

CISM Case Studies



European Air Traffic Management
EATM
Human Factors Management



Introduction Case Studies

CISM

When a Critical Incident occurs, no one can be sure how they will react and to what extent such an incident will effect them. What is known is that individual reactions to incidents vary considerably. They are personal to the individual concerned and can include anxiety, negative mood, depression, etc.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is the structured assistance for a normal reaction to an abnormal event. All CISM activity aims to moderate the impact of Critical Incident Stress and to assist an individual in returning to a pre-incident level of mood and performance.

To achieve this, a CISM programme addresses the needs of individuals by providing:

- Information
- Training
- Support

This brochure describes the experience of some European ANSPs that have introduced CISM into their organisations.



skyguide Case Studies CISM

skyguide is responsible for ensuring the control of air traffic in Switzerland's airspace, on behalf of the Swiss Confederation

Business issue

In the mid-nineties some of the Swiss ATCOs became aware of the need to introduce support for their peers who had faced a critical incident (CI). A CISM Programme based on a EUROCONTROL publication and an existing approach in France was introduced and implemented in Geneva and Zurich.

After the accident of Überlingen, the management of skyguide realised that there was a necessity to extend such a programme nationwide and to grant the necessary financial and human resources. In cooperation with the DFS (Deutsche Flugsicherung) and internal experts, a CISM concept for skyguide was developed and implemented in 2002.



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skyguide's approach

skyguide decided to implement a CISM programme with 4 levels of intervention. The intention was to provide assistance when an incident occurred and help controllers manage any negative emotional effects.

Level 1: Phase of Awareness or Information.

This first step provides information about critical incident stress and describes potential reactions to critical incidents. It explains the different CISM support mechanisms. The information underlines the importance of proactively preparing all employees, helping them to better cope with critical incidents.

Information is provided to management on what the consequences of a critical incident can be for a person and the benefits of having the support by a trained colleague (peer).

Level 2: Intervention of a Peer.

Is the one-to-one support by a trained peer counsellor with the person who has experienced a critical incident.

Level 3: Referral to Trained Mental Health Practitioner.

This level will be activated either when the person experiencing the incident prefers to have counselling by an external expert (doctor or mental health professional) rather than having an intervention with a peer, or when it seems necessary to advise the victim to consult the mental health professional.

The peers are also offered the option to contact external experts when they need coaching or debriefing.

Level 4: Collaboration with Crisis Organisation and external experts.

skyguide will activate this level when the critical incident is of such gravity (disaster) that the support of the peers will not be enough to handle and overcome the crisis. A direct collaboration between the crisis management team of skyguide and the peer coordinators will take place allowing an information exchange process and coordinated and appropriate actions.

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CISM solution

skyguide has initiated the Awareness of Information Phase and the recruitment of the peers. Information sessions have been organised for the company managers to educate them on the necessity for such a programme.

An information campaign was launched to recruit a number of peer counsellors, willing to invest some of their time and showing qualities such as empathy, authenticity and who inspire trust. Peers were selected by the unions or representatives within the staff group.

A peer training course was run in 2003 in accordance with the Institute of Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) standards and by the end of 2003 some 60 peers were trained and certified in a Basic Critical Incident Management Course.

Lessons learned

When confronted with a critical incident, it is evident that some ATCOs fall back on CISM. In the last two years, some changes in the culture at skyguide have been observed. After a critical incident, colleagues often turn spontaneously to a peer for a debriefing, and it has become more natural to talk about the stress linked to critical incidents.

The management has also begun to see the benefits to the employees and their units. Some of the supervisors are now orienting the controller immediately to a peer following a critical incident.

Business benefits

- The information campaign about the possible consequences of a critical incident has raised the awareness within skyguide of the possible negative effects of stress reactions following a critical incident.
- Such effects are no longer underestimated.
- It has become more easy to talk about critical incidents.
- More generally there is greater reflection of error management.
- During a major crisis at the beginning of 2004, the support was widely and quickly organised in such a way that controllers were able to pursue their activity without having to take extended sick leave.

