



# Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)

*Helping Employees Deal with Traumatic Events*

## CIRT SERVICES

- CIRT provides employees with emotional support following a traumatic event
- CIRT services are recommended for employees who are affected by a traumatic event
- CIRT services are scheduled in collaboration with an employee's department point of contact and the CIRT dispatcher.

**Critical Incident Response Team**

**856.342.2700**

[Cirt@CooperHealth.edu](mailto:Cirt@CooperHealth.edu)



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## *Defining a Critical Incident*

The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) helps employees deal with the emotional effects of a traumatic event, also referred to as a “critical incident.” A critical incident is a life experience or series of experiences that may create changes in a person’s emotional, cognitive or behavioral functioning. A critical incident can include, but are not limited to such occurrences which may happen in the work-place such as:

- Suicide or homicide of a patient, co-worker or loved one
- Unexpected or multiple deaths
- Acts of violence
- Natural or man-made disasters (including terrorism)
- Witnessing a traumatic event
- A serious incident involving children.



## *The Critical Incident Response Team and Critical Incident Stress Management*

The CIRT is staffed by caring, well-trained peers who are available to assist individuals who have undergone or witnessed a traumatic event. The team members help individuals process the emotional, cognitive, and physical effects of their experience. This is done by using critical incident stress management (CISM) services.

The goals of the CISM services are to help the individual process the traumatic event and minimize post-traumatic stress symptoms. CISM services include on-site support, one-on-one peer support, or group interventions. CIRT services are voluntary and confidential.

Even though an employee may not feel affected by an event, something shared may be helpful to a co-worker.

To obtain the services of the CIRT, call **856.342.2700** or by email at **cirt@CooperHealth.edu**.

*It is best to implement an intervention within 24 to 72 hours so it is important to contact CIRT as soon as possible after a critical incident occurs.*

### *Symptoms of Traumatic Stress*

Symptoms of traumatic stress may not always present themselves immediately following a critical incident. In fact, symptoms may become apparent day, weeks, or even months after an event. Symptoms may also arise as you approach the anniversary date of a critical incident.

Following are some of the symptoms of traumatic stress:

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • Irritability       | • Fatigue                  |
| • Intrusive thoughts | • Confusion                |
| • Loss of memory     | • Poor concentration       |
| • Depression         | • Changes in work patterns |
| • Headaches          |                            |