

	ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT 151 Douglas Avenue Elgin, Illinois 60120	
Effective Date: 05/30/18	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	Revised Date: 11/06/19
Chief of Police: 	Peer Support/Healthy Minds Program, 16.7	
Cross Reference: Operation Shattered Stars Training & Resource Manual	Policy Sections: 16.7.1 Program Objectives 16.7.2 Peer Support Advisory Committee Member Responsibilities 16.7.3 Peer Support Selection Process 16.7.4 Peer Support Program Training 16.7.5 Confidentiality 16.7.6 Discipline and Internal Investigations 16.7.7 Voluntary and Involuntary Separation 16.7.8 Request Peer Support 16.7.9 Northern Illinois Critical Incident Stress Management Team (NICISMT) 16.7.10 Healthy Minds Program	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the department's peer support program and to outline the responsibilities of personnel who serve on the peer support advisory board.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Elgin Police Department to ensure the safety and well-being of all employees. Employees experiencing personal difficulties that impact their personal and/or professional lives are encouraged to secure quality professional and confidential assistance. Employees may seek professional counseling services independently, through the city's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or the Healthy Mind Program. To supplement professional counseling services, the police department provides all employees an opportunity to receive peer support through times of personal or professional crisis through the Peer Support Program. The Peer Support Program is also available to all retired employees.

Peer support is not a professional service regulated by the State of Illinois. Peer support does not claim to be or practice any regulated service. It is not a substitute for specialized services, but serves as a liaison between peers and needed professionals in complex cases. Peer supporters are trained to listen, refer and support. They serve as an extra resource to employees when needed.

DEFINITIONS

Peer Support Chairman: Lieutenant appointed by the chief of police to oversee the activities of the department's Peer Support Program.

Peer Support Program Coordinator: Sergeant appointed by the peer support chairman, with approval from the chief of police, to manage and direct the Peer Support Program.

Peer Support Advisory Committee: Consists of the chairman, program coordinator and current peer supporters. Collectively, committee members establish the procedures of the Peer Support Program, team membership, and the direction of the program with approval from the chief of police.

Peer Supporter: Employee (active or retired) or a department volunteer selected by the Peer Support Advisory Committee tasked with the role of responding to peer support requests, as soon as practical, on a voluntary basis.

Peer Support Counseling: A form of self-help offered by a peer supporter to assist an employee during a time of need.

PROCEDURES

16.7.1 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Peer Support Program is not meant to replace professional counseling services or the city's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The department recognizes that some employees are more comfortable seeking support from a trained law enforcement employee who has a grasp of the challenges associated with a career in law enforcement or prefers to confer with someone he/she knows or already trusts. Communication between the peer supporter and the requesting employee is confidential provided it does not violate any law or department policy. Refer to Section 16.7.5 to review additional information on confidentiality guidelines. The program objectives are, but not limited to:

- A. Provide support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to employees who request assistance.
- B. Promote trust, allow appropriate anonymity, and preserve confidentiality for persons using the Peer Support Program within the program guidelines.
- C. Develop peer supporters who can compassionately provide peer support, identify personal conflicts and provide guidance or referral to professional/alternate resources, as appropriate.
- D. Ensure peer supporters receive the appropriate training to effectively implement the program objectives.

16.7.2 PEER SUPPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the peer support advisory committee may serve in the role of peer supporter. The specific responsibilities of committee members are outlined below:

- A. The peer support chairman shall:
 - 1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Peer Support Program.
 - 2. Identify and/or develop available resources for employees seeking assistance.
 - 3. Coordinate training with the training officer.
 - 4. Ensure employees serving on the peer support advisory committee adhere to program guidelines and confidentiality rules.
 - 5. Receive feedback on any part of the program, process and delivery of support; this information shall be provided to advisory committee members, as appropriate.
 - 6. Confer with command staff to obtain approval on new peer supporters, as recommended by the peer support advisory committee.
 - 7. Collaborate with the peer support program coordinator on the above responsibilities and assist the coordinator, as needed.
- B. The peer support program coordinator shall:
 - 1. Assist the peer support chairman with the above listed responsibilities.
 - 2. Handle the daily activities of the program and the overall supervision of the program.

3. Delegate tasks to the peer support members and provide assistance as needed; ensure peer support members address situations in a timely manner and use resources appropriately.
 4. Coordinate and/or provide peer support training and maintain training records; ensure the training coordinator has access to training records.
 5. Review complaints, conflicts and issues; provide an appropriate resolution and consult with the peer support chairman, as appropriate.
- C. Peer supporters shall:
1. Respond to assigned peer support requests and work directly with the requesting employee to provide support and facilitate the appropriate resources.
 2. Follow program and training guidelines; adhere to the applicable laws and confidentiality rules.
 3. Successfully complete the required training as specified in Section 16.7.4.
 4. Remain available for additional follow-up support.
 5. Consult with the program coordinator or designee in the event there are questions pertaining to federal, state or local laws, or department policy.

16.7.3 PEER SUPPORT SELECTION PROCESS

- A. All employees who are interested in serving as a peer supporter must submit a letter of interest to the peer support chairman or peer support program coordinator.
- B. The peer support advisory committee will review the letters of interest and conduct applicant interviews. Recommendations will be forwarded to the chief of police for approval through the peer support chairman.
- C. Candidates must meet the following criteria:
 1. Demonstrate the ability to maintain confidentiality.
 2. Ability to be empathetic and compassionate.
 3. Possess interpersonal and communication skills.
 4. Self-motivated and ability to work independently.
 5. Possess time management skills to allow minimal impact on his/her normal job duties.

