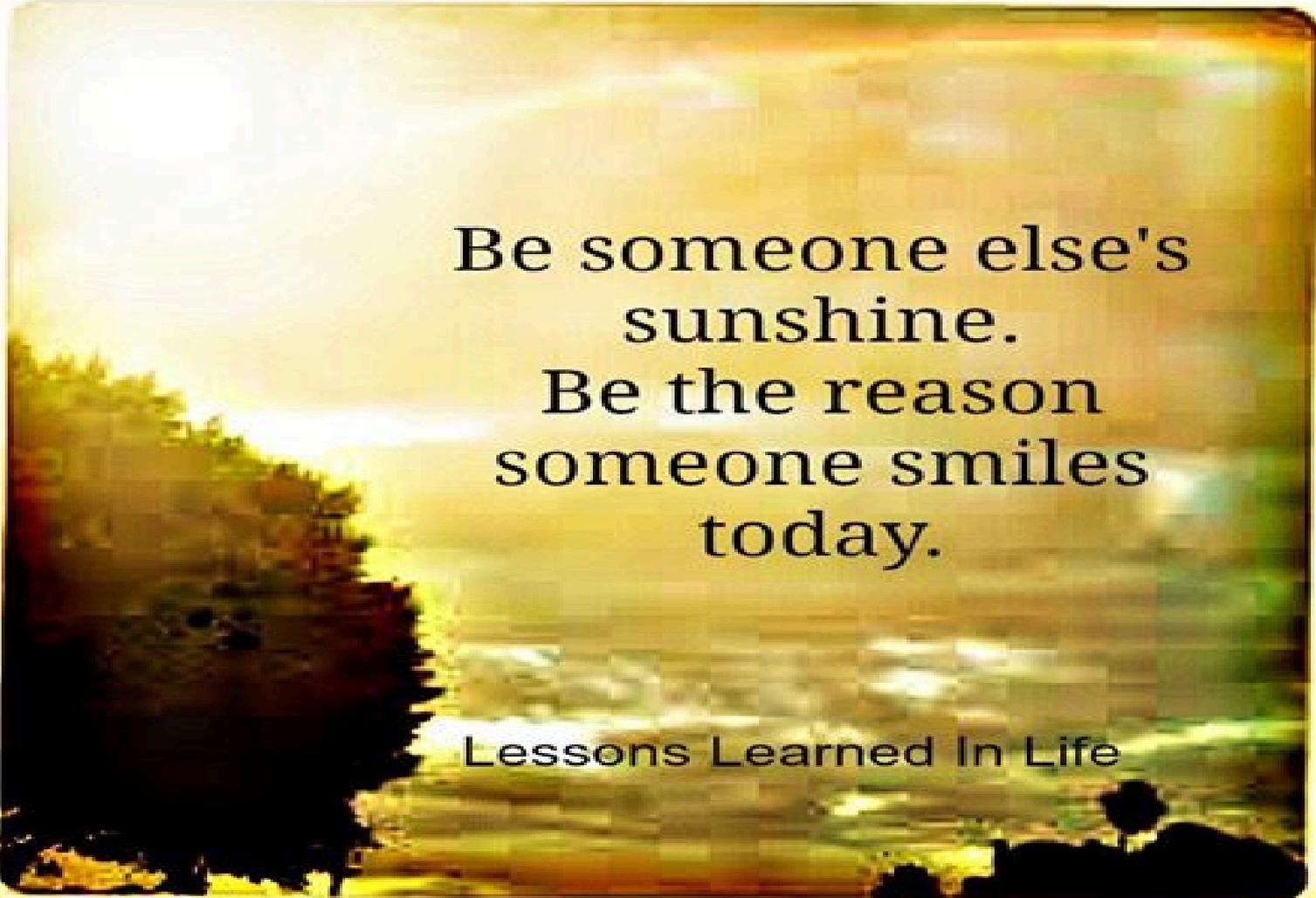


# **What Can Your Regional CISM Team Do For You And Why Should You Have One?**



**Patricia Copeland, NRP  
REMS CISM Team  
Coordinator  
ICISF Approved Instructor**

**Lt. Chris Jett, NRP  
Stafford County Fire &  
Rescue**

A scenic landscape photograph showing a dense forest of evergreen trees on the left side, leading to a body of water on the right. The sky is bright and hazy, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The entire image is enclosed in a yellow border.

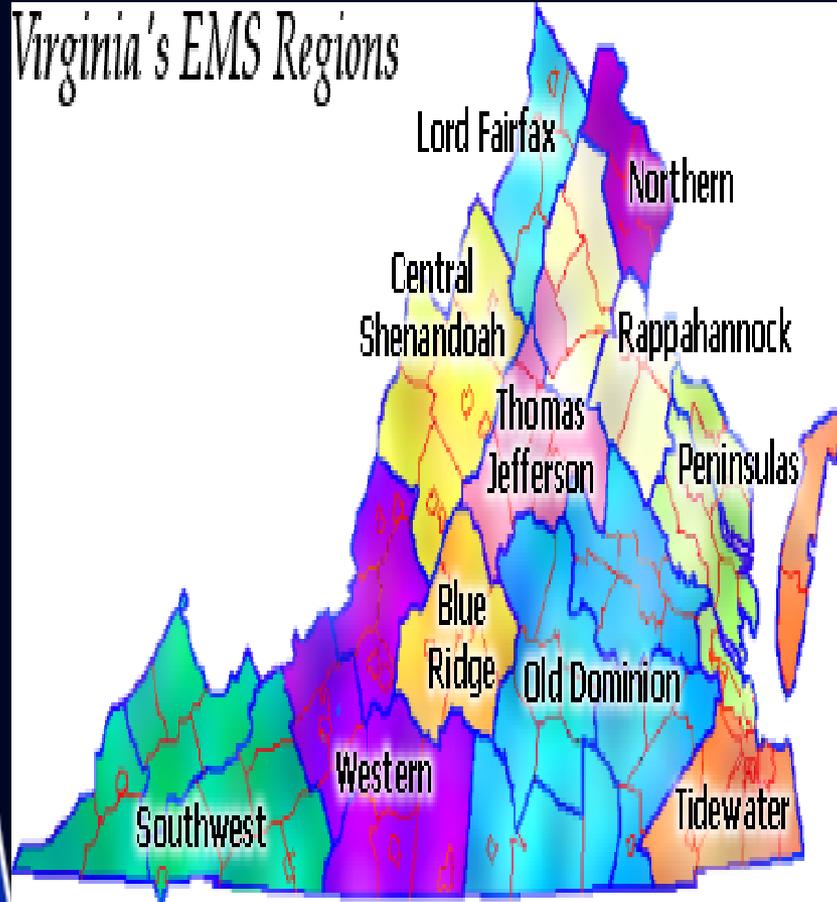
Be someone else's  
sunshine.  
Be the reason  
someone smiles  
today.

