

Peer Support Program

1037.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to define guidelines for providing assistance to Cedar City Police Department employees and their family member(s) who may be in need of emotional support. The Peer Support program is designed to offer voluntary and confidential support for employees for personal and job related circumstances.

1037.2 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Police Department personnel and their families.

1037.3 DISCUSSION

The Cedar City Police Department recognizes that employees may be negatively affected by specific and/or accumulated trauma, personal problems and/or problems concerning their family members. The Police Department encourages an employee who is experiencing problems to seek assistance at the earliest possible opportunity. It is the intent of the Police Department to offer assistance and support to an employee who has experienced a traumatic event, or a series of accumulated traumatic situations.

A voluntary, confidential Peer Support Team provides employees and their immediate families a means, by which to obtain non-professional assistance in times of great trauma or stress. This team is not intended to be a counseling service and shall comply with Policy 1016, Fitness for Duty Evaluations.

1037.4 POLICY

Peer Support Program Team Members are not professional therapists. When problems are acute or require professional assistance, information on professional referral resources will be provided to the employee. A team member, sworn or civilian, is a specifically trained colleague. A peer support program can augment outreach programs such as employee assistance programs (EAP's), in-house treatment programs, and out-of-agency psychological services and resources, but not to replace them. A team member is trained to provide both day-to-day emotional support for department employees as well as to participate in a department's comprehensive response to critical incidents. Team members are trained to recognize and refer cases that require professional intervention or are beyond their scope of training to a licensed mental health professional.

The promotion of trust and confidentiality is of utmost importance for the success of this program. All information shared with a team member will remain confidential, except as outlined in this policy. Employees who received assistance through the Peer Support Program will be informed of those exceptions prior to engaging in the peer support session.

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1037.5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Strategic goals and performance measures are published annually by the Chief of Police. Periodic reports revealing progress will be made to the Chief of Police, City Manager, Mayor and City Council as required.

A. Goal: To address and support the mental health needs and recovery of Cedar City Police Department (CCPD) personnel and their families after a critical incident and/or during job-related or personal stress.

1. To provide peer support and stabilization through personal support and appropriate referrals.
2. To provide a proactive safety net of support and confidentiality to enhance the recovery time and reduce the impact that critical incidents and stress have on job, family and the quality of life of the employee.
3. To educate and advise department personnel and their families about the possible reactions to chronic stress and trauma.
4. To recruit, screen and train qualified peers to be available to coworkers 24/7 on a confidential basis.
5. To assist CCPD personnel and/or their families when requested by the employee, their supervisor or through any other department referral(s).
6. To assist at critical incidents as needed.
7. To make available a confidential drug and alcohol 12 step recovery program for those members of the department voluntarily seeking assistance from substance abuse.

1037.6 DEFINITIONS

A. To increase the level of comfort and openness in PSP contacts, there must be assurances that such information will be protected. There are three levels of non-disclosure of personal information to differentiate in this context:

Peer Support Program Team Member: Any employee who has been trained to provide emotional and moral support to other employees, and whose selection to the Peer Support Team has been approved by the Chief of Police.

Privacy is the expectation of an individual that disclosure of personal information is confined to or intended for the team member only.

Confidentiality is a professional or ethical duty for the team member to refrain from disclosing information from or about a recipient of peer support services, barring any exceptions that should be disclosed at the outset.

Privilege is the legal protection from being compelled to disclose communications in certain protected relationships, such as between attorney and client, doctor and patient, priest and confessor, or in some states, team members and sworn civilian personnel.

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Privileged Communication: Any communication made by the employee or immediate family member to the team member while engaged in a support session that does not fall within the exceptions noted in this directive.

Peer Support Coordinator: The individual member of the Peer Support Team designated by the Chief of Police, currently the Corporal within the Public Affairs Division of the Cedar City Police Department. The coordinator is responsible for:

1. Chairing meetings of the Peer Support Team.
2. Assisting in the selection and removal of Peer Support Team members.
3. Making recommendations for modifications to the program and providing quarterly statistical reports to the Chief of Police on the use of the program.
4. Acting as a liaison between the Peer Support Team and other areas of the CCPD and other peers support organizations.

1037.7 PROCEDURE

A. Peer Support Program Team Member Selection

Team Members are selected based upon their character, integrity, interpersonal communication skills and a history of solid decision making and wisdom.

1. Information regarding the candidate's abilities and desire will be reviewed the Peer Support Coordinator and police administration for approval.
2. Team Members should be volunteers who are currently in good standing with the Cedar City Police Department and who have received recommendations from their supervisors and/or peers. An interview will be conducted as part of the selection process and should include peer support team members and a licensed mental health professional associated with the peer support team, if available.
3. Considerations for selection of Team Member candidates include, but are not limited to, previous education and training; resolved traumatic experiences; and desirable personal qualities such as maturity, judgment, personal and professional ethics, and credibility.
4. Upon successful completion of training, candidates will serve as team members. These members will then be involved in ongoing training and supervision under the direction of the Peer Support Coordinator.

