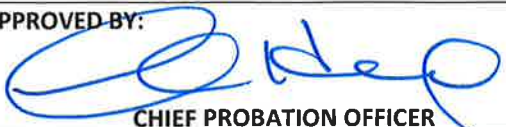


<p align="center"><b>SOLANO COUNTY CALIFORNIA PROBATION DEPARTMENT</b></p>	<p><b>POLICY NUMBER:</b> 517</p>	<p><b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> December 24, 2018</p>
	<p><b>SUPERSEDES:</b> N/A</p>	
<p><b>APPROVED BY:</b>  <b>CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER</b></p>	<p><b>TITLE:</b> <b>PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM</b></p>	

1. **Policy**

The Solano County Probation Department recognizes that staff may be exposed to stressful and/or traumatic incidents in their personal lives or at work. Staff may experience significant stress related symptoms that may adversely affect their personal well-being and/or ability to perform their job. The purpose of this voluntary program is to provide a peer support system for staff, enabling them to better manage symptoms of stress resulting from a personal or professional crisis. Peer Support is an optional adjunct to professional medical, psychological, spiritual, and other referral services. It is not a replacement for professional counseling or any other mental health services including the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The assistance is confidential, providing it does not violate any law or policy/procedure that may result in an administrative investigation.

2. **Team Member Selection**

The Peer Support Team will be selected for participation in the Peer Support Program via the following criteria:

- A. A memo will announce the formation of a Peer Support Team comprised of sworn and non-sworn personnel representing a variety of staff groups in the organization. Nominations will be sought to identify specific individuals who are already seen as sources of support for others in the workplace. All nomination submissions will be kept confidential.
- B. Nominees must express a desire to be a member of the Peer Support Program with a minimum commitment of three years, on a voluntary basis.
- C. Must be a full-time paid staff of the Solano County Probation Department who has successfully completed their initial probationary period.
- D. Not currently the subject of an internal investigation or suffering from serious personal problems or psychological stress.
- E. Must consistently display solid judgement and have strong interpersonal communication skills.
- F. Nominee's Supervisor and Manager will be contacted by the Peer Support Coordinator to obtain approval prior to the nominee being selected.

Team members will be chosen from those nominated by peers after completing the selection process.

3. **Peer Support Coordinator**

The Peer Support Coordinator will be appointed by the Chief Probation Officer and shall:

- A. Manage, maintain, and coordinate the program. They will act as a liaison between Peer Support Members, outside resource persons and the Department.

- B. Authorize overtime as necessary with Manager approval.
- C. Supervise and coordinate Peer Support Members' applicants.
- D. Coordinate training of Peer Support Members.
- E. Oversee maintenance of statistical data of reported contacts by Peer Support Members and review monthly.
- F. Offer guidance to Peer Support Members when problems occur.
- G. Assist in coordinating and conducting defusing and demobilization interventions, assess the need for follow-up referrals, and assist in teaching stress management. Peer Support Members shall never self-deploy without direction from the Peer Support Coordinator.

4. **Peer Support Team Member**

- A. Provide short-term supportive assistance and/or referral for staff involved in the Peer Support Program; within the scope of their ability, knowledge, and training.
- B. Provide feedback, clarify issues, and assist staff in identifying options for problem resolution.
- C. Provide support and guidance, but it is the staff's responsibility to make the problem-solving decision.
- D. Assist staff by referring them to the appropriate outside resource when necessary.
- E. Be available for additional follow-up support.
- F. Maintain contact with the Peer Support Coordinator regarding program activities.
- G. Contact Peer Support Coordinator as soon as possible after a request for an emergency response after normal business hours is received.
- H. Attend all required training and quarterly meetings.
- I. Peer Support Team Members who miss two consecutive training sessions will be placed on an inactive status until their training deficiency is rectified and may be subject to being removed from the team.
- J. Peer Support Team Members may be removed for cause by the Peer Support Coordinator and at the discretion of the Chief Probation Officer. A breach of confidentiality by Peer Support Member, except as mandated, shall be cause for immediate removal from the Peer Support Program.
- K. Participation as a Peer Support Team Member is voluntary. Any conduct deemed unbecoming to a Peer Support Team Member or non-compliance with this policy can result in dismissal from the Peer Support Team.
- L. A Peer Support Team Member may become temporarily inactive for any personal or professional reason by notifying the Peer Support Coordinator.
- M. If a Peer Support Team Member believes that a staff needs to be referred for professional services, they will contact the Peer Support Coordinator immediately. The Solano County Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will continue to be a resource for all staff.

