

**TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**  
**3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

<b>SUBJECT: Employee Mental/Emotional Wellness</b>		
<b>3.7</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> 5-6-2024	<i>Bryan Wheelles</i> Bryan Wheelles, Chief of Police
	<b>REVISED:</b> 4-26-2024	
	<b>TOTAL PAGES:</b> 10	

**3.7.1 PURPOSE**

To provide information on the Department's employee mental and emotional wellness programs.

**3.7.2 POLICY**

The Department shall provide emotional and wellness programs to all TPD employees.

**3.7.3 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**A. In General**

1. The City provides an employee assistance program (EAP) which includes up to six (6) confidential counseling sessions per incident free of charge to assist employees. The City provides these services on a self-referral basis or the Chief of Police or the Human Resources Director may make mandatory referrals in accordance with the City's Personnel Code and applicable bargaining union contracts.
2. The FOP contract provides for a choice between the City Health Care Provider and a licensed clinical psychologist or psychiatrist who is on retainer by the City.
3. For mandatory referrals, the cost for the initial evaluation, including any diagnostic screening, will be paid by the City. Subsequent expenses for treatment or diagnosis shall be the employee's responsibility.
4. This program can help employees with problems including but not limited to:
  - a. Family relationships;
  - b. Marital difficulties;
  - c. Drug and alcohol concerns;
  - d. Professional growth;
  - e. Workplace conflicts;
  - f. Physical and emotional abuse;
  - g. Depression and loneliness;
  - h. Child care and parenting;
  - i. Elder care assistance;
  - j. Loss of a friend or family member; and
  - k. Financial and legal problems.
5. The EAP is a service provided by an independent organization, neither the employer nor co-workers will know that the employee has sought help. The call

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

and any future conversations between the employee and the EAP shall be a private matter.

6. Confidential service is available at 800-466-8282.

#### **B. Designation of Assistance Employee**

1. The Chief of Police may designate an assistance employee to assist in matters requiring support, advice, and service:
  - a. The immediate family of any Department employee or retired employee who has died.
  - b. The immediate family of any Department employee who is suffering from a life-threatening illness or injury.
2. Bureau Commanders of the affected employee may designate one or more assistance employees from their command. Preferably, the assistance employee should be of the same rank, job description, or possibly a close friend of the affected employee. (The length of assistance and the use of Department vehicles or resources will be determined by the Bureau Commander based on an assessment of the needs of the family).
3. Requests for EAP services may be arranged confidentiality by the individual/family, an FOP representative, the HR Director or the Chief of Police.

#### **C. Supervisor Role in EAP**

1. Much of the success of our EAP rests with the Department supervisors. Supervisors and Peer Support Team members make nearly all referrals. The following are core issues supervisors should know and /or will complete:
  - a. Knowledge of employee job performance: this requires thoughtful use of the Department's evaluation and job description annual reviews. Keep subordinates informed of what is expected of them at work
  - b. Document and confront unacceptable work performance using the Officer Review System. At the meeting where the employee learns that his/her work performance is unsatisfactory provide documentation and cite Department policy infractions.
  - c. If employee conduct fails to improve, at the next quarterly officer feedback session the supervisor shall meet with him or her and work a plan of action for his/her improved work performance. Follow up on improved behavior and performance by noticing, documenting and openly praising the improvement.
  - d. Supervisors are encouraged to seek assistance when the above steps have failed. Human Resources personnel and the EAP are usually accessible to provide third party objectivity and guidance for planning an effective strategy to help the employee, improve workplace relations and productivity.
2. The FOP contract and the City's Personnel Code provide detailed instructions on how to intervene in substance abuse related employee problems.

#### **3.7.4 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM**

This procedure establishes guidelines for a program offering assistance and appropriate support resources to employees (sworn and non-sworn) of the Topeka Police

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

Department when personal or professional problems negatively affect their work performance, family unit, or self.

According to KSA 60-473, a peer support specialist is a person designated by a law enforcement agency, emergency services provider, employee assistance program or peer support team leader to lead, moderate, or assist in a peer support counseling session who is a member of a peer support team and has received training in counseling and providing emotional and moral support to law enforcement officers or emergency services personnel who have been involved in emotionally traumatic incidents by reason of their employment.

#### **A. Goals**

1. Provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to employees who express a need for assistance.
2. Promote trust, allow appropriate anonymity, and preserve confidentiality for persons using the Peer Support Program within the guidelines set forth by the Chief of Police or designee.
3. Develop Peer Supporters who can identify personal conflicts and provide guidance or referrals to professional or alternate resources as required.
4. Maintain an effective peer support training and response program.
5. Check on the status of illnesses and those injured on duty and provide support when desired and needed.