Lessons Learned In Life

# DEFINITIONS

**CRITICAL INCIDENTS** are unusually challenging events that have the potential to create significant human **DISTRESS** and can overwhelm one's usual coping mechanisms

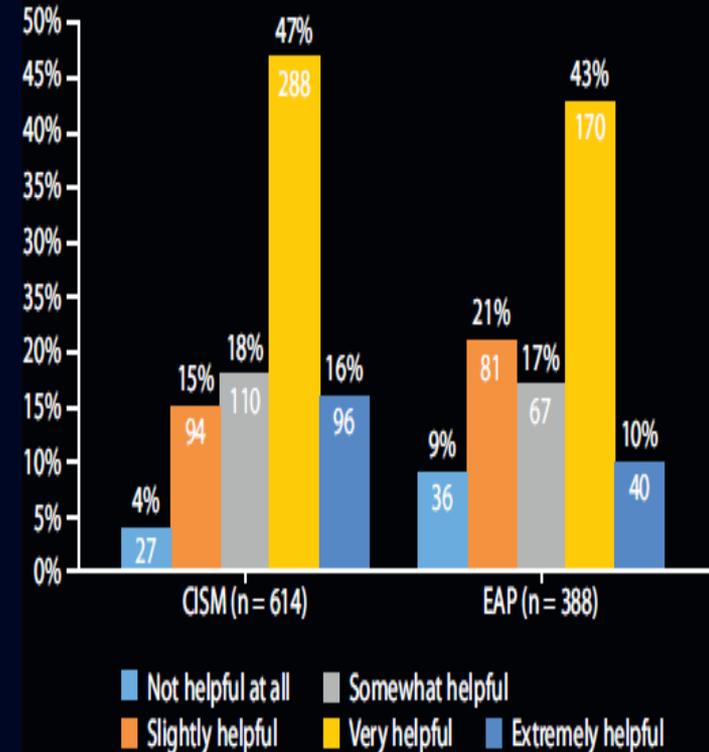
# REGIONAL OFFICES



EMS COUNCIL CONTACTS	EMS COUNCIL WEBSITES
<i>Blue Ridge EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Blue Ridge EMS Website <a href="http://blueridge.vaems.org">blueridge.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Central Shenandoah EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Central Shenandoah EMS Website <a href="http://csems.vaems.org">csems.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Lord Fairfax EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Lord Fairfax EMS Website <a href="http://lfems.vaems.org">lfems.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Northern Virginia EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Northern Virginia EMS Website <a href="http://northern.vaems.org">northern.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Old Dominion EMS Alliance Contact Information</i>	<i>Old Dominion EMS Website <a href="http://odemsa.vaems.org">odemsa.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Peninsulas EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Peninsulas EMS Website <a href="http://peninsulas.vaems.org">peninsulas.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Rappahannock EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Rappahannock EMS Website <a href="http://rem.s.vaems.org">rem.s.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Southwest Virginia EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Southwest Virginia EMS Website <a href="http://southwest.vaems.org">southwest.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Thomas Jefferson EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Thomas Jefferson EMS Website <a href="http://www.tjems.org">www.tjems.org</a></i>
<i>Tidewater EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Tidewater EMS Website <a href="http://tidewater.vaems.org">tidewater.vaems.org</a></i>
<i>Western Virginia EMS Council Contact Information</i>	<i>Western Virginia EMS Website <a href="http://western.vaems.org">western.vaems.org</a></i>

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FORMAL SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS

- Most people have heard a story (or been a part of one) about a caregiver who goes to a CISM debriefing and believes it to be a colossal waste of time, or an EAP counselor who knows absolutely nothing about the EMS industry and spends the sessions in horror, learning about events providers are routinely exposed to.
- We've heard those same stories as well, and we expected the survey results to show that formal support institutions such as EAP and CISM are ineffective or mediocre at best in dealing with provider CS. We were surprised to find that these institutions received higher ratings than we expected.
- Of the 86% of respondents who experienced critical stress, 18% (614) attended CISM type programs and 63% (388) of them found the sessions very helpful or extremely helpful.
- Of the 11% (394) who attended EAP sessions, 53% (210) found them very or extremely helpful. (See Figure 2.)



Survey Reveals Alarming Rates of EMS Provider Stress and Thoughts of Suicide; Data suggests ways to reduce the impact of critical stress on EMTs and paramedics, Mon, Sep 28, 2015 (JEMS Magazine)

## REMS CISM TEAM

**2013-2014 - We had a total of 339 personal contacts with public safety personnel**

- **14 - 1:1 Interventions**
- **14 - Defusings**
- **1 - Debriefing**
- **6 - CMBs**

➤ **Debriefing - Motor vehicle accident involving 4 teens – 3 killed**

➤ **Defusing - 5 year old killed in house fire**

➤ **Defusing - Solider killed by friendly fire (Ft. AP Hill)**

➤ **Defusing – EMT death**

➤ **On Scene Support – Teenage drowning**

➤ **Defusing/Debriefings – Responders from Pentagon (Alexandria)**

➤ **Debriefing - Explosion - 3 people killed**

➤ **Team sent to NYC**

➤ **Defusing – Airplane accident**

➤ **Defusing - Shaken Baby (Quantico)**

➤ **Debriefing – MVA – 3 Teens killed**

➤ **Defusing – Death of a child**

➤ **Debriefing – Construction site death**

➤ **Defusing - Drowning at public pool (Parks & Recreations)**

➤ **Defusing – MVA/child**

➤ **On-Scene Support – Airplane accident**

➤ **Defusing – Law enforcement shooting**

➤ **On-Scene Support - Line of Duty Death (Boating Accident)**

➤ **Debriefing – MVA – burn victims**

➤ **Defusing – Child accidentally killed by mom**

➤ **Defusing – Line of duty death**

➤ **Defusing – Suicidal Police officer**

➤ <b>Debriefing – Drowning</b>	➤ <b>Defusing – Line of duty death</b>
➤ <b>Debriefing – MVA – 2 killed</b>	➤ <b>Defusing – Firefighter Mayday incident</b>
➤ <b>Defusing/Debriefing - MVA - watched person burn</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - CPR in the Jail</b>
➤ <b>Defusing/Debriefing – Boy Scout Jamboree 2005</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - Hanging</b>
➤ <b>On-Scene Support (VCU Hospital) – Motorcycle accident</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - 911 Center</b>
➤ <b>Defusing/Debriefing – Death of a child</b>	➤ <b>Defusing – Death of a child</b>
➤ <b>Defusing - Social Services (CPR)</b>	➤ <b>One-on-One - Cardiac Arrest</b>
➤ <b>Defusing - MVA</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - Suicide</b>
➤ <b>Balloon Accident</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - CPR</b>
➤ <b>One-on-One - Park &amp; Recreations (Suicide)</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - Pediatric Death</b>
➤ <b>CMB - LODD</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - MVA</b>
➤ <b>Defusing - House Fire</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - House Fire 2 Dead</b>
➤ <b>Defusing/Debriefing - Pedestrian Struck</b>	➤ <b>Defusing - CPR on a life member of a squad</b>

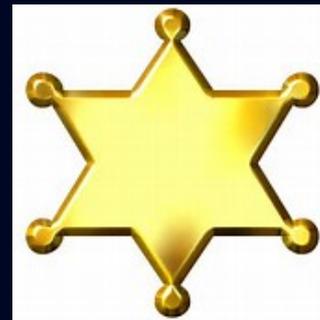
# **OUT REACH IS AN IMPORTANT PART**

- **Out Reach Meeting in Culpepper (2014)**
- **In 2013 Asked to provide assistance to the Environment Protection Association located in Springfield, VA by the ICISF**
- **Provide Awareness Training to local pools regarding Critical Incidents (2015)**
- **Information requested to Culpepper Regional Hospital and Spotsylvania Regional Hospital (2014)**
- **OEMS Symposium Training - Group Crisis Intervention (2013)**

- **OEMS Symposiums Suicide Awareness Training (2014)**
- **~~Training for Lake of the Woods in Carolina County (2014)~~**
- **Provided Training to State EAP Conference in Richmond, VA (2014)**
- **Provided two 1.5 hour sessions for the Stafford County Parks & Recreations Department on Critical Incident Stress Management for the Employees and Seasonal Lifeguards (2015)**
- **Asked to provide CISM information and training to the Stafford County Search and Rescue Team (2015)**
- **Assist the Rapidan in setting up a part of our Regional Team (2015)**
- **CISM presentation in Culpepper, VA (2015)**
- **2 – 2 Hour Training on CISM at VAVRS Conference (2015)**

# WHO IS ON THE TEAM?

- EMS Providers
- Firefighters
- Dispatchers
- Law Enforcement Officers
  - Police
  - Sheriff
  - Federal
- Clergy
- Clinicians/Counselors



