

some unresolved issues with the death of another officer. I now know that I did my best with what I had to take care of him for the 20 minutes it took for the ambulance to get there. The catch phrase for me is "I did my best." Thank you."

"What's different now for me is the fact that I can talk more openly about my incident and realize that no matter what others have said, that this wasn't my fault and I did all I could have done. I realized that I did what I had to do to survive. Being in the PCIS made me realize that I am not alone. The feelings I felt were normal. I realize that my battle is far from over but this class has made me realize that I can survive and keep my head held high. The EMDR was a major breakthrough in my healing process."

"What has changed for me is that the healing process has been sped up. Although I don't understand why someone would choose to take their own life, I can get past the spiritual issue. I can talk about the incident now and not get angry at him or anyone else."

"By returning to this program a second time, I realize the importance of being able to recognize and communicate what I may be involved in. And also to not only teach and explain to other officers that it is "normal and O.K." to experience difficulties, but learn to recognize the signs and symptoms and be willing to seek the assistance needed through programs such as this. In the world of law enforcement this is still a "new" aspect, but quickly needs to be widely publicized so that issue may be resolved prior to allowing the build up of issues."

"This class has changed my husband and me both. He states he will try to open up more and let me in so I can be there for him. As far as for me, I will support him more on the decisions he makes and let him know I am there."

"If you think your problem (situation) is unique, you're wrong. There are many people with some significant problems. However, I have learned that there is a solution, you just have to work on it and make peace within yourself. Also that many people are there to help."

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## Military Version of PCIS for Police Officers Returning from The War Zone



A military version of the PCIS, known as The Post Deployment Seminar is available on an "as needed" basis. For more information on this program contact LTC Steve Shugart, 803-667-2750 or [steven.shugart@us.army.mil](mailto:steven.shugart@us.army.mil)

# Post Critical Incident Seminar

## A Three-Day Training for Law Enforcement Professionals

Used By FBI Since 1985



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**Please Note: This is not Critical  
Incident Stress Management (CISM)  
Training for Peer Team Members**

## PCIS Description

**The Overall Goal of the PCIS: turning vulnerability into strength through learning, utilizing and offering peer support.**

This is an experiential workshop for officers who have "been there". Despite the best support immediately following a critical incident, there can be long lasting effects. Going through a critical incident is like crossing a fence, with no opportunity to jump back. A critical incident can rupture an officer's basic worldview. You are vulnerable and have to emotionally come to grips with a reality that the uninitiated cannot understand. The job, the street, and one's weapon are perceived differently. The PCIS will provide education on trauma, patterns of resolution, and field-tested coping strategies to promote recovery and resilience. Peer support is an important element of the PCIS. Discussion of incidents with fellow officers who have "been there" promotes normalization and recovery. This format has been in use by the FBI since 1985.

**What is a Critical Incident?** A Critical Incident is any event that results in an overwhelming sense of vulnerability and/or loss of control. These include line of duty shootings, getting shot or seriously hurt on the job, high speed pursuits that end in tragedy, events that bring prolonged and critical media attention, personal tragedies and the like.

**What will I get out of this?** An opportunity to share one's experience with one's peers, give and receive support, sessions with law enforcement related mental health professionals utilizing proven trauma recovery methods, and learn coping strategies that will enable recovery from past critical incidents and strengthen one's ability to deal with future incidents.

While several state police organizations around the country offer PCIS-type programs for their own agency, to the best of our knowledge there is no such program which is regional/statewide in scope and is offered to any officer in the state. While we may not be able to include everyone who wishes to participate in the program, we are planning a PCIS retreat which would include 35 participants and 15 facilitators. As the course fills up a waiting list will be started. The facilitators will be law enforcement peers, mental health professionals and law enforcement chaplains. This is a program which will be offered to any sworn officers in the state, including but not limited to: SLED Agents, SCDNR Officers, SCDPS officers, SCDPPP Agents, other State Police personnel, Sheriff's Deputies, Officers from local PD's and Federal Agents based in SC. **Spouses/significant others and 911 Telecommunicators are invited to attend the PCIS offerings.**

