



La Mesa Police Department *Department Wellness Program*

The La Mesa Police Department

The La Mesa Police Department is a municipal police agency authorized to employ 69 sworn police officers and 31 professional civilians, as well as a large contingent of retired senior volunteers. The Department serves a community of approximately 60,000 people in an area of 9 square miles. The Department answers over 100,000 calls for service each year with the Patrol Division, Investigations Unit, Special Investigations Unit, Traffic Unit, School Resource Unit, and Crime Prevention / Community Resource Unit.





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The Evolution of a Comprehensive Wellness Program

As early as 1997, the La Mesa Police Department recognized the impact of critical incident stress on those who serve in the law enforcement profession. Long before Peer Support teams were culturally accepted, the La Mesa Police Department's Peer Support Team began conducting critical incident stress debriefings to assist our team members with resolving critical incident stress following traumatic incidents. Over the years, our Peer Support Team has evolved and become just one component of a highly effective and diverse La Mesa Police Department Wellness Program. Influenced by a greater understanding of trauma and a steadfast dedication to our employees, our Wellness Program has successfully indoctrinated wellness initiatives and practices throughout all operational facets of our agency.

The greatest evolution of our program occurred in 2009, after then-Chief Ed Aceves (Session 236) and Captain Dan Willis (Session 241) attended the FBI National Academy. As part of their curriculum, they attended a course called "*Spirituality in Law Enforcement*." Chief Aceves didn't sign up for the course when selecting his courses, he was assigned to it and tried to get out of it as it was not something that interested him. He went to speak with the instructor, FBI Special Agent and Doctor Sam Feemster, seeking to get out of the class. Dr. Feemster challenged him: "Come to the first class, and if you don't like it, I will sign you out of the course." So the Chief went to the first class and was stymied when Dr. Feemster presented it like this: every year in the United States an estimated 125 to 150 police officers will commit suicide, but we are doing nothing about it. If a 737 airliner crashed every year in the United States, killing the 125 to 150 people on board, the FAA would ground every 737 until the problem was solved.

Chief Aceves stayed in the class. He also brought back with him a dedication to improving officer wellness: taking care of the whole person and giving our employees the training, tools, and services needed to survive a career in law enforcement; from recruitment to retirement, healthy, whole, happy, and intact to LIVE your life. Captain Willis then went to the FBI National Academy, attended Dr. Feemster's class, and came back with a passion for creating something more for our people here.

Captain Willis started thinking and testing the waters at LMPD to see what (if anything) might come of this new approach to wellness. The challenge was, of course, in using the word "spirituality" when discussing wellness. For most people, the use of the word "spirituality" tended to evoke thoughts of organized religion. We struggled to come up with another way to explain it: that unique inner sense of self and wellness that speaks to the soul rather than the mind. We were referring to the WHOLE person and the unique inner being that makes a person a human being and not just a badge or a uniform. Enter the concept of "BeSTOW," which stands for "Beyond Survival Towards Officer Wellness". This program was the creation of Dr. Feemster and formed the central basis for his course.



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BeSTOW PIN

The design of the BeSTOW pin has the following symbolic meaning:

“Bestow” means, “to give” or “to devote”. We give in selfless service and we are devoted to each other and those we are sworn to serve. The word “Bestow” is in the center of the pin because service, giving, and devotion to duty and each other are the center and purpose of our work.

The pin itself is a target to remind us to keep on target with our focus of training of the mind, body, and spirit—all of the components essential to being well and serving with the highest quality. A circle was used to form the target because a circle has no ending, it just continues. Similarly, our efforts to develop and proactively train our mind, body, emotions, and spirit must not have an end, but needs to continue throughout our professional and personal life.

The letters “Be-S-T-O-W” stand for “Beyond Survival Toward Officer Wellness”. This signifies that our over-all wellness involves much more than just physical health and safety. It more importantly involves our mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being—all of which are integral and needed in order to reach retirement well adjusted, healthy, and vibrant. We need to not only learn how to stay physically alive, but to learn how to thrive emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

The largest circle in the target is marked “spiritual”. Our spirit, that part of us that is not our mind or body---that which serves to motivate and inspire us, to give us hope, meaning, and purpose in our life, is fundamental and overshadows the remaining elements. It is our spirit that makes us human and has the greatest influence over our mind, body, and emotions.

The next circle in the target is marked “mental”. This is to remind us to continually strive to learn and to always look for ways to pass on what we have learned and experienced to others.