# HOW DO YOU JOIN A TEAM

1. Fill out a team application (<http://remscouncil.org/regional-services/cism/>)
2. Most teams have background checks
3. Must attend quarterly meetings (most teams have a certain number that you must attend a year, in order to remain active)

ALL TEAMS HAVE A 24-HOUR  
CONTACT NUMBER

# **INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS FOUNDATION**

**The mission of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. is to provide leadership, education, training, consultation, and support services in comprehensive crisis intervention and disaster behavioral health services to the emergency response professions, other organizations, and communities worldwide.**

**Employed in 28 nations worldwide and more than 1,000 CISM teams serve their communities in the aftermath of traumatic events**

**[www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org)**



# JEFFERY T. MITCHELL, PH.D.

- **Began as an elementary teacher  
... 6th grade science**
- **Became a volunteer firefighter  
... 9 ½ years**
- **Became interested in the stress  
of emergency services  
personnel**
- **Ph.D. Dissertation on  
paramedic stress**
- **Met George Everly ... working  
on identification and treatment  
of victims**
- **Since 1982, together working to  
assist first responders**



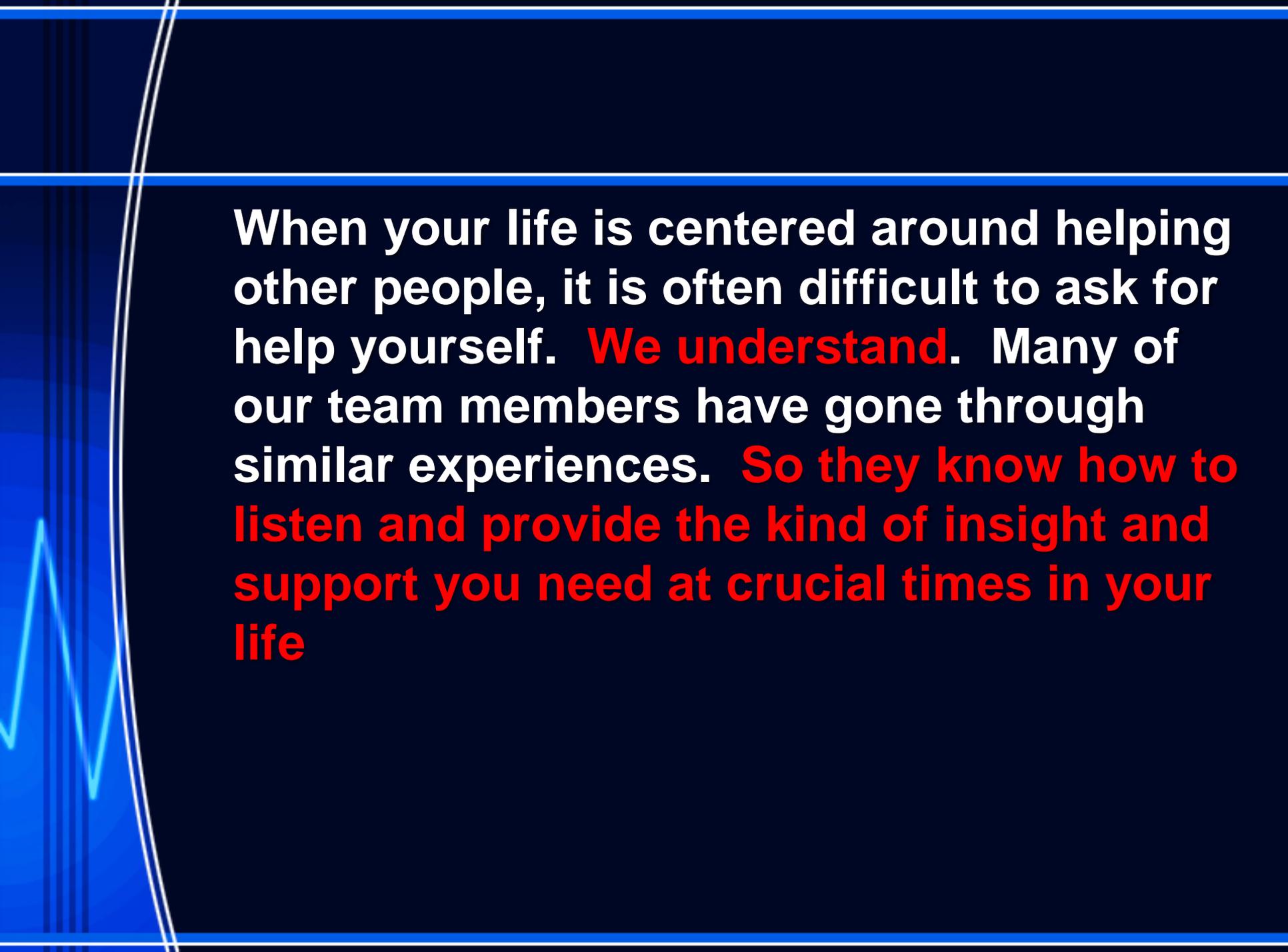
# **GEORGE S. EVERLY, Jr. Ph.D.**

- **Trained in business administration**
- **Intrigued with human behavior within business organizations**
- **Interested in clinical psychology ... especially psychophysiology**
- **Worked in laboratory ... studied biofeedback applications, blood pressure and general stress**
- **Went to conference with Dr. Mitchell in Australia on emergency service stress**
- **“These people are at such high risk, occupationally and there doesn’t seem to be anything in place to really assist them.”**
- **In 1989, the international critical stress foundation was formed**

# **BASIC TRAINING**

## **State Accredited team requirements:**

- **Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support (ICISF)**
- **Group Crisis Intervention (ICISF)**
- **Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention (ICISF) or**
- **Suicide Awareness: An Introduction for Crisis Responders**



When your life is centered around helping other people, it is often difficult to ask for help yourself. **We understand.** Many of our team members have gone through similar experiences. **So they know how to listen and provide the kind of insight and support you need at crucial times in your life**

