

	LANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY	Number: G.O. 3.12
		Issue Date: March 21, 2005
		Revision Date: November 2, 2005; July 8, 2009; November 17, 2014; May 23, 2018; April 20, 2020
CHAPTER: Organization, Management and Administration		Related Policy: G.O. 3.11 (Chaplain Program)
SUBJECT: Peer Support Team		Related Laws: ORS 181A.835

POLICY: The Lane County Sheriff's Office considers the mental health of all employees as being of prime importance. To this end, the department will maintain a trained Peer Support Team to provide emotional support to employees during and after times of professional and/or personal crisis. This assistance may be in the form of debriefings, defusing, one on one peer support, or referrals.

DEFINITION: The Peer Support Team is a trained team composed of department members that offer assistance and appropriate support resources to other department employees when personal and/or professional problems adversely affect their work performance, their family units, or themselves.

RULE: None

PROCEDURE:

I. Program Purposes

- A. Provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to employees who express a need for assistance.
- B. Promote trust, anonymity, and preserve confidentiality for persons using Peer Support Team members within the guidelines of the program.
- C. Develop Peer Support Team members who are able to identify personal crises or conflicts and provide guidance or referral to professional or alternate resources when required.
- D. Maintain an effective peer support training and response program.
- E. Support employees who have experienced family tragedies.
- F. Check on the status of employees who are experiencing serious illnesses or injuries and provide support where desired or needed.

- G. Provide training and education on mitigating the effects of stress and critical incidents on one's ability to function on the job, or in their personal life.

II. Duties and Responsibilities of Peer Support Team members.

- A. Convey trust, anonymity, and assure confidentiality to employees, within the guidelines of ORS 181.860, who seek assistance from the Peer Support Team.
- B. Attend training as required.
- C. Assist employees by referring him/her to the appropriate outside resource when necessary.
- D. Be available to the referred individual for additional follow-up support.
- E. Maintain contact with the Peer Support Team Sergeant regarding program activities.
- F. Agree to be contacted and, if practical, respond at any hour.

III. Peer Support Team Program Management

- A. The Administrative Division will provide direction for the team. The Chief Deputy will provide direct supervision to ensure the team is being managed by its members consistent with program goals and objectives.
- B. Duties of the Chief Deputy include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Supervising the program on a daily basis.
 - 2. Managing recruitment and screening of program applicants.
 - 3. Coordinating training of Peer Support Team members.
 - 4. Developing resources to assist individuals when problem areas are identified.
 - 5. Offering guidance Peer Support Team members when necessary.
 - 6. Coordinating follow-up response of Peer Support Team members when referrals are made to outside resources.

- C. Duties of the Sergeant include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Supervising the program on a daily basis.
 - 2. Managing recruitment and screening of program applicants.
 - 3. Coordinating training of Peer Support Team members.
 - 4. Developing resources to assist individuals when problem areas are identified.
 - 5. Offering guidance to Peer Support Team members when necessary.
 - 6. Maintain contact with the Chief Deputy regarding program activities.
 - 7. Coordinating follow-up response of Peer Support Team members when referrals are made to outside resources.

IV. Peer Support Team Member Assignment

- A. The Peer Support Team will be comprised of employees of the Lane County Sheriff's Office who have been selected for membership. The number of team members will be determined by the Chief Deputy to ensure that Peer Support Team is sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of the Lane County Sheriff's Office.
- B. In addition, administrative staff, such as a lieutenant, may be attached to the Peer Support Team to assist the Chief Deputy in administering the program. The administrative staff person shall carry out duties relative to the Peer Support Team as assigned by the Chief Deputy.
- C. Peer Support Team members will remain on the team until they:
 - 1. Terminate from the Department. Exception - A certified team member who retires from the department in good standing may continue to serve on the team in a volunteer basis.
 - 2. Resign from the Team
 - 3. Are removed for cause
- D. When a vacancy occurs on the Team, the Chief Deputy shall cause the vacancy to be filled.
 - 1. An announcement shall be posted inviting employees to submit memorandums of interest in becoming members of the Team.

2. A selection process shall be used to determine which interested employees possess the requisite traits and characteristics to be suitable member(s) of the Team. The most suitable employees applying for Team membership shall be selected.
3. When possible and without compromising the selection process, new members shall be selected to provide equal representation from both Corrections and Police Services. The Administrative Division should have at least one representative on the Team as well.

V. Peer Support Team Training

- A. Due to business needs or budget constraint, training may be postponed at the discretion of the Chief Deputy or immediate supervisor. All Peer Support Team members will receive competent training in:
 1. Basic critical incident stress management
 2. Advanced critical incident stress management
 3. Peer support
 4. Suicide prevention and intervention
- B. A Team member not fully trained as outline above shall always be paired with a fully trained Team member for any response activities.

VI. Confidentiality

- A. The acceptance and overall success of the Lane County Sheriff's Office Peer Support Team will be determined, at least in part, by observance of confidentiality. It is imperative that each member maintain strict confidentiality of all information learned from an individual within the guidelines of ORS 181.860.
- B. The policy of the Lane County Sheriff's Office Peer Support Team is to maintain confidentiality.
 1. Communications between a team member and department personnel shall remain confidential *except* for those communications identified in ORS 181.860 which include:
 - a. A threat of suicide or homicide by a participant in a peer support counseling session.

- b. Any information relating to the abuse of children or the elderly, or other information that is required to be reported by law.
 - c. Any admission of criminal conduct.
- 2. It is critical that all Peer Support Team members become well versed in all aspects of ORS 181.860.
- 3. Peer Support Team members will inform the participant, prior to discussion, limitations and exceptions regarding the information revealed. In those cases where any question arises regarding confidentiality, the Peer Support Team member should immediately contact the Peer Support Team Sergeant or, if unavailable, the Chief Deputy who will advise on the appropriate action to be taken.

VII. Internal Investigations

- A. It may occur that a Peer Support Team member is called to assist an individual who is or may become the subject of an internal investigation. The guidelines of ORS 181.860 must be followed in this circumstance.
- B. The role of Peer Support Team members in internal investigative circumstances should be one of support and assisting individuals through stress they may face during the disciplinary process. If Peer Support Team members have questions or concerns regarding these situations, they should consult with the Peer Support Team Sergeant or, if unavailable, the Chief Deputy.

VIII. Call Out Procedure

- A. Any time an employee of the Sheriff's Office believes they have sufficient information to suggest that a Peer Support Team response is warranted, they should initiate a team response.
 - 1. The initiating employee shall cause the Peer Support Team Sergeant or, if unavailable, the Chief Deputy to be contacted, providing as much information as is available and necessary to make a determination on activation.
 - 2. After determining that a Peer Support Team response is warranted, the Peer Support Team Sergeant or, if unavailable, the Chief Deputy shall contact, or cause to be contacted, Peer Support Team members to respond as required.
 - 3. In the absence of the Chief Deputy and the Peer Support Team Sergeant, the Sheriff shall be contacted for an activation determination.

4. Individual Peer Support Team members may initiate contact with an employee who is showing signs of crisis or interpersonal conflict. Such contact shall be kept confidential.
5. Any outside agency requesting the services of the Lane County Sheriff's Office Peer Support Team shall be put in touch with the Chief Deputy. After consulting with the requesting agency, the Chief Deputy shall make a recommendation to the Sheriff who shall either grant or deny the request.