

## Peer Support Procedures

### 832.1 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The Peer Support Program is a confidential resource for all San Diego Probation Department employees consisting of staff from the sworn and non-sworn classifications of the Probation Department, who will be referred to as Peer Support Team Members. Team Members are trained to provide support and liaison services to employees and their family members who have sought support, guidance, and/or assistance during crisis. They are trained to be effective listeners, provide feedback, clarify issues and assist the employee in identifying options for their own problem resolution.

Peer Support Team Members are not therapists. A peer support program can augment services such as employee assistance programs (EAP), but not replace them. When problems appear to require specialized assistance, team members can provide appropriate referrals. While Peer Support Team Members may offer information, support and guidance, it is ultimately the impacted individual's responsibility to decide how best to address his or her own issues and concerns.

### 832.2 CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE ELEMENTS

Critical Incidents that require a peer support response shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Critical incidents, as defined above, and the following specific events.
- (b) All shootings where a suspect is killed or wounded.
- (c) Where an employee witnesses another employee's death or serious injury.
- (d) Where an employee is witness to a violent death or serious injury.
- (e) Infant/child death.
- (f) Where an employee is witness to suicide.
- (g) Where an employee is witness to or participant in an incident involving multiple deaths.
- (h) An incident likely to affect the employee's ability to interact with the public and carry out their job functions.
- (i) Any other incident deemed appropriate for referral to a Peer Support Team Member by the Chief Probation Officer or designee.

Peer Support Team Members shall be activated and dispatched to provide swift response to all critical incidents involving Probation Department personnel, as resources and the situation permit. As stated above in subsection 936.4, the Peer Support Team may provide mutual aid to support the community whenever there is a need.

### 832.3 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Peer Support Program is a component of the Professional Standards Division, and the Division Chief will appoint a Peer Support Manager to oversee the management and organization of the program. In the event the Peer Support Manager is unavailable, a designee may temporarily

### *Peer Support Procedures*

---

serve that function. The Peer Support Advisory Committee is a group of three to five peer support members, a professional interventionist/psychologist, and a Chaplain, led by the Peer Support Manager. The selection and training of the Peer Support Team members will be the responsibility of the Peer Support Manager and the Advisory Committee.

#### **832.4 SELECTION OF PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS**

Recruitment and selection of candidates will be an ongoing function. Peer Support Team Members may be selected from all ranks, sworn and non-sworn, and the main means of selection shall be through a peer nomination process. Once nominated, interested employees may submit a memo of interest. An interview by the Peer Support Advisory Committee will take place for all applicants.

Approval for participation of any employee must be received by the employee's immediate supervisor prior to the interview process. Personnel file review will be conducted for all applicants for the purpose of identifying personnel and/or performance issues, and/or pending administrative action, which would deem the applicant ineligible until which time personnel, performance, or administrative issues are resolved.

The names of successful applicants will be submitted to the Chief Probation Officer or designee for final approval. Once selected, Peer Support personnel will sign the San Diego County Peer Support Program Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **832.5 TRAINING**

Peer Support Team Members shall receive training for critical incidents, post-trauma stress, and basic crisis management. Team Members shall be provided ongoing training, as scheduled by the program manager. Relevant introductory and continuing training for Peer Support Team Members may cover some or all of 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) Psychological diagnoses
- (k) Medical conditions, including those often confused with psychiatric disorders
- (l) Stress management
- (m) Grief management

### *Peer Support Procedures*

---

- (n) Domestic violence
- (o) Suicide assessment
- (p) Crisis management
- (q) Trauma intervention
- (r) Alcohol and substance abuse
- (s) When to seek assistance

#### **832.6 UTILIZING PEER SUPPORT SERVICES**

Peer Support rosters will be made available in all Probation Department office locations. Employees may contact Peer Support Team Members directly for support for critical incidents or personal crisis. Supervisor approval or notification is not required. All recipients of peer support are voluntary and are provided only when agreed to by the person in need of, referred to or seeking the assistance. There will be no mandatory referrals of department employees to the Peer Support Program.

Typically, peer support services to staff will occur when both are on duty and both require approval to leave their assigned duty by their immediate supervisor or Duty Supervisor/Watch Commander in the immediate supervisor's absence. There should be no expectation of "on duty" status when a peer support member is contacted off-duty. Physical response by peer support members for duty purposes requires authorization by the Peer Support Manager. Any variation of hours shall be approved through the Peer Support Manager.

Calls for Peer Support Team response while on-duty are at the discretion of the Team Member's chain of command. Approval must be obtained from the member's immediate supervisor (or Duty Supervisor/Watch Commander in the immediate Supervisor's absence) in order for the member to leave his or her assigned duty, and the on-duty response shall be approved and coordinated through the Peer Support Manager.

#### **832.7 CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE ACTIVATION**

Peer Support Team Members shall be activated and dispatched by the Peer Support Manager to provide first response to all critical incidents involving Probation Department personnel during both regular and non-business hours. For response to all critical incidents after normal work hours and/or weekends, direct contact with the Peer Support Manager or designee shall be made through an Executive Team Member and/or the Watch Commander at KMJDF, for activation of a critical incident response.

Upon these notifications, the Peer Support Manager, in consultation with the Counseling Team liaison, shall assess needs, determine what resources are needed and develop a course of action to take in dealing with the employees and/or family members involved. The Peer Support Manager is responsible to contact and dispatch Peer Support Team Members to the scene of the critical incident.

# San Diego County Probation Department

## Field Services Procedure Manual

### *Peer Support Procedures*

---

Call-out of Peer Support Team Members may be subject to overtime compensation when off- duty. Calls for response to a critical incident while on-duty are at the discretion of the Team Member's chain of command. Approval must be obtained from the member's immediate supervisor (or Duty Supervisor/Watch Commander in the immediate Supervisor's absence) in order for the member to leave his or her assigned duty.

The Peer Support Manager will act as liaison with the Incident Commander for the duration of the critical incident response and shall be responsible to assign tasks to all reporting Peer Support Team Members.

#### **832.8 CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES**

Members of the Peer Support Team, when acting in this official capacity, will make every effort consistent with Department policy and applicable law to keep conversations with individuals receiving support services confidential. The goal is to maintain confidentiality between Peer Support Team Members and peers. Peer Support Team Members must inform peers of the limits of their confidentiality. At no time should a Peer Support Team Member intervene as an advocate in the disciplinary process, even at an employee's request or come into conflict with the investigative process. Peer Support Members should inform individuals receiving support services that there are limits to confidentiality, including but not limited to:

- Suspected danger to self or others
- Suspected child abuse
- Factual information supporting elder abuse
- Domestic violence
- Sales or transportation of narcotics/dangerous drugs
- Cases in which the law requires divulgence
- Information concerning the commission of a crime
- Threats to staff