

## **STEPS TO CREATE A SPOUSAL/FAMILY GROUP IN YOUR OWN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY/DEPARTMENT**

**CHOOSE A LOCATION** - Reserve a room at the PD, contact your local community center or host the meeting at your home.

**SPREAD THE WORD** - With support from your department, meeting times and group information can be sent via department email. As members joined, we added them to our database.

**DETERMINE BOUNDARIES** - Recognize that confidentiality and privacy are paramount. Begin every gathering re-establishing your commitment to privacy and integrity.

**DEVELOP A MISSION STATEMENT** - Help your members and department recognize how you want to serve.

**MAKE IT OFFICIAL** - Create a logo for business cards (to be used for other items as well) and start a secret Facebook group for communication and information on meetings and events. For members that are not on Facebook, create an email account and possibly a blog to post a history of events.

**PLAN AHEAD** - Schedule monthly meetings to begin with and communicate this via the police department, through your Facebook group and email distributions. Develop a list of topics that are common among law enforcement families to draw from for future meetings and, whenever possible, try to invite in expert guest speakers.

**SURVEY YOUR MEMBERS** - Every city/town is unique, so you want to know what your members need from the group. Tally the results and gear your meetings toward those topics.

**BE CREATIVE, FLEXIBLE AND YES, SOCIAL** - Many of your members may live far away or may have small children and can't attend. Always try new ways of gathering the members together by holding virtual meetings via Facebook live or the "Zoom Meeting" app, rotating locations between homes, restaurants, police department or community rooms. Additionally, include social gatherings in your meeting plan so everyone can get to know each other and build friendships outside the group.

**MEET WITH YOUR DEPARTMENT'S TRAUMA/PEER SUPPORT TEAM (if available)** - it is very informative to get a solid foundation of how traumatic events are handled with the officers at your department.

**CREATE A CRITICAL EVENT COMMUNICATION PLAN** - It is important to realize the legal ramifications of communicating too much, or inappropriately and that it can jeopardize officer safety. We recommend that you be very careful in the event of an OIS or other traumatic event and develop a plan beforehand. 1) what is allowed to be communicated to the group 2) when it can be communicated and 3) to whom you can communicate. No details until the department is finished with its investigation.

*FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE [WWW.PEAKSANDVALLEYS.LIFE](http://WWW.PEAKSANDVALLEYS.LIFE) - GO TO THE "OFFICER INVOLVED SPOUSE" PAGE*