

Wellness Program

1034.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on establishing and maintaining a proactive wellness program for department members.

The wellness program is intended to be a holistic approach to a member's well-being and encompasses aspects such as physical fitness, mental health, and overall wellness.

Additional information on member wellness is provided in the:

- Chaplains Policy.
- Line-of-Duty Deaths Policy.
- Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.

1034.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Critical incident – An event or situation that may cause a strong emotional, cognitive, or physical reaction that has the potential to interfere with daily life.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) – A standardized approach using a discussion format to provide education, support, and emotional release opportunities for members involved in work-related critical incidents. These debriefings are typically scheduled after a major call or officer-involved injury and may not take place immediately following an incident.

Peer support – Mental and emotional wellness support provided by peers trained to help members cope with critical incidents and certain personal or professional problems.

1034.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Louisville Police Department to prioritize member wellness to foster fitness for duty and support a healthy quality of life for department members. The Department will maintain a wellness program that supports its members with proactive wellness resources, critical incident response, and follow-up support.

1034.3 WELLNESS COORDINATOR

The Chief of Police should appoint a trained wellness coordinator. The coordinator should report directly to the Chief of Police or the authorized designee and should collaborate with advisers (e.g., Department of Human Resources, legal counsel, licensed psychotherapist, qualified health professionals), as appropriate, to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including but not limited to:

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- a. Identifying wellness support providers (e.g., licensed psychotherapists, external peer support providers, physical therapists, dietitians, physical fitness trainers holding accredited certifications).
 - 1. As appropriate, selected providers should be trained and experienced in providing mental wellness support and counseling to public safety personnel.
 - 2. When practicable, the Department should not use the same licensed psychotherapist for both member wellness support and fitness for duty evaluations.
- b. Developing management and operational procedures for department peer support members, such as:
 - 1. Peer support member selection and retention.
 - 2. Training and applicable certification requirements.
 - 3. Deployment.
 - 4. Managing potential conflicts between peer support members and those seeking service.
 - 5. Monitoring and mitigating peer support member emotional fatigue (i.e., compassion fatigue) associated with providing peer support.
 - 6. Using qualified peer support personnel from other public safety agencies or outside organizations for department peer support, as appropriate.
- c. Verifying members have reasonable access to peer support or licensed psychotherapist support.
- d. Establishing procedures for CISDs, including:
 - 1. Defining the types of incidents that may initiate debriefings.
 - 2. Steps for organizing debriefings.
- e. Facilitating the delivery of wellness information, training, and support through various methods appropriate for the situation (e.g., phone hotlines, electronic applications).
- f. Verifying a confidential, appropriate, and timely Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for members. This also includes:
 - 1. Obtaining a written description of the program services.
 - 2. Providing for the methods to obtain program services.
 - 3. Providing referrals to the EAP for appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up resources.
 - 4. Obtaining written procedures and guidelines for referrals to, or mandatory participation in, the program.
 - 5. Obtaining training for supervisors in their role and responsibilities, and identification of member behaviors that would indicate the existence of member concerns, problems, or issues that could impact member job performance.
- g. Assisting members who have become disabled with application for federal government benefits such as those offered through the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (34 USC § 10281 et seq.).
 - 1. The coordinator should work with appropriate department liaisons to assist qualified members and survivors with benefits, wellness support, and counseling services, as applicable, when there has been a member death (see the Line-of-Duty Deaths Policy for additional guidance).

1034.4 DEPARTMENT PEER SUPPORT

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The purpose of this policy is to establish and maintain a program that provides every employee within the Louisville Police Department the opportunity to receive emotional and tangible peer support through times of personal or professional crisis and to help anticipate and address potential difficulties.

1034.4.1 PEER SUPPORT POLICY

Peer support-based interventions have helped people cope with a wide range of illnesses and circumstances. The rationale for such groups is that individuals who share common conditions or experiences can cope more effectively by discussing their experiences, sharing practical information, and offering moral support to one another.

