



SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDERS



570.04 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM 09-16-91

PURPOSE

To define the implementation and function of the Peer Support Program for Sacramento Police Department employees.

POLICY

To help Department personnel through a traumatic critical incident, and reduce the likelihood or effects of post-trauma stress reactions by implementing the Peer Support Program.

PROCEDURE

The Peer Support Program consists of selecting and training qualified personnel for immediate response to critical incidents, such as officer-involved shooting.

A. PARTICIPANTS

The Peer Support Program shall consist of the following personnel:

1. Captain, Staff Services Division - "Program Coordinator"
2. Police Chaplains
3. Selected Police Officers
4. Selected Dispatchers
5. Selected Psychologists

B. SELECTION CRITERIA

Employees interested in participating in the Peer Support Program shall submit a memorandum expressing their desire to do so. The memorandum shall be forwarded, through the chain of command, to the Captain, Staff Services Division. For selection to participate in the program, employees shall meet the following criteria:

1. Have endorsement of their Watch or Division Commander and Office Chief.
2. Not have any work restrictions due to psychological stress.
3. Is not the object of a serious or major investigation or suffering from serious or extreme personal problems.
4. Selection to participate in the program shall be made by the following panel:
 - a. Office Chief, Office of Administrative Services (OAS)
 - b. A Captain, Staff Services Division
 - c. A Captain, Office of Operations (OOO)
 - d. A Captain, Office of Investigations (OOI)
 - e. Manager, Communications Division

C. TRAINING

1. Initial training shall be a 40-hour post-trauma debriefing course consisting of:
 - a. Crisis Recognition
 - b. Crisis Intervention and Counseling
 - c. Listening Skills
 - d. Assessment Skills
 - e. Alcohol and Substance Abuse Identification
 - f. Departmental Policies and Procedures
2. Peer Support personnel shall participate in periodic training sessions with the psychologist assigned to the program. The training may be on a monthly or bi-monthly basis at the discretion of the Program Coordinator.
3. The Program Coordinator shall schedule and develop the training.

D. DUTIES

Peer Support personnel shall perform the following functions:

1. Immediate response when called upon for Critical Traumatic Incidents.
2. Contact affected personnel to assess their needs and provide any necessary help.
3. Provide emotional support to involved personnel to diffuse any shock reaction they may be experiencing.

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4. Provide information on possible reactions the employee or their family may experience.
5. Suggest resources and referrals the employee or family members may require.
6. Advise the employee of Departmental policies, procedures and other pertinent information. Make the employee aware of what actions and events to expect as a result of the incident.
7. Provide and work through the Department's post-trauma stress workbook with the employee when appropriate.
8. Be sure the employee gets home safely.
9. Act as liaison between the employee and psychologist to explain the purpose and procedure of the mandated visit.
10. Contact the employee within three days after the incident, or as necessary, to determine if they can be of further help.

E. WITHDRAWAL OR REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM

1. Withdrawal: Personnel selected for the program shall agree to a commitment for a minimum of one year. If, however, serious personal or work-related problems arise which prevent continued participation in the program the employee may request withdrawal. A memorandum to the Program Coordinator shall be written delineating the reasons for withdrawal from the program.
2. Removal: Peer Support Personnel shall be removed from the Peer Support Program who:
 - a. No longer meet the selection criteria.
 - b. Are not effective in response to a critical incident.
 - c. Have not followed procedures set forth in the Peer Support Manual or during training sessions.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The most important aspect of the Peer Support Program is the promotion of trust, anonymity and confidentiality. Therefore, communications between Peer Support personnel and employees involved in critical incidents shall be confidential, with the following exceptions:
 - a. There is child abuse involved.
 - b. There is reason to believe that the employee intends to injure another person.
 - c. The employee is involved with a felony crime.
 - d. Where, due to substance abuse or other reasons, the employee is a clear and present danger to self, citizens or fellow employees.
2. If any of the above conditions exist the employee's Watch or Division Commander and the Program Coordinator shall be notified. In the case of threatened injury, the intended victim shall also be notified.
3. These exceptions to confidentiality are either required by law or are necessary. Employees who become Peer Support members cannot abdicate their responsibilities to report criminal conduct. If concerns arise, Peer Support personnel shall contact the Program Coordinator for guidance.