The next smaller circle in the target is marked “emotional”. This is to remind us of the importance of learning to constructively process the events and feelings we experience at work, rather than ignoring or burying them, or dealing with them in a self-destructive manner.

The smallest circle in the target is marked “physical”. Our physical health is the least component of our over-all health and well-being. In order to be physically healthy, our emotional, mental, and spiritual components need to be healthy, well-adjusted, active, and trained.

We are able to give and to survive beyond physical safety when our spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical components are all aligned, active, trained, and balanced.



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Our BeSTOW program began as its own program separate from Peer Support. We formed a committee of people who wanted to be involved and started brainstorming. Our Peer Support Team remained the reactive component of our wellness program, while the BeSTOW program became the proactive component. We published line-up training materials, added training to our field-training program, and began our library. Eventually, we realized that the individuals who were most passionate about wellness and most trusted by our employees were our Peer Support Team members. Since all of our Peer Support Team was also on the BeSTOW Team, we combined the two. We also felt that BeSTOW was more of a philosophy; an approach to how we (as a Department) viewed wellness and as the culture began to shift, we were incorporating the BeSTOW philosophy into everything we did. So the two became one within the Wellness Program, and we have both reactive and proactive components within our program. The pin is issued to any officer who wants one.

Our Departmental Instructions were revised to reflect the philosophy and comprehensive nature of our program. *Department Instruction 116 has been included for reference in Appendix A.*

Reactive Components

Peer Support Team

Our Peer Support Team members are available 24/7 and respond to call-outs following incidents. This has included both on-duty and off-duty incidents. In 2014, a new La Mesa Police Officer was off-duty and traveling with his family on a local interstate. His vehicle was struck at high speed by a tow-truck, sending his wife, 1-year-old son, and mother-in-law to three different area hospitals. The officer himself was also transported to the hospital. The Peer Support Team responded simultaneously to three different hospitals, to support our officer and his family, and to ensure effective communication regarding the status of each patient with our officer. The officer's wife sustained the most significant injuries, required emergency surgery, and she remained in the hospital for over a week before being discharged. Peer Support Team members remained in contact with the officer, offering support and assistance.

While vicarious, cumulative, and critical incident trauma is inherit to law enforcement, our Wellness Program recognizes that sources of trauma can also occur off-duty. Many of our employees suffer losses and experience trauma in their personal lives. Our Peer Support Team is there to support our personnel, regardless of the source of trauma. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, a painful break-up/divorce, or health issues, the Peer Support Team will respond and assist employees.

Our Peer Support Team supports employees regardless of their position within the Department. The La Mesa Police Department is made up of 69 sworn peace officers, 1 Reserve Police Officer, 25 Communications staff, 31 non-sworn professional staff members, and 20 volunteers. We also recognize the importance of supporting those who



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came before us, and offer Peer Support and Wellness Program services to our retirees (both sworn and non-sworn). We believe our Team should reflect the make-up of our Department as a whole and therefore our Peer Support Team consists of 10 sworn peace officers, 2 non-sworn personnel, a retiree, and a Chaplain.

Although some agencies require their Peer Support personnel to have pre-requisite experience (namely that they have been involved in an Officer Involved Shooting), we do not require this. Our Peer Supporters have a wide variety of professional and personal life experience, allowing them to support our personnel regardless of the issue. While critical incidents do occur, experience has taught us that our personnel are more often challenged by experiences outside the workplace and the effects of this external trauma is sometimes far more damaging to their wellness and their career.

Peer Support Team Training

Our Peer Support Team members are trained in the Mitchell Model of CISM Debriefings. Each Team member attends the Basic Peer Support course, which includes both individual and group crisis intervention training. Each Team member is also a member of the California Peer Support Association (CPSA).

Beyond the Basic course, our Peer Support Team members also attend the Annual CPSA Conference. The 3-day conference is held in Ventura each year and provides Peer Supporters with a variety of training. For the past 6 years, we have sought to send our entire Team to the conference. Funding for the tuition, per diem, hotel room, and travel of each Team member has been paid for by the Department and through fundraising.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefings

Many agencies only offer full Critical Incident Stress Debriefings following an Officer Involved Shooting. One advantage of our Peer Support Team, and our Wellness Program, is that our Peer Supporters have a variety of experience and although some have been in an Officer Involved Shooting, the majority of our Team has not. We offer Critical Incident Stress Debriefings and Defusing following any incident which is traumatic. Per our Wellness Policy:

Critical incidents that require a Peer Support response shall include, but are not limited to:

- A. All shootings where a suspect is killed or wounded;
- B. Where an employee witnesses another employee's death or serious injury;
- C. Where an employee is taken hostage;
- D. Where an employee is witness to a suicide;
- E. Where an employee is witness to a violent death or serious injury;
- F. Infant/child death;
- G. Where an employee is a witness or a participant to an incident involving multiple deaths;
- H. Any incident that is likely to affect the employee's ability to interact with the public and carry out their job functions;
- I. Any other incident deemed appropriate by the Police Department Watch Commander.



