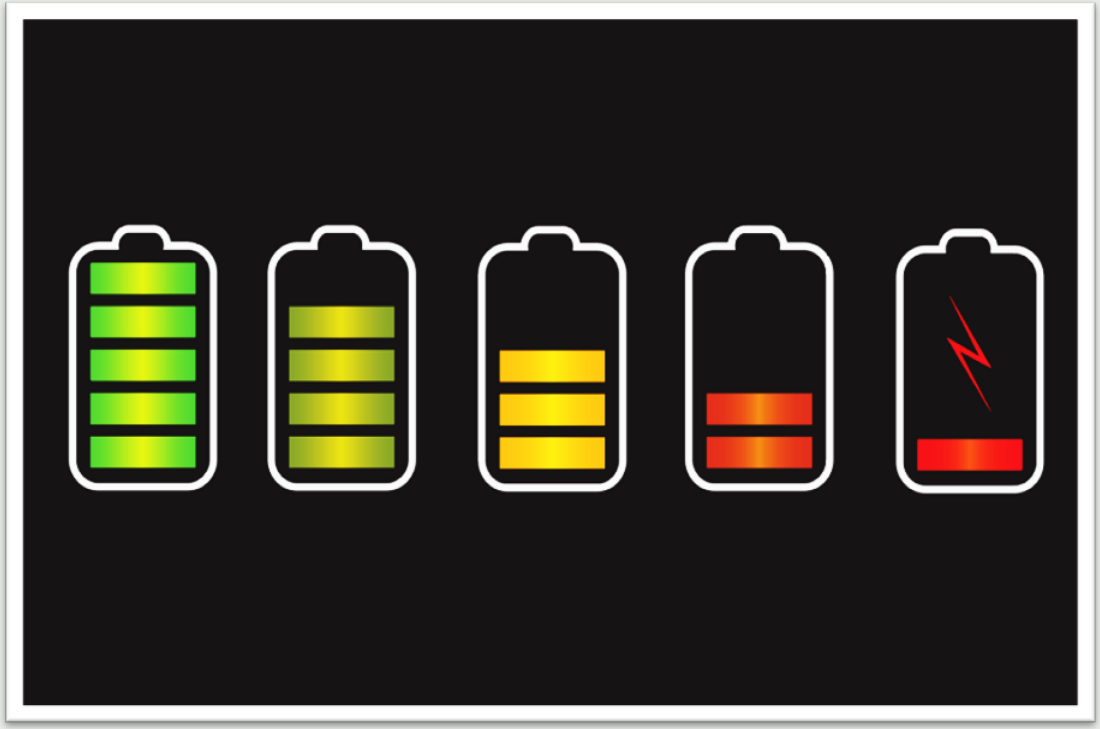
Active Optimism (Hope)

Rehearsal → Overlearning

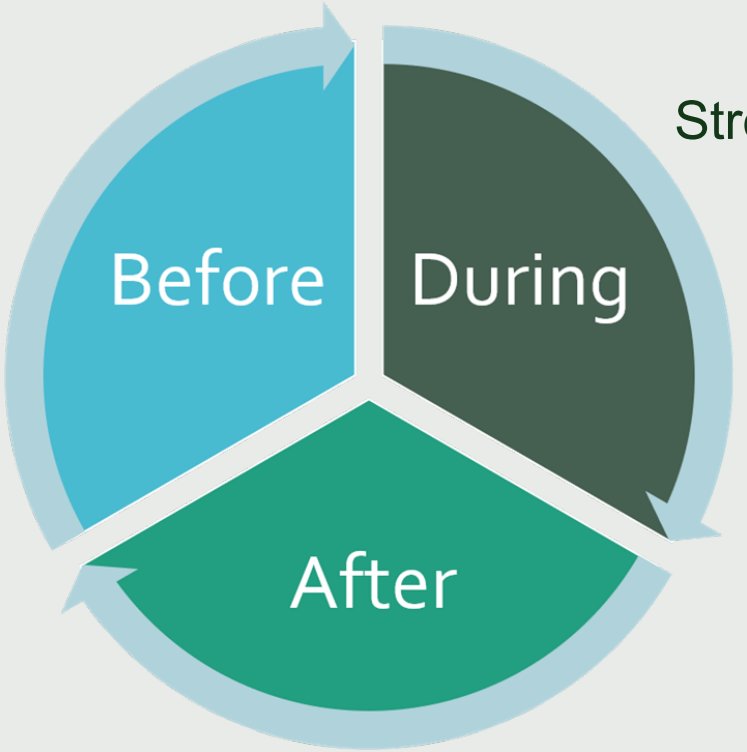
Reappraisal

Adapted from “Psychological Body Armor” and the book Stronger by Everly, Strouse, and McCormack (2017)

