

**AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF A  
CRITICAL INCIDENT  
ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONING  
AND WORK PERFORMANCE OF AN EMPLOYEE**

**by**

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**The grand essentials to happiness in this life  
are something to do,  
something to love,  
and something to hope for.**

**- Joseph Addison**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter 1

#### General Introduction

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	PROBLEM FORMULATION	8
1.3	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	10
	1.3.1 Goal of research	10
	1.3.2 Objectives of the study	11
1.4	HYPOTHESIS/RESEARCH QUESTIONS	12
	1.4.1 Hypothesis	12
	1.4.2 Research questions	12
1.5	RESEARCH APPROACH	12
1.6	TYPE OF RESEARCH	14
	1.6.1 Applied research	14
1.7	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	14
	1.7.1 Data collection	15
	1.7.1.1 Quantitative data collection	15
	1.7.1.2 Qualitative data collection	16
	1.7.2 Data analysis	17
	1.7.2.1 Quantitative data analysis	17
	1.7.2.2 Qualitative data analysis	17
	1.7.2.2.1 Process of qualitative data analysis	17
1.8	PILOT STUDY	19
	1.8.1 Feasibility of the study	19
	1.8.2 Pilot test of the data collection instrument	20
	1.8.2.1 Quantitative study	20
	1.8.2.2 Qualitative study	21
1.9	RESEARCH POPULATION, BOUNDARY OF THE SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD	22
1.10	ETHICAL ISSUES	23
	1.10.1 Voluntary participation	23
	1.10.2 No harm to respondents	23

1.10.3	Informed consent	23
1.10.4	Deception of respondents	24
1.10.5	Anonymity and confidentiality	24
1.10.6	Actions and competence of researcher	25
1.10.7	Release or publication of findings	25
1.10.8	Debriefing of respondents	25
1.11	DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS	25
1.11.1	Crisis	25
1.11.2	Critical incident	26
1.11.3	Trauma	27
1.11.4	Work performance	27
1.11.5	Employee assistance programme	28
1.12	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	29

## Chapter 2

### Litrature Review Critical Incidents

2.1	INTRODUCTION	30
2.2	DEFINING CRISIS, CRITICAL INCIDENT AND TRAUMA	31
2.2.1	Crisis	31
2.2.2	Critical incident	32
2.2.3	Trauma	33
2.3	DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS	34
2.3.1	Type I trauma	35
2.3.2	Type II trauma	36
2.4	RISK FACTORS IN TRAUMATISATION AS A RESULT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT	37
2.4.1	Pre-trauma risk factors	37
2.4.2	Trauma risk factors	38
2.4.2.1	Situational factors	39
2.4.3	Post-trauma risk factors	41
2.5	REACTIONS TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT	42

2.6	SHATTERING OF ASSUMPTIONS	46
2.6.1	Assumption of invulnerability	47
2.6.2	Assumption of rationality	47
2.6.3	Victim's sense of morality	47
2.6.4	Assumption of self-identity	47
2.7	FACTORS MEDIATING THE EXPERIENCE OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT	48
2.8	PHASES OF TRAUMA	51
2.8.1	Pre-impact phase	51
2.8.2	Impact phase	51
2.8.3	Recoil phase	52
2.8.4	Reintegration phase	52
2.9	NEURO-BIOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT	53
2.9.1	Bio-psychosocial model of stress	55
2.9.2	Psychological system	58
2.10	SYMPTOMS AND DIAGNOSIS	61
2.10.1	Definition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	62
2.10.2	Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	64
2.10.3	Complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	68
2.10.4	Acute stress disorder	69
2.11	EFFECT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT ON FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS	70
2.11.1	Family dynamics – immediately following the event	73
2.11.2	Family dynamics – weeks or months later	73
2.11.3	Family dynamics – years later	74
2.12	CONCLUSION	74

## Chapter 3

### Critical Incident Stress Management

3.1	INTRODUCTION	76
3.2	DEFINITION OF CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING (CISD)	76
3.3	GOALS OF DEBRIEFING	77
3.4	EFFECTIVENESS OF DEBRIEFING	78
3.5	PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA DEBRIEFING	80
	3.5.1 "SPIE"	80
	3.5.2 "IMPRESS A RAVEN"	80
3.6.	TRAUMA DEFUSING	82
	3.6.1 Aims of defusing	82
	3.6.2 Format of the defusing session	85
3.7	CONCLUSION	85