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Debriefings are not limited just to those who were “on scene.” Our Dispatchers are included in the CISM Debriefing. Our Wellness Program recognizes the trauma suffered by Dispatchers who, often as the first point of contact with a victim or witness, experience the same trauma as Officers who respond to the scene. Dispatchers perceive their trauma through auditory pathways and their minds often fill with horrific mental images that mirror what their ears perceive. Their unique perspective often provides a crucial component during a CISM debriefing, just as the Officers’ perspective provides their Dispatchers with crucial components.

Supporting Families Through Debriefings

In the late-night hours of August 19, 2011, La Mesa Police Officers were called to a neighborhood regarding a domestic disturbance and a male possibly armed with a rifle. When the squad of 6 Officers and their Sergeant arrived, they were confronted by a man in the middle of the street armed with a shotgun. The male ignored commands to drop the weapon and instead racked the shotgun and began to raise the weapon towards the approaching officers. All 6 Officers fired at the male, striking him multiple times, before he could discharge his shotgun. The male died at the scene.

Members of the Peer Support team were called in to assist with on-site support for the involved employees, including the officers that discharged their weapons. Team members were also able to provide defusings for the involved officers and dispatchers prior to them going home. In the aftermath of the incident and the Peer Support response, we quickly realized the trauma of the incident was not localized to our involved officers—their spouses and families suffered as well. We wondered if we would possibly support their spouses while simultaneously supporting the officers. The solution was simple: while the officers were conducting their CISM debriefing several days later, we would also debrief the spouses in a separate debriefing. Although this had never been done before, the debriefing was extremely successful. The spouses were able to express their thoughts and reactions. We also armed them with knowledge and materials to help them understand what their law enforcement spouses might be experiencing and how to better support them.

Contracted Counseling Services

When the need to assist an employee exceeds the capabilities of a Peer Supporter, the Peer Supporter can confidentially refer that employee to a variety of licensed mental health clinicians. While many public safety employees are able to access mental health counseling through their city or county Employee Assistance Program, there are significant limitations to EAP’s. Most notably is the difficulty in selecting a culturally competent clinician who understands trauma and First Responders. The La Mesa Police Department has contracts with three different psychological service providers. These contracts allow an employee to see the clinician, for up to 6 sessions per incident/issue, free of charge and completely confidential. The clinician then sends an invoice to the



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agency for payment. The invoice does not contain names, badge numbers, or ID numbers. The direct contact information for these providers is posted in the Department break room so that the employee can feel comfortable reaching out confidentially.

When we began offering contracted counseling services, the annual budget for those services was \$1,000.00. The amount was based on the anticipated use. We quickly realized the amount was insufficient and we were pleasantly surprised that so many of our personnel were willing to take advantage of this program. For the 2019/2021 Fiscal Years, we have included \$12,000.00 per year for “psychological/crisis/post-trauma services for employees.”

Annual Peer Support Team Debrief

Our Peer Support Team is a tremendous resource worth protecting. While Team members are also working professionals, and thus may experience trauma of their own, we recognize the implications of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue stemming from supporting their peers. Each year, we hold a “Team Debriefing” with a mental health clinician. The Team is able to process their role during the past year and relieve some of the ill-effects and compassion fatigue that often comes from taking care of other First Responders.

Proactive Components

Quarterly Wellness Newsletter

In 2013 we began publishing a quarterly newsletter called “The V.E.S.T” (Vitality through Emotional Survival Training). The newsletter covers a variety of topics, applicable to all our employees. Articles are written by Peer Support Team members, pulled from public sources, or contributed by community partners. Every issue highlights resources, both internal and external. *Refer to Appendix B for samples of The V.E.S.T.*

Quarterly Fit Test

Officers and staff are encouraged and rewarded for participating in the quarterly physical fitness test called the “Fit Test.” Each year, employees can earn up to forty (40) hours of compensation time by completing the test, which is monitored by a proctor. Proctors are employees of different ranks throughout the police Department. The test includes blood pressure and pulse rate measurements, body composition assessment, sit-ups, push-ups, flexibility, and a 1.5 mile run. The better you do in each category, the more paid time off you are rewarded. This program is written into our Memorandum of Understanding.

