

## **The CISM Controversy: Implications for Crisis Intervention**

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The Critical Incident Stress Management model of crisis intervention has come under increasing criticism. Critics cite research they claim shows CISM does not work or may, in some instances, cause harm. CISM is a sub-set of Crisis Intervention designed to work with emergency responders. This population has traditionally been resistant to any type of psychological support. The controversy has already had a negative impact on the ability to support first responders.

CISM follows the same cognitive-affective-cognitive process that underlies traditional crisis intervention models including the NOVA model and the APA designed American Red Cross disaster mental health model. In response to the criticism, we are seeing the advent of models such as “psychological first aid” developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the National Center for PTSD.

This presentation will review the research, look at the context of the challenges to CISM and explore the implications this controversy has for CI practitioners.