

Peer Support/Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

1012.1 POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Newark Police Department to provide departmental employees with voluntary and confidential resources of support and assistance relating to personal, work, and/or critical incident stress.

1012.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Newark Police Department recognizes that employees may be exposed to stressful and/or traumatic incidents, both on and off duty, from which they may experience significant stress related symptoms that may adversely affect their personal wellbeing and ability to perform their assigned job function. The purpose of this policy is to provide a peer support system for employees, thereby helping to enable them to better manage symptoms of stress resulting from personal or professional crisis or crises. Decisions derived from this directive shall be made for the welfare of the employee.

It is the mission of the Newark Police Department Peer Support Team to assist and educate City employees so that they may understand and reduce the effects of traumatic events.

This policy is not designed to take the place of, or be a substitute for, the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

1012.3 TRAUMA SUPPORT TEAM STAFFING

TEAM COMPONENTS: DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Peer Support Team will consist of the following components:

Mental Health Professional

A licensed mental health professional under City contract with specific expertise, experience, education, and training in the field of trauma services with special emphasis on police personnel.

The role of the mental health professional is to conduct defusing and demobilization processes, assess the need for follow-up referrals, and assist in teaching stress management to Peer Support Team Members and police personnel during training seminars and patrol briefings.

Peer Support Manager

A Lieutenant, appointed by the Chief of Police, as the primary Manager between the team, mental health professional, and management staff. He/she will serve as the team administrator and be available for peer support for other department managers. The Manager will generally not participate in peer support of non-management employees. The Manager will be responsible

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for the team budget, authorizing overtime as necessary, approving team deployment in extraordinary circumstances, maintaining team training standards, and attending quarterly Coordinator meetings.

Peer Support Team Coordinator

The role of the Peer Support Team Coordinator is to:

- (a) Manage, maintain, and coordinate the program. They will act as liaison between peer support personnel, outside resource persons, and the Department.
- (b) Authorize overtime as necessary.
- (c) Supervise and coordinate peer support personnel.
- (d) Coordinate training of peer support personnel.
- (e) Assist in conducting defusing and demobilization interventions, assess the need for follow-up referrals, and assist in teaching stress management.
- (f) Create a list of qualified referral sources for the use of the peer support personnel. Referral sources will be investigated fully by the Peer Support Team Coordinator prior to being included on the list.
- (g) Responsible for determining the continued training needs of the Peer Support Team and for the scheduling of initial and continuing training.
- (h) Responsible for applying for certification through International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) once the Peer Support Team membership has met the required level of training.

Team Members

Members will assess the need for follow-up referrals and assist in teaching stress management. They will also provide one-on-one peer assistance to affected employees at the request of either the individual employee, a supervisor, or the Peer Support Team Coordinator.

Department Chaplain

The Department Chaplain should be trained in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Pastoral Crisis Intervention. The Chaplain may assist, as requested by the Peer Support Team Manager and/or Peer Support Team Coordinator, in group crisis interventions, follow-up referrals, or assist in teaching stress management.

1012.4 DEFINITIONS

Debriefing: A process that should be conducted within 72 hours of the traumatic event. The debriefing usually lasts 2-3 hours depending on the number of participants.

Defusing: A shortened version of the debriefing, generally lasting less than one hour. A defusing should take place as soon as possible after the traumatic event (usually within 24 hours). The defusing may be used to determine the need for debriefing and/ or other services.

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Demobilization: A brief informational session applied when operational units have been released from service at a major incident/disaster that requires unusually large numbers of personnel or lengthy periods of deployment. It serves a secondary function as a screening opportunity to assure that individuals who may need assistance are identified early after a traumatic event.

Follow-up: Phone calls and/or home visits, when appropriate, to monitor the progress and wellbeing of the employee(s) and family members. Referrals to the appropriate resources can be initiated during a follow-up.

