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**DAYTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER
STRESS COUNSELING**



RICHARD S. BIEHL - DIRECTOR AND CHIEF OF POLICE

Rev. 5/16

POLICY STATEMENT

Law enforcement agencies nationally are directing professional efforts and resources toward developing services and practical procedures to deal with personal and job-related stress. Police employees are subject to work-related stresses encountered in other occupations and to diverse pressures and psychological trauma unique to policing. Vital to the health of any police organization is the provision of resources necessary to help police employees deal with stress-related problems before such problems become unmanageable or threaten either the employee's public or private life. When on-duty or off-duty events significantly impact an employee's performance, the Department has an obligation to both the employee and the public to ensure that the employee receives appropriate counseling to address the performance issues.

The Dayton Police Department recognizes the need for counseling programs and has established procedural guidelines to ensure consistency for providing stress care options to troubled employees and employees involved in certain traumatic events on duty. The concept of **Peer Support** is an earnest effort on the part of selected police volunteers to provide support and assistance needed to avoid escalation of problems prior to risking loss of job, family or other vital life sources.

I. VOLUNTARY STRESS COUNSELING SERVICES

- A. The City of Dayton sponsors and supports counseling services through various providers of stress counseling services. Employees who need assistance in identifying or contacting a counseling service provided by the city should contact a Peer Support person.
- B. A variety of counseling resources are available to employees through for-profit health care providers, not-for-profit associations such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Suicide Prevention, various social service agencies and through members of the clergy. Employees who need assistance in determining the appropriate resource to assist in dealing with stress-related problems should consult with their physician, clergyman or any Peer Support person for guidance in finding or selecting counseling services.
- C. Voluntary counseling is encouraged when an employee recognizes a personal or family need.
 - 1. The Department suggests and encourages personnel to seek counseling on personal time during off-duty hours when the need becomes apparent.
 - 2. Voluntary counseling, initiated by the employee on the employee's personal time, is kept strictly confidential. No information will be shared with the employer or other members of the department.
- D. The City of Dayton also maintains an Employee Assistance Program to provide evaluation and treatment for various medical, emotional or social problems.
- E. Employees who use sick leave for stress related problems are subject to the provisions of the Sick Leave Policy.

II. PERFORMANCE COUNSELING

- A. Performance counseling is counseling which is required by the department due to the employee's involvement in certain duty-related events, or when an employee's behavior on or off duty exhibits symptoms of stress-related illness.
- B. At least one counseling session will be required whenever an employee is involved in an incident where the employee's actions were the proximate cause of death of another person.



C. When an employee's behavior exhibits symptoms of stress-related illness, a police supervisor, after consultation with the employee's Watch/Bureau Commander and Division Commander, may require the employee to attend professional counseling sessions with a City-sponsored service provider.

- If the counseling is agreed upon, the Watch/Bureau Commander will place the employee on restricted duty or relieve the employee from duty, depending on severity of circumstances, until results are received from the first session.

If the employee is unable to return to full duty, the Chief, or their designee, will determine the employee's duty or leave status depending on the medical limitations imposed by the doctor, the circumstances that necessitated counseling and restricted duty opportunities available within the Department.

- When an employee is placed on any administrative leave, the Division Commander must also notify Human Resources.

D. Watch/Bureau Commander's Responsibilities (Re: Performance Counseling)

1. Schedule an initial appointment to take place within 48 hours for the officer with a City sponsored service provider. In the event an officer involved in a traumatic episode chooses a different program for subsequent counseling, obtain the name of the facility and counselor so that contact can be made.
2. Provide the counselor with the employee's name, assignment, whether the employee appears receptive to the counseling and the circumstances that necessitate the counseling.
3. Provide the counselor with your name, assignment and work number as well as the name, assignment and work number of the officer's immediate supervisor.
4. Obtain general feedback information, in writing, relating to job performance to determine the officer's fitness for full duty, restricted duty, continued counseling in conjunction with a return to duty or continued leave with counseling.
 - a. If more specific information is needed to determine job fitness, a written waiver signed by the employee must be obtained beforehand.
 - b. If the officer requires additional counseling but is certified to return to work, the officer is permitted to attend the counseling sessions during duty hours.
 - c. If the officer requires additional counseling and is not certified to work full or restricted duty after one session, the Commander will ensure the employee's leave status is entered into KRONOS if a change occurs.

E. Expectations of Service Provider (RE: Performance Counseling)

1. Maintain the confidentiality of the specificity of the counseling session.
2. Provide a prognosis for the employee's fitness for return to full duty.
3. Report the officer's duty capability - full duty, restricted duty, continued leave - and provide a recommendation for the type of duty the employee is most suitable to perform.
4. Provide a general written statement or Certification Form on request of the officer, supervisor, or commander.
5. Make the appropriate referral if the problem is related to substance abuse.

III. PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

A. The Peer Support program is staffed exclusively by Dayton Police officers and selected civilian employees.



1. Application to be a Peer Support person may be made by Special Report to the Supervisor of Police Training, for forwarding to the Coordinator of Peer Support.
 2. Selections are made by review of applications from officers interested in the program. The Chief of Police shall make final approval of selections.
 3. All support personnel receive training in basic and proper counseling techniques, support techniques and referral resources and may actually be called upon to assist in training because of successful resolution of conflict situation(s).
 4. Once a Peer Support person expresses a commitment to the program, their name and phone number will be posted in all Divisions and Bureaus, and located on the "P" drive under the Peer Support List folder. Peer Support names and phone numbers are posted for the benefit of police officers and not the general public.
- B. It is essential to the continued success of the program that STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY is maintained between the Peer Support person and the individual being assisted by the Peer Support person. Nothing discussed between these individuals, with the exception of revealed "criminal activity," will be divulged to any other Departmental source without written consent of the individual being assisted by the Peer Support person.
- C. This program is not intended to provide officers who may have violated the law with a method of relieving themselves of criminal liability, nor is it to be construed that a penitent/confessor relationship exists in peer support any time a crime is revealed. Officers, who may be involved in violations of law, including violations of their oath of office, are encouraged to seek professional assistance.
- D. Individual participation in the program is strictly voluntary. Referrals made to the program by any concerned person will prompt a discreet and tactful inquiry by a Peer Support team member into the problem, but participation is voluntary.
- E. Neither the Coordinator of the program, nor any peer support person, will discuss or disclose the subject of any peer support contact, nor will any record of such contacts be made available for use in administrative or disciplinary proceedings.
- F. The program Coordinator may provide periodic support group training sessions as needed.
- G. Peer Support person will also assist employees in contacting an appropriate member of the clergy to provide counseling and/or referral services to employees and their families who find it appropriate to seek counseling from a member of the clergy. Employees may also contact the F.O.P. Chaplain for such assistance.