## Chapter 4

### Models in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

4.1	INTRODUCTION	87
4.2	MITCHELL'S DEBRIEFING PROCESS	87
	4.2.1 Phase 1: Defusing	87
	4.2.2 Phase 2: Initial debriefing	88
	4.2.3 Phase 3: Formal CISD	88
	4.2.3.1 Introductory stage	89
	4.2.3.2 Fact stage	90
	4.2.3.3 Thought stage	90
	4.2.3.4 Reaction stage	91
	4.2.3.5 Symptom stage	91
	4.2.3.6 Teaching stage	92
	4.2.3.7 Re-entry stage	93

4.2.4	Phase 4: Follow-up CISD/trauma aftercare model	94
4.2.4.1	Session 1: Making contact	95
4.2.4.2	Session 2: Assessment and the way forward	96
4.2.4.3	Session 3: Resourcing and moving forward	97
4.2.4.4	Session 4: Ending or preparation for post-traumatic stress disorder intervention	98
4.3	BRIEF THERAPY	98
4.3.1	Brief therapy and characteristics of brief therapy	99
4.3.2	Solution focused brief therapy (SFBT)	101
4.3.2.1	SFBT versus long-term therapies	102
4.3.2.2	Strengths and weaknesses of SFBT	104
4.4	TRAUMA INCIDENT REDUCTION (TIR)	105
4.4.1	Basic TIR	107
4.4.2	Thematic TIR	107
4.4.3	Change in emotional scale	111
4.4.4	Steps in TIR	111
4.4.5	Rules for facilitating TIR	113
4.4.5.1	Do not interpret	113
4.4.5.2	Do not evaluate	113
4.4.5.3	Maintain complete confidentiality of session data	113
4.4.5.4	Maintain control of the session at all times, but do not overwhelm the client	113
4.4.5.5	Ensure understanding of what the client is saying	114
4.4.5.6	Be interested, not interesting	114
4.4.5.7	Therapist's primary intention must be to help the client	114
4.4.5.8	Ensure that the client is well fed and rested and not under the influence of a psychotic drug	114
4.4.5.9	Ensure that the session is being given suitable space and with appropriate time available	114
4.4.5.10	Act predictably	115
4.4.5.11	Never attempt a session with a client who is unwilling or protesting	115
4.4.5.12	Take each issue in a session to a positive end point	115
4.5	CONCLUSION	115



## Chapter 5

### Employee Assistance Programmes

5.1	INTRODUCTION	119
5.2	WORK	120
5.2.1	Work as a microcosm of society	121
5.2.2	Work as a means for personal and collective identity	122
5.2.3	Work as a means of intervention/maintenance of human behaviour systems	122
5.2.4	Work as a diagnostic tool	122
5.3	INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE WORKPLACE	123
5.3.1	Poor work attendance	125
5.3.2	Drop in productivity	126
5.3.3	Deteriorating interpersonal relationships	127
5.3.4	Health issues	127
5.3.5	Societal issues	128
5.4	EAP AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING	131
5.4.1	Models in EAP	133
5.5	EFFECTIVE EAPs	135
5.5.1	Goals of an EAP	135
5.5.1.1	Essential elements of an EAP	135
5.6	EAP'S ROLE IN MANAGING CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE	139
5.7	VALUE OF AN EAP	144
5.8	CONCLUSION	149

## Chapter 6

# Empirical Data on the Impact of a Critical Incident on the Psychosocial Functioning and the Work Performance of the Employee

6.1	INTRODUCTION	148
6.2	ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF INFORMATION	151
6.2.1	Data on clients being exposed to a critical incident (Part 1)	151
6.2.1.1	Demographic information	151
6.2.1.1.1	Age	151
6.2.1.1.2	Gender	152
6.2.1.1.3	Qualifications	153
6.2.1.1.4	Service years at current employer	154
6.2.1.1.5	Level of functioning	155
6.2.1.1.6	Marital status	156
6.2.1.1.7	Dependants	157
6.2.1.1.8	Meaning of work	158
6.2.1.1.9	Critical incident	159
6.2.1.2	Trauma risk factors	164
6.2.1.2.1	Most traumatic incident	164
6.2.1.2.2	Extent of life threat	165
6.2.1.2.3	Onset of the critical incident	166
6.2.1.2.4	Degree of disturbance in home routine	167
6.2.1.2.5	Degree of exposure of death, dying and destruction	168
6.2.1.2.6	Degree of moral conflict inherent to situation	169
6.2.1.2.7	Respondents' role in trauma	170
6.2.1.2.8	Proportion of the community affected	171
6.2.1.2.9	Degree of bereavement	172
6.2.1.2.10	Duration of by trauma	173
6.2.1.2.11	Potential for recurrence of the incident	174
6.2.1.3	Situational factors	175
6.2.1.3.1	Anticipation of incident	175
6.2.1.3.2	Nature of crisis	176
6.2.1.3.3	Severity of crisis	177
6.2.1.3.4	Physical proximity of the incident	178

