



Sworn Public Safety Employee Mental Health Audit

Austin City Auditor's Office | July 20, 2026

Background

Public safety employees are critical to the safety of Austin

3,300+
sworn employees



Image sources: City of Austin Digital Asset Manager.

What we found

2 Findings

1 Additional Observation

5 Recommendations

Finding 1

The City provides mental health supports for public safety employees, but some employees are hesitant to use them or feel they do not address the root causes of stress.

Austin provides resources in line with peer cities and best practices

Public Safety Wellness Center



Image source: City Auditor's Office.



Peer Support
Teams



Licensed Mental
Health Providers



Medical
Services



Chaplains



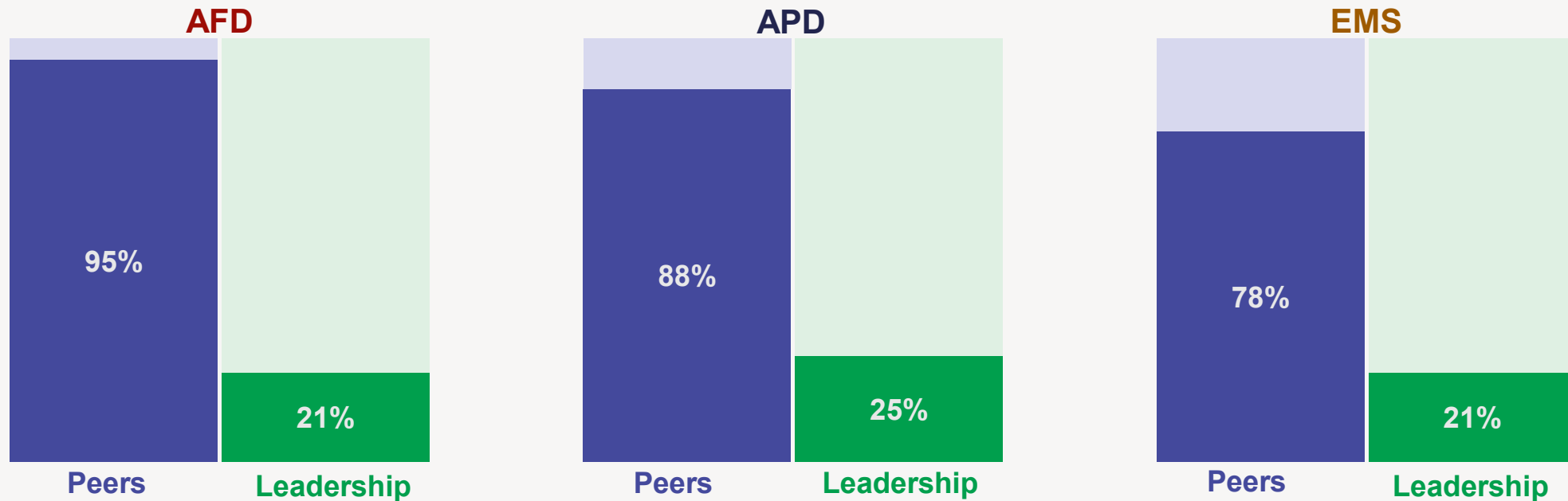
Fitness
Services



Pet Therapy
Team

Despite some satisfaction with resources employees may not feel supported

% of survey respondents who felt their *peers* versus *department leadership* cared for their mental health and well-being



Some employees reported concerns about using resources

30%
had concerns
about the
confidentiality of
City resources

“[The resources] come from the sources of the stress, so the same offices that are causing the issues are pushing out the solutions.”

-APD Employee

“No one really trusts those services and there is a general feeling that it does not matter.”

-AFD Employee

“We can’t speak up if we’re afraid of being stigmatized”

-EMS Employee

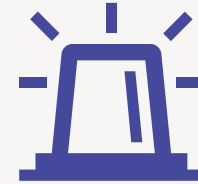
Significant sources of stress may not be addressed by available supports



