



Tulsa Police Department

Peer 2 Peer Support Program

Guideline – Effective August 1, 2019

1. Purpose:

Mission: To provide a peer support resource within the Tulsa Police Department (TPD) such that all officers and dispatchers have the confidence and courage to reach out when strained by professional or personal challenges.

Vision: The Tulsa Police Department's Peer 2 Peer Support Program is dedicated to providing confidential peer and critical incident support for all TPD members. This support is provided so we may endure any struggle together. We believe that strength is not shouldering yet another burden but rather letting go and asking for help. Peer 2 Peer provides safe, non-judgmental and confidential support so that TPD officers and dispatchers may engage in a genuine conversation and obtain resources for recovery.

Values: Tulsa Police Department's Peer 2 Peer Support Program values support that comes from someone who has endured similar challenges; respect for diversity of people and experience; compassion for our fellow brothers and sisters; having the courage to be vulnerable and reach out; and trust, confidence and privacy.

2. Definitions

Peer 2 Peer Support Program: A department-coordinated group of TPD member volunteers, retired TPD, and TPD dispatchers specifically trained to provide emotional and tangible support, encouragement and referral to fellow TPD members. This support is provided in response to challenges and losses such as exposure to critical incidents, injury, illness, or death. And, support in response to celebrations, such as birth/adoption of child or promotion. A peer support program may augment existing programs such as, First Responder Support Services, PLLC (FRSS) and the City of Tulsa Employee Assistance Program (EAP), but does not replace them.

Peer Support Person (PSP): A dedicated, compassionate TPD member specifically trained to be available to his/her fellow brothers and sisters to engage in a conversation, provide encouragement, coordinate resources and/or provide an appropriate referral for those struggling with professional or personal challenges. The PSP is a colleague, not a counselor or therapist, and trained to recognize and refer their peers to a licensed mental

health professional (LMHP), i.e. FRSS or EAP when the situation is beyond their scope of assistance.

Behavioral Health Consultant (BHC): A behavioral health consultant (Licensed Mental Health Professional) will be responsible for providing the Peer 2 Peer program with initial and on-going training, and support for matters such as confidentiality, conflicts of interest and emergent high-risk situations. The BHC is an expert in the field and experienced in providing counseling, training and consultation to public safety personnel, including critical incident response.

Confidentiality of Peer Support: To ensure utilization of the Peer 2 Peer program, there must be assurances that personal information will be protected. There are three levels of non-disclosure of personal information to differentiate in this context:

- **Privacy** is the expectation of an individual that disclosure of personal information will not be made public and is intended for the PSP only.
- **Confidentiality** is an extension of privacy. Confidentiality is a professional or ethical agreement that prohibits the PSP from disclosing information from or about a recipient of Peer 2 Peer. Exceptions to Confidentiality shall be discussed during the initial contact when appropriate and include the following:
 1. Any information related to suspected abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.
 2. Any explicit threat to kill oneself or inflict serious bodily injury upon a reasonably identifiable person.
 3. Any admission of criminal conduct.

In those instances when a question of confidentiality arises, the PSP should contact the Peer 2 Peer Program Leader immediately. The Program and/or Assistant Program Leader will immediately notify the Mental Health Coordinator, who has oversight responsibility for P2P. The BHC may also be contacted as needed to consult regarding these concerns. It is the PSPs responsibility to be fully familiar with the limits of confidentiality.

Additionally, any PSP (supervisor or otherwise) who must officially report a peer's behavior (based on the Exceptions to Confidentiality, as described above) should consider first notifying the peer (unless notification of the peer would potentially interfere with a criminal investigation) and consider his or her needs or preferences in how to proceed in the most respectful and discrete manner. The Program and/or Assistant Program Leader will contact the peer to offer P2P support during any associated intervention, challenge or investigation.

