



ACTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P: Administration		
POLICY & PROCEDURE # 4.32	DATE OF ISSUE: 6/12/2024	EFFECTIVE DATE: 6/12/2024
SUBJECT: PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM	ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief James Cogan	
REFERENCE(S): Massachusetts Police Accreditation Comission: None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDS <input type="checkbox"/> RESCINDS	

I. PURPOSE

The Peer Support Team is dedicated to supporting first responders by providing peer-led assistance and information on mental health, well-being, and available resources. The Peer Support Team prioritizes confidentiality and trust while striving to foster connections among peers, reduce stigma, promote help-seeking behavior, and encourage a resilience-focused approach to work and personal life.

II. POLICY

This policy establishes procedures for providing personnel and their families with peer support resources and strategies. The goal is to improve and maintain their mental health and well-being.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. The Peer Support Team takes a proactive approach to providing mental health support, unlike the Critical Incident Stress Management (*CISM*) Team, which primarily responds reactively to critical incidents.
- B. If a member seeks Peer Support Services, a trained Peer Support Team member will offer direct assistance. All discussions between the member seeking help and the Peer Support member will be kept confidential, including any use of necessary resources. However, the Peer Support Team members are also mandated reporters. If there are immediate concerns about an individual's health, well-being, or safety, or the safety of others, such as indications of potential suicidal or homicidal behavior, these concerns will be escalated beyond the Peer Support Team and reported to the appropriate authorities.

- C. The Peer Support Team is directed by the Peer Support Coordinator(s) for the Acton Police Department and the Acton Fire Department. The updated contact list for the Peer Support Team members can be found in the folder labeled “Peer Support Program” on the P drive on any Department computer.
- D. The Peer Support Team will provide regular check-ins with members that they have assisted, to ensure that the individual has access to continuity of mental health care. This check-in will be completed by the support member who originally assisted the member.
- E. If a member requires immediate in-patient care at a facility and requests it, the Peer Support Team will inform the Chief of the Department that the member will be absent for a period determined by their stay at the facility. However, no specific details will be disclosed.
- F. The Peer Support Team will liaise with in-patient facility coordinators to ensure the member receives the necessary resources.
- G. Members of the Peer Support Team must agree to, follow, and sign policy documents that outline the team's protocols and their commitment to maintaining the confidentiality of support services rendered.
- H. The Peer Support Team Coordinator(s) will serve as intermediaries between team members and the administration, handling any required arrangements for time off to ensure that members receive appropriate treatment.

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

History: NONE