Peer support programs maximize existing departmental resources by providing employees and police volunteers with additional options and tools for dealing with personal and /or work-related stress. Peer support programs shall be staffed by peer advisors operating under the overall supervision of the Deputy Chief and general supervision of the Team Coordinator, along with the Police Department Contract Psychologist. Peer advisors are paid employees of the department who have been specially trained to assist and support fellow employees by providing services such as information, guidance, advice, referrals, consultation, and act as a liaison with healthcare professionals. Peer advisors render these services voluntarily as a collateral duty in addition to their regular work assignments. At the discretion of their supervisors, they may conduct peer support activities while on duty, provided that doing so does not interfere with their regular work assignments, violate office policies or procedures, or otherwise disrupt office operations. Peer advisors do not provide professional services such as diagnosis or treatment of mental health disorders, psychological assessment, testing, counseling, or any other activity that might constitute the practice of psychotherapy under the Colorado Revised Statutes or other applicable laws.

1034.4.2 DEFINITIONS

Client: In this policy, the term "client" refers to any Louisville Police Department member who makes a self-initiated contact, is referred to, or is contacted by a peer advisor. Any client, whether sworn or civilian, may maintain a mutually consensual peer support relationship with any peer advisor.

Peer Advisor: A peer advisor is a paid employee of the department who is specially selected and trained to provide a first line of assistance and basic crisis intervention to fellow employees of the agency. Peer advisors work in a voluntary capacity to assist clients during times of personal and professional crisis. Peer advisors are trained to recognize situations that require clients to be referred to additional resources. Peer advisors may be peace officers or civilians assigned to any division. As peer advisors interact among themselves within the program, rank or position within the agency is not a significant consideration.

Police Psychologist: The Police Psychologist is a professionally trained, educated, and certified individual or collective group of mental health professionals contracted by the department to provide

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psychological services, trauma intervention, and wellness support. The police psychologist will assist in the selection, training, and retention of peer advisors and provide consultation regarding client and other program matters as needed.

Program Coordinator: The program coordinator is a designated member of the department, usually a supervisor, who oversees the operational aspects of the program and acts as the liaison between program participants and the program director.

Program Director: The program director is the Deputy Chief who will provide overall management and oversight of the program. The program director will provide support to the program coordinator with the program's day-to-day operations and logistical components.

Annual Mental Health Checkup: An annual meeting with the Police Psychologist (or member of their respective office) to check on the mental well-being of each active department member. For the mental health checkup, the officer is the client of the Police Psychologist, even though the financial responsibility for the checkup will rest with the department, and it is not a fit for duty evaluation. The goal of the checkup is to normalize the process of opening up with the psychological service provider(s) and to make sure that any member of the department that is harboring stressors, but has been hesitant to seek assistance, is provided an open, private, and safe environment to find the assistance they may or may not have known they need.

1034.4.3 PEER SUPPORT PROCEDURES

A. Organizational Structure - The program will maintain its individual policy, client statistics, meeting agendas, continuing education, and client review with the police psychologist, provided no conflict exists with this policy. The organizational structure of the program is as follows:

- Chief of Police
- Deputy Chief of Police / Program Director
- Program Coordinator
- Police Psychologist
- Peer Advisors

B. Program Director Responsibilities - The program director is appointed by the Chief of Police or the Chief's designee. The responsibilities of this position include:

- Maintain the integrity and accountability of the program.
- Assist in the formulation and administration of program policies, procedures, guidelines, and directives.
- Ensure adequate administrative support for the program.
- Ensure adequate funding for the program.
- Assist in the resolution of program-related problems and to address complaints and grievances related to peer advisors and program function.

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- Maintain records, statistics, and other documentation of program activities.
- Assist the program coordinator in the selection and training of peer advisors.
- Assist the program coordinator in ensuring ongoing training for peer advisors.
- Promote and market the peer support program throughout the agency.
- Serve as a primary liaison to the police psychologist.
- Coordinate with the Police Psychologist to facilitate the annual mental health checkups.

C. Program Coordinator Responsibilities – The responsibilities of this position include:

- Manage the day-to-day operation of the program.
- Assist in the formulation and administration of program policies, procedures, guidelines, and directives.
- Facilitate peer advisor meetings.
- Maintain records of peer advisor and program activities.
- Assist in the recruitment and training of peer advisors.
- Assist in the ongoing training of peer advisors.
- Assist the police psychologist with his or her duties related to the program.
- Promote and market the peer support program throughout the agency.
- Collection of data from contact sheets to gauge utilization and effectiveness of program.
- Assist with coordination of annual mental health checkups.

