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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Goal of research</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 Objectives of the study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 HYPOTHESIS/RESEARCH QUESTIONS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.1 Hypothesis</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.2 Research questions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 TYPE OF RESEARCH</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.1 Applied research</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.1 Data collection</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.1.1 Quantitative data collection</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.1.2 Qualitative data collection</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.2 Data analysis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.2.1 Quantitative data analysis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.2.2 Qualitative data analysis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.2.2.1 Process of qualitative data analysis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 PILOT STUDY</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.1 Feasibility of the study</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.2 Pilot test of the data collection instrument</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.2.1 Quantitative study</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.2.2 Qualitative study</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 RESEARCH POPULATION, BOUNDARY OF THE SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 ETHICAL ISSUES</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.1 Voluntary participation</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.2 No harm to respondents</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2

Literature 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1 Assumption of invulnerability</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2 Assumption of rationality</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.3 Victim’s sense of morality</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.4 Assumption of self-identity</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.7 FACTORS MEDIATING THE EXPERIENCE OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.8 PHASES OF TRAUMA</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8.1 Pre-impact phase</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8.2 Impact phase</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8.3 Recoil phase</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8.4 Reintegration phase</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.9 NEURO-BIOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.9.1 Bio-psychosocial model of stress</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9.2 Psychological system</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.10 SYMPTOMS AND DIAGNOSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.10.1 Definition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10.2 Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10.3 Complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10.4 Acute stress disorder</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.11 EFFECT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT ON FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.11.1 Family dynamics – immediately following the event</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11.2 Family dynamics – weeks or months later</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11.3 Family dynamics – years later</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.12 CONCLUSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.12 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.4 Phase 4: Follow-up CISD/trauma aftercare model

4.2.4.1 Session 1: Making contact
4.2.4.2 Session 2: Assessment and the way forward
4.2.4.3 Session 3: Resourcing and moving forward
4.2.4.4 Session 4: Ending or preparation for post-traumatic stress disorder intervention

4.3 BRIEF THERAPY
4.3.1 Brief therapy and characteristics of brief therapy
4.3.2 Solution focused brief therapy (SFBT)
4.3.2.1 SFBT versus long-term therapies
4.3.2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of SFBT

4.4 TRAUMA INCIDENT REDUCTION (TIR)
4.4.1 Basic TIR
4.4.2 Thematic TIR
4.4.3 Change in emotional scale
4.4.4 Steps in TIR
4.4.5 Rules for facilitating TIR
4.4.5.1 Do not interpret
4.4.5.2 Do not evaluate
4.4.5.3 Maintain complete confidentiality of session data
4.4.5.4 Maintain control of the session at all times, but do not overwhelm the client
4.4.5.5 Ensure understanding of what the client is saying
4.4.5.6 Be interested, not interesting
4.4.5.7 Therapist’s primary intention must be to help the client
4.4.5.8 Ensure that the client is well fed and rested and not under the influence of a psychotic drug
4.4.5.9 Ensure that the session is being given suitable space and with appropriate time available
4.4.5.10 Act predictably
4.4.5.11 Never attempt a session with a client who is unwilling or protesting
4.4.5.12 Take each issue in a session to a positive end point

4.5 CONCLUSION
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

### 6.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF INFORMATION

#### 6.2.1 Data on clients being exposed to a critical incident (Part 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.2.1.1 Demographic information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.1 Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.2 Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.3 Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.4 Service years at current employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.5 Level of functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.6 Marital status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.7 Dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.8 Meaning of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1.9 Critical incident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6.2.1.2 Trauma risk factors

| 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

| 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

6.2.2.2.1 Dissociative symptoms
6.2.2.2.2 Numbing
6.2.2.2.3 Dissociative amnesia
6.2.2.2.4 Reduction in awareness
6.2.2.2.5 Derealisation
6.2.2.2.6 Depersonalisation

6.2.2.3 Intervention

6.2.2.3.1 Outcome of individual counselling
6.2.2.3.2 Reaction to the individual counselling

6.2.3 Document analysis – data on the clinical notes of therapists

6.2.3.1 Intervention classification
6.2.3.2 Work impact
6.2.3.3 Emotional distress

6.2.3.3.1 Emotional rating scale
6.2.3.3.2 Mental status indicator

6.2.3.4 Emotional – post-event assessment

6.2.3.4.1 Treatment outcome
6.2.3.4.2 Overall client improvement scale

6.2.4 Responses with regards to semi-structured interviews

6.2.4.1 Semi-structured interviews: employee (part 3)
6.2.4.2 Semi-structured interviews: manager (part 4)

6.3 CONCLUSION

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.2.1 Conclusions and recommendations based on data collected from employees (part 1 of the study)
7.2.1.1 Demographic information
7.2.1.2 Meaning of work
7.2.1.3 Critical incident
7.2.1.4 Trauma risk factors
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

Table 1: Methods of data collection       15
Table 2: Manifestations of re-experiencing and avoidance across modes of experience       45
Table 3: SFBT vs Long-term therapy       103
Table 4: Response rate       149
Table 5: Critical incidents exposed to primarily (self) or secondarily
(significant other person) 161

**Table 6**: Reason for call categories 234

**Table 7**: Mental status indicator 251

**Table 8**: Participation of employees in semi-structured interviews 257

**Table 9**: Demographic information of participants 259

**Table 10**: Participation of managers in semi-structured interviews 267

**Table 11**: Demographic information of managers in semi-structured interviews 268

**Table 12**: Empirical data analysed for the purpose of this study 274

**Figures**

**Figure 1**: Schematic representation of emotional arousal pathways (adopted from Tehrani, 2004 and Retief, 2004) 54

**Figure 2**: Bio-psychosocial model of stress (Schulz *et al*., 2000:81–83) 56

**Figure 3**: Emotional scale (Gerbode & Moore, 1994:3) 110

**Figure 4**: Trauma intervention process 117

**Figure 5**: Age of respondents 152

**Figure 6**: Highest qualifications 153

**Figure 7**: Number of service years 154

**Figure 8**: Level of functioning 155

**Figure 9**: Marital status 156

**Figure 10**: Dependants 157

**Figure 11**: Meaning of work 159

**Figure 12**: Relationship to person being exposed to critical incident (if not self) 160

**Figure 13**: Trauma exposure – self 163

**Figure 14**: Trauma exposure – family member or loved one 163

**Figure 15**: Top three incidents as indicated most traumatic by respondents 164

**Figure 16**: Extent of life threat 166

**Figure 17**: Degree of disturbance in home routine 167

**Figure 18**: Degree of exposure to death, dying and destruction 168

**Figure 19**: Moral conflict inherent to situation 169

**Figure 20**: Respondents role in trauma 170

**Figure 21**: Proportion of the community affected 171

**Figure 22**: Degree of bereavement 172

**Figure 23**: Duration of being affected by trauma 173
Figure 58: Dissociative amnesia 227
Figure 59: Reduction in awareness 228
Figure 60: Derealisation 229
Figure 61: Depersonalisation 230
Figure 62: Reaction to individual counselling 232
Figure 63: Intervention classification 240
Figure 64: Work impact: initial assessment 243
Figure 65: Work impact: initial assessment 245
Figure 66: Emotional distress: first session 248
Figure 67: Emotional distress: last session 250
Figure 68: Treatment outcome 254
Figure 69: Overall client improvement scale 256

References 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crises</th>
<th>Critical Incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Incident Stress management (CISM)</td>
<td>Debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)</td>
<td>Defusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma Incident Reduction</td>
<td>Trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial functioning</td>
<td>Work performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>