

OGDEN CITY POLICE

Office of the Chief

Policy No: 64

Subject	Effective Date
Employee Mental Wellness Program	January 6, 2021
Department	Replaces Policy Dated
Police	February 2020
Division	Review Date
All Police Personnel	January 2022
Authorized Signature 	

NOTE: This rule or regulation is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer’s civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this agency, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a proactive Ogden Police Department (OPD) Employee Mental Wellness Program that includes peer support, training, mental wellness assessments, and therapy services. Ogden City recognizes that, in protecting the citizens of Ogden, the OPD Department puts itself in a heightened state of risk and a heightened state of awareness on a regular basis. This constant level of exposure to risk and awareness can result in stress-induced psychological injury. Ogden City acknowledges the disruption injuries can cause to an employee’s personal and professional wellness. Ogden City therefore understands the importance of providing a program that supports the psychological wellness of its Department employees.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide an opportunity for Department personnel to receive aid in being resilient to the psychological traumas and long-term exposures to a high-stress environment that may result from their service to the Department. The desired result is a lack of negative impact upon their professional performance and personal life satisfaction.

III. POLICY

A. General: Ogden City understands that, for OPD personnel, the possibility of psychological injury is as much a part their job as is the possibility of physical injury.

1. Regular mental wellness assessments may identify changes in psychological health that may be occurring; therefore, Ogden City provides OPD personnel with appropriate and confidential mental wellness assessments, mental wellness counseling, peer support services, and training in areas that may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Family and marital issues
 - b. Mental health issues
 - c. Stress-related issues
 - d. Post-Traumatic Stress (PTSD)
 - e. Career and job-related issues
 - f. Grief concerns
 - g. Insomnia
 - h. Crisis intervention
 - i. Alcohol and/or chemical dependency
 - j. Assisting families of deceased officers
 - k. Critical incidents
 - l. Line of duty deaths and traumas
2. After the effective date of this policy, upon hiring a new employee, a mental wellness assessment will be given to establish a baseline status of mental health for the new employee.
3. All OPD personnel will participate in an initial mental wellness assessment to establish a baseline for each of them. Employees will be given 30 days from the implementation of the mandatory assessment to complete an initial assessment if they have not already done so.
4. Annual mental wellness assessments will be given to all OPD personnel. This is to monitor changes to their mental wellness related to job performance and personal well-being. Completion of annual assessments is mandatory within 15 days of receiving it. Assessments will be distributed to employees within 30 days of their anniversary date.
5. Employees who fail to complete an initial or annual assessment will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

B. Critical Incidents:

1. Critical incidents may result in increased mental stress or injury to Department personnel. These may include but are not limited to:

- a. Officer involved shootings
 - b. Death of a fellow officer in the line of duty
 - c. Child abuse
 - d. Traumatic accident scenes
 - e. Other traumatic events (as determined by the employee)
 2. Professional mental wellness counseling from a licensed mental health clinician will be made available according to the need indicated by the assessment management plan and as a result of a critical incident.
 3. Regular monitoring of the mental wellness of personnel involved in a critical incident may occur based on need indicated by the assessment management plan.
- C. Peer Support: Ogden City recognizes the value of their officers and employees supporting each other in times of professional and personal crises and encourages all personnel to participate in the Peer Support Program when they are in need.
1. Pledge: all Peer Support Team members are required to sign the Peer Support Confidentiality Pledge.
 2. Training: Peer Support team members must complete the P.O.S.T. approved Peer Support training program before being able to offer Peer Support. They must then complete 4 hours of maintenance training each quarter to remain a member of the Peer Support Team. Being a Peer Support Member includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. how to be effective listeners.
 - b. how to help employees identify possible problems affecting their professional and personal lives.
 - c. how to assist employees in identifying options for problem resolution.
 - d. how to assess critical risks that can result from mental injuries.
 - e. when to refer an employee seeking their aid to professional mental health services.
 3. Peer Support Team members **are not professional therapists**. They do not provide professional mental health counsel or attempt to resolve mental health issues. When a situation requires the assistance of a mental health professional, information about professional resources offered through the program will be provided to the employee. Peer Support members may provide an employee with moral support when dealing with a mental health issue, but they do not offer professional advice.

