A collection of military medals and a ribbon on a wooden display board. The board is dark wood with a blue border and several circular holes. A red ribbon with a circular emblem is at the top. Below it is a silver star-shaped medal with a central emblem. A blue ribbon with a circular emblem is below that. At the bottom is another silver star-shaped medal with a central emblem. A small metal object is also visible on the board.

# Stress Reactions: How they help you and How they hurt you

A pair of red-rimmed glasses and a circular seal on a pink background. The glasses are positioned horizontally. The seal is circular with a compass rose design and some text around the perimeter.

Understanding Some of the Issues  
Dealing with Critical Incident Stress as  
a Dispatcher and Supervisor



# What You Need to Know

- ◆ When the signs and symptoms of stress are within “normal” ranges
- ◆ When stress reactions are interfering with the job
- ◆ When you or a colleague is indicating a need for intervention
- ◆ If suicide is a potential for the individual

# Stress Response Syndromes

- ◆ *General Stress*

- ◆ All
- ◆ Normal
- ◆ Eustress
- ◆ Distress



Recovery

- ◆ *Cumulative Stress*

- ◆ Pile up
- ◆ Takes time
- ◆ “Burnout”
- ◆ Destructive
- ◆ Changes in health, performance, relationships, and personality



# Stress Response Syndromes

- ◆ *Critical Incident Stress*

- ◆ Event
- ◆ Normal
- ◆ Painful
- ◆ Interpretation

Resolution

- ◆ *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

- ◆ Event
  - ◆ Intrusion
  - ◆ Avoidance
- >
- ◆ Arousal
  - ◆ 30 days +
  - ◆ Disruption to normal life pursuits

# Stress Equals Change



# Arousal

- ◆ Cognitive
- ◆ Emotional
- ◆ Physical





# Routine Signs and Symptoms

- ◆ Alert
- ◆ More rapid breathing
- ◆ Yawning
- ◆ Heart rate increases
- ◆ Pupils widen
- ◆ Increased adrenalin
- ◆ Increased other stress chemicals
- ◆ Eyes scan
- ◆ Perceptual focus
- ◆ Active listening
- ◆ Mental review of past
- ◆ Preparations for fight or flight
- ◆ Selective activation or suppression of bodily functions

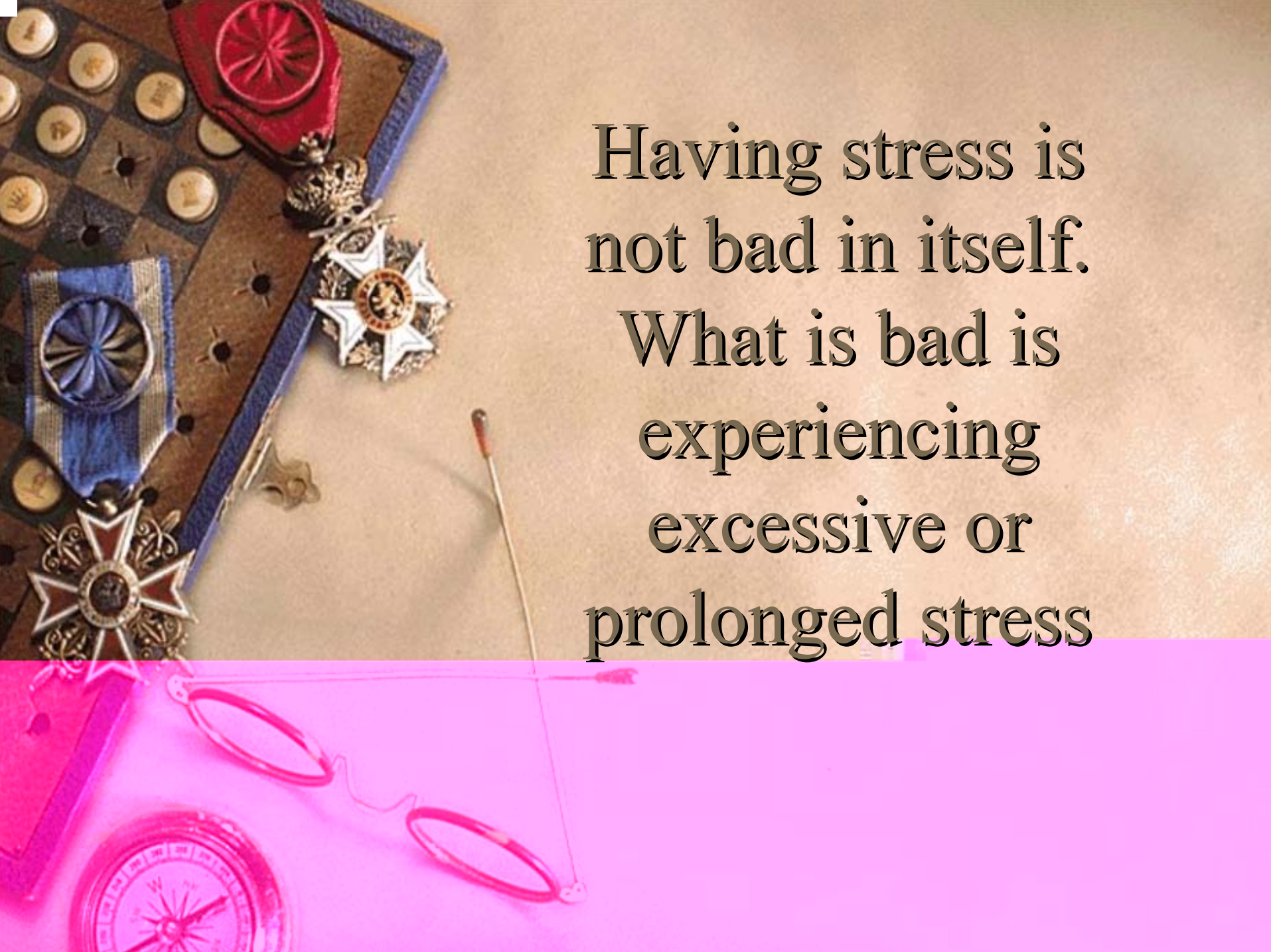


These early signals of reacting to a strong stimulus are actually adaptive and can help you to perform better and in a safe manner




