**Small Group Exercise (Debriefing)**

**Officer-Involved Shooting**

A robbery at a supermarket occurs early on a Friday evening in a small town just off the Interstate. Following an hour long chase through city streets the two suspected robbers have fled their car and are now barricaded in a private residence and holding a family of three hostages. The suspects are well-armed and are reported to be escapees from a local jail.

The standoff continues on late into the night. The media is working every angle to get closer to the blockaded home and are constantly having to be told to stay in the designated area. One photographer gets too close to the house and is mistakenly shot by a police officer. He is wounded in the arm, and is taken to the nearest hospital. The suspects release the hostages at 0315 hours, and at 0400 the decision to send tear gas into the house is made. As all stand ready, the SWAT team fires a canister into the house and it is soon filled with smoke. The suspects come out one at a time—the first with his hands behind his head and cooperative when told to lie down on the front lawn. The second comes out with a semi-automatic rifle on one arm and a handgun in his other hand. After repeated requests to drop the guns, he shoots the other suspect in the back with the handgun, and starts firing aimlessly with the rifle. He is fatally shot by the SWAT team.

The first suspect is critically wounded, and two officers have been hit by stray gunfire, both hit in their body armor. The wounded are all transported to the hospital.

During the next two days the incident is analyzed and evaluated. In the official report the actions of the policeman that shot the photographer were deemed accidental, and the shooting of the armed suspect was justified.

The debriefing takes place on Monday afternoon. A CISM team of police officers from the state patrol are called to conduct the intervention.

**For this exercise you will need:**

**Six to eight volunteers (give role-playing cards). Allow each volunteer to read their role and encourage them to “play it real”.**

**Four to five CISM team members.**

**Allow the CISM team members to decide what roles (Lead, Education, Doorkeeper, etc.) they will take.**

**Debriefing should take about 50-60 minutes, and then discuss for 15 minutes or so…**

**Questions:**

**-Anybody you’d “red flag” as needing further help?**

**-What were some of the “normal” reactions expressed?**

**-Was the CISM information delivered adequately? Key terms used?**

**-Anything to add?**

**Public Safety Role**

**Police Officer**

**You are a five-year veteran and are active on the SWAT team as well as your patrol duties. Your captain was one of the officers that were shot, and he is doing well and expected to return to work this week. You have spent the weekend at the hospital taking care of his family, so haven’t been involved in the investigation. You are willing to participate in the debriefing having had to talk to members of the CISM team last year for a stressful incident. Your demeanor is optimistic.**

**Public Safety Role**

**Police Officer**

**You are the officer that accidently shot the photographer, and have gotten a lot of ribbing from your peers. You have tried to contact the photographer and his family, but they don’t want to talk to you, which is frustrating. You come to the debriefing unsure if you are going to face any lawsuits from the photographer or his employer. Share your concerns and how this has kept you from sleeping very well the past few nights. You are skeptical of the debriefing, because you think it will be used as a disciplinary tool for the department.**

**Public Safety Role**

**Dispatcher**

**Keeping a professional, calm disposition was tough for you because your spouse works for the police department and you know most of the personnel that were involved in the shooting. You have not seen any of them until this afternoon, but you spoke to some of them (via radio) while the event was occurring. You’re anxious to hear the full story from the persons involved, because you want to tell the folks back at dispatch what “really” happened (mention this as an off-hand comment).**

**Public Safety Role**

**Police Officer**

**You have been disturbed by the heartless act of the second suspect (shooting the other suspect) and your emotions have run to anger and rage toward him. You have not been “yourself” lately, and your spouse has told you so. As you share your thoughts during the Reaction phase, state you’d like to see this suspect “rot away in jail”. Your demeanor is guarded pessimism.**

**Public Safety Role**

**Police Captain**

**Upon your shoulders were the tough decisions to charge the house with tear gas and to give the order to shoot if needed during the event. You are confident these were the best decisions to make given the circumstances, even though the town newspaper slanted the story towards police brutality and excessive force. Your peers all have expressed that they are behind your actions, and you take comfort in that. Your demeanor is confident.**

**Public Safety Role**

**CSI Photographer**

**New to the force, this is the first shooting that you have witnessed. You share that the adrenaline rush of the event has prompted you to seek a position as a SWAT member and have signed up for training in that area. You share that though disturbed by the family held hostage, you feel that the outcome was positive. Your demeanor is upbeat for the future.**

**Public Safety Role**

**Police Officer**

**You are a 15-year veteran, and have taken many promotional exams for captain. You are critical of how the event played out, stating that that’s not the way you would have handled the situation. You think going through a debriefing is a waste of time…initially. As you share, you have a change in attitude as you hear others share their experiences. Your demeanor starts as critical of the event and converts to positive as the debriefing progresses.**

**Public Safety Role**

**Police Officer**

**You are one of the officers hit by the suspect’s gunfire. You feel like you were well taken care of by your department. You have been encouraged by the “brothers of the badge” taking extra measures to ease you back into line duty. You express that you feel so good you are going to make a \*major purchase\* even though you are in heavy debt. Your demeanor is optimistic for the future.**