



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
STEPHEN L. MYLETT, CHIEF OF POLICE

NUMBER P-2023-072	EFFECTIVE DATE August 25, 2023	RESCINDS
SUBJECT Peer Support Procedure		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief Stephen L. Mylett

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Akron Police Department Peer Support Program is to provide APD employees with resources to assist with mental health, occupational, personal, or other related concerns. Trained members of the peer support program can serve as a bridge between the officers in need and the mental health professionals.

The Peer Support Program is not intended to bypass or conflict with the Rules, Regulations, or Procedures of the Akron Police Department or the contract established between the City of Akron and the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor. The Peer Support Program officers peer to peer emotional support to employees who express a need for assistance, provides confidentiality for employees utilizing the program as permitted by law, and designates Peer Support team members trained to identify concerns and provide referrals to mental health professionals or alternate resources as needed.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Peer Support Program**: A voluntary program designed to assist employees experiencing concerns such as mental health, occupational stressors, personal matters and/or related concerns of both work-related and nonwork-related nature. The program may offer emotional support, provide resource information, and/or referrals to mental health professionals, as appropriate.
- B. **Peer Support Team (PST)**: Group of voluntary police employees of various ranks and assignments who have been selected and trained to provide support to peers in the Akron Police Department. PST Members shall comply with the legal requirements outlined in ORC 2317.023 regarding privileged peer support communications. PST members are not licensed mental health clinicians or counselors and operate in this capacity under the guidance of, and subject to, the standards and guidelines set forth by the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor.
- C. **Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor**: A licensed clinician with whom the City of Akron has contracted to help develop, oversee, and administer the Peer Support Program.
- D. **Peer Support Program Coordinator**: A PST member who is responsible for coordinating the daily PST functions and acting as the primary liaison between the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor, PST members, and the Chief of Police or his designee. The Peer Support Program coordinator is responsible for maintaining PST members' training records.

- E. Peer Support Committee: Selected supervisors who are members of the Peer Support Team that support the Peer Support Program Coordinator and the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor in team tasks.

III. POLICY

A. PEER SUPPORT TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

1. The Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor sets forth all standards and requirements for eligibility, application, and service to the PST, Peer Support Committee, and Peer Support Program Coordinator.
2. Members of the PST serve on a voluntary basis and may be selected from any rank and/or unit.
3. Employees interested in serving on the PST shall submit a letter of interest to the Chief of Police, or his designee.
4. The Chief of Police, or his designee, may, within his discretion, deny any employee from service as a member of the PST.
5. The Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor shall select members to serve as the PST, Peer Support Committee, and Peer Support Program Coordinator and may do so through vetting processes to be determined within their sole discretion.
6. The Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor shall set forth standards for and make all decisions pertaining to the removal from the PST, Peer Support Committee, and Peer Support Program Coordinator.

B. PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the responsibilities determined and set forth by the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor, PST members shall:

1. Establish contact with, and offer appropriate assistance to, those employees who request Program assistance;
2. Abide by the Program requirements and objectives as set forth by the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor, and
3. Educate employees about the Program and the services it offers.

C. REFERRALS AND REQUESTS

1. Any employee wishing to seek peer support assistance can reach out to any PST member directly or contact the Peer Support Program Coordinator or any member of the Peer Support Committee.
2. The status of referrals or requests will not be disclosed, except to the participating employee, the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor, or as required by law.
3. Employees are not compelled to participate in the program. Retaliation based on participation or refusal to participate will not be tolerated.

4. If a need for PST services arises, an on-duty PST member should respond to provide immediate assistance and notify the Peer Support Program Coordinator as soon as feasible. If no PST member is on-duty or available due to work assignment, the Peer Support Program Coordinator should be contacted to coordinate assistance.
5. Any PST member who provides support will notify the Peer Support Program Coordinator within 48 hours of the required statistical data.
6. The Peer Support Program Coordinator, in cooperation with the Peer Support Program Clinical Advisor, will maintain anonymous records of support provided to employees for purposes of Program evaluation.
7. Confidentiality is critical with all Peer Support interactions and will be maintained to the extent permitted by law.

By Order Of,



Stephen L. Mylett, Chief of Police

Date September 12, 2023

