

A close-up photograph of a vibrant green leaf, likely from a grass or similar plant, covered in numerous clear water droplets. The droplets are of various sizes and are scattered across the surface of the leaf, which shows fine veins. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

in equilibrium

Call us free: 0800 622 6932

Consultancy details

Post Trauma Debriefing

Overview

Immediately after a traumatic incident we can provide telephone advice and if possible will attend the incident location the same day. This is to provide support, give reassurance, defuse the impact of primary stages of shock and assist in minimising the disruptive effect on personnel and business continuity. A post trauma debriefing meeting will then be arranged with all those affected to ascertain facts, vent feelings and decide future plans.

A comprehensive service

Because every trauma situation is unique an initial meeting is required to decide how we will work together. It is normal for the post trauma debriefing to take the form of a meeting and for one-to-one counselling to be provided for those who need it. We can provide an experienced debriefing facilitator who also has counselling skills which is extremely useful as those attending post trauma debriefings frequently experience personal distress caused by flashbacks or discussions that trigger past traumatic experiences.

Typical symptoms shown by those involved in a traumatic incident

- Flashbacks
- Nightmares and sleep disturbance
- Heightened thoughts of trauma
- Excessive use of tobacco and alcohol
- Withdrawal and avoidance of people and places
- Inability to concentrate
- Angry outbursts

When should post trauma debriefing be used?

This process has been successfully employed in many situations, including:

- 'A violent attempted robbery at a bank branch.'
- 'The unexpected death of a schoolteacher just after arriving at school.'
- 'A fatal accident involving machinery at a manufacturing plant.'
- 'A serious assault on a Public House member of staff by a customer.'

Purpose of post trauma debriefing

- To minimise the emotional and psychological affect on those involved
- Facilitate the ventilation of negative feelings and in many cases, reactive anger
- Establish the facts and decide on an action plan for the future
- Minimise operational downtime and potential sickness absence costs

Timing of the post trauma debriefing meeting

The Post Trauma debriefing meeting should not be held too soon after the event, as both personnel and victims experience various degrees of shock and unreality. At this early stage many people are still in an altered state of consciousness during which the intake and processing of information is different from the normal. The meeting usually takes place at least two days after the traumatic incident, however depending on circumstances it could be weeks or months later if necessary.

Venue

The debriefing meeting should take place in a room where there will be no interruptions. There should be a table in the centre and, if possible, tea/coffee making facilities should be available. The venue should be informal and not give the impression of being a “therapy” session. Depending on the circumstances it may not be appropriate to hold the meeting in the location the incident occurred.

Who attends the post trauma debriefing meeting

All those who are part of the team should attend, even if they were not present when the incident occurred. This should include whoever is responsible for implementing future plans to reduce /minimise the risk of a

The Benefits of Post Trauma Debriefing

For the employee:

- Clearer decision making
- Increased effectiveness
- Better concentration
- Addresses lateness and tiredness caused by sleep disturbance and flashbacks
- Management of uncharacteristic outbursts of anger, inertia or withdrawal

For the organisation:

- Enhances team support and cohesiveness
- Less interruption in productivity overall
- Reduced sickness absence

Objectives of the post trauma debriefing meeting

- Establish the facts from those directly involved
- Ventilation of impressions, feelings and reactions
- Decrease group and individual tension
- Prepare those involved for symptoms and reactions that may arise
- Identify available sources of support for those who need it
- Ensure that everyone attending is as involved as they want to be
- Help the group to decide how to take things forward which may include a follow-on meeting and one-to-one sessions
- The debriefing facilitator agrees with the group what to feedback to management verbally

What happens next

- If required, the consultant undertakes one-to-one debriefing sessions for those uncomfortable with a group setting
- If necessary a further debriefing meeting is arranged
- Management develops an action plan with the help of the consultant and the involvement of employees,
- Support actions are implemented including counselling sessions for those who require them

Contact Details

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