Law enforcement is a physical job that not only takes a toll on our minds, but it also wreaks havoc on our bodies. Working nights, long hours and getting little sleep coupled with the stressors of this career in general, the body’s hormones become unbalanced, cortisol builds up, and our cardio and circulatory systems are continually taxed. Blood pressure



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is a silent killer, even for people who “appear” to be fit. According to the Officer Down Memorial Page, 187 police officers died in the line-of-duty from heart attacks or heart related issues between 2010 and 2020. This is just the number for line-of-duty deaths. Many more occur while officers are off-duty as well. The Fit Test promotes regular exercise and movement, while also making individuals aware of how their body is physiologically processing the stress. During the past year, 35 different employees have participated in the Fit Test program, for a combined 786 hours of compensated time off.

Department Fitness Center

The Department has a fitness center that is outfitted with high-quality weight and cardio equipment that is available to all employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Although our employees cannot work out on duty, they can get their workouts in just before or after their shifts. In conjunction with the City of La Mesa Wellness Committee, yoga sessions, healthy cooking courses, and incentivized fitness challenges are held regularly throughout the year.





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Wellness Library

Our previous Peer Support Team Leader, Maxine Lynch, began an extensive library of books, videos and articles for individuals to check out at their convenience. A large variety of topics are covered, to include: personal growth, post-traumatic syndrome disorder (PTSD), combat and survival, leadership and management, police procedures, crisis intervention, substance abuse, suicide, family and interpersonal relationships, and even some police non-fiction covering the history of some officers and agencies.

At present, our Wellness Library contains over 120 titles and a variety of Department members check-out books and DVD's on a regular basis. We are always looking to include additional titles in our library and any new purchases are first read or viewed by a Peer Supporter prior to adding them to our library. Each new title is included as a "Book Review" or "DVD Review" in our quarterly wellness newsletter. The review is written by the Peer Supporter who read or watched the title.





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Chaplain Program

One need not be a religious person or member of a church to benefit from the support of a Police Chaplain. Our Wellness Program has worked to significantly enhance our Chaplain program and services. We work diligently to create an atmosphere for Chaplains to be part of our Officers' and Staff's everyday composition. Our Chaplain is not only a pastor at a local La Mesa church but is also involved with officers and other employees on a regular basis. She is a part of our Peer Support Team and has served as a board member and the vice president of the California Peer Support Association. She attends regular meetings with our team, travels with us to attend annual training, and even fills our Agency's refrigerator with bottled water to keep us hydrated.

Our Chaplain is involved in many aspects of our agency. She visits and checks on Officers, Dispatchers and other team members, goes on ride-alongs with Officers to better understand the work they do and how she can apply her services better, comes to call-outs to assist with homeless citizens, and she is proactive in letting team members know they are not alone in the struggles they face. Through her ride-alongs and participating in Department events, our Chaplain has gained the trust of our employees.

Recently an Officer's mother passed away. Chaplain Womack kept in contact with the Officer through text messages and calls to offer help with her family, give words of encouragement and guidance, and to make sure the Officer knew she was accessible to assist in any way she might need. The officer expressed a heartfelt gratitude for the support and counsel in a time of such deep grief.

The Peer Support Team is also currently recruiting more Chaplains for our team. Different people have unique needs and preferences in the person for whom they will confide. Our goal is to have an effective collection of committed Chaplains that will include different genders, races, religions, and backgrounds.

New Employee Orientation

Of the 69 sworn Officers at the La Mesa Police Department, 35% have less than 5 years of law enforcement experience. For these new Officers, they have "grown up" in a law enforcement agency that supports wellness and normalizes traumatic experiences and reactions to trauma. This cultural shift has been due, in part, to their indoctrination into our Wellness Program. We take this indoctrination one step further by including their families. Once a year, the Peer Support Team holds a "New Employee Orientation." All new employees hired since the previous year are mandated to attend and they are strongly encouraged to bring their significant other, adult children, and family members. The employees are paid overtime to attend this 4-hour session. We typically provide a catered brunch or lunch during the event.