# Other Common Expected Reactions to Stressful Events

- ◆ Increased anger
- ◆ Increased irritability
- ◆ Aggressive stance
- ◆ Seeking defensive positions
- ◆ Seeking cues to danger
- ◆ Seeking cues to safety

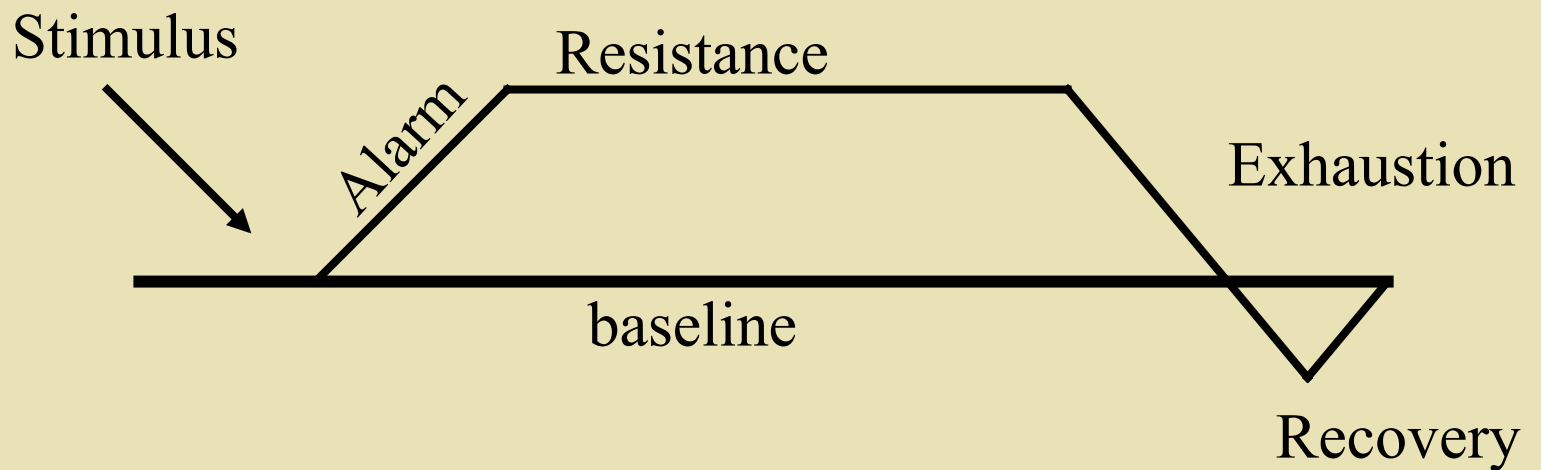
A collection of military medals and a compass on a wooden surface. The medals include a red ribbon with a circular emblem, a blue ribbon with a circular emblem, and two silver Maltese crosses with central emblems. A wooden compass with a red handle is also visible. The background is a light-colored wooden surface.

Having stress is  
not bad in itself.  
What is bad is  
experiencing  
excessive or  
prolonged stress

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a collection of military medals and a compass rose. At the top, there are several circular medals with intricate designs. Below them is a blue ribbon with a circular medal featuring a starburst pattern. Further down is a large, ornate silver cross-shaped medal with a central circular emblem. At the bottom, a portion of a compass rose is visible, showing cardinal directions and degree markings.

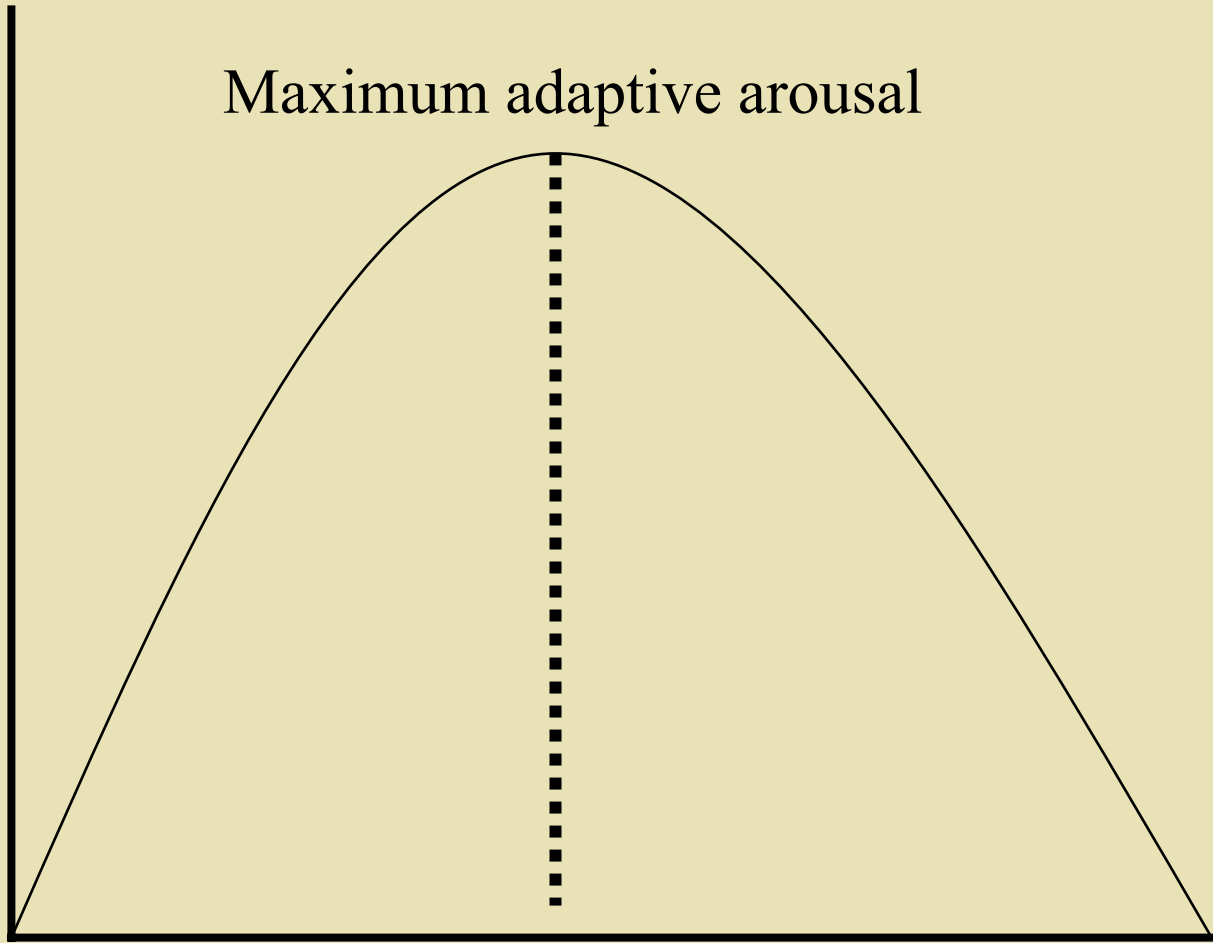
Initially stress reactions are adaptive and helpful. As the stress reactions increase, however, there is a greater chance that they will be maladaptive and disruptive

