Ohio | **Department of Rehabilitation & Correction**

I. AUTHORITY

Ohio Revised Code 5120.01 authorizes the Director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, as the executive head of the department, to direct the total operations and management of the department by establishing procedures as set forth in this policy.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a confidential internal employee peer support program for all employees and their families. A trained peer may provide mental and emotional support through one-on-one discussion, education, family support, and post critical incident or event follow up.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all employees of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC).

IV. DEFINITIONS

The definitions for the below listed terms can be found at the top of the policies page on the ODRC Intranet at the following:

Definitions Link

- **Clear and Present Danger**
- **Critical Incident or Event**
- **Military Peer Support Team**
- **Peer Support Advisory Committee**
- **Peer Support Team**
- **Peer Support Team Coordinator**
- **Peer Support Team Leader**
- **Peer Support Team Member**

V.   POLICY

It is the policy of the ODRC to have a confidential, formal internal employee peer support program to provide intervention, emotional and social support, information, and referral and follow-up services for employees who are experiencing difficulty with life or work-related stressors or who are negatively impacted by a critical incident or event. Peer support is not a substitute for professional counseling.

Participation in peer support activities is voluntary. It is meant to be an extra available resource for employees to utilize, when needed.

Peers shall not hamper or impede any investigation or attempt to act as a representative for an employee.

VI.   PROCEDURES

A.   Peer Support Program

1.   The employee Peer Support Program provides support for employees and their families to help prevent or lessen the potential negative impact of stress upon an employee. Trained peer support team members will provide mental and emotional support through one-on-one discussion, education, family support, immediate support and post incident follow up. The Peer Support Program goals include:

    a.   Advocating recognition and awareness of mental and emotional wellness.

    b.   Providing resources to employees and their families during personal and professional crisis situations.

    c.   Serving as a liaison between employees and support resources.

    d.   Building a well-rounded program that focuses on maintaining confidentiality and building trust.

    e.   Identifying and vetting additional resources and programs that could benefit anyone who needs assistance outside the scope of the Peer Support Program.

2.   The ODRC Director will appoint the peer support team coordinator who shall provide oversight of the Peer Support Program. The responsibilities of the peer support team coordinator include:

    a.   Assisting the Peer Support Advisory Committee with continuous evaluation and maintenance of the Peer Support Program.

    b.   Maintaining a list of professional resources for potential referrals.

    c.   Recording resources utilized by the program, including appropriate and confidential statistical data.

    d.   Coordinating educational materials for the Peer Support Program.

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    e. Ensuring that peer support team members adhere to the program's confidentiality policies.

    f. Receiving, processing, and handling complaints regarding any part of the program.

    g. This includes notifying the Peer Support Advisory Committee of major complaints and following up with complainants of action taken.

3. The Peer Support Program shall maintain five (5) peer support teams consisting of selected and trained peer support team members from each facility and APA region. The teams shall provide employee support to employees and their families. The teams shall be identified as the:

    a. NE Peer Support Team- GCI, LORCI, NERC, OSP, TCI, NEOCC, LAECI, Cleveland APA, Akron APA

    b. NW Peer Support Team- AOCI, MANCI, MCI, NCCC, ORW, RICI, TOCI, Lima APA

    c. SE Peer Support Team- BECI, CCI, NCI, RCI, SCI, SOCF

    d. SW Peer Support Team- CRC, DCI, FMC, LECI, LOCI, MACI, PCI, WCI, Dayton APA, Cincinnati APA, Columbus APA, OSC

    e. Military Peer Support Team - The military peer support team is a specialized team. The team members of the military peer support team must have a military background, be familiar with, or experienced in, military deployments and must be trained on issues and resources related to military service. The military peer support team leader must be a veteran.

B.   Peer Support Teams

1. The peer support team coordinator shall appoint a peer support team leader for each team. The peer support team leader shall operate under the direction of the peer support team coordinator.

2. The peer support team leaders shall manage all functions and services of their peer support team, including but not limited to, determining appropriate peer support services following an incident/event, coordinating and recruitment of team members.

3. The peer support team leader shall work collaboratively with peer support team coordinator and managing officers to ensure staff are provided the opportunity to utilize services offered.

4. The peer support team leader shall maintain and forward a team roster to the peer support team coordinator and managing officers. The roster shall be updated and reissued immediately upon changes in any team member's contact information.

5.   The managing officer/designee shall ensure the Critical Incident Management Support Manual contains the most updated copy of the applicable peer support team roster.

6.   Peer support team members must adhere to the Terms and Conditions/Confidentiality Agreement.

   a.   Members must agree to keep non-identifying tracking information and submit to the peer support team leader on a weekly basis.

   b.   Members agree to make themselves available for co-workers.

   c.   Members may be dismissed from the peer support team for breaching confidentiality, acting in a non-professional manner that could diminish the team integrity or reputation, failure to fulfill any of the team obligations and responsibilities, and failure to maintain a minimum number of training hours. A review process will be conducted before dismissal is recommended.

   d.   Peer support team members may resign at any time by notifying the team coordinator, in writing.