Resilience & Green Practices



Managing Incident Stress



Crisis Response
Stress Injury Continuum
“Other” First Aids

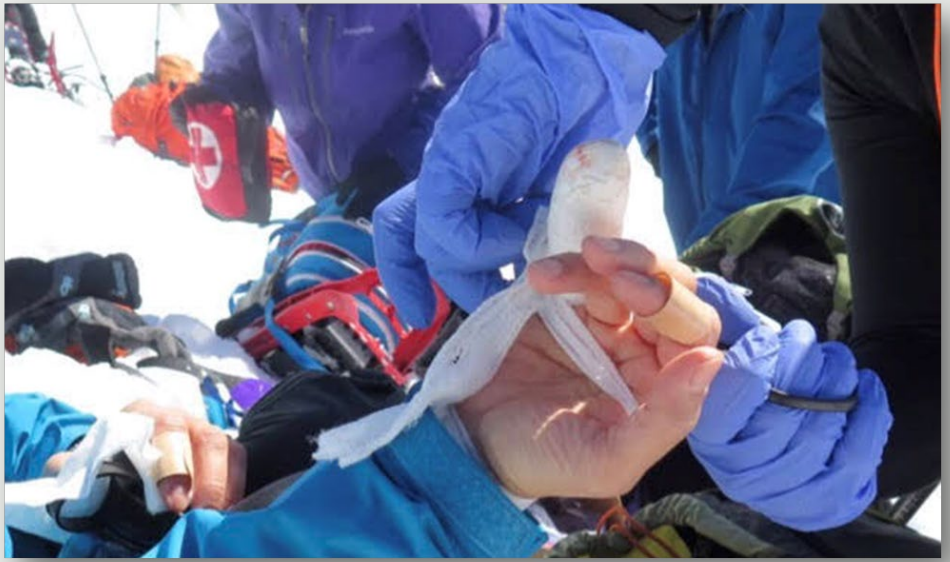
Defusing
Debriefing

What is a Crisis?

"A **crisis** is a temporary state of upset and disorganization, characterized chiefly by an individual's inability to cope with a particular situation using customary methods of problem solving."