Workload and
schedule



Sleep and
rest

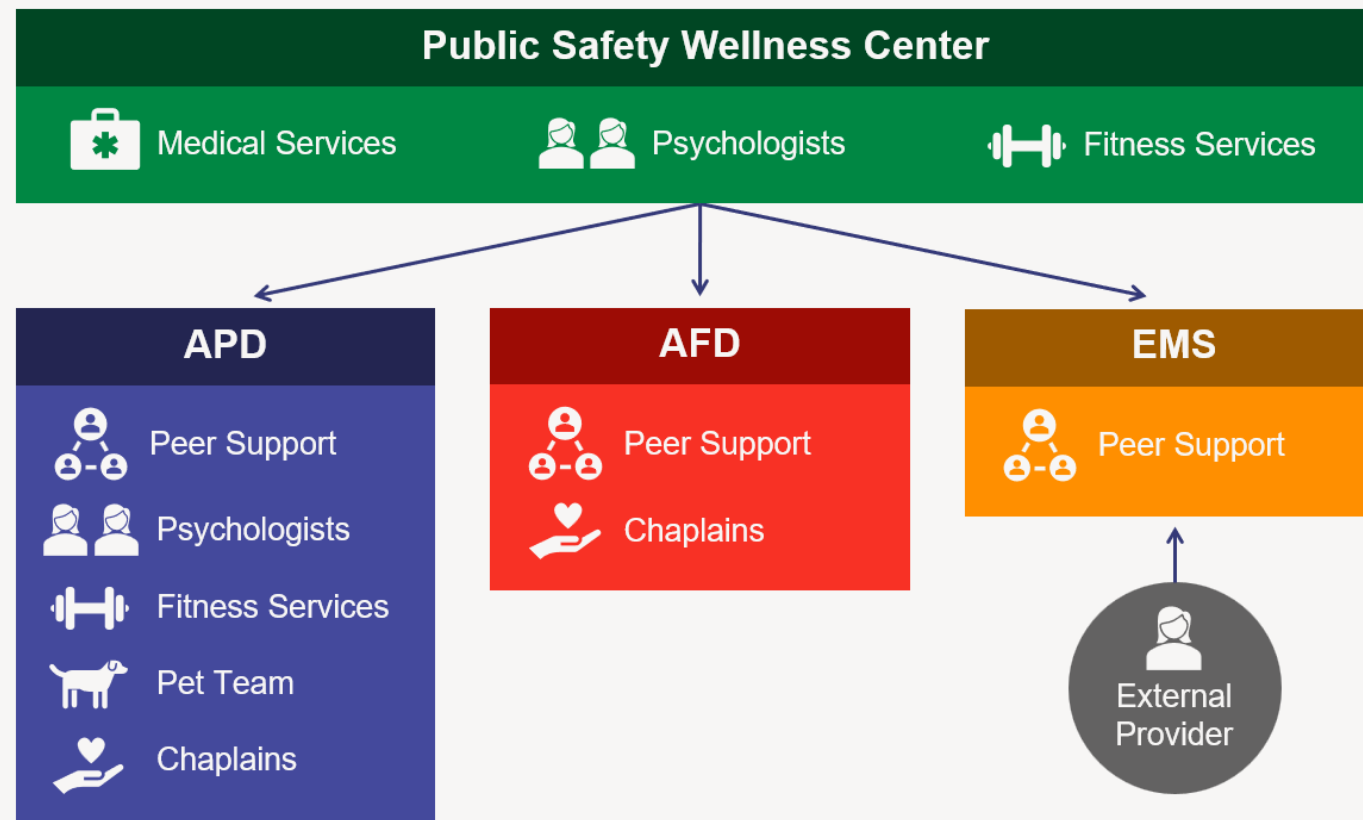


Cumulative
stress

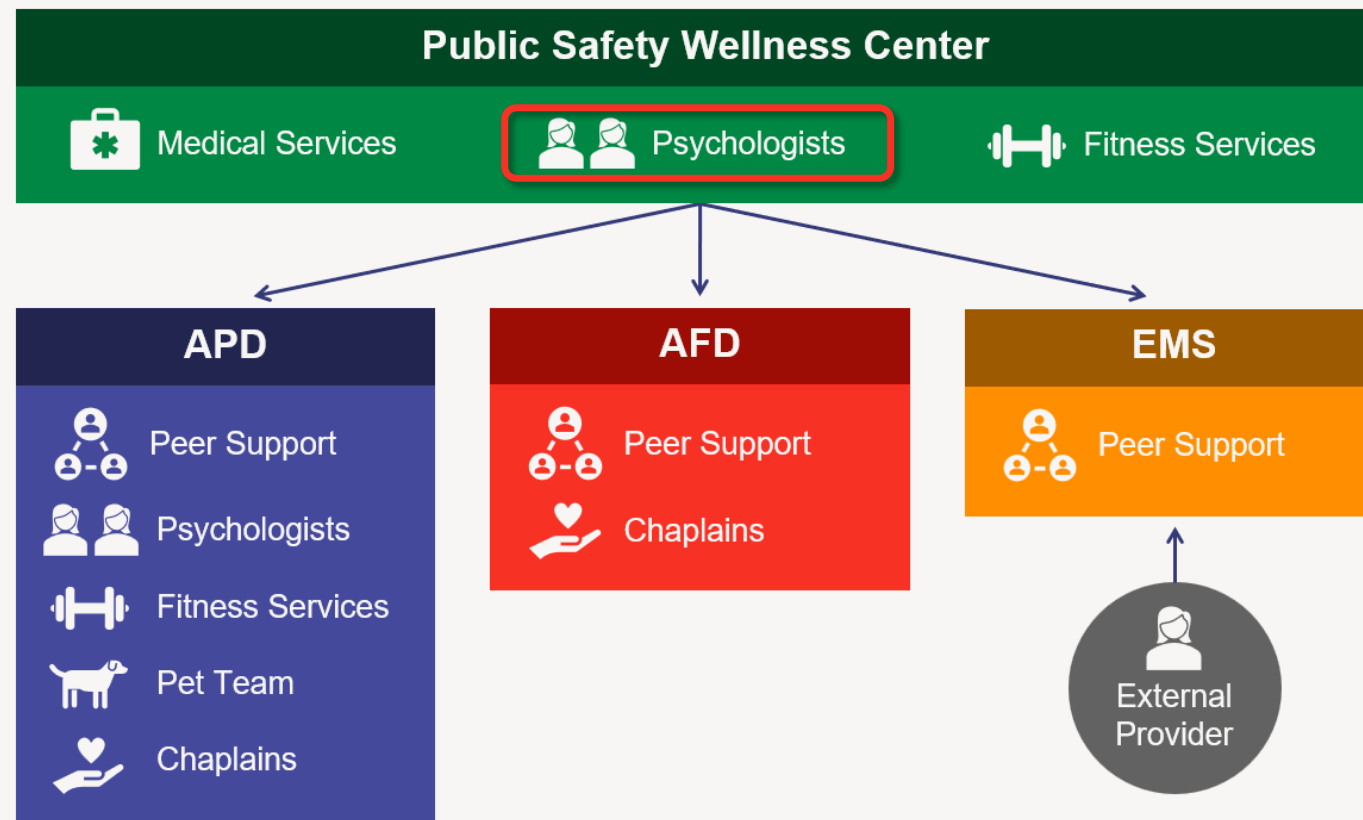
Finding 2

