

Sample Debrief Guide

Debriefing can be used as part of an emergency intervention to help staff who have recently experienced a traumatic event, either directly or indirectly. The goal of a debriefing session is to try and reduce the possibility of stress or other psychological symptoms.

A debriefing is normally done within 72 hours of the incident and gives the individual or group the opportunity to talk about their experience, how it has affected them, brainstorm coping mechanisms, identify individuals at risk and inform the individual or group about services available to them in the organization and externally. The final step is to follow up with them the day after the debriefing to ensure that they are safe and coping well or refer them to the appropriate supports, which may include an Employee Assistance Program, counselling services, etc. Follow up with the affected individuals should occur according to a plan that is set out between the individual and their manager/supervisor.

Before organizing a debriefing, the organization or facility should consider the following:

- Who is best suited to lead the debriefing? Will we use an internal facilitator or an external facilitator?
- How soon after the incident will it take place?
- Should it be done individually or as a group?
- Where will the debriefing happen?
- Will attendance be mandatory?
- How long will the debriefing last?
- What if participants want to leave?

As this is only a guide, it is suggested that those responsible for conducting debrief sessions refer to Human Resources or their organization's policies and guidelines to see if they already have something in place. Alternatively, an organization can use the following *Critical Incident Group Debriefing – Issues and Considerations* from the Crisis and Trauma Resources Institute Inc. to create a debrief procedure if they do not currently have one.

Source <http://blog.ctrinstitute.com/free-resources/critical-incident-group-debriefing-issues-and-considerations/>.