



## SPECIALIZED CLINICAL SERVICES

# Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

Inkblot's group trauma debriefs and wellness support groups provide the following:

- Supports prevention and minimizes the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Trauma Defusing—Defusing is a process of supporting staff who have experienced a traumatic or extraordinary incident at work and occurs within hours of the event. Defusing sessions are shorter, unstructured encounters that encourage a relatively brief discussion of the events which occurred to prevent an acute stress response. The goal of trauma defusing is to defuse the impact of the event, ensure psychological safety, and to assess the needs of individuals or a group.
- Specialized trauma-focused group debriefs are delivered by expert mental health professionals for the general population and more specialized populations such as student populations, racialized groups, first responders, and veterans. These groups generally comprise 8-12 participants and run for 90 minutes per group session. In complete confidentiality, trauma intervention groups provide a safe space for participants to share their traumatic experiences and stories and aid in participants' recovery process. Participants are provided with psychoeducation and normalization of trauma reactions and symptoms while benefiting from the group dynamic of hearing others' stories and similar reactions and symptoms.

- Rules of engagement about confidentiality and conduct are set forth and maintained by the group facilitator to ensure that all participants feel safe to disclose their feelings and feel respected by all those attending the group. The goal of trauma debrief groups is to assist participants in easing the emotional stress created by the traumatic events, including feelings of isolation, loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness, depression and anxiety and to aid in the recovery process.
- Follow-up wellness support groups allow participants to continue their recovery process and ensure a safe and confidential space in which they can continue discussing their emotions and experiences related to the traumatic experiences. These follow-up wellness support groups are generally provided by the same group facilitator and participants with whom they have already established good rapport and an excellent therapeutic alliance.

*It is important to remember that defusing and debriefing are neither counselling nor a suitable substitute for counselling. They usually stand alone as a single psychological crisis intervention and not as part of ongoing therapy.*

