



City of Racine Police Department
Policy and Procedure

Number: 119

Subject: Peer Support Team		
Date Issued: 12-09-88	Date Revised: 05-02-17	Revision Number: 4

POLICY

The Racine Police Department recognizes the need for emotional and psychological support for Department personnel when confronted with a traumatic incident and that repeated exposure to traumatic incidents can result in cumulative stress. The Department offers Peer Support as one avenue to aid members in crisis. The Department is aware that confidentiality between Peer Support members and Department personnel is of foremost importance to ensure that Peer Support will be used to the fullest extent.

All contacts between the Department personnel and Peer Support members shall remain strictly confidential except pursuant to court order, subpoena or similar process. The confidentiality provisions are limited to contacts with a Peer Support member acting in that capacity and do not extend to specifics of the incident that may be solicited by investigators in either the criminal or administrative phases of the investigation.

The Chief of Police shall determine the amount of information to be released and to whom, when an official Department investigation is required. Peer Support related information demanded pursuant to court order, subpoena, or other legal processes shall not be released without prior review and consultation with the City Attorney.

A Peer Support member shall be permitted to remain with an affected member during the time immediately following the traumatic incident; however, the Peer Support member shall function solely in that capacity and not as a union representative, Department investigator, or in any other role.

DEFINITIONS

Traumatic Incident – Any incident involving a member of the Racine Police Department, either on or off duty, which is outside the usual realm of human experience and is markedly distressing. Such traumatic stressors usually involve the perceived threat to the member’s physical well-being or to someone in close proximity. These incidents may include, but are not limited to: officer-involved shootings (regardless of injury); officer-involved major motor vehicle accidents; serious assault against an officer; or any other incident where it is reasonable to believe Department personnel may experience post-traumatic stress as a result of the incident. Repeated exposure to traumatic incidents can lead to cumulative stress.

Crisis - A response to an adverse situation, manifest or anticipated, wherein psychological homeostasis (equilibrium) is disrupted and one’s usual coping mechanisms have failed to reestablish homeostasis. This is evidenced by functional distress or impairment.

Crisis Intervention - A short term helping process (acute intervention designed to mitigate the crisis response). Crisis intervention response targets the response, not the event.

Peer Support Team Member – A member of the Department selected and specially trained to provide crisis intervention (emotional and psychological support) to fellow member/employees and their families that are in crisis or after a traumatic incident.

PROCEDURE

MEMBER

When a member is in crisis or a traumatic incident occurs involving Department personnel, the following steps will be taken:

1. May request the services of Peer Support as the result of stress induced by some form of relationship to a traumatic incident or repeated exposure to traumatic incidents.
2. You may request a specific Peer Support member respond if that member is available.
3. If offered services by a Peer support member, understand that the assistance is strictly optional and that there are no requirements on the part of the member to use the services offered. Information shared with Peer Support is strictly confidential.

SUPERVISOR

Notify the Shift Commander (by telephone if possible) of the incident and location of affected personnel.

SHIFT COMMANDER

Consult with Supervisor on information of the incident and member's response to the incident to determine if a traumatic incident (or repeated exposure to traumatic incidents) occurred that requires Peer Support assistance.

1. Notify the Peer Support Commander of the incident and advise the circumstances involved and who may be directly or indirectly affected by the incident.
2. Advise the Peer Support Commander of the affected member's request of a specific member to respond.
3. Notify the affected person's Unit Commander and the Chief of Police.

PEER SUPPORT COMMANDER

1. Upon notification from the Shift Commander of a member in crisis or a traumatic incident requiring Peer Support assistance:
 - a. Contact the appropriate Peer Support Team member(s):
 - 1) Based on the particular circumstances of the incident.
 - 2) Based on the training and experiences of the available Peer Support members.
 - 3) Based on the member's request of a specific Peer Support Team member.
 - b. If there aren't enough Peer Support members available, respond and provide Peer Support assistance.
 - c. On your next regularly scheduled day of work, perform follow-up by reviewing the related reports from the involved officers and the Peer Support Team member who responded.
 - d. Ensure follow up is done with the affected member(s) by a member of the Peer Support Team.
2. Assume responsibility for the Peer Support operations to include training.
3. Assist in the selection of new Peer Support members.
4. Assist in the development of policies/procedures relating to Peer Support.

PEER SUPPORT MEMBER

1. Respond as directed by the Peer Support Commander or other authority.
2. At the point of establishing contact with the affected member, you will advise the affected member of the limitations of your role with regards to confidentiality.
3. Be available for training and assist in Peer Support related policy/procedure development.
4. Assist in the selection of new Peer Support members.

PEER SUPPORT ADVISOR

This is a member of the Department in the rank of Lieutenant or above that is available as an advisor to the Peer Support Commander as a resource. The advisor is not to be construed as a

commander of the unit, but is there to ensure that the guidance of the Chief of Police and the needs of the unit are both being met.

NOTES

- Department Personnel may contact a Peer Support member directly for assistance or referral; however, this would not automatically warrant overtime compensation for either party.
- Requests for Peer Support assistance from other jurisdictions require authorization from the Chief of Police.
- The call-in of Peer Support members can be supplemented with a call-in or notification of a Department chaplain. The call-in or notification of a chaplain can be done at the request of any affected member, the Shift Commander, or any member of Peer Support.

RELATED PROCEDURES

[Table of Contents](#)

[102 – Line of Duty Injury](#)

[212 – Reporting of Major, Unusual or Noteworthy Occurrences](#)

[601 – Use of Deadly Force](#)

[602 – Use of Nonlethal Force](#)

[605 – Use of Impact Munitions](#)

[607 – Investigation of the Use of Force](#)