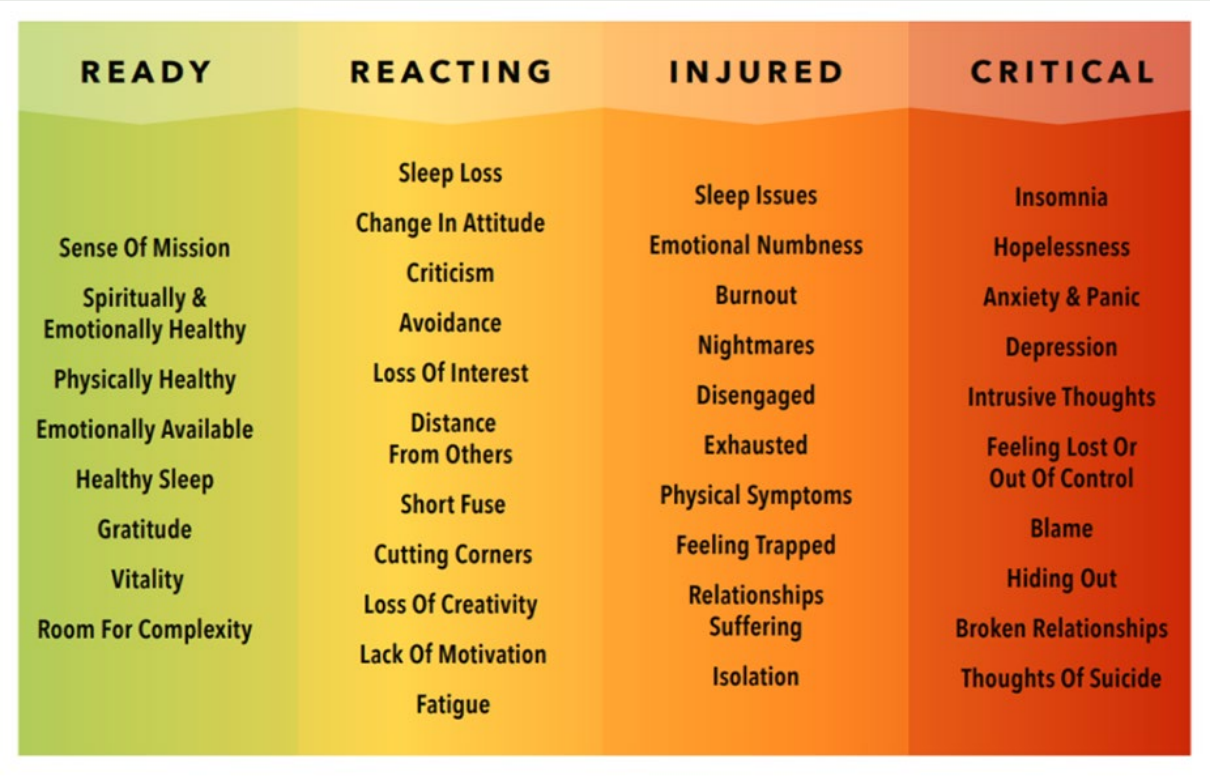
- Gerard Caplan (1964)

Context/Perspective





Stress Injury Continuum



“Other” First Aids

Emotional First Aid / Mental Health First Aid / Psychological First Aid

“A **crisis** is a temporary state of upset and disorganization, characterized chiefly by an individual's inability to cope with a particular situation using customary methods of problem solving.”



Restore and/or increase a person’s ability to cope

Category	Primary Focus	When Used	Key Actions / Features
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)	Mental illness signs, crisis triage	Developing or worsening mental health concerns	ALGEE: assess, listen, reassure, encourage help
Psychological First Aid (PFA)	Disaster-related distress	Immediately after traumatic events	Look, Listen, Link; safety and stabilization
Psychological First Response (PFR)	Acute psychological distress	Sudden emotional overwhelm, panic, shock	Grounding, calm presence, brief support, resource connection
Emotional CPR (eCPR)	Emotional crisis connection	Emotional shutdown or overwhelm	Connect, Empower, Revitalize
Stress First Aid (SFA)	Stress injury prevention	Ongoing stress, high-risk settings	Check, Coordinate, Cover, Calm, Connect, Competence, Confidence
Conflict First Aid	Social/relationship well-being	Interpersonal conflict	Relational stabilization and recovery

Stabilize

Connect and Listen

Problem Solve, Plan, and Give Hope

Transition & Care

Tips from a Chaplain

Avoid intruding but do initiate contact.

Accept the response you get from the person.

Be interested in the person, not just the situation.

Be cautious about offering advice.

Use honesty with kindness.

Sometimes being present is enough.

Defusing & Debriefing

Facilitators of Critical Incident Stress Debriefings (CISD) should have credentials and knowledge of Defusings as well as Debriefings.



