

PEER SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- AUTHORITY:** Administrative Directive
- RESCINDS:** Procedure Manual Item 1-2-006, dated 09/29/2017
- FORMS:** **Peer Support Team Stat Sheet** (Attachment)
- PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines for the Peer Support and Assistance Program.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The Department recognizes the value of providing an in-house resource for employees, and their family members, to support them in managing professional and personal crises, or other hardships. The purpose of this procedure is to establish an in-house Peer Support and Assistance Program along with the implementation of a Peer Support Team (PST) for Department employees and their families.

The PST may be utilized to support other county departments and personnel, and should work in cooperation with PSTs of other agencies in multi-agency and/or multi-department incidents. The PST may also be utilized to support the community in situations of critical incidents, such as school shootings, natural disasters, etc.

- B. The Peer Support and Assistance Program is a program that offers assistance and appropriate support resources to employees when personal and professional problems negatively affect their work performance, family unit, or self. This communication is confidential with the exception of information about the commission of a crime or if the employee is a danger to themselves or others. This program is designed to:
1. Provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to other employees who need assistance.
 2. Promote trust, allow anonymity, and preserve confidentiality for persons using peer support within the guidelines of the program.
 3. Develop members who can identify personal conflicts and provide guidance or referrals to professional/alternate resources as required.
 4. Maintain an effective peer support training and response program.
 5. Check on the well-being of employees not working, due to illness/injured on-duty status (IOD), and provide support where desired and needed.

C. Team Structure

The PST will fall under the **Strategic Support** Division Director (DD) for accountability purposes.

1. The Program Administrator should be the rank of Administrator I or higher. The Program Administrator shall be responsible for the PST budget and coordinator(s).
2. The Program Coordinators shall be selected by the Program Administrator to monitor peer support operations throughout the Department. The responsibilities of the Program Coordinator(s) are as follows:
 - a. Supervise the program in their assigned area on a daily basis.
 - b. Notify the Program Administrator, via telephone or in person, of all peer support emergency response requests after normal working hours.
 - c. **Seek** approval from the Program Administrator prior to activating a PST member after normal working hours.
3. PST Members are employees of the Probation Department who have received additional training regarding peer support services and referrals. The responsibilities of a PST Member are as follows:
 - a. Convey trust and anonymity, and assure confidentiality within the policy to employees who seek assistance from the PST
 - b. Attend assigned peer support training seminars
 - c. Provide assistance and support
 - d. Assist the employee by referring them to appropriate outside resources, when necessary
 - e. Be available to employees for additional follow-up support
 - f. Maintain contact with the Program Coordinator(s) regarding program activities
 - g. Attend quarterly meetings
 - h. Agree to be contacted and respond at any hour to assist an employee, **if necessary**
 - i. **Submit monthly statistic sheets (“stat” sheets) to the Peer Support Logistics Coordinator. To ensure confidentiality, PST members will only record the type of counseling offered and how much time they spent in the month on Peer Support related conversations. Stat sheets regarding the previous month are due on the 10th of each month.**

4. The Peer Support Advisory Committee is a group of three (3) to five (5) PST members and a representative from the Orange County Association of Peer Supporters.
5. Application/Selection Process:
 - a. PST Members shall be selected from the Department personnel at large.
 - b. The PST will periodically recruit for PST members by posting interest in ProbNet's Project Opportunity section.
 - c. The applicant's supervisor and DD/manager are contacted by a Peer Support Coordinator to obtain their approval for the applicant to participate.
 - d. An interview will be conducted with the applicant by the Peer Support Advisory Committee.
 - e. All selected applicant names will be submitted to the Professional Standards Division (PSD) for review of their personnel file.
 - f. The name of all applicants who have been selected by the committee and approved by PSD shall be submitted to the Chief Probation Officer or his/her designee for final approval.

II. PROCEDURE

- A. The PST is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week (24/7), to all employees. PST information and resources are available on ProbNet, which includes brochures and postings within the Department.
- B. The PST is intended to be a resource available to the Department, in the event of a critical incident or crisis situation. Peer support personnel will be available to:
 1. Listen to another employee's feelings after a critical incident or crisis situation
 2. Facilitate or assist supervisors with diffusing critical incidents
 3. Respond to an employee's request for peer support or assistance
 4. Conduct Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) debriefings
 5. Provide information on other available resources (Employee Assistance Program, Alcoholics Anonymous, financial support, marital counseling, etc.)
 6. Provide peer support orientation to new employees
- C. Personnel who may possibly be involved with conducting any administrative or criminal investigations, or administrative discipline relating to an employee seeking assistance, shall avoid any conflict of interest.

D. Critical Incidents

1. A Peer Support Coordinator shall be notified, via telephone or in person, within twenty-four (24) hours of a critical incident. Information should include, but should not be limited to, the nature of the incident and names of staff involved.
2. A critical incident is any event that causes an unusually intense stress reaction. The distress experienced after a critical incident limits people's ability to cope, impairs their ability to adjust, and negatively impacts the work environment.
3. Critical incidents that may require a peer support response may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Officer involved shootings
 - b. When an employee witnesses another employee's death or serious injury
 - c. When an employee is taken hostage
 - d. When an employee is a witness to a suicide
 - e. When an employee is a witness to a violent death or serious injury
 - f. Infant/child death
 - g. Any incident that is likely to affect the employee's ability to interact with the public and carry out their job functions.
4. Peer support personnel may be utilized to support the community in critical incident situations.