D. Eligibility - Any non-probationary employee of Louisville Police Department with no pending disciplinary actions against him/her shall be eligible to apply for the position of peer advisor.

E. Selection and De-Selection - Applications for the position of peer advisor will be solicited as program needs dictate. The selection process may include an assessment board consisting of:

- Police psychologist or designee
- Program director or designee.
- Program coordinator or designee.
- Peer advisors selected by the program coordinator

The assessment board may consider characteristics and traits such as the applicant's reputation /credibility within the agency and among his or her peers, social skills, ability to empathize, previous education and training, job experience, overall job performance, previous utilization of this or a similar program, motivation, sincerity, ability to complete training, and adherence to program policy. Final approval of applicants rests with the Program Director and/or the Chief of Police. Newly selected peer advisors will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding/Confidentiality (attached) and successfully complete all required training.

Due to the sensitive nature of peer support work, peer advisors can be dismissed (de-selected) at any time at the discretion of the Program Director or the Chief of Police. Violation of any term or condition of the Memorandum of Understanding/Confidentiality Statement shall constitute grounds for dismissal/de-selection from the program.

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F. Training - Initial training shall consist of no less than 40 hours of formal instruction in topics including an overview of mental illness, suicide, grief, chemical dependency and other compulsive behaviors, counseling skills, listening skills, issues with families and children, critical incidents, trauma, vicarious trauma, anger management, stress management, and referral techniques.

G. Meetings and Documentation - The program coordinator will facilitate regular meetings with peer advisors and, when available, the police chaplain. The police psychologist, or his or her designee, may be asked to attend a portion of these meetings to provide assistance and consultation regarding past and on-going contacts with clients. These meetings will also provide opportunities for continuing education. The program coordinator will ensure that peer advisors submit Client Contact Sheets (or other methods of capturing data) pertaining to all client contacts, in a timely manner. Contact sheets may indicate the number and type of client contacts, but must contain no information that could potentially identify individual clients. Contact sheets will be forwarded to the program director on a regular basis and an annual report will be completed showing the effectiveness of the program.

H. Ethical Issues - The behaviors and actions of peer advisors reflect on the credibility of the peer support program as a whole. Inappropriate behavior can damage the trust fellow employees place in the program. Paramount to maintaining the program's credibility is the personal integrity of each peer advisor, and his or her respect for each member's dignity, self-development, and personal welfare.

Peer advisors will not exercise power over clients or derive personal gain from helping them. It is unethical for a peer advisor to accept any gift or remuneration from a client, engage in activities to meet their personal needs at the expense of the client, or to ask for favors or help from clients. A peer advisor's sole reward is the satisfaction of helping a troubled coworker.

In developing trust with a client, it is important for peer advisors to explain their role and describe what services can and cannot be offered. Peer advisors are primarily caring and attentive listeners, serving as a bridge to helping troubled members find the professional help or long-term support they may need. Peer advisors are not expected to solve the clients' problems for them.

Peer advisors must scrupulously avoid dual relationships with clients. These can include situations in which a client is the direct report or direct supervisor of the peer advisor, the client and peer advisor are engaged in an intimate relationship, the client and peer advisor are involved in any capacity in the same internal investigation, the client's need for peer support stems from an incident involving the peer advisor, or other situations diminishing the peer advisor's ability to remain objective. Peer advisors must strive to be neutral, and avoid partisanship or alignment with management or employee organizations. The peer support program relies on the trust and endorsement of both management and line-level employees.

Both the peer advisor and client at all times maintain the right to terminate the peer advisor/client relationship, or to request that the matter be reassigned to a different peer advisor. Confidentiality of information gained during the peer advisor/client relationship shall survive the termination of that relationship, except as permitted or required by law.

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I. Confidentiality - Issues discussed during peer support are confidential within the parameters specified by law, department policy, and the police psychologist. Safeguarding acquired information is a primary obligation of team members and the program. Subject to the limitations of law, information received in confidence shall not be revealed without the express consent of the person involved. Express consent to reveal information constitutes a waiver of confidentiality. In cases where express consent is granted, information will be provided only to those specifically authorized to receive the information.

