

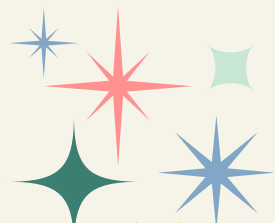


Peer Support vs CISM

The difference between peer support and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) lies in their scope, purpose, structure, and application in addressing stress and mental health in emergency service environments. While they often complement each other, they serve distinct roles.

Peer Support

- **Definition:** Peer support is an ongoing, informal, and interpersonal approach where trained peers provide emotional and practical support to colleagues dealing with work-related stress or personal challenges.
- **Purpose:** To provide day-to-day support, foster resilience, and promote mental wellness through shared experiences.
- **Structure:**
 - Involves trained peer supporters within the organization.
 - Focuses on one-on-one conversations or small group interactions.
 - Addresses a broad range of issues, from routine job stress, critical incidents, and personal difficulties.
- **Scope:**
 - Proactive and preventive.
 - Available anytime, not necessarily linked to a specific incident.
- **Examples:**
 - A peer supporter offering guidance to a colleague feeling overwhelmed by workload or experiencing personal crises.
 - Ongoing emotional check-ins with a dispatcher after a difficult call.





Peer Support vs CISM

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

- **Definition:** CISM is a structured and systematic crisis intervention approach used after a critical or traumatic incident to mitigate acute stress and prevent long-term psychological impact.
- **Purpose:** To provide immediate support and help personnel process their reactions following critical incidents (e.g., a mass casualty event, dispatcher involved in a child's death).
- **Structure:**
 - Typically led by trained facilitators, which may include mental health professionals and peer supporters.
 - Includes specific interventions, such as debriefings, defusings, and follow-ups.
- **Scope:**
 - Reactive and incident-focused.
 - Targets high-stress, emotionally charged events.
 - Often time-limited and event-specific.
- **Examples:**
 - A group debriefing session for dispatchers after handling a high-profile disaster.
 - A defusing meeting shortly after a particularly distressing shift.

Aspect	Peer Support	CISM
Focus	General well-being and daily stress.	Response to specific critical incidents.
Timing	Ongoing, anytime support.	Incident-driven, post-event.
Participants	Peers within the organization.	Mixed teams (peers + professionals).
Goal	Build resilience and offer peer-level help.	Mitigate acute stress and prevalence of PTSD.
Methodology	Informal conversations and resources.	Formalized interventions and techniques.