6.2.1.3.5	Feelings of guilt	179
6.2.1.3.6	Duration of incident	180
6.2.1.3.7	Psychological proximity	181
6.2.1.3.8	Stress associated with the incident	182
6.2.1.3.9	Role and conflict overload	183
6.2.1.4	Post-trauma risk factors	185
6.2.1.5	Reaction to a critical incident	186
6.2.1.5.1	Physical symptoms	187
6.2.1.5.2	Cognitive symptoms	199
6.2.1.5.3	Emotional symptoms	190
6.2.1.5.4	Behavioural symptoms	191
6.2.1.5.5	Shattering of assumptions	192
6.2.1.6	Interventions	195
6.2.1.6.1	Defusing	195
6.2.1.6.1.1	Impact of defusing	195
6.2.1.6.2	Debriefing	196
6.2.1.6.2.1	Impact of debriefing	199
6.2.1.6.3	Aftercare	199
6.2.1.6.3.1	Support after the debriefing process	199
6.2.1.6.3.2	Referral for further assistance	200
6.2.1.6.3.3	Further assistance	202
6.2.1.6.4	Experience of individual counselling	203
6.2.1.6.5	Value of individual counselling	205
6.2.2.	Data on clients being exposed to a critical incident as provided by the therapist (part 2)	206
6.2.2.1	Trauma reactions associated with PTSD	207
6.2.2.1.1	Trauma exposure	207
6.2.2.1.2	Initial response to trauma	208
6.2.2.1.3	Re-experiencing the event	209
6.2.2.1.4	Duration of re-experiencing the event	211
6.2.2.1.5	Avoidance of the event	212
6.2.2.1.6	Duration of avoidance of the event	215
6.2.2.1.7	Increased arousal	216
6.2.2.1.8	Duration of increased arousal	217
6.2.2.1.9	Disturbance caused by critical incident	219
6.2.2.1.10	Symptoms associated with complex PTSD	220
6.2.2.1.10.1	Behavioural reactions to a critical incident	221
6.2.2.1.10.2	Emotional reactions to a critical incident	222
6.2.2.1.10.3	Cognitive reactions to a critical incident	223



6.2.2.2	Symptoms associated with acute stress disorder	225
6.2.2.2.1	Dissociative symptoms	225
6.2.2.2.2	Numbing	226
6.2.2.2.3	Dissociative amnesia	226
6.2.2.2.4	Reduction in awareness	227
6.2.2.2.5	Derealisation	228
6.2.2.2.6	Depersonalisation	229
6.2.2.3	Intervention	231
6.2.2.3.1	Outcome of individual counselling	231
6.2.2.3.2	Reaction to the individual counselling	231
6.2.3	Document analysis – data on the clinical notes of therapists	232
6.2.3.1	Intervention classification	232
6.2.3.2	Work impact	241
6.2.3.3	Emotional distress	246
6.2.3.3.1	Emotional rating scale	246
6.2.3.3.2	Mental status indicator	251
6.2.3.4	Emotional – post-event assessment	253
6.2.3.4.1	Treatment outcome	253
6.2.3.4.2	Overall client improvement scale	255
6.2.4	Responses with regards to semi-structured interviews	256
6.2.4.1	Semi-structured interviews: employee (part 3)	256
6.2.4.2	Semi-structured interviews: manager (part 4)	267
6.3	CONCLUSION	274

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1	INTRODUCTION	275
7.2	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	276
7.2.1	Conclusions and recommendations based on data collected from employees (part 1 of the study)	276
7.2.1.1	Demographic information	276
7.2.1.2	Meaning of work	277
7.2.1.3	Critical incident	288
7.2.1.4	Trauma risk factors	288

