

Unit 7

Stress, Health, and Awareness

7.1.0 Unit Goal: Summarize health and wellness topics related to Telecommunicator stress management and critical incident stress. Summarize way to relieve the stress and improve the health of telecommunicators.

7.1.1 Learning Objectives: Identify the different terms related to health and wellness.

- Stress – the body's response to changes that create taxing demands.
Mills, H., Ph.D. (2015, December 21). Types of stressors (Eustress vs. Distress). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/types-of-stressors-eustress-vs-distress/>
- Stressor – a stimulus that causes stress.
Stressor. (2018, June 5). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stressor>
- Burn out – exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration.
Burnout. (2018, June 9). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/burn%20out>

- Eustress – positive stress
 - Short term
 - Motivates and focuses energy
 - Perceived as within our coping abilities
 - Feels exciting
 - Improves performance*Mills, H., Ph.D. (2015, December 21). Types of stressors (Eustress vs. Distress). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/types-of-stressors-eustress-vs-distress/>*

- Distress – negative stress
 - Can be short or long-term
 - Causes anxiety or concern
 - Perceived as outside our coping abilities
 - Feels unpleasant
 - Decreases performance
 - Can lead to mental and physical problems

Mills, H., Ph.D. (2015, December 21). Types of stressors (Eustress vs. Distress). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/types-of-stressors-eustress-vs-distress/>

- Health – the absence of disease.
*What is Wellness? (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/wellness/what-is-wellness>
<https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/do-you-have-sitting-disease#1>*

- Wellness – a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.

What is Wellness? (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from

<https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/wellness/what-is-wellness>

- Critical Incident – any event with a stressful impact sufficiently overwhelming the usual effective coping skills of an individual.
 - Critical incidents are abrupt, powerful events that fall outside the range of ordinary human experiences.
 - These events have a strong emotional impact, even for the most experienced person.

Critical Incident Stress. (2007, October 15). Retrieved July 25, 2018, from

<https://www.officer.com/home/article/10249385/critical-incident-stress>

- Critical Incident Stress and Post-Traumatic Stress:
 - Also known as Post Traumatic Stress
 - Critical incident stress affects up to 87% of all emergency service workers at least once in their careers.
 - Most individuals will not develop a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after a critical incident or traumatic event, but every telecommunicator will experience marked reactions during and after life-threatening or extremely distressing experiences.
 - Immediate and short-term reactions are to be expected and are extremely common.
 - Some individuals may experience a prolonged or more intensified reaction(s) to a critical incident that may develop into an adjustment disorder, an acute stress disorder, or even PTSD.
 - Post-Traumatic Stress: Common, normal and often adaptive response to experiencing a traumatic or stressful event. PTS is not a disorder and treatment is not required as symptoms will improve or subside on their own

Critical Incident Stress. (2007, October 15). Retrieved July 25, 2018, from

<https://www.officer.com/home/article/10249385/critical-incident-stress>

Bender, J. (2013, December 9). What Are the Differences Between PTS and PTSD?

Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.brainline.org/article/what-are-differences-between-pts-and-ptsd>

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder – A clinically diagnosed condition including specific criteria for diagnosis.

Bender, J. (2013, December 9). What Are the Differences Between PTS and PTSD?

Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.brainline.org/article/what-are-differences-between-pts-and-ptsd>

<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder#1>

<https://frontlinerehab.com/emergency-dispatchers-suffer-ptsd-silence/>

<https://blog.watsonconsoles.com/power-of-resilience-how-to-thrive-as-a-911-dispatcher>

- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing – a specific technique, conducted by properly trained facilitators, designed to assist others in dealing with the physical or psychological symptoms generally associated with trauma exposure.

- Allows those involved with the incident to process the event and reflect on its impact.

Davis, J. A., Ph.D. (2013, February 12). *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing from a Traumatic Event*. Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/crimes-and-misdemeanors/201302/critical-incident-stress-debriefing-traumatic-event>

- Does not constitute any form of psychotherapy and it should never be utilized as a substitute for psychotherapy.
- A supportive, crisis-focused discussion of a traumatic event.
 - Aimed at the reduction of distress restoration of group cohesion and unit performance.

