

RedR UK Psychosocial Program: Critical Incident Stress Management Training

Training Outline

Overview

RedR has expanded its training programs to encompass Psychosocial Programming and the first of the training programmes being delivered focuses on Critical Incident Stress Management Training (CISM). RedR has developed the program, with funding assistance from ECHO and DFID, in order to address the psychosocial needs of staff in the Darfur region, especially in relation to critical incidents. Research has shown that people who are provided with education and skills for coping with stressful incidents are generally able to manage better. They will be able to recognize signs and symptoms of psychosocial problems earlier and will have an understanding of coping strategies. This process also normalizes symptoms and assists people in realizing when they may need to reach out for additional support.

The CISM course focuses on training both national and international NGO and INGO staff in the skills needed to cope with critical incidents. Staff in the Darfur region are often exposed to violence and critical incidents where their safety and security are at risk. The CISM program, thus, seeks to educate staff on general psychosocial issues as well as provide skills to cope with the critical incidents. In addition, RedR will be setting up a support network, initially focusing on Nyala, that will provide support to staff who are exposed to critical incidents. The network will be made up of selected training participants who will receive ongoing mentoring and training from RedR as they respond to critical incidents.

What is a Psychosocial Program?

The term psychosocial refers to the emotional, social, mental and spiritual impact that living in a stressful environment can create. This training program provides education and skills to participants in order to contribute to their psychosocial well-being and to assist participants in understanding psychosocial stressors, signs and symptoms of problems, the impact of cumulative and critical incident stress and coping strategies. In order to achieve this goal, the program recognizes the need to develop and strengthen human capacity through building on existing positive personal and community coping strategies, and available resources.

What is Critical Incident Stress Management Training (CISM)?

The CISM component of the training is based on a model developed by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation and is recognized world-wide as a validated model for addressing critical incidents. This model represents an integrated system of interventions which are designed to mitigate or prevent the psychosocial impact of critical incidents (for example: hijacking of vehicles, exposure to violence). The interventions taught will include education on the methodology of crisis intervention and utilizes role plays and interactive training materials to build individual and group skills in responding to critical incidents.

The CISM training provides participants with the skills necessary to assist them in managing and recovering from significant stress (both cumulative and critical incidents) in the workplace.

Through this program, participants will have the understanding of a comprehensive system for managing the general psychosocial impact from living in a stressful environment as well as specific skills for dealing with critical incidents.

The CISM model utilized in Darfur has been adapted for the local context.

What is the Support Network?

Upon completion of the initial training course, selected participants have the opportunity to be part of a Critical Incident Support Network to support humanitarian workers (both national and international) in the event of an incident. While the training course provides pre-incident education and coping strategies, the network provides peer support, defusing and psychological first aid for any worker impacted by an incident. A referral system is also being developed in order to provide anyone who requires additional assistance with resources. Participants in the network will receive ongoing support, training and mentoring from RedR.