



# UW -Madison Police Department

## Policy: 1.4

### SUBJECT: PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/15/15

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STANDARD(S): 22.1.6

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#### POLICY:

The Department shall provide all public safety employees within the Department the opportunity to receive peer support through times of personal or professional crises and to help anticipate and address potential challenges such as work/life stressors, family concerns, relationship distress, and other life transitions.

#### DEFINITIONS:

“Peer Support Partner”, sworn or non-sworn, is a specially trained colleague, not a counselor or therapist to be a confidential source of support and a link to professional resources if desired. Peer Support Partners (PSPs) augment the Employee Assistance Office (EAO) but do not replace it. PSPs shall refer cases that require professional intervention to a mental health professional through the EAO.

“Employee Assistance Office (EAO)” is a no-cost resource that can provide timely solutions for life transitions, physical or emotional health issues, and relationship challenges. The [EAO](#) offers legally required confidential counseling and consultation to UW-Madison faculty, staff, graduate student employees, significant others, and family members.

“LifeMatters” is an expanded service offered by the EAO to provide employees with free and confidential statewide coverage, and 24/7 telephone access to professional counselors in support of employees’ personal and work-related concerns. Along with EAO, [LifeMatters](#) provides a wide variety of resources including training, financial and legal consultation, time saving searches, 1–5 sessions with a counselor for personal or work-related issues, and management consultation regarding workplace concerns. LifeMatters can be contacted directly by a UWPD employee or family member without going through the EAO.

#### PROCEDURE:

##### 1.4.1 ADMINISTRATION

- A. The Peer Support Program will be overseen by a trained manager and coordinator that can be a sworn or non-sworn employee.
- B. The Peer Support Program is staffed by current department members and is a voluntary option for staff who are seeking support or assistance. Peer Support Partners are selected through a process. The Peer Support Program managers determine the overall number of peer support partner positions to ensure equal representation across all ranks/positions within the department.
- C. Services offered by the Peer Support Program are available to all department members. Any Department member can communicate with any PSP of their choosing.
- D. PSPs are employees first and peer supporters second. Any conflicts of roles shall be resolved in that context. The peer support program is not an alternative to discipline. A PSP shall not intervene in the disciplinary process, even upon request.
- E. PSPs shall receive mandatory orientation for new members and continuing training relevant for peer support skills.

##### 1.4.2 SELECTION PROCESS AND REMOVAL

- A. The selection criteria for those who apply to serve in a volunteer capacity as a PSP include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 1. Minimum commitment to stay on the Peer Support team for a three-year term.
  - 2. Employees who are in good standing (evaluation ratings of satisfactory or above).
  - 3. Received recommendations from their supervisors and/or peers.
  - 4. Previous related education and training.
  - 5. Related life experiences that align with peer support skills.
  - 6. Desirable personal qualities such as maturity, judgment, and personal and professional credibility.

Each candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities related to peer support will be evaluated by the Peer Support Program Manager, selection committee, and subject matter expert (if desired).

- B. Recruitment for vacancies will occur on a 3-year cycle and information regarding the vacancy shall be distributed electronically to all qualifying department personnel. Qualifying personnel shall submit the requested information to the designated position.
- C. Possible criteria to be removed from the Peer Support Team include breach of confidentiality, failure to attend training, failure to attend meetings (PSPs must notify program manager if you are unable to attend a meeting) or losing one's good standing with the Department.

#### 1.4.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Role of Peer Support Program Manager:
  - 1. Responsible for supervision of PSPs and overall program implementation and utilization.
  - 2. Effectively coordinate with EAO/LifeMatters during critical incidents and making proper resource referrals.
  - 3. Collaborate with EAO/LifeMatters to provide ongoing training for PSPs.
  - 4. Coordinate regular meetings and share information with PSPs.
- B. Role of Peer Support Program Coordinator:
  - 1. Assists the Peer Support Program Manager with effectively coordinating with EAO/LifeMatters during critical incidents and making proper referrals.
  - 2. Aids with collaborating with the Peer Support Program Manager and EAO/LifeMatters in providing ongoing training for PSPs.
- C. Role of Peer Support Partner (PSP):
  - 1. Serve as a PSP for employees and their families seeking information on EAO/LifeMatters resources for issues such as work or personal stress, emotional stress, addictions, financial stress, relationship difficulties, and family concerns.
  - 2. PSPs will not provide therapy or counseling but will act as a referral person to available resources such as EAO/LifeMatters.
  - 3. PSPs will assist (when requested) with group critical incident defusing's/debriefings by working with the EAO/LifeMatters provider(s) to assess specific intervention needs.
- D. PSPs shall inform Department members of the limits of their confidentiality. Limits are consistent with the law, Departmental policy (26.1.1.1 CODE OF CONDUCT), if a PSP becomes aware of a department member engaging in activity that violates Department Policy or the law, they shall notify their supervisor immediately. The supervisor shall then notify the Manager on Call (MOC). The MOC shall determine whether a Chief or Assistant Chief(s) needs to be contacted.

