

## The Three-Step Defusing Process

- Introduction of the team, statement of purpose, motivation of participants, setting of ground rules, discussion of confidentiality, and description of the defusing process
- Exploration of what transpired during the critical incident, discussion of experiences and personal reactions, evaluation of the need for further intervention (full debriefing, individual crisis intervention or counseling), and the provision of support, hope, and reassurance
- Information for teaching of critical incident stress survival and coping skills, emphasis on self-care stress management, rest, and positive family interactions; normalization of reactions and experiences, recognition and acknowledgement

During the later morning and early afternoon hours of the actual day of the mass shooting, the Dayton Fire Department made the Dayton Firefighters Activities Center available for the Southwest Ohio Critical Incident Stress Management Team (SWOCISM) to conduct the remainder of the defusings in order to capture every police officer and firefighter/EMS/paramedic on scene during and subsequent to the mass shooting. Several defusings were conducted consecutively, with five members of the team present for these interventions, including a firefighter/paramedic, police officer, chaplain and two mental health professionals. Most of the participants were very open and forthcoming, trying to process the dreadfulness they had just witnessed. Because of confidentiality, no surveys, questionnaires, or feedback followed the defusing process. Therefore, it was difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of this process, other than by word of mouth. Interestingly enough, however, many of the participants ultimately requested individual psychotherapy/one-to-one interventions post-defusing in the weeks and months that followed.

Mitchell, J. T. (2006). *Advanced Group Crisis Intervention*. International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.

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