
Employee Assistance Program and Peer Support Procedure

1036.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this procedure is to instruct members in the use of the employee assistance program (EAP) and peer support programs.

1036.2 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

The village offers its members and their families access to an EAP to help discuss and cope with stress experienced from both personal and professional experiences.

The Village of Grafton contracts with Aurora Health Care to provide EAP services. Up to three (3) confidential consultations per service are provided by experienced professionals to determine a member's or family member's specific needs and recommend the most appropriate services. These consultations may be conducted face-to-face or by telephone, depending on the situation and your preference.

The services provided by the Aurora EAP program are:

- (a) Childcare resource and referral
- (b) Elder care resource and referral
- (c) Legal consultation
- (d) Property or real estate matters
- (e) Mediation services
- (f) Adoption information services
- (g) Financial consultation
- (h) Alcohol and/or Drug abuse
- (i) Suicide prevention
- (j) Stress and anger management
- (k) Marriage counseling
- (l) Domestic violence
- (m) Wellness Coaching

Access to these services can be done by phone, 1-800-236-3231, or web site <http://www.aah.org/eap>

In addition to being offered three (3) confidential consultations for services mentioned above, all sworn department members we be required to participate in an annual wellness check with an experienced professional. The wellness check appointment will be scheduled, on duty time, with

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an experienced professional selected by the EAP who has expertise in working with emergency services personnel.

The village's human resources department can also be called for more information on the program.

1036.3 PEER SUPPORT

To help change the belief that seeking help is a sign of weakness rather than a strength, the department offers its members and families trained peer support options as an outlet to discuss and cope with stress experienced as a result of critical incidents and stress caused by both personal and professional experiences. It is OK not to be OK. Contacting a peer may be more comfortable to members due to the perceived stigma associated with visiting a licensed professional.

Peer support groups offers members trained people from within the department, or from other county law enforcement agencies, that will listen, assess and when necessary, refer professional assistance to employees and their family.

1036.3.1 GRAFTON POLICE DEPARTMENT PEER SUPPORT

The department has volunteer members who are trained to provide peer support. Members can confidentially contact the peer support group for any assistance needs they may have. The department peer support team can be contacted, in-person, by the internal voicemail phone system by dialing voicemail box #857 or by sending an email to peersupport@village.grafton.wi.us

Messages left at these contact methods are only accessible to members of the peer support team.

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to the success of the peer support program. All support provided by the peer support team is bound by strict confidentiality terms and agreements of the members on the peer support team. A breach of the confidentiality agreement from a member of the peer support team is grounds for dismissal from the team.

1036.3.2 OZAUKEE COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEF (CID) & PEER SUPPORT TEAM

Ozaukee County law enforcement agencies have a team of trained personnel who provide current and retired employees of Ozaukee County Law Enforcement agencies and their families with a voluntary and confidential outlet to discuss and cope with stress experienced as a result of critical incidents and stress caused by both personal and professional experiences.

[See attachment: OZ CO Peer Support MOU 2021.1.pdf](#)

Attachments

OZ CO Peer Support MOU 2021.1.pdf

**OZAUKEE COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL
CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEF (CID) & PEER SUPPORT TEAM
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between**

Cedarburg Police Department
Grafton Police Department
Ozaukee County Sheriff's Office
Saukville Police Department

Mequon Police Department
Port Washington Police Department
Thiensville Police Department

Overview

Purpose: To provide current and retired employees of Ozaukee County Law Enforcement Agencies and their families with a voluntary and confidential outlet to discuss and cope with stress experienced as a result of critical incidents and cumulative stress caused by both personal and professional experiences. To provide a core group of personnel who are trained to **listen, assess**, and when necessary, **refer** professional assistance to employees and their family members. To change the belief that seeking help is a sign of weakness rather than a strength. To normalize a professional culture in which employees and their families seek peer support and/or psychological support as needed and to improve the career-long psychological wellness for our employees and their families.