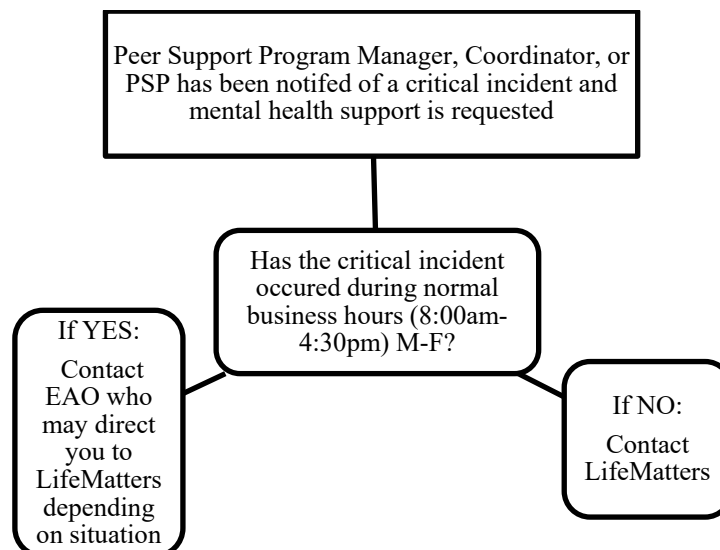
Department personnel are mandatory reporters under the following laws and policies:

- a. Title IX Responsible Employee Reporting – reporting of sex-based discrimination including but not limited to Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Dating/Domestic Violence, Stalking, Sexual Exploitation, Retaliation
- b. Clery Act Reporting – reporting Clery Act offenses (<https://uwpd.wisc.edu/data-policies-resources/clery-act/clery-crime-definitions/>) occurring on Clery Act geography (<https://go.wisc.edu/clerymap>)

- c. [Executive Order 54](#) – requires all University of Wisconsin system employees to report child abuse and neglect.
  - d. Wisconsin Ch.36.11(22)- Any person employed at an institution who witnesses a sexual assault on campus or receives a report from a student enrolled in the institution that the student has been sexually assaulted.
- E. PSPs must advise members that information told to them is not protected by legal privilege and that confidentiality is administratively provided and may not be recognized in court proceedings.
- F. PSPs shall not give information to supervisors and should advise supervisors of the confidentiality guidelines established by the Department.
- G. PSPs shall not be asked to give information about members they support, and PSPs are prohibited from sharing information to other PSPs, unless the person they are supporting provides consent. The only information that management may require about peer support cases is the anonymous statistical information regarding the utilization of a PSP.
- H. PSPs shall consult with a mental health professional through EAO/LifeMatters if needed for mental health related concerns. PSPs should be aware of their personal limitations and should seek advice and counsel in determining when to disqualify themselves from working with problems for which they have not been trained or problems about which they may have strong personal beliefs.

#### 1.4.4 PEER SUPPORT PARTNER CONTACT PROCEDURES

- A. If the Peer Support Program Manager, Coordinator, or PSP is notified by a supervisor/manager of an employee who could benefit from Peer Support team assistance the Peer Support Program Manager, Coordinator, or PSP will verify with that supervisor/manager that the employee granted permission to be contacted by a Peer Support team member, and if that permission was granted then the Peer Support Program Manager, Coordinator, or PSP will directly contact appropriate PSPs whose specialty area aligns with the needs of that employee.
- B. When a PSP makes contact with an employee and if it is determined that the employee could benefit from mental health support from a mental health professional the PSP will assist the employee (if requested) with contacting [EAO](#) at 608-263-2987 if it is during business hours (8:00am-4:30pm) Monday-Friday or email at [cao@mailplus.wisc.edu](mailto:cao@mailplus.wisc.edu). If the employee needs assistance after business hours the PSP will assist the employee (if requested) to contact [LifeMatters](#) at 800-634-6433. Appointments with LifeMatters counselors are available in-person, via chat, text, or video.
- C. If PSP support is requested following a critical incident the Peer Support Program Manager, Coordinator, or PSP team member will either contact EAO or LifeMatters for assistance. Please see the diagram below for the appropriate protocol:



#### 1.4.5 **RECORDKEEPING**

- A. No records shall be maintained when employees refer themselves; only anonymous information for statistical evaluation will be recorded.
- B. No reference of any referrals to EAO/LifeMatters will be placed in an employee's personnel file, except as it applies to specific charges leading to disciplinary or corrective actions.