

TOPIC GUIDE MOOC 1

Interview by a Psychology Early Intervention psychologist

Personal Info

- profession **Hellas EAP, Employee Assistance Program Provider in Greece**
- age **35-45**
- gender **FEMALE**
- trained in psychological early interventions: **yes/no**. If yes, what course/master?
International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. (ICISF)
- experience in psychological early interventions: **yes**
- If yes, role in psychological early interventions experience
CISR Interventionist

1) How do you describe the condition of emergency or mass crisis?

- a) Describe the situation you know/in which you were involved.

Critical incident was a major fire broke out at a refinery reservoir. Four employees died in wake of accident and some others were injured seriously.

- b) Describe and the support you provided.

Crisis intervention focused on an active, short-term, supportive process for people affected directly and indirectly by the incident. It was important to make contact with the distressed persons and to provide psychological first aid in order to mitigate the crisis response.

2) How do you define victims of first type (who is directly involved by the impact of the event) involved in an emergency crisis?

- a) Which kind of needs do they have?

- Basic needs: water, safe place/shelter
- Health services for injuries and psychological services
- Understandable and correct information about the incident
- Connection with loved ones / Being able to contact loved ones



b) What kind of resilience do they have?

- Caring for themselves
- Seeking out comfortable, familiar surroundings that promote a sense of safety
- Sharing thoughts and feelings
- Working on beginning to accept what has happened

c) What kind of intervention do they need? Please describe demands matched by phases.

- Assessment of victims to see who might need additional support
- Provide psychological first aid: contact with people who may need support, ask about people's needs and concerns, help them address basic needs, give information, connect them with loved ones and social support

3) What kind of decisions a psychological rescuer makes in a psychological early intervention?

a) What decisions do psychological early intervention staff make and why?

The first decisions in a psychological early intervention focused on assessment & initial stabilization. The psychological rescuer focuses on observing for people with obvious urgent basic needs and with serious distress reactions, making contact with people who may need support, asking about people's needs and concerns, supporting them for symptom reduction and facilitating the access to continued care, if needed.

b) What information do psychological early intervention staff need? Do they seek help from any other rescuers?

A psychological rescuer needs accurate information before enter a crisis site. Specifically: *What happened? Where? When? How many and who are affected? What are the available Services? Who is providing for basic needs (emergency medical care, food, etc)? When and where can people access services? Who is helping, including community members? Also, a rescuer needs information about safety and security, for example: Is the crisis over or ongoing (aftershocks, fighting)? Are there places to avoid due to insecurity or because it is not permitted to be there?*

4) What kind of skills does a psychological rescuer need in order to cope with a psychological early intervention?

a) What skills should psychological early intervention staff have?

Supportive & helpful communication skills, problem solving skills, pain management skills. A psychological rescuer should have a professional behavior focused on providing healthy responses, being visible and available, maintaining confidentiality, remaining within the scope of his expertise / role, making appropriate referrals, being knowledgeable / sensitive to culture and diversity.

b) What skills should psychological early intervention staff improve?

Self-care skills. A psychological rescuer needs also be responsible to himself by paying attention to his own psychological wellbeing especially if he has a high workload.

5) What kind of knowledge does a psychological rescuer need to cope with a psychological early intervention?

a) What knowledge should psychological early intervention staff have?

Being trained in the Critical Incident Stress Response Protocol or any other Psychological Crisis Protocols. Being trained, also, in Psychological First Aid Protocol.

b) What knowledge should psychological early intervention staff improve?

A basic premise of a psychological rescuer is to expect normal recovery from most survivors, assume survivors are competent, recognize survivor strengths, and promote resilience. Not making assumptions, for example, that all survivors will develop severe mental health problems or long term difficulties in recovery.

6) Please describe a good practice in your experience

a) Please give more details

At first, a very important note is that we do not provide crisis intervention services just because an event has occurred. There must be evidence of distress, impairment or dysfunction. Therefore, one of the most important skills for a crisis team is the ability to properly assess the group and the individuals who make up that group. Do not focus on the event alone. Look most at the reactions of the people.

Steps of a good practice based in our experience:

- 24/7 trauma response assessment availability.
- An initial assessment of the impact of the incident, by the crisis team, and development of an action plan. Acute intervention designed to mitigate the crisis response.
- On-site defusing and debriefing meetings with victims/ survivors who is directly and indirectly involved by the impact of the event. The main scope is the normalization of the reactions and minimization of post-traumatic stress. The crisis services that are provided should be short-term and focused on support, not psychotherapy.
- Individual trauma counselling for those survivors who has been identified that they require or have asked for themselves additional support.
- Pre incident Preparation: training in psychological first aid and trauma response protocols for key personnel (community staff, first responders, etc)

