



# MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## STANDARD OPERATING INSTRUCTION

### WELLNESS TEAM

**ISSUED:** March 25, 2024

**EFFECTIVE:** March 25, 2024

**REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:**

Assistant Chief Craig Sarnow

**DATE:** February 13, 2024

**ACTION:** Amends SOI (September 2, 2022)

**WILEAG STANDARD(S):** NONE

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating instruction is to establish policy regarding the department's Wellness Team. The Milwaukee Police Department is responsible for supporting a safe and inclusive City of Milwaukee where all can live, work, and raise a family protected by a diverse police department with the highest level of integrity. The department's key resource in meeting this responsibility is its employees. The department is therefore concerned about problems that its employees experience, which may interfere with their job performance and/or jeopardize their ability to effectively carry out their job responsibilities. It is the policy of the Milwaukee Police Department to maintain and promote a work culture that will help employees and their family members/significant others deal with personal, behavioral, or medical problems, by implementation of the Milwaukee Police Wellness Team.

## II. PROCEDURE

A. The Wellness Team is composed of two full-time coordinators, a department chaplain and contracted mental health professionals. The Wellness Team also includes an internal network of department members, designated as the "Wellness Team Network," who are internally vetted and receive special peer support training.

B. A department member or family member may initiate assistance from the Wellness Team using the following options:

### 1. Contact the Wellness Team Coordinators

The Wellness Team coordinators provide general wellness information to department members and their families, as well as referrals to the department chaplain and mental health professionals. In addition, the Wellness Team coordinators are responsible for oversight of the Wellness Team Network members.

### 2. Contact a Wellness Team Network Member

Wellness Team Network members have received specific training to be a resource for those seeking assistance with personal and work-related stress.

### 3. Contact the City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The EAP provides support for all general city employees and families who wish to be

assisted by a service outside of the department's Wellness Team.

4. Any member of the Wellness Team may initiate a "Wellness Reach Out" to check on a member based on one of several factors, including but not limited to, the member being involved in a critical incident, a referral from a members coworker or supervisor, a death in the member's family, or any other potentially traumatic event in the member's life that may cause a disruption in day to day life.

### **III. WELLNESS TEAM GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- A. It will be the option of the employee to accept or reject referral for professional treatment (except in the case of a mandatory session as the result of a critical incident). The Wellness Team encourages employees to seek help on their own initiative.
- B. The fact that an employee accepts, rejects, or fails to respond to treatment for alcoholism, drug dependency or personal behavioral/medical problems will not diminish the employee's responsibility to meet required job performance standards.
- C. Implementation of this policy will not require, nor result in, any special regulations, privileges or exemptions from administrative practices applicable to job performance requirements, nor, shall there be any inconsistency with labor agreements.
- D. Management and supervisory personnel will follow department policy and procedures, which assure employees that job security or promotional opportunities will not be jeopardized by a request and/or referral for diagnosis and treatment.

### **IV. CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES**

- A. All contacts with any member of the Wellness Team or Wellness Team Network members shall remain strictly confidential unless:
  1. Prior written consent is obtained from the department member that specifies what information may be disclosed, to whom, and for what purpose.
  2. An unexplained, unusual, or suspicious death.
  3. A case of suspected child neglect or abuse.
  4. A threat to one's own life or safety, or that of another.
  5. A report of committing; having committed; or threatening to commit a crime.
  6. A threat to public health or safety.
  7. A report or information required to be reported by police per [Wis. Stat. § 968.075](#) (Domestic Abuse).

**Note: One on one contacts with the department chaplain or mental health providers have legal privilege and are subject to their own restrictions.**

- B. The Wellness Team coordinators and the Wellness Team Network members do not share the same legal privilege regarding confidentiality as the department chaplain and mental health providers. There is no guarantee that a court, whether civil or criminal, will not under some circumstances be able to order the Wellness Team member to whom the individual spoke to disclose any conversations which may have taken place unless the Wellness Team member has a confidentiality privilege under [Wis. Stat. § 905](#) (e.g., clergy, mental health professional).

## **V. WELLNESS TEAM REFERRAL OPTIONS**

- A. Alcoholism, drug dependency and personal/emotional problems may become progressively more serious and uncontrollable, and this process often culminates in a person becoming involved in a crisis situation resulting in a disciplinary action, dismissal, criminal prosecution, hospitalization, or even death. The Wellness Team recognizes that this process may be interrupted and reversed with effective intervention and treatment.
- B. Often persons affected will be unaware or deny the extent of the problem, and they will not be motivated to seek help. It is in the employee's best interest that positive or aggressive steps are taken to intervene before the situation deteriorates to a crisis point and that coworkers and supervisors intervene prior to that time whenever possible.
- C. There are four types of referrals to the Wellness Team:

### **1. Self-Referral**

Employees with personal problems are encouraged to seek help on their own initiative before health or job performance is affected. They can discuss their problems with the Wellness Team coordinators, a facilitator of their choice (including Wellness Team Network members), or the department chaplain or mental health professionals. The Wellness Team will assist the employee in working with the department's Human Resources Division – Medical Section or in contacting appropriate resources to provide service for a specific problem. The Wellness Team will also follow up with employees to make certain they gain access to needed services.

