

Suicide

More law enforcement officers take their own lives each year than are killed by felons or die in other duty-related accidents. The names inscribed at the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial in Washington D.C. would double or triple if law enforcement officer suicides were taken into account. **This flier cannot take the place of training**, but we all need to watch each other's backs in other ways.

Awareness is the first step; experts agree that 80% to 90% of those individuals completing suicide often communicate their suicidal intent to someone. **Training** in suicide prevention and intervention skills can help us identify these subtle communications. Training and awareness equal the confidence to recognize the suicidal danger signs and ask the right questions, at the right time. Contact a Peer Advisor or the staff at Nicoletti-Flater if you're ever concerned.

In a survey of 500 law enforcement officers done by The National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation, Inc., 98% of the officers said they would consider suicide and cited the following reasons:

- Death of a child or spouse
- Loss of a child or spouse through divorce
- Terminal illness
- Responsibility for co-workers death
- Killed someone out of anger
- Indictment
- Feeling alone
- Sexual accusations
- Loss of job because of conviction of a crime
- Being locked up

The fact that an officer is experiencing one of these events does not preclude a suicide—but we need to be aware and provide support.

Finally, all of us need to confront the myth that we will be perceived as weak and our job will be at risk if we seek psychological help. **Competent and Confidential mental health services are available.**

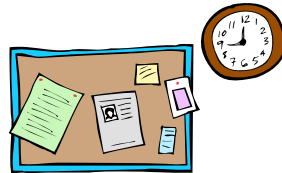
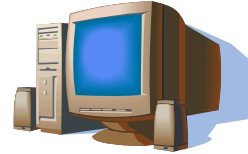
How to contact us...



Look for this pin.

Peer Advisors will be wearing it on their uniform or, if in plain-clothes, on their Department ID Card!

Each Peer Advisor has their telephone numbers and current assignment on the DPD Web page.



We try to maintain an information poster at each district, bureau, and unit with our contact info.

Current Peer Advisors

Gene Alfaro	Heather Hohnholz	Grace Nunez de
Dan Andrews	Pam Jackson	Ovaille
Barb Archer	Choice Johnson	Virginia Quinones
Sharon Avendano	Gabriel Jordan	Joe Rodarte
Joe Black	Jay Knipple	Mark Roggeman
Leslie Branch-Wise	Tom Loughlin	Jennifer Rowe
John Bronson	Lisa Love	Randy Royal
Greg Campbell	Jim Mair	Al Shell
John Coppedge	Kevin Malloy	Andre Solomos
Jennifer Curtis	Tony Marchesi	Bill Stanley
James Dempsey	Jeff Martinez	Joe Tennant
Gene Foster	Robert Martinez	Kim Thompson
Todd Gentry	Shanna Michael	Danny Veith
Betty Hale	Jurgen Mohr	Mike Vogler
Frank Harrington	Scott Murphy	Robert Waidler
		Vanita Warren

You won't hurt our feelings if

you decide to contact Nicoletti-Flater Associates at 303-989-1617

Some officers feel comfortable with contacting Doctor Nicoletti's office directly, without a referral from Peer Support—AND THAT'S OK! The Peer Support Unit doesn't need to know about it and Nicoletti-Flater will keep it confidential.



For You and Your Family

Denver Police Department
Peer Support Program
Est. 1982

Living in today's world is complicated enough. Add the unique and occasionally severe stress involved with being a Denver Police Officer and it's easy to become overwhelmed. Often times just talking things over with a trusted peer can go along way towards easing the strain.

The Peer Support Program was developed in 1982 as a cooperative effort between Psychological Services, various police employee organizations, and the Denver Police Department.

Apart from any law violations which may be disclosed, all conversations with Peer Support Advisors are completely confidential. The program does not report to the administration and meets in a neutral location. All Peer Advisors are specially trained and work under the supervision of Doctors from Nicoletti-Flater Associates. When Advisors are faced with problems beyond the scope of our training, referrals are made to the Psychologists. All counseling at Nicoletti-Flater is provided free of charge to officers and members of their immediate family.

Peer Support Advisors want to be of assistance to you in any way possible. We all wear the same uniform so we know where you are coming from. Contact an Advisor today and begin working towards resolving those issues that threaten your health, family, and - potentially— your career. Remember, all conversations are kept strictly confidential.

*-Detective Danny Veith
Coordinator Peer Support Unit*

Cell: 720-641-0208
Desk: 720-913-6569

The History of Peer Support

Police work was recognized as extremely stressful, in the mid 1930's, when New York City Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia ordered a study of police officer suicides. The suicide rate in police officers was found to be considerably higher than the rate of suicides in the average population. Unfortunately, an easily applied intervention program to assist stressed law enforcement personnel was never developed.

In the late 1960's, psychologists began to pioneer counseling services, spouse support programs, marriage & family counseling, stress inoculation training, and other police stress education projects for law enforcement officers. In 1968, LAPD and San Jose PD were the first to hire full-time law enforcement psychologists.

The first "police stress" programs were developed in the mid-1970's and were modeled on the Alcoholic Anonymous programs. They were often peer support type programs and can be credited with establishing the use of peers in support services for emergency personnel.

In 1980, the FBI added a psychological services program to provide counseling to its employees.

In 1981, the Los Angeles Police Department began one of the earliest peer support programs following a shooting incident.

(Heinman & Reese in Mitchell and Everly's "An Operations Manual for CISD...")

