



World Bank/OECS Emergency Recovery and Disaster Management Project

Government of Saint Lucia

Stress Management Response Team Plan

Based upon the Bermuda Hospital Crisis Incident Management Manual - 1996

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Document the Saint Lucia National Emergency Management Plan

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1.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

Hazard analysis and experience have confirmed that Saint Lucia is at risk from numerous hazards, both natural and technological. Hazards such as: Hurricanes, Tropical Wave, Tropical Storm, Storm Surge, Flooding, Land Slides, Drought, Volcanic eruption, Earthquake, Tsunami (giant sea wave), Fire, Explosion, Hazardous Material Spill, Mass Poisoning, Pollution, Transport Accident (mass causality), and Civil Unrest.

The National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO).

It is the intention of the Government of Saint Lucia through the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) to develop, test and implement adequate measures to protect the population of Saint Lucia from the emotional, physical, social, environmental and economic effects of both natural and man-made disasters.

Emergency responders too, are susceptible to suffer the consequences of a disaster and also to be under stress because their own activities during response and relief during and after the impacts of hazards. Emergency responders, then, are vulnerable to emotional and psychical effects too. Hence the need to establish a Stress Management Team (SMART): to ensure timely debriefing of emergency responders after a disaster.

Composition of the Stress Response Team (SMART)

The recommended composition of the SMART is as follows:

- Rep. of the Ministry of Health (CMO or nominee)
- Rep. of NEMO/Chairman Welfare Committee
- Rep. of NEMO/Chairman Shelter Management Committee
- Members of NEMO trained in Stress Management debriefing
- Rep. of the Christian Council
- CARITAS Antilles.
- Adventist Disaster Response Agency
- Saint Lucia Counselling Association
- Saint Lucia Mental Health Association
- Mental Health Professionals
- Saint Lucia Red Cross
- Any other counselling organisation.
- Any other appropriately trained person.

Chairperson of the SMART.

The SMART will have a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson that will be appointed from one of the members of the SMART. The Chairperson responsibilities are described in point 16.0.

Objectives of the SMART

- Ensure the timely debriefing of emergency personnel
- Refer to suitable specialists
- Recommend to NEMO future works and activities to be undertaken

Scope of Work.

The SMART will be required, *inter alia*, to liaise with the staff of the National Emergency Management Organisation to:

- Meet at least quarterly.
- Recruit and screening of team members.
- Identify critical incidents that will be addressed.
- Review the Disaster Legislation to include Stress Management.
- Identify liability issues and Laws that have a bearing on SMART.
- Collaborate with the relevant agencies, counselling associations and psychotherapy associations to identify formulate and institute appropriate systems for defining, reviewing and revising medium and long-term Stress Management policies, objectives and strategies.
- Review relevant Models.
- Identify where other services may overlap and make recommendations to harmonize them.
- Review sectoral plans and forward recommendations for components for Stress Management.
- Conduct pre-incident education.
- Maintain a database.
- Identify additional training requirements and recommend appropriate training programs and training institution for team development.
- Provide on-scene support services.
- Provide defusing and debriefing.

Support/inputs by NEMO.

- Institutional support provided through documented rules and regulations, general policy guidelines and through access to available relevant information, training resources and facilities.
- Secretarial support.

2.0 MISSION STATEMENT

The Stress Management Response Team (SMART) Plan of the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) exists to assist emergency workers who, in the course of their duties may experience critical incidents. The SMART plan works to facilitate the well being of emergency workers who may be adversely affected by critical incidents and to mitigate the effects of these incidents. The SMART plan will provide a range of stress management services to emergency service providers in the community.

The plan will provide the following:

1. Creating and developing debriefing island-wide teams in times of crisis or disaster.
2. Education and training programmes for all team members on related topics a minimum of once a year.
3. Reduction of the impact of critical incidents on emergency workers. The SMART will be charged with providing support to the emergency workers whenever necessary or after a critical incident.
4. A resource and referral provision for emergency service providers seeking specialty services. These emergency service providers will include, but will not be limited to, the Police, Fire, other Government Departments, Non-government organizations, family counsellors and mental health professionals.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

An integrated system of interventions, designed to prevent and/or mitigate the adverse reactions that affect emergency and disaster response personnel.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS

An unusually strong stress reaction that could affect the ability of workers in a disaster from performing their tasks and that could affect their everyday functioning.

