



WRITTEN DIRECTIVE	No.	PD17-0209	Page:	1 of 13
	Subject:	Effective Date: 08-31-17		
	Peer Support Program / Stress-Related Incidents	Supersedes/Amends: PD15-0209		
	Reference:	Addendum 22.2.3, 35.1.9		



I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to provide a procedure for identifying factors that may negatively affect performance and assist employees in understanding the impact of these factors by providing psychological counseling and to establish a crisis intervention counseling process known as Critical Incident Stress Management. The goal of a Peer Support Program is to provide all employees with the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible support through times of personal or professional crisis and to help anticipate and address potential difficulties.

II. Policy

22.2.3

It shall be the policy of the Lynchburg Police Department to provide counseling opportunities for employees experiencing difficulty due to stress induced problems and to employees who are involved in critical incidents. Depending on the circumstances, these opportunities may also be extended to family members.

III. Procedure

A. Peer Support Program

1. Purpose

- a. Provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to employees who express a need for assistance, or for whom supervisory staff feel could benefit from program involvement.
- b. Promote trust, allow anonymity and preserve confidentiality for employees utilizing the program.
- c. Develop Peer Support personnel who can identify personal conflicts and provide guidance or referral to professional or alternate resources as required.
- d. Provide personnel to listen, assess, and whenever necessary, refer for professional assistance to employees and their families

during times of trauma, grief, or other personal and professional problems.

2. Responsibilities

- a. Advising peers seeking assistance that a Peer Supporter 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 supporter that that information is confidential.
- d. Providing short-term supportive assistance and or referral, for employees involved in the Peer Support Program, within the scope of their ability, knowledge and training.
- e. Making additional referral for assistance when deemed appropriate.
- f. Maintaining contact with the Program Support Coordinator regarding program activities.
- 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 Coordinator, and intervention is requested or needed.
- i. Responding to the scene of a critical incident if requested by the Incident Commander, Watch Commander, or Peer Support Program Coordinator.
- j. Notifying the Program Coordinator should the Peer Supporter voluntarily withdraw from participation.
- k. Abiding by the program policies and objectives or be removed from program participation.
- l. Notifying the Program Coordinator should a conflict of interest arise.

3. Referral Program

- a. 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.

- 1) An employee may personally contact any Peer Supporter, or the Peer Support Coordinator for referral to either professional counseling or a Peer Supporter.
 - 2) Any employee aware of another employee who may need assistance can initiate a referral by contacting any Peer Supporter, Program Coordinator or Supervisor. The referred employee will be contacted to assess their receptiveness to Peer Support intervention. The identity of the person initiating the referral will remain confidential.
 - 3) Supervisory personnel have the authority and responsibility to recommend a Peer Supporter 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 his/her benefit and will be confidential.
 - 4) Referrals shall not be used as a disciplinary tool.
 - 5) A family member or associate of the employee may make a referral, in which case, also, the employee's participation is voluntary. The identity of the person initiating the referral will remain confidential.
4. Peer Support Program Coordinator
- a. The Peer Support Program Coordinator shall function as the primary liaison between the Peer Supporters and the Chief of Police. The Peer Support Coordinator shall be responsible for:
 - 1) General supervision of the program.
 - 2) Recruiting and coordinating the screening of Peer Support applicants.
 - 3) Ensure all employees are aware of the program through watch briefing presentations, written memorandums or other literature about the program as may be developed.
 - 4) Preparing and disseminating to all employees a current referral list of professional counseling services approved by the Police Department.

- 5) Identifying and coordinating the appropriate training for the selected Peer Supporters, and documenting and maintaining all records pertinent to such training.
- 6) Acting as the liaison for peer support referrals, and being responsible for assigning Peer Supporters to assist employees consistent with the particular need.
- 7) Providing guidance and assistance to Peer Supporter personnel when problems or questions arise.
- 8) Developing resources to assist employees when problems are identified.
- 9) Perform the tasks associated with the referral program in conjunction with their normal assigned duties.

5. Peer Supporter Selection Process

- a. Through a supervisory recommended process, a sufficient number of interested employees, shall be selected to perform the duties as Peer Supporters.
- b. Peer Supporter candidates shall be employees with five years of service as a sworn Law Enforcement officer. At least three or more years must be with LPD as a sworn Law Enforcement officer.
- c. Eligible, interested employees shall submit a memorandum of interest to their immediate supervisor for recommendation. The memorandum should detail their reason for wanting to become a Peer Supporter, qualifications, training, and experience which they feel would be beneficial to the program. The memorandum will then be forwarded through their chain of command to their respective Captain stopping at each level for comments. After review at all levels the memorandum will be forwarded to the Peer Support Coordinator for consideration.
- d. Following an interview, employees shall be eligible for appointment as a Peer Supporter upon recommendation from the Peer Support Board Members.
- e. Peer Supporters shall successfully complete training as determined by the Peer Support Coordinator.

