

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy No: 01-16

Effective Date: 09-11-2020

Revision Date: 09-11-2020

Subject: Employee Peer Support Program

I. Policy Statement

Division staff deliver a continuum of intervention, supervision, and rehabilitation programs to youth offenders while assuring public safety. Providing this continuum of intervention with resistant and potentially violent youth frequently places staff in a highly stressful work environment. Stress and potentially traumatic events involving employees can result in adverse mental and emotional effects.

II. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to develop a knowledgeable, skilled and trained, Employee Peer Support Program (EPSP) for Division staff; and to provide confidential support to employees dealing with the personal and professional complexities of working in a high stress work environment that includes primary and secondary trauma.

III. Definitions

A. "Employee Peer Support Program" (Program)

A voluntary employee support program that supplements resources already available (e.g., Employee Assistance Program [EAP], health insurance and other available resources) and helps identify and resolve concerns for employees experiencing personal and professional problems that impact job performance.

B. "Peer Support Advisory Group" (Advisory Group)

The Peer Support Advisory Group is designated to recommend policy and procedure. The Advisory Group will coordinate the Employee Peer Support Program and is responsible for administering the program. Advisory Group members are selected from trained peer supporters by the Program Directors and serve at the pleasure of the Division Director. They should reflect the diverse workforce within the Division. The Advisory Group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Program Director
2. Program Coordinator
3. Mental Health Coordinator
4. Rural area representative
5. Multi-use representative
6. Secure Care representative
7. Case Management representative

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C. "Peer Support Team" (Team)

A team of Division employees trained to deliver appropriate confidential peer support, support services, and provide appropriate referrals.

D. "Peer Support Team Member" (Team Member)

An employee who has voluntarily applied for, been selected by the Advisory Group and trained to deliver the Employee Peer Support Program.

E. "Communication"

An oral statement, written statement, note, record, report, or document made during, or arising out of, a meeting between a Division employee and a peer support team member.

F. "Peer Support Team Coordinator" (Coordinator)

Serves as the primary liaison between the Peer Support Advisory Group, Peer Support Team, JJS administration and community resources.

G. "Mental Health Coordinator"

A Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) available to the Peer Support Team to answer questions and consult on issues or concerns related to mental health.

H. "Critical Incident"

For the purpose of this policy, a critical incident is any non-routine, unusual, or potentially threatening event.

I. "Self-Care "

Any activity that is done deliberately in order to take care of one's mental, emotional, and physical health.

IV. Procedures

A. Confidentiality:

Employees seeking services through the Program will be ensured confidentiality as described below.

1. No one outside of the team, including Administrators, Program Directors, Assistant Program Directors and Supervisors, shall become involved with the functioning of

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- the team in a manner which might threaten:
- a. The confidentiality of employees; and
 - b. Career development/advancement opportunities.
2. While providing peer support, a team member shall maintain any communications gained during their interaction with Division employees as strictly confidential in accordance with this policy.
 3. Limits to confidentiality of communications include disclosure of:
 - a. Threat or intent of harm to self or others;
 - b. Child abuse, past or present;
 - c. Violations of the law;
 - d. DHS or JJS policy violations;
 - e. Diagnosed mental illness that would interfere with the employee's ability to perform duties safely and as assigned;
 - f. Substance use that could cause the employee to be unable to perform their job duties safely and as assigned.
 4. Disclosure of these items requires the team member to notify JJS Administration and/or law enforcement.
 5. Identifying information shall not be shared with other members of the team or Advisory Group.
 - a. Team members may seek guidance from the Mental Health Coordinator, or Advisory Group.
 - b. Examples of peer support provided may be used for training purposes within the team while maintaining confidentiality as defined by this policy.
 6. Breach of confidentiality will be considered a violation of this policy.
 - a. Accusations of a breach of confidentiality by a team member will be made in writing and submitted directly to the Coordinator for an in-depth review.
 - b. The team member accused of the breach shall be suspended from the team and peer support functions until an in depth review has been completed. If the complaint is unfounded, the member may continue their duties as part of the team.
 - c. Members of the team who have been found to have violated the confidentiality of an employee will be permanently removed from the team, and may be subject to further disciplinary action.
 - d. A review of findings and recommendations will be submitted to the Division Deputy Director for any further action. Confidentiality of the complainant involved will be maintained in written communications submitted to the Deputy Director.

