



<b>CLACKAMAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</b>	
<b>Policy # 25</b>	<b>Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.</b>
Reference: <a href="#">ORS 181A.835</a> , <a href="#">County Wellness</a>	

## **PEER SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

### **General**

1. A traumatic event, personal tragedy, or any law enforcement situation or incident may overwhelm normal coping mechanisms, possibly causing unusually strong emotional reactions. These reactions have the potential to interfere with an employee's ability to perform job functions or handle personal and family relationships. Crises occur in law enforcement and these may lead to emotional difficulties that have broad ramifications, both personally and professionally.
  
2. The Sheriff's Office supports and encourages all employees to pursue and take advantage of all available means to mitigate the stresses of their profession. The county has established an [Employee Wellness Program](#) to support county employees and their families in addressing personal and job-related problems. The Sheriff's Office has established the Peer Support Team that is available to respond to and assist employees involved in critical incidents or in need of assistance due to personal or work related stressful situations or circumstances. Employees may request these same services for family members when work related incidents create traumatic impacts on their families.

### **Peer Support Team**

3. The Sheriff's Office will maintain a peer support team to provide employees the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible peer support through times of personal or professional crises to help anticipate and address potential difficulties that may affect work performance.
  
4. The Sheriff, through the Undersheriff, will appoint a Program Manager to manage the Peer Support Team in accordance with established objectives of the program. The Program Manager will develop and obtain approval of a Peer Support Team Procedures Manual comprising at a minimum:
  - a. selection and supervision of team members;
  
  - b. training for team members;



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- c. developing and maintaining written objectives, operational procedures, referral lists for employees for various issues and other guidance necessary to the operation of the team;
  - d. maintenance of monthly statistical data of reported contacts by peer support staff for program evaluation purposes and forward to the Sheriff or his designee (no names or other identifiable information will be included in these statistics); and
  - e. managing expenses and personnel costs associated with the operations of the team (i.e. training, de-brief costs).
5. The Peer Support Team will be comprised of Sheriff's Office and outside agency employees, selected based on previous education and training, resolved traumatic experiences and desirable personal qualities such as maturity, judgment and personal professional credibility. The team will recommend new candidates to the Undersheriff for filling vacancies based on selection of peers with an expressed desire to support CCSO employees.
6. Peer Support Team members (peer supporters) serve an indeterminate term and may resign, take leave of absence, or be removed from the team at the discretion of the Undersheriff. Team members will receive initial and maintenance training to a level outlined in the Peer Support Team Procedures manual. Team members can be found on CLASSweb – PEER support resources.
7. Participation in the program by employees seeking support is strictly voluntary. Employees may access services by:
- a. personally contacting any peer supporter, the peer support Program Manager, or referral to professional counseling via the County Wellness Program, or
  - b. having a family member or associate of any employee make a referral, in which case, the employee's participation is also voluntary.
8. Peer Support Team members will be available to assist CCSO employees for reasons identified by this policy, and can be called out by the Patrol Watch Commander or Supervisor. The Peer Support Team may be called to assist other agencies at the discretion of the Division Commander.



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**Confidentiality and Exceptions**

9. Employees and peer supporters are required to distinguish confidential peer support session from casual discussion. A peer support counseling session is a conversation between a team member and an employee seeking support/guidance. In order to ensure all benefits of confidentiality, employees and team members are strongly encouraged to hold sessions in a confidential place and are required to verbally confirm a confidential peer session is underway to distinguish confidential sessions from casual discussions.

10. Peer supporters will inform participants, prior to discussion, of limitations and exceptions regarding the information revealed. The observance of confidentiality is the cornerstone to the success of the peer support team; however, exceptions to this rule include:

- a. any threat of suicide or homicide made by a participant in a peer support counseling session, or any information conveyed in a peer support counseling session relating to a threat of suicide or homicide;
- b. any information relating to abuse of children or of the elderly, or other information that is required to be reported by law; or
- c. any mention of previous or future criminal conduct.

11. Peer Supporters are specially trained colleagues, not counselors or therapists, and shall refer cases that they believe require professional intervention or consultation to a mental health professional. A peer support program can augment outreach programs, e.g. employee assistance programs and in-house programs, but not replace them. Peer supporters may refer employees to other community resources.

12. Peer Supporters should be aware of and avoid potentially conflicting peer support relationships.

***PEER SUPPORT RESOURCES can be found on [CLASSweb](#)***

or

***Employee Assistance Program (EAP)***

***To make an appointment call: Cascade Centers: 1-800-433-2320***