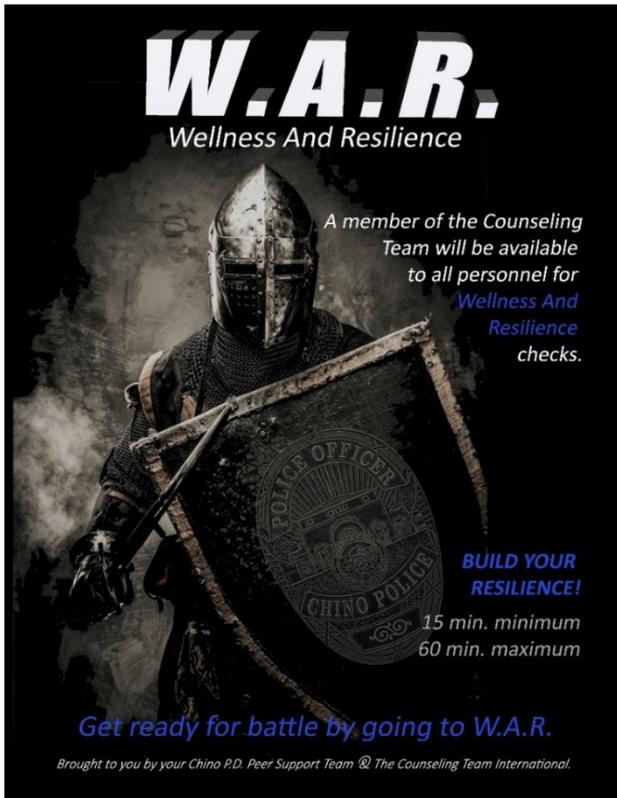


Chino Police Department - Peer Support Team W.A.R. – Wellness And Resilience Program & Family Matters

The Chino Police Department has had a Peer Support Team for more than a decade and the department's leadership continues to be committed to employee wellness. The Peer Support Team has taken this commitment to new levels by implementing two new employee wellness programs.



First, the **Wellness And Resilience Program**, also known as **W.A.R.** This program utilizes the services of [The Counseling Team International](#) (TCTI) by bringing them in-house on a quarterly basis to conduct voluntary wellness checks for employees. The Counseling Team International provides exceptional counseling and critical incident intervention to emergency service personnel and their families. They specialize in working with first responders and their families and have an expertise in dealing with the unique issues they face.

The department has had a long-lasting relationship with TCTI spanning more than 20 years. Many counselors from TCTI are familiar faces to employees since they are regularly called out to assist after a critical incident. The W.A.R. Program builds upon that foundation by bringing counselors inside the department to make their valuable services more accessible to employees.

Once a quarter, the Peer Support Coordinator schedules a counselor from TCTI for a 4-hour block of time. The

day and time of each W.A.R. Session is altered so that employees working different shifts have an opportunity to utilize this service. A flyer advertising the upcoming session is distributed to all employees along with an email from the Chief or a member of the Peer Support Team encouraging employees to utilize the service. On the day of the session, the counselor sets up in a “soft room” located off one of the main hallways in the department. (This is the same room that is used by TCTI counselors when they are requested after a critical incident.) Employees are then welcome to meet with the counselor voluntarily anytime the door to the room is open.

The purpose of the W.A.R. program is to make this valuable resource more convenient as well as to help destigmatize the notion of seeking help for emotional or mental health related issues. The department has seen success in both areas. Counselors have reported that there is a steady stream of employees during the W.A.R. sessions. In addition, the choice of using a knight gearing up for battle as the image for the program has been well received by personnel. A large poster of the image hangs on the wall of the soft room and the room is now affectionately known throughout the department as “The W.A.R. Room.” Employees are responding positively both to the service provided and to the normalization of seeking help when it's needed.

The second program that has been recently implemented by the Chino Police Department's Peer Support Team is called, "**Family Matters.**" As the name suggests, this program is specifically designed to engage with the family members of our department personnel. The goal is not only to educate them on the rigors of a career in law enforcement, but also to connect them with one another so that they have a strong support system.

Family Matters begins with an orientation meeting. Spouses, significant others, parents, or anyone considered a part of an employee's support system is invited to attend. Employees are also welcome to attend with their loved ones if they so choose. During the 2 ½ hour meeting, members of the Peer Support Team present information on topics such as: signs of stress, stress management, coping strategies, the role of peer support and chaplains, and other available resources. Copies of Dr. Kevin Gilmartin's Book, "Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement" are given to each family member. They are given tips on signs of stress to look for in their loved one, strategies to combat stress, and resources to help everyone in the family stay healthy.

The meeting ends with a Q & A session where participants open up and share their experience in supporting a member of law enforcement. Although the educational component is valuable, what is even more valuable are the conversations and the relationships that are formed as a result of the interaction with one another. Spouses of tenured officers interacting with and answering questions of spouses of new hires is invaluable. Participants transition from receiving information, to sharing their knowledge and experience and connecting to one another. At the end of the session, all participants are asked to provide their contact information so that it can be shared amongst the group and they can continue to connect with one another in the future.

Family Matters was developed to actively demonstrate that the health and happiness of an employee's home life is critical to their success and to the longevity of their career. The Peer Support Team is devoted to not only arming family members with knowledge but creating an atmosphere where they can be supported, relationships can be developed, and they can receive the resources they need. The response from participants has been outstanding and is allowing the Peer Support Team to take Family Matters to the next level.

The success of Family Matters has resulted in the creation of what will be a "Family Auxiliary Group" that is connected to the Peer Support Team. Although their role and function is still under development, the plan is to have them assist in hosting future Family Matters orientations and be another resource when members of the department need support (meals, cards, phone calls, texts, etc.).

Through these two innovative programs the Chino Police Department's Peer Support Team is succeeding in bringing employee wellness to the forefront. Both programs have been well received by the members of the organization and strongly endorsed by the department's command staff. For agencies looking to implement either of these programs, please contact the Chino Police Department's Peer Support Team Coordinator, Glenna Oliver at goliver@chinopd.org or (909) 927-9906.