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- I. Policy

The Peer Support Team (PST) is a group consisting of sworn and civilian employees who have been trained in crisis intervention. The team is under the direction and supervision of the Stress Management Division (SMD) of the Montgomery County Police Department. PST members are committed to the principles of confidentiality and integrity while providing peer support to both sworn and civilian employees of the police department. The Department respects the privacy of communications occurring during the Peer Support Interventions. Team members will be bound to the same standards of confidentiality that apply to the SMD. The ultimate decision to use the support services of PST is a personal choice to be made by the affected employee.

- II. Definitions

- A. Peer Support Team Director - The director of Stress Management Division.
- B. Team Coordinator - Assists in the scheduling of the PST and maintains the team records.
- C. Police Psychologists- Psychologists who are part of Stress Management Division and who share a rotating on call schedule.
- D. Confidentiality- A standard of maintaining the privacy of communications which involves not revealing information gained during Peer Support interventions, and which follows state laws and ethical standards of the American Psychological Association.
- E. ECC – Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center
- F. M-NCPP Peer Support Team Liaison – The Maryland-National Capital Park Police designee assigned to coordinate the Division's participation in PST training and support activities.
- G. Communications-M-NCPP Communications Section

- III. Activation of the PST

- A. The PST will only be activated upon the notification of, and with the approval of, the PST Director, or designated on-call psychologist. The OIC on the scene will evaluate the need for PST involvement and, when appropriate, request PST activation by contacting ECC.
- B. Individuals in need of personal assistance may also request PST involvement by contacting the PST Director, or designee, or Liaison directly.

IV. Circumstances for PST Activation

- A. The Officer in Charge (OIC) will request PST activation in the following circumstances:
 - 1. When a Division member witnesses the death or serious injury of any person. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Death or serious injury of a Division employee.
 - b. Police involvement terminating in death or serious injury to any person.
 - c. Communications personnel directly involved in call taking or dispatching.
 - 2. Incidents involving death or serious physical/emotional trauma to a child.
 - 3. Situations involving department personnel which by their nature would have a severe adverse effect. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. The sudden, unexpected, and/or violent death of a family member.
 - b. The discovery of a life-threatening illness.

V. Responsibilities of the OIC

- A. The OIC will ensure that the scene is under control and that the situation is stabilized.
- B. The OIC will gather information as to what occurred and identify sworn and civilian personnel who may be affected, within the limits of Divisional Directive 603.0, Deadly Force/In-Custody Death Investigations.
- C. The OIC will consider requesting a PST response in any situation not enumerated above which may have an adverse impact on affected personnel. An immediate response may or may not be required. Examples of these include situations involving abuse of a child or the death of a person resulting from non-police related activity (e.g. fatal collisions, homicides, etc.)
- D. Once a decision is made to activate PST, the request will be made through ECC. If possible, a phone number will be provided where the OIC can be reached via ECC.
- E. The OIC will gather the following:
 - 1. Name(s) of employee(s) affected.
 - 2. Observed physiological or emotional reactions.
 - 3. Information which may help PST members effectively assist the affected employee(s).
 - 4. Location of affected employee(s).

- F. PST activation/response may be delayed in those situations that are stable but ongoing (e.g. hostage/barricade situations.)
- VI. ECC Responsibilities
- A. ECC will contact the Director, PST, or on-call designee, when the OIC requests the activation of the PST.
 - B. ECC will advise the Director/designee of the following information:
 - 1. Location and nature of the incident
 - 2. Name of the requestor, affected personnel, and contact phone number.
 - 3. If any Communication personnel may be affected.
 - C. Communications will notify the Watch Commander of the PST request
 - D. ECC/Communications will provide copies of incident tapes upon the request of the Coordinator.
- VII. Team Coordination Responsibilities
- A. The Team Coordinator will maintain the current schedule for team members and will work in conjunction with the Director, PST, to assign appropriate team personnel to respond when activated.
 - B. The Team Coordinator will be responsible for the administration of team activities, reviewing and maintaining forms, and evaluating PST interventions.
- VIII. PST Members' Responsibilities
- A. PST members will conduct themselves in a professional manner, maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the individual(s) seeking support. They will recognize utilization of the PST services is voluntary.
 - B. PST team members that are assigned to Internal Affairs will recuse themselves from any investigation involving all cases in which they served as a PST team member.
 - C. Internal Affairs will not be permitted to interview a PST member related to their involvement in any situations where they have provided support to Park Police employees.
 - D. When arriving to the scene of an incident, PST members will immediately contact the senior ranking officer and evaluate the situation to determine if resources assigned by the Team Coordinator are adequate.
 - E. In those situations where the Montgomery County Police Department psychologist is responding to the scene, PST activity will occur under the psychologist's direction.

- F. Team members will offer and provide support/assistance according to approved training within the role definition of PST. This may include attention to alternative needs when affected personnel request non-team resources.
- G. In situations involving the possibility of administrative or criminal sanction, the PST Director, and/or other police psychologists will have full responsibility for responding to employees directly involved. PST may be activated to assist other individuals affected by the situation.
- H. PST will not interfere nor assist in any investigative process. PST and investigators/senior ranking officers will work cooperatively to protect the integrity of crime scenes as well as to ensure that PST services are available to affected personnel.
- I. PST will not interfere with the activities of the internal/external representatives who are serving as representatives to the employee but will be readily available to provide appropriate assistance upon their request. The PST Director, in appropriate and relevant circumstances, may consult with the affected representative and department command staff to determine the appropriate PST response.
- J. Depending on the nature of the event and wishes of involved personnel, team members may offer group or individual assistance.
- K. If a member of the M-NCPP Peer Support Team receives a call out and they are on duty, it is the responsibility of the watch commander/shift supervisor to authorize the officer(s) participation. The watch/shift supervisor must take into consideration call volume at the time of the request and the staffing needs for the time the officer(s) may be on the call out.
- L. If the PST is activated during the officer's normal time off, it will be up to the officer to determine if they are able to respond. They will notify the on-duty/on-call watch commander.
- M. Officer(s) responding to a PST call out during their off hours are entitled to approved compensation.
- N. M-NCPP Officers who respond to a Peer Support call out shall, at their earliest convenience, e-mail the M-NCPP Peer Support Liaison the amount of time spent on the call out and whether it was on or off duty. This is to ensure accurate records for time sheets.

By Authority of
Chief Darryl W. McSwain
Maryland-National Capital Park Police
Montgomery County Division

Approved Park Police Document
Signed Original on File

End of Directive