Examples of such critical incidents that bring up that stress are, but not limited to:

Earthquakes	Mass Casualty Events	Hurricanes	Plane crashes
Serious injuries	Bombings	Wars	Hostage situations
Fire	Others (See Point 1.0 Background)		

DEBRIEFING

Debriefings are structured group meetings or discussions about a traumatic event involving persons who normally work together. Occasionally, it may be necessary to combine various groups of emergency response personnel together for a debriefing but this should only be done when all of the parties were involved together in the same incident. Debriefings are designed to mitigate the impact of such an event and to assist persons to recover as quickly as possible from stress arousal associated with the particular event.

DEFUSING

A defusing is a small, structured group meeting (4-8 persons) or discussion of persons who normally work together, e.g., nurses, police, paramedics, fire-fighters, etc., and who have been exposed to a traumatic event. Occasionally, it is necessary to combine various groups of emergency response personnel together for a defusing but this is only done when all of the parties to be combined were involved together in the same incident. A defusing is likened to a short debriefing.

MASS CASUALTY INCIDENT

A mass casualty incident is any incident where the resulting number of casualties exceeds the resources of the emergency services to manage them and hence the actual number of persons affected will vary from situation to situation.

4.0 SMART GOALS

1. Mitigation of traumatic stress
2. Intervention to assist recovery from traumatic stress (in-house policies)
3. Acceleration of recovery whenever possible
4. Restoration of function

5.0 SERVICES/INTERVENTIONS PROVIDED BY THE SMART

1. Pre-incident education
2. On-scene support services (when needed)
3. Debriefings
4. Defusing

5. Demobilizations after disaster
6. Significant other support services
7. Individual consultations (one-to-one)

6.0 PURPOSE OF THE SMART

The Stress Management Response Team (SMART) of the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) of Saint Lucia is established to assist Emergency Management Workers who may experience stress critical incidents in the course of their work.

The SMART works to:

- Enhance overall psychological health of emergency workers and significant others as deemed necessary;
- Reduce the impact of traumatic stress on primary emergency workers; and
- Accelerate recovery from exposure to stressful incidents.

SMART programs will provide:

- Education and training for team members, emergency workers generally and others as identified;
- A pool of trained resource personnel dedicated to reducing the stress impact of emergency incidents on emergency workers;
- Team members with the skills for island-wide stress management services for emergency workers.

7.0 LEAD AGENCY

The National Emergency Management Organisation shall be the lead agency. NEMO shall be responsible for establishing the environment in which the SMART can be developed and supported.

Responsibilities shall include:

- Provision of resources for development of SMART
- Development of supporting organizational structures
- Assisting with the establishment of rules, standards, protocols and procedures for SMART operations
- Coordination of SMART programme activities
- Securing releases of personnel as needed
- Establishment and maintenance of appropriate databases
- Development of research and evaluation methods and service quality assurance mechanisms
- Cooperation with such other agencies deemed appropriate in order to promote stress management in emergencies.

8.0 TEAMS

The SMART should establish teams as necessary.

9.0 TEAM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Selection of Members

Recruitment is on going because of the dynamic nature of the population. Selection of persons to serve on the SMART shall be determined by a Team Membership Committee set up by the membership and established for that purpose. The Team Membership Committee will review the applications for voluntary membership into the SMART. They will make reference contacts and determine which candidates will be selected to receive initial training, interview candidates when applicable, and make final selection of members.

The Team Membership Committee will include, but is not restricted to:

- The Chairperson of the SMART
- A representative from NEMO
- A mental health professional
- A support member
- Another member appointed by the Chairperson of the SMART

Criteria for Membership

The Team Membership Committee members will be selected utilizing the following protocols:

- Mental Health Professional Team Members:
 - (a) Each mental health professional shall be employed in one of the following areas:
Social Service, Psychology, Crisis Intervention, Counselling, Psychiatric Nursing.
 - (b) The Mental health professional should have specific training in the following:
Crisis intervention
Management
Stress Management knowledge
Group process
Directive intervention
Cross training in emergency service and/or experience in emergency service work
Post-traumatic stress disorders
Human communications
- Support Personnel:
 - (a) Qualities which each support team member should possess:
Emergency service provider skills
Maturity
Respect and trusted among peers

Ability to keep confidences
Psychology or social work background – an asset, not mandatory
Sensitive to others
Ability to learn psychosocial process
Ability to adhere to established guidelines and protocols.