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During the New Employee Orientation, we introduce the employee and their family to the components of our Wellness Program and we talk about critical incident trauma, vicarious trauma, cumulative trauma, and hypervigilance. Each family receives a copy of two books: *I Love a Cop*, by Ellen Kirschman, and *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*, by Kevin Gilmartin. These are their copies to keep. We also provide the families with handouts such as “PTSD: Not All Wounds are Visible” (*attached in Appendix C*).

The New Employee Orientation also provides the family members an opportunity to meet members of our Peer Support Team. They are provided with contact information for each Team member and are encouraged to reach out if they need support or believe their loved one may be in need of support.

Field Training Officer Program

As a new Officer, Dispatcher or staff member, our personnel are often inundated with new information, traumatic scenes, physical and verbal attacks by citizens, and the complex stress of getting through the training program successfully. Often, they feel isolated or segregated from the rest of the group.

Field Training Officers integrate Peer Support into the training program. Our objective is to completely normalize the utilization of the Peer Support Team, Wellness Program resources, and eradicate the stigma associated with seeking assistance. Our Field Training Program also includes a portion of training during which a Trainee is paired with a Peer Support Team member to go over the Wellness Program. Trainee’s must be “signed off” on this portion of training to complete Field Training. *A copy of this portion of our Training Manual is included in Appendix D.*

Annual Performance Evaluations

When employees receive their annual performance evaluation, they are provided with a Wellness Program Handout. This handout includes contact information for all Peer Support Team members, the Chaplain, and our contracted counseling services. While not mandatory, we also encourage employees to check in with one of the counselors to “purge” any trauma from the past 12 months. While providing the employee with their evaluation, their supervisor also discusses wellness, emotional survival, and things the employee can do to enhance their survivability.

Bulletin Board

Our Department has several break-rooms, with the largest including a full kitchen. Most employees take their lunch/dinner break in this room. We have a large bulletin board, which is updated quarterly, displayed in a prominent location in the break room. The bulletin board always includes contact information for the Peer Support Team and our contract counseling services. Each quarter, the board is updated with news articles from



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a variety of sources. These articles focus on physical and emotional wellness and are specific to First Responders.

Below 100

As a national program, Below 100 provides outstanding training which we promote via our Wellness Program. The 5 tenants of the program (Wear Your Belt! Wear Your Vest! Watch Your Speed! Complacency Kills. What's Important Now?) are displayed in the briefing room, the locker rooms, and on a bulletin board outside the briefing room. We update the Below 100 flyers as they become available and we incorporate these tenants in our training programs.

Giving Back Through Community Engagement

Youth Leadership Camp

Each summer, the Peer Support Team hosts a Youth Leadership Camp. This week-long camp seeks to develop leadership skills in teens who are sophomores, juniors, or seniors in high school. The students are nominated by teachers, school administrators, or Department personnel who have witnessed the student's leadership potential. These are typically students who are academically succeeding in school. The camp includes discussions and activities designed to instill self-confidence and leadership attributes. The Peer Support Team also focuses on resilience, with the understanding that the students are the next generation of leaders within our Community.

Since the inception of the Youth Leadership Camp, we have been privy to incredible stories of success, perseverance, and gratitude. Many Department members have maintained mentoring relationships with former students and have sought to support them through their collegiate and young adult lives. While this program serves the future of our Community, we also recognize the health benefits of volunteerism and giving back to the community. Department members who are involved in the program take great pride in the program and value the sense of service they feel each year.

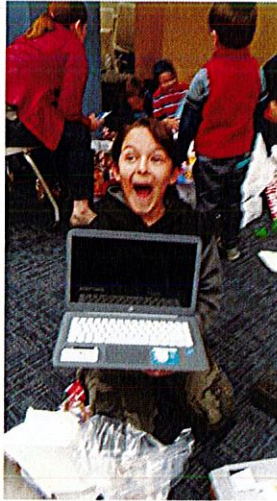
LMPD Christmas Families

Each holiday season, the Peer Support Team "adopts" three to five families. The families are often single parent households or families facing financial hardships, with young children at home. Our Chaplain meets with the parent(s) several weeks before Christmas and finds out what their children have on their wish list that year. The week before Christmas, the families are invited to the Police Department for a dinner and afterwards the children are given Christmas presents (which is a surprise to the children). Funding for this program often comes from Department members who wish to contribute. The program also receives generous support from our La Mesa Police Officer's Association.



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In 2017, the Peer Support Team adopted Ryan's family. Ryan's mother suffered a stroke while pregnant with him and she has struggled with medical issues since his birth. At the age of 12, Ryan is small for his age, but undoubtedly has the heart of a lion. The one item he has wanted for years, that his family cannot afford, is a laptop computer.