Next steps

- To even better support the peers, skyguide has decided to set up a group of expert peers. These experts shall benefit from an extended training and will then be able to coach and supervise the other peers.
- Refresher courses for all the ATCOs and for the supervisors will be organised.
- Peers will be provided with annual refresher training and supervision sessions.
- An extension of this support programme to employees other than ATCOs (mainly in the technical field) is under consideration.
- Increase the co-operation with other ATC providers to benefit from their experiences but also with other institutions (police; airport authorities, hospitals).
- Provide assistance - when requested by a foreign ATC provider - during a major crisis.
- skyguide is considering further developments to its CISM programme and will monitor developments in the field of psychotrauma in order to adapt its CISM programme.

DFS Case Studies CISM

DFS, Deutsche Flugsicherung GmbH
German Air Navigation Services

Business issue

DFS had repeated requests from colleagues from the control room or the tower who wanted to know how critical-incident reactions could be managed and if there were adequate methods of coping with these stress reactions. In 1998 DFS started research on appropriate methods and examined the experiences of others in this field.

With the support of a EUROCONTROL publication on CISM and the experience of NAV Canada and the German Bundeswehr, DFS decided to establish a CISM model according to the standards of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF). The aim was to introduce a model that would meet the requirements of air traffic controllers based on peer counselling.

CISM should generally be regarded as a multi-component model which comprises more than one method and which needs to be firmly anchored in the company.

CISM has clearly defined objectives:

- Reducing stress reactions
- Restoring the ability to work
- Avoiding post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD)

DFS Case Studies^{CISM}

DFS's approach

After the basic requirements had been identified and described in consultation with managers and air traffic controllers, a CISM concept was written and made available for discussion. The final concept was then submitted to and adopted by the DFS Board of Managing Directors. This course of actions laid the foundations for the acceptance of the model within the company.

CISM solution

What followed was the training of the CISM expert at DFS who has overall responsibility for the implementation of the programme and the training of the personnel to provide debriefing (these are peers within the organisation).

The information phase, one of the most important elements in the introduction of a CISM programme, took place at different levels in the company. Special seminars were held to inform all managers about the programme, the tasks and objectives as well as the responsibilities of managers and peers. For managers in operations, a special training module, "CISM for Supervisors" was prepared.

All staff members were informed about CISM via different media, briefings, training courses and information seminars. The potential peers were informed about their responsibilities, the expectations placed upon them and their future tasks. In all of these information activities the major focus was placed on confidentiality and peer support.

DFS Case Studies^{CISM}

Peer training

The peers are elected by their colleagues at the different DFS branches. A minimum of five peers per control centre and two peers per tower are designated. All peers participate in the following training courses:

- CISM Basic Group Crisis Intervention.
- CISM Basic Individuals and Peer Support.
- CISM Advanced.

All courses are in keeping with the ICISF standards and the peers are certified by the ICISF. In addition, supervision groups are provided for the peers at the different DFS branches and the so-called CISM Forum, a conference for all DFS peers is held once a year.

Certification is an important component of the CISM concept at DFS. It means that CISM is a recognised and proven method, that the trainers are experienced in this field and that they have been trained to be trainers by the ICISF. For the peers, the training course and the certification mean that they have acquired a solid standing and a professional basis for their work.



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Lessons learned

CISM has meanwhile become a standard procedure at DFS. It is well accepted by air traffic controllers and is being used in many different ways. The peers have gone through high-quality training and are committed to their function.

The DFS Board of Managing Directors and the managers support the programme. The staff members are informed about CISM, the functions and availability of the peers and confidentiality.

Since peers are the ones who can relate to an incident most easily, it is believed that CISM, performed in accordance with a standardised peer counselling model, is an optimal support method in air traffic control. CISM facilitates a reduction of stress reactions in a most effective manner, leading to a more rapid restoration of pre-incident functioning.

The openness and confidentiality in dealing with sensitive issues has also led to a change in organisational culture. Staff members are more open when it comes to talking about their experiences. Stress reactions are no longer regarded as weakness and the use of CISM has a high professional standing among those involved. CISM is now part of the professionalism of an air traffic controller.

DFS Case Studies^{CISM}

Business benefits

At DFS, a first assessment concerning the number and effects of CISM interventions was carried out in 2003. The result clearly showed that the objectives of restoring the ability to work and reducing stress reactions were in all cases achieved in a relatively short period of time. The air traffic controllers concerned needed less time to cope with their reactions and were able to return to work earlier. Participants of CISM interventions did not show any post-traumatic stress disorders.