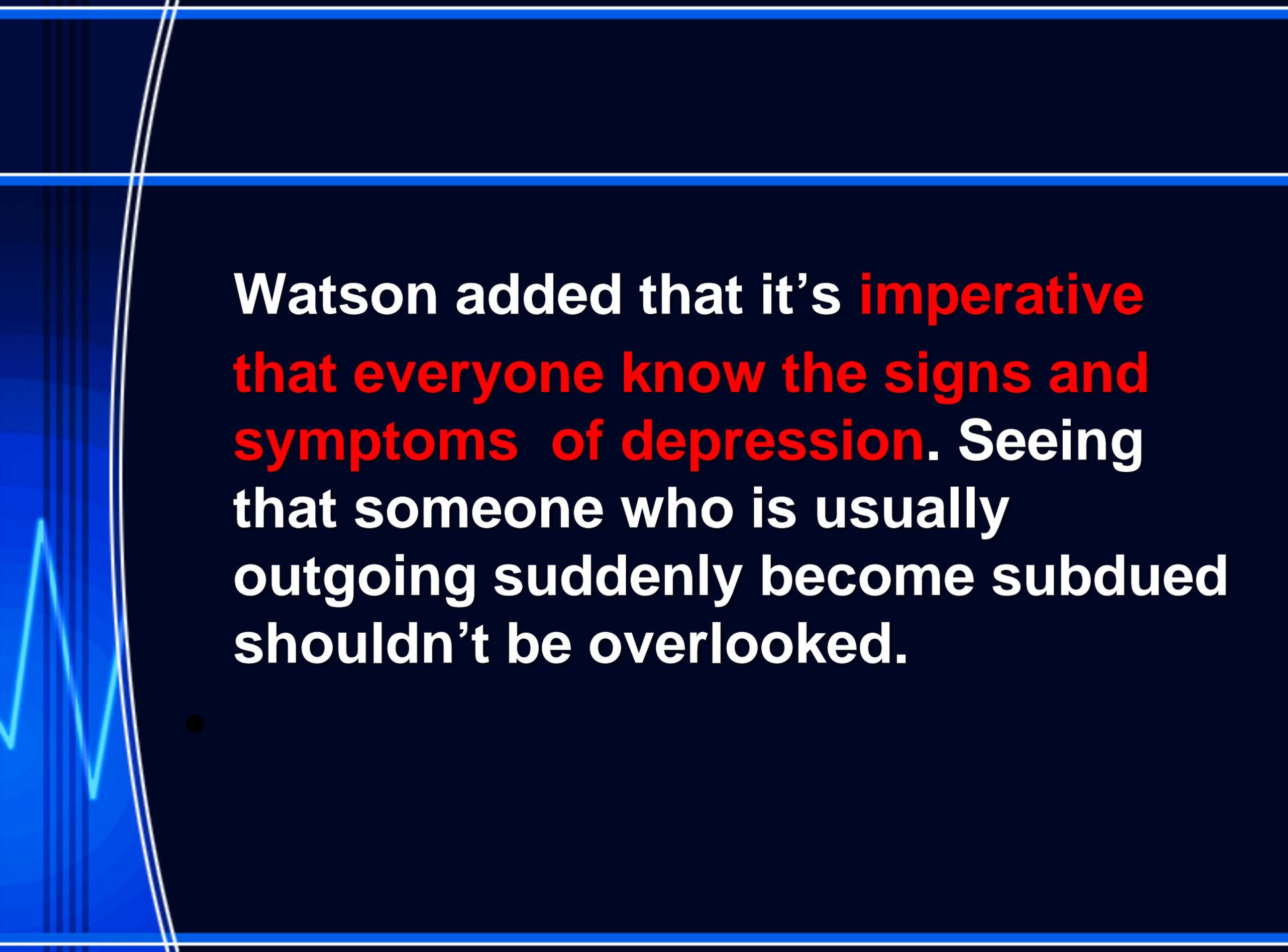
**Article from Firehouse Magazine**  
**October 29, 2013**

The majority of those suffering from PTSD don't get treatment for a number of reasons. They often **fear documentation of their visit will hurt their chances of promotion or their colleagues will find out**

That's why confidentiality is so essential throughout the process, explained Dr. Patricia Watson with the National Center for PTSD

She added that **responders often prefer peer interaction** as opposed to formal interventions. But, some must be referred for professional assistance