# General Adaptation Syndrome





Health and performance

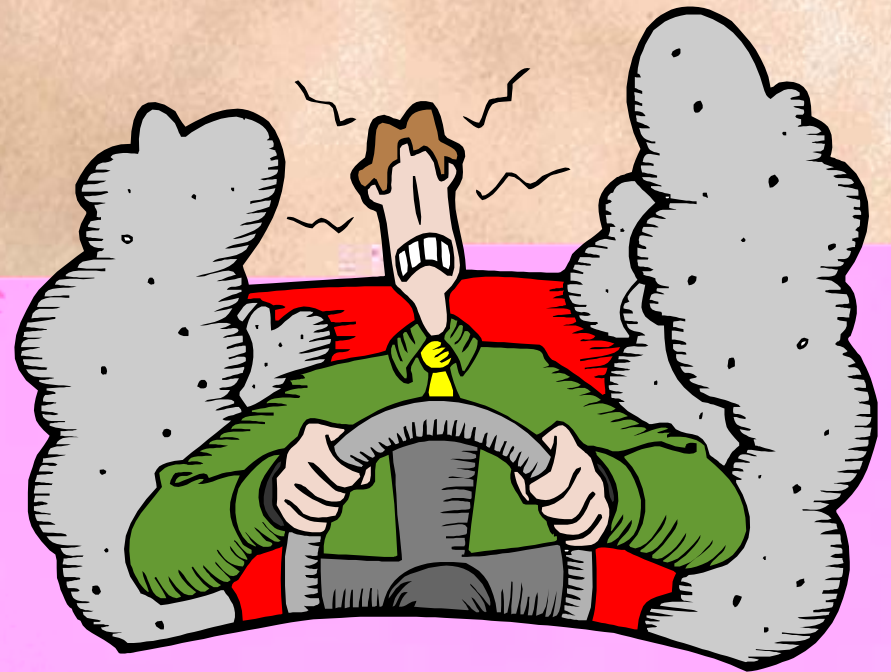


Maximum adaptive arousal

Stress arousal




Cumulative Stress:  
When arousal turns into  
malfunction





# Early Signs of Distress

- ◆ Chronic fatigue
- ◆ Feelings of boredom
- ◆ Increasing anxiety
- ◆ Vague feelings of depression

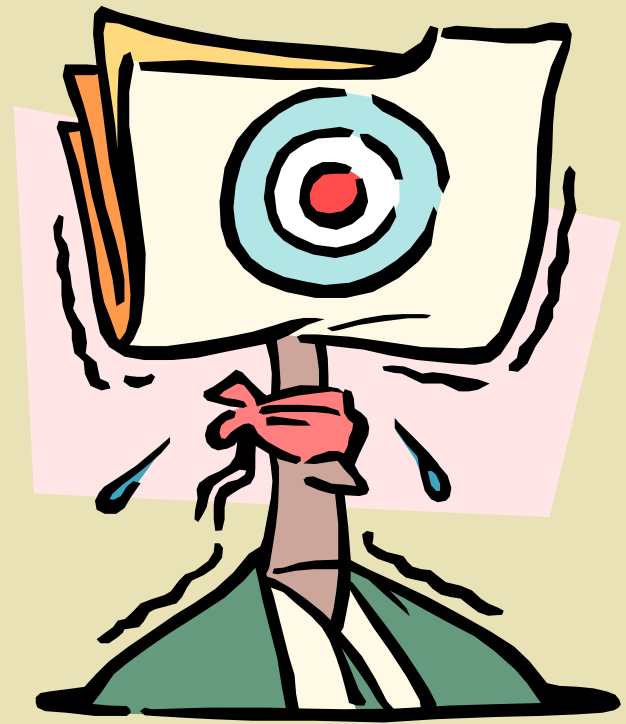


# When we do not pay attention to the early signs

- ◆ Anger
- ◆ Irritability
- ◆ Frustration
- ◆ Emotional outbursts
- ◆ Labile
- ◆ Forgetting important things
- ◆ Problems in decision making
- ◆ Problem solving difficulties
- ◆ Loss of attention
- ◆ Risk taking increases
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Increased alcohol
- ◆ Withdrawal from others
- ◆ Loss of concentration