In parallel to DFS's own assessment, a feasibility study concerning a cost-benefit analysis was carried out in cooperation with Eurocontrol and Dortmund University. The study showed that air traffic controllers use CISM to help them cope and return more rapidly to pre-incident performance.

This suggests that companies which have invested in a programme like CISM can achieve a return-on-investment in that staff members return to work earlier to perform their normal tasks. The benefit for the air traffic controllers is that they are better able to recover from their stress reactions within a shorter period of time.

DFS Case Studies CISM

Next steps

DFS will continue with the CISM programme it has initiated. The exchange of experience with other air navigation service providers, which has already been initiated, will be carried on. DFS aims to establish a network with others so as to facilitate mutual support if need be.

In addition to the cooperation at management level, it is also planned to increase contacts between peers. This has already been started and will be carried on further. DFS provides consulting services to other air navigation service providers for implementing CISM and for the training of peers (including ICISF certificate). Moreover, DFS will actively contribute to the further development of CISM in Europe.



ENAV S.p.A. Case Studies CISM

ENAV S.p.A. is the Italian company in charge of controlling and supporting air traffic.

Business issue

On the 26th of March 2003 Italy experienced a runway incursion at Naples airport. Following this event, some “behavioural discomfort” was detected among ATCOs. The ENAV Operational Department, in conjunction with the local Head of ATC Unit, requested a TRM intervention in order to mitigate any possible interpersonal discomfort. Following this, it was felt that TRM intervention was not sufficient to cover the emotional reactions to this event.



ENAV S.p.A. Case Studies CISM

ENAV's approach

ENAV's Safety Management System, Training Centre and the Operational Departments set up a support process for air traffic controllers and local management that could be used following such operational incidents.

ENAV's CEO decided to include CISM principles within the ENAV Safety Policy. This was published in October 2003 and the company started research aimed at verifying the application of CISM principles and techniques. They took into account EUROCONTROL documentation, research literature and the experiences of other ANSPs that had already implemented CISM: Deutsche Flugsicherung (DFS), NAV Portugal, skyguide and IAA Ireland.

ENAV adopted the EUROCONTROL CISM Policy (Mitchell Model) and established a coordination line with DFS for support in training and CISM implementation procedures. ENAV launched a CISM pilot-project at the main airports (Malpensa, Linate, Fiumicino) and all ACCs (Milano, Padova, Roma, Brindisi).

CISM solution

The first step was a CISM campaign among ATCOs and managers by which ENAV informed them of the CISM scope and content. The aim was to spread CISM awareness. A "bottom-up approach" was used with the intention to provide a customised product for ATCOs. Local election committees were formed to recruit candidates to act as peer counsellors within the CISM programme. Safety investigation staff were not eligible for election as peer counsellors.

On the 22nd of March 2004, ENAV held its first basic CISM Peer Training Course for 15 participants.

ENAV S.p.A. Case Studies CISM

In parallel, a CISM architecture was constructed consisting of:

- CISM National Coordination Team: for tactical and strategic purposes, for the design of procedures, hot line with peers, co-ordination for logistic and technical support, etc...
- The CISM Policy.
- The CISM activities organisation: local structure and tasks.
- The CISM Peers National Board (2 meetings per year).
- The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) for a special event in which it is not sufficient to give a task to a single peer.
- A basic and advanced CISM Training.
- A CISM bulletin in the ENAV magazine.
- Costs: ENAV stressed the importance to go ahead with CISM Peers recruited on a voluntary basis without any fringe benefits and/or advantage for career (with the exception of travelling expenditures and shift hour bonuses), to allow them to be ready for their tasks.

Lessons learned

It is very important to define the boundaries of the CISM intervention; this was discussed during the 1st CISM Peers National Board, held in June 2004.

ENAV noticed that during some CISM interventions, the ATCOs involved asked the peer for other kinds of support, not included within the peers' tasks and unrelated to the CISM event.

In some cases, peers reported, after their intervention, a burnout syndrome for which a debriefing would be required.