- **Privilege** provides even greater protection. Privilege is the legal protection from being compelled to disclose communications in certain protected relationships, such as between attorney and client, doctor/therapist and patient, or priest and

confessor. Oklahoma's Statute addressing Peer Support Counseling Privilege (OK Statute 12-2506.2, 2014) provides privilege (legal protection) only in the cases that involve "peer support counseling sessions ...for public safety or emergency services personnel who have been involved in emotionally traumatic incidents by reason of their employment" i.e. critical incidents. Reference Oklahoma Statue Title 12 (Addendum #1).

3. Administration

Peer Support Persons shall not be asked to give, nor shall they release, identifying or confidential information about personnel they support. The only information that management or Internal Affairs will receive about peer support activity is anonymous statistical information regarding utilization of the Peer 2 Peer program. These same prohibitions apply to recipients of P2P program services. An employee under investigation or involved in the disciplinary process will not be questioned about P2P conversations or intervention.

Peer 2 Peer is not an alternative to discipline and does not intervene in the disciplinary process. A PSP may provide support for an employee under investigation or during a disciplinary process but should refrain from discussing the incident itself when possible. However, the PSP may discuss and review the disciplinary process and what the employee may expect. Further, the employee must be cautioned that any information shared with the PSP regarding the incident in question may not be regarded as confidential.

PSPs will not provide information to supervisors obtained through peer support contact and may educate supervisors on the confidentiality requirements established by the Peer 2 Peer Support Program as necessary.

In order for the Peer 2 Peer program to meet the emerging standards of care in peer support, TPD will provide on-going behavioral health consultation through FRSS.

4. Selection

Peer Support Persons will be nominated by their peers to be of service in the Peer 2 Peer program and voluntarily accept this responsibility. PSPs must be in good standing within the department.

The department will encourage the nomination of PSPs that demonstrate the following:

- ✓ Trustworthy
- ✓ Respected
- ✓ Non-Judgmental and sensitive to racial, ethnical and sexual diversity
- ✓ Exceptional listening and communication skills
- ✓ Empathetic and encouraging
- ✓ Able to stay calm under pressure
- ✓ Positive role model and leader
- ✓ Able to work well within a group
- ✓ Respects confidentiality*

* The acceptance and success of the Tulsa Police Department Peer Support Program will be determined, in part, by **confidentiality**. It is imperative that each PSP maintain strict confidentiality of all information learned about an individual within the Guideline of the Peer 2 Peer Support Program.

PSPs are expected to meet the following criteria:

- Agree to maintain confidentiality within the Guideline provided.
- Sign and uphold the Peer 2 Peer Program Agreement.
- Successfully attend the initial 14-hour training.

5. Training, Meetings and Consultation

Peer Support Persons will receive an initial 2-day *Resilience-based Peer Support* training provided by First Responder Support Services. This training will be provided by the Peer 2 Peer Behavioral Health Consultant and include the following topics:

- Active-listening and communication
- Confidentiality and boundary setting
- Resilience-based peer support and intervention
- High-risk behavior and situations
- Peer 2 Peer operations and record keeping

PSP will also participate in on-going Peer 2 Peer program meetings and training, which may be scheduled monthly or less frequently depending upon program development, training needs and departmental demands. Attendance of the annual P2P update training and team meetings is mandatory (60% compliance with notice to the PSP's team leader provided for absences) for continued participation in the P2P program. These meetings and training will focus upon continued skill development, behavioral health topics, anonymous case consultation, and program development.

6. Duties

The PSP's duties and expectations include the following:

- Represent the Peer 2 Peer Support Program conducting oneself with the utmost integrity and respect for self and others with a demeanor that is above reproach.
- Respond to requests from peers within 24-hours or refer them to another Peer 2 Peer member A.S.A.P., available during off-duty hours as necessary.
- Utilize face-to-face or phone call conversations, avoid text and email.
- It is recommended that off-duty face-to-face meetings take place in a public place.
- It is recommended that PSP's take another Peer 2 Peer member when meeting with a peer outside of work.
- PSP's will avoid meeting with peers in either members' home or personal vehicle.

