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Police Spiritual Welfare Info-Journal: Rules of an Aftercare Meeting

The exchange over extreme operations may contribute to reduce actual and possible future loads. In order to succeed and to avoid a deterioration of the psychological status of the participants in these talks several rules are required:

- All participants agree to absolute secrecy about the meeting
- Participation is voluntary and there is no need to speak
- Only those involved in the operation take part in the meeting (not more than 10 people). There is no minimum number of participants.
- In obvious discomfort of the group superiors should not participate. It may be useful to offer a special aftercare for superiors.
- The meeting should be offered not earlier than 4-5 days after the operation.
- The operational-tactical manoeuvres criticism is not the subject of this exchange and has previously taken place.
- The overall timeframe of the event should include about 4 hours. Thus working without a pressure of time and a recovery period before the return to work are possible. If necessary further meeting should be organized.
- Ensure a trouble-free setting: remote area with access screening, cell phones and beepers are off, inspection from the outside has to be limited.
- A comparably equipped side room is helpful if participants wish to withdraw completely or in phases from the conversation. Also for this case a separate companion is required and has to be determined in advance.
- Non-alcoholic drinks should be available.
- There has to be a moderator of the meeting. This task is not to be perceived by superiors. The moderator knows the world of the participants, ensures compliance with the topic and the discussion rules, pays attention to the dynamics of group and individual, and enables and encourages the participants to communicate. The moderator avoids rash reviews and cheap, cliché-ridden empty promises. He offers tools for understanding their own and others' reactions and creates the phases of the conversation together with the participants.
- The target of the meeting is to communicate in a confidential and helpful way about the experienced stress and constructive ways of dealing with it. All participants seek to achieve a friendly atmosphere, facing and accepting different mental states.
- Disorders of the conversation course due to the fact that participants can not or not more identify with the discourse have priority over a smooth process. Such disorders have to be solved in the situation itself or in a subsequent meeting, if desired by the people concerned.
- At the end of the conversation the mental status of the participants should be examined and, if necessary, further discussions should be appointed. The moderator should point out further possibilities of aftercare.