7.2.1.5	Situational factors	280
7.2.1.6	Post-trauma risk factors	281
7.2.1.7	Reactions	281
7.2.1.8	Interventions	282
7.2.2	Conclusions and recommendations based on data collected from therapists (part 2 of the study)	283
7.2.2.1	Trauma reactions associated with PTSD	283
7.2.2.2	Symptoms associated with complex PTSD	285
7.2.2.3	Trauma reactions associated with Acute Stress Disorder	285
7.2.2.4	Intervention	286
7.2.3	Conclusions and recommendations based on data collected through the document study (data in the clinical notes of therapists)	288
7.2.3.1	Intervention classification	288
7.2.3.2	Work impact	288
7.2.3.3	Emotional distress	290
7.2.3.4	Emotional – post-event assessment	291
7.2.3.4.1	Treatment outcome	291
7.2.3.4.2	Overall client improvement scale	291
7.2.4	Conclusions and recommendations based on data collected through the semi-structured interviews with employees (part 3 of the study) and managers (part 4 of the study)	292
7.2.5	Implication of this study for practice	294

## Tables

<b>Table 1:</b>	Methods of data collection	15
<b>Table 2:</b>	Manifestations of re-experiencing and avoidance across modes of experience	45
<b>Table 3:</b>	SFBT vs Long-term therapy	103
<b>Table 4:</b>	Response rate	149
<b>Table 5:</b>	Critical incidents exposed to primarily (self) or secondarily	

(significant other person)	161
<b>Table 6:</b> Reason for call categories	234
<b>Table 7:</b> Mental status indicator	251
<b>Table 8:</b> Participation of employees in semi-structured interviews	257
<b>Table 9:</b> Demographic information of participants	259
<b>Table 10:</b> Participation of managers in semi- structured interviews	267
<b>Table 11:</b> Demographic information of managers in semi-structured interviews	268
<b>Table 12:</b> Empirical data analysed for the purpose of this study	274

## Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> Schematic representation of emotional arousal pathways (adopted from Tehrani, 2004 and Retief, 2004)	54
<b>Figure 2:</b> Bio-psychosocial model of stress (Schulz <i>et al.</i> , 2000:81–83)	56
<b>Figure 3:</b> Emotional scale (Gerbode & Moore, 1994:3)	110
<b>Figure 4:</b> Trauma intervention process	117
<b>Figure 5:</b> Age of respondents	152
<b>Figure 6:</b> Highest qualifications	153
<b>Figure 7:</b> Number of service years	154
<b>Figure 8:</b> Level of functioning	155
<b>Figure 9:</b> Marital status	156
<b>Figure 10:</b> Dependants	157
<b>Figure 11:</b> Meaning of work	159
<b>Figure 12:</b> Relationship to person being exposed to critical incident (if not self)	160
<b>Figure 13:</b> Trauma exposure – self	163
<b>Figure 14:</b> Trauma exposure – family member or loved one	163
<b>Figure 15:</b> Top three incidents as indicated most traumatic by respondents	164
<b>Figure 16:</b> Extent of life threat	166
<b>Figure 17:</b> Degree of disturbance in home routine	167
<b>Figure 18:</b> Degree of exposure to death, dying and destruction	168
<b>Figure 19:</b> Moral conflict inherent to situation	169
<b>Figure 20:</b> Respondents role in trauma	170
<b>Figure 21:</b> Proportion of the community affected	171
<b>Figure 22:</b> Degree of bereavement	172
<b>Figure 23:</b> Duration of being affected by trauma	173

<b>Figure 24:</b> Potential for the recurrence of the incident	174
<b>Figure 25:</b> Anticipation of incident	176
<b>Figure 26:</b> Severity of the crises	178
<b>Figure 27:</b> Physical proximity of the incident	179
<b>Figure 28:</b> Feelings of guilt	180
<b>Figure 29:</b> Duration of incident	181
<b>Figure 30:</b> Psychological proximity	182
<b>Figure 31:</b> Stress level directly after the incident	183
<b>Figure 32:</b> Role and conflict overload	184
<b>Figure 33:</b> Post-trauma risk factors	186
<b>Figure 34:</b> Physical symptoms	188
<b>Figure 35:</b> Cognitive symptoms	189
<b>Figure 36:</b> Emotional symptoms	190
<b>Figure 37:</b> Behavioural symptoms	191
<b>Figure 38:</b> Shattering of assumptions	194
<b>Figure 39:</b> Impact of defusing	196
<b>Figure 40:</b> Impact of debriefing	198
<b>Figure 41:</b> Support after the debriefing process	200
<b>Figure 42:</b> Referral for further assistance	201
<b>Figure 43:</b> Acceptance and impact of further assistance	202
<b>Figure 44:</b> Experience of individual counselling	204
<b>Figure 45:</b> Trauma exposure	208
<b>Figure 46:</b> Initial response to trauma	219
<b>Figure 47:</b> Re-experiencing of the event	210
<b>Figure 48:</b> Duration of re-experiencing the event	212
<b>Figure 49:</b> Avoidance of the event	214
<b>Figure 50:</b> Duration of avoidance	215
<b>Figure 51:</b> Increased arousal	217
<b>Figure 52:</b> Duration of increased arousal	218
<b>Figure 53:</b> Disturbance caused by a critical incident	220
<b>Figure 54:</b> Behavioural reactions	222
<b>Figure 55:</b> Emotional reactions	223
<b>Figure 56:</b> Cognitive reactions	224
<b>Figure 57:</b> Numbing	226