E. Debriefing/Defusing

1. Debriefings and defusing will be conducted by peer support personnel, as soon as practicable, after a critical incident.
2. A defusing immediately follows the critical event and generally lasts no longer than one hour. It gives all parties involved in the incident the big picture of what occurred. It gives involved personnel a reminder that their thoughts are normal. PST Members may be present to give assistance and support. A defusing may eliminate the need for a formal debriefing or it may enhance the formal debriefing process. The Peer Support Coordinator(s) and Program Advisory Committee will decide on the need for a formal debriefing.
3. **Debriefings should be conducted by qualified personnel within 24-72 hours after the critical incident. Attendance at debriefings is highly recommended for all employees involved in the critical incident.**

4. One (1) certified CISM mental health professional and two (2) to three (3) PST members trained in CISM are required to conduct a debriefing. A staff chaplain is optional, but is highly recommended. The debriefing may last two (2) to four (4) hours.

F. Confidentiality

1. The acceptance and success of the Peer Support and Assistance Program will be determined in part by the observance of confidentiality. It is imperative each PST Member maintain strict confidentiality of all information learned about an individual within the guidelines of this program.
2. All conversations between peer support personnel and employees are not privileged communications, under the Evidence Code. The Department will respect the confidentiality of conversations between peer support personnel and employees, with the following exceptions:
 - a. Information concerning the commission of a crime
 - b. The employee or a third party is a danger to themselves or others
3. Disclosures under this exception will be made directly to the Chief Probation Officer or his/her designee.

G. The Crisis Response Team (CRT) works in partnership with law enforcement, to develop a coordinated response for impacted communities or individuals following a critical crime related incident, tragic accident, or natural disaster. The CRT is available to provide direct responses to the victim, witnesses, and members of the surrounding community, in order to mitigate the trauma experienced in the aftermath of a tragic incident. Additionally, the CRT is able to provide a first responder debriefing, which gives employees an opportunity to learn about normal stress reactions to trauma. Upon request, a CRT representative will work with the Peer Support and OC **Employee** Assistance Programs to provide services, such as:

1. One-on-one confidential debriefing
2. Handouts on normal stress reactions and other topics related to the incident
3. Work with PST to conduct group debriefings
4. Training on crisis response, as they become available

H. Pay and Compensation

1. Typically, a PST Member shall offer support services to staff while on duty. When members of the PST agree to respond or attend a debriefing, the following pay and compensation policies will be in effect:
 - a. If the personnel are on-duty, they will be paid as "hours worked."

- b. If the personnel are off-duty, the overtime will be preapproved by the Program Administrator.
 - c. The pay/compensation will be the same as the guidelines set forth in the applicable Memorandum of Understanding for that team member.
 - d. There is no pay/compensation for being on the call-out roster.
 - e. Members of the PST are considered "At Will" and can be removed by the Program Administrator.
2. Generally, when an employee is on-duty, meetings and follow-up contacts by a PST member will be coordinated with that employee's immediate supervisor. Consideration should be given to the employee's position, minimum staffing levels, calls for service, and availability to attend meetings.
- I. Training
1. PST members should receive training in the following areas:
 - a. Effective listening
 - b. Critical incident stress
 - c. Debriefing and defusing techniques
 - d. Post-traumatic stress
 - e. Problem-solving skills
 - f. Relationship termination
 - g. General assessment skills
 - h. Referral follow-up
 2. The suggested minimum training is:
 - a. Twenty-four (24) hour Basic Peer Support course
 - b. Basic Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) course
 - c. National Organization of Victim Assistance (NOVA) Basic Crisis Response Training
 - d. Any additional training, as deemed necessary by the Chief Probation Officer or his/her designee
 3. In addition, the Public Safety Peer Support Association offers a training conference each year. A selected number of members may be budgeted to attend each year. Those in attendance shall provide training for team

members unable to attend. PST members should attend on-going training to stay current on the latest practices and procedures for providing assistance to employees.

REFERENCES:

Procedure:	1-2-007	Probation Staff Chaplaincy Program
	1-4-003	Suicide Prevention
	1-4-107	Authorization to Carry Firearms
Policy:	Department Values Statement & Code of Ethics	
	A-1	Policy Procedure and the Law
	A-2	Upholding Departmental Philosophy and Principles
	A-7	Employees as Departmental Representatives
	C-16	Employee Conduct – On Duty
	C-17	Employee Conduct – Off Duty – Law Violations
	C-19	Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

K. Kamdar

APPROVED BY:

Monthly Statistics Report - Probation



Month: _____

Peer Supporter: _____

Identified Issues																															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Male (M)/Female (F)																															
Old (O)/New (N)																															
Approach (A)/Not Approach (NA)																															
Anxiety																															
Organizational Stress																															
Critical Incident																															
Depression																															
Family/Kids/Elders																															
Marital/Relationship																															
Medical/IOD																															
Retirement																															
Referrals																															
Substance Abuse																															
Other																															

TOTAL HOURS OF CONTACT: _____

Group Debriefs/# of Participants: _____