Duties and Responsibilities

Peer Support/CID Coordinator (PSC)

The Ozaukee County Undersheriff will be the team coordinator and administrative contact for the Peer Support Team Leader(s) or their designee. The PSC has been given authority by the Ozaukee County Sheriff to make decisions regarding peer support policy, procedure and response as needed during a critical incident to not add additional responsibilities to incident command and allow incident command to solely focus on the critical incident. The PSC will also serve as a liaison between CID/Peer Support and administration as needed. Duties include:

- Designate responsibility of paging out CID team through I am Responding
- Ensuring all employees are aware of the team through presentations, written handouts at time of hire and annually thereafter, working with all County Agency Training Officers to incorporate information about peer support in the training program and internal posting of information.
- Coordinating training of Peer Support and CID, documenting, and maintaining all training records pertinent to such training – providing copies of such to the appropriate agency.

- Maintaining a record of EAP/Mental Health services available to employees and disseminating that information to all employees at time of hire and annually.

CID/Peer Support Team Leader(s)

The CID/Peer Support Team Leader(s) act as the primary liaison between the peer supporters, outside resource contacts and participating agencies. The Team Leader(s) is responsible for overseeing the team to include assigning and supervising CID/Peer Supporters in the performance of their duties associated with the support and referral team. Major duties of the team leader include:

- General supervision of the team.
- Acting as the liaison for peer support referrals and being responsible for assigning, if needed, peer supporters to assist employees
- Assigning CID members to critical incidents and coordinating their response.
- Serving as a member of the Peer Support Team.
- Coordinating the recruitment and screening of the CID & Peer Support applicants.
- Maintaining only statistical data of reported contacts by peers and peer supporters.
- Maintaining when CID is dispatched and who responded.
- Preparing and disseminating to all agency employees and partner agency members a current referral list of professional counseling services.
- Offering guidance and assistance to peer supporters when problems or questions arise.
- Coordinating follow-up response of peer supporters when referrals are made for outside services.

Peer Support/CID Team Member

The Peer Support/CID Team Member provides support and assistance to employees in times of stress and crisis. Peer supporters are specifically trained colleagues that should not attempt to counsel individuals. Peer supporters should refer cases that require professional intervention to the appropriate professionals. The peer supporter is not exempt from federal, state, local laws, or the rules and regulations of their employing agency. Peer supporter responsibilities are as follows:

- Convey trust, anonymity and assure confidentiality within guidelines of policy to employees who seek assistance from the Peer Support/CID Team.
- Provide assistance and support.
- Assist the employee by referring him/her to the appropriate outside resource when appropriate.
- Be available to the individual for additional follow-up support, if needed.
- Maintain contact with the Team Leader(s) regarding team activities and submit all Data Utilization Forms to the Peer Support/CID Team Leader(s) as incidents arise.
- Contact injured, retired, or new employees as assigned.

- Contact family members of employees as assigned.
- The Peer Support/CID Team Members agree to be contacted and, if practical, respond at any hour.
- When necessary, contact the Peer Support/CID Team Leader(s) for assistance and guidance.
- Notify the Team Coordinator if they wish to voluntarily withdraw from the team.
- Notify the Team Leader(s) should a conflict of interest arise: *Another Peer Supporter shall be assigned when there is a potential for ANY conflict of interest.*

Employee Critical Incident Notification

In the event of a Line of Duty Death, Officer Involved Shooting or Death (OIS/OID) and/or the critical injury of an employee the Peer Support/CID Team Leader(s) will appoint a peer supporter from the affected county agency who will notify all members of the affected county agency that were not directly involved or impacted by the critical incident. The Team Leader(s) will brief the peer supporter on information obtained from Incident Command. The Peer supporter will be responsible for notifying all agency employees that were not directly involved or impacted by the critical incident.

The purpose of this notification is to provide factual information to employees in order to prevent the circulation of false information and speculation as to events. The peer supporter and all members of the involved agency will be given a verbal, confidential directive and directed to not contact other employees, release any information or engage in the use of social media regarding the critical incident. The purpose of this is to prevent the inadvertent notification of the affected employee's family. Once notification has been made, Incident Command will direct the involved agency's dispatch center to advise employees via I am Responding or another notification system.

