

GENERAL ORDER

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

I. POLICY

A. PURPOSE/ PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. RESOURCE. It is the policy of the San Francisco Police Department to establish a Peer Support Program as a voluntary and confidential resource for all Department employees and their families. The purpose of the program is to provide support and assistance for personal problems before they become acute.
2. REFERRALS. Members of the Peer Support Program 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 or their families.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE. The Peer Support Program is a component of the Department's Employee Assistance Program.

C. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

1. INITIATION. Participation in the Peer Support Program is voluntary and must be initiated by the person seeking the support. There will be no mandatory referrals of employees, nor will peer support members be directed to initiate contact, except as specified in Department General Order 11.11, Evaluation and Rehabilitation Program.
2. SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE. If a support member determines that an employee requires specialized assistance, he/she must obtain the employee's approval to discuss the situation with a member of the Employee Assistance Program, the Stress Unit, or an outside professional.

D. INFORMATION

1. CONFIDENTIALITY. The peer support member shall maintain confidentiality and not discuss any information developed in support sessions.
2. EXCEPTIONS. The peer support member shall advise the employee that confidentiality will be strictly maintained except in these instances:
 - a. When the information must be revealed by law, such as a case of child abuse or felony criminal conduct.

- b. When a peer support member gathers information in connection with his/her duty assignment at the time of the incident (e.g., when a peer support member who is a supervisor or any person that is required by Department policy or procedure to investigate, or when ordered by a superior). Unless the peer support member is directly involved in or is a witness to an incident under investigation by the Management Control Division, no information developed in the support session can be used in any future disciplinary proceedings.
 - c. When there is reason to believe that the employee intends to seriously injure himself or another person. In the case of threatened serious injury, reasonable efforts shall be made to warn the intended victim(s).
 - d. When due to substance abuse the employee is a clear and immediate danger to self, citizens or fellow employees.
 - e. In all the cases above, an appropriate supervisor shall be notified.
- E. DUTIES OF SUPERIORS. Supervisors who are peer support members cannot abdicate their supervisory responsibilities when on duty and confronted with misconduct or disciplinary problems. After taking necessary action in these circumstances, supervisors may make referrals to the Stress Unit, other segments of the Employee Assistance Program or other appropriate agencies.
- F. WATCH REPORT/DETAILS. When an off-duty peer support member is needed to assist an employee in an extended crisis, both may request to be detailed to the Employee Assistance Program as needed. Such details are to be requested through the member's Commanding Officer, who shall:
- 1. Obtain approval from the peer support member's Deputy Chief;
 - 2. Notify the peer support members station or unit.
 - 3. Notify the Officer in charge of the Behavioral Science Unit.

Reference

DGO 8.04, Critical Incident Response Team

DGO 11.09, Employee Assistance Program/Stress Unit

DGO 11.11, Evaluation and Rehabilitation Program