

# MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL



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| <i>Subject:</i><br><b>PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM</b> |  |  |
| <i>Effective Date:</i><br><b>06/03/2021</b>    | <i>Original Date:</i><br><b>06/03/2021</b> | <i>Next Review:</i><br><b>06/03/2023</b> |
| <i>Chapter</i><br><b>13</b>                    | <i>Policy #</i><br><b>13.93</b>            | <i>Distribution:</i>                     |
| <i>References:</i>                             |  |  |

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Missoula Police Department (MPD) Peer Support Program (PSP) is to provide all public safety employees and their families the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible support through times of crisis. In an effort to address this need, the department will establish a PSP available to assist sworn and civilian personnel employed by the MPD.

## II. POLICY

This policy establishes a structured PSP to provide support through times of personal or professional crisis to all MPD employees. The MPD recognizes that its employees, by virtue of their profession, encounter situations that may result in emotional and psychological trauma. The MPD has an obligation to assist its members by providing non-professional peer support services and/or referral information for professional counseling. The goals of the program are:

- A. To provide a readily accessible support network of employees willing to be of service to other employees who express a need for assistance.
- B. To promote trust, appropriate anonymity, and confidentiality for employees participating in the PSP.
- C. To improve an employee's ability to anticipate personal conflicts and to provide alternatives for self-help.
- D. To maintain an effective, ongoing PSP training process
- E. To provide services, upon request, to personnel off duty due to injury or illness.
- F. To provide assistance to the critical incident stress management (CISM) Team.

## III. DEFINITIONS

**Traumatic Event** - Any incident which could cause severe physical or mental injury, usually due to an external agent. Traumatic events may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Employee involved in the use of deadly force.
- B. Assault on an employee involving a deadly weapon.
- C. Injury, illness or death of an employee or family member of an employee.
- D. Assisting family members with an employee's death.
- E. Investigations involving death, such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- F. Substance abuse.
- G. Marital, relationship, health, family, financial, employment, or other personal problems.

## **IV. ORGANIZATION**

### **Peer Support Program Commander**

The PSP Commander shall be the Captain of the Administrative Division, unless otherwise designated by the Chief of Police. The PSP Commander shall be responsible for:

- A. Program development, logistics and control of the Peer Support Program.
- B. Coordinating peer support activation, making referrals to mental health professionals, collecting utilization data and coordinating peer support trainings and meetings.

### **Peer Support Team Leader**

The PSP Team Leader shall be the rank of Sergeant or Corporal, unless otherwise designated by the Chief of Police and is responsible for:

- A. General supervision of the program.
- B. Recruiting and coordinating the screening of PSP applicants.
- C. Ensure all employees are aware of the program through briefing presentations, written memorandums or other literature about the program as may be developed.
- D. Preparing and disseminating to all employees a current referral list of professional counseling services approved by the City of Missoula and the Missoula Police Department.
- E. Identifying and coordinating the appropriate training for the selected Peer Support Team, and documenting and maintaining all records pertinent to such training.
- F. Maintaining monthly statistical data of reported contacts by Peer Support staff for program evaluation purposes and forwarding it to the Program Commander.
- G. Acting as the liaison for peer support referrals, and being responsible for assigning PSP Team Members to assist employees consistent with the particular need.
- H. Providing guidance and assistance to PSP personnel when problems or questions arise.
- I. Developing resources to assist employees when problems are identified.
- J. Perform the tasks associated with the referral program in conjunction with their normal assigned duties

### **Peer Support Team Member**

PSP Team Member responsibilities shall include:

- A. Advising peers seeking assistance that a Peer Support Member is not exempt from laws, rules, regulations, directives, or orders; but that any exchange of information not in violation will be confidential.
- B. Advising a peer that any acts of self-injury or injury to others cannot go unreported.
- C. Advising other parties seeking information about discussions shared between a peer and peer support team member that that information is confidential.
- D. Providing short-term supportive assistance and or referral, for employees involved in the PSP, within the scope of their ability, knowledge and training.
- E. Making additional referral for assistance when deemed appropriate.
- F. Maintaining contact with the Peer Support Team Leader regarding program activities and statistical data on program contacts for purposes of program evaluation, including the submission of a Monthly Peer Support Contact Summary regarding support contacts made with employees.

- G. Establishing contact with, and offering assistance to those employees who self-refer, or are referred by supervisory personnel.
- H. Responding at any hour if necessary, when contacted by the Peer Support Team Leader, and assistance is requested or needed.
- I. Responding to the scene of a critical incident if requested by the Incident Commander, Shift Commander, PSP Commander, Peer Support Team Leader, or MPD Staff.
- J. Abiding by the program policies and objectives or be removed from program participation.
- L. Notifying the Peer Support Team Leader should a conflict of interest arise.