Mitchell, J. T., Ph.D. (n.d.). *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)*. Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <http://www.info-trauma.org/flash/media-f/mitchellCriticalIncidentStressDebriefing.pdf>

- Critical Incident Stress Defusing: allows for the ventilation of emotions and thoughts associated with the crisis event.

Davis, J. A., Ph.D. (2013, February 12). *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing From a Traumatic Event*. Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/crimes-and-misdemeanors/201302/critical-incident-stress-debriefing-traumatic-event>

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Services provided to employees ranging from consultation about issues with organization-wide implications to individual assistance including employees and family members experiencing personal difficulties.

Definitions of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). (2011, October). Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <http://www.eapassn.org/about/about-employee-assistance/eap-definitions-and-core-technology>

7.1.2 **Learning Objectives:** Review the categories and examples of different types of stress.

- Stress can affect all aspects of your life, including your emotions, behaviors, thinking ability, and physical health. No part of the body is immune. But, because people handle stress differently, symptoms of stress can vary. Symptoms can be vague and may be the same as those caused by medical conditions. So it is important to discuss them with your doctor. You may experience any of the following symptoms of stress.

- Acute Stress vs. Chronic Stress
 - Acute stress is the most common form of stress. It comes from the demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. This type of stress can be thrilling and exciting as in an adrenaline rush. It is short-term and does not have enough time to do extensive damage.

Miller, L. H., Ph.D. (n.d.). *The Stress Solution*. Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-kinds.aspx>

- Chronic stress is a grinding stress that wears people away day by day and year after year. It is the stress of unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time.

Miller, L. H., Ph.D. (n.d.). *The Stress Solution*. Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-kinds.aspx>

Karriem-Norwood, V., MD. (2017, July 11). *Stress Symptoms*. Retrieved June 11, 2018, from https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-symptoms-effects_of-stress-on-the-body#2

- Symptom Categories and Examples:
 - Physical – low energy, headaches, upset stomach, diarrhea, constipation, nausea, aches, pains, muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, insomnia, lowered immune system, loss of sexual desire/ability, nervousness, shaking, ringing in the ear, dry mouth, clenched jaw, teeth grinding
 - Emotional – becoming agitated easily, moody, feeling overwhelmed, difficulty relaxing, inability to quiet your mind, low self-esteem, lonely, avoiding others
 - Cognitive – constant worry, racing thoughts, forgetfulness, disorganization, inability to focus, poor judgment, negative outlook
 - Behavioral – changes in appetite, procrastinating, avoiding responsibilities, nail biting, fidgeting, pacing, increased use of alcohol/drugs cigarettes

Karriem-Norwood, V., MD. (2017, July 11). *Stress Symptoms*. Retrieved June 11, 2018, from https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-symptoms-effects_of-stress-on-the-body#2

- <https://powerphone.com/empowering-your-telecommunicators-to-deal-with-911-stress/>
- Common reactions after a critical incident:
 - Anxiety about being involved in a similar event.
 - Fear for the safety of yourself or loved ones.
 - Preoccupation about the stressful event.
 - Avoidance of situations or thoughts that remind you of the incident.
 - Flashbacks where you mentally re-experience the event.
 - Physical symptoms: muscle tension, fatigue, headaches, nausea, bowel problems.
 - Decreased interest in usual activities, including sex and appetite.
 - Feelings of sadness or loneliness.
 - Disbelief at what has happened; feeling numb, unreal, isolated, or detached from other people.
 - Insomnia, frequent awakening, disturbing dreams or nightmares.
 - Problems with concentration or memory (especially aspects of the traumatic event).
 - A misperception of time.
 - Guilt and/or self-doubt related to the traumatic event.
 - Anger or irritability at what has happened; at the senselessness of it all.

Critical Incident Stress. (2007, October 15). Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.officer.com/home/article/10249385/critical-incident-stress>

7.1.3 **Learning Objectives:** Identify the causes and sources of telecommunicator stress.

- Telecommunicator stress is different than responder stress:
 - Tied to the phone in the communications center can't effect change in the field.