<b>Figure 58:</b> Dissociative amnesia	227
<b>Figure 59:</b> Reduction in awareness	228
<b>Figure 60:</b> Derealisation	229
<b>Figure 61:</b> Depersonalisation	230
<b>Figure 62:</b> Reaction to individual counselling	232
<b>Figure 63:</b> Intervention classification	240
<b>Figure 64:</b> Work impact: initial assessment	243
<b>Figure 65:</b> Work impact: initial assessment	245
<b>Figure 66:</b> Emotional distress: first session	248
<b>Figure 67:</b> Emotional distress: last session	250
<b>Figure 68:</b> Treatment outcome	254
<b>Figure 69:</b> Overall client improvement scale	256
<b>References</b>	297

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Participation in research project (General cover letter)
Appendix 2: Cover letter for therapist
Appendix 3: Research questionnaire for employees/clients
Appendix 4: Research questionnaire for therapists
Appendix 5: Semi structured interview for employee
Appendix 6: Semi structured interview for manager
Appendix 7: Letter of permission to continue with research (the Careways group)
Appendix 8: Certificate of translator

## **Acronyms**

EAP:	Employee assistance programme
PTSD:	Post-traumatic stress disorder
TIR:	Trauma incident reduction
CISM:	Critical incident stress management
CISD:	Critical incident stress debriefing
CIR:	Critical incident stress response
PFA:	Psychological first aid.



## Summary

**Title: “An impact assessment of a critical incident on the psychosocial functioning and work performance of an employee”**

Candidate : Albert André van Wyk

Study leader : Prof L.S. Terblanche

Department : Social work and Criminology

Degree : D. Phil (S.W)

My purpose with the envisaged study was to determine the effect a critical incident have on employees and how their functioning, psychosocially and at work is affected. Furthermore the goal was to determine if the employees who was affected by a critical incident was exposed to Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) intervention, and if so did it have an impact on their functioning ( Psychosocial and work performance).

An extended literature study was conducted to comprehend the meaning of trauma, the different facets of trauma, how it can impact on an emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioural level. The literature study further focused on the impact of a critical incident on the work performance and family life of the employee. Attention was given to the models in CISM intervention, the role of Employee assistance programs as well as the perceived outcomes of interventions the respondents were exposed to.

In the study, data was collected in a qualitative as well as a quantitative manner. In the quantitative study two questionnaires were used as tool to collect information. In the qualitative study the researcher used clinical case notes as part of the document analysis as well as a semi structured interview with both the employee as well as the manager as data sources.

Respondents (therapists) were selected according to the probability sampling procedure for the quantitative study and respondents volunteered to participate in the qualitative study after participating in the quantitative study.

Participation in the study was voluntary and the participation rate in the quantitative study was 67.5% and in the qualitative study 22.22%

It was evident from the study that employees were affected by a variety of critical incidents divergent in severity, circumstances and duration. The impact on each individual was unique and responses ranged in terms of severity.

It was evident from the study that employees were affected by the critical incident and subsequently their work performance and psychosocial functioning was affected.

The study managed to provide sufficient evidence on the impact of the critical incident on the psychosocial functioning and work performance of the employee. The research proved that individual counselling is effective in working through the incident and improving the psychosocial functioning and work performance significantly.

The study also proved that intervention in the form of defusing, debriefing, individual counselling and aftercare is effective in addressing employees' reactions, supporting them to recover emotionally from the critical incident and improving their psychosocial functioning and subsequently their work performance.

Conclusions and recommendations were made in terms of the empirical findings. The researcher hope that these conclusions and recommendations will be of value and contribute to the study field of CISM and EAP and have a positive impact on employees exposed to critical incidents and their recovery process.

### **Key terms**

Crises	Critical Incident
Critical Incident Stress management (CISM)	Debriefing
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	Defusing
Trauma Incident Reduction	Trauma
Psychosocial functioning	Work performance