
Wellness Program

1035.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on establishing and maintaining a proactive wellness program for [department/office] members.

The wellness program is intended to be a holistic approach to a member's well-being and encompasses aspects such as physical fitness, mental health, and overall wellness.

Additional information on member wellness is provided in the:

- Chaplains Policy.
- Line-of-Duty Deaths Policy.
- Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy.

1035.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (5 ILCS 840/5):

Critical incident – An event or situation that may cause a strong emotional, cognitive, or physical reaction that has the potential to interfere with daily life.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) – A standardized approach using a discussion format to provide education, support, and emotional release opportunities for members involved in work-related critical incidents.

Peer support – Mental and emotional wellness support provided by peers trained to help members cope with critical incidents and certain personal or professional problems.

Peer support advisor – A department-approved member, trained in counseling, who voluntarily provides confidential support and assistance to fellow members experiencing personal or professional problems.

Peer support counseling program – A department-established program to train members to serve as peer support advisors to conduct peer support counseling sessions.

Peer support counseling session – Communication with a department-designated peer support advisor who may listen, assess, assist with problem-solving, make necessary referrals to a professional, and conduct follow-up as needed.

1035.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Alsip Police Department to prioritize member wellness to foster fitness for duty and support a healthy quality of life for department members. The Alsip Police Department will maintain a wellness program that supports its members with proactive wellness resources, critical incident response, and follow-up support.

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1035.3 WELLNESS COORDINATOR

The Chief of Police should appoint a trained wellness coordinator. The coordinator should report directly to the Chief of Police or the authorized designee and should collaborate with advisors (e.g., Department of Human Resources, legal counsel, licensed psychotherapist, qualified health professionals), as appropriate, to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including but not limited to:

- (a) Identifying wellness support providers (e.g., licensed psychotherapists, external peer support providers, physical therapists, dietitians, physical fitness trainers holding accredited certifications).
 - 1. As appropriate, selected providers should be trained and experienced in providing mental wellness support and counseling to public safety personnel.
 - 2. When practicable, the Alsip Police Department should not use the same licensed psychotherapist for both member wellness support and fitness for duty evaluations.
- (b) Developing management and operational procedures for department peer support advisors, such as:
 - 1. Peer support advisor selection and retention.
 - 2. Training and applicable certification requirements.
 - 3. Deployment.
 - 4. Managing potential conflicts between peer support advisors and those seeking service.
 - 5. Monitoring and mitigating peer support advisor emotional fatigue (i.e., compassion fatigue) associated with providing peer support.
 - 6. Using qualified peer support personnel from other public safety agencies or outside organizations for department peer support, as appropriate (5 ILCS 840/10).
- (c) Verifying members have access to mental health resources, including peer support, counselors, or licensed psychotherapist support (55 ILCS 5/3-6012.2; 65 ILCS 5/11-1-14).
- (d) Establishing procedures for CISDs, including:
 - 1. Defining the types of incidents that may initiate debriefings.
 - 2. Steps for organizing debriefings.
- (e) Facilitating the delivery of wellness information, training, and support through various methods appropriate for the situation (e.g., phone hotlines, electronic applications).
- (f) Verifying a confidential, appropriate, and timely Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for members. This also includes:
 - 1. Obtaining a written description of the program services.
 - 2. Providing for the methods to obtain program services.

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3. Providing referrals to the EAP for appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up resources.
 4. Obtaining written procedures and guidelines for referrals to, or mandatory participation in, the program.
 5. Obtaining training for supervisors in their role and responsibilities, and identification of member behaviors that would indicate the existence of member concerns, problems, or issues that could impact member job performance.
- (g) Assisting members who have become disabled with application for federal government benefits such as those offered through the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (34 USC § 10281 et seq.).
1. The coordinator should work with appropriate department liaisons to assist qualified members and survivors with benefits, wellness support, and counseling services, as applicable, when there has been a member death (see the Line-of-Duty Deaths Policy for additional guidance).

1035.4 [DEPARTMENT/OFFICE] PEER SUPPORT

1035.4.1 PEER SUPPORT ADVISOR SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of a department peer support advisor will be at the discretion of the coordinator. Selection should be based on the member's:

- Desire to be a peer support advisor.
- Experience or tenure.
- Demonstrated ability as a positive role model.
- Ability to communicate and interact effectively.
- Evaluation by supervisors and any current peer support advisors.