Pivetta, S. (1997). *Unit 9 Stress*. In *9-1-1 Emergency Communications Manual* (3rd ed., pp. 479-491). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

<http://dispatchingdiscussions.blogspot.com/2014/06/stress-invisible-first-responders.html>

<https://blog.watsonconsoles.com/power-of-resilience-how-to-thrive-as-a-911-dispatcher>

- Poor communications in the field of Communications.

Pivetta, S. (1997). Unit 9 Stress. In *9-1-1 Emergency Communications Manual* (3rd ed., pp. 479-491). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

<http://centerforcoachingexcellence.com/blog/the-high-price-of-poor-communication>

- Exposure to critical incidents
 - Remaining calm.

Pivetta, S. (1997). Unit 9 Stress. In *9-1-1 Emergency Communications Manual* (3rd ed., pp. 479-491). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

<https://www.joinipsa.org/IPSA-Blog/6697062>

- Our own expectations:
 - It is the Type A personality drawn to the fast-paced environment of the telecommunicator.
 - Need to dominate, competitive, strong achievement orientation, impatient.
 - Translates to being hard on ourselves, our bodies.

Scott, E., MS. (2018, March 1). What Does it Mean to Have Type A Personality Traits? (S. Gans MD, Ed.). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/type-a-personality-traits-3145240>

- Workplace dynamics:
 - Sedentary, poor eating habits, shift work, lack of sleep, work/life balance, missed holidays/birthdays/anniversaries, no breaks/vacation time, overall poor health.

Pivetta, S. (1997). Unit 9 Stress. In *9-1-1 Emergency Communications Manual* (3rd ed., pp. 479-491). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

<https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/do-you-have-sitting-disease#1>

7.1.4 **Learning Objectives:** List common ways of reducing stress and minimizing its effect on the Telecommunicator.

- Focus on physical health with healthy habits:
 - Get enough sleep – helps you be able to make smart nutritional choices.
 - Regular exercise – find what you like to do and incorporate it into your daily routines.
 - Plan for nutritional success – planning ahead helps reduce last-minute unhealthy choices.
 - Get at least the recommended daily water intake – even minor dehydration is enough to affect your mood, cause a headache, increase anxiety, and decrease focus.
 - No smoking or illicit drugs, minimize alcohol intake.

Wherrell, J. (2017, January 18). *6 Daily Habits of a Healthy Person*. Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://myhousefitness.com/6-daily-habits-healthy-person/>

- Focus on mental health with wellness:
 - Holism – be conscious of yourself as a whole and complete person, living life as fully as possible.
 - Have a hobby outside public safety.

- Incorporate humor.
- Take a break from technology.
- Meditate.
- Balance – give significant attention to each dimension of life.
- Self-responsibility – you’re responsible for your own health and happiness.
- Positive and Proactive – keep learning, growing, trying.

What is Wellness? (2012). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.globalwellnessday.org/about/what-is-wellness/>

- When you can no longer manage it by yourself:
 - Peer Support – formal or informal – check on each other.
 - Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
 - the formal process to talk about an incident.
 - happens soon after the incident.
 - conducted with peers.
 - Confidential.
- Professional counseling
 - Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) are designed to assist organizations in addressing productivity issues and assist employees in identifying and resolving personal concerns, including health, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal issues that may affect job performance.

Definitions of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). (2011, October). Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <http://www.eapassn.org/about/about-employee-assistance/eap-definitions-and-core-technology>

- Private counselor through personal medical benefits

Glenn, T., PA. (2015). Outreach. Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <http://www.taniaglenn.com/outreach/>

- What to do after experiencing critical incident stress:
 - Immediately after the event-
 - Make sure you are with people. Don’t go home to an empty house.
 - Talk about the incident with others. Discuss your feelings and reactions.
 - Remind yourself the event is over.
 - If possible, get some physical exercise to burn off some tension and anxiety.
 - Restrict caffeine and other stimulants.
 - Try to eat something even if you do not feel like eating.
 - Avoid alcohol, other central nervous system depressants, and sleeping pills.
 - If you cannot sleep, get up and do something until you are tired and then try again.
- How to handle the next few days:
 - Do not be afraid of your feelings.
 - Remind yourself that your reactions are a normal result of trauma and will pass in time.
 - Try to get back into your normal routine as soon as possible; you may need to gradually introduce yourself to tasks that seem difficult.

