

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS OPERATING PROCEDURE		EFFECTIVE DATE 09/23/2024	NUMBER 02.04.101C
SUBJECT MDOC PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM		SUPERSEDES NEW	
		AUTHORITY PD 02.04.101	
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OBJECTIVE:

To provide a readily accessible network of employee peers who are trained and willing to be of service to their colleagues who may require assistance or support.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. Employee Service Program (ESP): A service provided by the Office of the State Employer that is designed to provide assistance to employees and their families to promote wellness and to prevent or resolve personal or organizational issues that may interfere with work productivity, home life, or behavioral health.
- B. Peer Support Person (PSP): A Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) employee who has been nominated, reviewed, and selected to offer assistance and support to MDOC staff, especially during times of stress and crisis.
- C. Wellness: The holistic integration and exploration of healthy habits to improve physical, spiritual, and mental health. Wellness is the active pursuit of good health and results in an improved quality of life.

INFORMATION:

- D. The Peer Support Program is composed of MDOC employees who have been nominated by their colleagues, reviewed, and selected to be specially trained to serve in a volunteer role of Peer Support. The purpose of the Peer Support Program is to offer assistance and appropriate support resources to all MDOC employees, eligible family members, and retirees when personal or professional issues negatively impact their lives. This assistance is confidential, as it meets the confidentiality standards described within this policy and the Peer Support Program Confidentiality Agreement.
- E. The Peer Support Program provides an avenue for individuals to “talk-out” their problems with specially trained co-workers, who understand and want to help. The Peer Support Persons (PSPs) are trained to use active listening skills, help clarify issues, explore options, assist with the problem-solving process, and provide approved wellness referrals and resources when needed as appropriate. The Wellness Unit Program Manager and Coordinators shall provide guidance, consultation, and maintain oversight of PSP volunteers.
- F. Because of the sensitive nature of the PSP role, it is imperative that the PSP maintain clear boundaries and be free from conflicting responsibilities or the appearance of such. Individuals who are in formal positions that may compromise or hinder the important dynamics of the PSP work will not be eligible for PSP selection. These roles would include, but not limited to, those in supervisory positions and union representatives.
- G. The PSP role is not one of a counselor or a therapist, but one who will listen, assess, and, when necessary, refer to the Wellness Unit or to a designated referral source including the ESP. Participation as a PSP is strictly on a voluntary basis.
- H. The following are objectives of the Peer Support Program:
 1. To provide a readily accessible network of employee peers who are trained and willing to be of service to their colleagues (peers) who may need assistance or support.
 2. To help support the employee's wellness for themselves and their families.
 3. To develop among employees an awareness that they are not alone, that people care, and that others are willing to listen and support them.

4. To increase awareness and accessibility of wellness services offered by the MDOC Wellness Unit and outside professional resources.
 5. To help individuals cope through temporary crises.
 6. To provide 24/7 emotional support and crisis intervention to all MDOC employees, eligible family members, and retirees.
 7. To be available for continued wellness support.
 8. To provide insight into the unique dynamics and circumstances of different work areas.
- I. The PSP's immediate supervisor shall have the discretion to modify the work hours of a PSP so they may fulfill the duties of this voluntary support role. Situations requiring schedule modifications could include, but are not limited to, critical incident response or after-hour wellness rounds.

PROCEDURE:

PEER SUPPORT SELECTION PROCESS

WHO

DOES WHAT

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| Wellness Unit | 1. | When Peer Support Persons (PSPs) are needed, issues a memo to all members of the Department to call for recommendations/nominations. Recommendations or nominations will be returned to the Wellness Unit Peer Support email box. |
| Regional Wellness Coordinator | 2. | When a recommendation is received by the Wellness Unit, sends an application to the person recommended. As a part of this application, their interest in serving as a PSP will be verified. |
| PSP Candidate | 3. | Completes the application which includes contact information for their supervisor and Warden/Administrator. |
| | 4. | Returns the completed application to the Wellness Unit Peer Support email box. |
| | 5. | Any applicant who is in a supervisory position, union representative, or discriminatory harassment counselor will be rejected due to the ways these roles could compromise the confidential nature of the PSP role. |
| Wellness Unit | 6. | Sends notification and reference forms to the PSP candidate's immediate supervisor and the warden or administrator of their work area. When completed these reference forms will be returned to the Wellness Unit Peer Support email box. |
| Regional Wellness Coordinator | 7. | Reviews the initial referral, application, and references for the PSP candidate's region. Any concerns with the application materials will be reviewed with the Wellness Unit Program Manager. |
| | 8. | If there are no concerns with the PSP application, schedules an interview with the PSP candidate using the |

approved questions.