1035.4.2 PEER SUPPORT ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of Alsip Police Department peer support advisors include:

- (a) Providing pre- and post-critical incident support.
- (b) Presenting department members with periodic training on wellness topics, including but not limited to:
 1. Stress management.
 2. Suicide prevention.
 3. How to access support resources.
- (c) Providing referrals to licensed psychotherapists and other resources, where appropriate.
 1. Referrals should be made to department-designated resources in situations that are beyond the scope of the peer support advisor's training.

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1035.4.3 PEER SUPPORT ADVISOR TRAINING

The Alsip Police Department shall provide appropriate training in counseling to its peer support advisors, prior to being assigned, so that they may conduct peer support counseling sessions and provide emotional and moral support (5 ILCS 840/5; 5 ILCS 840/10).

1035.5 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFINGS

A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing should occur as soon as practicable following a critical incident. The coordinator is responsible for organizing the debriefing. Notes and recorded statements shall not be taken because the sole purpose of the debriefing is to help mitigate the stress-related effects of a critical incident.

The debriefing is not part of any investigative process. Care should be taken not to release or repeat any communication made during a debriefing unless otherwise authorized by policy, law, or a valid court order.

Attendance at the debriefing should only include peer support advisors and those directly involved in the incident.

1035.6 PEER SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS

Communications made by a member or peer support advisor in a peer support counseling session and any oral or written information conveyed in the session are confidential and may only be disclosed in accordance with 5 ILCS 840/20. Any communications relating to a peer support counseling session made between peer support advisors and the supervisors or staff of a peer support counseling program are confidential and may only be disclosed in accordance with 5 ILCS 840/20.

All communications, notes, records, and reports arising out of a peer support counseling session are not subject to disclosure under section 7.5 of the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 840/20(e)).

A police department with an established peer support counseling program shall discipline a peer support advisor who violates the confidentiality of the peer support counseling program by sharing information from a peer support counseling session with members who are not supervisors or staff of the peer support counseling program unless otherwise allowed by 5 ILCS 840/20 (5 ILCS 840/20(e-5)).

1035.7 PHYSICAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

The coordinator is responsible for establishing guidelines for any on-duty physical wellness program, including the following:

- (a) Voluntary participation by members
- (b) Allowable physical fitness activities
- (c) Permitted times and locations for physical fitness activities
- (d) Acceptable use of department-provided physical fitness facilities and equipment

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- (e) Individual health screening and fitness assessment
- (f) Individual education (e.g., nutrition, sleep habits, proper exercise, injury prevention) and goal-setting
- (g) Standards for fitness incentive programs. The coordinator should collaborate with the appropriate entities (e.g., human resources, legal counsel) to verify that any standards are nondiscriminatory.
- (h) Maintenance of physical wellness logs (e.g., attendance, goals, standards, progress)
- (i) Ongoing support and evaluation

1035.8 WELLNESS PROGRAM AUDIT

At least annually, the coordinator or the authorized designee should audit the effectiveness of the department's wellness program and prepare a report summarizing the findings. The report shall not contain the names of members participating in the wellness program, and should include the following information:

- Data on the types of support services provided
- Wait times for support services
- Participant feedback, if available
- Program improvement recommendations
- Policy revision recommendations

The coordinator should present the completed audit to the Chief of Police for review and consideration of updates to improve program effectiveness.

1035.9 TRAINING

The coordinator or the authorized designee should collaborate with the Services Supervisor to provide all members with annual training on topics related to member wellness, including but not limited to (50 ILCS 705/7):

- The availability and range of department wellness support systems.
- Suicide prevention.
- Recognizing and managing mental distress, emotional fatigue, post-traumatic stress, and other possible reactions to trauma.
- Alcohol and substance disorder awareness.
- Countering sleep deprivation and physical fatigue.
- Anger management.
- Marriage and family wellness.
- Benefits of exercise and proper nutrition.

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- Effective time and personal financial management skills.

Training materials, curriculum, and attendance records should be forwarded to the Services Supervisor as appropriate for inclusion in training records.