Peer Support/CID Team Criteria & Selection Process

Through a selection process, a sufficient number of interested employees shall be selected to perform the duties as Peer Supporters.

Criteria for Peer Support/CID Applicants

- Employees with one or more continuous years of employment
- Not currently on disciplinary action
- Non-probationary
- Successfully complete the selection process

Selection Process:

- **Letter of Interest:** When the Peer Support/CID Team Leader or participating Ozaukee County Agency determines a need for new Peer Supporter(s) or CID members, the Peer Support/CID Team Coordinator will be responsible for distributing a notice to all participating agencies. Interested employees should submit a Letter of Interest to the Peer Support/CID Team Coordinator. Employees may also recommend a peer by submitting the name of the peer to the Peer Support Team Coordinator via a letter describing the reason for the recommendation. ***Participation in the Peer Support Team is voluntary.***
- **Consideration for selection:** The Peer Support Team Coordinator, Leader(s) and Peer Support Team shall review the CID/Peer Support Team Letters of Interest and make contact with any interested or recommended employees for consideration. Additional criteria to be considered may include:
 - Previous education and training
 - Resolved prior traumatic experiences
 - Desirable personal qualities, such as maturity, sound judgment, honesty, good interpersonal/communication skills, confidentiality, and personal and professional credibility
 - Background information provided from specific agency
- **Interview:** CID/Peer Support Team candidates will be scheduled for an interview. The interview board shall include but not be limited to the CID/Peer Support Team Coordinator, CID/Peer Support Team Leader(s), CID/Peer Support Team member and at least one law enforcement agency employee who is not on the CID/Peer Support Team. The interview board recommendations will be submitted to the Ozaukee County Sheriff for final approval.
- **Training:** the approved CID/Peer Support Team candidates must successfully complete approved training.
- **Dismissal from team:**
 - Conduct inconsistent with team policies, objectives and training will result in dismissal.
 - Possible criteria for dismissal include but are not limited to the following: breach of confidentiality, failure to attend training, failure to attend meetings, failure to follow-up on referrals, or loss of one's good standing with the department.

Peer Support Training

The CID/Peer Support Team Coordinator or designee will coordinate the CID/Peer Support Team training. The major emphasis will focus on skill development for conducting peer

assistance and debriefing. The basic tools to provide assistance are to LISTEN, ASSESS, REFER, FOLLOW-UP.

- The main areas to be covered in training include: Effective listening and problem solving skills, assessment skills, referral and follow-up management skills, critical incident stress, debriefing and diffusing techniques. Other introductory and continuing training for CID/Peer Supporters should include the following topics:
 - Confidentiality
 - Role conflict
 - Limits and liability
 - Ethical issues
 - Communication facilitation and listening skills
 - Nonverbal communication
 - Problem assessment
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Stress management
 - Burn-out
 - Grief management
 - Domestic violence
 - Suicide assessment
 - Crisis management
 - Trauma intervention
 - Alcohol and substance abuse
 - When to seek mental health consultation and referral information
 - PTSD
 - Relationship termination (death, divorce, etc.)

Confidentiality

The acceptance and success of the CID/Peer Support Team will be determined, in part, by observance of confidentiality. It is imperative that each CID/Peer Supporter maintain strict confidentiality of all information learned about an individual within the guidelines of this team. The CID/Peer Support Team and its participants are not subject to the exemptions of privileged communications as defined in Wisconsin State Statute, Chapter 905 (*privilege generally applicable to physicians, clergy, attorneys, etc.*). The policy of the CID/Peer Support Team is to maintain confidentiality; however, communication between the CID/peer support personnel and a person is considered confidential except for matters that involve the following:

- A substantial/imminent danger to self or others
- In cases where law, mandatory reporter or agency policy requires divulgence
- Where divulgence is requested by the peer

CID/Peer Support Team members will not be required to divulge confidential information even if ordered to do so unless the nature of the information falls within one of the confidentiality exceptions listed above. If a CID/Peer Support Team member is found to be in violation of the confidentiality rules, they will be removed from the team and be subject to potential disciplinary action by their agency.