10.0 SMART MEMBERSHIP LENGTH OF SERVICE

- A. Membership in the team will be reviewed every three years during the second week of December. Members must express their desire to remain active. The Chairperson of the SMART and the Team Membership Committee will approve all membership renewals;
- B. The SMART will decide on a specific number of members. Vacancies created will be discussed by the team and recommendations made to the Chairperson of the SMART regarding replacing members on the basis of:
 - (a) Number of vacancies
 - (b) Time interval to end of term
 - (c) Current membership
 - (d) Availability of training opportunities and funds
- C. Any member wishing to resign, for any reason, will submit a written resignation to the Director of NEMO after discussing the matter with the Chairperson of the SMART;

11.0 REVOCATIONS/SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership is revocable at the discretion of the Chairperson of the SMART or the Peer Review Board (See point 12.0 below) . Action is appropriate for, but not limited to the following:

- 1. Failure to maintain strict confidentiality regarding SMART debriefing held, including topics discussed and personnel involved. Any breach in confidentiality will result in the immediate removal from the SMART.
- 2. Failure to follow all protocols and directives regarding the SMART activity.
- 3. Organising or, in any way, attempting to organize any type of debriefing without consultation with the Chairperson of the SMART. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson and the Director of NEMO should be contacted.
- 4. Organising or, in any way, attempting to organize any SMART activity or Team without the prior knowledge or approval of the Chairperson of the SMART.
- 5. Going to the scene or place of an incident to act on behalf of the SMART without the prior knowledge or approval of the Chairperson of the SMART. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson and the Director of NEMO should be contacted

6. Failure to be present at an assigned debriefing when the member has made the commitment to do so and has not provided an excuse.
7. Continued unexcused absenteeism at the SMART meetings (held quarterly) or training sessions.
8. Acting against the expressed direction of the Chairperson of the SMART.
9. Any misrepresentation of the affairs or operations of the SMART.
10. Failure to complete the required paperwork (reports, etc.)
11. Any misrepresentation of professional education or experience in the application for membership of the SMART.

Failure to comply with the any of the above may also leave members liable under the laws of Saint Lucia.

12.0 PEER REVIEW BOARD

A Peer Review Board will be established to evaluate the criteria for membership revocation or suspension. The SMART will elect the Peer Review Board and members will serve on a rotating basis per incident. If the incident involves a clinical matter, the Board will consist of a mental health team member and two other team members. For non-clinical matters, any three members may be selected.

For clinical issues, the following procedures will apply:

1. The Peer Review Board will meet and discuss the problem with the member, within 72 hours of notification.
2. The Peer Review Board will file a written report and recommendation, within 48 hours of the meeting to the Chairperson of the SMART and copied to the Director of NEMO.
3. The Chairperson of the SMART will review the recommendation of the Board, consult with the Director of NEMO and initiate any disciplinary action recommended
4. The Director of NEMO will submit the report to the Chairman of the National Emergency Management Advisory Council (NEMAC).

For non-clinical issues, the following procedures will apply:

1. The Peer Review Board will meet and discuss the problem, with the member, within one week of notifications.

2. The Peer Review Board will file a written report and recommendation, within 48 hours of the meeting to the Chairperson of the SMART and copied to the Director of NEMO.
3. The Chairperson of the SMART will review the recommendation of the Board, consult with the Director of NEMO and initiate any disciplinary action recommended.
4. The Director of NEMO will submit the report to the Chairman of the National Emergency Management Advisory Council (NEMAC).

13.0 SMART TRAINING

Training is the key to a successful SMART. Training can become a concern if everyone is not operating at the same level. Consensus regarding modules is important for quality control. The training will take several forms and be presented by several people

The goal is to provide in-service and continuing education at a minimum of once a year. Many of these topics will be determined by the members of the team, by areas of training not previously completed, and new programmes that will be developed and incorporated as the SMART grows.

