



# CITY OF GARDEN GROVE

**Steven R. Jones**  
Mayor

**John R. O'Neill**  
Mayor Pro Tem - District 2

**George S. Brietigam**  
Council Member - District 1

**Diedre Thu-Ha Nguyen**  
Council Member - District 3

**Patrick Phat Bui**  
Council Member - District 4

**Stephanie Klopfenstein**  
Council Member - District 5

**Kim Bernice Nguyen**  
Council Member - District 6

September 8, 2020

Honorable Kirk H. Nakamura  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report, "*Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve*"

Dear Judge Nakamura:

The City of Garden Grove has reviewed the Orange County Grand Jury Report, *Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve*. In compliance with California Penal Code 933 and 933.05, the City has responded to each of the findings and recommendations included in the report. Each finding and recommendation is listed below, followed by the City's response.

## Findings

F1. Peer Support Programs are effective in helping Peace Officers develop healthy coping techniques for themselves and their families.

The City of Garden Grove agrees with this finding.

F2. A written policy documenting each agency's Peer Support Program helps ensure the program's continuation after changes in staff.

The City agrees with this finding. Garden Grove Police Department (GGPD) has had a Peer Support Team and written policy since 1997. Our current policy, Garden Grove Police Department General Order 2.23, last updated as of August 6, 2020 identifies a chain of command for the Peer Support Team. This chain of command consists of the Peer Support Team members, who report to a Peer Support Team supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for several duties, to include arranging training for team members, any

administrative duties, and keeping the Administrative Services Bureau Commander apprised of any call-outs or utilization of the team.

F3. The benefits in the peer support statute, effective January 1, 2020, are important to Peace Officers and Peer Support Team members.

The City of Garden Grove agrees with this finding. All of GGPD's volunteer Peer Support Team members are sent to a Basic Peer Support training class prior to them responding to any personnel in need. The new statute helps to ensure confidentiality amongst Peer Support Team members and the employee in need.

F4. It is important that Peer Support Team members receive periodic training.

The City of Garden Grove agrees with this finding. Each GGPD Peer Support Team member is mandated to attend a Basic Peer Support class put on by a psychologist familiar with Peer Support. Each member is also requested to attend quarterly ongoing training put on by GGPD's retained departmental psychologist that covers various Peer Support related topics.

F5. Allocating a specific budget line item for Peer Support Programs help ensure adequate training and continuation of the programs.

The City of Garden Grove agrees with this finding. GGPD has established a specific budget for the Peer Support Team to assist with training and other administrative needs. The funds have been allocated toward contracts with professional service providers in the field and will continue to be allocated for the foreseeable future. If a Peer Support Team member is activated then his/her pay will be taken from their regular budget.

F6. Continuous communication to Peace Officers about the Peer Support Programs is important to increase awareness and use of the Peer Support Program.

The City of Garden Grove agrees with this finding. GGPD Peer Support Team members periodically go to the various units and briefings to talk with employees about the Peer Support Team and its function. The supervisors are reminded periodically about the Peer Support Team and when they might be needed during traumatic incidents. The Peer Support Team also has flyers available throughout the police department with documentation about the Peer Support Team as well as the names of the members. This flyer also contains various support organizations and their respective phone numbers,

to include the phone numbers to the organizations that we contract with for psychological services.

### Recommendations

R2. The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that all Peer Support Programs be in compliance with the peer support statute. (F3)

The recommendation has been implemented. The Garden Grove Police Department General Order 2.23 – Peer Support Team has been modified to reflect the current laws directed under California Penal Codes 8669.1 – 8669.7. (See attached General Order 2.23 – Peer Support Team)

R3. The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that Peer Support Team members receive periodic training and that completion of training is documented. (F4)

The recommendation has been implemented. The Peer Support Team has been receiving quarterly training for the past few years. This training is conducted by the contracted departmental psychologist and is approximately two hours in length. The Peer Support supervisor currently keeps notes as to the topics of the training and which Peer Support Team members were present. The Garden Grove Police Department is currently undergoing a change in our training records and in the future this training will be kept on our training records database.