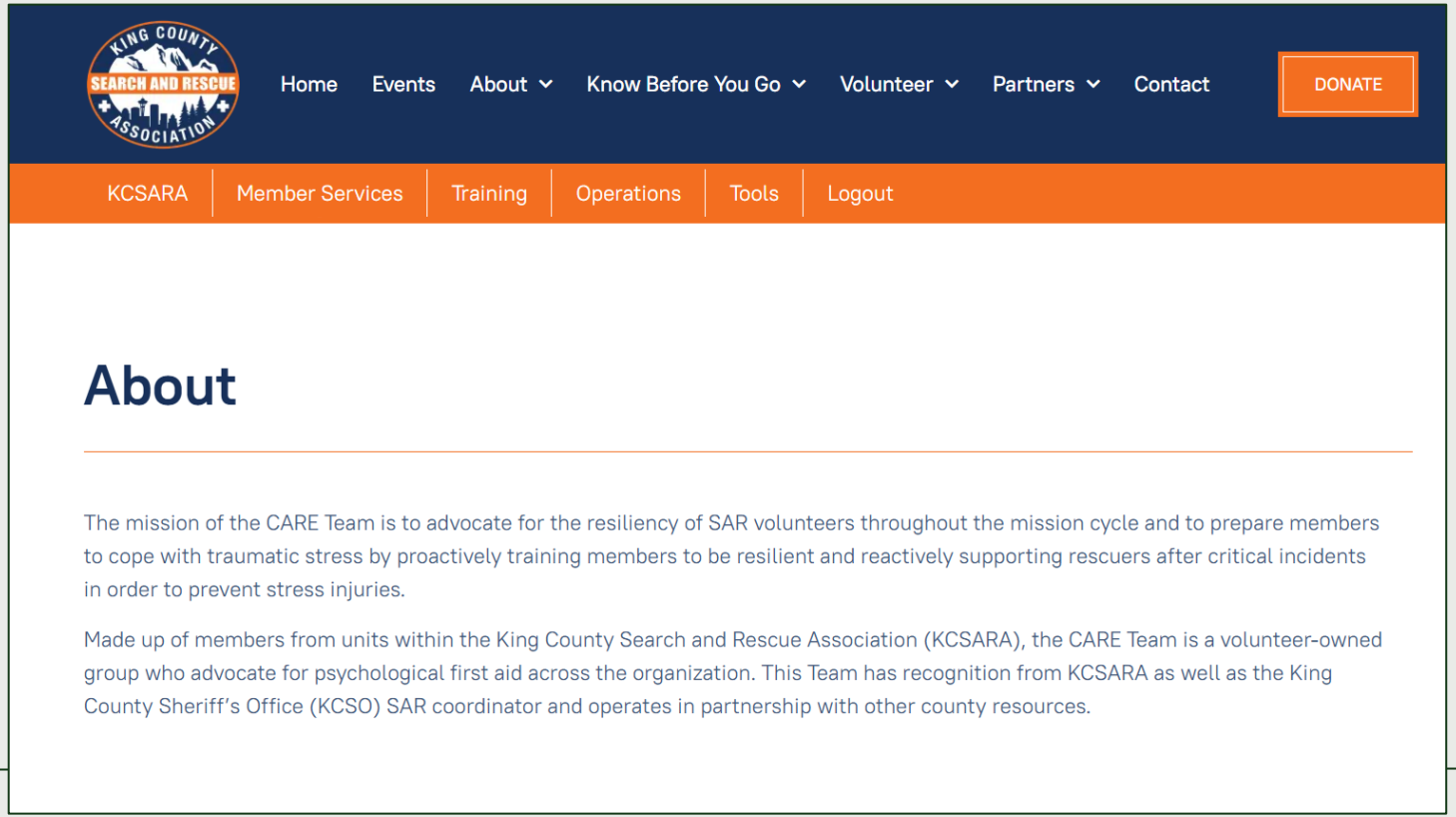
- 🚩 Mandatory
- 🚩 Heterogenous (different/mixed) group
- 🚩 Combined with AAR

