



International Critical Incident Stress Foundation

3290 Pine Orchard Lane · Suite 106 · Ellicott City, MD 21042
www.icisf.org · (410) 750-9600 · info@icisf.org

SPITRITUAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

Research validates that the help and support people receive in times of crisis matters. Providing effective spiritual and psychological care to individuals, families, and communities in difficult times is critical and can help promote resiliency.

This two-day course endeavors to build helping skills and a better understanding of the unique role of the crisis responder and trains participants in the fundamental principles of spiritual and psychological first aid (SPFA). Care provided in SPFA may be defined as a practical, compassionate and supportive presence designed to mitigate acute distress, assess needs, provide essential supportive care, and link with other support systems as needed for ongoing spiritual, emotional, and mental health care.

Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Identify evidence-informed foundations for SPFA
- Articulate an understanding of a “supportive presence” and “companioning.”
- Define the essential elements of connecting and communicating with people in crisis
- Prepare survivors to understand commonly experienced psychological/ behavioral reactions and the process of recovery
- Identify indicators of resiliency, recovery and post traumatic growth to encourage help, hope and healing
- Identify how meeting basic human needs is foundational to providing SPFA
- Demonstrate essential interventions to help stabilize and protect people in crisis
- Create a safe environment that facilitates effective listening and crisis communication
- Link survivors with existing community support services and develop an ongoing care plan.
- Demonstrate skills for assessing spiritual and emotional needs of individuals in crisis
- Utilize a spiritual assessment framework to identify ways to help an individual draw on spiritual and religious resources to cope and foster resiliency

Successful completion of the Approved Instructor Candidate Program will allow you to teach this curriculum to others. Continuing education will be required to maintain your instructor status.



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Prerequisites for Participation in “Spiritual & Psychological First Aid” Approved Instructor Candidate Program:

- Completion of the following ICISF courses as taught by ICISF or by an approved ICISF instructor. (Copies of certificates of completion are required to accompany the application.)
 - Group Crisis Intervention
 - Spiritual and Psychological First Aid
- Evidence of significant on-scene experience providing SPFA in crisis settings. This is one of the most important criteria for being able to effectively teach this course. You cannot teach this course competently if you do not understand and have real life experience within the world of crisis response and recovery.
- A minimum of three years critical incident/traumatic stress experience.
- A letter of recommendation/endorsement from a local, state or regional CISM team or crisis/disaster agency dated within three months of application due date.
- A letter of recommendation/endorsement from a local, state or regional CISM coordinator, crisis/disaster agency, or clinical director dated within three months of application date.
- At least one of the letters of recommendation/endorsement must attest to the instructor candidate’s teaching ability. If neither of the aforementioned letters can do so, a third letter must be submitted.
- If you are not already an experienced ICISF Approved Instructor in good standing and we do not know your teaching capabilities, you may be required to submit a video demonstrating your teaching ability.
- Active membership on a crisis intervention team.
- Current ICISF membership.
- A copy of a current CV or resume that shows the scope of your education and teaching.
- Brief statement outlining:
 - Your crisis intervention/CISM experience. Clearly indicate the types of crises events you have served in and the different roles you have filled during these responses.
 - Your instructional experience. List what groups and organizations you have you trained for and types of training have you done.
 - Document your involvement with crisis response teams.



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- Outline your experience working with people of diverse religious and non-religious groups/cultures. Indicate your experiences helping people draw on their spiritual and religious resources to cope with trauma and loss.
- Reasons for applying for ICISF Approved Instructor Training and how you intend to use it if you are approved as an instructor for this course.
- Complete an interview by phone, person or video conferencing to answer additional questions if needed.
- Completion of the UMBC CISM Certification Exam: <http://cism.umbctraining.com/>
Optional textbook “CISM: A Practical Review” can be purchased [here](#).