- Respond to peers in such a way as to communicate availability and concern, practicing resilience-based intervention.
- Respond to requests for assistance from Peer 2 Peer leadership in a timely manner.
- Attend Peer 2 Peer training and meetings, communicating any absence ahead of time.
- Maintain and submit Peer 2 Peer program statistics and documentation in a timely manner.
- Readily seek consultation from a Peer 2 Peer Team Leader, Assistant Program Leader, Program Leader or BHC.
- Understand, be familiar with, and abide by this Peer 2 Peer Guideline and the corresponding P2P Program Agreement.
- Request a leave of absence or resign from the program if unable to meet the above-described Duties.

PSPs may be removed from the Peer 2 Peer program for non-compliance with these duties. Such disqualification will be at the discretion of the Peer 2 Peer Program Leader and/or the Assistant Program Leader.

The P2P Team Leader duties include those listed for PSP and the following additional responsibilities:

- Meet with their assigned team members monthly or as needed.
- Communicate relevant information to PSPs on their team.
- Respond to requests from the P2P Program Leader or Assistant Leader in a timely manner.
- Ensure that a peer request is responded to within 24 hours.

The P2P Assistant Program Leader duties include those listed for PSP and the following additional responsibilities:

- Perform duties of the P2P Program Leader when absent or unavailable.
- Assist with other duties required of the Program Leader.

The P2P Program Leader duties include those listed for PSP and the following additional responsibilities:

- Schedule and meet with P2P Team Leaders on a monthly basis or as needed.
- Gather and maintain statistics for the P2P Support Program.
- Assist and work with the Behavioral Health Consultant for continued training and consultation as needed.
- Report to the TPD Mental Health Coordinator.

7. Limitations

Peer Support Persons are responsible for being aware of their personal limitations and bias' and should seek consultation from their Team Leader when determining how to respond when these arise. It is recommended that the PSP readily disqualify him/herself

from working with peers whose challenges occur as overwhelming or may pose a personal conflict.

It is recommended that PSPs refrain from intervening with a particular peer if the relationship could impair his/her objectivity, competence, or effectiveness or otherwise risk exploitation or harm to the peer with whom the relationship exists. For example, it is recommended that PSPs not develop peer support relationships between supervisors or subordinates and should avoid religious, sexual, political and/or financial entanglements with recipients of peer support.

The PSP knows when and how to refer peers, supervisors, or subordinates to another PSP member, chaplain, or mental health professional to avoid any potential conflicts of interests. The PSP knows how to balance the occasional fine line between offering support and enabling a potentially destructive pattern of behavior and will seek consultation from P2P leadership and/or the BHC as needed.

PSP's cannot abdicate their job responsibility as officers or supervisors by participating in the Peer 2 Peer Support Program. Supervisors have additional requirements regarding the reporting of high-risk behavior, criminal behavior, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and workplace injury that may place the supervisor or the Tulsa Police Department in jeopardy if the procedures are not followed.

A PSP will not keep written, formal or other private records of Peer 2 Peer contacts, nor shall there be any recording of P2P contacts. The only documentation will be in the form of non-identifying statistical records that capture general productivity of the program.

8. PSP Complaints and Internal Affairs (IA) Investigations

If a PSP member becomes the subject of a complaint regarding an inappropriate breach of confidentiality, or other behavior unbecoming of a PSP, the Program or Assistant Program Leader, or Mental Health Coordinator (when such complaint involves the Program or Assistant Program Leaders), should be notified immediately. The Program Leader will investigate complaints that involve a specific complainant or eyewitness, not hearsay. The PSP member will be notified of the complaint and given an opportunity to speak to the accusation before others involved are contacted. In the event that a PSP has operated outside the scope of this Guideline, he or she may be removed at the discretion of the Program Leader or Mental Health Coordinator. During times when a PSP is under investigation by TPD IA, the PSP member should notify the Program or Assistant Program Leader immediately and request a temporary leave of absence until the associated investigation is concluded. If the results of the investigation are unfavorable or in conflict with this Guideline, the PSP may be removed at the discretion of the Program Leader or Mental Health Coordinator.