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B. Statistical Reporting:

Team members shall report required statistical information to determine how the program is being accessed by staff and if it is helpful to staff members. All metrics gathered shall be anonymous.

1. Statistical information shall be kept confidential and shall not contain identifying information, but shall include the following:
 - a. Date;
 - b. Type of contact;
 - c. Name(s) of the peer support responder(s); and
 - d. Support provided
 - e. Was the service helpful?
2. Personal information about the response of specific employees to the incidents or services shall not be included to protect affected employee's confidentiality and privacy.

C. Conduct:

While acting in an official peer support capacity, a team member is expected to maintain a level of professionalism and appropriate conduct that is in accordance with current division policies and codes of conduct.

1. Team members may not provide peer support and will refer the person seeking services to another team member in the following instances:
 - a. To any supervisee;
 - b. In response to any incident in which they were involved or materially aware of;
 - c. In situations where a personal or professional conflict may arise;
 - d. Or as otherwise directed by a Peer Support Coordinator.

D. Team Selection

1. Team membership is a voluntary assignment and may be withdrawn by the Coordinator or the Deputy Director at any time.
2. Potential nominees for the team will be interviewed by the Advisory Group and be reviewed for suitability by a Mental Health Coordinator.
3. Team members should be employees in good standing, have supervisor approval and must be appointed to the team by the Deputy Director.
4. Team members should be aware that their services could be required at any time, and should have the availability to answer phone calls or respond to call-outs day or night if needed.
5. Team members shall be encouraged to maintain good self-care.

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6. Team members who fail to fulfill any of the outlined responsibilities may be withdrawn from the program.
 7. Any team member may withdraw from the program at any time, for any reason, by giving written notification to the Coordinator.
- E. Training and Meetings
1. Team members shall be required to complete initial Peer Support Training.
 2. Team members shall be required to attend quarterly training.
 3. Advisory Group members shall also be required to attend monthly meetings in person or via web-conferencing.
- F. Peer Support Responsibilities.
1. Employee initiated contacts: The team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to all Division employees. Any employee who desires to speak with a team member about a critical incident or other peer support situation may communicate directly with a team member in person, by phone or email.
 2. In-person event response: The Coordinator will initiate and coordinate an in-person response by members of the team to any of the following events:
 - a. Death or serious injury of a juvenile in care or who has received services through the Division.
 - b. Serious injury or death of a coworker.
 - c. Any incident or event in which an employee requests in-person support through their APD.
 - d. The facility/program APD shall contact the Coordinator to inform them of the event as soon as they become aware of any of the above events. In the event that the Team Coordinator is not immediately available, contact will be made with a Program Director overseeing the EPSP.
 3. Mandatory Communication Response: The Team Coordinator will initiate and coordinate team contact with affected employee(s) in response to any of the following events:
 - a. Serious injury or death of a coworker off the job including major illness, or disability.
 - b. Serious injury, illness or death of an employee's family member.
 - c. Any situation in which an employee requests contact through his or her APD on behalf of themselves or another employee.
 4. The facility/program APD shall contact the Program Coordinator to inform them of the event as soon as they are aware of any of the above events. Should the Program

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Coordinator not be available, contact shall be made with the supporting Program Director.

H. Peer Support during Investigations

1. Peer support services are available to employees under investigation in order to attend to their personal wellbeing.
2. Peer support team members will not give advice, council or interfere with ongoing investigations; nor will they take an active role in the investigation.
3. Peer support team members may support the involved employee during this process.
4. If an employee is the subject of an investigation, the standard limits of confidentiality will still apply to team members.
5. Peer support services and follow-up is provided at the involved employee's discretion and can be waived or terminated at any time the involved employee wishes.

I. Pay and Compensation

1. Members of the team who respond to an incident, debriefing, training class or meeting where they would normally be off duty will be allowed to accrue overtime, comp time or excess leave at any given time.
2. Team members who receive a peer support call while on duty will need to coordinate with their supervisor if coverage is needed while they handle the call. Team members will not receive overtime, comp time or excess hours compensation in these circumstances.
3. Team members shall notify a Coordinator and Supervisor/APD in writing within 24 hours, documenting any overtime, comp time or excess hours accrued while performing team activities.

V. Continuous Renewal

This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. This policy may be reviewed before that time, to reflect substantive change. This policy has been reviewed by the Division of Juvenile Justice Services Executive Management Team, and is approved upon the signature of the Director.



Brett M. Peterson, Director
Division of Juvenile Justice Services

9/11/2020

Date