# And if we ignore all the previous signs

- ◆ Intense depression
- ◆ Chronic irritability
- ◆ Loss of objectivity
- ◆ Paranoia
- ◆ Extreme frustration
- ◆ Thoughts of suicide
- ◆ Feelings of intense pressure





# The pathological end result

- ◆ Dramatic changes in performance
- ◆ Negative alterations in physical and mental health
- ◆ Destructive changes in relationships with family, friends and colleagues
- ◆ Significant negative changes in personality



# The First

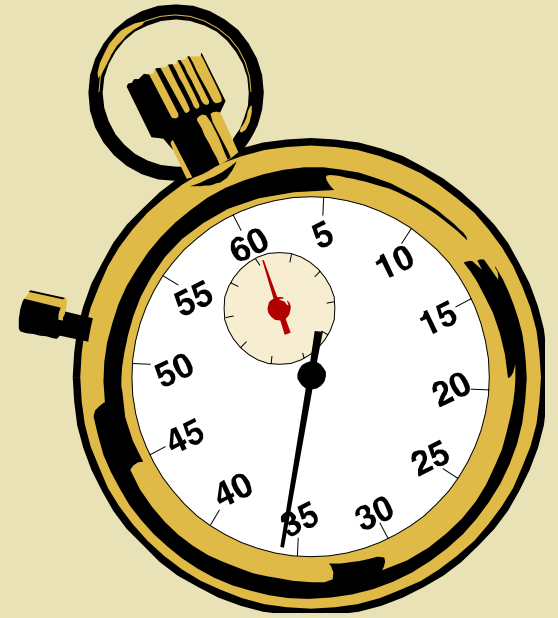


# The Numbers are Shocking

- ◆ 1 person succeeds in killing themselves in the USA every 17.1 minutes
- ◆ Over three hundred youngsters below age 15 kill themselves each year

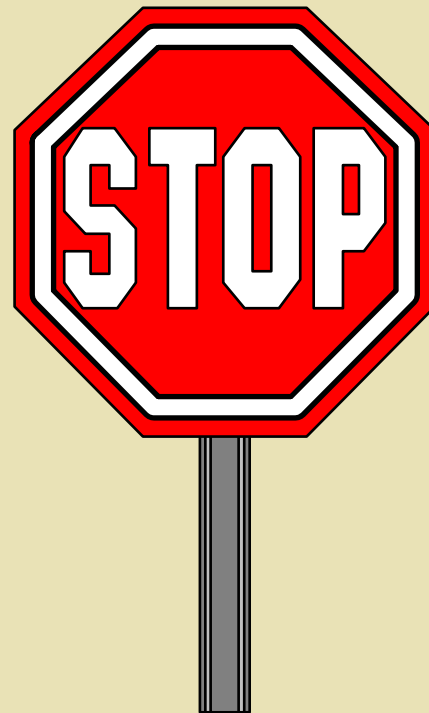


A suicide  
attempt  
takes place  
every  
39 seconds



# Suicide Warning Signs

- ◆ Talk of death, suicide, or harming oneself
- ◆ Chronic panic or anxiety
- ◆ Constant insomnia
- ◆ Altered personality





# Suicide Warning Signs

- ◆ Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- ◆ Dropping performance
- ◆ Dropping grades
- ◆ Giving away treasured possessions



# Suicide Warning Signs

- ◆ Becoming more isolated and pulling away from normal social activities
- ◆ Talk of depression, life is not worth living