The statutory privilege for peer support advisor confidentiality is specified in CRS 13-90-107(m)(I), Who may not testify without consent. Under this provision, peer support advisors are prohibited from testifying in civil court cases without consent. The protection for recipients of peer support applies to individual peer support interactions only. The provision does not apply when: "(A) A law enforcement or firefighter peer support team member was a witness or a party to an incident which prompted the delivery of peer support services; (B) Information received by a peer support team member is indicative of actual or suspected child abuse, as described in section 18-6-401, C.R.S., or actual or suspected child neglect, as described in section 19-3-102, C.R.S.; or actual or suspected crimes against an at-risk person, as described in section 18-6.5-103 (C) Due to intoxication by alcohol, being under the influence of drug, or incapacitation by substances, as described in sections 27-81-111, C.R.S., the person receiving peer support is a clear and immediate danger to the person's self or others; (D) There is reasonable cause to believe that the person receiving peer support has a mental health disorder and, due to the mental health disorder, is an imminent threat to himself or herself or others or is gravely disabled as defined in section 27-65-102, C.R.S.; or (E) There is information indicative of any criminal conduct". Peer support members are subject to all other disclosures required by law.

Peer advisors must advise all persons with whom they interact in a peer support role of the limitations of peer support member confidentiality. This includes that the information discussed will be communicated to the police psychologist.

In the event information received in a peer support interaction must be revealed by reason of law, peer advisors shall reveal such information only after an effort to elicit the person's voluntary disclosure has failed. In cases where it is appropriate, the peer advisor should inform the person of the obligatory actions necessary. Information revealed under such circumstances shall be provided only to the appropriate persons and/or public authorities.

In the unlikely event that a peer advisor receives information during a peer support interaction that there is a viable threat of harm or violence toward another person or persons, a "duty to warn" arises. This information is not confidential. The peer advisor must warn the threatened person(s), contact the program coordinator or police psychologist immediately, and take any other actions deemed appropriate for the circumstances.

An intentional violation of the confidentiality standard by any member is a serious breach of trust and is cause for censure or removal from the program.

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J. Duty to Act – Advisors who are sworn peace officers are required to ensure that appropriate and timely intervention occurs in cases where there is probable cause that a crime has been committed within a domestic relationship (C.R.S. 18-6-803.6). Advisors who are mandatory reporters must also take action in cases of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect (C.R.S. 19-3-304).

K. Team Response - Team members may respond to any traumatic incident when requested, and with a supervisor's approval. A response may be appropriate during incidents of personal or professional crisis. This could be any incident that causes severe physical or mental injury, usually due to an external agent. These events may include, but are not limited to:

- Member involved in the use of deadly force.
- Assault on a member involving a deadly weapon.
- Hostage situation when a member is a victim.
- Injury, illness, or death of a member or a member of their family.
- Catastrophic incidents such as an airplane crash, flood, fire, or fatal accident.
- Death Investigations.
- Marital, relationship, health, family, financial, employment, or other personal problems.

L. Availability of Advisors - The program coordinator will provide dispatch with a list of peer advisors. In the event peer support or intervention is requested through dispatch, they will page the program coordinator, who will access the circumstances and arrange for appropriate peer support intervention. If the program coordinator does not respond within a reasonable amount of time or is not available, the program director will be paged

In the event the peer support coordinator or director cannot be contacted, dispatch will continue to call peer advisors in the order listed until a peer advisor is contacted. The peer advisor contacted will then act as coordinator and will assess the circumstances and arrange for appropriate peer support intervention.

1034.4.4 PEER SUPPORT MEMBER SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of a department peer support member will be at the discretion of the coordinator. Selection should be based on the member's:

- Desire to be a peer support member.
- Experience or tenure.
- Demonstrated ability as a positive role model.
- Ability to communicate and interact effectively.
- Evaluation by supervisors and any current peer support members.