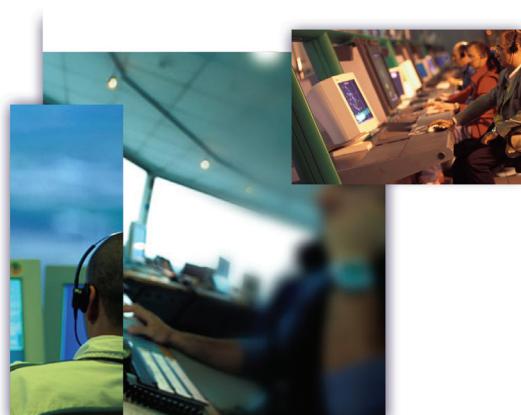
Business benefits

ENAV has perceived a very good reaction to its CISM programme; ATCOs are very much involved and motivated. Until now, ENAV has had seven CISM interventions in Italy with a good record of their outcome. The individualistic approach apparent in ENAV seems to be changing.

The CISM experience of other ANSPs has been very valuable. This is the best way to foresee problems or inconveniences in a robust and mature frame of activity.

Next steps

ENAV's choice of the CISM approach was driven in the context of standardisation and homogenisation of the CISM technique in Europe. ENAV believes that they should strive to stay on the path of a common CISM policy. Moreover ENAV considers it extremely important to share experiences and working methods together with other ANSPs.



NAV Portugal Case Studies

CISM

The priority mission of NAV Portugal is to ensure the air traffic management within the Flight Information Regions (FIRs) under Portuguese responsibility. The traffic flow is managed by Air Traffic Control Centres, which provide Air Traffic Services.

Business issue

NAV Portugal has faced situations of staff impairment, some of them leading to early retirement of ATCOs identified as related (directly or not) with stress reactions to critical incidents. The previously existing structures and services designed to assist staff were not providing an adequate response to these situations.

NAV Portugal decided that this problem should be addressed consistently, in order to mitigate both individuals and organisation impairment caused by Critical Incident Stress.



NAV Portugal Case Studies CISM

NAV Portugal's approach

Following an analysis of the different CISM programmes and studies carried out in 2002/3, NAV Portugal created a CISM Programme to assist, initially, ATCOs and Communications Operators/Flight Data Assistants in coping with the negative stress reactions which may result from critical events occurring in the work environment, and in order to facilitate a more rapid return to the "normal" functioning of the individual.

The implementation of NAV Portugal CISM Programme took its first steps in 2002, with the selection of CISM Peers (ATCOs and COM Operators) from volunteers in every unit, and the creation of a NAV Portugal CISM Team.

In April 2003 NAV Portugal officially implemented the CISM Programme, recognizing it as a necessary component in the performance and safety of ATS.

The NAV Portugal CISM Programme is based on the following principles:

- Every intervention and contact in the scope of the CISM Programme is conducted on a voluntary basis; no ATCO or COM Operator will ever be constrained to use the services of the CISM.
- Strict confidentiality for every contact, conversation or intervention, under the CISM Programme.
- Records on CISM sessions are not kept.
- Complete independence of the CISM Programme from any other departments or corporation structures, both internal (NAV Portugal) and external.

NAV Portugal Case Studies

CISM solution

The NAV Portugal CISM Programme consists of:

- An Educational Programme, aiming to provide the ATCOs and/or COM Operators with the necessary information about stress in general, the stress reactions to critical incidents and the services available through the CISM Programme – INFORMATION.
- A Training Programme for the CISM Peers and Mental Health Professional that constitute the CISM Team – TRAINING.
- Support and Crisis Intervention provided by CISM Peers (and, if necessary, a health professional, following a referral) to the colleagues that voluntarily ask for that support, in order to moderate the impact of Critical Incident Stress, and to speed up the return to the pre-incident state – SUPPORT.

The NAV Portugal CISM Team is composed of:

- 23 CISM Peers, (ATCOs and COM Operators) – Approximately 1 CISM Peer per 15 potential users (ATCOs and/or COM Operators working in ATC units).
- 1 National Coordinator – a CISM Peer.
- 1 Clinical Coordinator – a Clinical Psychologist.

The CISM Programme is structurally independent from the Safety, Operational Requirements & Performance Directorate of NAV Portugal.