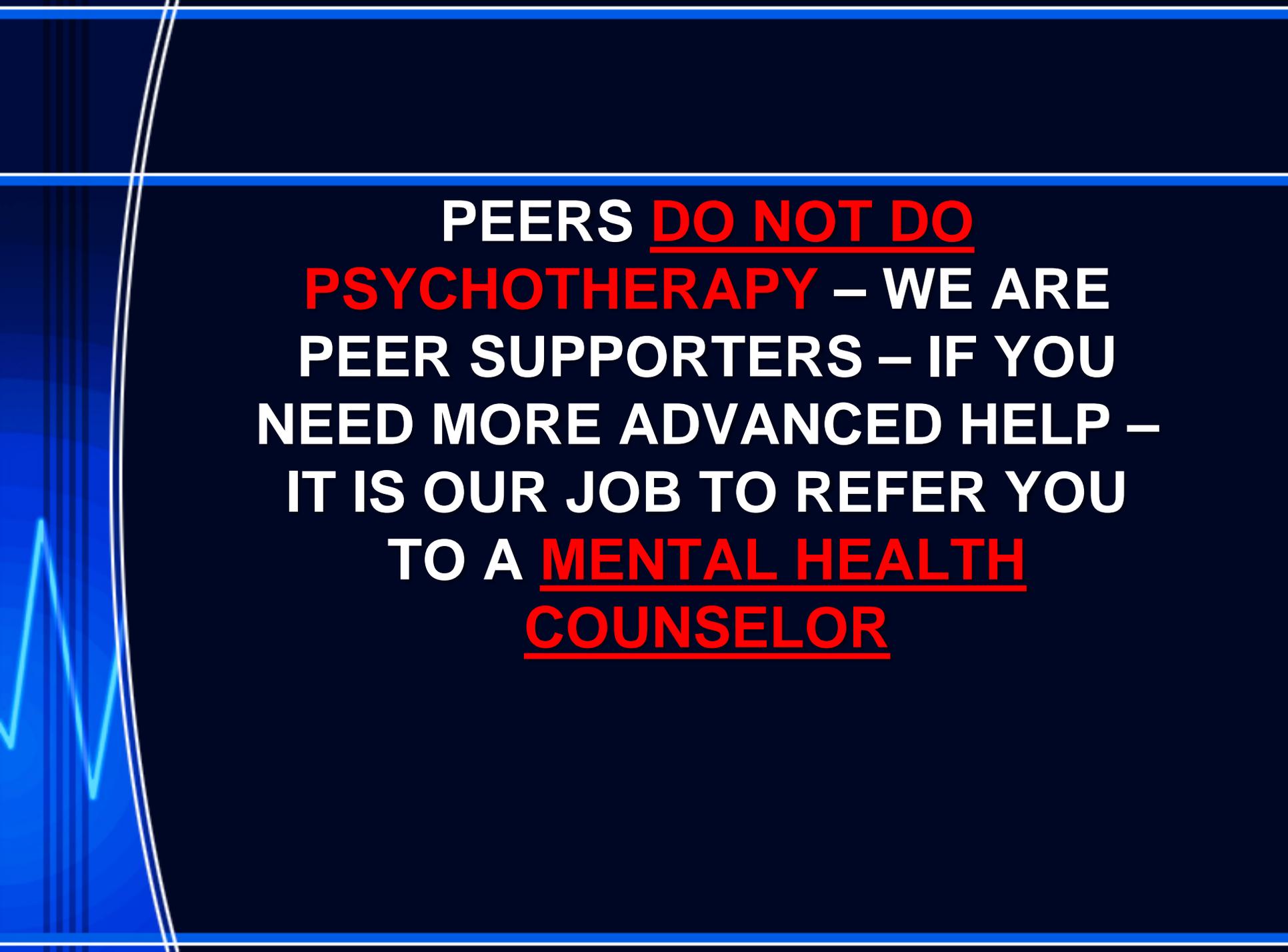




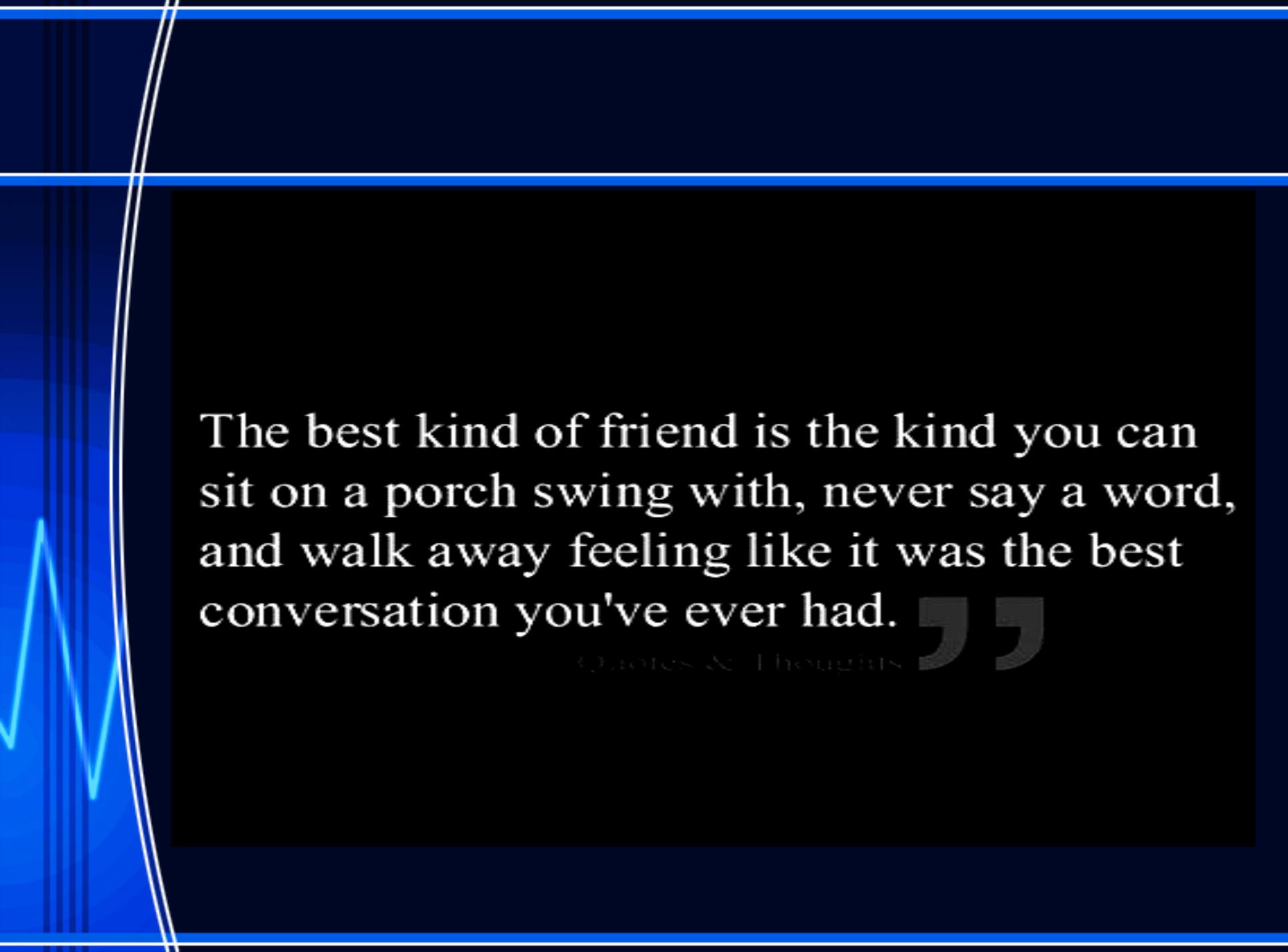
Watson added that it's **imperative that everyone know the signs and symptoms of depression.** Seeing that someone who is usually outgoing suddenly become subdued shouldn't be overlooked.

**CONFIDENTIALITY IS THE  
FOUNDATION TO CRITICAL  
INCIDENT STRESS  
MANAGEMENT**



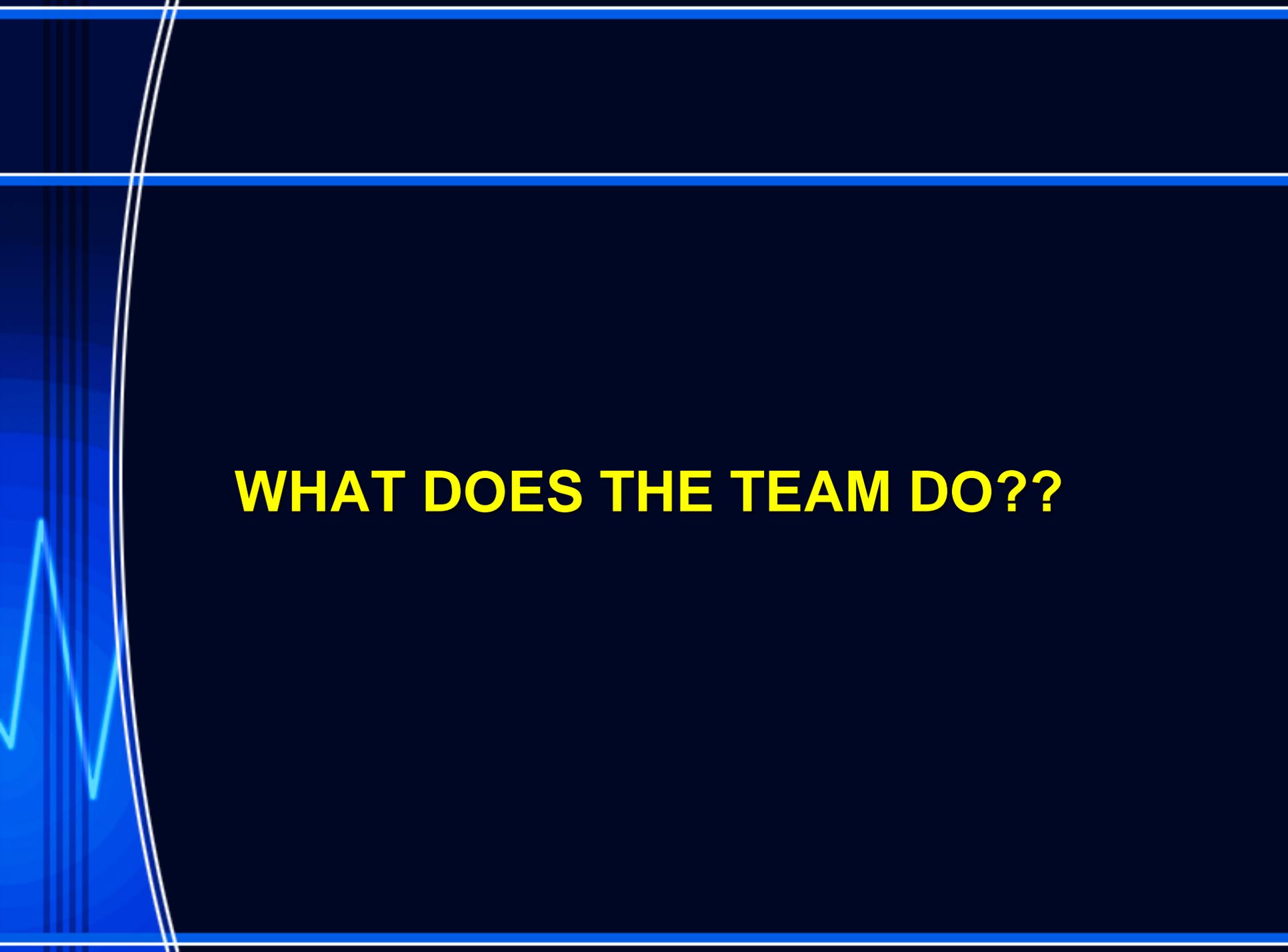


**PEERS DO NOT DO  
PSYCHOTHERAPY – WE ARE  
PEER SUPPORTERS – IF YOU  
NEED MORE ADVANCED HELP –  
IT IS OUR JOB TO REFER YOU  
TO A MENTAL HEALTH  
COUNSELOR**



The best kind of friend is the kind you can sit on a porch swing with, never say a word, and walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you've ever had. ”

Quotes & Thoughts

The image features a dark blue background with a white grid. On the left side, there is a glowing blue line graph with several peaks and valleys. The text "WHAT DOES THE TEAM DO??" is centered in the middle of the image in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

**WHAT DOES THE TEAM DO??**

# INTERVENTIONS

- **One-on-One Interventions**
- **RITS (Rest, Information Transition Services)**
- **Crisis Management Briefings**
- **Defusings**
- **Debriefings**
- **On-Scene Support**

## **HOW DOES CISM HELP?**

**CISM helps you to understand that it is okay to deal with the stressors of your job**

### **Critical Incident Stress Management:**

- **Reduces the impact of the incident**
- **Eases the feeling of being abnormal Promotes overall well-being Improves coping skills for future incidents**
- **Helps you remain productive on the job**