#### **B. In General**

1. Upon activation/notification by the Peer Support Coordinator, the Peer Support Team member will notify their immediate supervisor of the request for peer support only if the activation interferes with normal duties.
2. The following guidelines provide the Peer Supporter's formal authority to obtain the organizational resources and support he or she needs to assist peers:
  - a. Peer Supporters may be temporarily reassigned to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as a member of the Peer Support Team. All such activity is subject to prior authorization by the Chief of Police and the Peer Support Coordinator;
  - b. Participation in the Peer Support Program is strictly voluntary. Overtime and/or compensatory time may be authorized by the Chief of Police or designee for time expended by employees using the program reference an on duty incident or by personnel performing peer support duties in support of that incident;
  - c. Peer support team members are allowed to consult with employees while on duty as long as that activity does not interfere with the member's job performance or is a distraction to other employees;
  - d. Agency facilities may be utilized for peer support activities when available; and
  - e. Agency vehicles may be used in conjunction with peer support activities, in accordance with Topeka Police Department policy.

#### **C. Confidentiality**

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

1. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained between the Peer Supporter and the counselee, in accordance with the provisions of this procedure. KSA 60-473 holds the communication between peer supporter and employee the same privileged communication as attorney-client, physician-client or marital privilege.
2. Peer Supporters should inform the person, prior to discussion, of the confidentiality limitations and exceptions. Peer Supporters should consult with the Peer Support Coordinator or the psychologist in those cases where a concern or question regarding confidentiality arises.
3. Information divulged to a Peer Supporter concerning the following matters shall not be held as confidential:
  - a. Any criminal offense;
  - b. Danger to self;
  - c. Danger to others; and
  - d. When the peer requests to make known.
4. Any communication made during a peer support session is confidential and may not be disclosed by any person participating. Any verbal communication is held confidential when made between peer support specialists, or between peer support specialists and supervisors of the peer support program. Verbal communications are not subject to the Kansas Open Records Act and are not admissible in any judicial or administrative proceeding. Written documentation should be avoided unless deemed absolutely necessary.
5. When the Peer Supporter is assisting an employee who is or becomes the subject of an internal investigation, the Peer Supporter shall adhere to the confidentiality procedure set forth herein:
  - a. A Peer Supporter shall not volunteer any information received in confidence;
  - b. A Peer Supporter will not hamper or impede the actual investigation, or attempt to shelter the employee from the investigation;
  - c. The Peer Supporter's role will be one of support and assistance for employees experiencing the stress of an internal investigation and does not take the place of the employees exclusive bargaining representative; and
  - d. The person responsible for rendering the discipline may make the employee aware the Peer Support Team is available to them.
6. Peer Supporters shall not be involved in any aspects of an investigation involving the employee they are supporting.

#### **D. Requesting of Peer Support Services**

1. Any employee may contact the peer support team member of his or her choice at any time, whether on or off duty, to request assistance or support.
2. A list of Peer Supporters will be distributed to all employees of the department. The list will also be posted on the Topeka Police Department Power DMS. Employees may contact their supervisors to obtain a copy of the list.

#### **E. Notification**

1. The Peer Support Program Coordinator should be notified by the Watch Commander or Bureau Commander of the following incidents:

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

- a. Death of an employee of the agency;
  - b. Serious illness or injury of an employee of this agency resulting in employee being admitted into a hospital.(only with the employee's express permission; HIPPA compliance); and
  - c. Any incident where an officer has been injured and/or has discharged their weapon in defense of themselves or another.
  - d. Other critical incidents of various nature which might require members to act.
2. When military deployment occurs, the employee may be assigned a Peer Supporter. The Supporter may serve as a contact person within the Department while the employee is deployed. However, the Supporter does not replace the Departments Military Leave Coordinator.
    - a. The deployed employee may voluntarily contact the supporter if he/she wishes, either during deployment or after his/her return to work.
    - b. The supporter is not to be viewed as a licensed or professional counselor, but a person whom the employee may talk to if needed.

#### **F. Peer Support Psychologist**

The Peer Support Program Psychologist will be the Department's contracted psychologist. The Peer Support Program Psychologist's responsibilities include:

1. Provide instruction for peer support training program; and
2. Attend biannual meetings whenever possible and act as an advisor to Peer Supporters.

#### **G. Peer Support Program Coordinator**

1. The Peer Support Program Coordinator shall be designated by the Chief. He/she will act as the primary liaison between the Peer Supporters, resource persons and programs, and the Chief of Police or designee.
2. The Peer Support Program Coordinator reports only to the Chief of Police or his designee on business pertaining to the operation of the program.
3. Major responsibilities of the Peer Support Program Coordinator include:
  - a. Daily oversight of the program;
  - b. Recruiting and coordinating the screening of Peer Support applicants;
  - c. Coordinating training of the Peer Supporters;
  - d. Developing resources to assist employees when problem areas are identified
  - e. Offering guidance and support to Peer Supporters, as needed
  - f. Maintaining and distributing to all employees a current Peer Supporter list, and;
  - g. Maintaining records of expenses associated with the program.