- If you feel uncomfortable, scared or anxious, take some deep breaths and remind yourself that you are safe.
- Be kind and patient with yourself; engage in enjoyable and relaxing activities.
- Continue to talk to your family, friends, and colleagues about the trauma.
- Even if you feel a bit distant from other people, do not reject genuine support.
- Work on your general stress levels; make sure that you have adequate sleep, a good diet, and regular exercise.
- Practice relaxation techniques to help reduce nervous tension and insomnia.
- Remember that accidents are more common after severe stress; be more cautious in your activities.
- Allow yourself time to deal with the memories. There may be some aspects of the experience that will be difficult, if not impossible, to forget.
- If your reaction(s) continue to seriously disrupt your life, seek appropriate help.

Critical Incident Stress. (2007, October 15). Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.officer.com/home/article/10249385/critical-incident-stress>

- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
 - Should be provided by trained personnel as soon as possible but typically no longer than the first 24 to 72 hours after the initial impact of the critical event. As the length of time between exposure to the event and CISD increases, the least effective CISD becomes.
 - Individuals who are provided CISD within a 24-72 hour period after the initial critical incident experience less short-term and long-term crisis reactions of psychological trauma.

Davis, J. A., Ph.D. (2013, February 12). Critical Incident Stress Debriefing from a Traumatic Event. Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/crimes-and-misdemeanors/201302/critical-incident-stress-debriefing-traumatic-event>

- Improve your resilience to stress:
 - Maintain a supportive network; talk things over with caring friends and loved ones.
 - Seek out humor or laughter.
 - Live a healthy lifestyle; a healthy diet, physical exercise, maintain a regular sleep routine.
 - Think positively about yourself.
 - Remind yourself that you can get through the next situation.
 - Use stress management and coping skills, such as exercise, yoga, or meditation regularly.
 - Make time for activities you enjoy, try new activities or find new hobbies.
 - Maintain family and social commitments and outings.
 - Find additional support as needed; a group, spiritual guidance, or therapist.
 - Clean up lingering daily stressors that will exacerbate the next major stressor; pay off credit card bills, change negative personal habits, etc.

Critical Incident Stress. (2007, October 15). Retrieved July 25, 2018, from <https://www.officer.com/home/article/10249385/critical-incident-stress>

Unit 7 Stress, Health, and Awareness Resources

- Eight Dimensions of Wellness, What is Wellness? (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/wellness/what-is-wellness>
- The Six Dimensions of Wellness Model, Hettler, B., MD. (n.d.). The Six Dimensions of Wellness Model. Retrieved June 11, 2018, from https://www.nationalwellness.org/page/nwi_tools?
- The Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory, The Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory. (n.d.). Retrieved June 11, 2018, from <https://www.stress.org/holmes-rahe-stress-inventory/>
- The Registry of EMDR Therapists for 911 Telecommunicators, <https://911wellness.com/treatment-support/>
- 911 Wellness Toolkit, <https://911wellness.com/treatment-support/>
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, <http://www.info-trauma.org/flash/media-f/mitchellCriticalIncidentStressDebriefing.pdf>
- ProCHRT Toolbox, <https://www.apcointl.org/resources/staffing-retention/professional-communications-human-resources-committee/prochrt-toolbox/health-and-wellness/>
- International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, <https://icisf.org/>
- Deer Oaks EAP Services, <https://www.deeroakseap.com/>
- Seated Workout #1
 - Toe tap kicks
 - Elbow to opposite knee
 - Horizontal leg abductions
 - Straight leg raises
 - Toe touches
 - Triceps kickbacks with band
 - Diagonal reach up with band
 - Bicep curl with band under feet
 - Rotator Cuff swinging gate
 - Sit down stand-ups
- Seated workout #2
 - March
 - Butt Kicks
 - Wall Push Ups
 - Squats
 - Jumping Jacks
 - Lunges
 - Zombies
 - Side Lunges
 - Alternating Standing Leg raises
 - Calf Raises

Glossary/Acronyms

Stress – the body's response to changes that create taxing demands.

Stressor – a stimulus that causes stress.

Burn out – exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration.

Eustress – positive stress.

Distress – negative stress.