

D) CISM / Peer Support CAN HELP with Resiliency

- Research shows that people will heal and recover faster from stress by responding to stress appropriately; this is the basis of peer support. Peer support can be as informal as "talking it over" with a trained peer or with a group. Even if you do not want to speak about the incident there is still value in listening to others speak about it. It is **entirely voluntary**, but highly encouraged to participate.
- CAP Peer Support can be considered emotional **first-aid** to help a CAP member's normal coping skills. It is always confidential, supportive, and respectful; it is performed by a peer supporter – a CAP member just like you who knows how to get you the help you need.
- All people who undergo a traumatic or critical incident are affected. Talking and going through a CISM / Peer Support is a sign of strength and maturity because it means that you are taking an active role in your health.
- CISM is a proven process that will help you heal and return to your previous state of health by talking (or listening if you choose not to talk) about the normal process your mind goes through after an incident or trauma.

Request Help (24x7)

- **If you would like to speak with a CAP Critical Incident Stress Management Officer contact your Chain of Command, Wing CISM Officer, OR call the CAP National Operations Center at 888-211-1812 ext 300 (24x7) who will coordinate with the appropriate help that best fits your needs. Just say that you want to talk to the CISM Team. You don't need to tell anyone why you want to talk.**
- **If you want to speak confidentially with a suicide phone coach call the suicide prevention lifeline at 1-800-273-8266 or text for free at 838255.**

This document or the accompanying presentation found on the CAP Safety website may be used by CISM, Health Services, or Safety Officers as one way to satisfy the monthly safety requirement (when approved by the local safety officer).



Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Resiliency Program Monthly Training – June 2015 Management of Negative Emotions

By understanding that negative emotions can be helpful teachers of lessons and that negative emotions arise from triggers, we can shape our future decisions into more positive ones. This will make all CAP members more resilient to life's challenges. Being able to mentally "get up" when knocked down is the goal.

Being Aware of our Negative Emotions will help by:

- **Understanding that some negative emotions are normal;**
- **Understanding that sometimes our negative emotions cascade and create additional negative emotions and thoughts - this is called Gratuitous negativity and this is something we should reduce through being honest and authentic with our emotions.**
- **Identifying if you are having a prolonged negative mood which can be managed with professional help.**

A) How Negative Emotions Work: Negative Emotions such as anger, fear, guilt, shame, sadness, jealousy, embarrassment, contempt, and disgust occur when something or someone gets in the way of what we want. Reducing the occurrences of negative emotions is always best, but having some negative emotions is actually good for you.

- When a negative emotion occurs (like getting told you did not pass an examination) your attention will be drawn to that situation and your mind will start going into problem solving mode (which is a good initial step in solving the problem, however, after a brief break to allow some time to pass).

B) Negative Emotions are Too Fast Acting: When a situation triggers a negative emotion your body rapidly goes into a mode where your attention narrows in on the problem at hand in an attempt to find a solution, **however your mind will likely not find the correct solution because your mind is in a "rapid problem solving mode" and you will not be able to think critically until some time has passed.**

C) **Unsuccessful ways that DON'T reduce Negative Emotions:**

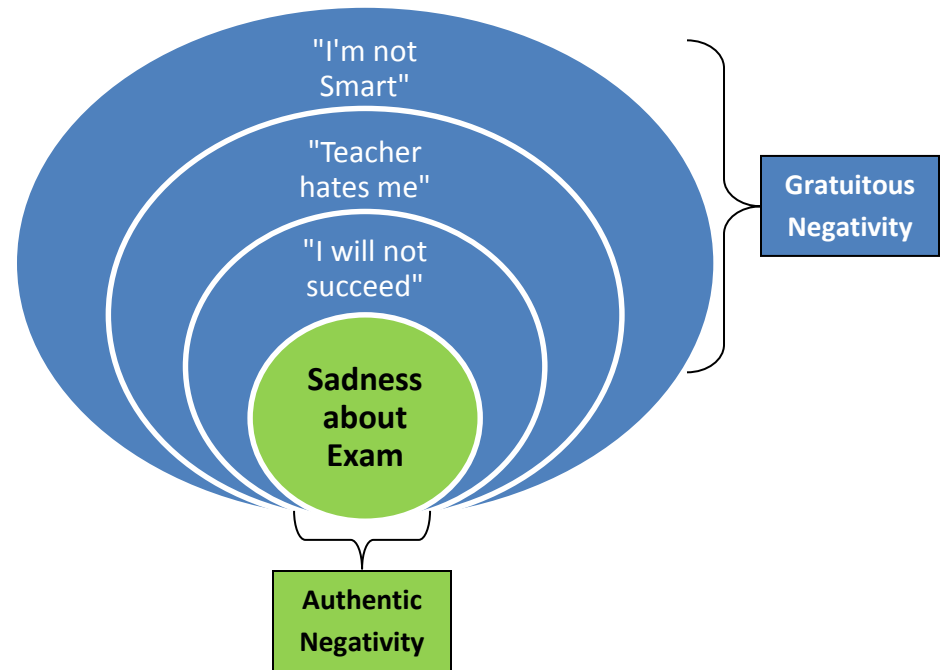
- **Ignoring / Pretending** the negative emotion does not exist; this worsens the situation because time typically does not improve situations.
- **Choosing the first “knee jerk” solution** – falling into the trap of choosing the first solution you think of is oftentimes a problem (first solutions are rarely correct ones); think critically instead.
- **Unhealthy Distraction** – In some cases people will try to forget their negative emotions by using self-destructive behaviors like unhealthy relationships, risky behaviors, drugs, and alcohol.
- **Constantly thinking about the negative thoughts** – In some cases people will be unable to “get the problem out of their head”.

D) **Successful ways to reduce Negative Emotion!**

- **Name and acknowledge the negativity** – By naming the negative emotion (“I am sad”), giving yourself permission to feel badly for a specific time period, and talking to yourself (and/or your close friends) about how to recover and learn from the experience. You will recover; be patient.
- **Act the way you want to feel** – If you want to feel happier, smile more; if you want feel more energetic, get wholeheartedly involved in an activity.
- **Healthy Distraction** – Engage in physical activities (yoga, stretching, walking), mental activities (reading, puzzles, or games), or social activities with positive friends and/or family.
- **Mentally say “stop” to the constant negative thoughts** – By taking control and saying “stop” you can mentally move on from the negative thoughts. Be in control of your emotions.

Necessary/Authentic Negativity: When we have a necessary/authentic negative emotion (sadness about not doing well on an examination) taking the time to put things into perspective and remembering what the exact reason for the negative emotion is important; be honest about what the negative emotion resulted from.

Gratuitous Negativity: When we have that authentic negative emotion (sadness about not doing well on an examination) that negative emotion frequently cascades into additional negative emotions like “I am not smart”, “I will never succeed”, or “that teacher hates me” for example. These additional negative thoughts are normal but need to be discarded because they are not productive, not true, and can cause people to get “wrapped up” in their negative moods.



E) **Figuring out Authentic versus Gratuitous Negativity:**

- Be honest and authentic about your emotions; think critically about how you feel.
- Take it one negative emotion at a time; what is the root cause of your negative mood? Think about what occurred just prior to the negative mood?

F) **Negative Emotions versus a possible Mood Disorder**

- Mood Disorders – create an almost daily blanket of negative feelings that can distort your thinking.
- If you have negative feelings more often than not, speak with a school counselor, employee assistance program (EAP) professional, or a CAP CISM Team member who can help you locate a person who can help. **If you have frequent negative emotions, there are things that can help you live to your full potential.**