



Faculty & Employee
**ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE

Guidance for UVA Leaders

Developed by FEAP



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Critical Incident Response

Critical incident: Any event that has the power to overwhelm usually effective coping mechanisms.

Both the organizational system and individual employees are affected, and impact may extend outside of the workplace to communities and families.

RESPONDING TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

The Role Leaders Play:

Employees look to leaders for guidance, explanations, direction, support, and answers. Leaders restore a sense of order, control, and safety, setting the trajectory for resilience and recovery.



FEAP recommends: Actions that help make employees feel safer: visible leadership, access to supportive systems, and effective communication plans.

What Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) Do:

The goal of an EAP critical incident response is to continue stabilization and foster resilience.

The EAP is not an emergency service. EAP services complement the organizational processes employed in the early stages after an incident and are designed to build upon the actions of leaders and set the stage for supportive interventions to come.

Before FEAP coordinates a response, we collaborate with leaders and managers to learn how we can best help. **FEAP recommendations will be based on current assessment of situational needs and stage of recovery.**

FEAP Consultation & Assessment

Following stabilization of the situation, call FEAP for consultation and assessment 24/7.

Workdays - Monday through Friday - between 8 am and 5 pm:

- Call the FEAP Crisis Consultant: 434-995-8305 or call the FEAP office: 434-243-2643.
- The expected FEAP response time to consult is within 10 minutes.

After hours, weekends, and holidays:

- Call the FEAP office: 434-243-2643.
- Your call will be answered by a behavioral health specialist who will page the FEAP on-call consultant to respond to organizational crises.
- In this situation, FEAP's expected response time to consult is within 20 minutes.



FEAP Recommends: Consult, consult, consult.

“Any early intervention approach should be based on accurate and current assessment of the need prior to interventions” (International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies, 2009).

FEAP may ask:

- What happened?
- Who was involved? How much time has elapsed?
- How was safety restored?
- What was the impact on employees and on operations?
- What actions have leaders employed? What messaging has been shared?
- What resources have been brought in?

What to Expect After an Incident

FEAP will provide guidance and recommendations on how we can support your team in continuing to move forward and will collaborate with you to create a preliminary plan.



FEAP may recommend the below interventions with flexibility to adapt for each situation:

- **Participation in Leadership Meetings:** FEAP connects with leader(s) to assess current needs, recommend a plan for organizational and individualized support, and provide leaders with information about FEAP services and ongoing resources.
- **Participation in Briefings:** Briefings position management “out front” and in control, delivering the facts, support, and resources. FEAP is represented as a resource and may offer general guidance. FEAP’s role is to complement and further empower leadership in their position of control, provide brief education, tips, and, together with management, outline the interventions available or that day.
- **Providing 1:1s:** Voluntary opportunities for individuals to meet with a FEAP counselor. These sessions are focused on crisis intervention, safety, resilience, and work. Meetings are typically between 5 and 20 minutes and require a confidential space.

While groups may be useful, these require more extensive coordination and a cooperative effort to create the time, place, and communications. Extent of coordination may conflict with operational demands and routines. Groups also risk additional exposure to trauma. Speaking about how trauma impacted an individual before they are psychologically ready can be harmful outside of a treatment setting.

Helpful Resources

- [Providing Support After Traumatic Events](#)
- [When Difficult Things Happen](#)