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Qualification:

Ingrid Matouskova's occupation is focused on forensic psychology, communication, intervention and psychology in crisis or specific situations, crisis management. She has been working with university students for 17 years. She is a member of the Association of Forensic Psychologists and the Czech Association of Occupational and Organizational Psychologists. She cooperates with security forces.

What is a CISM Team?

Critical Incident Stress Management teams (hereinafter referred to as CISM teams), in which two types of professionals work. Mental health professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists, practitioners, social workers) and trained peer counselors (so-called peers). The American author Jeffrey T. Mitchell is responsible for the creation of this model of stress management in critical situations. Both types of professionals working in CISM teams undergo special training, they are provided with regular meetings of team members. The main goal of CISM groups is to help people who experience the negative consequences of stress after being exposed to a critical event, and to prepare the staff of the integrated rescue system to be able to deal with the stress that is relevant to their profession.

Who are the possible forms of CISM?

On-scene support includes both assistance to all intervening professionals and consultation with management. For professionals, it is necessary to accept the crisis (immediate description of events, feelings), correction of incorrectly evaluated own reactions (these are understandable and normal), explanation of stress reactions, and especially reintroduction into action.

In the case of large-scale disasters, **demobilization** is usable. It should be performed immediately after moving from the event. It takes only 10 minutes, followed by a 20-minute relaxation. Its aim is to provide clear and structured information on the appearance of possible symptoms, on the observance of lifestyle, reducing the stress associated with a critical event and initiating the resumption of rescue forces to keep them at the level of the so-called autopilot.

The use of **defusing** is suitable for smaller events or where debriefing is used later. Its timing is within eight hours of the critical event, immediately upon returning from deployment, before the teams leave home. The group should be homogeneous, small, composed of people who lived the event together. The aim is to mitigate the impact of this event, alleviate the emotional burden, map the group, assess the need for debriefing. To do this, a quiet room is needed, in a so-called safe environment, preferably around a table, without time pressure. The duration is around thirty minutes.

Debriefing is essentially a structured conversation using the potential of the group. It is a matter of bringing together a group of people who have gone through an identical traumatic event and getting them to share their experience, talk about their often strange reactions and accept them. If debriefing is required, it should be within 24 to 72 hours of the intervention, lasting two to three hours. Debriefing is important for alleviating the stress response of the intervening group and accelerating the recovery of forces. After its completion, individual consultations are possible.

Who are targets of CISM?

The idea of introducing psychological care "on the job" was first voiced in 1984 after the rage of an amok shooter at McDonald's in New Mexico, USA. The act of senseless murder and the sight of massacred innocent restaurant visitors caused the subsequent problems typical of post-traumatic stress disorder in most of the police officers who intervened at the time. This officially confirmed that even police professionals, undergoing both a network of psychological tests on boarding and psychological training during their service, do not have to be protected from mental trauma.

Rescuers in an extreme or exposed situation therefore have the right to draw qualified and discreet assistance from their employer free of charge and quickly, which should not affect their job evaluation. The main purpose of this help is to prevent problems leading to the lasting consequences of the psychological trauma experienced.

Resource: <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/tema-2010-i-zachranari-jsou-jen-lide.aspx>