

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: GO2401
SUBJECT: Peer Support Program		
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I. POLICY

The Saint Joseph Police Department recognizes the importance of mental health and emotional well-being for all its members. The Peer Support Program is established to provide peer-based emotional support to all department personnel. This program aims to foster resilience, promote well-being, and provide a confidential resource for managing personal and professional stressors. The Chief of Police or his designee shall determine the personnel eligible to serve as Peer Support Members within the department.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Peer Support Team (PST) Composition and Selection

1. The Peer Support Team will consist of trained personnel representing various ranks and roles within the department.
2. Team members will be selected based on experience, empathy, communication skills, and the ability to maintain confidentiality.
3. Peer Support Team members will be allotted comp time when contacted by personnel needing assistance when the PST member is off duty.
4. The Chief of Police or a designated coordinator will oversee the selection process and the overall program management.

B. Confidentiality

1. Peer Support interactions are confidential, with the following exceptions:
 - a. If there is a threat of harm to the individual or others.
 - b. If there is an admission of criminal activity.
 - c. If required by law.
2. Peer Support Members must maintain confidentiality and are prohibited from disclosing information shared during support sessions, except under the circumstances listed above.

C. Access to Peer Support

1. SJPD personnel seeking peer support may directly contact a Peer Support Member.
2. A list of available Peer Support Members and their contact information will be maintained and distributed by the department.
3. Support can be provided in person, via phone, or through virtual communication, depending on the comfort and needs of the individual.

D. Training Peer Support Members

1. All Peer Support Members will undergo specialized training in stress Management, crisis intervention, active listening, and mental health awareness.
2. Ongoing training and professional development will be provided to ensure Peer Support Members remain equipped to offer effective support.

E. Peer Support Services

1. Peer Support Members will coordinate debriefings, if needed or requested after major incidents, i.e. officer involved shootings, fatal crashes, death scenes etc... and provide emotional support, referrals to mental health professionals, and guidance on coping strategies.
2. The Peer Support Program will collaborate with the department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and other mental health resources for comprehensive support.

F. Non-Interference with Investigations

1. Peer support services are distinct from internal investigations or disciplinary processes.
2. Peer Support Members are not involved in such matters and will not disclose any information shared during support sessions for investigative purposes.

G. Promotion of the Program

1. The department will actively promote the Peer Support Program, encouraging early engagement with the Peer Support Team.
2. Informational sessions will be held periodically to increase awareness of the program and its benefits.

H. Supervision and Evaluation

1. The Peer Support Program will be overseen by a designated program coordinator who holds the rank of sergeant or above.
2. Regular evaluations will be conducted to assess the program's effectiveness and identify areas of improvement.

I. Non-Retaliation

1. Employees seeking peer support services will not face any form of retaliation, discrimination, or negative consequences in their employment as a result of their participation.

Paul Luster, Chief of Police

Date