# Suicide Warning Signs

- ◆ Loss of interest in formerly pleasurable activities
- ◆ Loss of energy

# Depression - Suicide Relationship

- ◆ Withdrawal from social activities
- ◆ Feelings of being useless / worthless



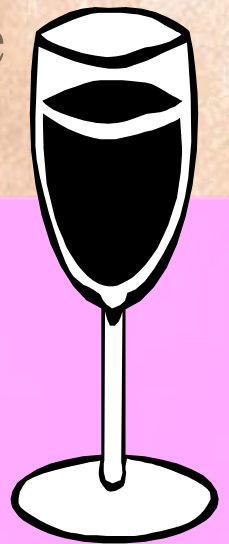
# Depression - Suicide Relationship

- ◆ Hapless
- ◆ Helpless
- ◆ Hopeless



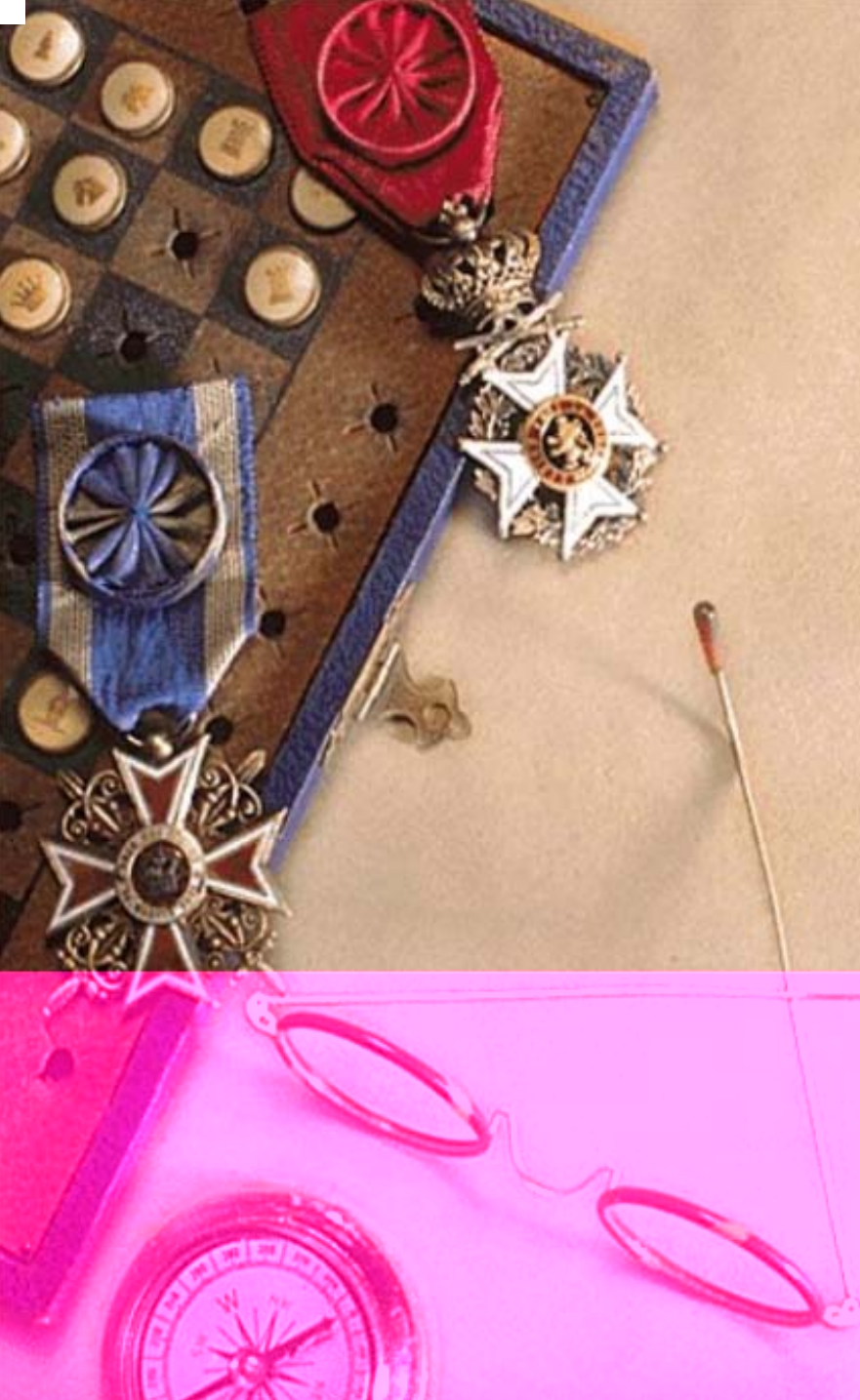
# Suicide and Alcohol

If you are depressed and drinking you have a 58% higher potential to commit suicide than if you are depressed and not drinking



# The Sudden Onset of Acute distress



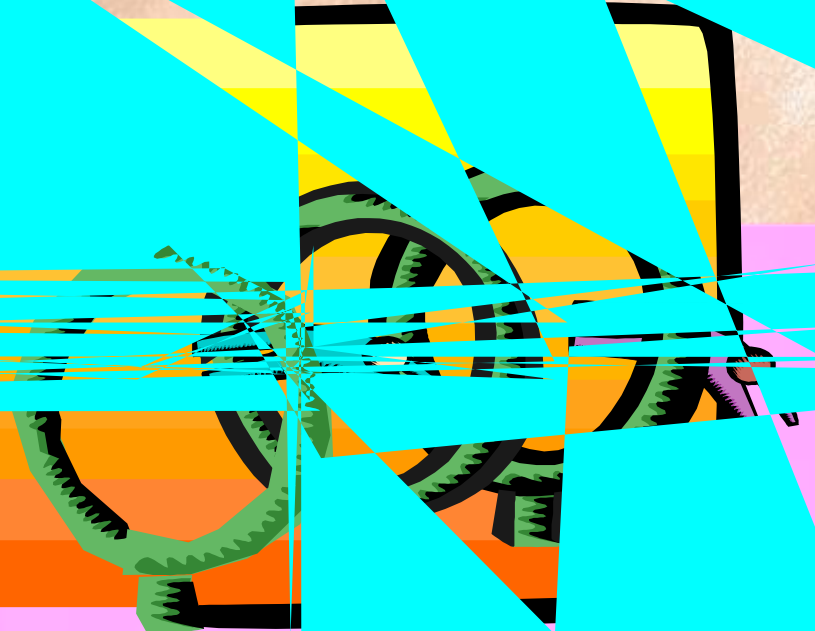


# Critical Incident

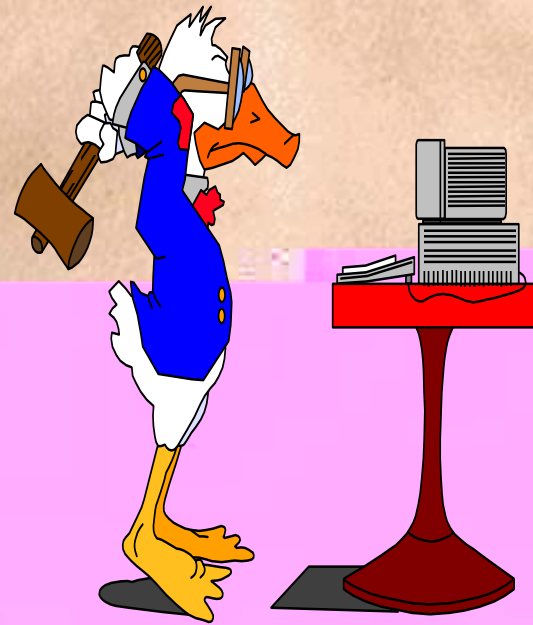
An event that has the capability of overwhelming the coping abilities of an individual or a group

CASE STUDY

An acute emergency  
reaction  
stimulus of  
le and



Crisis is a state of emotional turmoil



# Crisis Response Characteristics

- ◆ The relative balance between thought and feelings is disturbed.



