

ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Distribution: All Employees

Subject: **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Index as: Chaplain Program EAP

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I.O.V.5:20, Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

Replaces: G.O. II-35, Employee Assistance Program (May 2002)

This Order consists of the following sections:

- I. Introduction
- II. Purpose
- III. Philosophy
- IV. Resources and Referrals**
- V. Entering the Employee Assistance Program- (EAP)
- VI. Confidentiality
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. The St. Petersburg Police Department is committed to creating a safer environment and providing responsive police services through an aggressive, problem-solving partnership with the community. The Department recognizes that the ability to meet this commitment is integral to the depth of pride and commitment its employees bring to their jobs and that the strength of the Department's employees lies in the support behind them.

B. The Department also recognizes that the health and well-being of its employees and their families are essential in creating an atmosphere within the Department that promotes communication, creativity and participation. The Department values its employees and encourages them to achieve their greatest potential.

II. PURPOSE

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was created to assist employees and their families in accessing resources and obtaining referral information for problems of a personal or professional nature. The primary purpose of the EAP is to assist employees who are experiencing problems of a continuous or persistent nature which, when left unresolved, may jeopardize an employee's psychological and/or physical well-being. The goal is to provide individuals with brief, solution-focused consultation, health maintenance education classes, preventative services, and referrals to psycho-social services and treatment.

III. PHILOSOPHY

A. The Department and the public have a significant interest in supporting the concept of confidentiality in the work of the EAP. Resolution of problems and effective treatment depend upon an atmosphere of confidence and trust; therefore, the mere possibility of disclosure of confidential communications may impede development of the relationship necessary for a successful conclusion.

B. Confidentiality within the EAP serves a public interest since the mental health of employees of the St. Petersburg Police Department is no less important than their physical health in achieving our problem-solving partnership goals with the community.

IV. RESOURCES AND REFERRALS

A. Resource and referral information includes, but is not limited to:

1. Alcohol/Substance Abuse Treatment Programs and Support Groups

2. Chaplain Services Program

3. Community Resource Access and Referral

4. Credit Counseling Services

5. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team and Peer Debriefers (support)

6. Critical Incident Stress Management Programs

7. Family/Significant Other Support Groups

8. Insurance Provider and/or Benefits Coordination

9. Professional Relationship/Career Issues

10. Psychological Services

11. Supervisor Referral Training

B. Chaplain Services Program

1. The Chaplains Services Program, a service of the EAP, was founded to provide assistance to employees of the Department and their families during times of family stress, community crises and personal conflicts. The Department recognizes spiritual support/counseling upon request as part of a **holistic** response to the **wellness** of Department employees.

2. Each Chaplain is ordained and recognized by their denomination. Each possesses a strong sense of commitment to their faith, the community and this Department. While each Chaplain is a member of a recognized religious denomination, they are committed to providing spiritual counseling, pastoral care and guidance to each Department employee, without regard to the employee's religious affiliation or denomination.

3. Required skills and knowledge for inclusion in the Chaplain Services Program include: knowledge of pastoral counseling and the ability to apply this knowledge for one-on-one personal contact; knowledge of grief counseling, stress management, interpersonal skills, and group dynamics; knowledge of critical incident stress management (CISM) for law enforcement in regard to suicide, line- of-duty death or serious injury, and other critical incidents.

4. Applicants for the Chaplain positions are interviewed by the Employee Assistance Coordinator.

Applications are processed through the Community Awareness Division by the Department's Administrative Volunteer Coordinator.

5. Approved participants in the Chaplain Services Program:

a. Shall provide two (2) hours of service per month which may include office hours, Chaplain Services Program meetings, ride-a-longs, presence or the provision of services at official events, counseling and/or support services to employees/families and assistance to employees during critical incidents.

b. May be contacted via the EA Coordinator **or** the Communications Center if their services can be of assistance during matters involving injury, death or during a serious incident.

6. Employees are encouraged to access the services of the Chaplain Services Program at any time they deem necessary. Voluntary contact with a Chaplain does not initiate any sort of formal entry into the EAP Program.

7. All discussions between employees and a Chaplain acting in the capacity of a personal counselor shall be recognized as a privileged communication.