7.   Peer support team members shall be knowledgeable in internal agency and external community resources available to employees and make referrals when necessary.

8.   The military peer support team members must have a military background and be familiar with the deployment process. The only exception is the mental health professional(s) assigned to the program.

C.   Peer Support Services

1.   The Peer Support Program shall provide peer support services to employees and their families. The peer support team members may assist employees in identifying resources to assist in resolving personal or professional problems, stress and fatigue, and reactions to incidents.

2.   All services of the Peer Support Program are confidential. Peer support team members shall not disclose who uses the program or what services are provided to the employee and their family.

3.   Peer support services may be initiated at the request of the employee seeking services or at the request of a concerned party.

4.   The fundamental core services of the Peer Support Program include but are not limited to:

   a.   Immediate assessment and intervention,
   b.   Providing education on acute trauma related symptoms,
   c.   Offering early intervention crisis survival skills,
   d.   Advocating for the needed intervention and services,

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  e. Identifying needs and specialized resources,
  f. Assisting with navigation of off-work processes and requirements,
  g. Connecting the employee with the off-work specialist,
  h. Assist in obtaining, completing, and submitting necessary personnel paperwork,
  i. Visiting in hospital, residence, or other off-site location to provide services,
  j. Initiating and scheduling follow-up,
  k. Providing return to work support and follow-up services,
  l. Work with the employee family on a case-by-case basis.

5. Peer support team members will immediately contact the peer support team leader in the event the employee issue requires a higher level of intervention, i.e., suicidal expressions/thoughts.

6. All peer support services shall be documented on the Peer Support Program Weekly Contact Report (DRC1421) by the peer support team member providing services and forwarded to the peer support team leader weekly.

D.   **Military Peer Support Services**

1. The military peer support team members shall work with any employee and their family regarding issues related to their military service.

2. A military peer support team member shall be contacted when an employee with a military background is experiencing obvious distress.

3. In accordance with ODRC Policy 36-LEV-04, Military Service Leave and Notice Requirements, the Personnel Office shall forward the Military Peer Support Information Sheet (DRC1411) to the peer support coordinator and the military peer support team leader within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt. Completion of this form is mandatory.

4. The military peer support team leader shall assign a military peer support team member to work with the employee who is deploying for military service or who is returning to work from a deployment.

5. The military peer support team member shall assist the employee in deployment as follows:

  a. Assist the employee with preparation and paperwork prior to leaving on a deployment.
  b. Provide professional and personal support to the employee.
  c. Provide assistance as the employee transitions back to the workforce.
  d. Educate the employee on common and potential post-deployment transition issues.
  e. Establish a long-term connection with the employee for future support and assistance.
  f. Provide resource information to the employee.
  g. Provide educational information to the supervisor of the returning employee that includes information about the employee's transition back to the workforce (i.e., common and potential post-deployment issues).

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6.   When the completed Military Leave Reinstatement Request (DRC1413) is received upon the employees return to work, the Personnel Office shall forward the form to the OSC Bureau of Personnel and to the peer support coordinator and the military peer support team leader within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt in accordance with ODRC Policy 36-LEV-04, Military Service Leave and Notice Requirements.

7.   Upon returning to work from a deployment, the assigned military peer support team member shall contact the returning service member.

E.   Notifications

1.   Notification of critical incidents or events to the peer support program coordinator and the peer support team leader is required to ensure appropriate outreach and services are provided to staff. Notification will prompt the peer support program coordinator and the peer support team leader to determine the level of service that is required. Services may range from an informal contact to a formal response to a critical incident/event.

2.   Consistent notification protocols shall be adhered to in each case to ensure there is an equal and fair application of support and services for all staff.

3.   Notification shall occur through email or phone contact. Email notification shall be sent to DRC.PEERSUPPORT@odrc.state.oh.us. Phone contact numbers are located on the Peer Support Team roster.

4.   The peer support team leader shall be notified <u>by phone</u> of all the following:

a.   All staff assaults that require outside emergency medical care,
b.   Death of an employee on duty (regardless of the cause of death),
c.   Life threatening injuries of an employee on duty,
d.   Hostage incident,
e.   Loss of a portion of an institution where a planned response to regain control is implemented,
f.   Unexpected death of an employee,
g.   Any situation where employees are exposed to extreme violence or harm,
h.   Incarcerated individual suicide or serious suicide attempt,
i.   Staff suicide or attempted suicide,
j.   Inmate on inmate assaults resulting in serious physical harm or death,
k.   Significant threats of harm to the employee or their family.

5.   The team leader shall be notified via email to DRC.PEERSUPPORT@odrc.state.oh.us of all the following:
a.   Staff assaults,
b.   Any other incidents that have the potential to negatively impact the employee(s).

6.   If a staff member requests to utilize peer support services, every effort should be made to ensure contact is made.

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7.   Most peer support services can be delivered through informal contacts with the employee(s) and do not require peer support team members to be pulled from their duties or called into work to perform peer support services. However, there are instances that may require an immediate response, such as:

    a. Employees exhibiting behaviors or expressing thoughts of suicide,
    b. Employees who are in crisis due to a work or non-work incident,
    c. Any other incident where it is evident an employee is in crisis.