#### **H. Peer Support Personnel**

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

1. All interested employees who choose to volunteer as a Peer Supporter must submit their written request through his/her chain of command to the Peer Support Program Coordinator.
2. Applicants must:
  - a. Agree to maintain confidentiality within the guidelines provided in the confidentiality section of this procedure;
  - b. Have no restrictions regarding psychological stress;
  - c. Not be the subject of an investigation or pending disciplinary action;
  - d. Have written endorsement by his/her immediate supervisor;
  - e. Be empathetic and possess strong interpersonal and communication skills;
  - f. Attend and successfully complete:
    - 1) Critical Incident curriculum approved by the department contracted Psychologist
    - 2) Tactical Communication/De-escalation training; and
    - 3) 40-hour basic course of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT);
  - g. Be willing to attend follow-up and continuing education training.
3. The Peer Support Program Coordinator, other Peer Support Team Members, and the Chief's Office shall select candidates suited for appointment as Peer Supporters.
4. Peer Supporter's responsibilities will include:
  - a. Providing support and assistance on a voluntary basis to fellow employees and/or their families in time of personal and/or professional crises;
  - b. Convey trust, anonymity, and assure confidentiality within this procedure to employees who seek assistance from the Peer Support Program;
  - c. Assist the employee by referring him/her to the appropriate outside resource when necessary;
  - d. Maintain contact with the Peer Support Program Coordinator regarding program activities;
  - e. Be available to be contacted and, if practical, to respond at any hour; and
  - f. Attend trainings unless the Peer Support Coordinator approves their absence.
5. Peer Supporters may voluntarily withdraw from participation at any time. They are, however, required to notify the Peer Support Program Coordinator in writing.
6. Peer Supporters may be removed from participation in the program by the Peer Support Program Coordinator or the Chief's Office for any of the following reasons:
  - a. Conduct inconsistent with the program procedure;
  - b. Failure to fulfill training requirements and/or attend regularly scheduled meetings;
  - c. Unsatisfactory work performance; and

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

- d. Become involved in an internal investigation or disciplinary action inconsistent with the goals of the Peer Support Program.
- 7. Peer Supporters in good standing may ask the Peer Support Program Coordinator, in writing, to place them on inactive status. The requester must explain why the request is being made.
- 8. The Peer Support Program Coordinator shall determine the period of inactive status, which may be granted for a period up to two (2) years.
- 9. To be reinstated to active status, the employee shall make a written request to the Peer Support Program Coordinator. The Peer Support Program Coordinator shall either deny or approve the request. Upon approval, the employee shall be informed of any required training for reinstatement.

#### **I. Peer Support Program Structure**

- 1. Under the direct supervision of the Peer Support Program Coordinator, the following positions will be voluntarily filled by one or more Peer Support Team Member:
  - a. Legacy Officer: Responsible for keeping track of significant dates, anniversaries, or events that are relevant to employees for a variety of reasons.
    - 1) Initiates appropriate responses for said significant dates with family members, significant others, friends, etc.
    - 2) Responsible for continued communication “checkups” with identified people after a significant loss.
    - 3) Communicates potential further needs to the Peer Support Program Coordinator and other Peer Support positions and team members.
  - b. Loss and Hardship Officer
    - 1) Coordinates sending condolences, get well, and other notes or cards for individuals within the department experiencing hardship or loss.
    - 2) Coordinates meal trains, help on other tasks, or things the family may need (mowing lawn, coordinating transportation, etc.)
  - c. Education / Resource Officer
    - 1) Responsible for keeping an updated list of resources for those seeking clinicians, treatment programs, or other mental health needs and points of contact.
    - 2) Brings training opportunities to the attention of the Peer Support Program Coordinator, and assists in identifying the needs of the team and department regarding continued education.
    - 3) Speaks, presents, or finds speakers for continued education for the department regarding mental health support and emotional survival for the law enforcement.
    - 4) Communicates with clinical psychologist representative as needing regarding quality of resources and educational needs.

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

2. All Peer Support Team members are required and expected to be the eyes and ears around the department to aid in identifying when and where needs arise. If needs are identified, it is every member's responsibility to notify the appropriate team member holding these positions, as well as the Peer Support Program Coordinator, of those needs.

