

LET THERE BE HOPE

AN INSTRUCTOR'S JOURNEY
THROUGH THE CISM WORLD



BARB ERTL, LPC, CCISM



***Let There Be Hope:
An Instructor's Journey Through the CISM World***

First Edition.

Published by International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.,
a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization in special consultative status
with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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Print ISBN: 978-1-943001-40-8

eBook ISBN: 978-1-943001-41-5

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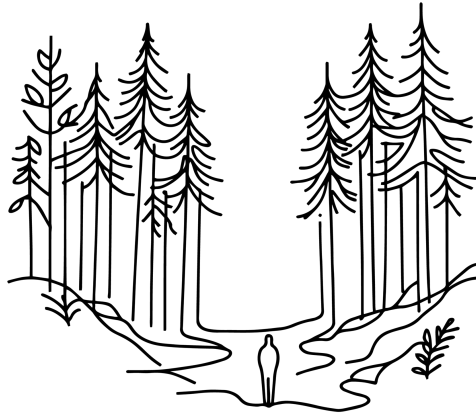
Edited by Judith Reveal, Just Creative Writing and Indexing Services
and the ICISF Publishing Department.

Illustrations by Luka.

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Let There Be Hope

An Instructor's Journey Through
the CISM World



By

Barb Ertl, LPC, CCISM

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HELPING SAVE THE HEROES

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the following people, as their help throughout the years has been crucial to everything that I have accomplished. They are:

Elaine Ghazinour -

my friend and stalwart encourager

Wendy Rhines -

my sister, travel companion, and consultant

Kevin Rhines -

my brother-in-law and PowerPoint creator

Kyle Rhines -

my nephew and IT consultant

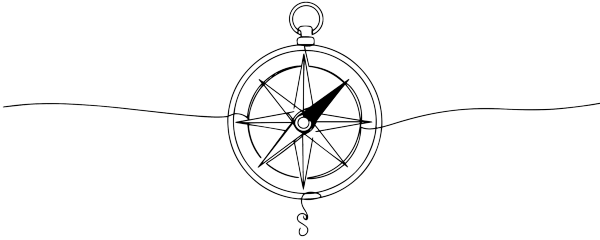
Dr. Dennis Valone -

my friend and inspiration for lifelong learning

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Introduction



Dear Reader,

When I first started training on the road, there were so many things no one ever told me—the little details you won't find in any trainer's manual. This guide is my way of sharing those experiences with you, not to focus on the content of any particular course but to prepare you for the unexpected moments that come before, during, and after your trainings.

The stories I'll share are based on real people and events I've encountered along the way, with the hope that whether you're a new or seasoned instructor, you'll feel more equipped to handle the curveballs that inevitably come your way.

Barb

Chapter One

The Early Days



Let There Be Hope

Before we get started, however, I would like to introduce myself for a little context. For 31 years, I was a school social worker. During those same years, I worked in the Emergency Department of a Trauma Center for ten years and was a volunteer firefighter/EMT for 18 years, where I was introduced to CISM and ICISF. In 1994, I became an Approved Instructor (after much kicking and screaming) and a member of the ICISF faculty in 1999. The point is, I never wanted to be a teacher, nor had any training in educational methodology, so stepping into that arena was terrifying to me.

In the early days of training, there are two things that you concentrate on: one is knowing the content of your material; the second is having an audience. For me, learning the content was always the easier of the two, but having an audience to teach to was much more difficult. Trying to introduce a whole new way of thinking about trauma to first responders (in the 1990s) was extremely hard, so I tried to ease into it by partnering with a more experienced trainer.

Dave was not a first responder; he was a clinician, but he was well-known in our community and had much experience training on a variety of topics, including CISM. We thought that it might be easier to break into the first responder world if we first presented the information to a group of our colleagues to refine the flow. We advertised the training to a wide audience at a minimal cost, secured a training venue, and hoped for a few people to show up. We unfortunately did not require people to pre-register.

Chapter One: The Early Days

On the first day of the training, we had set up our overhead projector and screen with a stack of transparencies (remember those days?) on the stage of an auditorium at a small, private college. It was the middle of August. About 15 minutes prior to the start of the training, people started to arrive—one person, two people, five people, twenty people, and so on until the auditorium was filled with over a hundred people. We were shocked, and I was terrified, but we prevailed until lunchtime. By then, the temperature both inside and outside had risen significantly. Unfortunately, there was no air conditioning in the auditorium, so we were forced to open the doors for ventilation. However, unbeknownst to us, there was a large wasp nest above one of the doors that was disturbed when the door was opened. Once opened, the wasps flew into the auditorium and stung several people. Needless to say, there was a period of pandemonium as the wasps were swatted or chased out of the building. Once order was restored and people had a chance to break for lunch, we continued for the remainder of the day.

Little did we know that the second day of the training would have its own set of challenges. Dave and I were able to secure several large fans so as not to repeat the fiasco of the previous day. We also had cold bottles of water available for the participants during breaks and lunch. We were so much better prepared, or so we thought.

Oh, but we were so wrong. Midway through the morning session, the bulb on the overhead projector blew out, and we did not have a replacement. From that point on, we were

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forced to recreate our transparencies on an easel and flipchart! Thank goodness the last part of the training was about introducing the intervention protocols and role-playing. Over ninety people completed that training—some with kind words for Dave and me, others with condolences.

Lessons learned...

- *Preregistrations are necessary*
- *Familiarize yourself with the venue*
- *Be prepared to improvise*

Chapter Two

Somewhere in Virginia