R4. The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that all law enforcement agencies allocate a specific budget line item for their Peer Support Program. (F5)

The recommendation has been implemented. The Garden Grove Police Department has budgeted funds towards professional peer/trauma support training since approximately 2012. The funds have been allocated towards contracts with professional service providers in the field and will continue to be allocated for the foreseeable future. This training budget is a specific line item for training and administrative duties in the amount of \$15,000 per year. If a Peer Support Team member is activated then his/her pay will be taken from their regular budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Maria Stipe, Assistant City Manager, at (714) 741-5106 or by email at [marias@ggcity.org](mailto:marias@ggcity.org).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven R. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "S" at the beginning and a long, sweeping underline.

Steven R. Jones  
Mayor

Attachment: General Order 2.23 – Peer Support Team

C: Orange County Grand Jury



**General Order: 2.23  
PEER SUPPORT TEAM**

Effective: December 4, 1997  
Last Revised: August 6, 2020

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this order is to establish the duties and responsibilities of the Peer Support Team. The team will work in conjunction with the Department psychologist and assist police department personnel involved in traumatic incidents. This assistance may cover a range of duties from conducting debriefings with personnel involved in an incident, to providing comfort and assistance to involved persons, and to explaining investigative processes.

**POLICY**

The Department recognizes that traumatic events often cause feelings of anger, guilt, and helplessness, which affect the mental and physical health of employees. These feelings are often not understood and have an adverse affect on how employees perform their duties. In an attempt to minimize these problems, the Garden Grove Police Department has developed a Peer Support Team composed of department personnel, assigned the duty of assisting personnel involved in traumatic incidents. The Peer Support Team shall operate under the direction of the Administrative Services Commander and the supervision of the Professional Standards Lieutenant. The Peer Support Team shall have ongoing specified training from the Department Psychologist related to assisting personnel involved in traumatic incidents.

It is not the intent of this team to in any way hinder the investigation of officer-involved incidents. Peer Support Team members shall make every effort to cooperate with investigators in their duties.

**PROCEDURE**

The incident supervisor should contact the Peer Support Team. The team supervisor should then notify members of the team, as needed, to provide debriefing services.

Prior to contacting the affected employee(s), team members shall first contact the incident supervisor, or if unavailable, another on-duty police supervisor or

manager, and identify themselves and their role as members of the Peer Support Team. On-duty team members involved in the initial incident, immediately called for investigative follow-up, or otherwise involved in the incident shall not be part of the debriefing team.

The incident supervisor shall notify the Peer Support Team in the following situations:

1. Any incident when a psychologist debriefing is required by General Order 3.11.
  - Duty-related shooting incidents or aggravated assaults when the officer suffers a nonfatal gunshot wound, stab wound, or other serious injury resulting in hospitalization.
  - Duty-related shooting incidents resulting in the wounding of another person.
  - Duty-related shooting incidents resulting in the death of another person.
  - Duty-related traffic collisions resulting in fatal injuries to another person.
  - Duty-related traumatic incidents resulting in the death or serious injury of another person directly involved in the incident being handled by the on-scene officer.

**NOTE:** Use of the Peer Support Team is intended to support, not replace, the mandatory interview with the Department-recognized psychologist, for those officers involved in a shooting that results in injury or death to another person, per General Order 2.8.

2. When Department personnel have been involved in any incident that results in an emotional shock to the degree that substantial and lasting damage may occur. Such incidents may include, for example, the death of or serious injury to department personnel, exposure to an especially tragic or gruesome event, or a mass death situation.
3. Whenever the on-duty supervisor feels that it would be beneficial to the officer or employee involved to have contact with the Peer Support Team.
4. When requested by department personnel.

