I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to focus on employee wellness, develop and implement a Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).

II. Policy

CISM is designed to be a confidential consultation and resource for members and is not to be used as an investigative tool. The team will consist of trained sworn and non-sworn Sheriff’s Office personnel able to support members by providing assistance in the areas of personal and group debriefing, anonymous and confidential peer support, and resilience training.

III. Definitions

**Critical Incident**: Any situation faced by members that cause them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions and which has the potential to interfere with the ability to function either at the scene or at a later time.

**Critical Incident Stress Debriefing**: A formal Critical Incident Stress Management Debriefing (CISD) is a group discussion of a traumatic experience. These confidential meetings typically occur within a reasonable time of the incident. Although a CISD is usually held within three days, the specific timing depends on a number of factors. CISM Team members must judge the timing of the CISD meeting on a case by case basis.

**Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)**: A comprehensive, systematic, and multi-component approach to managing traumatic stress within an organization.

**Critical Incident Stress Management Team**: A group of trained agency members approved and supported by the Sheriff, consisting of a coordinator, peer support providers, and a mental health professional able to sustain sanctioned Critical Incident Stress Debriefings, One to One Support, and Resiliency services to the agency members.
**Family Support Services:** A set of interventions which may be utilized by the CISM Team members to provide a range of crisis support services to families of members in conjunction with HCSO Policy MAN2000, “Death or Critical Injury of Agency Member”.

**Follow-Up Services:** Contact with members following initial services provided by a CISM Team Member.

**Individual Support:** One-on-One support available to members with any Peer Support Provider, about any topic that is of concern to the member.

**Peer Support Providers:** Members of the agency who are trained through an approved CISM course. These members should be able to identify the normal stress reactions associated with critical incidents.

**Mental Health Professional:** A CISM trained licensed social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist or other licensed professional counselor.

**Referral:** Recommendations made by members of the CISM Team to the agency members suggesting contact with the EAP, chaplains, or other mental health providers.

**Team Coordinator:** CISM team member assigned with primary oversight and administrative functions of the CISM. The Coordinator is nominated by team members and approved by the Sheriff. Nominations for coordinator will occur every 24 months at the start of the new calendar year or in the event of an immediate vacancy.
Harford County Sheriff’s Office
Policy #MAN5500: Critical Incident Stress Management

5500.1 General Provisions
5500.1.1 CISM shall not interfere with any on-going criminal or internal investigations.
5500.1.2 This policy is not to interfere in any way with the voluntary use of or referral to any other related programs or services.

5500.2 Confidentiality and Responsibility
5500.2.1 Members who choose to use CISM services must be made aware that no special legal privilege is extended to peer support providers such as in the case of doctors and patient or attorneys and clients.
5500.2.2 The agency and team members must agree to actively protect confidentiality in order to sustain program viability.
5500.2.3 Peer support providers shall ensure agency members understand all conversations and sessions are strictly confidential with the exception of:
5500.2.3.1 Information indicating imminent harm to the member or others.
5500.2.3.2 Information that may prevent serious crimes.
5500.2.3.2 Situations requiring mandated reporting by law (i.e. child abuse, elder abuse).
5500.2.3.4 Information shared between peer support providers enabling other team members to garner assistance and experience from one another.
5500.2.3.4.1 These discussions shall be general in nature, shall not include names or other unnecessary identifiers, and shall not be discussed outside of closed team sessions.
5500.2.4 Allegations of team member confidentiality violations, to include the divulgence of sensitive information after the member’s tenure with the team, shall result in the immediate suspension of member’s operational status as a CISM team member until issue resolution.

5500.3 Responsibilities of the Agency
5500.3.1 Shall consider communications between a member and peer counselor as privileged and shall not question a peer support provider concerning the identity or services provided a member.
5500.3.2 Shall ensure members attend sessions for all mandatory CISM activations but recognize and reassure personnel that active participation is not mandatory and nobody is compelled to speak.
5500.3.3 No notes or recordings shall be taken during a session nor shall reports be filed at its conclusion.
5500.3.4 Shall support scheduling and logistics requirements of the team and its members regarding training and duties.
5500.3.5 Shall provide information regarding an incident to include photos, diagrams, and incident reports.
5500.3.6 Shall make provisions for a mental health provider to support the team who is not associated with any fit for duty evaluation.
5500.4 **Responsibilities of the Coordinator**

5500.4.1 Shall ensure CISM members comply with policy and procedures set forth in this policy.

5500.4.2 Shall monitor CISM members to ensure they meet the requirements of their regular duties and remain eligible for team participation.

5500.4.3 Shall monitor CISM member’s performance to insure they meet team standard of training, performance, and behavior.

