



# 2017 AWARDS

## A Comprehensive Stress Management Program For Correctional Employees Department of Correction and Rehabilitation

### Description

The Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation Critical Incident Stress Management Program (CISM) is a comprehensive, multi-faceted stress management program designed to help correctional employees build resistance to distress, impairment, and dysfunction. The program works to increase a capacity for resilience to rebound from distress. It helps correctional employees recover from exposure to traumatic incidents. A mental health professional and a team of specially trained multidisciplinary peers provide a variety of interventions, including the promotion of wellness, positive stress management skills, and individual and group intervention following exposure to traumatic incidents.

Initiated in early 2016, the CISM program has served more than 400 employees, representing two-thirds of the workforce, through orientation, training, or outreach following a traumatic incident. CISM services have responded to 10 serious traumatic incidents, including inmate suicide attempts, two deaths in custody, several staff assaults, and the death of a beloved, long-term employee. Outreach was provided to more than 80 individual employees experiencing a variety of issues, such as being the victim of an inmate assault, experiencing a death in the family, or being injured on the job. CISM services have also been provided via roll call and new employee trainings.

Studies indicate these types of programs can reduce employee sick leave and absenteeism by 50 to 60% among individuals who experience a traumatic event. Beyond the scientific study results, a measure of the CISM program success is the value of connectedness and camaraderie employees experience when they overcome stressful conditions. CISM helps employees to effectively work in a highly stressful job by helping them know the program staff care and are deeply concerned for their well-being.

### Key Accomplishments

- In 2016, the CISM team created a video greeting for a seriously ill employee who served in the department for more than 20 years. The video communicated how much she was loved and how her fellow employees were wishing her well. When the employee succumbed to her illness, the team mobilized to provide support to all department employees who mourned her loss at the workplace and her funeral services and burial.
- When an employee lost his home and all his family's belongings in a house fire, the CISM team organized a department collection to help the employee and his family cope and manage their immediate emergency needs.
- The team members take seriously their commitment to providing high quality peer support and have collectively attended more than 200 hours of training to learn and improve their skills in critical incident stress management.

### Team Members

**Laurie Mombay**, Program Coordinator  
**Cindy Boyd**, Correctional Specialist  
**Lanora Dixon**, Correctional Specialist  
**Ayo Durojaiye**, Correctional Specialist  
**Corporal Patricia Garvey**  
**Lia Felker**, Therapist  
**Corporal Nikolas Knowlton**  
**Sergeant Carl Mande**  
**Sergeant Alicia Veney**  
**Sergeant Warren Wallingford**

