

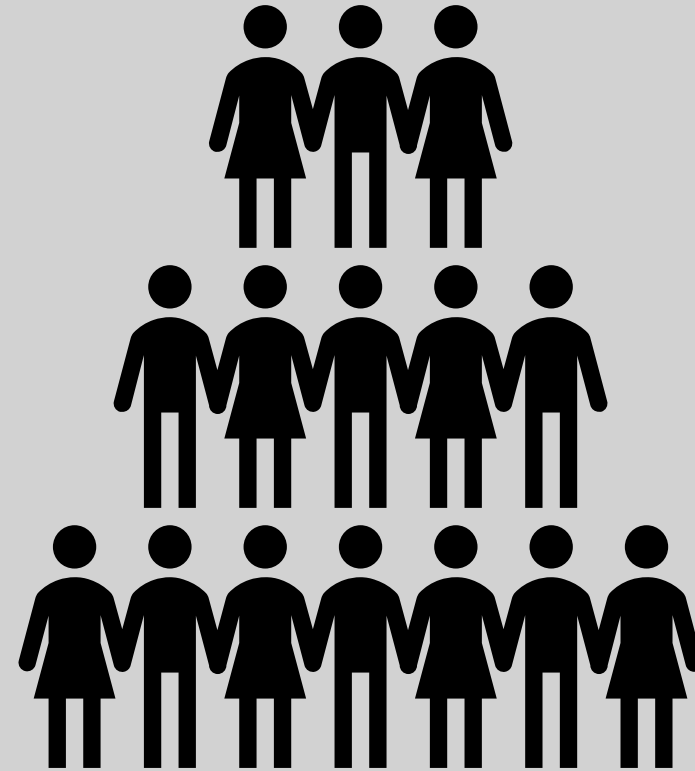


# Peer Support Overview

*Vermont Department of Corrections*

# Peer Support Is....

- A highly trained group of individuals that provides a safe and confidential forum for discussion and expression.
- Members attend
  - Basic Training
  - Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Training



# We listen in order to help you:

1

Cope with stress

2

Lessen the blow of a traumatic event

3

Decompress from the daily grind

4

Express compassion

5

Share Experience

6

Normalize Reactions

7

Share Coping Strategies

8

Strengthen Resiliency

# Trauma

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Anything that has the capacity to overwhelm an individual.



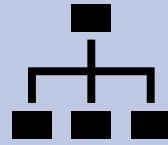
# Primary Traumatic Stress

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- Being Assaulted
- Receiving Threat
- Stalked
- Attacked by Animal in Field
- Observing Violence/Death/Suicide
- Arrest (e.g. children witnessing their parents' arrest)
- Near-misses
- Car Accidents
- Being Accused of Criminal/Unethical Conduct (lawsuits)



# Stress in Corrections



## Interpersonal

Family  
Friends  
Co-workers  
Personal  
Wellbeing

## Organizational

Processes  
Overtime  
Reports  
RFD  
Disciplinary  
Action

## Environmental

Inmates  
Violence  
Critical Incidents  
Nature of Work

# ***Crisis Intervention Goals***

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Lower     | Lower emotional tension, stabilize the person, mobilize a person's resources, and mitigate the impact of the traumatic event. |
| Normalize | Normalize reactions and facilitate recovery processes in people who are experiencing normal reactions to abnormal events.     |
| Restore   | Restore individuals to adaptive functions, to enhance unit cohesion, and performance in groups.                               |
| Identify  | Identify individuals who may need professional care and to ensure those persons receive appropriate referrals.                |

# Confidentiality

Confidentiality shall be maintained to protect the identity of employees as well as the content of any contact by a member of the Peer Support Team. Peer Support Team members may discuss situations with other team members for team meetings, e.g., post-incident status check, training and/or decompression purposes. However, this information must not be shared outside the involved Peer Support Team members. All conversations will be discussed in a professional and respectful manner.

While every effort will be made to protect confidentiality, **there are some situations where confidentiality cannot be absolute, such as:**

- Situations in which there is an indication the employee presents a clear and present danger to himself/herself or others; or
- Situations where there is appears that the employee may be in violation of one of the 12 work rules; or
- Situations in which it appears there is a violation of any law that would normally be enforced by law enforcement including, but not limited to, child abuse, sex abuse, domestic violence, etc.