Public safety employees may not receive consistent or proactive mental health support across departments.

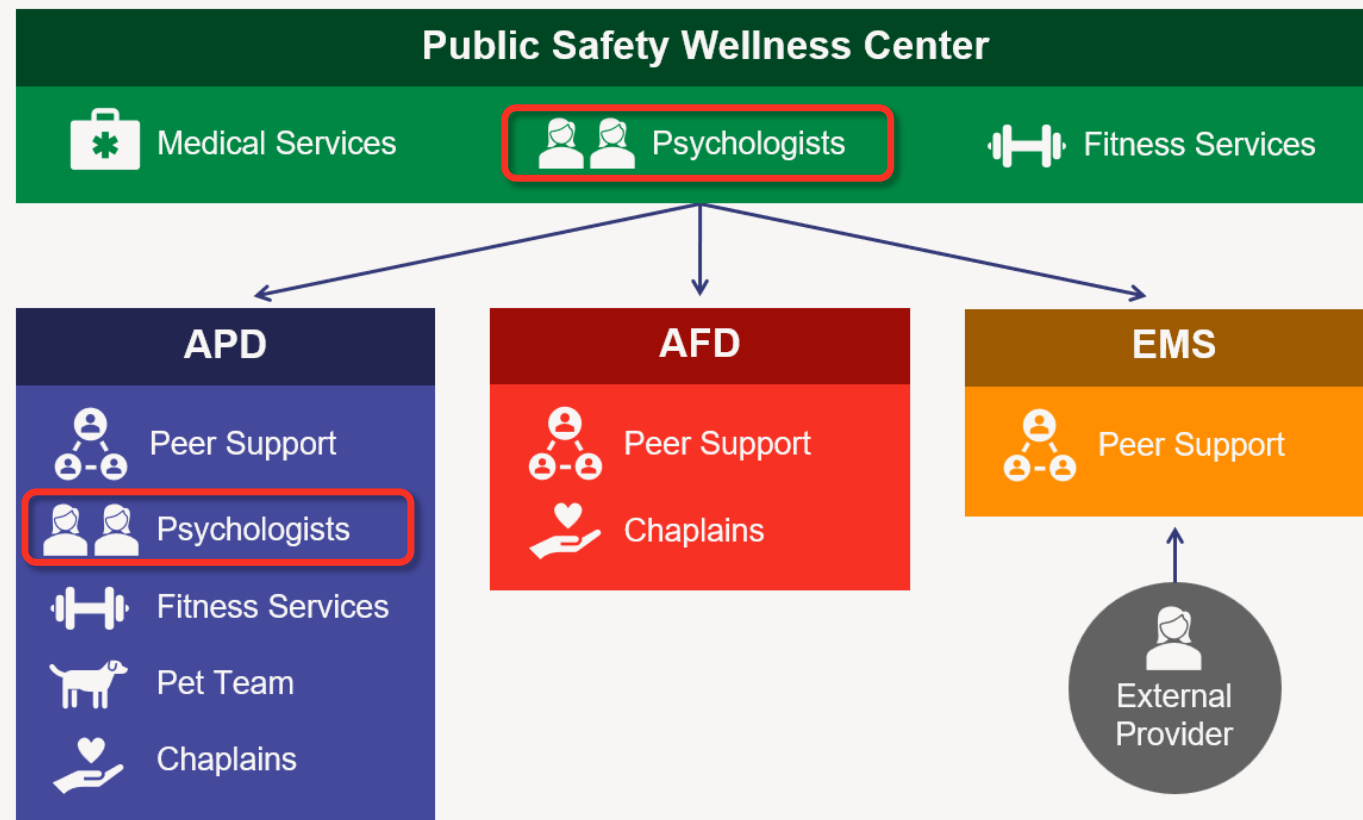
Resources and access may vary across departments