This program is another means of giving back to the Community we serve. The stories of the families and the joy on the faces of the children when they realize the big stack of presents underneath the Christmas tree is for them, helps to remind us all why we chose the Law Enforcement profession. This helps us reconnect to the "spiritual" and "emotional" wellness components of our Wellness initiatives. Since we began this program 24 years ago, we have raised over \$15,000.00 and help over 60 families.

Citizen's Academy

Each year, we invite 30 citizens to join us for our Citizen's Academy. This is a 6-week program and the participants attend a 2-hour session once a week. We cover a variety of topics during the 6 weeks, all designed to better familiarize our citizens with our Department and the realities of police work. When we first began Citizen's Academy in 2014, we included a 20-minute portion on our Wellness Program but received such an overwhelming interest in the topic from the attendees that we expanded the segment to 2 hours.

During this 2-hour portion of the Academy (entitled, "The Hidden Cost of Law Enforcement") we seek to give our citizens a small taste of what Officers and Dispatchers experience and how that affects their emotional wellness. We show them the heart behind the badge and educate them about cumulative trauma, critical incident trauma, and PTSD. We discuss suicide rates amongst Police Officers. We also share with them the many components of our Wellness Program. Nationwide efforts have sought to "humanize the badge," and our Citizen's Academy program is one method of doing exactly that.



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County Wellness Committee

The La Mesa Police Department Peer Support Team was a founding member and key organizer of a county-wide officer wellness and emotional survival committee. The committee meets quarterly and provides an incredible opportunity for networking with other Peer Support Teams and Wellness Programs within the county. The components of our Wellness Program have been shared with city, county, and federal law enforcement agencies. Our successes, and our shortcomings, have been shared in order to assist other agencies in establishing best practices with respect to Wellness initiatives.

Assisting Other Agencies

While we are fortunate to have a robust Wellness Program at our agency, we consistently strive to assist our allied agencies with their programs and in their moments of need. For many years, our local fire Department (Heartland Fire) has not had its own Peer Support Team. Following critical incidents, our Peer Support Team has facilitated CISM Debriefings for Heartland Firefighters. If an incident involved both Heartland Fire and La Mesa Police personnel, we facilitated combined debriefings, including the Firefighters in our debriefing. This has been incredibly beneficial for the personnel involved in the incident. Following one incident, involving an infant death, Peer Support Team members even drove to the Communications Center for Heartland Fire. The Fire Dispatcher for the incident was unaware of the tragic outcome and rather than provide the disposition by telephone, the Peer Supporters went to advise her in person and to be there to support her.

Heartland Fire has recently implemented their own Peer Support program. During their developmental phase, a La Mesa Police Peer Support Team leader met with Heartland on numerous occasions, to share best practices and to help them implemental their program. Their program is now successfully evolving and has already been heavily utilized.

Our assistance to other agencies does not end at our county borders. We are frequently contacted by agencies from other counties and other states, seeking advice and assistance in developing their own program or adding initiatives to existing programs. We are happy to assist these agencies and send them materials to assist them, including a copy of our Department Policy, our handouts, and an outline of our Wellness Program components.



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Conclusion

Our Department Wellness Program will undoubtedly continue to evolve as we move forward. While we have a comprehensive program, we recognize that we do not have all the answers and we can always strive to learn new things. Our program is not trademarked and we would welcome any opportunity to share our program with any interested law enforcement agency. We would also welcome any opportunity to learn from other agencies. We are proud of the fantastic and collaborative relationships we have formed with the wellness teams on our fellow law enforcement agencies in our region. The leaders of the respective teams communicate often and assistance from team to team is rarely requested- but only because it is always offered first.

At the center of our Program is our commitment to taking care of all our personnel. Agencies can no longer afford a, “suck it up,” mentality. Each employee is a valued member of our Team at the La Mesa Police Department, and we recognize the caustic effects this profession has on the spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing of those who serve. A comprehensive Wellness Program is an essential component for any agency and we hope that our program carries our employees from “recruitment to retirement—healthy, whole, happy, and intact,” so that they may truly live in retirement.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Department Instruction on Wellness

Attachment B – V.E.S.T. Newsletter Sample

Attachment C – P.T.S.D. Pamphlet Created by LMPD Peer Support

Attachment D – LMPD Field Training Manual (Section on Wellness & Peer Support)

APPENDIX A—Department Wellness Program Policy

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