#### **3.7.5 TRAUMATIC INCIDENT EMPLOYEE WELFARE PROCESS**

- A. A traumatic incident is one that is sudden, powerful and falls outside the range of ordinary human experience. These could include any event that may impact the employees' psychological and emotional wellness (i.e. accident scenes, crime scenes, incidents involving children, etc.)
- B. When a supervisor, coworker or the employee themselves begins to recognize effects of the incident on the employee's psychological or emotional wellbeing there are several options to consider.
  1. Any employee can provide emotional and moral support to a coworker.
  2. The employee can ask or seek out any Peer support member
  3. The employee may be referred to the Employee Assistance Program.
  4. The supervisor or Peer Support Program Coordinator may coordinate time off with Bureau Commanders for the employee to assist with recovery. This time may consist of accrued time or special duty in special circumstances.

#### **3.7.6 ALTERNATIVE TO CITY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER/EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

- A. **An alternative to the CHCP and EAP is a City retained licensed clinical psychologist or psychiatrist.**
  1. This person will have no affiliation with the City or any official beyond establishing the initial contract for services.
  2. This person will not report to the City or and city officials the names of employees or their families who are utilizing this service or the nature of any problem unless with consent of the employee.
  3. The employee or his/her family will incur no expense for the assistance received with the licensed clinical psychologist or psychiatrist on retainer.

#### **3.7.7 CRITICAL INCIDENT EMPLOYEE WELFARE PROCESS**

- A. **An employee welfare process will take place under the following circumstances:**
  1. Deadly force is used in a defensive action;
  2. Any case involving serious bodily injury; or
  3. When the Chief determines the incident requires the debriefing.



## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

#### **B. Day of the event**

1. The supervisor on scene will advise dispatch to send a command page to include the FOP President, FOP Labor Chair and Peer Support Program Coordinator.
2. Each officer involved in the critical incident will be assigned an officer on the scene. These officers are responsible for transporting the officer, one to a car, from the scene to the Law Enforcement Center and remain with them until relieved.
3. Officer(s) involved will be placed in a room that is not recorded or monitored.
4. While at the Law Enforcement Center an assistance employee, of their choice, will be made available to them.
5. The Topeka Fire Department and/or AMR may be called to the LEC to preliminarily check the general health/wellness of the officer(s) involved.
6. The affected employee will be relieved of all duty assignments and responsibilities, except those related to the incident;
7. The employee shall complete his/her shift and may remain on-duty in an overtime status as long as necessary to facilitate investigation of the incident;
8. Affected officer(s) will be relieved of their assignments and placed on Administrative Leave or Administrative Duty until such time they are returned to full duty or light duty in some cases.
9. Whenever possible, Classroom A will be the gathering place for TPD officers. In the event it is not available, a suitable room will be made available.
10. A counseling session involving the affected officer(s) and a City of Topeka approved psychologist will be scheduled no later than 24-48 hours following the officer's statement provided in the criminal investigation, when possible.
  - a. The officer(s) spouse or immediate family should be involved if possible.
  - b. The session affords the member the opportunity to address immediate psychological concerns he/she may be experiencing and will allow the department to make the member aware of available resources to assist him/her.
11. The affected officer(s) will be given an explanation of the Stress Evaluation Process by the Bureau Commander which will be arranged for him/her. The Peer Support Team member can assist in the explanation process when requested by the Bureau Commander or his/her designee.

#### **C. Days following the incident**

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE MENTAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

1. In an effort to enhance a safe return to full duty, the affected employee shall participate in a series of steps to ensure he/she is ready and confident to return to his/her regular duty assignment. After the traumatic or significant event, Department employees may be assigned a peer support team member to help assist in these processes.
  - a. If the affected employee is on administrative leave or duty he/she in some circumstances may be assigned to a limited duty assignment in the following days as determined by the Chief.

#### **D. Upon return to full duty**

1. If the incident involved the use of a firearm, and after being released by the Department psychologist, and in an effort to further enhance the employee's transition back to full duty, he or she will meet with the Range Master to participate in a reality-based training. The employee will participate in a number of use of force scenarios designed to enhance his/her return to a full duty status. The Range Master will provide feedback to the employee and Bureau Commander on these scenarios.
2. The Bureau Commander shall meet with the employee and discuss his/her attitude towards returning to his/her regular duty assignment.
3. The Bureau Commander will make an appointment for the affected officer(s) to meet with a professional psychologist within 30 days of returning to duty.
4. The affected officer(s) should be given an option to ride with another officer for a reasonable amount of time.
5. The Bureau Commander shall communicate with the Chief of Police and Deputy Chief to determine whether any additional steps will be taken. This communication may include information from the Department psychologist, peer support team member, and other sources that are involved in the employee's incident.

#### **E. Six months following the incident:**

1. The Bureau Commander will be responsible for ensuring there is contact through phone or physical visits between the affected officer(s) involved and a professional psychological service for further evaluation.

#### **F. One year following the incident:**

1. The Bureau Commander shall continue to work with the officer(s) involved and the Department psychologist if additional services/evaluations are needed.