V. ENTERING THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

Entry into the program can occur at one of three levels: voluntary, informal or formal referral.

A. Voluntary referral to the EAP occurs when an employee self-refers or otherwise initiates the contact with the EAP. An employee who voluntarily enters the EAP may discontinue participation at any time.

B. Informal referral occurs when a supervisor makes a referral to the EAP after observing, or otherwise detecting, there are personal or professional issues affecting an employee's work performance or demeanor but which do not give rise to formal disciplinary action. Informal supervisory referral to the EAP provides the employee with potential resources and information for problem resolution. An employee may refuse an informal referral to the EAP or may elect at anytime to discontinue participation resulting from an informal referral.

C. Formal referral occurs when an employee's participation in the EAP is mandated as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, disciplinary action. Formal referral may be made in instances where the underlying facts suggest the employee is at significant psychological or physical risk and referral is necessary prior to any disciplinary process. This determination will be made by the employee's Bureau Commander.

Formal referrals shall be deemed a condition of employment.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

A. Communications between EAP personnel and the employee **are** deemed confidential upon entry into the EAP at the voluntary or the informal referral level.

B. The Department will not request or require EAP personnel or professional staff under the EAP **Coordinator's** supervision to furnish information which results from participation in the EAP at the voluntary or informal referral level.

C. Employees entering the EAP through a *formal* referral shall be required to sign a *Waiver of Confidentiality*. The Waiver will address those facts and circumstances which the Department deems necessary to monitor compliance with, and progress of, any treatment, program, or other participation in an EAP service.

D. Where the formal referral is made as part of a disciplinary action, the *Waiver of Confidentiality* shall also address those facts and circumstances which concern the employee's compliance with the terms of the discipline administered.

E. In cases of formal referral, care shall be taken to ensure that the only information released is that which has a direct relevance to the employee's ability to perform their job and the employee's cooperation with the program mandates.

F. Voluntary or informal participation shall not preclude prosecution or disciplinary action which may result from an independent investigation or complaint.

G. Although communications with EAP personnel are confidential, this confidentiality does not extend to judicial proceedings.

VII. LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

A. The Department will not initiate an investigation or complaint based upon an employee's request for assistance, nor will the Department violate the confidentiality of the EAP, unless the request for assistance constitutes a communication specified in Subsection B (below).

B. An internal complaint or investigation may be initiated, and such communication will not be considered confidential, when the communication to EAP personnel by an employee:

1. Consists of an implied or stated danger to themselves or others; or
2. Indicates an intent to commit a crime; or
3. The communication is made to, or received by, EAP personnel from an EAP service provider, and such communication provides information about the participation, continuation or conclusion of a program of treatment which has been mandated in formal referral situations.

VIII. PERSONNEL ISSUES

A. The EAP is supportive in nature; therefore, informal referrals to the program represent a genuine effort to assist employees with personal or professional issues that are negatively impacting their lives. Such referral is not disciplinary and shall not be referenced in an employee's permanent record.

B. An employee has the right to refuse informal referral to the EAP. In the event a referral is refused, such refusal shall not be used against the employee and shall not be referenced, in any manner, in the employee's personnel files.

C. To the extent that an informal EAP referral is offered to remedy job performance issues, the underlying issues may still be documented and used **during** the employee's job performance evaluation, regardless of the employee's participation in the EAP.

IX. EAP NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A. In those instances when the EAP **Coordinator** must contact the employee's chain of command, the EAP **Coordinator** will deal directly with the affected employee's Bureau Commander.

B. The Bureau Commander will make those notifications necessary for operational purposes, while striving to maintain the maximum amount of confidentiality.

X. EAP REFERRAL TRAINING

A. Training regarding the Employee Assistance Program and EAP referral procedures will be provided to employees upon their promotion to a supervisory position. This training will normally be done in conjunction with the scheduled block of New Supervisor Training.

B. New employees shall receive information about the Employee Assistance Program as a part of their pre-Academy training, during the Emergency

Complaint Writer Academy or during initial orientation of new civilian employees.

Charles "Chuck" Harmon
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