5500.4.4 Shall monitor team members to insure they are not emotionally overwhelmed by the scope of CISM duties.

5500.4.4.1 This includes the establishment of a peer and professional support apparatus within the team itself.

5500.4.5 Shall provide assistance to CISM members reporting confidentiality exceptions previously described in this order.

5500.4.6 Shall be ultimately responsible for the administrative and logistical needs of the team, to include:

5500.4.6.1 Maintaining a team roster schedule.

5500.4.6.2 Timely notification of scheduled meetings and trainings via the chain of command.

5500.4.6.3 Providing general administrative and oversight functions.

**Annual Report**

5500.4.7 Shall submit an annual report to the Harford County Sheriff’s Office Command Team by January 15th consisting of:

5500.4.7.1 Number of team members.

5500.4.7.2 Number of critical incident call-outs.

5500.4.7.3 Number of peer support contacts.

5500.4.7.4 Number of wellness trainings provided by the team.

5500.4.7.5 Total number of CISM man hours expended.

5500.4.7.6 Any monetary expenditure to include overtime, training, or equipment.

5500.4.8 This report shall be used only for administrative and planning purposes and shall not reference or include the names or experiences of any member disclosed during a CISM contact.

5500.5 **Responsibilities of Team Members**

5500.5.1 Shall sign a membership terms and conditions agreement as part of appointment to the CISM team.

5500.5.2 Shall notify the coordinator immediately of issues that may impair or affect his/her ability to operate as a peer support provider.

5500.5.3 Shall recognize they are not mental health providers and operate within the limits of their training.

5500.5.4 Shall not take notes or otherwise document the session.

5500.5.5 Shall immediately make notification to the coordinator and affected party’s command of emergent or criminal issues as described previously in this policy.
5500.5.6 Shall provide CISD services, peer support, and resiliency functions and presentations as determined through the Sheriff's Office Training Academy.

5500.6 Training
5500.6.1 All training shall be provided by recognized professional organizations and individuals working in the CISM field.
5500.6.2 Initial training shall consist of a basic course conducted by recognized CISM instructors and approved by the Sheriff's Office.
5500.6.3 Team meetings and trainings shall be conducted on a quarterly basis.

5500.7 Team Selection
5500.7.1 The team shall be composed of volunteer Sheriff's Office members, not including a Coordinator and licensed mental health care provider.
5500.7.2 Members must be in a non-probationary status and in good standing with the office.
5500.7.3 Initial application shall be consistent with Sheriff's Office policy and procedures established for selection to secondary assignments as outlined in Transfer Procedures, MAN0900, sections 900.10.1 thru 900.10.3.
5500.7.4 All members meeting the requirements shall be reviewed by an initial screening board composed of the CISM Coordinator, one active member of the CISM team, and a clinician.
5500.7.5 Individuals selected through this process shall be offered training after they have agreed to, and signed, a terms and condition agreement.
5500.7.6 Members who successfully complete initial training must appear before, and receive a favorable rating from, a final oral board consisting of the CISM Team Coordinator, the original sitting team member, and a second active team member.

5500.8 Resignation/Removal from the Team
5500.8.1 Resignation or removal of a member from the team shall be consistent with established Sheriff's Office policy and procedures as outlined in Transfer Procedures, MAN0900, sections 900.10.5 & 900.10.6.

5500.9 Team Notification Procedures for Critical Incidents
5500.9.1 The Team Coordinator shall be responsible for maintaining and updating current contact rosters.
5500.9.2 Initial notification shall be made by the Watch Commander or Duty Officer to the on-call Peer Support Provider.
5500.9.3 Notification and CISM Team response shall be mandatory for:
5500.9.3.1 Police involved shooting or other force applications resulting in death or grave injury.
5500.9.3.2 Line of duty death
5500.9.3.3 Serious injury to members in the performance of their duties.
5500.9.4 A commander or duty officer may also contact the CISM Team Coordinator or designee for any incident that produces a high level of stress.

5500.9.5 Upon notification, the Peer Support member shall contact the other on-call team member and CISM Coordinator, respond to the designated location, and report to the deputy in charge of the incident.

5500.9.6 Regardless of rank, the Peer Support Provider exercises no command authority when performing team duties.

5500.9.7 The provider should avoid direct involvement in the incident and concentrate attention on assisting members.

5500.10 One-to One Contacts

5500.10.1 Members may approach any Peer Support Provider at any time.

5500.10.2 Peer Support Providers are not mental health practitioners. They shall encourage members to seek professional assistance when appropriate.

5500.10.3 Peer Support is not part of any formal Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referral or any administrative action taken by the agency. While peer support may be requested in conjunction with the EAP, it is not a replacement.

5500.11 Follow up Service

5500.11.1 Shall be provided in accordance with guidelines and may include mental health or other professionals deemed appropriate or requested by CISM providers and affected members.