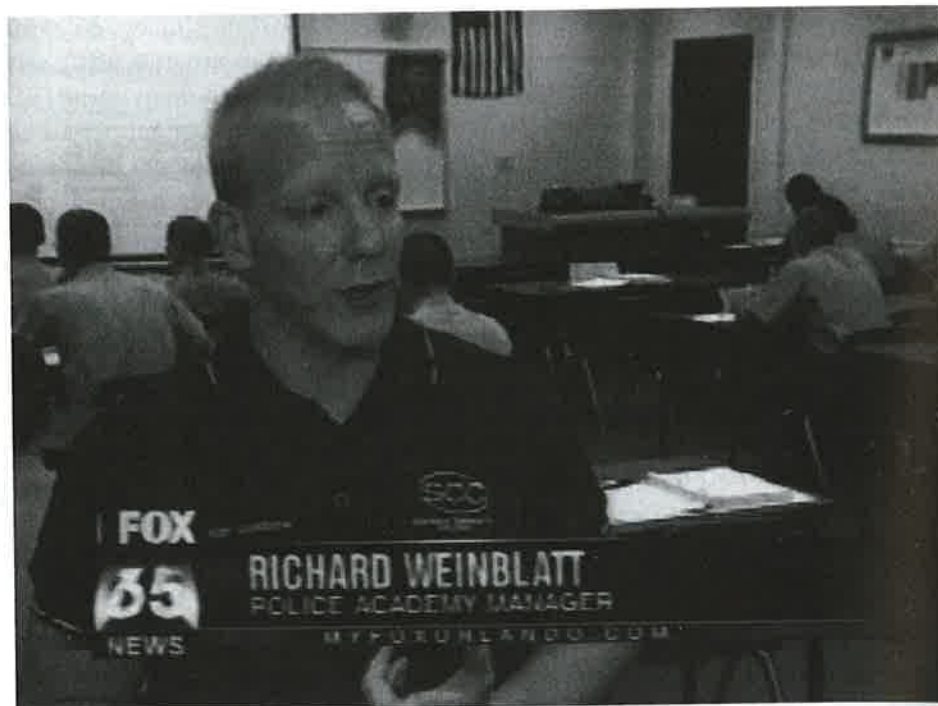


Dr. Richard Weinblatt, a former police chief known as "The Cop Doc," discusses a police shooting event and how such incidents contribute to police stress. Prompt and appropriate departmental response is crucial in helping officers successfully manage the range of physical and emotional stressors that follow such incidents.



Courtesy Richard Weinblatt

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

critical incident stress debriefing (CISD)

officers who experience a critical incident such as a mass disaster or crash with multiple deaths are brought together as a group for a psychological debriefing soon after the event.

Critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) is another effective way to prevent or reduce stress by bringing together as a group those officers who experience a critical incident together, such as a mass disaster, a crash with multiple deaths or a particularly grizzly murder, and providing a psychological debriefing soon after the event. A trained mental health professional leads the group members as they discuss their emotions and reactions. This allows officers to vent and to realize they are not going crazy but are responding normally to a very abnormal situation.

A CISD should take place within 24 to 72 hours after a critical incident. Earlier is usually too soon for full emotional impact to have occurred. If only one officer is involved in the critical incident, he should be joined in the CISD by volunteers from the department who have experienced a similar incident or have been trained in PTSD.

To overcome officers' reluctance to participate in a mental health program, attendance at a CISD should be mandatory. A CISD should not become an operational critique. The groups should be small and everything said kept confidential.

employee assistance program (EAP)

may be internally staffed or use outside referrals to offer help with stress, marital or chemical-dependency problems.



Law enforcement departments should include an **employee assistance program (EAP)** or provide referrals to outside agencies for psychological and counseling services and to assist officers with stress, marital or chemical dependency problems.

Topics and issues commonly addressed through EAPs include alcoholism and substance abuse; depression; anxiety; attention deficit disorder; fear of