
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE – 113.010
PEER SUPPORT

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 15, 1999
AFFECTS: All Personnel

REVISION DATE: June 26, 2024

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Plano Police Department's response to personnel requiring peer support.

II. POLICY

The goal of peer support is to provide all public safety employees the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible peer support through times of personal or professional crisis and to help anticipate and address potential difficulties. The department is committed to the safeguard of the mental health and emotional well being of all employees.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Critical Incident – any event that has a stressful impact sufficient to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of either an individual or a group.
- B. Debriefing – a structured, peer driven, and group discussion of a critical incident that integrates crisis intervention strategies with educational techniques for coping with stress.
- C. 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.
- D. Mental Health Professional – a licensed social or mental health worker, counselor, psychotherapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.
- E. Peer Support Member – a licensed or non-licensed employee volunteer member of the Plano Police Department Peer Support Team, as authorized by the chief of police, who provides mental health intervention services to agency personnel.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Obtaining Peer Support Services
 - 1. Department employees may voluntarily seek the assistance of qualified peer support personnel.
 - 2. Peer support personnel may be used to assist officers and their families in cases of crises through informal support and referral to professional mental health service providers.
 - 3. Requests for Peer Support Services
 - a. Any employee can request peer support personnel, chaplain or other clergy, physician or mental health professional to respond following a critical incident, at any hour of the day.
 - b. Any employee can request peer support services for any personal or professional issue through the peer support on-call number or by directly contacting any team member. Peer support members' names, phone numbers, and duty assignments will be posted on the Peer Support SharePoint page. Appropriate referrals will be provided if the employee requires assistance beyond the scope of Peer Support capabilities.
 - c. Any employee or supervisor can request peer support personnel discretely contact a co-worker that they feel may need assistance.
 - d. Employees are not required to utilize any one-on-one peer support or chaplain/clergy counseling services except as provided in previous sections.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE – 113.010
PEER SUPPORT

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 15, 1999
AFFECTS: All Personnel

REVISION DATE: June 26, 2024

B. Peer Support Services Team

1. Member Selection

- a. Employees wishing to volunteer with Peer Support should submit a letter of interest to the Peer Support Team leader.
 - b. The Peer Support Team leader will review the applicant's personnel file and interview the applicant's supervisor and co-workers to ensure the applicant is in good standing with the department, is productive in their primary assignment, and possesses personal attributes that would enable them to work well in the peer support environment.
 - c. Considerations for selection of members include, but are not limited to, previous education and training; resolved traumatic experiences and desirable interpersonal qualities, such as maturity, judgment and personal and professional credibility.
 - d. A qualified psychologist will assess applicants who pass the selection process in order to ensure they are in a healthy place to be assisting others.
 - e. The selection of individual members is made with the approval of the Peer Support Team chairs and the Chief of Police.
 - f. Employees may join the team or stay on the team after retirement, although they will not be required to answer the on-call number. Retirees will be subject to the same review of personnel file and supervisor/co-worker interviews as current employees.
 - g. Plano Police Chaplains who wish to join the Peer Support Team may do so with the recommendation of the Chaplain Coordinator, the Senior Chaplain, and the Peer Support Team Leader. The Chief of Police will have final approval on team membership. Chaplain will be required to have the same training as other team members.
2. Qualified peer support personnel shall be authorized by the chief of police to provide voluntary support services including defusing, debriefings and one-on-one support to department employees.

Note: Personnel must-successfully complete prescribed peer support training for emergency services personnel prior to actual involvement in peer support service.

3. Training of Members

- a. Personnel must-successfully complete prescribed peer support training for emergency services personnel prior to actual involvement in peer support service.
- b. Introductory and continuing training for members shall include:
 - (1) Confidentiality issues
 - (2) Communication facilitation and listening skills
 - (3) Problem assessment
 - (4) Problem solving skills
 - (5) Alcohol and substance abuse
 - (6) Medical conditions often confused with psychiatric disorders
 - (7) Stress Management
 - (8) Suicide assessment

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE – 113.010
PEER SUPPORT

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 15, 1999
AFFECTS: All Personnel

REVISION DATE: June 26, 2024

- (9) Depression and burn-out
- (10) Grief management
- (11) Domestic violence
- (12) Crisis management
- (13) Nonverbal communication
- (14) Traumatic intervention
- (15) Suicide Prevention training, such as QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) or ASK (Ask, Seek, Know), is required for all team members within the first six months of appointment.
- (16) Peer Team members must attend individual and group crisis intervention training from the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) within the first year of appointment.

- 4. Removal from Peer Support Team may occur under the following circumstances:
 - a. Request by the member to be removed from the team either on a temporary or permanent basis;
 - b. Breach of confidentiality;
 - c. Failure to attend training; or
 - d. At the discretion of the Peer Support Team chairs or the chief of police

C. Confidentiality

- 1. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained between the Peer Support Team member and the employee/family member in accordance with provisions of the law, specifically Health and Safety Code Title 9, Subtitle B, Chapter 784, and this policy.
- 2. Peer Support Team members shall inform the person of the confidentiality limitations and exceptions. Peer Support Team members shall consult with the Peer Support Team leader or chairs in those cases where a concern or question arises regarding confidentiality issues.

E. Traumatic Events

- 1. As prescribed by the chief of police, first responders who are involved in critical incidents will attend a mandatory defusing and/or debriefing sessions approved for emergency services personnel. A deputy chief or division manager may require any employee involved in a critical incident, outside of the role of first responder, to attend these sessions. These sessions will be held at a time outside of the regular scheduled workweek at a convenient location and when personnel are relieved of duties.

An outside Critical Incident Stress Management Team may be requested to conduct a defusing and debriefing if the event affects Peer Team members or if the chief of police deems it more appropriate to enlist outside assistance. The Critical Incident Stress Management Teams would be first responders from neighboring agencies or organizations like the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas.

There are five potential traumatic events that should trigger a mandatory debriefing:

- a. Major Disasters,
- b. Multiple casualty incidents,

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE – 113.010
PEER SUPPORT

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 15, 1999
AFFECTS: All Personnel

REVISION DATE: June 26, 2024

- c. Line of duty death or suicide of a department member,
- d. Death of a child resulting from violence, neglect or any other condition which may have a lasting effect on personnel,
- e. Any incident or situation that the incident commander feels may require team intervention.

Note: A waiver may be obtained from the chief of police under special circumstances.

- F. In the event of an officer involved shooting, serious injury or line-of-duty death of an officer, the on-duty watch commander should notify PSC to contact the Peer Support Team leader or their designee. The team leader will determine the necessity of a Peer Support Team call out.

1. Team Member Actions at the Scene

- a. Report to the outer perimeter of the scene and contact the officer in charge.
- b. Request to see the involved officer(s).
- c. Provide only moral support to the involved officer(s). Do not interfere with the investigation.
- d. Remain available to assist the involved officer(s) and their family members until the issue, investigation, or turmoil is resolved.
- e. Allow the involved officer(s) to terminate the assistance of the Team member at any time.