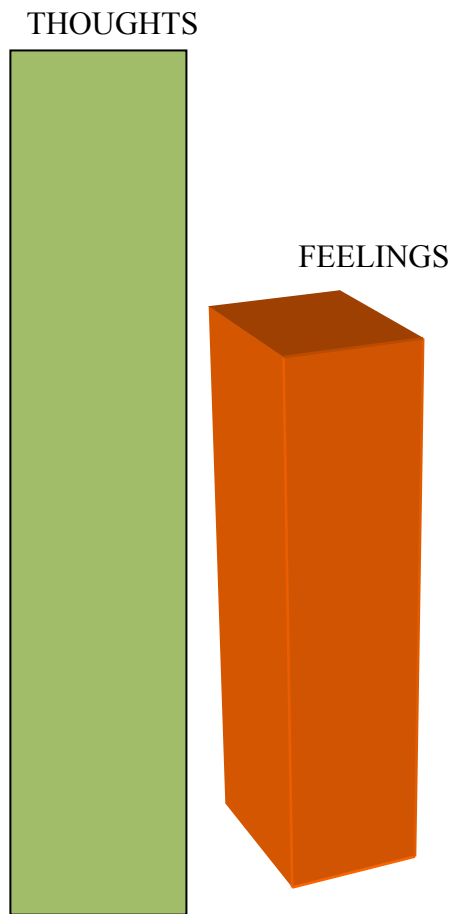


# Crisis Response Characteristics

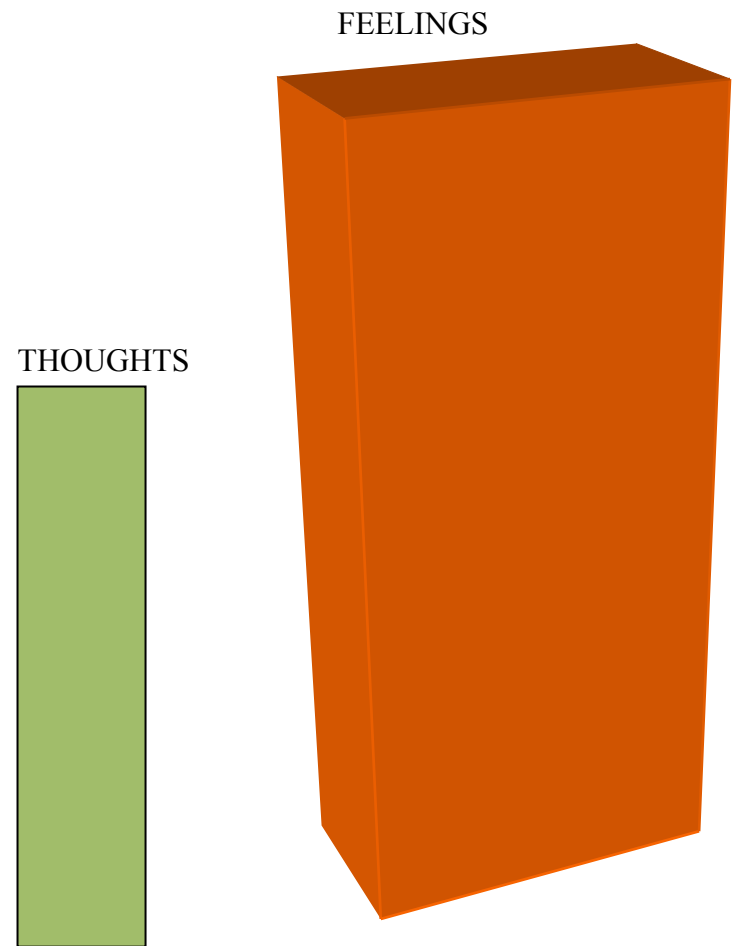
- ◆ The usual coping methods do not work effectively
- ◆ There is evidence of mild to severe impairment in the individuals or groups involved in the situation



## PRE-CRISIS



## CRISIS



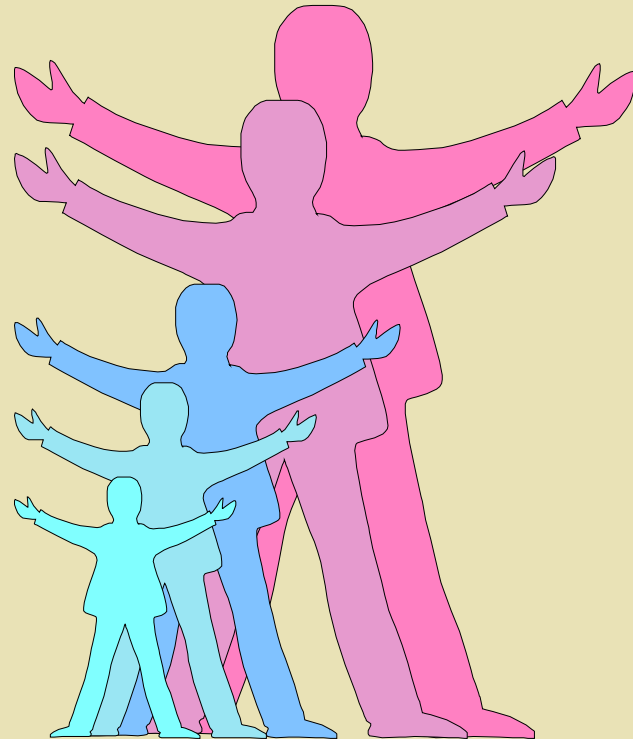


Anyone can  
experience a crisis  
at anytime in his or  
her life.