4. The promotion of trust and confidentiality is of **utmost** importance for success of the Peer Support program. All information shared with a Peer Support Team member will remain confidential as outlined in Confidentiality section of this policy. Employees who receive assistance through the Peer Support Program will be informed of the strict confidentiality policy and its exceptions prior to engaging in the Peer Support session.
 5. For Peer Support visits in the field, such as an employee's home, two Peer Support members will be sent.
 6. All OPD personnel may reach out to any Peer Support member, including Ogden Fire Peer Support team members.
 7. Due to increased levels of exposure to stress and potential psychological strain, Peer Support team members may request a quarterly mental health assessment.
 8. Families of Peer Support team members (especially spouses and or partners) may also request a quarterly assessment.
 9. On occasions where Ogden City Police Peer Support Members are requested to offer Peer Support to other agencies, the Ogden City Peer Support Policy will apply. Requests for Peer Support by other agencies will be sent to the Chief's Office for approval prior to sending the Peer Support Team.
 10. When an OPD Peer Support Team member is performing peer support activities they are on official duty and are compensated in accordance with applicable Department policies.
- D. Training: all OPD personnel will undergo annual training on how to recognize emotional stress and shock and what to do when they occur. This training may include, but is not limited to:
1. How to utilize the Peer Support Program to promote wellness and healing.
 2. The importance of the Department's Physical Fitness program in maintaining good mental health.
 3. How to utilize training resources to improve resiliency.
 4. How to recognize, treat, and recover from psychological injuries.

- E. Confidentiality: Data gathered during mental health assessments is confidential and is to be used only for the participant's benefit. This confidentiality has not only been ordered by the Chief of Police, it is a mandate from the Utah State Judicial Code 78B-5-903 Public Safety Peer Counseling, <https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title78B/Chapter5/78B-5-S903.html>. Any breach of this confidentiality can result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
1. No information concerning an employee's participation may be included in an employee's personnel file.
 2. An employee's career or promotional opportunities/eligibility within the Department will not be jeopardized because of participation in this program.
 3. All information and records are confidential within the confines of the applicable laws and the scope of this policy with the following exceptions:
 - a. The participant gives permission for the release of the information.
 - b. There is a bona fide medical emergency, in which case only pertinent information may be released and only to appropriate medical personnel.
 - c. There is imminent danger of suicide or physical harm to the participant or to another person.
 - d. There is a report of an abuse or the neglect of a child; in which case only, pertinent information may be released and only to appropriate personnel.
 4. This confidentiality also applies to any personal experiences or personal information shared by Peer Support personnel with participants during participation in this program.
- F. Families: The program is available to family members. All family members of Department personnel are welcome to participate in the mental wellness assessment program.
- G. Ultimate responsibility: Although this program gives Department personnel an opportunity to resolve issues that may affect their job performance and personal life, the ultimate responsibility for proper conduct, job performance, and personal life satisfaction, rests with the individual employee.
- H. Participation: Participation in this program may be terminated if an individual engages in conduct that could terminate their employment or if the participant displays a continuing unwillingness to follow program recommendations. Unwillingness of employees to participate in mandated program activities will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

I. Code of Conduct: Staff of the Mental Wellness Program, Peer Support Team members, and participants in the program are all expected to conduct themselves in accordance to the Department's Code of Professional Conduct. See: (list reference to code of conduct here)

J. Cost of the OPD Mental Wellness Program:

1. The benefits provided by the OPD Mental Wellness Program are part of the employee benefits package offered to OPD employees by Ogden City. These internal benefit services are provided at no cost to OPD personnel and their families.
2. The program counselors or Peer Support may refer OPD to outside professionals or services when appropriate. The costs of the services provided by outside professionals, including insurance co-payments, are the responsibility of the participant. This cost may be covered by the employee's health insurance plan or other sources. Ogden City and OPD do not assume any liability for payment for any services rendered by a referred, outside service provider.