NAV Portugal Case Studies CISM

Lessons learned

- NAV Portugal gained several insights into the CISM programme organisation including:
 - CISM peer training is a determinant of the success of the Programme; annual refresher courses are necessary.
 - The CISM programme has to be customised to the target users: cultural and specific working conditions and environment are major issues.
 - Close coordination and organisation of the Team's activities are necessary.
 - Promotion of the CISM Programme is a major issue: the target users (ATCOs and COM Operators) normally see themselves as highly skilled specialists and that there is no place for "feelings" in their life.
 - A method to assess the overall quality of the services provided by the CISM Programme has to be defined; questionnaires for the users at the end of the follow-ups proved to be a useful approach.
 - The educational programme has to be conducted through training modules.
 - A CISM module specially designed for the students in the initial training (ab-intio).
 - Operations Supervisors have an important role in the CISM Programme:
 - By following specific routines to alert the CISM team whenever a Critical Incident occurs.
 - By providing information on the availability of the CISM Peers (and the List of Contacts to the CISM Team) to colleagues involved in the Critical Incident.
- The CISM Programme has already proved its added value.

NAV Portugal Case Studies CISM

Business benefits

- Easier and quicker recovery from stress reaction to critical incidents.
- Facilitation of the post incident skill reacquisition.
- The educational programme has opened up the discussion around stress on the job. People are getting used to the notion that each one should rely on each other. Other topics, like TRM, have brought an important rapport, leading to the awareness that “things can be different, to the better” and that “things are changing”.
- Improvement of the company’s internal image.

NAV Portugal Case Studies CISM

Next steps

- Routine refresher training for CISM Peers, focused on role playing scenarios.
- The educational programme must continue on a regular basis, and the information to the users must be organised and provided in a modular approach.
- There are definite benefits in the interchange of experiences and methods among the already existing ATS providers CISM Programmes and Teams, particularly across Europe; regular meetings and common training should be considered.
- NAV Portugal is looking for further developments to its CISM initiative.



Maastricht UAC Case Studies CISM

Maastricht UAC provides air traffic control services in the upper air-space of one of the busiest regions in Europe. From the Centre at Maastricht in the Netherlands, a multinational team controls air traffic in the skies over Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and part of Germany.

Business issue

The Maastricht UAC considers Critical Incident Stress management as an important and integral part of its Safety Management System.

CISM is a method of caring for its Air Traffic Controllers and control staff that have experienced an emotional crisis which could prevent them continuing to function safely, if not addressed in a supportive and structured way.

The CISM objective of Maastricht UAC, is to lessen the impact of a Critical Incident and accelerate the recovery process of its staff who are experiencing stress reactions.



Maastricht UAC Case Studies CISM

Maastricht UAC's approach

Noting the Maastricht UAC's unique structure and taking into account the many different nationalities, it was decided to train 14 CISM Peer Councillors to support the operations room personnel. The peers cover the disciplines of air traffic control, flow management and flight data support.

Initial and annual refresher peer training is provided by a locally based company which is also contracted to supply immediate professional crisis support when required.

Business benefits

The Maastricht UAC considers its staff as its most important asset and investment. Therefore, anything that can be done to protect and support this investment can be considered as a major business benefit. The cost of training an Air Traffic Controller is very high, representing a major proportion of the budget; the cost of losing just one Air Traffic Controller, balanced against the investment required to maintain a CISM programme makes good business sense.

Next steps

CISM support will be later extended to all staff in the Maastricht UAC. It is also hoped that supporting its diverse nationality base, a European ATM CISM support network will be set-up to allow for an additional support layer if it should be required.

CISM and your organisation Case Studies

CISM

This brochure, prepared in 2004, has described the CISM programmes in European ATM. The business and social benefits of CISM type programmes in ATM and other industries are generally accepted by those involved. Like safety management initiatives, the full benefits of a CISM programme becomes apparent, once the system is in place and has evolved to a level of maturity.

What is not yet clear are the business and social costs that are incurred when programmes like CISM are not in place. It is likely that such costs remain substantial, though currently hidden, in most organisations without a CISM programme.

The ANSPs contributing to this brochure are already seeing the benefits of CISM programmes and through a EUROCONTROL sponsored user group, have begun to network and develop further CISM products to promote implementation in EUROPE.

A CISM User Group has been created for ANSPs in Europe. It meets twice a year and has an Extranet site hosted by EUROCONTROL. If you are an ANSP with a CISM requirement or have CISM in place and would like to know more, please contact:

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Further information and deliverables are available at:

www.eurocontrol.int/humanfactors/public/standard_page/humanfactors.html

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