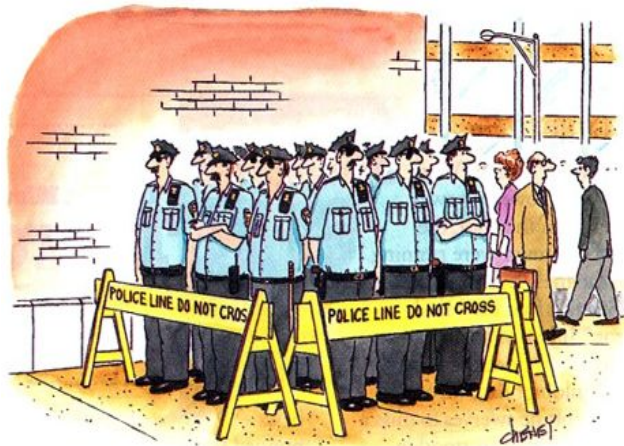
Between the mid-1970's and the early 1980's, Denver PD lost more officers to suicide than from Line-Of-Duty-Deaths. The Denver Police Peer Support



Larimer Street—early 1970's

Program was formed, in 1982, in response to this unacceptable statistic. Thirteen police officers volunteered to train through the Colorado Department of Health & Hospitals to staff the new program as "Peer Support Advisors."

New Peer Advisors complete an initial 40-hour training curriculum recognized by the POST Board.



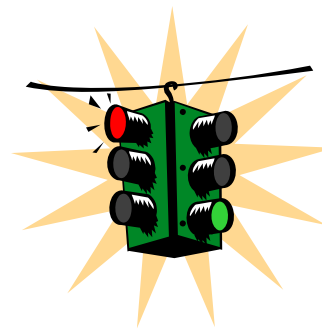
What Is Peer Support?

Denver Police Officers are accustomed to the role of "Problem-Solvers" and can be uncomfortable in situations where they may be a "Problem-Haver." The majority of these problems do not require assistance from a psychologist. Often it helps when we can just bounce our thoughts off another officer. Peer Support provides officers with the opportunity to vent in a **confidential environment**. Whether work-related or from situations that arise off the job, Peer Support is designed to assist officers during times of personal and professional crisis.

Peer Support Advisors—fellow Denver Police Officers from various ranks and assignments—have the advantage of enduring the same personal and work related events you are experiencing. Peer Advisors are the "good listeners" selected for their reputation of being trusted, approachable, and compassionate. They have the ability to help fellow officers through difficult times and get them back on track. Peer Advisors can assist in identifying potential solutions; they want to prevent "concerns" from turning into "problems." There are times, however, when a fellow officer needs assistance beyond the capability of a Peer Advisor. Having established a close working-relationship with mental health professionals, **Peer Advisors can refer officers to clinicians and maintain confidentiality.**

Peer Advisors are volunteers

who applied to the Peer Support Program out of a sincere desire to help their fellow officers. They are not paid or compensated by the police department to meet with you; they do not report or reveal encounters to your supervisors, Internal Affairs, Administration, fellow officers, your significant other,.... no one!



You must be aware, however, that certain situations require a Peer Advisor to report information divulged during an encounter with a fellow officer:

- "The only exception to the rule of confidentiality would be regarding information dealing with criminal activity. Officers serving as Peer Support Advisors are required to report such information to the appropriate authority." (Operations Manual 116.18 (1)(d)(1).
- State Statutes requiring the reporting of excessive force, domestic violence, child abuse, etc.

Help Us Help You

Peer Support stresses holding people accountable. The Program was not designed for officers to dump their problems off on a Peer Advisor. We are a resource that provides support and possible referrals for your particular situation.

Peer Advisors are not trained therapists or licensed counselors and the Peer Support Program is not designed to take the place of professional treatment. We will listen, provide support & assistance, and refer when necessary.

(Please, don't ask us for information about another officer)

When is it appropriate to contact Peer Support?

We all have difficult situations that arise in our lives. Sometimes they're at home with our significant other, our children, our adult children, or aging parents. Other times they're at work with a supervisor, subordinates, grievance issues, promotions, preparation for retirement, on-the-job injuries, or other health issues.

Depression, Stress, & Anxiety—Officers may suffer from cumulative stress or have a stress reaction specific to a particular incident. Mental and physiological changes may result and the accompanying anxiety is often dealt with through education about the body's stress response. Proactive work—getting inoculated through education and awareness—may prevent these problems from becoming disruptive to our lives and the lives of those around us.

Legal & Financial Problems—Whether it is yourself or a family member, legal and financial problems are often a cause of stress in our lives. If unresolved, these problems can lead to tension and irritability that can affect our personal lives and job performance.

Alcohol Problems—Alcoholism is a disease, and those who suffer from it deserve complete assistance in the restoration of health and productivity. Alcoholism is recognized as a family problem, and the family will receive as much assistance as the alcoholic.

Family Issues—Officers are often trained to use an impermeable "image armor" to maintain their emotional distance from work situations. After a shift, they may find it difficult to take the "armor" off, coming across as cold, distant, or uninvolved to members of their family. Whether any problem involves your children or significant other, the ramifications can be serious. Officers are held to a higher standard with their families; issues that spiral out of control can result in POST decertification and Federal firearm possession prohibition. **Address family issues early on, before irreparable damage is done.**

Critical Incidents—Peer Advisors are available to respond to critical incidents such as shootings, Line-Of-Duty-Deaths, or when a civilian is killed during a police action. Our goal is to assist Psychological Services, to reduce PTSD via the mitigation of a critical incident's impact.