# Impairment factors

- ◆ Suddenness
- ◆ Intensity
- ◆ Degree
- ◆ Duration
- ◆ Level of loss





# Impairment factors

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Injury or death to relatives or friends
- ◆ Resources available
- ◆ Education, training , availability of coping mechanisms




# Why have a stress reaction?

- ◆ Protects the person
- ◆ Generates fight reaction
- ◆ Generates flight reaction
- ◆ Enables rapid reaction
- ◆ Enhances survival thinking
- ◆ Enables perceptual focusing



The Critical Incident Stress  
reaction is all  
about  
survival

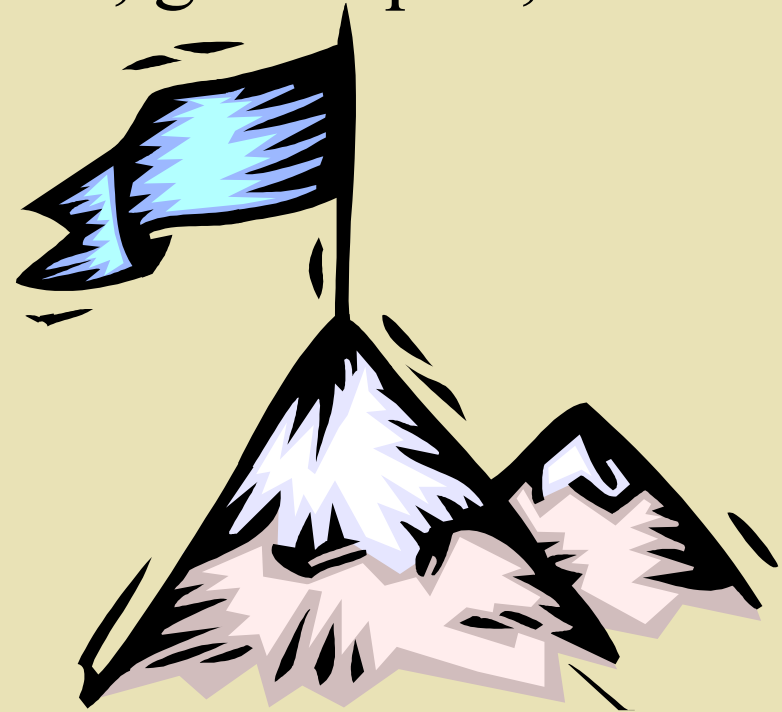
A collection of military medals and a compass rose on a wooden surface. The medals include a red ribbon with a circular emblem, a blue ribbon with a circular emblem, and two silver Maltese crosses with central emblems. A compass rose is visible in the bottom left corner. The background is a light-colored wooden surface.

# Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The Pathological End  
Result of an Unresolved  
Critical Incident Stress  
Reaction

# Six Essential Elements of PTSD

- ◆ Horrible, Terrible, Awful, grotesques, overwhelming event





# Six Elements of PTSD

- ◆ Intrusion of thoughts and images
- ◆ Avoidance of stimuli
- ◆ Arousal
- ◆ Must last thirty days or more
- ◆ Significant disruption in normal life pursuits



# Intrusion

- ◆ See aspects
- ◆ Hear it again
- ◆ Smell it again
- ◆ Taste it again
- ◆ Feel it again
- ◆ Cannot stop thinking about it
- ◆ Dreams / nightmares



# Avoidance

- ◆ Avoid place
- ◆ Avoid people
- ◆ Avoid conversations
- ◆ Avoid reminders
- ◆ Excessive sleep
- ◆ Limit activities
- ◆ Stay indoors



# Arousal

- ◆ Sleepless
- ◆ Restless
- ◆ Loss of attention
- ◆ Loss of concentration
- ◆ Loss of ability to relax
- ◆ Hyper-alert




# Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ◆ The system became stuck
- ◆ The normal has turned into the abnormal
- ◆ Can alter a person's life
- ◆ Needs corrective action
- ◆ Rarely goes away by itself
- ◆ New aggressive treatments available

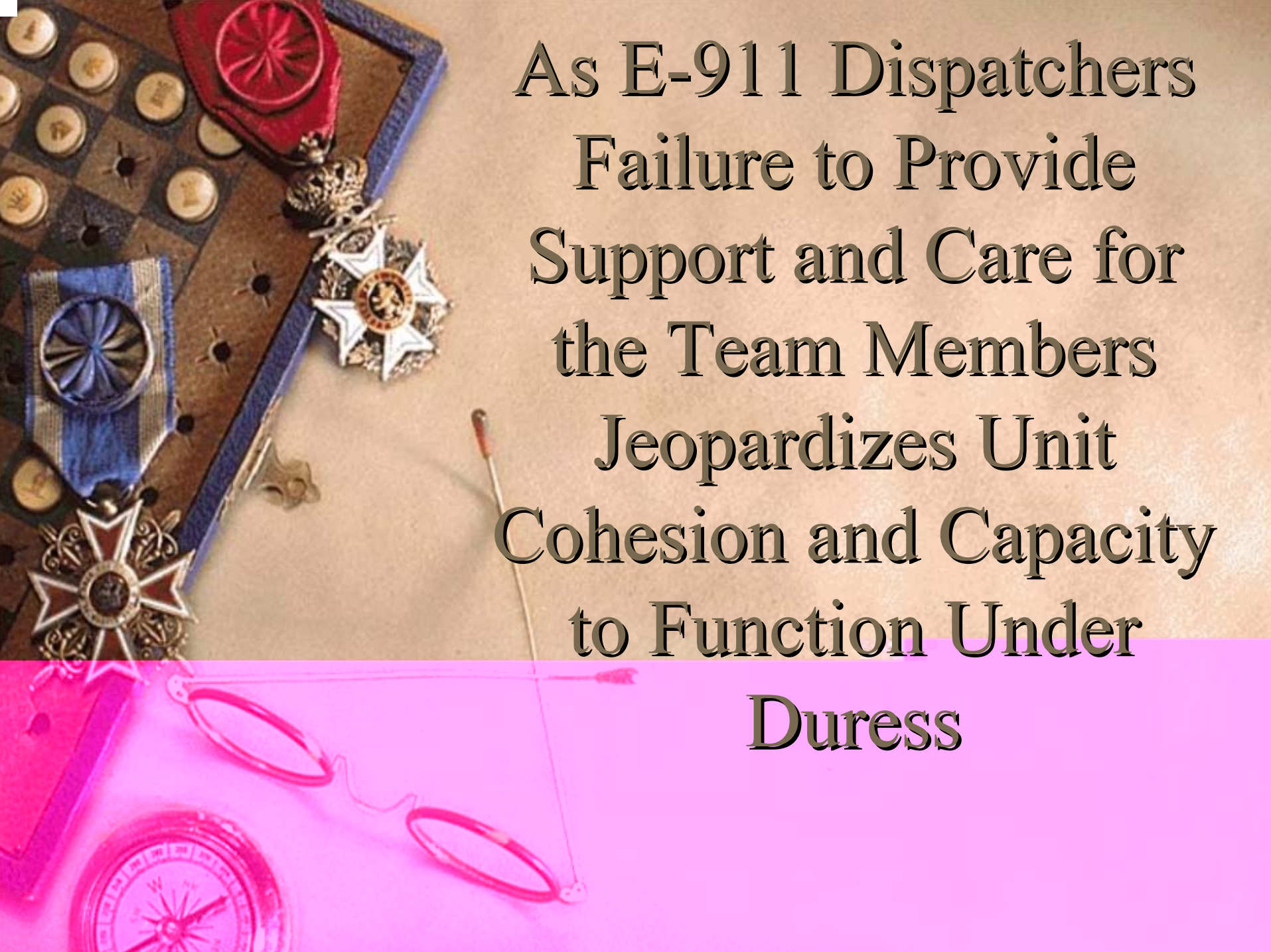
As Human Beings, We All  
Suffer the Condition of  
“Universal Vulnerability”.  
That Is, Anyone of Us Could  
Develop PTSD