Peer Assistance: Peer Assistance is a process by which trained personnel provide emotional support and referrals for a colleague during a crisis or when they are under stress. Generally, Peer Assistance is sought by the employee in need, or suggested by the employee's peer(s) or supervisor. Peer Assistance does not replace the need for structured group intervention or professional services following trauma.

Traumatic Event: Any event that may temporarily overwhelm an individual's usual method of coping or produce unusually strong reactions. It is important to note that an individual's reaction to a traumatic event is individual-specific based on the totality of circumstances in that individual's life (i.e., the degree of involvement, cumulative events, personal likeness, children, etc.). These events can include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Line of duty deaths or serious injuries.
- (b) Suicides of emergency personnel.
- (c) Disasters.
- (d) Law enforcement shootings.
- (e) Accidental death or injury to others caused by one's actions.
- (f) Significant events involving children.
- (g) Prolonged incidents which end in a loss.
- (h) Events with excessive media interest.
- (i) Life-threatening experiences.
- (j) Severe abuse.
- (k) Homicides.
- (l) Terrorism.
- (m) High publicity crimes of violence.
- (n) Death in the family.
- (o) Divorce.
- (p) Addiction.
- (q) Any significant event or personal crisis which overwhelms usual coping mechanisms.

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1012.5 PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVE

The Newark Police Department's employees are its greatest asset. Because we value our employees, we are dedicated to providing them with continued training and support in the area of stress management and career survival. This philosophy is enacted through our commitment to provide intervention and structured support activities, which educate personnel and their families about stress and stress management. Such activities can occur prior to an incident in the form of training, during an incident to identify early warning signs of stress related symptoms, or after an incident in the form of debriefings and follow-up referrals.

The nature of the job can take its toll on those who devote their lives to protecting others and is physically and psychologically one of the most demanding professions. One of our goals is to keep the mental health of our employees as strong as possible by providing peer assistance through times of personal and/or professional crisis. The objective is to mitigate the likelihood of stress reactions that may arise out of exposure to a single critical or traumatic incident, or cumulative stressful incidents.

Peer Support/Critical Incident Stress Management is an adjunct to professional medical, psychological, spiritual, or referral services. It is not intended to replace the counseling or any mental health benefit provided by the employees' health plan or EAP plan and is not intended to provide substance abuse counseling.

1012.6 ACTIVATION AND PEER SUPPORT PROCESS

Activation

The Newark Police Department Peer Support Team may be activated after a critical incident if the on duty watch commander believes that on-duty personnel would benefit from a debriefing, defusing, or demobilization session. In the event that a critical incident occurs, the supervisor of the affected employee(s) should notify the Peer Support Manager or Peer Support Coordinator and the Mental Health Professional as soon as possible. The Peer Support Manager, the Mental Health Professional, or Peer Support Coordinator will then confer with the supervisor and assess whether or not the incident warrants the need for a formal group crisis intervention. In addition, each member of the Department is individually empowered to request (either for themselves or another employee) that the watch commander activate the Peer Support Team. The final decision as to whether a debriefing or defusing is warranted will be made by the Peer Support Coordinator and/or Manager upon the advisement of the Mental Health Professional.

- When making a notification in the absence of the Peer Support Manager and Coordinator, the supervisor or manager should attempt to consult with an on-duty Peer Support Team Member with approval from a Command Staff member.
- In the unlikely event that the supervisor and Peer Support Coordinator disagree as to whether or not a debriefing or defusing is warranted, the Peer Support Manager and/

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or the Mental Health Professional will make the determination. In any event, when an employee requests intervention, that request will be granted.

The on-duty watch commander will notify the Division Captain or Lieutenant of a call out if warranted. well-being, the Peer Support Team will deploy a minimum of two members. In the event there are no Peer Support Team members on duty, the watch commander will initiate a call-out for additional team members.