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| | 9. | After the interview, presents all application materials to the Wellness Unit Program Manager for approval. |
| Wellness Unit Program Manager | 10. | Reviews all aspects of the application for completeness and considers if the candidate is suited to the role of a PSP based on the requirements contained in this operating procedure. |
| | 11. | Sends notice via email to the candidate if they are rejected. |
| | 12. | If the candidate is approved, presents the candidate to MDOC Human Resources to ensure there are no current disciplinary concerns that would prevent the candidate from serving as a PSP. |
| MDOC Human Resources | 13. | Verifies the PSP team candidate is in good standing with the Department. |
| Wellness Unit Program Manager | 14. | Submits candidate verified by MDOC Human Resources to the Director for final approval. |
| Wellness Unit | 15. | Notifies candidates of their selection by email. The candidates will be asked to confirm their interest and will be scheduled for training by the Wellness Unit. |

J. Qualities of PSPs that will be utilized throughout the selection process include:

1. Be well respected and considered highly competent in their assigned work area or post.
2. Be motivated and willing to manage time effectively with minimal impact on normal duties, including an ability to manage work and PSP volunteer role responsibilities.
3. Be empathetic, as well as possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
4. Agree to maintain confidentiality as outlined in PD 02.04.101 "Wellness Unit."

PEER SUPPORT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

K. Training shall emphasize and focus on skill development for conducting peer support services and shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Confidentiality & Building Trust
2. General Assessment Skills
3. Active Listening
4. Self-Care
5. Problem-Solving Skills
6. Mental Health Issues (PTSD, anxiety, etc.)
7. Crisis Intervention

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8. Special Populations (military, retirees, etc.)
9. Suicide Awareness & Intervention
10. Cultural & Diversity Issues
11. Relationship Issues (death, divorce, etc.)
12. Referral and follow-up (Wellness Unit, ESP, etc.).

- L. The purpose of follow-up workshops, annual training, and team-building workshops are to enhance problem-solving skills, provide group sharing and learning opportunities, refresh initial training topics, address newly arisen needs, and offer an exchange of experiences. Any required hours for peer support training will be offered two times per year. All Peer Support Persons shall be required to attend one of the designated peer support training sessions.

PEER SUPPORT SERVICE GUIDELINES

- M. The PSP may withdraw their volunteer role as a PSP at any time. They must notify the Wellness Unit Program Manager of their resignation in writing.
- N. A PSP may be subject to removal from participating in the Peer Support Program on the grounds that their conduct is inconsistent with the Peer Support Program purpose, policy, and objectives.
- O. A PSP under investigation shall be placed on inactive status until the matter is resolved. While the PSP is on inactive status, they shall not represent themselves as a PSP or act in this capacity. The PSP shall notify the Wellness Unit that they are under investigation.
- P. All PSPs serve at the discretion of the Regional Wellness Coordinators and the Wellness Unit Program Manager and may be removed at any time for cause.
- Q. The PSP may be removed from participation in the Peer Support Program if they fail to participate in required Peer Support training without prior approval.
- R. PSPs may request to be placed on a leave of absence for up to six months due to personal and professional matters that will impede their ability to give themselves fully to the program. Requests for leave must be in writing and will be reviewed by their Regional Wellness Coordinator and may be reviewed by the Wellness Unit Program Manager.

PEER SUPPORT ADVISORY BOARD

- S. A Peer Support Advisory Board shall be established consisting of MDOC Staff. The purpose of the board will be to advise and consult with the Wellness Unit on development and enhancement of Peer Support services. The Board shall represent various stakeholders from the MDOC Wellness Unit, Peer Support Persons, and MDOC Staff.
- T. Meetings shall be held at least quarterly, and all members of the board are asked to make the meetings a priority and attend as scheduled. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, it is the responsibility of the member to plan for alternative representation. Attendance for board members is considered to be Department related and supervisors shall release board members from their regular duties to attend these meetings if possible.
- U. A summary of meeting minutes and any recommendations shall be distributed to Wellness Advisory Board members and Wellness Unit Program Manager.
- V. The Board exists to provide consultation and feedback. The Board has no supervisory authority over PSPs.

APPROVED: Heidi E. Washington 8/26/2024
Heidi E. Washington, Director Date