# COPING WITH A CRITICAL INCIDENT

Often emergency personnel cope with stress and consider it as “**part of the job.**” Some situations, however, cause lasting impressions and can challenge the ability to function on the job and at home. These can sometimes be the cause of physical and emotional stress and result in an emergency responder losing interest in their job, becoming a troubled employee or leaving the field completely

## **HOW DOES THE CISM TEAM WORK?**

- **Everything is confidential so you can speak freely**
- **This is not therapy, a critique of the event or fit for duty clearance**
- **Participants may describe their thoughts, actions and reactions to the incident**
- **The team will assist you in understanding the thoughts, emotions and behaviors that accompany a critical incident**
- **It is an opportunity to help you understand how a critical incident has effected you**

# ONE-ON-ONES

- **Individual contact**
- **Either by phone or in person**



# RITS/DEMOBILIZATIONS

- **Natural or Man - made Disaster**
- **Terrorist attack**
- **Major search operation**
- **Major wild land fire**



# **REST, INFORMATION TRANSITION SERVICES**

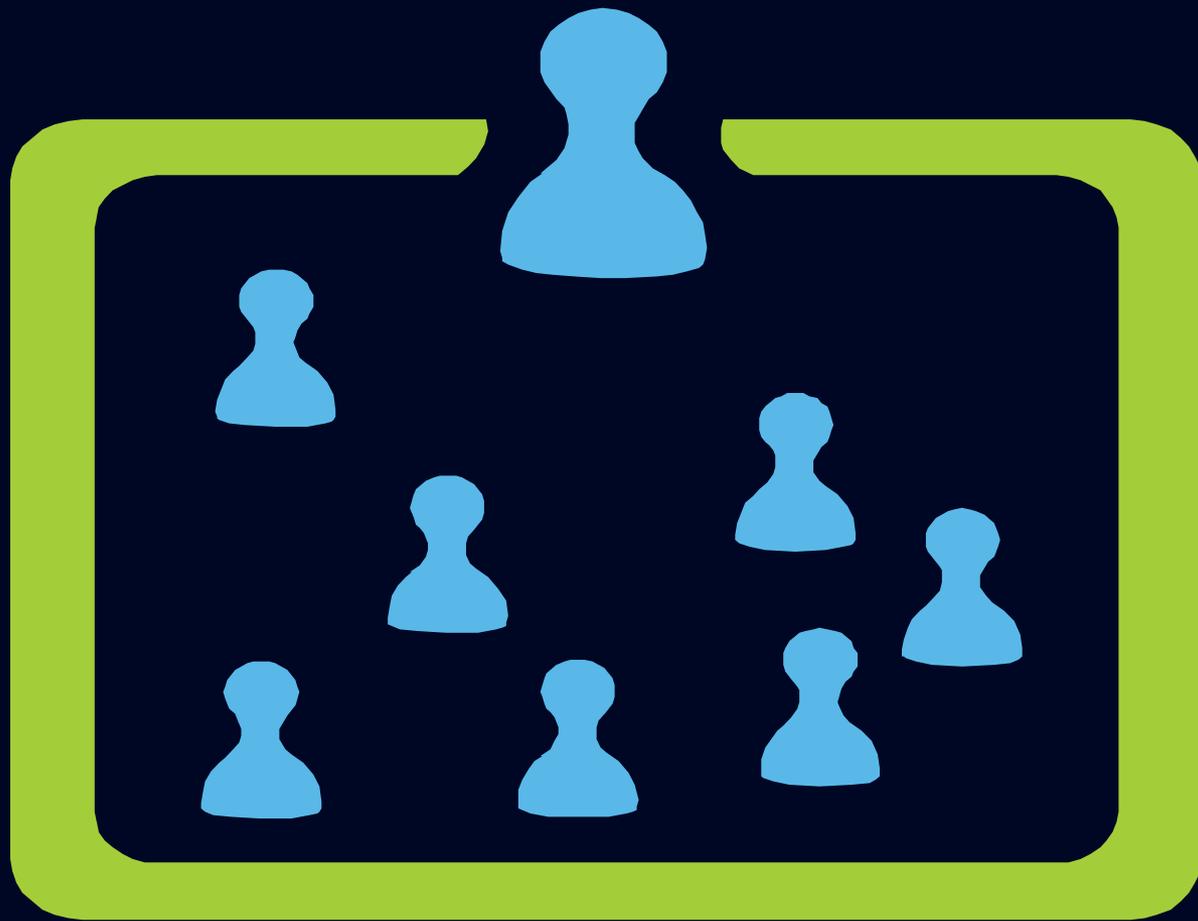
- **A ten minute informational session on operation, as well as information on stress & stress management**
- **A twenty minute rest period with food and fluids**
- **A very brief period of instructions from unit leaders on either a return to non - disaster duties or release to home**

# RESPITE/REHAB CENTERS

- **On - going and less structured than demobilization**
- **Most commonly used for on - going events**
- **Provides areas for rest and / or diversion (e.g., TV, VCR) appropriate for use in ongoing event**
- **Provides food and fluids**

# **CRISIS MANAGEMENT BRIEFING** **(CMB)**

- **May be utilized with a traumatic event of any size that impacts a large number of people**
- **Applicable to school, business, church, industrial, organizational and community based populations**
- **Has military and emergency services applications as well**



# CMB GOALS

- **Provide information**
- **Provide a sense of leadership**
- **Reduce sense of chaos**
- **Enhance credibility**
- **Rumor control**

# **DEFUSING GOALS**

- **Normalization / lower tension**
- **Set expectations, provide information**
- **Discuss coping methods**
- **Identify those who need additional support**

# DEFUSINGS

- **INTRODUCTION** – Introduce team; lay out the guidelines; lower anxiety about the process
- **EXPLORATION** – Allows a brief discussion of the experience. A brief “story” of the event
- **INFORMATION** – Provide information, normalize, teach, guidance, summarize key points