1034.4.5 PEER SUPPORT MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

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The responsibilities of department peer support members include:

- A. Providing pre- and post-critical incident support.
- B. Provide Personal Contacts as follows:
 - 1. Self-Referral: Any department member may request peer support assistance for personal or professional matters.
 - 2. Reach-out program: Team members may provide follow-up personal contact on a one-on-one basis to department members who were involved in a traumatic incident, or to provide personal support to department members as needed.
 - 3. Peer support team members who are off-duty, upon contact with a member seeking peer support, must assess the need for immediate intervention. If the team member determines that immediate intervention is not necessary, they will schedule a meeting with the member during on-duty work hours. If the matter is urgent, the team member should make a reasonable attempt to connect the member with an on-duty peer support team member.
- C. Internal Affairs Investigations or Supervisory Inquiries: Employees will be offered peer support resources as part of the professional standards investigation notice process.
- D. Peer support members may assist as a debriefing resource to assist a mental health provider in the debriefing and defusing process after a critical incident.
- E. Peer support members may be utilized to assist Sergeants with immediate defusing at the end of a shift or traumatic call
- F. Providing department members with periodic training on wellness topics, including, but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Stress management.
 - 2. Suicide prevention.
 - 3. How to access support resources.
- G. Providing referrals to licensed psychotherapists and other resources, where appropriate.
 - 1. Referrals should be made to department-designated resources in situations that are beyond the scope of the peer support member's training.

1034.4.6 PEER SUPPORT MEMBER TRAINING

A department peer support member should complete department-approved training prior to being assigned.

1034.5 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFINGS

A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing should occur as soon as practicable following a critical incident. The coordinator is responsible for organizing the debriefing. Notes and recorded statements shall not be taken because the sole purpose of the debriefing is to help mitigate the stress-related effects of a critical incident.

The debriefing is not part of any investigative process. Care should be taken not to release or repeat any communication made during a debriefing unless otherwise authorized by policy, law, or a valid court order.

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Attendance at the debriefing should only include peer support members and those directly involved in the incident.

1034.6 PEER SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS

The Department will honor the sensitivity and confidentiality of communications with peer support members.

Any oral or written communication made to a peer support member while providing peer support services in accordance with this policy is confidential and shall not be disclosed without consent unless (CRS § 12-30-125):

- a. The peer support member was a witness or party to an incident which prompted the delivery of peer support services.
- b. The communication indicates actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or crimes against at-risk persons.
- c. The member receiving peer support services is a clear and immediate danger to themselves or others due to being under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other incapacitating substances.
- d. There is reasonable cause to believe the member receiving peer support services is gravely disabled or is an imminent threat to themselves or others due to a mental health disorder.
- e. There is information indicative of any criminal conduct.
- f. The member receiving peer support services makes an articulable and significant threat against the health and safety of another or involving the damage or destruction of property.

1034.6.1 RESTRICTIONS ON DISCLOSURE OF PEER SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS

A peer support team member acting in a peer support capacity and according to department guidelines for provision of peer support services may not be compelled to testify in court proceedings unless specific exceptions apply (CRS § 13-90-107).

1034.7 WELLNESS PROGRAM AUDIT

At least annually, the coordinator or the authorized designee should audit the effectiveness of the department's wellness program and prepare a report summarizing the findings. The report shall not contain the names of members participating in the wellness program, and should include the following information:

- Data on the types of support services provided.
- Wait times for support services.
- Participant feedback, if available.
- Program improvement recommendations.
- Policy revision recommendations.

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The coordinator should present the completed audit to the Chief of Police for review and consideration of updates to improve program effectiveness.

1034.8 TRAINING

The coordinator or the authorized designee should collaborate with the Deputy Chief to provide all members with regular education and training on topics related to member wellness, including but not limited to:

- The availability and range of department wellness support systems.
- Suicide prevention.
- Recognizing and managing mental distress, emotional fatigue, post-traumatic stress, and other possible reactions to trauma.
- Alcohol and substance disorder awareness.
- Countering sleep deprivation and physical fatigue.
- Anger management.
- Marriage and family wellness.
- Benefits of exercise and proper nutrition.
- Effective time and personal financial management skills.

Training materials, curriculum, and attendance records should be forwarded to the Deputy Chief as appropriate for inclusion in training records.