8.   The details of the incident shall guide the peer support team leader on the type(s) of services required.

9.   The peer support team leader shall notify the managing officer/designee of the necessity and immediacy of peer support response and services.

F.   Team Member Selection and Training

1.   To be considered for team membership of the Peer Support Program, an employee must complete and submit the Application for Special Teams (DRC2685) to the appropriate peer support team leader for approval.

2.   The peer support team leader shall conduct an interview with the applicant and provide their recommendation to the managing officer.

3.   The Application for Special Teams (DRC2685) is then submitted to the Peer Support Advisory Committee of the final approval of the applicant.

4.   Applicants for the Peer Support Program shall:

    a. Be a respected staff member that is regarded as competent in their field,
    b. Have basic active listening skills with the ability to accurately identify and display empathy towards others,
    c. Have the ability to positively manage their own stress,
    d. Be willing and available to be called upon and respond to activations at any time,
    e. Have a good attendance record,
    f. Have no significant discipline (i.e., anything above a written reprimand) for at least one (1) year and/or active discipline,
    g. Meet training and professional credentials,
    h. Have a good rapport with co-workers and management,
    i. Adhere to confidentiality.

5.   At a minimum, applicants approved for participation in the Peer Support Program must successfully complete twenty-four (24) hours of an approved peer support training.

6.   Each peer support team member must attend eight (8) hours of approved training once per quarter. The training must be approved by the peer support program coordinator.

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7. Each member of the military peer support team must receive specialized training, in addition to the 24-hour training requirement. The training will include military specific topics including, but not limited to, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, Combat Trauma, Military Sexual Assault, and resources specific to active duty and retired military personnel.

G.   Confidentiality

1. The Peer Support Program is a confidential program. Members shall not discuss information obtained while acting in a peer support capacity with anyone other than other trained members when assistance is needed or when required by law.

2. Peer support team members have a duty to report an individual that is a "Clear and Present Danger" to themselves or others. Immediate notification to the peer support team coordinator and/or peer support team leader is mandatory. Every effort must be made to ensure that the individual is safe. When possible, the individual should not be left alone. If necessary, outside emergency responders may be notified (i.e., police, sheriff, fire).

3. Peer support team members shall not divulge information with other employees, family members, friends, supervisors or management, or the public. Identifying information on employees utilizing Peer Support Team services or mental health referrals will never be recorded or maintained. Peer support team members have the responsibility to inform members of their duty to report, prior to meeting.

4. The effectiveness of this program relies heavily on the integrity of the peer support team members and the reputation they maintain. If the Peer Support Advisory Committee is notified of a suspected or potential breach of confidentiality or violation of team policy, a review process will be conducted by the Peer Support Advisory Committee immediately.

5. A review process will begin if either one of the following allegations are brought to the attention of the Peer Support Advisory Committee:

    a. A peer support team member is acting in contradiction to, or has failed to adhere to, Peer Support Team Guidelines.

    b. A peer support team member has failed to adhere to the Peer Support Program policy and including the signed Peer Support Program Confidentiality Agreement (DRC1445).

6. Any confirmed violation will be reviewed by the Peer Support Advisory Committee to determine majority agreement prior to starting the review process.

7. The length of the review process may vary from case to case, taking unique circumstances into consideration.

8. Upon completion of the review process, one of two possible outcomes will be determined.

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a. There is insufficient evidence to constitute a change to the member's good standing status.

b. There is sufficient evidence to change the member's good standing status.

9. Depending on the nature and severity of the violation, the Peer Support Advisory Committee could recommend additional training for the member or remove the member from the peer support team.

10. The reputation and integrity of the team will not be compromised.

H. Peer Support Advisory Committee

1. The committee consists of representation from Employee Services Team, Human Resources, Legal, Labor, and Behavioral Health. Responsibilities of the Peer Support Advisory Committee include:

a. Distribute, collect, review, and make approval recommendations on peer support team members applications.

b. Evaluate program operations and make modifications based on feedback.

c. Provide administrative support.

2. The Peer Support Advisory Committee shall conduct a meeting each year in the 4th quarter of the calendar year and invite participation from managing officers and appropriate deputy directors. The purpose of the meeting is to receive input and feedback regarding access to peer support services.

3. The Peer Support Advisory Committee, chaired by the peer support team coordinator, shall meet annually to review, and modify the Peer Support Program, including but not limited to training curriculum and operational protocols. The peer support program coordinator shall submit program recommendations and updates to the ODRC assistant director for final approval.

Referenced ODRC Policies:

36-LEV-04   Military Service Leave and Notice Requirements

Referenced Forms:

Military Peer Support Information Sheet	DRC1411
Military Leave Reinstatement Request	DRC1413
Peer Support Program Weekly Contact Report	DRC1421
Peer Support Confidentiality Agreement	DRC1445
Special Teams Application	DRC2685

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