
Peer Support Program

346.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the Redding Police Department Peer Support Program (PSP) is to provide all employees with the opportunity for peer support through times of personal or professional crises. The goals of the program are:

- (a) To provide a readily accessible support network of employees willing to be of service to other employees who express a need for assistance.
- (b) To promote trust, appropriate anonymity, and confidentiality for employees participating in the Peer Support Program.
- (c) To develop employee ability to anticipate personal conflicts and an awareness of available alternatives for self-help.
- (d) To maintain an effective, ongoing Peer Support Program training process.
- (e) To provide services, upon request, to personnel off duty due to injury or illness.
- (f) To identify quality service providers in the community and surrounding area who can be used as counseling referrals.
- (g) To provide assistance, upon request, to the critical incident stress management (CISM) team.

346.2 PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Peer Support Coordinator will hold the rank of lieutenant under the direction of the Chief of Police.

The Peer Support Supervisors will hold the rank of sergeant and/or corporal.

The duties of the Peer Support Coordinator are:

- (a) Maintain and coordinate a liaison between PSP, resource persons, and the Department.
- (b) Recruit and coordinate PSP applicants.
- (c) Coordinate training of PSP.
- (d) Create a list of qualified referral services for the use of the PSP. Referral sources will be researched fully by the coordinator prior to being included on the list.

The duties of the Peer Support Supervisor are:

- (a) Supervisors shall manage the overall program and maintain a liaison between peer support resource persons and the Department.

The overall program will be so established to enable the support personnel to have input into the administration of the program. Information will be periodically distributed by the coordinator to the support personnel regarding the program. This information will consist of training workshops, suggested reading material, helpful counseling hints, and referral information.

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346.3 NOTIFICATION OF SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Support personnel may be contacted directly, using the Department resource assignment roster.

Support personnel may be utilized to assist the critical incident stress management (CISM) team, by contacting the peer support coordinator. If unavailable, contact the assistant coordinator or program managers using the Department resource assignment roster.

346.4 PARTICIPATION IN THE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Personnel selected for participation in the Peer Support Program will be chosen using the following criteria:

- (a) Expressed desire to be a member of the Peer Support Program
- (b) No work restrictions involving psychological stress.
- (c) Full-time paid employees of the Redding Police Department who have successfully completed the FTO program (or equivalent training program prior to appointment), and police chaplains who have completed a chaplain's program.
- (d) A written request shall be submitted to the Peer Support Coordinator.

Support personnel may be removed, for cause, by the Peer Support Coordinator, supervisors, and at the discretion of the Chief of Police. In such cases, a decision will not be made until the facts of the situation are reviewed by the Peer Support Coordinator, the Peer Support Supervisors, and reviewed with the Chief of Police.

346.5 TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The initial peer support training will be a POST approved workshop under the direction of a licensed psychologist, or Critical Incident Stress Management Trainer. The workshop is intended to provide a basic understanding of the following areas:

- (a) Crisis Identification
- (b) Crisis intervention and counseling
- (c) Listening skills
- (d) Assessment skills
- (e) Suicide assessment
- (f) Alcohol and substance abuse
- (g) Knowledge of abnormal behavior

A series of continuing mandatory training programs may be provided for support personnel, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Problem-solving workshops
- (b) Referral update information
- (c) Sharing workshops

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- (d) Advanced skills workshops
- (e) POST approved updates

The Peer Support Program Supervisors and Coordinators or his/her designee will be responsible for developing the training and submitting the training plan to the department Training Manager for approval. This shall include the use of outside consultants, coordination of counselor's schedules, and establishing of training and workshop sessions.

346.6 SUPPORT PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDELINES

One of the most important responsibilities of support personnel is the promotion of trust, anonymity, and confidentiality for employees who seek the assistance of the Peer Support Program. Therefore, communications between support personnel and a counselee are considered privileged by the Department. Some exceptions to confidentiality are either required by law or because sworn members who become support personnel cannot abdicate their responsibilities as police officers in the process.

The following situations are required to be reported:

- (a) Where child or elder abuse is involved.
- (b) Where the person seeking support is involved in a felony crime.
- (c) Where there is a reason to believe the person seeking support intends to seriously injure another person and a duty to warn exists.
- (d) Where the person seeking support is a clear and present danger to self, citizens, or fellow employees; i.e. substance abuse, mental illness.

In these cases, the affected employee's watch commander shall be promptly notified. In the case of serious threats of injury, the intended victim shall also be warned.

*Although some situations fall under the mandatory reporting requirements, the support personnel's role shall remain as one of care and support!

Personnel selected for the Peer Support Program are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- (a) Maintain strict confidentiality in all matters not deemed as "mandatory reporting."
- (b) Work to develop and maintain a sincere rapport with the person seeking support.
- (c) Strive to be a good listener; avoid lecturing or providing unnecessary or excessive advice.
- (d) Do not force unwanted assistance (with the exception of the person seeking support being a danger to himself or others).
- (e) Recognize situations wherein a potential for conflict of interest arises. In such cases, the support personnel shall refer the person to another support personnel.
- (f) Limit or not participate in the program in time of serious personal crisis.
- (g) Maintain personal integrity in both professional and personal life.

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- (h) Keep the coordinator aware of support activity.
- (i) Actively participate in the program and attend mandatory meetings.

346.7 INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

When a support personnel is supporting an individual who becomes the subject of a disciplinary investigation, a support personnel should follow the confidentiality policy of the program. However, support personnel may not hamper or impede the actual investigation nor may they attempt to shelter the individual from the Department. The support personnel's role in disciplinary situations should be one of support in helping individuals through the problems they face in the disciplinary process. If at any time a support personnel finds it necessary to invoke the confidentiality provisions of the program, they should consult the Peer Support Program Coordinator or Supervisor for guidance and assistance.

Support personnel may participate as witnesses before boards and hearings as any department employee would. They are free to testify on behalf of another employee, and with the permission of the employee, providing information which would be considered confidential. When asked or served with a subpoena by the Department or another board or body to provide testimony, support personnel shall appear and testify. They shall make it known their relationship with the individual has been that of a Peer Support personnel. They should freely respond to questions regarding their knowledge of the individual but must not violate the confidentiality of the relationship, except as required by law.

346.8 OVERTIME/COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

In most cases, peer support will take the form of on-duty meetings or relatively short duration; however, if overtime is necessary, support personnel must have prior authorization from a supervisor.