### **2. Supervisor**

Whenever an employee with an established record of acceptable work evidences a pattern of inconsistent or deteriorating job performance and fails to respond to supervisory input (e.g., verbal instructions, written job instructions, discussion of job performance), the supervisor should encourage the employee to contact the Wellness Team coordinators, one of the Wellness Team Network members, the department chaplain or a mental health professional.

### **3. Co-Worker**

When an employee believes a coworker is experiencing problems, but is not seeking

treatment or is denying the problem, the employee should attempt to intervene by expressing concern in a caring manner and by making an informal referral to the Wellness Team. The employee may also contact the City of Milwaukee's EAP coordinator, who can discuss other available options in addition to the Wellness Team.

#### 4. Officer-Involved Deaths and Other Critical Incidents

See SOP 453.55(F) regarding confidential debriefs related to officer-involved deaths and other critical incidents.

## VI. WELLNESS TEAM NETWORK

A. The purpose of the Wellness Team Network is to provide a core group of personnel who are trained to provide support, information and referral to employees and family members who are seeking assistance related to a critical incident, day-to-day work stress, or personal life stress.

### B. SELECTION OF WELLNESS TEAM NETWORK

1. Department members who wish to become part of the Wellness Team Network shall submit a *Department Memorandum* (form PM-9E) through their chain of command to the commanding officer of the Administration Bureau.
2. The commanding officer of the Administration Bureau will make decisions related to assignments to the Wellness Team Network and the Wellness Team coordinators.
3. Selected applicants will be required to complete Wellness Team peer support training.

### C. ROLE OF WELLNESS TEAM COORDINATORS

1. Oversight of the Wellness Team Network.
2. Work with the other members of the Wellness Team to facilitate program use and assure adherence to program guidelines.
3. Responsible for supervision of Wellness Team Network and overall program implementation and utilization.
4. Work with the Wellness Team to provide ongoing training for Wellness Team Network members as well as other Milwaukee Police Department wellness topics.
5. Coordinate regular meetings and share information with Wellness Team Network members.
6. Coordinate annual and semi-annual debriefings for members assigned to sensitive work locations (e.g., Homicide Division, Sensitive Crimes Division) or any work location that requests a debriefing.

**D. ROLE OF WELLNESS TEAM NETWORK MEMBERS**

1. To serve as a peer support for employees and their families seeking information on the Wellness Team and resources for issues such as work or personal stress, emotional stress, addictions, financial stress, relationship difficulties, and family concerns.
2. Wellness Team Network members will not provide therapy or counseling but will act as a referral person to the Wellness Team or other available resources.
3. Wellness Team Network members will coordinate group critical incident defusings/debriefings by working with the responding Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) provider to assess specific intervention needs.
4. Wellness Team Network members will conduct follow-up contacts with affected officers at intervals to be determined by the mental health provider.
5. Wellness Team Network members shall be trained to act as family liaison officers and shall serve as the central point of contact between the designated family representative and the department following the death of a member or a line of duty death.

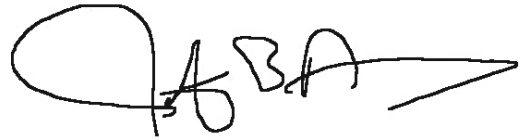
**VII. TIME SPENT ENGAGING IN WELLNESS TEAM - RELATED ACTIVITY**

- A. The Chief may allow Wellness Team members to engage in Wellness Team-related training during the member's normal hours of work so long as a request for such time is submitted in writing to the Chief in advance and the request is approved. The Chief reserves the right to deny any such requests.
- B. No compensation whatsoever shall be provided to Wellness Team members performing Wellness Team-related activities outside a member's normal hours of work.

**VIII. RECORDKEEPING**

- A. Wellness Team records of referrals and actions taken under this program will be maintained in strictest confidence and paper or electronic records shall not be accessible by non-Wellness Team members unless authorized by the Chief of Police, or designee.
- B. No records shall be maintained when employees refer themselves as only non-identifying information for statistical evaluation will be recorded.
- C. No reference to any Wellness Team records will be placed in an employee's personnel file, except as it applies to specific charges leading to disciplinary or corrective actions.
- D. Discussion or speculation about an employee's personal problems violates Wellness Team confidentiality requirements and is prohibited.
- E. Wellness Team Network members who are referral facilitators must, in good faith, follow all Wellness Team guidelines and may deviate from them only when they are in conflict

with applicable city ordinance, state statute, and/or departmental policy. Prior to any deviation, contact with the Wellness Team coordinators shall be attempted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.B.N.' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

JEFFREY B. NORMAN  
CHIEF OF POLICE

JBN:mfk