If the on-duty supervisor has any doubt as to whether the team should be called out, the Peer Support Team supervisor should be notified and consulted. The incident supervisor and Peer Support Team supervisor will decide if a response is appropriate.

The team supervisor will be responsible for activating as many members of the team as necessary to appropriately respond to the incident.

Department personnel involved in a traumatic incident may select a member of the Peer Support Team to assist them and every effort shall be made to have that member respond

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

While communication between an officer or employee and the department psychologist has been deemed confidential and privileged by the Evidence Code, communication between a member of the Peer Support Team and the person being debriefed may not be considered privileged by the courts. The Garden Grove Police Department considers these communications to be confidential.

It shall be mandatory that Peer Support Team members maintain strict confidentiality in matters discussed in trauma debriefings, and trauma meetings and training. Any statement to or discussion with Team members while acting in his/her Peer Support Team role shall remain confidential.

A law enforcement personnel, whether or not a party to an action, has a right to refuse to disclose, and to prevent another from disclosing, a confidential communication between the law enforcement personnel and a peer support member made while the peer support team member was providing peer support services, or a confidential communication made to a crisis hotline or crisis referral service. (California Penal Code 8669.4(a))

Pursuant to California Penal Code 8669.4(b), a confidential communication may be disclosed under the following circumstances:

- (1) To refer a law enforcement personnel to receive crisis referral services by a peer support team member.
- (2) During a consultation between two peer support team members.
- (3) If the peer support team member reasonably believes that disclosure is necessary to prevent death, substantial bodily harm, or commission of a crime.
- (4) If the law enforcement personnel expressly agrees in writing that the confidential communication may be disclosed.
- (5) In a criminal proceeding.
- (6) If otherwise required by law.

Peer Support Team members shall not discuss debriefings they have been involved in, who has been debriefed, or provide any information about the team's activities except in the instances listed above and then only after consultation with the Department psychologist.

The Peer Support Team is not an investigative unit of the Police Department; therefore, it will not be the policy of this department to question team members, or any other participant involved in a Peer Support Team debriefing, concerning the content of such discussion.

Pursuant to California Penal Code 8669.5(a), a Peer Support Team member shall not provide peer support services in any of the following circumstances:

(1) If, when serving in a peer support role, the peer support team member's relationship with a law enforcement personnel receiving peer support services could be reasonably expected to impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in providing peer support, or would otherwise risk exploitation or harm to the law enforcement personnel.

(2) If the peer support team member and the law enforcement personnel receiving peer support services were involved as participants or witnesses to the same traumatic incident.

(3) If the peer support team member and the law enforcement personnel receiving peer support services are both involved in a shared active or ongoing investigation.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSULTATION**

The Peer Support Team shall work in conjunction with the Department psychologist and at their direction. If the incident is such that the Department psychologist is not called out or does not respond, the lead Peer Support Team member will notify the Department psychologist of the call out and the reason for it. At the conclusion of the call out, the lead Peer Support Team member will notify the Professional Standards Lieutenant or the Administrative Services Bureau Commander prior to re-contacting the Department psychologist with the results of the call out.

### **Peer Support Team Training**

The Peer Support Team is a voluntary position comprised of compassionate experienced individuals that want to assist other employees dealing with traumatic incidents in both their personal and professional lives. Once a team member is brought onto the Peer Support Team they will be required to attend a Basic Peer Support class identified by the Peer Support supervisor. Each team member will also be required to attend quarterly training put on by the contracted departmental psychologist.

### **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

The Peer Support Team will have a supervisor who will be responsible for the administrative requirements of the team. This supervisor shall report only to a designated management liaison, generally the Administrative Services Bureau, due to the confidential nature of the team's responsibilities. The Peer Support Team Coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Supervision and administrative duties of the team



*GARDEN GROVE POLICE DEPARTMENT*

*General Order: 2.23*

*Peer Support Team*

- Keep the Administrative Services Bureau Commander apprised of any call-outs or utilization of the team
- Arrange training for team members