Managing Incident Stress

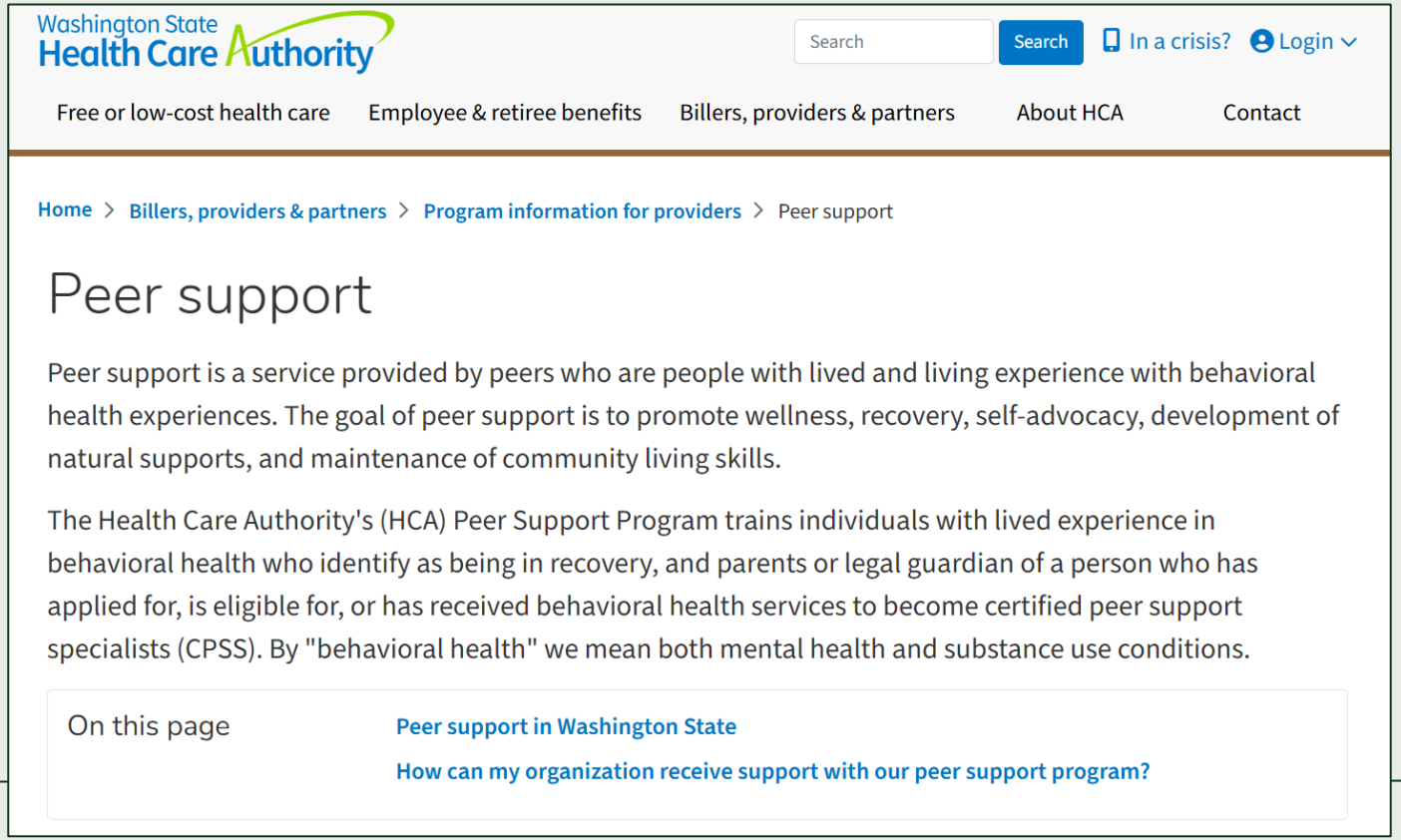


Peer Support
Para-Counseling
Counseling & PTSD Therapy

Peer Support – Team Specific



Peer Support – State Programs



Para-counseling

- ➔ Delivered by individuals who may not have formal training as professional counselors but possess foundational skills
- ➔ Designed to bridge the gap in mental health services
- ➔ Able to provide immediate support to individuals

