

Peer Support and Assistance Program

302.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Anaheim Police Department recognizes the value of providing an "in-house" resource for employees and their family members to support them in managing both professional and personal crisis. The purpose of this policy is to establish an in-house Peer Support and Assistance Program and implementation of a Peer Support Team for Department employees and their families.

The Peer Support Team may be utilized to support other City Departments and personnel and should work in cooperation with peer support teams of other agencies and/or City Departments in multi-agency and/or multi-department incidents. The Peer Support Team may also be utilized to support the community in situations of critical incidents, such as school shootings, natural disasters, etc.

302.1.1 DEFINITION

The Peer Support Program is a program that offers assistance and appropriate support resources to employees when personal or professional problems negatively affect their work performance, family unit or self. This communication is confidential, providing it does not violate any law or Department regulation. This program is designed to:

- (a) Provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to other employees who need assistance;
- (b) Promote trust, allow anonymity, and preserve confidentiality for persons using Peer Support within the guidelines of the program;
- (c) Develop members who can identify personal conflicts and provide guidance or referral to professional/alternate resources as required;
- (d) Maintain an effective peer support training and response program;
- (e) Check on the well being of employees out with illnesses / IOD's and provide support where desired and needed.

302.2 MISSION STATEMENT

The role of the Anaheim Police Department Peer Support Team is to be available to listen, support, refer, and assist employees and family members during professional or personal, stressful, or difficult periods in their lives.

302.2.1 ACCESSING PEER SUPPORT

The Peer Support Team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to all employees. There are Peer Support Team brochures available at several locations in the main station and police substations, including the briefing, report writing, and the Records Section with team member contact information included.

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302.2.2 POLICY

The Peer support Team is intended to be a resource available to the Department in the event of critical incident or crisis situation. Peer Support personnel will be available to:

- (a) Listen to another employee's feelings after a critical incident or crisis situation;
- (b) Facilitate or assist supervisors in diffusing critical incidents;
- (c) Respond to an employee's request for peer support or assistance;
- (d) Conduct Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) debriefings;
- (e) Provide information on other resources available (Employee Assistance Program, Alcoholics Anonymous, financial support, etc)
- (f) Provide Peer Support orientation to new employees (FTO program)

Personnel who may possibly be involved in conducting any administrative or criminal investigation or administrative discipline relating to an employee seeking assistance shall avoid any conflict of interest.

Peer Support personnel shall also be available for support and assistance on any other incident at the discretion of the Chief of Police or Deputy Chiefs of Police.

In addition, Peer Support personnel may be utilized to support the community in critical incident situations. Examples would be school shootings, natural disasters, etc.

302.2.3 CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A "critical incident" is any event that causes an unusually intense stress reaction. The distress people experience after a critical incident limits their ability to cope, impairs their ability to adjust, and negatively impacts the work environment.

Critical Incidents that may require a Peer Support response may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Officer involved shootings;
- (b) Where an employee witnesses another employee's death or serious injury;
- (c) Where an employee is taken hostage;
- (d) Where an employee is a witness to a suicide;
- (e) Where 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;

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- (h) Any other incident deemed appropriate by any employee and approved by a supervisor.

302.2.4 DEBRIEFING/DIFUSING

Debriefings and defusing will be conducted by Peer support personnel as soon as practical after a critical incident. Debriefings should occur within 24-72 hours after the critical incident and will be conducted by qualified personnel. Attendance at debriefings is highly recommended for all employees involved in the critical incident.

A defusing immediately follows the critical event and generally lasts no longer than one hour. It gives all parties involved the incident the "big picture" of what occurred. It gives involved personnel a reminder about exercise, what foods to eat, to drink plenty of water and to know their thoughts are normal. Peer Support Team 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 and Program Advisor will decide on the need for a formal debriefing.

One certified CISM mental health professional and two to three Peer Support Team members are required to conduct a debriefing. A Chaplain is optional but is highly recommended. The debriefing may last two to six hours.

302.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

The acceptance and success of the Anaheim Police Department Peer Support and Assistance Program will be determined in part by the observance of confidentiality. It is imperative each Peer Support Team Member maintain strict confidentiality of all information learned about an individual within the guidelines of this program.

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 to others.

Disclosures under this exception will be made directly to the Chief of Police or Deputy Chief of Police.

302.3.1 TEAM STRUCTURE

The Peer Support Program will fall under the Investigations Division for budget and accountability purposes.

Program Coordinators - The Program Coordinator(s) should be the rank of Sergeant or higher. The Program Coordinators shall be responsible for the Peer Support Program budget and coordination of the Peer Support Team.

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Program Advisor - The Program Advisor will be a licensed Forensics Psychologist with exceptional experience dealing with police and/or first responder issues. His/her duties shall consist of:

- (a) Assist in training and selection of Peer Support Team Members;
- (b) Provide continued training in the techniques of Peer counseling;
- (c) Provide guidance at debriefings.

Peer Support Team Members - Peer Support Team Members shall be selected from the Department personnel at large.

302.4 ROLE OF PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

Peer Support Team Members provide support and assistance to employees in times of stress and crisis. The responsibilities of a Peer Support Team Member are as follows:

- (a) Convey trust and anonymity and assure confidentiality within the policy to employees who seek assistance from the Peer Support Program;
- (b) Attend assigned Peer Support training seminars;
- (c) Provide assistance and support;
- (d) Assist the employee by referring them to the appropriate outside resource when necessary;
- (e) Be available to employees for additional follow-up support;
- (f) Maintain contact with the Program Coordinators regarding program activities;
- (g) Attend quarterly meetings;
- (h) Agree to be contacted and if necessary, respond at any hour to assist an employee in need.

302.5 PAY AND COMPENSATION

When members of the Peer Support Team are notified to respond or attend a debriefing, the following pay and compensation policies will be in effect. Whenever possible, overtime will be pre-approved by the Program Coordinator(s).

- (a) If the personnel are "on-duty" they will be paid as Hours Worked;

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- (b) If the personnel are "off-duty" they will submit an overtime slip to their immediate supervisor after the slip has been verified by the Program Coordinator or their designee; all overtime will be preapproved by the Program Coordinators.
- (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) Selection of members on the Peer Support team is not considered a special assignment as set forth in Article 49 of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- (f) Members on the Peer Support Team are considered "At Will" and can be removed by the Program Coordinators.

Generally, when an employee is on duty, meetings and follow-up contacts by a Peer Support Team 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.

302.6 TRAINING

Peer Support Team 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.

The suggested minimum training is:

- (a) 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 of Police, Program Coordinators or Program Advisor.

In addition, The California 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. Peer Support Team Members should

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attend on-going training to stay current on the latest practices and procedures for assistance to employees.