

Chapter: Internal Reporting
Title: Critical Incident Support Teams

Effective Date: 8/31/09, T-100
Page: 1 of 3
New

ACA Standard(s): 4-JCF-4D-07

(a) **Policy.**

The Texas Youth Commission may dispatch a Critical Incident Support Team (CIST) to provide immediate administrative, clinical, and chaplaincy assistance to staff, youth, and family members affected by certain critical incidents.

(b) **Procedures.**

(1) **Members of the Critical Incident Support Team.**

- (A) The director of integrated treatment and support or designee will maintain an active list of qualified mental health professionals and chaplains to be members of the CIST.
- (B) The list of CIST members and appropriate contact information will be supplied to:
 - (i) director of residential and community services;
 - (ii) director of specialized treatment;
 - (iii) chief local administrators; and
 - (iv) managers of institutional clinical services.

(2) **Training.**

CIST members will receive training that includes, but is not limited to:

- (A) definition of roles and responsibilities;
- (B) expectations for communicating with the youth's family, other youth, and staff; and
- (C) debriefing procedures.

(3) **Activation of the Critical Incident Support Team.**

- (A) The director of integrated treatment and support or designee will initiate activation of the team in the event of a life threatening suicide attempt, death of a youth or on-duty staff member, or other critical incident as determined by the chief executive officer or designee.
- (B) The director of integrated treatment and support or designee will designate and immediately notify one member of the team to function as the team leader. The team leader must be a mental health professional who serves in an administrative role within the agency and is not directly affected by the incident.
- (C) The team leader will contact team members and activate the team.

(4) **Responsibilities of the Critical Incident Support Team Leader.**

The team leader will, as appropriate:

- (A) within eight hours after notification of a critical incident, collaborate with the chief local administrator to determine which staff and youth require support during the first 72 hours;
- (B) coordinate team responsibilities;
- (C) relieve the affected psychologist or associate psychologist, if applicable;
- (D) debrief with the affected administrator;

- (E) establish the scope of the staff and youth directly or indirectly involved;
- (F) monitor to what degree the staff directly or indirectly involved are coping with the critical incident;
- (G) coordinate with the administrator the affected staff who are cleared to work;
- (H) coordinate follow-up support for affected staff; and
- (I) identify staff for follow-up with private insurance, outside providers, or Employee Assistance Program counseling services.

(5) Responsibilities of the Chief Local Administrator.

The chief local administrator will designate a large, quiet room for the CIST team to organize the mental health response and for a quiet space for the affected staff members to begin the process of recovery.

(6) Responsibilities of the Critical Incident Support Team.

- (A) Team members will inform affected youth in a timely manner and provide supportive opportunities for reaction during and after the critical incident. In coordination with facility psychology staff, the CIST team will:
 - (i) organize and facilitate support group meetings;
 - (ii) provide the opportunity for youth to express sympathy to the family, as appropriate;
 - (iii) provide appropriate pastoral counseling, as necessary; and
 - (iv) identify follow-up services and other precautions for the youth.
- (B) In the event of a youth's death, team members will provide supportive services to the youth's family. The team will:
 - (i) provide family members with the opportunity to visit the critical incident room or area, if appropriate;
 - (ii) ensure that the possessions of the deceased are treated with respect and returned to the family members including:
 - (I) any farewell letter; and
 - (II) any work the youth has accomplished;
 - (iii) provide pastoral support either on-site or with a referral to resources in the local community. The chaplain may also assist in community referrals for mortuary and burial arrangements.
- (C) Team members will provide supportive services to the staff members directly and indirectly affected by the critical incident. The team will:
 - (i) begin follow-up calls and/or visits to staff directly involved;
 - (ii) organize and facilitate support group meetings;
 - (iii) provide direction or referrals for follow-up care, as needed;
 - (iv) ensure the availability of a debriefing session for affected staff.
- (D) Within 30 days of the critical incident, the team will:
 - (i) prepare a debriefing report detailing the effectiveness of the response and listing additional follow-up activities, as necessary;

- (ii) forward the debriefing report to the executive management team; and
 - (iii) coordinate with facility management to ensure follow-up occurs throughout the year and on the anniversary dates of the critical incident.
-
-