

# Supporting Your Team During Critical Moments

## A Guide for Managers & HR Professionals on Critical Incident Response

At Spring Health, we understand that navigating a critical incident can be overwhelming, for both individuals and organizations. Our goal is to provide compassionate, professional support to help your team recover and move forward together.



### What is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident is a stressful event that can disrupt someone's emotional or physical well-being. It may also impact witnesses, first responders, and the broader workplace. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a critical incident as an event beyond the scope of normal or typical experiences, often involving actual or perceived threats to safety, injury, or loss.

Critical incidents in the workplace can range from large-scale events (macro-level) to more localized challenges (micro-level):

#### Macro-Level Incidents (Large-Scale):

- Natural disasters (hurricanes, floods, wildfires)
- Mass shootings
- Pandemics
- Civil unrest
- Acts of terrorism

#### Micro-Level Incidents (Localized):

- Loss of a colleague
- Workplace accidents
- Workforce reductions
- Incidents of violence

### How Does a Critical Incident Response (CIR) Help?

A Critical Incident Response (CIR) is a thoughtful, structured approach to supporting employees after a traumatic event. It is not therapy, but a specialized way to:

- Equip employees with practical coping strategies.
- Normalize responses to abnormal events, helping individuals understand their feelings and reactions.
- Provide psychoeducation on managing stress and trauma.
- Foster a safe, open environment where employees can choose how much or how little they share.

CIRs are led by mental health professionals, either in person or virtually, and include group debriefings and short, individual check-ins. Sessions are typically 1 hour long, with additional resources and follow-up care available through Spring Health.

### What CIRs Are Not

It's important to clarify what CIRs are not:

- They are not therapy or treatment for PTSD or other diagnoses.
- They do not replace investigative or administrative procedures.
- They are not designed to solve organizational challenges or policy issues.

## Spring Health's Commitment to CIR Support

We recognize the urgency and sensitivity of responding to critical incidents. Our team approaches every request with empathy, professionalism, and a deep understanding of the impact these events can have on your organization.

Whether your team needs immediate support or guidance on shaping a response, Spring Health is here to help. Our CIR services are flexible, tailored to fit your company's unique culture and needs, and available in both individual and group formats.

### Tips for Coordinating a CIR:

#### 1. Check Internal Policies:

Confirm any existing guidelines with your HR or leadership team before scheduling a CIR.

#### 2. Timing Matters:

Scheduling CIRs 48–72 hours after an incident allows employees to process initial emotions, like shock or denial, and ensures greater participation.

#### 3. Keep It Simple:

Offering fewer, well-timed sessions often results in better utilization. As a general rule, about 10% of employees affected by an incident may attend a CIR.

#### 4. Consider the Details:

When requesting a CIR, think about factors like:

- Was the incident onsite or offsite?
- How many employees were directly impacted?
- Would your team prefer group support, individual check-ins, or both?
- Are there specific needs, such as bilingual support or cultural competence?

#### 5. Spread the Word:

Clearly communicate the availability and purpose of CIR sessions to your team. Highlight that participation is confidential, voluntary, and a chance to process the event in a supportive space.

## More Ways Spring Health Can Help

CIRs are just one of the many resources available to support your team. **Employees also have access to:**

- Individual therapy sessions through Spring Health
- 24/7 mental health crisis line
- Manager-specific support through our Management Consultation team
- Self-guided wellness tools via the Spring Health app or website

## Reach Out for Support

Even if you're unsure what kind of support your team needs, we encourage you to reach out to Spring Health. Our Management Consultation team is ready to guide you through the process, answer your questions, and help you create a plan that works for your organization.

Thank you for trusting Spring Health to support you and your team during this challenging time.

*We're here to help you move forward, together.*