B. Counseling to Address Stress-Induced Problems

1. Sources to be Considered in Identifying Stress

- 35.1.9 D

 - a. A supervisor receiving a request for assistance should interview the employee and develop a recommended course of action based on the needs of the employee. The actions could range from informal counseling to obtaining professional help.
 - 2. Recommendations from the employee's supervisor.
 - a. Any Department supervisor who has information or who believes that another employee is suffering from stress-related trauma that could negatively affect the employee's health, mental stability, or job performance shall convey this information to the Division Captain with a summary of the facts that led them to conclude that the employee may need assistance.
 - b. After conferring with the Division Captain, remedial actions shall proceed as deemed necessary.
 - c. The Division Captain will be responsible for the interviewing and the nonprofessional counseling processes initiated to identify and address stress-induced problems as referred to in this section.
- 35.1.9 A

 - 3. The following areas will be reviewed by the affected employee's immediate supervisor to help determine whether or not follow-up action is indicated. The results of this review will be reported to the Chief of Police through the chain of command. Areas to be reviewed include, but are not limited to:
 - a, Certain types of leave
 - b. Disciplinary record
 - c. LPD fleet (vehicle) crash history
 - d. Citizen complaints
 - e. Use of force incidents
 - f. Vehicle pursuits
- 35.1.9 E

 - 4. After a review of the Department records, the affected employee's supervisor may take any of the following actions:
 - a. Discontinue any further investigation or review where there is no perceived reason to proceed further.
 - b. Interview the employee concerned.
 - c. Commence or continue an investigation of the situation or circumstances without losing sight of the fact that this process is meant to be corrective, not punitive in nature.

- d. Recommend some level of counseling for the employee.
 - e. File an *Allegation of Misconduct* complaint if it is evident that employee misconduct may be involved.
 - f. Recommend to the employee's Major, removal of the employee's firearm if the employee is a danger to himself or others.
 - 1) If immediate action is called for, the supervisor should relieve the employee of all firearms or other dangerous weapons.
 - a) Such action will be immediately reported to the affected employee's Major.
 - b) All actions taken will be documented in memorandum format by the supervisor taking the action.
 - 2) Firearms previously removed will be returned to an employee at the direction of the Major when the condition affecting the employee is deemed to have been addressed.
 - g. In all cases where the employee is placed on leave pending psychological evaluation directed by the Department, the time away from work will not count against earned sick leave until such time that a physician verifies that the employee should not be returned to duty.
5. Once a supervisor has commenced an action in this area of concern, including a review of any individual's Department records, the Major will be informed of:
- a. the facts and the case
 - b. the recommended plan of action to address identified concerns.
6. A report of all actions taken in any case as described in this section shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
7. The Administrative Division Captain will be responsible for monitoring the Department's *Personnel Early Warning System* software program.

35.1.9 B

C. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

- 1. The Lynchburg Police Department will make available a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program to minimize the

effects caused by critical incidents and will assist employees to cope effectively with reactions to these incidents.

2. An affected employee's Division Captain will be responsible for notifying the Administrative Division Captain that a critical incident debriefing session needs to be scheduled.
3. The Administrative Division Captain will be responsible for coordinating the process and maintaining records of critical incident care offered to employees.
4. Critical Incident Defined: A *critical incident* will include any situation faced by an employee of the department that causes him to experience unusually strong emotional reactions. (i.e. –major disasters, serious injury or death of another employee in the line of duty, failed rescue attempts, serious injury or death of children, personal family tragedies)
5. Critical Incident Stress Management programs and strategies are designed to mitigate the effects of critical incidents in emergency personnel and to assist them in managing and recovering from significant stress should they encounter it in their work. The three main strategies are:
 - a. Debriefing – a group meeting or discussion, usually held 24 to 72 hours after an incident, employing both crisis intervention and educational processes. The meeting is targeted toward mitigating psychological distress associated with a critical incident or traumatic event.
 - b. Defusing - a small group process which is instituted after any traumatic event powerful enough to overwhelm the coping mechanisms of the personnel exposed to it.
 - c. Demobilization – a brief intervention immediately after a disaster or major incident which provides a transition period from the major incident back to the normal work routine.
 - d. Critical Incident Stress Management Programs are offered:
 - 1) separate from, or in addition to, the City of Lynchburg Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 - 2) specifically tailored to the variables of critical incident reaction.

