

Critical Incident Trauma Response

What to expect & how to prepare

Research and experience shows effective management and support before, during and after an event can minimise or prevent severe reactions to traumatic events and assist employees in returning to the workplace safely and effectively.

EASA Trauma Service (24hr) can flexibly deploy a package suitable to the situation which can consist of:

- **On-scene Management and Risk Assessment**
- **Individual Psychological First Aid (group debriefing is no longer recommended)**
- **Follow up Trauma Counselling and Assessment**
- **Preventive Education and Risk Management (includes peer support training)**

On-scene Management and Risk Assessment

When trauma occurs, **Psychological First Aid** can be used to offer emotional support to those involved. EASA can also attend the workplace and deliver supportive services directly to the staff affected, these services are more commonly:

First week

- Individual sessions at the worksite for those affected
- Group Session – education and self care only (this is not an opportunity to debrief)

Completing the above in liaison with the workplace, EASA may recommend further assistance such as follow up and/or counselling.

Individual Psychological First Aid

Some individuals feel the need to discuss their experience or reactions with a counsellor, or a manager may refer them for a session after being concerned for their welfare. Counselling is commonly offered by workplaces, at the worksite, or at the EASA Offices.

Follow up Trauma Counselling and Assessment

After trauma EASA will ensure your staff have ongoing screening and support where needed. This more commonly involves the counsellor who attends the worksite explaining to the individual concerned that they will be contacting them in the near future to check how they are recovering; this may be over the phone or in person.

The majority of people recover well within the first 3 weeks after an incident; however, for some there are lasting effects which can be picked up during the screening.

Preventive Education and Risk Management

Training focuses on a number of areas including trauma response for managers or supervisors, stress management, effective communication, basic counselling skills, dealing with aggressive and violent people, etc. We also offer a comprehensive peer support training program to enable employees to be psychologically equipped and prepared in dealing with incidents.

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Managers/Supervisors frequently asked questions:

What is my role if I arrange for a counsellor to attend the workplace?

Generally we ask managers to maintain good communication with their staff; share information that is known, and inform staff of the support available both verbally and written (focus and memory can be affected by trauma).

We recommend that staff are provided with a flyer on potentially traumatising events which details what they may be experiencing and the various self care options. This is available at no cost. Please inform us if you would like a paper or electronic copy to keep on hand.

For any event, it assists if there is a contact person who can be in communication with the counsellor before they arrive and provide background information and then also upon arrival, particularly to gather information if there are concerns about staff that need to be communicated. This contact person is also able to ensure the counsellor is directed to the room and that staff are aware a process is commencing. It can also be useful for EASA to communicate any concerns to this person about their staff. EASA wants to support managers to support their staff at a difficult time.

What arrangements do I need to make if I've organised a Critical Incident Support?

We also find it helpful if the room arranged for the counselling has both water and tissues and is located in an area that is not overlooked or overheard by other areas to ensure privacy.

Notification email example for staff:

If informing staff by email the following wording may be useful:

(Org/person) is concerned about the wellbeing of staff involved or potentially affected by the incident on (date). We have engaged a Critical Incident Support organisation, EASA, to provide additional support for you at this time. A counsellor will be attending the workplace on (date) and will be available to see you during that visit in the (name) room. You can either book a time with myself to see the counsellor at that time or should the door of the room be open you can ask to see the counsellor during these hours. EASA also has counsellors available to see you outside these times, including evenings and weekends and you can call 89411752 to book a time with a counsellor. (Org/Person) would be happy to meet with you to discuss any other aspect of this event and appreciates that you may need to take some time away from the workplace, though we encourage you to stay with your usual routines. Should you need to leave the workplace please let (org/name) know, they are fully briefed on the incident and support available.

Alternatively,

(Org/person) is concerned about the wellbeing of staff involved or potentially affected by the incident on (date). We have engaged a Critical Incident Support organisation, EASA, to provide optional support for you at this time. A counsellor will be attending the workplace on (date) and will be facilitating an optional group education (not a debrief session) and self-care session with you and your colleagues.

This session will start at (time) and can run for up to (?) hours, the facilitator will need you to be at the venue on time as they will be closing the door to interruptions at (time) to allow for privacy.

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