## **V. PROCEDURES**

### **Peer Support Team Selection/Deselection**

- A. Considerations for selection of Peer Support Team candidates include, but are not limited to, previous education and training; resolved traumatic experiences; and desirable personal qualities such as maturity, judgment, personal and professional ethics, and credibility.
- B. Eligible, interested employees shall submit a letter of interest to the PSP Commander detailing their reason for wanting to become a Peer Support Team Member. The letter of interest should include qualifications, training, and experience which they believe would be beneficial to the program.
- C. Criteria for deselection from the program may include, but is not limited to, breach of confidentiality, failure to attend training or loss of one's good standing with the department.
- D. Peer Support Team Members can be provided with the option to take a leave of absence from the PSP and are encouraged to exercise this option when personal issues or obligations require it.
- E. Each Division should have an appropriate number staff assigned and trained as Peer Support Team Members. The number of staff selected to participate in the PSP will vary based upon the number of staff assigned to each Division. Selection of Peer Support Team Members is not limited to sworn personnel and may include civilian department personnel, across all shifts and Divisions.

## **VI. PEER SUPPORT TEAM ACTIVATION**

The Referral Program is established to assist employees in dealing with problems which are the result of domestic, financial, health, other personal problems, or job related difficulties, and to enable the employee to recognize and resolve the unfavorable reactions to that emotion or stress. Referrals may occur as follow:

- A. An employee may personally contact any Peer Support Team Member, or the Peer Support Team Leader for referral to either professional counseling, addiction treatment programs or a Peer Support Team Member.
- B. Any employee aware of another employee who may need assistance can initiate a referral by contacting any Peer Support Team Member, Peer Support Team Leader or Supervisor. The referred employee will be contacted to assess their receptiveness to PSP assistance.
- C. Supervisory personnel have the authority and responsibility to recommend a Peer Support Team Member to employees when appropriate. It must be understood that this support is voluntary and that an employee cannot be ordered to participate. The employee shall be assured that the consultation has been arranged solely for their benefit and will be confidential.
- D. Referrals shall not be used as a disciplinary sanction.

- E. A family member or associate of the employee may make a referral, again the employee's participation is voluntary.
- F. Events that require Peer Support Team activation are incidents that involve serious injury/death to any MPD employee or serious injury or death of an employee's relative.

## **VII. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING**

The Missoula Police Department's PSP is intended to enhance options available, such as the employee assistance program, the Crisis Support Chaplains dedicated to serve the Missoula Police Department and out of agency psychological services, but not replace them. The goal of the Peer Support Program is to (1) provide both emotional and physical support to MPD employees when called upon and (2) enhance awareness of additional services available to assist employees beyond the initial interaction with the Peer Support Program. These services include but are not limited to:

### **Counseling Services:**

Professional counseling services to assist employees in post trauma situations are provided through the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) facilitated by the Reliant Behavioral Health (RBH) counseling services (1-866-750-1327 [www.MyRBH.com](http://www.MyRBH.com) Access Code: Missoula). The EAP provides services to help people privately resolve problems that may interfere with work, family, and life. The EAP is provided for FREE and confidential services cover MPD employees and their dependents, living at or away from home, and all household members, related or not.

\* Confidential Counseling - up to 6 face-to-face counseling sessions for each new issue, including family, relationship, stress, anxiety and other common challenges.

\* 24-hour Crisis Help – toll-free access for you or a family member experiencing a crisis.

\* RBH eAccess – convenient to access to on-line consultations with licensed counselors.

Continued care is available on a voluntary basis through EAP/RBH. The employee can choose to continue to see the same clinician or may elect another licensed mental health professional using their EAP/RBH benefits. The employee's eligible family members also have the option of utilizing the same clinician using their EAP/RBH benefits.

### **Crisis Support Chaplains Services**

Crisis Support Chaplains are specially trained clergy members who serve the Missoula police officers and their families, as well as other emergency responders and the community at large when called upon. Crisis Support Chaplains provide a wide range of services to include:

- A. Patrol ride-along – Chaplains accompany officers on routine patrols to encourage them to share and address their daily pressures and responsibilities.
- B. Disaster & Critical Incident Support – Chaplains are trained in providing leadership when implementing department protocols regarding critical incident stress and can also assist with large-scale disaster events that occur in the Missoula community.
- C. On-call Support & Counseling – Chaplains are available to assist in any kind of crisis situation where their presence might be of assistance. First responders struggling with stress or family crisis may reach out when necessary.

- D. Prayers and Ceremonies – Chaplains are available to offer formal prayers at special events, officiate at services and assist with organizing ceremonies to honor officers killed in the line of duty.
- E. New Officer Orientation - Chaplains provide training/new officer/families of first responders out-reach/forums to help them understand the unique stresses of police work and to maintain healthy, resilient relationships.
- F. Survivor Notifications – When officers must notify a family of a loved one’s suicide, homicide, accidental death or serious injury, a Chaplain will accompany them and offer support and resources to the survivors in their time of grief.
- G. Victim Support – Chaplains provide practical assistance to traumatized individuals and crisis counseling to victims in instances of child abuse domestic abuse, sexual violence grief and natural disasters.
- H. Community Education – Through events such as the Citizen’s Academy and by speaking in classes at schools, Chaplains help members of the community better understand and appreciate the work of police officers.