## Agencies Who Have Participated In The PCIS

|                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Abbeville County Sheriff's Office     | Georgetown County Sheriff's Office           | SC Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services |
| Aiken County Sheriff's Office         | Goose Creek Police Department                | SC Department of Public Safety (SCHP/STP/BPS/SC-CJA)    |
| Aiken DPS                             | Great Falls Police Department                | SC Law Enforcement Division                             |
| Aiken Technical College DPS           | Greenville County Sheriff's Office           | SC National Guard                                       |
| Bamberg Police Department             | Greenville Police Department                 | Seneca Police Department                                |
| Barnwell Police Department            | Greenwood Police Department                  | South Congaree Police Department                        |
| Batesburg-Leesville Police Department | Hampton County Sheriff's Office              | Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office                     |
| Beaufort County Sheriff's Office      | Hampton Police Department                    | Spartanburg DPS   |
| Benedict College Police Department    | Hanahan Police Department                    | Summerville Police Department                           |
| Bennettsville Police Department       | Hartsville Police Department                 | Sumter County Sheriff's Office                          |
| Berkeley County Sheriff's Office      | Horry County 911                             | Sumter Police Department                                |
| Bishopville Police Department         | Horry County Police Department               | Travelers Rest Police Department                        |
| Cayce DPS                             | Johnsonville Police Department               | USC Police Department                                   |
| Charleston County Sheriff's Office    | Lane Police Department                       | West Columbia Police Department                         |
| Charleston Police Department          | Lexington County Sheriff's Office            | York County Sheriff's Office                            |
| Chester County Sheriff's Office       | Lexington 911                                | *****   |
| Clarendon County Sheriff's Office     | Manning Police Department                    | <b>Participating Departments Outside of SC</b>          |
| Clinton Police Department             | Midlands Technical College Police Department | Blacksburg Police Department (Virginia)                 |
| Clio Police Department                | Myrtle Beach Police Department               | Fairfax County Police (Virginia)                        |
| Colleton County Sheriff's Office      | Newberry County Sheriff's Office             | Chapel Hill Police Department (North Carolina)          |
| Columbia College Police Department    | Newberry County 911                          | Chesterfield County Police (Virginia)                   |
| Columbia Police Department            | North Myrtle Beach DPS                       | Norfolk Police Department (Virginia)                    |
| Conway Police Department              | Oconee County Sheriff's Office               | Buffalo Police Department (New York)                    |
| Darlington County Sheriff's Office    | Olar Police Department                       | Virginia Tech Police Department                         |
| Denmark Police Department             | Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office           | Virginia State Police                                   |
| Dillon Police Department              | Pickens County Sheriff's Office              | North Carolina State Highway Patrol                     |
| Dorchester County Sheriff's Office    | Pinewood Police Department                   | United States Department of State                       |
| Drug Enforcement Administration       | Port Royal Police Department                 | Italian State Police                                    |
| Duncan Police Department              | Prosperity Police Department                 | Police Service of Northern Ireland                      |
| Easley Police Department              | Richland County Sheriff's Office             | Surry County Sheriff's Office (VA)                      |
| Fairfax Police Department             | Ridgeway Police Department                   | Canadian EAP Program                                    |
| FBI                                   | Rock Hill Police Department                  |   |
| Florence County Sheriff's Office      | SC Department of Corrections                 |   |
| Forest Acres Police Department        | SC Department of Natural Resources           |   |
| Fort Lawn Police Department           |  |   |

**Since 1997 Over 350 Officers, Spouses and TCO's from 85 Departments Have Participated in the PICS**

## Officer Comments Upon Completing PCIS

"Two weeks before attending the class I was at a point of not continuing life. I entered the class not sure of the outcome. Seeing people just like me showed me I'm not alone, and y'all have given me the tools to deal with past, present and future problems - these things along with many of the peer team's words, pats on the back, and smiles. Thanks for a new lease on life."

"Now I know I can do my job and am good at my job. The past is not coming back now when I think about the shooting incident. I know that I am O.K. and not alone."

"Don't ever cut this program short. It was on the third day that everything came together for me, and I understood that out of this incident there is a meaning for life and death."

"The incident that brought me here was the death of my shift partner. But what I found out was that I had