JOPLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT	2-13 STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE
SUBJECT: Peer Support Program	**REVIEW DATE: Annually - February**
EFFECTIVE DATE: December 20, 2017	**ACTION DATE:**
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES:	**AMEND DATE:**
ACCREDITATION INDEX: 22.2.6	**APPROVED:** Richard A. Pearson **Chief of Police**

I. POLICY

The Joplin Police Department places the greatest possible value on our members and recognizes that public safety employees face situations which may create significant distress. The Peer Support Program is designed to provide confidential emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis. The Peer Support Program shall promote trust, allow anonymity, and preserve confidentiality for all members utilizing the program.

II. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the implementation and utilization of the Peer Support Program.

III. DEFINITIONS

Peer Support Team:

Formally established and trained group of peers and mental health professionals capable of providing one-on-one support, referrals, and secondary trauma support.

Personal or Professional Crisis:

Any incident which causes physical or mental injury, usually due to an external agent. These events may include, but are not limited to:

1. The use of deadly force.
2. Assault on a member
3. Injury, illness, or death of a member or someone in a member's family
4. Assisting family with a member's death
5. Investigations involving crimes against children, or a child death investigation.
6. Substance abuse
7. Marital, relationship, health, financial, or other personal problems.

Traumatic Event:

Directly experiencing or witnessing death or serious physical injury. Any event that may temporarily overwhelm an individual's usual methods of coping with trauma.

Critical Incident:

Abnormal, traumatic, or unusually challenging event with the potential to create significant human Distress which can overwhelm usual coping mechanisms.

Peer Support Program Coordinator:

Member designated to coordinate the program, select and supervise advisors, and maintain records. The Coordinator shall be a Staff Officer, who subsequently cannot be compelled to release information by line level supervisors.

Peer Support Advisor:

A member who has been selected and properly trained to provide support for members of the Joplin Police Department, or other law enforcement agencies upon request.

Client:

Any Joplin Police Department Member who receives support from a Peer Support Advisor.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Selection and Training

1. Members wishing to serve on the Peer Support Team shall forward a letter of request to the Coordinator. The selection process will be based upon Department need, vacancies, experience, and qualifications. The Department will announce vacancies agency wide.

2. All members of the Peer Support Team will receive training on stress awareness, secondary trauma, referrals, crisis intervention, and de-escalation.

B. Peer Support Activation

1. Department members may access and Peer Support Advisor for one-on-one informal peer support and referrals anytime at their discretion.

2. Department supervisors should be aware of situations that may require support from a peer support advisor. Supervisors may contact the Coordinator anytime to activate an Advisor or to inquire if activation is appropriate.

C. Confidentiality

1. One of the most important responsibilities of a Peer Support Advisor is the promotion of trust, anonymity, and confidentiality. Communications between a member and an Advisor is considered privileged unless criminal acts are involved: or where the member, through words or actions, indicates that there is an articulable danger to themselves, citizens, or fellow members. If Department Supervisors request information about a peer support usage from an Advisor, they will be referred to the Program Coordinator. Advisors are not permitted to release any information to another member, regardless of the requestor's rank.

2. Communication between members and Advisors is confidential and may not be disclosed in an administrative proceeding. There is no expectation of confidentiality in a criminal proceeding. Regardless of any possible criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding, Advisors shall not make or maintain any notes regarding their communications.

D. Reporting

1. No written note taking or recordings are allowed at any Peer Support Team interventions.

2. Peer Support Team members providing any type of assistance will forward a Peer Support Team usage form to the Coordinator. The usage form will shall include only the name of the Peer Support Team member, date and time of service, and type of incident/intervention involved.

V. COMPLIANCE

Violations of this policy, or portions thereof, may result in disciplinary action as described in the City of Joplin's Personnel Rules, or the Joplin Police Department's Rules and Regulations and General Orders. Members of the Joplin Police Department, while assigned to or assisting other agencies, shall comply with this policy.

VI. APPLICATION

This document constitutes department policy, is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil or criminal liability in any way. It shall not be construed as the creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in any evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims insofar as the employee's legal duty as imposed by law. Violations of this policy, if proven, can only inform the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.