16.7.4 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM TRAINING

- A. The Peer Support Program adheres to the training requirements established by Operation Shattered Stars. Selected candidates must successfully pass the Operation Shattered Stars Peer Support 16 hour training program. Upon successful completion of this training, employees attain the status of a voluntary member of the Operation Shattered Stars Peer Support Team.
- B. There is a continuing education requirement for peer supporters. Annually, peer supporters must successfully complete authorized training to maintain peer support status. Operation Shattered Stars may have a clinical consultant or clinical support staff available to guide and supervise training.

- C. For more information on training and peer support guidelines, refer to the Operation Shattered Stars Peer Support Training and Resource Manual.

16.7.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. The acceptance and success of the Peer Support Program is dependent on the peer supporter's ability to maintain confidentiality. It is imperative that peer supporters and other committee members maintain strict confidentiality of all information surrounding an employee's situation within the guidelines of the Peer Support Program.
- B. Communication between the peer supporter and requesting employee is confidential, except for matters involving the following:
 - 1. Danger to self.
 - 2. Danger to others.
 - 3. Suspected child abuse.
 - 4. Suspected domestic violence.
 - 5. Suspected elderly abuse.
 - 6. Serious criminal offenses.
 - 7. Cases where the law requires divulgence.
- C. A general principle for the peer supporter is to inform the person prior to discussion what the limitations and exceptions are regarding the information revealed. In those cases where there is a concern or question about confidentiality, the peer supporter must contact the peer support team coordinator or designee.

16.7.6 DISCIPLINE AND INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

- A. There may be situations where the peer supporter is assisting a peer who is or becomes the subject of an internal investigation. The peer supporter shall follow the confidentiality guidelines of the Peer Support Program. Peer supporters shall not volunteer any information received in confidence; however, he/she shall not hamper or impede the investigation or attempt to act as a representative for the employee.
- B. The peer supporter's role in disciplinary situations is one of support and assisting the peer through the stress they may face during the disciplinary process. If peer supporters have any questions during these situations, they shall consult with the peer support program coordinator or designee.

16.7.7 VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION

- A. Peer supporters who wish to separate from the Peer Support Program are asked to submit their separation in writing to the peer support chairman or peer support program coordinator.
- B. Failure to fulfil the duties of a peer supporter, breach of confidentiality, or failure to adhere to Operation Shattered Stars guidelines, department policy and applicable laws may result in removal from the program and or discipline.

16.7.8 REQUEST PEER SUPPORT

- A. Peer support may be requested by:
 - 1. Calling 1-844-50-SUPPORT or going online to www.operationshatteredstars.org and requesting to be put in contact with a peer support team member outside of the Elgin Police Department.
 - 2. Reaching out to any peer support team member.
 - 3. Third party request – employees can request peer support for a co-worker by contacting a department peer support team member.
- B. The assigned peer supporter will make contact with the requesting person. He/she is authorized to use department facilities or an agreed upon outside location to meet. When the meeting is done on duty time, the peer supporter shall obtain permission from his/her supervisor, unless exigent circumstances exists. No names or personal identifiers will be given to the supervisor.
- C. Participation by the peer supporter and requesting person is voluntary; no overtime or compensatory time will be authorized during the performance of peer supporter duties unless authorized by the peer support chairman or administration.

16.7.9 NORTHERN ILLINOIS CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT TEAM (NICISMT)

- A. The Elgin Police Department is a participating member of NICISMT.
- B. NICISMT provides a source for critical incident stress debriefings for all first responder agencies in Northern Illinois.
- C. The chief of police may designate a department member as a participant on the NICISM Team.
- D. A department member may participate in a critical incident debriefing after an unusually traumatic event. The decision to request a critical incident debrief will be made by the incident supervisor in conjunction with the peer support chairman and administration.

16.7.10 HEALTHY MINDS PROGRAM

- A. The Healthy Minds Program is designed to offer voluntary mental health visits for employees. The purpose is to encourage employees to receive preventative psychological care, which will enhance their overall wellness. This is a trial program that will be evaluated each year to determine what changes need to be made and if the program should be continued.
- B. The program offers four free one hour visits with a department mental health professional. The visits will occur quarterly or as determined by the mental health professional. The record of employee participation will be done by billing only. The department shall not receive any medical information about the employee except information that requires mandated reporting by law.
- C. Employees may also see their own mental health professional and provide a signed doctors note to show proof of attending four counseling sessions to the training officer.
- D. Once an employee has attended four mental health counseling sessions, they will be given an 8 hour mental health day.
 - 1. Proof of completion must be submitted to the training officer prior to the end of the calendar year.

- 2. If the 8 hours is earned near the end of the year, the employee must ensure it can be taken prior to the end of the year or defer the hours to the beginning of the next year.
- E. A commander designated by the chief of police is responsible for overall administration of the program. The training officer is responsible for tracking participation and ensuring that employees are awarded the 8 hour mental health day.
- F. The police department also recognizes First Responder Mental Health Day, which falls on the third Friday in May