All candidates for team membership should attend the PAHO Stress Management Training Course. This seminar will instil basic knowledge on the topic of stress and its management and provide an overview into the area of Critical Incident Stress, as well as information on debriefing and team membership. The Chairperson of the SMART, or other resource person who is knowledgeable in the area will present this.

There will be mandatory attendance at the three-day PAHO Training Course. This course will add definition to the roles and responsibilities of team members; the debriefing and intervention process; team protocols; and will provide a more in depth look at the topic of Critical Incident Stress. All SMART volunteers, regardless of their desired area of participation within the SMART, must attend this course.

Training and educational programming will be set up via contact with the SMART and Training Coordinators. All members who receive requests for services by the SMART are to contact the SMART Chairperson who will select the most appropriately trained and available team members to present the programme.

14.0 TEAM ACTIVATION

It is important that all activities be coordinated and dispatched in an orderly fashion, regardless of the type of activity.

1. It shall be the responsibility of the NEMO to notify the SMART Chairperson for services/assistance as needed.
2. The SMART Chairperson can also contact NEMO for approval to activate the SMART.

3. Requests for referrals are also to be directed to the SMART Chairperson who will contact the requesting party.
4. Once a request for services is made the SMART Chairperson will determine:
 - Whether a debriefing is needed or other type of intervention
 - Select team members to provide the service
 - Set up location, date of debriefing or other service
 - Assist with pre-debriefing activities meeting
 - Attend if necessary debriefing/SMART activity
 - Obtain and review intervention report
 - Arrange debriefing for debriefers
5. Only those persons involved in the critical incident will be permitted to attend the debriefing. Any unauthorized or inappropriate individual will be required to leave the debriefing room.
6. SMART members involved in a response would not be assigned to conduct a debriefing.

15.0 SMART CALL OUT PROCEDURES

The SMART will be notified by NEMO through the SMART Chairperson. The SMART Chairperson shall act as the liaison between the overall incident command/liason whenever necessary.

The SMART will be mobilized and dispatched on instructions of either the Director of NEMO or the SMART Chairperson after consultation with NEMO.

16.0 SMART CHAIRPERSON

The SMART Chairperson with the assistance of NEMO shall be responsible for the overall management of the SMART of which he/she is Chairperson. Responsibilities include:

1. The efficient functioning of the Stress Management Response Team of the National Emergency Management Organisation.
2. Recruitment of volunteers for the programme.
3. Represent the SMART at meetings, workshops, seminars, etc.
4. To provide (or his/her nominee) clinical support to team members.
5. To provide guidance to team members.
6. Assist with the team selection process.
7. Co-ordinate the training of the SMART.
8. Respond to requests for assistance or other programming.
9. Evaluate requests for debriefings.
10. Dispatch the SMART.
11. Provide debriefing of the debriefers when necessary or requested.
12. Solicit support from appropriate agencies.

13. Hold periodic SMART meetings (at least quarterly).
14. Maintain quality control.
15. Maintain records of team activities.
16. Maintain updated lists of referrals.
17. Coordinate training sessions, seminars, in-services and continuing educational programmes.
18. Undertake research and development curricula for stress management programming.
19. Present reports to NEMO (After Action Reports).

The Deputy Chairperson of the SMART will undertake these duties in the absence of the Chairperson of the SMART.

17.0 ISSUES FOR COORDINATION

Urban areas might have a number of SMART members (teams) depending on the total population of the area. These teams should consist of 4-6 volunteers. When overwhelmed by a specific situation external support must be considered.

In the Caribbean and Saint Lucia, coordination will have more to do with resources, distance, locally planned and implemented response programmes that are facilitated with dialogue between interested parties and within sub-groups of interested parties who share common concerns.

