
	<b>Queensland State Emergency Service Operations Doctrine</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>
	<b>Business Management Directives</b>	<b>EMbrace Program</b>
Version: 1.0 Valid from: 11/10/2007		<b>BMH 13.0</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

To outline the scope and functions of the EMbrace Program and to provide information on how to access the EMbrace Program Services.

## 2. RATIONALE

The EMbrace Program's mission is to enhance the psychological and emotional well being of all volunteers within Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) by providing a range of services which are outlined in this document.

## 3. APPLICATION

Applies to all State Emergency Service (SES) members.

Please note that special conditions apply to Emergency Services Cadets and these conditions are outlined in the relevant sections.

## 4. OPERATIONS DOCTRINE INFORMATION

The Emergency Services environment poses a potential risk of exposure to critical incidents. The EMbrace Program is committed to providing support services for SES members to increase their resilience before, during and after stressful events or critical incidents.

## 5. PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The following information outlines the various services offered by the EMbrace Program.

### 5.1 RESPONSIBILITY

Procedural responsibilities are detailed in the relevant sections below.

### 5.2 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Peer Support is encouraged as a first resource for any individual. The Peer Support Program aims to provide support to volunteers through informal, but confidential contact with peers who have been appropriately trained for this role. By definition, Peer Supporters cannot provide support to SES members outside their own peer group. For example, SES Peer Supporters cannot provide support to Cadets.

Peer Supporters form part of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team. They are able to refer members to an EMbrace Program counsellor, community resources or other specialist services.

More information about the Peer Support Program can be found in "BMH 19.0 Peer Support" and the Queensland SES Peer Support Procedural Guidelines.

### **5.3 EMBRACE PROGRAM COUNSELLORS**

EMQ, via the EMbrace Program, offers SES members and their immediate families access to qualified mental health professionals. These counsellors have counselling experience relevant to work in an emergency service environment. They have all had their qualifications verified.

Access to counselling is voluntary and no person can be forced to attend. Counselling is confidential and no person is under the obligation to discuss the counselling with anyone unless they so choose.

An individual may choose to provide the counsellor with permission to discuss their situation, in confidence, with the EMbrace Program Coordinator, the Rehabilitation Officer or Supervisor as this may aid in resolving work issues. This will be discussed with the individual by the counsellor.

#### **5.3.1 ELIGIBILITY**

Criterion for accessing designated EMbrace Program counselling:

- Issues are directly related to SES involvement.
- The EMbrace Program will pay for four (4) counselling sessions. This may be extended upon the request of the Counsellor with the permission of the client. Authorisation of extension must be obtained from the EMbrace Program Coordinator prior to commencement of additional sessions.

(Please note that SES members who are in employment elsewhere may have access to their own workplace employee assistance program for broader issues)

#### **5.3.2 PROCESS**

Process for accessing EMbrace Program counselling:

- Lists of counsellors are available from the local Peer Supporter or the EMbrace Program office on telephone 1300 309 508.
- Members can contact the counsellors direct if they are aware who the counsellors are in their local area.
- Members must identify themselves as SES members and may be asked to present their membership number. Attendance in uniform is not recommended for privacy reasons.
- Counsellors will identify at the time of making the appointment whether the issues are likely to meet the EMbrace Program criterion for counselling.
- Counsellors will invoice the EMbrace Program directly but the identity or name of the person is not revealed.

Please note that Emergency Services Cadets should not contact a counsellor direct. They must access counsellors via the EMbrace Program Coordinator to ensure that a counsellor appropriate for their age is identified and provided.

## **5.4 CRISIS TELEPHONE COUNSELLING**

Any individual, needing immediate psychological support can call the Crisis Counselling Line on telephone 1800 805 980. The call will be answered by a call centre and the on-call, qualified counsellor will return the call as soon as possible. This is a 24 hour, 7 days a week service.

The Crisis Counselling Line is not for general counselling inquiries or to report a critical incident. The EMbrace Program should be called for those referrals on 1300 309 508.

The Crisis Counselling Line is shared service with Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Fire and Rescue Service so members will need to identify that they are an SES member.

## **5.5 COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Members may seek alternative support elsewhere but should ensure they check the qualifications and experience of any counsellors they are considering engaging. The EMbrace Program will not fund the services of any resources outside the designated counsellor network.

## **5.6 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT**

The critical incident response team consists of Peer Supporters, the EMbrace Program Coordinator, Supervision Counsellors and a number of qualified mental health practitioners.

Peer Supporters are trained to make an assessment of the need for further intervention. On occasion this may include the facilitation of defusings and/or “One-on-One” consultation. Peer Supporters can also assist the mental health professionals in critical incident debriefings if required and can provide one-on-one or small group follow up support after a critical incident.

More detailed information on the procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident can be found in “BMH 8.0 Critical Incident Stress Management”.

## **5.7 ORGANISATIONAL CONSULTANCY**

The EMbrace Program provides organisational consultancy on a wide range of issues, and will refer people to the relevant department as appropriate.

This service is available to supervisors, employees and volunteers. Relevant issues include, but are not limited to:

- performance management;
- group dynamics;
- moral and ethical dilemmas;
- specific management styles;
- dealing with difficult people; or
- managing any psychological issues that impact on work performance.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the EMbrace Program Coordinator on 1300 309 508.

## 5.8 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training can be developed and facilitated to suit the varying needs of a SES work group. Examples of the types of training provided are:

- stress management;
- change management;
- team building;
- dealing with difficult people;
- group dynamics; and
- conflict resolution.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the EMbrace Program Coordinator on 1300 309 508.

## 6. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This information is to be accessible for all relevant personnel.

## 7. FORMS AND TEMPLATES

Nil

## 8. APPENDICES

Nil

## 9. RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDELINES

*Disaster Management Act 2003*  
*Queensland Public Service Act 1996*  
*Anti-discrimination Act 1991*  
*Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Act 1992*  
*Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*  
*Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*  
*Queensland Public Service Award – State 2006*  
Cabinet Decision No. 32878, May 1980  
Department of Emergency Services Corporate Plan 2004-2008  
QSES - BMH 8.0 Critical Incident Stress Management  
QSES - BMH 19.0 Peer Support Program  
QSES - Peer Support Procedural Guideline

## 10. DOCUMENT REVIEW

This document will be reviewed by the EMbrace Program every 18 months or as otherwise required as a result of identified legislative, policy and/or procedural changes.

*Original Signed*

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Executive Director