

JACKSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy: 5-23

Effective: 030521

PEER TO PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Peer to Peer Support Program (PPSP) is to provide all Jacksonville Police Department (JPD) employees the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible support through times of personal or professional crisis and to help anticipate and address potential difficulties. The JPD will continue to pursue the newest and most innovative knowledge, research, and understanding to ensure the best possible outcome for employees serving the community of Jacksonville.

POLICY:

I. CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. Statement of Confidentiality: All information and correspondence pertaining to issues defined under Arkansas Code Annotated §16-40-106, shall remain confidential within the peer to peer support program. PPSP team members who violate the confidentiality rule are subject to dismissal from the group and/or disciplinary action.
- B. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained between peer to peer support personnel and the employee. Nothing discussed between the participants shall be divulged to any third party without express consent of the employee. However, peer to peer personnel are required to report the following circumstances to the PPSP supervisor. The PPSP supervisor shall ensure the following information is reported through the chain of command:
 1. When there is an indication that an employee presents a clear and present danger to himself or others;
 2. Employees who have been involved in a violation of law that would result in disciplinary action; and
 3. Disclosures of domestic violence, child or elder abuse.
- C. The PPSP supervisor will provide reports to the chain of command by reporting on number of contacts, hours worked and number of referrals. This will ensure to maintain strict confidentiality.

II. PEER TO PEER SUPPORT OPERATION

- A. The JPD PPSP is designed to assist employees with stress management, crisis management, depression, burn-out, suicide prevention, along with any other unforeseen complications that may arise in the law enforcement profession. The PPSP will aid employees in areas of developing healthy habits, wellness outreach initiatives, and education-based training.
- B. The PPSP is unable to aid employees with grievance resolutions, complaints, reassignment requests, or respite from a history of poor decision-making or pattern of a deliberate performance issue.
- C. The PPSP is not intended to be used as a disciplinary tool, nor is it a means to avoid discipline where such action is appropriate. This policy does not supersede any department directive governing discipline. The idea behind this program is to assist employees in developing strategies to instill better coping mechanisms and healthier and more productive lifestyles, and to enhance the performance of their careers.
- D. This policy does not alleviate the responsibilities of all employees to report acts of misconduct as outlined in JPD Policies, Procedures, and Rules.

DEFINITIONS:

- I. Critical Incident: Any situation faced by JPD personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional or physical reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function during or after the incident. A critical incident may be different from one individual to another.
- II. Critical Incident Stress: The severe or accumulative psychological stress or trauma an employee may experience during and/or following a critical incident. The stress or trauma is an abnormally strong emotional, cognitive, or physical reaction that has the potential to interfere with normal function(s) to include:
 - A. Physical and emotional illness;
 - B. Failure of usual coping mechanisms; and
 - C. Loss of the ability to function.
- III. Peer Support Event: Any debriefing, defusing, or counseling session conducted by a certified peer support member that involves the emotional or moral support of an JPD employee who needs emotional or moral support as a result of job-related stress or an incident in which the employee was involved while acting in his or her official capacity.
- IV. Critical Stress Debriefing: Is a supportive, crisis-focused discussion of a traumatic event. It is used exclusively for small groups who have encountered a powerful traumatic event. It aims at reduction of distress and a restoration of group cohesion and unit performance. A debriefing will be led by the PPSP team member/s, the Chaplain or an equally trained organization selected by the Chief of Police.
- V. Critical Stress Defusing: A peer-driven group process integrating crisis intervention strategies. Defusing is a shortened version of a debriefing and takes place immediately or relatively soon after a critical incident.
- VI. Peer Support Team Member: A volunteer member of the JPD Peer Support Team authorized by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. This member provides mental health intervention services to agency personnel with required and approved training in critical incident stress management.

PROCEDURES:

- I. TRAINING
 - A. Training PPSP Team Members
 1. Personnel must successfully complete prescribed peer support training prior to actual involvement in the peer to peer support program.
 2. PPSP team members will attend training approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
 3. Training will meet the basic requirements from Arkansas Code Annotated §16-40-106.
 4. Active PPSP team members will complete refresher training Biannually.
 - B. The PPSP will work in conjunction with the Training Division and/or City of Jacksonville Human Resources Division to develop health, wellness, and resiliency programs for all JPD employees.
 - C. New employees will receive an orientation on JPD's health, wellness, and resiliency programs within one year of employment.



Brett C. Hibbs
Chief of Police