18.0 COSTS OF THE SMART

Many Teams have members who volunteer, however, there are costs associated with starting and operating an SMART. Items that may generate costs include:

1. Availability and accessibility of training opportunities
2. Duration of coordination required
3. Size of the geographic area served by the Team
4. Equipment (*e.g.* Bibs, PCs, Forms)

19.0 INCIDENTS WHERE DEBRIEFING MIGHT BE NECESSARY

1. Road traffic accidents (serious or fatal)
2. Fires where lives were lost or serious injuries occur
3. Serious crimes *i.e.* rape, murder
4. Natural, accidental and man-made disaster

5. Deaths/incidents involving children
6. Riots where serious injuries occur
7. Incidents that impact on the entire community
8. Line of duty deaths
9. Providing life saving support for extended periods without success
10. Threat to self in line of duty
11. Drowning or near drowning
12. Suicide/attempted suicide
13. Serious trauma involving multiple agencies
14. Others as deemed appropriate

20.- MEMBER APPLICATION

NEMO
P.O. Box 1517
Castries
St. Lucia, West Indies
Tel. (758) 452-3802
Fax (758) 453-2152
Email:eoc@candw.lc

NAME: _____

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

NEXT OF KIN PHONE NUMBER _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

MARRIED [] SINGLE []

What kind of experience do you have that is suited for participation in the Stress Management Response Team? _____

Have you taken any course work e.g., crisis intervention, peer counselling, etc. that would prepare you to do critical incident stress debriefings?

Are there any circumstances that would prevent you from responding?

Why are you interested in becoming a member of the SMART?

I am willing to volunteer your time to provide stress response services?

I am willing to volunteer my time and to participate in ongoing training programmes?

I understand this is a volunteer corps, and no financial compensation will be provided to team members.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

21.- MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

I, _____, the undersigned, agree that if I am
PLEASE PRINT NAME

selected into the membership of the Stress Management Response Team of the National Emergency Management Organisation I will serve as a volunteer team member for a period of three years, which may be renewed.

I understand that serving as a team member requires the following commitment and obligations:

1. Completion of the initial training.
2. Completion of additional training sessions, as may be required, a minimum of one per year.
3. Attend the SMART meetings (held quarterly).
4. Complete any required records or other paper work
5. Adhere to the SMART policies, guidelines and protocols.

I understand that revocation or suspension of my membership can occur under certain circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. If I fail to maintain strict confidentiality regarding SMART debriefings held, including topics discussed and personnel involved.
- B. If I would breach confidentiality, it will result in immediate removal from the SMART Chairperson.
- C. If I fail to follow the protocols and directives regarding SMART activities.
- D. If I organize, or in any way attempt to organize any SMART activity or programme without the SMART Chairperson's prior knowledge and approval.
- E. If I go to the scene place of an incident to act on behalf of the SMART, without the SMART Chairperson's prior knowledge and approval.
- F. If I fail to be present at an assigned debriefing or activity when I have made a commitment to do so without a valid excuse.
- G. If I act against the express direction of the SMART Chairperson and/or NEMO authority.

- H. If I misrepresent the affairs or operations of SMART.
- I. If I am habitually, or continually, absent from scheduled SMART meetings without a valid excuse.

I understand that revocation or suspension of membership to the SMART can occur for breaches of any one or more of the above.

I further understand that being selected to attend the preliminary training session does not ensure me a position in the Team or within the Team.

The SMART – NEMO agree to provide the following:

1. A local preliminary training session. Further sessions can be provided as the need arises.
2. At least one continuing education session per annum.
3. Administrative support.
4. Debriefing for the debriefing team members after a Stress Response when necessary.
5. Re-evaluation of the entire Team operations and personnel after each year of operation.
6. Maintenance of quality standards in performance and confidentiality in personnel (Team members) and operation.
7. SMART member identification for each Team member.
8. ‘On site’ Team members with safety equipment including, but not limited to safety helmet or hardhat and a reflective safety devise.
9. Team meetings as required, at least on a quarterly basis.
10. Information and updates on the topic of Stress Management In Disasters and related issues.
11. Quality control overseen by NEMO.

I have read and understood these commitments and obligations and will agree, if selected, to serve as a volunteer for the SMART – NEMO and to abide by all protocols.

I CONSENT TO THE ABOVE _____

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

WITNESSED BY: _____

POSITION: _____

FOR NEMO _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

22.0 Health Services (Complaints and Conciliation) Act No. 34 of 2001

The **Health Services (Complaints and Conciliation) Act No. 34 of 2001** is a “stand alone” document that may be activated to support hazard management plans, and is binding on the members of the Stress Response Team.