

<b>PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT MANUAL OF GENERAL ORDERS</b>			
<b>General Order: 14.01</b>	<b>Effective: 08/11/2019</b>	<b>Supersedes: 07/05/2017</b>	<b>Number of Pages: 2</b>
<b>PEER SUPPORT TEAM: GENERAL GUIDELINES</b>			

A. The Peer Support Team has been established to assist members who, in the course of their duty, may become involved with a “Critical Incident.” A Critical Incident is defined as any situation that provokes an emotional reaction, which may have the **potential** to interfere with the member’s ability to function, either at the scene or subsequent to the incident.

B. Confidentiality Statement

1. The Peer Support Team is not an investigative unit of the Police Department. It shall be the duty and obligation of Team members to maintain strict confidentiality in matters involving emotional, financial, or personal concerns of participants. Any statement or discussion with a member, while fulfilling their role on the Team, will remain confidential.
2. Members of the Peer Support Team are also members of the Police Department, and therefore have certain legal obligations. Team members may become aware of information that may not remain confidential. Exceptions to the confidentiality rule of the peer support function are:
  - a. There is reason to believe a participant presents a danger to themselves or others.
  - b. There is reason to believe a participant may have committed a serious crime.
  - c. There is reason to believe a participant has committed child or spousal abuse.
  - d. There is reason to believe a participant has deceived an investigator.

Exception to the confidentiality rule will be clearly stated to the participants prior to the beginning of a meeting with a Peer Support Team member. Team members having knowledge of one of the exceptions will not discuss the matter, except with the appropriate authorities.

3. It will be the policy of this Department not to question Peer Support Team member(s) for the facts surrounding a critical incident or the individuals involved.

C. Team Structure

1. **TEAM COORDINATOR:** The Peer Support Team Coordinator shall perform the administrative duties of the Team and will ensure the team is called out when requested. The Team Coordinator will be selected by the Team and approved by the Chief of Police. The Team Coordinator will report directly to the Chief.

2. **PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER:** A sworn or civilian member of the Department or employee of the Office of Public Safety Communications who has received training approved by the Peer Support Team's clinical advisor and the Prince William County Community Services Board.
3. **PEER SUPPORT:** A confidential discussion between a participant(s) and a Team member following a critical incident. The purpose of offering peer support is to restore the member's cognitive functioning and to prepare them for future stress reactions resulting from the incident. Peer Support members are also encouraged to share with participants additional resources available to them such as, but not limited to: the Employee Assistance Program or the Team Clinical Advisor. Debriefings are no longer considered mentally and emotionally helpful in the aftermath of critical incidents, as advised by the Team's Clinical Advisor; therefore, they are not offered by the team.
4. **CLINICAL ADVISOR:** A licensed clinical social worker and behavioral health consultant who specializes in providing training, counseling, and support services to public safety personnel.