In the event more than two Peer Support Team Members are needed, the watch commander or responding Team Member shall notify the Peer Support Team Coordinator. They will determine the number of team members necessary for that incident. If the Peer Support Team Coordinator is not available, the appropriate Division Captain or Lieutenant will be consulted. Incidents that may necessitate a Peer Support call out may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Line of Duty Death
- (b) Officer Involved Shootings
- (c) Serious Line of Duty Injury
- (d) Suicide of an NPD Employee
- (e) Off-duty Employee Death
- (f) Disaster/Multi-casualty Incidents
- (g) Mass Homicides
- (h) Injury or death to a civilian as a result of operational procedures
- (i) Traffic collision with traumatic injuries or fatalities
- (j) Death of a child
- (k) Incidents involving victims who are relatives or friends

When the above listed incidents occur, an automatic Peer Support notification will be initiated.

The watch commander will see that the Peer Support Coordinator is notified and the need for group intervention or immediate peer support will be assessed.

This program is dependent upon the identification of ALL critical incidents both large and small to help reduce the emotional impact and to avoid the effects of posttraumatic stress.

The Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) should include any sworn and/or professional staff personnel directly involved in the incident. If the debriefing to be conducted is for an incident described above, the attendance will be automatic for those involved. Active participation in the discussion is not a requirement. Anyone not directly involved in the incident may not attend the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing. Peer support personnel will be in attendance.

A Critical Incident Stress Defusing may be used to determine the need for debriefing and/or other services and is typically conducted by a Peer Support Team Member. Defusing will be offered to all employees to assist in identifying any stress or trauma experienced during the incident and should be held as soon as possible after the incident.

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Request for Peer Assistance

Lists of the names of the Peer Support Team Members shall be provided to all employees of the Department available on F:\WPSHARED\POLICE\DUTY ASSIGNMENTS and posted on departmental bulletin boards. Any police employee in need of peer assistance may select a Peer Support Team Member of their choice.

Referrals to Mental Health Professionals

Members of the Peer Support Team are trained to be effective listeners and to provide feedback, clarify issues, and assist employees in identifying options for problem resolution; however, they are not therapists. When problems are acute or appear to require specialized assistance, information on referral resources will be made available to employees.

Peer Support Members shall not make referrals to a Mental Health Professional without the Peer Support Manager's authorization.

A list of professionals shall be available to both the Peer Support Coordinator and Peer Support Manager to assist employees in making a choice if a referral is made. This should include Employee Assistance Program (EAP) providers as well as private practice professionals – pamphlets are available in the Sergeant's Office.

1012.7 TRAUMA SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS

Team members will be comprised of sworn and non-sworn members representing a variety of employee groups within the Department. Team members understand that membership is voluntary and they may be activated at any time.

Team Members will be selected from those nominated by peers. The Coordinator and Manager will make the selection. The following criteria will be considered when making selections:

- (a) A memo will announce the formation of a Peer Support Team comprised of sworn and non-sworn personnel representing a variety of employee groups in the organization. Nominations will be sought to identify specific individuals who are already seen as sources of support for others in the workplace.
- (b) Nominees must express a voluntary desire to be a member of the Peer Support Program with a minimum commitment of three years.
- (c) Nominees are not currently the subject of a serious or major investigation or suffering from serious personal problems or psychological stress.
- (d) All team members must be prepared to answer calls for help 24 hours a day.
- (e) Nominees must consistently display solid judgment and have strong interpersonal communication skills.

Peer Support team members may be removed for cause by the Peer Support Manager and at the discretion of the Chief of Police. A breach of confidentiality by a Peer Support Team Member shall be cause for immediate removal from the Peer Support Program.

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1012.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

One of the most important responsibilities of a Peer Support Team member is the promotion of trust, anonymity, and confidentiality. Therefore, communications between a Peer Support Team member and an employee being assisted is considered privileged by the Department unless criminal acts are involved; or where the employee, through words or actions, indicates that there is a clear and present danger to him/herself, or others. Peer Support Team members have no legally protected privilege of patient confidentiality as far as court testimony, so team members shall not make or maintain any notes regarding their communications.

A violation of confidentiality, except as mandated by reporting laws, will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the Peer Support Team.