5. **Confidentiality**

One of the most important responsibilities of the Peer Support Team is the promotion of trust, anonymity, and confidentiality for staff who seek assistance from Peer Support Team Members. Communication between a Peer Support Team Member and a staff is considered "confidential" by the Department except for matters that involve violations of the law or breach of Department or County policy that may result in an administrative investigation. Members of the Peer Support Team shall operate under the following guidelines:

- A. It shall be mandatory that Peer Support Team Members maintain strict confidentiality in matters discussed in debriefings, defusings, meetings, and trainings. Any statement or discussion with Peer Support Team Members while acting in their Peer Support Team role shall remain confidential with the exception of the below.
- B. Types of information that are not protected by confidentiality include:
  - 1. Information regarding child, spouse, or elder abuse
  - 2. Belief that staff is a danger to self or others
  - 3. Admission of criminal conduct
  - 4. Witness to a crime
  - 5. Information disclosed that would require investigation to include Administrative investigation, per Department policy.
- C. If any of the above events occur, as outlined in subdivision (B), the Peer Support Team Member will contact the Peer Support Coordinator immediately. Peer Supporters do not have complete confidentiality, such as in the attorney-client or physician-patient relationship.
- D. The Peer Support Team is not an investigative unit for the Department; therefore, it will not be the policy of the Department to question Peer Support Team Members, regarding the content of such discussions, except as required by law.

6. **Record Keeping**

Record keeping will be for the utilization of statistical information only. Names or identification numbers of staff will not be used. Peer Support Team Members shall keep a monthly tally of the number of contacts and hours involved in providing peer assistance. No identifying information regarding peer contact or group debriefing services will be collected. If any time is recorded, the Peer Support Team Member will submit the summary to their supervisor and the Peer Support Coordinator by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

7. **Program Process**

A list of the names and contact telephone numbers of the Peer Support Team Members will be maintained by the Peer Support Coordinator, and made available to all staff on the internal website (NAS). Any staff in need of peer assistance may select the Peer Support Team Member of their choice.

In the event a critical incident occurs, the supervisor of the affected staff(s) should notify the Peer Support Coordinator as soon as possible. The Peer Support Coordinator and Mental Health Professional (EAP or other) will confer with the supervisor and assess whether the incident warrants the need for a formal group crisis intervention.

Critical incident defusing and debriefing can include sworn and non-sworn personnel directly involved in the incident. Active participation in the discussion is not a requirement, but attendance is required. Anyone not directly involved in the incident, may not attend the

defusing or debriefing. Attendance of staff is not mandatory, but Peer Support Members will be in attendance.

8. **Training**

The Peer Support Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the training status of Peer Support Team Members. Peer Support Team Members must attend the Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support training, and the Group Crisis Intervention training before they can participate in providing peer assistance. Other recommended trainings including: Advanced Group Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention.

Peer Support Team Members must attend quarterly trainings and/or meetings.

9. **Compensation**

Peer Support Team Members must understand that being a member is voluntary. In most cases, peer assistance should take on a form of an on-duty meeting of a relatively short duration. Prolonged peer assistance, such as debriefings and defusings, should be scheduled on-duty whenever possible. If necessary and approved, Peer Support Team Members will be compensated for overtime in accordance with the staff's MOU.

10. **Exceptions** Any exceptions to the provisions set forth in this Policy shall require prior written approval from the Chief Probation Officer.