

*Critical Incident Debriefing in a  
Group Setting  
Process Debriefing*

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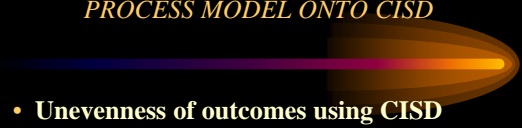
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*BACKGROUND FOR OVERLAY OF  
PROCESS MODEL ONTO CISD*



- **Unevenness of outcomes using CISD**
  - Some clients get better
  - Some get worse
- **More complicated models like CISM require long term intervention**
- **Work has been done to overcome intrinsic problems with CISD model**

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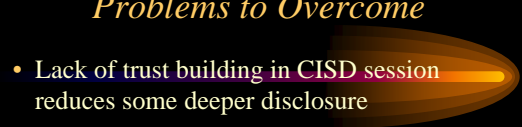
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*Problems to Overcome*



- **Lack of trust building in CISD session** reduces some deeper disclosure
- Internal group dynamics not taken into account when forming groups
- CISD group structure ignores group process
- No opportunity for group members to interact; rather each must adhere to debriefer directives and limitations
  - If an interactional problem exists it can't be dealt with

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### *Process Model Group*

Leader as Process Consultant

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### *Underlying Assumptions of Group Work*

- Most problems are interpersonal in nature
- Family experiences are primary source of interpersonal process
- Group reactivates people's interpersonal processes
- Here and now relationships within group bring change and healing
- Interpersonal learning is experiential
- Change can happen in a short period of time

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### *The Therapeutic Factors of Group Counseling*

Irving Yalom

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*Eleven Primary Therapeutic  
Experiences in Group*

- Instillation of hope
- Universality
- Imparting information
- Altruism
- Imitative behavior

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*Eleven Primary Therapeutic  
Experiences in Group*

- The corrective recapitulation of the primary family group
- Development of socializing techniques
- Interpersonal learning

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*Eleven Primary Therapeutic  
Experiences in Group*

- Group cohesiveness
- Catharsis
- Existential factors

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### *Existential factors*

- Discovering previously unknown/unacceptable parts of self
- Expressing repressed secrets
- Honest feedback about how others see self
- Learning to express feelings

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### *Existential factors*

- Group teaching self about impression self makes
- Expressing feelings toward other members
- Learning responsibility for self

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### *Existential factors*

- Taking risks and discovering that others reveal embarrassing experiences and behaviors
- Feeling more trustful of group and of others

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## *Problems in Group Counseling*

Mostly based in group process

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- Low cohesion caused by a member makes group unsafe
- Members step back and let a few take over
- One or more take over and cut in
- Members check out
- Some don't self disclose; make it uncomfortable for others
- Some criticize or are angry consistently
- Some refuse from the beginning to participate

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- Subgroups, dyads, triads occur
- Criticism, defensiveness, passive-aggressive norms develop (usually without notice)
- Group becomes dependent on leader; interactions all brokered through leader

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## *Applied Process-Focused Group Model*

### **Process Debriefing**

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## *Tasks of Process-Focused*

- Some groups avoid dealing with their dynamics
- Process-focused group places priority on
  - Establishing a safe environment
  - Responding to members' emotions and inner needs in the moment
  - Translating problems into patterns
  - Recognizing coping mechanisms that maintain patterns of defense

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## *To Properly Facilitate a Process Debriefing Group*

- Facilitator must have knowledge/skills of process dynamics
- Facilitator must learn to balance attention toward process, not just content
- Facilitator must recognize and address underlying interpersonal dynamics and interpersonal conflicts

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- Engaging members into the moment involves higher level of exposure and intimacy than customary social interactions
- Subtleties of interaction require high degree of awareness and skill in facilitate

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### *Getting Ready for a Process Debriefing Session*

- Debrief team
  - One leader
  - One of two cofacilitators
- Characteristics of effective facilitators
  - Understanding of how groups work
  - Genuineness
  - Accurate empathy
  - Provide safe, trusting atmosphere
    - This may mean attention to “who” is in group

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- Knowledge of critical incident
  - As much background as possible
  - Extensive detail of the event
  - Knowledge, familiarity with culture(s) of participants
- Facilitators are role models, no competition
- Active but not authoritarian
- Facilitators more active in beginning and end but smaller role in middle indicates good dynamic between members

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- Groups with homogeneous experience are more effective
  - Grouping by profession
  - Rank
  - Work teams
  - Specific stress exposure
  - Geographical location to event

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### *Preparatory Steps*

1. Know the hierarchical structure of organization and how safe it will be to debrief
  1. If it will work
  2. Who should attend
2. Leader should prepare the set of questions fitting with traumatic event and potential issues of participants
  - 1-2 hour preparation by facilitation team
  - Consider what directives will motivate participants
  - What rules will particular group need?
  - Consider appropriate wording to encourage participation and trust

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3. Leader should be prepared in case there are conflicts and practice diverting potential attacks to constructive, resolving conversations
4. Participants should be familiar with questions before session
5. Reserve substantial time: session lasts as long as important things are being said (prepare for up to 3 ½ hours)

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6. Room set up to optimize interaction while assisting leader control
7. Cell phone restrictions
8. Comfortable setting
  - Well lit room
  - Natural lighting but not distracting windows
  - Size room according to size of group
  - Refreshments available throughout group and afterward
9. No breaks

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- If possible find out if any potential participant is too psychologically unstable to attend and make other debriefing/assessment arrangements for that individual

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### *Facilitation Principles*

- Members encouraged to share. Facilitators develop active, inclusive dynamic
- Facilitators control themes so participants don't digress
- Leaders facilitate discussion not perpetrate their own opinions
- Prepare to summarize group perspectives before moving to new topics

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### *In the Session*

- Facilitators should
  - Be attentive to participants, not just the speaker
  - Be attuned to what is happening
  - Be open and honest
  - Provide feedback
  - Offer individual follow-up whenever appropriate
  - Don't be distracted by paper or break contact

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- Thank each person who shares to encourage participation and acknowledge importance of disclosures
- Make confrontive interactions constructive: don't passively allow destructive communications to develop
- Give opportunity to explore themes that need further investigation
- Normalize reactions and event interpretations of participants (using the group process whenever possible)

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- When personal or earlier life issues surface use the disclosure to invite individual counselling later
- If group is a natural group motivate helpful worth beyond the debriefing session
- Higher stress incidents may require a series of sessions over successive days to debrief experiences

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- Avoid

- Domination by one or a few group members
- Causing secondary traumatization with too graphic of details (not describing the event but the personal experience of participants during the event)
- Digression
- Inaccurate information
- Destabilization of unstable members

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- Use in the moment group process to teach and facilitate skills of

- Directness between participants
- Ownership by participants
- Constructive communication if conflict occurs
  - Thought phase of group is a good time to defuse blame and accusations and allow the group understanding of the wrong decisions of particular group members

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*Cues that conflict resolution is in order*

- Disagreements
- Challenges of one member by another
- Blame
- Accusation
- Tangential comment
- Status centered comments
- Disruptive behavior
- Reprisal comments

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