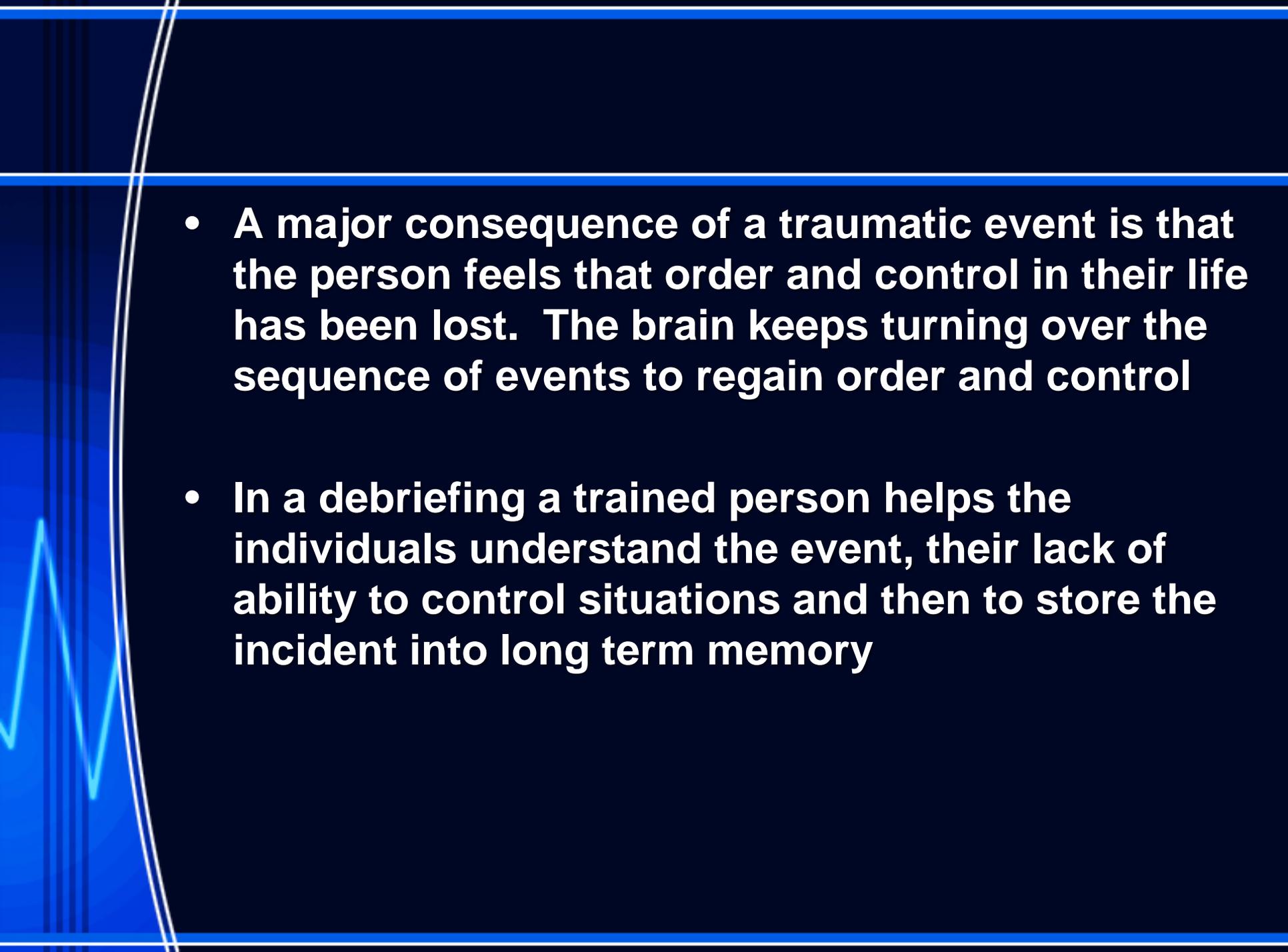


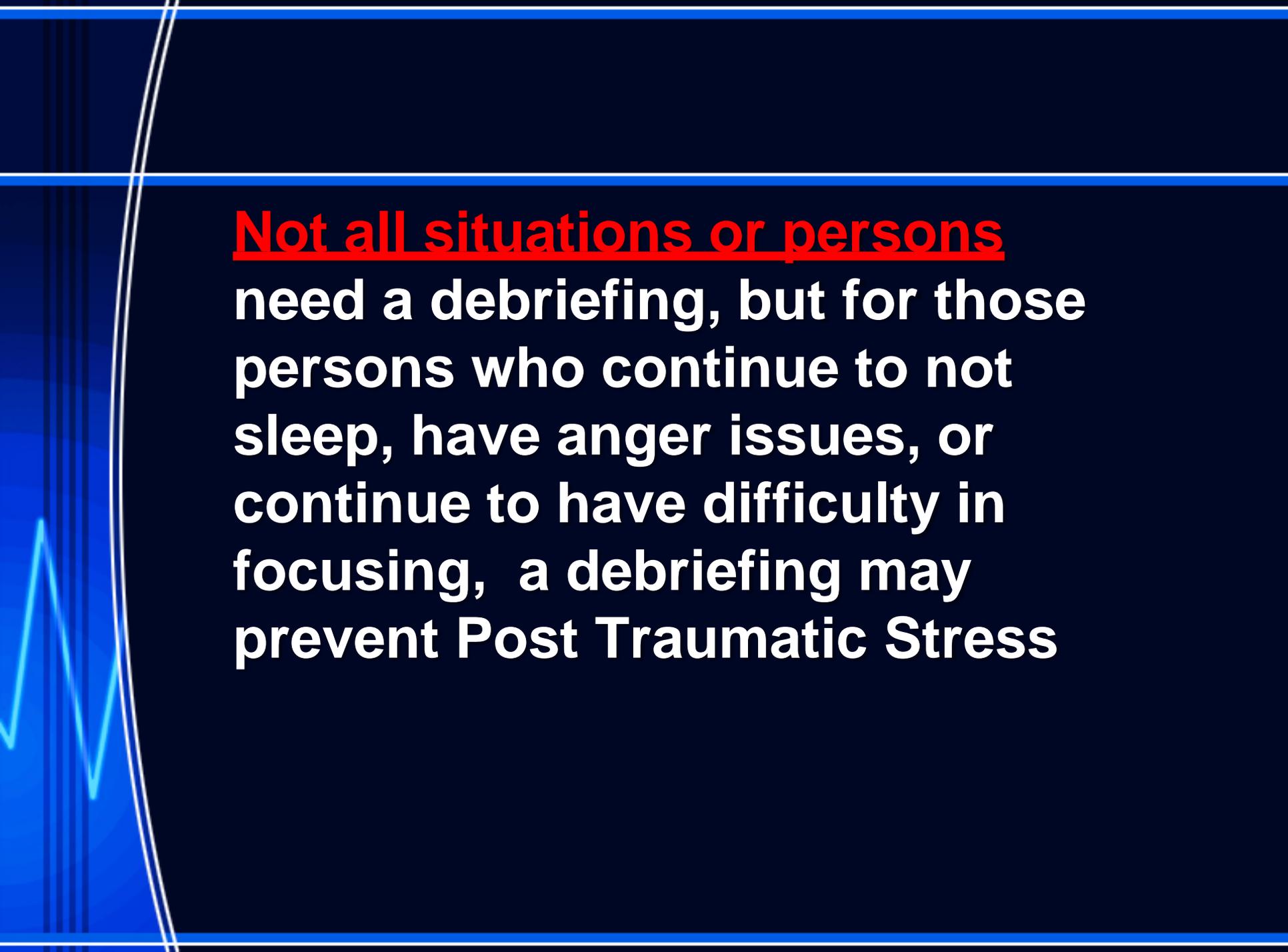
# **DEBRIEFING GOALS**

- **Mitigate distress**
- **Facilitate psychological normalization and psychological “closure” (reconstruction)**
- **Set appropriate expectations for psychological / behavioral reactions**
- **Serve as a forum for stress management education**
- **Identification of external coping resources**
- **Serve as a platform for psychological triage and referral**

# PLANNING A DEBRIEFING

- **SIZE:** Small group (3 - 20)
- **DURATION:** 1 - 3 hours
- **TIMING:** 1 - 10 days for most incidents (1 - 3 days for most acute public safety incidents; 3 - 4 weeks for disasters). Implement when “psychological closure” possible, i.e., disengagement. Timing has more to do with **PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS** than the passage of time
- **LOCATION:** Room with chairs placed in a circle or around a table, isolated away from incident site and distractions
- **GROUP:** Homogeneous groups only!

- 
- **A major consequence of a traumatic event is that the person feels that order and control in their life has been lost. The brain keeps turning over the sequence of events to regain order and control**
  - **In a debriefing a trained person helps the individuals understand the event, their lack of ability to control situations and then to store the incident into long term memory**



**Not all situations or persons  
need a debriefing, but for those  
persons who continue to not  
sleep, have anger issues, or  
continue to have difficulty in  
focusing, a debriefing may  
prevent Post Traumatic Stress**

# **ON-SCENE SUPPORT**

- **Have someone stay with the distressed person or persons**
- **Provide non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated fluids**
- **Allow the person to talk about the experience**
- **Reassure the person that the stress experience is normal; most people recover very well from stress**
- **Show appreciation for the person's work**

- **Do nothing to embarrass the person.**
- **Listen to the person**
- **Don't take the person's anger or other feelings personally**
- **Don't tell them that they are "lucky it was not worse" - traumatized people are not consoled by those statements. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them**

# WHY HAVE A REGIONAL TEAM?

The need for continued mental health is very much a necessity in the emergency response field. Without it, we would have more suicides, more cases of Post Traumatic Stress, and more people leaving emergency response. Providers need to know that they are important, that someone out there cares when times get tough.