B. Removal of Members

1. Team Members will be removed from the program for failure to maintain the standards for team members.

C. Referral - An employee or family member may access the Peer Support Team by any of the following methods:

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1. Self Referral - Recognize the need for assistance. The Peer Support Team Coordinator's phone number will be easily accessible through the department.
2. Indirect Referral - An employee may be referred indirectly by a concerned friend, co-worker, or family.

D. Peer Support Services

1. Team Members are to be easily accessible to employees who need their services. A list of members will be made available to all employees.
2. Peer Support sessions will be CONFIDENTIAL.
3. Supervisory approval is required for support sessions that will require the team member or employee to leave their assigned duty.
4. Team Members who engage in unexpected support sessions while off-duty must contact their supervisor as soon as possible for their time to be recorded for compensation purposes.
5. Team Members need to be aware of their personal limitations and should seek advice and counsel in determining when to disqualify themselves from working with problems for which they have not been trained or problems about which they may have strong personal beliefs.

E. Confidentiality

1. Team Members will make no written record of the details of the support sessions: Employees who seek assistance through the Peer Support Program must be made aware that team members will maintain confidentiality by not disclosing any information developed in peer support sessions, except in accordance with this policy. Team Members are required to maintain the confidentiality of information developed in peer support counseling sessions, except as indicated below.
2. Team Members will advise employees prior to any support session that confidentiality will be strictly maintained with the following exceptions:
 - a. When information revealed must be disclosed by law, such as in cases of child abuse, elder abuse, or when the employee reveals that he or she has committed a crime that presented a clear and immediate danger to self or others.
 - b. When due to mental, emotional or substance abuse problems, the employee presents a clear and immediate danger to self or others.
 - c. When information revealed gives reason to believe the employee has violated or conspired to violate a person's civil rights. Federal law (42 U.S.C. 1986) requires anyone with knowledge of such violations to report them or be subject to liability for the civil rights violations.
 - d. When the team member is directed by court order to disclose the information or is compelled to disclose the information by rules of civil or criminal discovery.

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e. When the team member is directly involved in an incident as a participant, witness or investigator.

3. Team Members are authorized to refer employees who wish to discuss issues listed in the exceptions to another professional resource.

4. When information described in the exceptions above is revealed during a peer support session, the team member will take the necessary steps to notify the appropriate authority.

F. Role Conflict

1. Team Members shall refrain from entering relationships if the relationship could reasonably be expected to impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her role or otherwise risk exploitation or harm to the person with whom the relationship exists. For example, team members avoid religious, sexual, or financial entanglements with receivers of peer support. Team Members must receive training related to handling the complexities that can develop between team members and receivers of peer support.

2. Because of potential role conflicts involved in providing peer support, including those that could affect future decisions or recommendations concerning assignment, transfer, or promotion, team members should not develop peer support relationships between supervisors or subordinates.

3. A trained team member knows when and how to refer peers, supervisors, or subordinates to another team member, chaplain, or mental health professional to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. This includes recognition that a large number of contacts between a peer support person and any one individual may be an indication that a referral is needed.

4. Supervisors may have additional requirements regarding the reporting of issues such as sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and workplace injury that may place the supervisor or the agency in jeopardy if the procedures are not followed. Team Members cannot abdicate their job responsibility as officers or supervisors by participating in the program.

1037.8 PROTOCOL

Members of the Peer Support Team are volunteers who have received the necessary pre-requisite training to participate as a functioning member of the team. An employee who has been contacted by the Peer Support Team through indirect referral is under no obligation to participate. Peer Support Team members shall not become involved in any situation in which criminal activity is involved, or when an employee is under an Internal Affairs Investigation. Discussions between the employee and/or family members and the Peer Support Team member are strictly confidential subject to the following exceptions:

1. Court Order
2. Subpoena
3. Disciplinary Actions (Policy Violations)

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4. Criminal matters
5. Threat to public safety

1037.9 PSP APPLICABLE ACTIVITIES & INVOLVEMENT

The following is a list of applicable activities, in which the PSP can become involved with a fellow employee. The list includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Hospital visitation
2. Career issues support
3. Post-critical incident support
4. Death notification
5. Substance abuse and EAP referrals
6. Relationship issues support
7. Support for families of injured or ill employees
8. On-scene support for personnel immediately following critical incidents

1037.10 TRAINING

The Peer Support Coordinator, in cooperation with Police Administration identifies appropriate ongoing training for team members.

Peer Support Program Team Members are required to advance their skills through continuing education and training as scheduled by the program coordinator. It is recommended that 2 hours of update training per quarter be provided to peer support members.

Relevant introductory and continuing training for team members could cover the following topics:

- A. Confidentiality
- B. Role conflict
- C. Limits and Liability
- D. Ethical Issues
- E. Communication facilitation and listening skills
- F. Nonverbal communication
- G. Problem assessment
- H. Problem-solving skills
- I. Cross-cultural issues
- J. Medical conditions often confused with psychiatric disorders
- K. Stress management

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L. Burn-out

M. Grief management

N. Domestic violence

O. Suicide assessment

P. Crisis management intervention

Q. Work-related critical incident stress management

R. Alcohol and substance abuse

S. When to seek licensed mental health consultation and referral information

T. Relationship issues and concerns

U. Military support

V. Local resources