A collection of military medals and a compass on a wooden surface. The medals include a red ribbon with a circular emblem, a blue ribbon with a circular emblem, and two silver Maltese crosses with central medallions. A wooden compass with a red handle and a white face is also visible. The background is a light-colored wooden surface.

Recognizing the signs  
and symptoms of stress  
is not enough

We have to do  
something about it

A collection of military medals and a compass on a wooden surface. The medals include a red ribbon with a circular emblem, a blue ribbon with a circular emblem, and two silver Maltese crosses with central emblems. A compass is visible in the bottom left corner. The background is a light-colored wooden surface.

As E-911 Dispatchers  
Failure to Provide  
Support and Care for  
the Team Members  
Jeopardizes Unit  
Cohesion and Capacity  
to Function Under  
Duress

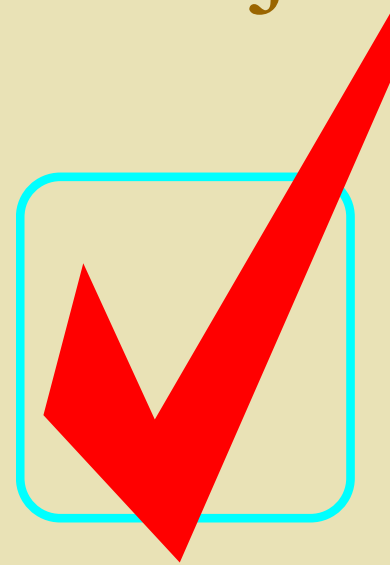
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# Crisis Intervention

Emotional “first aid” designed to assist the person in crisis to return to adaptive functioning

# Crisis Intervention Objectives

- ◆ Stabilize
- ◆ Mitigate
- ◆ Mobilize
- ◆ Normalize
- ◆ Restoration to adaptive function





# Salmon Principles

- ◆ Simplicity
- ◆ Brevity
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Pragmatism
- ◆ Proximity
- ◆ Immediacy
- ◆ Expectancy

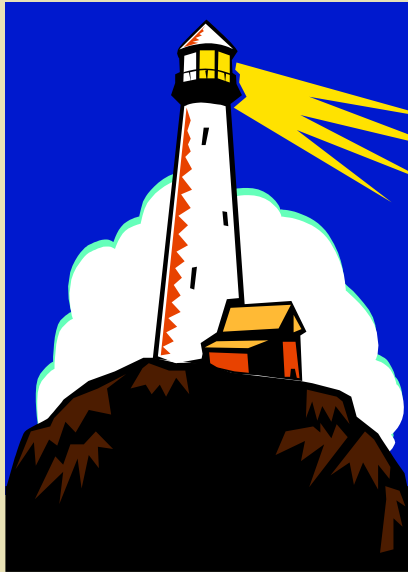
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# Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

CISM is a comprehensive, systematic, and multi-tactic approach to managing traumatic stress within an organization or community

# CISM Components

- ◆ Before: Education, planning, protocol development, policy development





# CISM Components

- ◆ During: On-scene support services, one-on-ones, advice to command, support to victims
- ◆ After: One-on-ones, defusing, CISM, demobilization, spouse support, follow up services




# Critical Incident Stress Management - CISM

- ◆ Comprehensive
- ◆ Systematic
- ◆ Multi-component
- ◆ Before / During / After
- ◆ Individual
- ◆ Group
- ◆ Organizational
- ◆ Family



# Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

- ◆ Preparation
- ◆ Education
- ◆ On-scene support
- ◆ Defusing
- ◆ CISD
- ◆ 1:1
- ◆ Family support
- ◆ Follow up and referral mechanisms

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide features a collage of military medals and a compass rose. At the top, there are several circular medals with intricate designs. Below them is a large, ornate cross-shaped medal with a central circular emblem. At the bottom, a portion of a compass rose is visible, showing cardinal directions and degree markings.

Crisis Intervention is relatively simple to learn and apply, but it has a real potential to make a difference in the lives of others, and it can save some of those lives when properly utilized.



International Critical Incident  
Stress Foundation

(410) 750-9600

emergency (410) 313-2473

[www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org)

# The End