## Peer Support Dual Approach

### Education

- Stress Identification
- Stress Management
- Self-care
- Pre-incident Training
- Resource Information

### Response

- Individual Follow-up
- Critical Incident Stress Identification
- Crisis Defusing Sessions
- Resource Referral



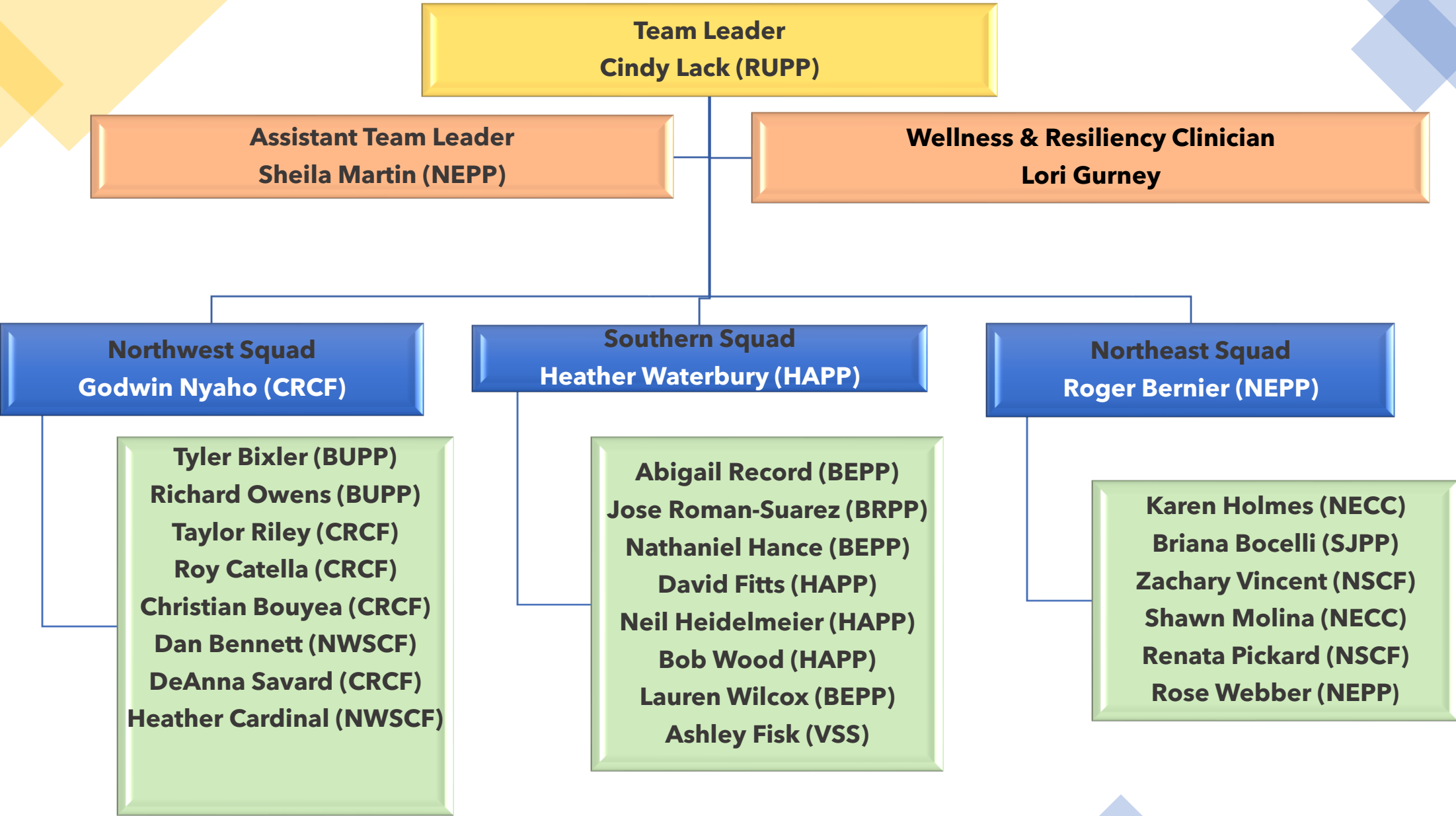
**Contacting  
Peer Support  
(Activation)**

| <b>Critical Incident</b>                          | <b>Management Referral</b>              | <b>Personal Referral</b>                        |
|---|---|---|
| An incident occurs.                               | Distress is noted by senior staff.      | Individual recognizes stress in their own life. |
| Emergency Response Plan activated by Team Leader. | Peer Support is contacted to follow up. | Individual contacts Peer Support Team member.   |
| Peer Support responds.                            | Peer Support responds                   | Peer Support responds                           |

# Defusing vs. Debriefing

**Defusing:** Happens within 8 hours of a traumatic event/incident and consists of 2-20 people who were directly involved in the incident or event. The goal is to mitigate the impact of the traumatic event, reduce cognitive, emotional and physiological symptoms. This accelerates the recovery process and can help identify individuals who may need further services.

**Debriefing:** Happens 24-72 hours following a traumatic event/incident. The target group is individuals who have an existing relationship before the traumatic event occurred. The goal is to support the primary group after the event and to restore the unit's cohesion and performance. This may also assist in identifying individuals who may benefit from further support or referral for a professional clinician.



# PEER SUPPORT

## VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



The image features a motivational quote centered on a blurred background of a sunset or ocean. The text is rendered in a white, monospaced, typewriter-style font. The background consists of soft, out-of-focus colors of blue, green, and purple, suggesting a natural scene. The quote is framed by dark blue geometric shapes: a horizontal bar at the top left, a vertical bar on the right, and a triangular shape at the bottom left.

Pain is inevitable.  
Suffering is optional.