A general principle for peer supporters to follow is to inform the person, prior to discussion, what the limitations and exceptions are regarding the information revealed. In those cases where a concern or a question regarding confidentiality arises, the peer supporter must immediately contact the CID/Peer Support Team Coordinator who will take appropriate action.

The only information documented is the anonymous statistical information obtained via use of the Peer Support Data Utilization Form.

Peer Support Referral Processes

All members of the participating law enforcement agencies are encouraged to contact a member of the CID/Peer Support Team Coordinator, leader(s) or member when he/she becomes aware of an individual who is in need of assistance. Timely notification enables the involved employee to recognize and resolve any unfavorable reactions to an event or stressor. Referrals may occur as follows:

- An employee may personally contact any peer supporter, or the Peer Support Team Leader for referral to professional counseling thru EAP, a chaplain or a peer supporter.
- Any employee aware of another employee who may be in need of assistance can initiate a referral by contacting the Peer Support Team Leader(s) to assign a peer supporter.
- Supervisory personnel have the authority and responsibility to recommend a peer supporter to an employee when appropriate and after any stressful, critical or traumatic events by notifying the CID/Peer Support Team Leader(s). *It must be understood that this support is voluntary and that an employee cannot be ordered to participate.*
- Referrals should never be used as a disciplinary sanction.
- A family member or associate of the employee may make a referral.
- CID/Peer Support does not have to occur within the employee's work group (shift) and may cross agency lines.

❖ Examples of traumatic or critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- Employee involved in a use of deadly force incident
- Assault on an employee
- Hostage situations
- Injury, illness or death of an employee or a family member of an employee
- Assisting family members with an employee's death

- Catastrophic incidents such as airplane crash, flood, fatal accidents, etc.
- Investigations involving death, such as S.I.D.S
- Substance Abuse
- Marital, relationship, health, family, financial, employment, or other personal problems

Wellness of CID/Peer Support Team

- The CID/Peer Support Team will be assigned a chaplain whose responsibility will be serving as a resource and providing counseling and support to the CID/Peer Support Team.
- If a CID/Peer Support Team member for personal reasons or due to secondary trauma is no longer able to provide meaningful support, the CID/Peer Support Team member shall request a 6-month leave of absence from the team, which will be granted by the CID/Peer Support Team Coordinator. At the end of the leave of absence, a meeting will take place between the CID/Peer Support Team Coordinator, Leader(s), Chaplain and the CID/Peer Support Team member to discuss and make a determination on continued involvement or resignation from the team.
- After a term of three (3) years of service on the team, the CID/Peer Support Team Leader(s) and CID/Peer Supporter will meet to discuss continued participation with a focus on preventing burnout/secondary trauma and retention of meaningful team member participation.

Assessing Effectiveness of CID & Peer Support

- One year after program implementation an anonymous survey will be conducted at all participating agencies to assess program awareness, utilization and areas of concern.
- Subsequently surveys will be conducted every two years.
- Survey results and modifications will be discussed and decided on by all Peer Support Team members at the annual meeting.

CID/Peer Support Compensation

- Training will be compensated per each law enforcement agency's own policy.
- CID/Peer Support Team members agree their service is voluntary and compensation for time involved is left to each law enforcement agency's discretion.
- CID/Peer Support Team members agree to, whenever possible, conduct Peer Support contacts during their normal shift but understand that there will be instances when contacts will be made outside of working hours.

This agreement will expire on Nov 1, 2022, but shall automatically renew according to these terms for successive one-year periods unless any party gives all others not less than 60 days advance notice. Any party may cancel this agreement at any time, if a 30-day written notice is provided to the other party.

By: Cedarburg Police Department

By: Mequon Police Department

By: Grafton Police Department

By: Port Washington Police Department

By: Ozaukee County Sheriff's Office

By: Thiensville Police Department

By: Saukville Police Department