



**Draft** 1

---

**Author** Sarah Davidson

---

**Last updated** 22 April 2009

---

## Psychosocial Support at the British Red Cross

### Why is psychosocial support important?

- > It helps facilitate a trusting relationship with people in crisis
- > It helps promote understanding, through the sharing of information
- > It helps responders increase awareness of & manage their own emotional needs e.g. stress, managing crises & preventing burn out

### The aims of Psychosocial Support are to:

- > Minimise further harm and distress
- > Promote a calm and thoughtful approach
- > Promote listening
- > Promote understanding
- > Promote resilience and recovery

### CALMER – the model

- > Consider
- > Acknowledge
- > Listen
- > Manage
- > Enable
- > Resource

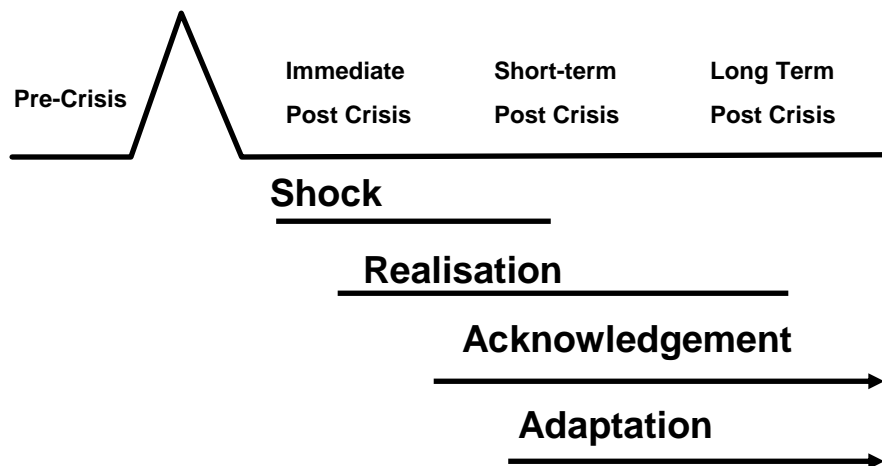
### Important throughout is the need to be calm

- > By calming yourself you can think more clearly
- > By being calm and clear you can plan better
- > By being calm you cue others to be calm
- > Thus – before each stage say “calmly”

## C – Consider

- > The situation  
Note: Risk to yourself and others e.g. aggression
- > The resources required
- > The specific needs including age, appearance, gender, wishes, wants
- > The common reactions following crises

## The Continuum of Psychological Rehabilitation



Reproduced by kind permission of Dr Marion Gibson (2006, p.35)  
in Order from Chaos: Responding to traumatic events. Venture Press

## A – Acknowledge

- > The situation
- > Your role
- > Ask about needs and wants
- > Remember that if someone has been involved in a crisis they may be: upset, confused, tearful, angry and/or keen to get away
- > Accept what they say
- > Accept you may not be able to help

## L – Listen

- > Listening skills (verbal & non-verbal)
- > Keep a comfortable distance – don't crowd
- > Make eye contact, but don't stare
- > Use a calm voice
- > Use affirming signs as you listen
- > Be aware of their reactions
- > Check their understanding of what you say
- > Don't touch them without getting their permission
- > Keep your movements to a minimum
- > Learn from your listening
- > Let their words guide your actions
- > Show empathy by thinking about their perspective

## M – Manage

- > The situation with respect, privacy & dignity
- > The response to basic needs
- > Monitor changes in reaction and situation

## E – Enable

- > Enable by involving them in considering options
- > Assist contact with supportive others, such as family & friends
- > Provide appropriate information verbally & in writing

## R – Resource

- > Reassess and respond to changing priorities
- > Find out what next and support them to get this
- > Recognise their resilience (their resources and coping)

- > Involve them in all aspects of the action plan for what next
- > Remember and resource your own needs
- > Recognise that providing support can create many familiar & unfamiliar emotions
- > Speak to someone who you trust afterwards
- > Seek the support you need
- > If you keep feeling distressed, see your doctor and consider talking to a professional

#### Overview

- > **CALMER** should help you stay calmer
- > **CALMER** should help you focus on those affected
- > **CALMER** should remind you how to be & what to do
- > **CALMER** should remind you of your needs after the event

The CALMER model has been developed by Sarah Davidson, the British Red Cross Society's psychosocial support adviser.