D. LPD EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (EWS)

(See also III H. of PD-1601 Internal Investigations)

1. The early identification of employees who are experiencing job or other related stress and may be engaging in a pattern or practice of problematic behavior or are experiencing underlying issues that are affecting their job performance is imperative.
2. Providing a method for identifying performance deficiencies, taking corrective actions, and making appropriate referrals increases the department's accountability and offers the employee a better opportunity to meet the department's values and mission statements.

35.1.9 A

3. The LPD EWS is based on reviews of :
 - a. sick leave usage by occurrence,
 - b. injuries,
 - c. suspension from duty,
 - d. LPD fleet (vehicle) accidents,
 - e. internal investigations, including misconduct or performance demeanor complaints,
 - f. use of force incidents, and
 - g. vehicle pursuits.

35.1.9 B & D

4. The LPD EWS has been established to provide a systematic review of performance indicators. This data will be disseminated to the appropriate supervisor who will:
 - a. review each incident, individually and collectively,
 - b. meet with the identified employee, and
 - c. submit a summary of the supervisor's findings through their divisional chain of command.
5. The analysis of the facts should include consideration of the totality of the circumstances surrounding each incident, drawing on knowledge of human behavior, department policies and procedures, and wisdom gained from law enforcement experience. Some things to keep in mind when reviewing the incidents are:
 - a. determining what, if anything could have been done differently to prevent the complaint or need to apply force;
 - b. that the process of analysis should include recognition that there are circumstances when use of force is necessary and proper, and

that there are occasions when false or misleading accusations may be made against officers by citizens;

- c. deciding if there are any similarities between incidents;
- d. determining if other possible indicators of stress are present such as an unusual amount of sick leave, tardiness, marital problems, etc;
- e. determining if a trend or pattern of behavior is developing; and
- f. making appropriate and accurate referrals.

35.1.9 D

- 6. Supervisors will:
 - a. initiate a mandatory informal meeting with the employee to inform them of the review (documenting this notification on the attached form) and discuss the incidents that triggered the EWS.
 - b. make every effort during this meeting to determine if there are other factors affecting the employee's job performance.
 - c. prepare a report outlining the analysis of the incidents, findings, and recommendations. The report of the review will include:
 - 1) an overview summary that identifies similar incidents, trends, etc.
 - 2) the findings and conclusions based on the supervisor's analysis, and
 - 3) a recommended disposition.
- 7. The report, with the recommended disposition, will be completed by the assigned supervisor within 30 days and forwarded back to employee's Division Captain.
- 8. The Division Captain will then review the summary and if he concurs with the review findings and recommendations, forward to the Major for approval of action and recommendations of the review.
- 9. The original report must be forwarded to the Administrative Division Captain for retention.
- 10. A copy of the report may be maintained in the employee's Unit file for reference by the immediate supervisor.
- 11. The employee should be fully informed of the findings and disposition and will be provided a copy of the review upon completion.

35.1.9 C

- 12. An evaluation of the Personnel Early Warning system will be completed on an annual basis to ensure the process is meeting the needs of agency personnel.

22.2.6

E. AVAILABILITY OF COUNSELING

1. Any employee who wishes to seek counseling is encouraged to do so at any time, by notifying a supervisor or one of the contact persons listed in the *Addendum* to this directive.
2. Arrangement of a stress management session:
 - a. Upon notification, the arrangement of a critical incident stress management session will be finalized by the contact person.
 - b. The employee should provide details of the incident to the contact person, including the name of the incident supervisor.
3. It is recommended that employees involved in critical incidents receive a management session:
 - a. *after* passage of a 24 hour post-incident "normalizing period", but
 - b. *within* two to four days after the incident.
4. Critical incident stress management may also be made available to the spouse and/or children of an employee involved in a critical incident.
5. The employee's attendance at the initial critical incident stress management session will be arranged as follows:
 - a. There will be no cost to the employee for a stress management session
 - b. Every effort will be made to schedule the session during the work hours of the majority of the employees involved.
 - c. Should continuing counseling or treatment be needed, an appropriate referral will be made by the group moderator.
6. Employee attendance at a management session will be strictly voluntary.

F. POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

22.2.6

1. It is the Department's policy to afford employees professional psychiatric evaluation immediately following involvement in any traumatic incident, as well as provide evaluation if an employee shows stress which may affect their performance.

2. For the purpose of this policy, a traumatic incident is defined as any incident or action which may result in emotional or psychological anguish. Incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Incidents involving the use of deadly force which may or may not result in serious injury or death
 - b. situations in which employees are fired upon
 - c. motor vehicle crashes involving serious injury or death
 - d. participation in undercover operations for extended periods of time
 - e. participation in incidents resulting in the death or injury of a fellow employee
 - f. multiple, cumulative, smaller incidents over a period of time
3. A supervisor, upon learning that an employee has been involved in a use of deadly force, seriously injured in the line of duty, or involved in some form of traumatic incident will immediately notify the employee's Division Captain.
 - a. The Division Captain or his designee will, as soon as possible, meet with the employee and advise them of the psychological counseling available under this policy.
 - 1) Employees who have been involved in a traumatic incident that resulted in death to any person will be required to have a psychological evaluation.
 - 2) In all other cases, it shall be left to the judgment of the Division Captain whether such evaluation and counseling is warranted; however, such counseling will be made available if the employee requests it.
 - b. In all cases where psychological evaluation and/or counseling is requested by the employee, the Division Captain will be responsible for making the appropriate arrangements for the employee to participate in evaluation and/or counseling.
4. Psychological counseling will be made available to family members of employees who are killed in the line of duty.
 - a. The assigned Benefits Coordinator will arrange as soon as possible to meet with the spouse or next of kin of sworn employees killed in the line of duty to discuss benefit entitlements. (See *PD-0203: Employee-Related Death/Critical Injury*)

- b. At this meeting, the spouse and/or child(ren) will be advised of the Department's policy to provide psychological counseling to immediate family members, spouse or child(ren), if they feel a need for such counseling:
 - 1) The Department will cover all costs relating to the evaluation and initial treatment
 - 2) Thereafter, if further treatment is indicated, the Department's psychiatrist will refer the family member to a psychiatrist or psychologist of their choice.
5. Visits to the psychiatrist due to traumatic situations encountered on duty will not be charged against the employee's leave balances.
6. This policy will not affect any policy relating to the investigation of any use of force or other matter in which an employee is injured, but is intended to supplement such policies. The evaluations described are not for the purpose of critique of the traumatic incident, but are solely concerned with the emotional aftermath.

35.1.9 F

G. COUNSELING STAFF

1. A critical incident stress management session will be conducted by one of six established management teams.
2. Each critical incident stress management team will generally be comprised of two to three members, as follows:
 - a. a designated local mental health professional, trained in critical incident stress management, in the role of group moderator
 - b. one or two designated person(s) trained in critical incident stress management, to serve as peer counselor(s):
3. Supplementing the management teams will be designated local professionals from the medical and mental health related fields, who:
 - a. have received training in critical incident stress management
 - b. may be available, if needed, to serve as members of a management team
 - c. may be available to provide supplementary services as requested by the critical incident stress management team.

H. CONDUCTING OF MANAGEMENT SESSION

1. Upon notification, the mental health professional designated as stress management team leader will be responsible for obtaining necessary

information needed for the session and set the time and location for the meeting.

22.2.6 C,D

2. The mental health professional will act as a group moderator and discussion facilitator.
3. The mental health professional will be further responsible for:
 - a. referring an employee for further assistance, when deemed necessary
 - b. disclosing to the Chief of Police specific information from a management session *only* when the professional deems necessary.
4. The group moderator will be assisted by the peer member(s).
 - a. The peer member(s) will receive specific training to enable them to effectively serve in this capacity.
 - b. The peer member(s) will be present both to assist the group moderator and to lend support to the employee.

22.2.6

I. AVAILABILITY OF STRESS-RELATED TRAINING

1. The current contact person for arrangement of proactive, stress-related training sessions through the Critical Incident Stress Management organization will also be listed in the *Addendum* to this directive.

35.1.9 F

2. A variety of stress management and stress reduction programs, including the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), will be made available for employees, tailored to specific need or interest indicated.
3. It shall be at the discretion of the respective Major to arrange a suitable stress-related training session through the contact person, should he feel that sufficient need or interest exists within his bureau.

Original Signed

Raul Diaz
Chief of Police

August 31, 2017

Date