



UW -Madison Police Department

Policy: 1.4

SUBJECT: PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/15/15

REVISED DATE: 06/19/19; 11/11/20; 06/01/22

REVIEWED DATE: 02/01/17; 05/01/18; 05/12/21

STANDARD(S): 22.1.6

INDEX:

1.4.1 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

POLICY:

The Department shall provide all public safety employees within the Department the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible peer support through times of personal or professional crises and to help anticipate and address potential difficulties.

DEFINITIONS:

“Peer Support Partner”, sworn or non-sworn, is a specially trained colleague, not a counselor or therapist. 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.

PROCEDURE:

1.4.1 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

- A. The Peer Support Program is staffed by current department members and is a voluntary option for staff who are seeking support or assistance.
- B. The program is overseen by a trained manager and coordinator.
- C. All of the services offered by the Peer Support Program are available to all department members.
- D. When a vacancy exists on the Peer Support Team, information regarding the vacancy shall be distributed electronically to all qualifying department personnel. Qualifying personnel shall submit the requested information to the designated position.
- E. 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. Employees who are in good standing (evaluation ratings of satisfactory or above);
 - 2. Received recommendations from their supervisors and/or peers; and
 - 3. Previous education and training; resolved traumatic experiences; and desirable personal qualities, such as maturity, judgment, and personal and professional credibility.
- F. PSPs are employees first and peer supporters second. Any conflicts of roles should 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.
- G. Possible criteria to be removed from the program include breach of confidentiality; failure to attend training; or losing one’s good standing with the Department.
- H. PSPs shall receive relevant introductory and continuing training for, including but not limited to the following: Confidentiality Issues, Communication Facilitation and Listening Skills, Ethical Issues, Problem-Solving Skills, Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Cross-Cultural Issues, Stress Management, Suicide Assessment, Depression and Burn-Out, Grief Management, Domestic Violence, Crisis Management, Nonverbal Communication, When to Seek Mental Health Consultation and Referral Information, Traumatic Intervention, Limits and Liability. PSPs shall be provided with a training and reference packet that has been approved by a mental health professional.
- I. PSPs shall have a mental health professional with whom to consult. 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.

- J. PSPs shall not be asked to give information about members they support. The only information that management may require about peer support cases is the anonymous statistical information regarding the utilization of a PSP.
- K. PSPs shall inform Department members of the limits of their confidentiality. These should be consistent with the law as well as Departmental policy and may include the following; threats to self, threats to specific people, felonies or serious misdemeanors as specified by the Department, child, spouse, and elder abuse. If a PSP becomes aware of a department member engaging in the above related acts, 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.
 - 1. 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 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
- L. PSPs shall not volunteer information to supervisors and should advise supervisors of the confidentiality guidelines established by the Department.
- M. 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.
- N. Any Department member can communicate with any PSP of their choosing.