**CISM programs will continue to grow and offer help to emergency responders 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The benefits of having peer support groups will continue help the providers remain mentally and physically healthy. Keeping employees healthy will continue to be a way to reduce the cost of any organization. Any organizations overall goal by having a Regional CISM Team is to ensure that its member's health is a priority. We want to keep educating emergency responders and help them return to work post any major incident. That is why the need to have and maintain peer support programs is so very vital in public safety.**

**WE ARE OUR MOST IMPORTANT ASSET**

M

See how far you've come?  
Be proud of yourself.  
If nothing else, one day, you can look at  
someone straight in the eye and say:  
"But I lived through it and  
it made me who I am today."

Lessons Learned In Life

# **COURSES OFFERED BY ICISF**

- **Advanced Group Crisis Intervention**
- **Behavioral Emergencies: Survival Strategies for Emergency Services and Counselors**
- **CISM Application with Children**
- **Compassion Fatigue**
- **Grief Following Trauma**
- **Group Crisis Intervention**
- **Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support**

# **COURSES OFFERED BY ICISF**

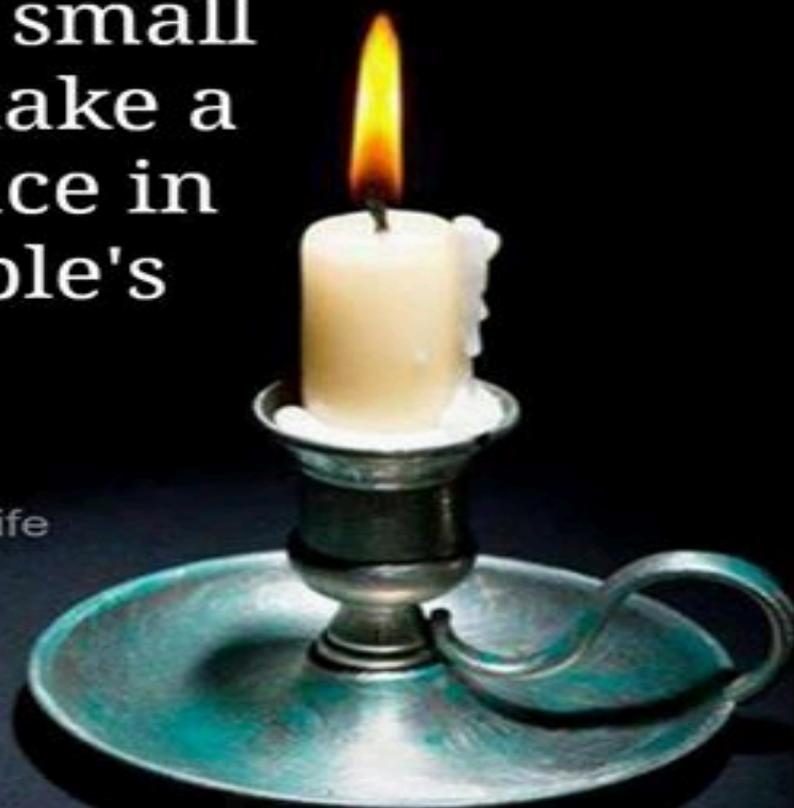
- **Law Enforcement Perspectives for CISM Enhancement**
- **Line of Duty Death: Preparing the Best for the Worst**
- **Managing School Crises: From Theory to Application**
- **Pastoral Crisis Intervention**
- **Pastoral Crisis Intervention I & II**
- **Pastoral Crisis Intervention II**

# **COURSES OFFERED BY ICISF**

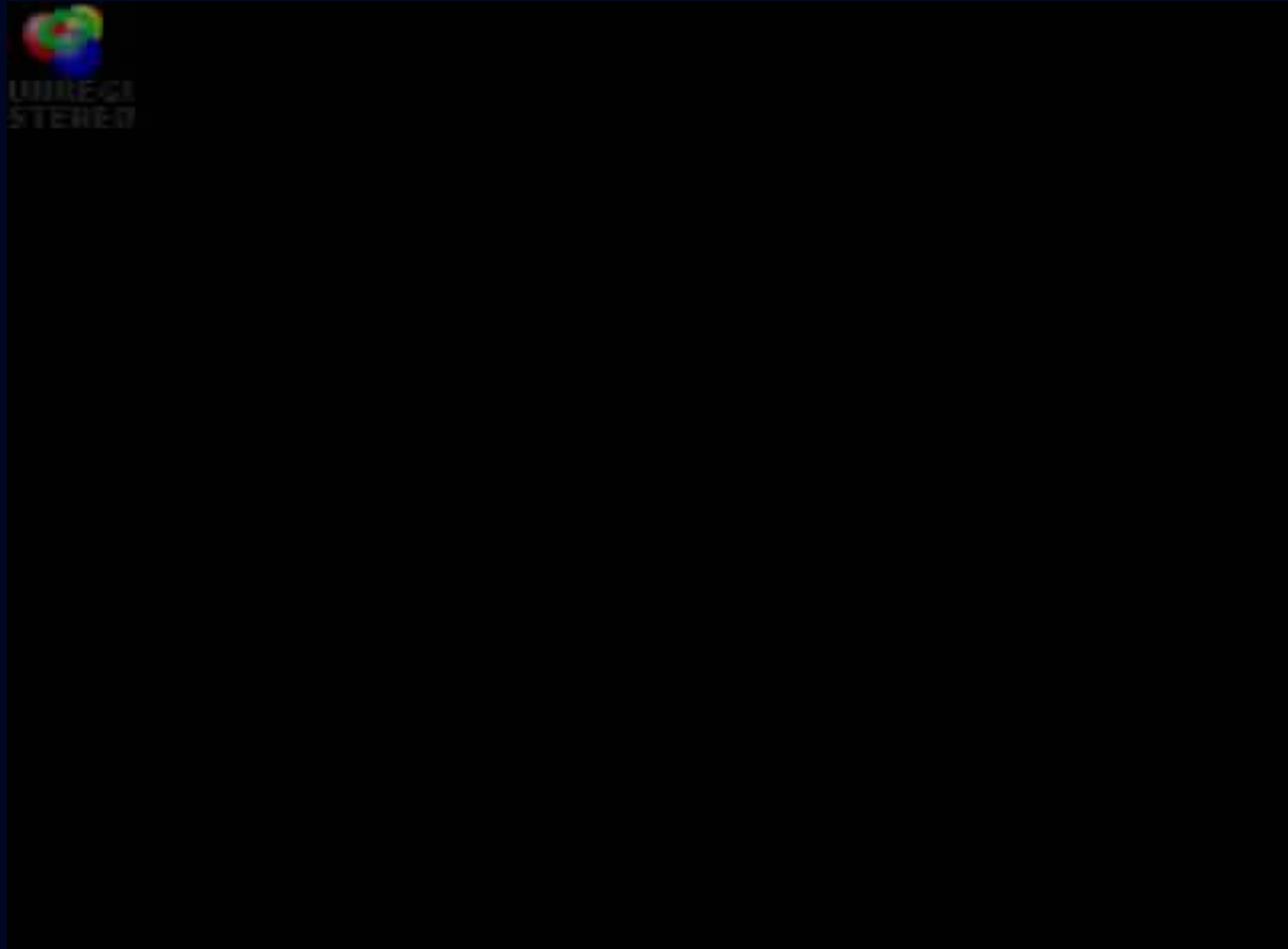
- **Stress Management for the Trauma Service Provider**
- **Suicide Awareness**
- **Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention**
- **Terrorism: Psychological Impact and Implications**
- **Workplace Violence Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support & Group Crisis Intervention**

You may think  
your light is small  
but it can make a  
**BIG** difference in  
other people's  
lives.

Lessons Learned In Life



# EVERYBODY NEEDS SOMEBODY



# QUESTIONS??