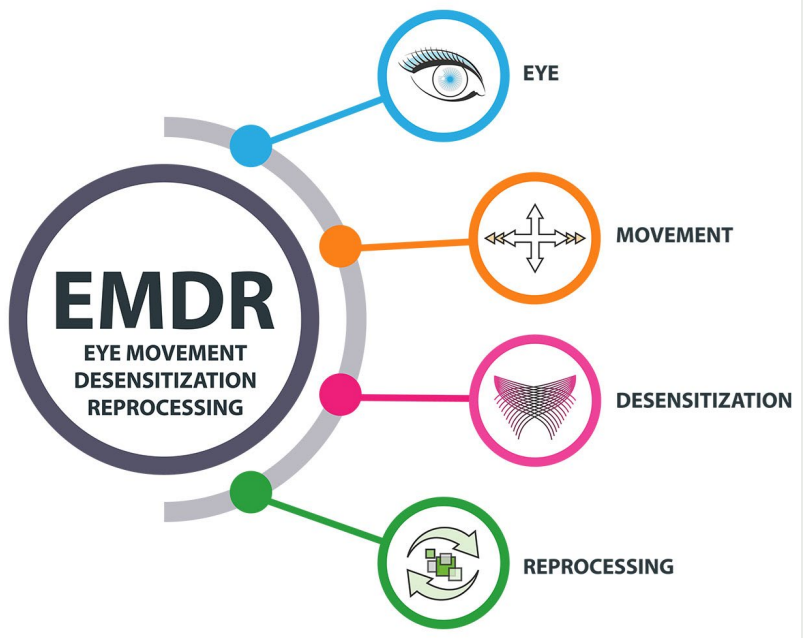


Counseling & PTSD Therapy

- ➔ Counseling can be short or long-term
- ➔ MANY therapy and treatments available
- ➔ Establishing a relationship before a critical incident can help you feel safer reaching out
- ➔ Crisis lines & hotlines can help

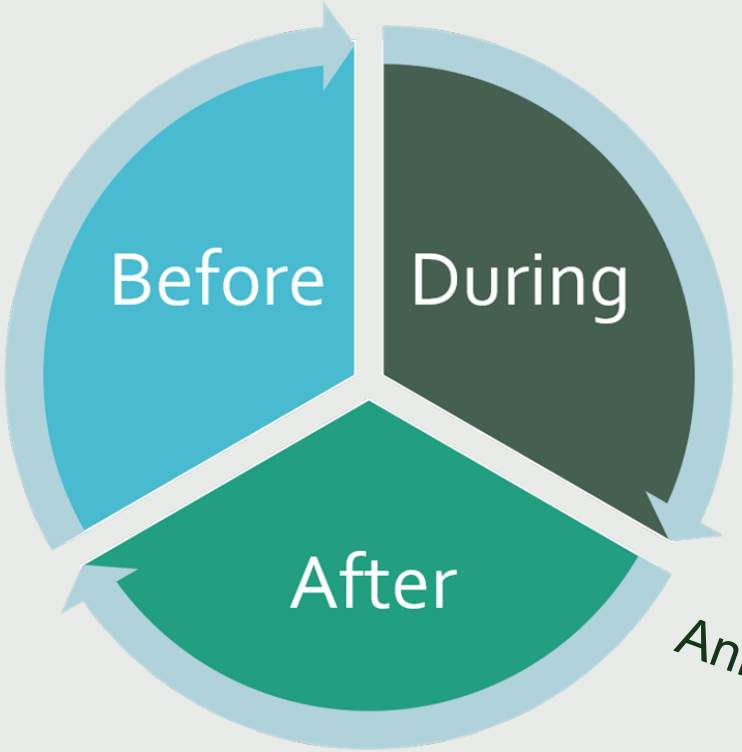
  Call 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline)

  Text 741741 (Crisis Text Line)



SCN CODE4 Northwest American Alpine Club

Managing Incident Stress – Yes, And…



Burnout Prevention

Memorials

Team Building

Suicide Prevention

After Action Review

Anniversaries

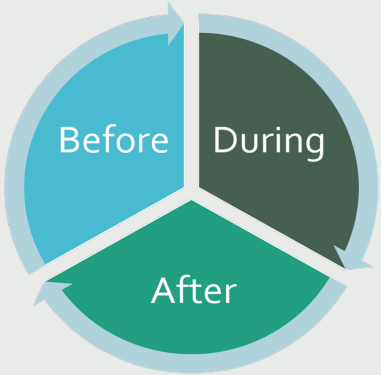
Action Steps

Foundational Resilience: Identify “green practices” and wellness tools.

- Practice a new one beginning tomorrow.

Crisis Analysis: Identify appropriate models for supporting individuals in crisis.

- Choose one to learn more about in the next month.



Strategic Planning: Develop a post-incident support plan.

- Work with your team/organization to address gaps in the next year.

Thank you for being here!

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