It shall be mandatory that Peer Support Team Members maintain strict confidentiality in matters discussed in debriefings, defusings, meetings, and training. Any statement or discussion with Peer Support Team Members while acting in his/her Peer Support Team role shall remain confidential.

Types of information that are NOT protected by confidentiality include:

- (a) Information about child, spouse, or elder abuse per 1165PC
- (b) Threats of suicide or homicide
- (c) Admission of criminal conduct
- (d) Threats to harm another person
- (e) Witness to a crime
- (f) Information gathered that would require investigation per Department Policy

Peer Support Team Members shall not discuss debriefings in which they have been involved or provide any information about the team's activities except in the instances listed above and then only after consultation with the Peer Support Team Leader and/or Coordinator.

The Peer Support Team is not an investigative unit of the Newark Police Department. Therefore, except as required by law, it will not be the policy of this department to question Peer Support Team Members or any other participant involved in a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) debriefing or defusing of a critical incident concerning the content of such discussion.

1012.9 RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping will be for the use of statistical information only. Names or identification numbers of employees will not be used. Peer Support Team Members shall keep a monthly tally of the number of contacts and hours involved in peer assistance. No identifying information regarding peer contact or group debriefing services will be collected.

The Peer Support Activity Summary shall be submitted to the Peer Support Team Coordinator quarterly and then forwarded to the Peer Support Team Manager.

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1012.10 TRAINING

Peer Support Team Members should receive the following training within the first 6 months of appointment:

- (a) International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) Certified Basic Peer Support Training (GRIN)

Peer Support Team Members are encouraged to become members of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) where volumes of resource materials are located online (www.icisf.org).

The Newark Police Department will follow the Critical Incident Stress Management protocol endorsed by the ICISF:

1) The initial training shall be a minimum 16 hour Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support Course, a 16 hour Group Crisis Intervention Course, a 16 hour Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Course, a 16 hour course on The Changing Face of Crisis and Disaster Mental Health Intervention.

2) Initial training is intended to provide a basic understanding of and the skills using the Critical Incident Stress Management protocol endorsed by the ICISF, which include, but are not limited to the following areas:

- a) Developing rapport with the person being assisted.
- b) Facilitating and supportive listening skills.
- c) Grief and bereavement.
- d) Nutrition and exercise.
- e) Crisis identification.
- f) Assessment skills.
- g) Crisis intervention techniques.
- h) Relationship problems.
- i) Alcohol and substance abuse.
- j) Depression and suicide.
- k) Post critical incident syndrome.
- l) Knowledge of abnormal behavior.
- m) Job related problems.
- n) Taking action (CISD).

3) Annual Update Training shall consist of the following:

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- a) Quarterly training (minimum of 4 hours). Each team member shall attend at least one 4 hour quarterly training session per year.
- b) A minimum of two Peer Support Team Members should attend an annual conference relating to Critical Incident Stress Management. This shall be rotated amongst Team Members annually.
- c) Continuing education should take place on an on-going basis and include intermediate and advanced CISM courses and workshops as well as in-house training by appropriate guest speakers/trainers.

The Peer Support Team Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the training status of peer support personnel to insure appropriate preparedness of Team Members. The Peer Support Team Coordinator will be responsible for the scheduling of initial team training as well as updated training for Team Members.

1012.11 COMPENSATION

The position of Peer Support Team Member is a voluntary one and Members must be prepared to answer calls for help from within the Department as well as requests for mutual aid on a 24 hour basis.

In most cases, peer assistance should take the form of an on-duty meeting of a relatively short duration. Prolonged peer assistance, such as debriefings and defusings, should be scheduled on-duty whenever possible. In the event that off-duty overtime is required, the Peer Support Team Member shall obtain prior approval from the Peer Support Coordinator, Peer Support Manager, or the Watch Commander. Peer Support Team Members will be compensated for their off-duty time as provided in the employee's MOU and in accordance with Department and City policies and procedures.