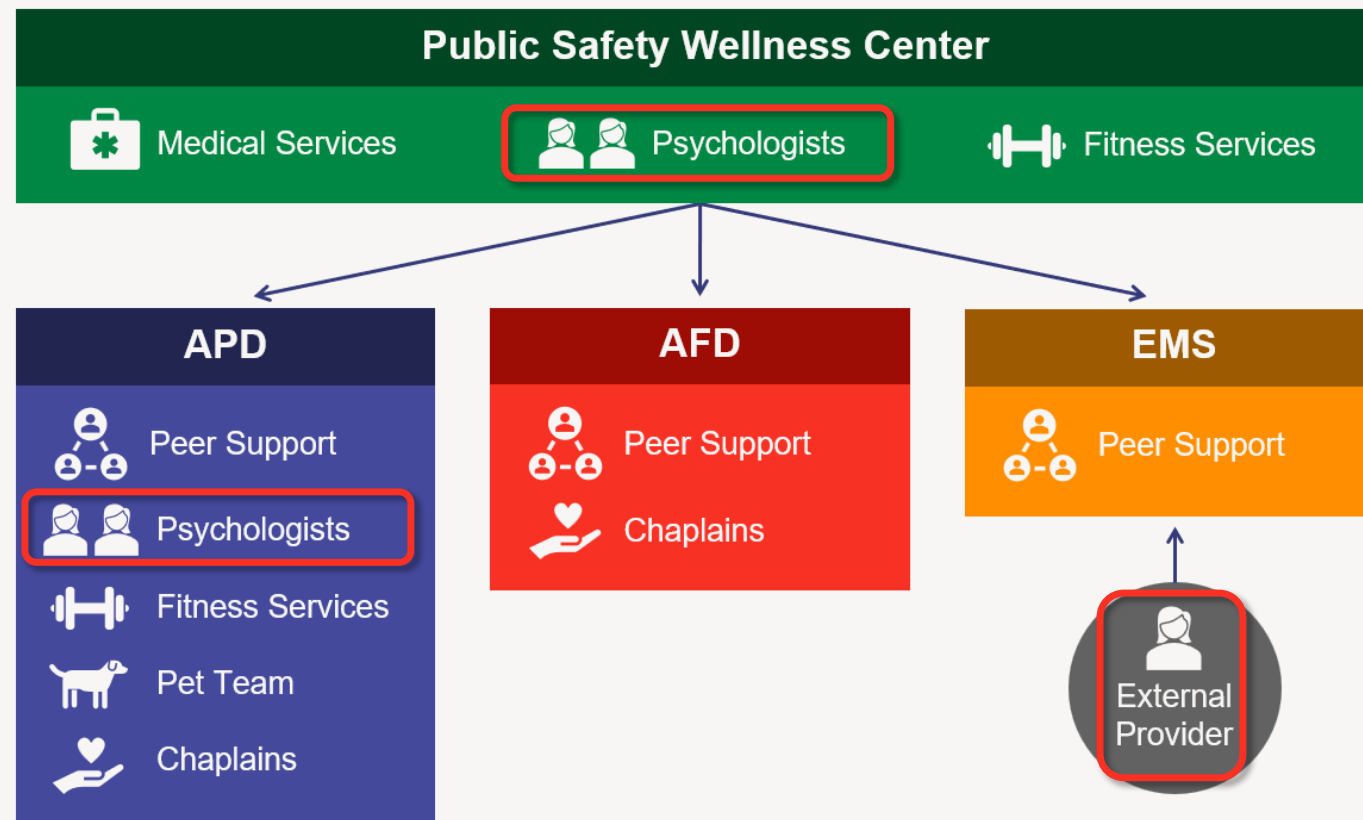
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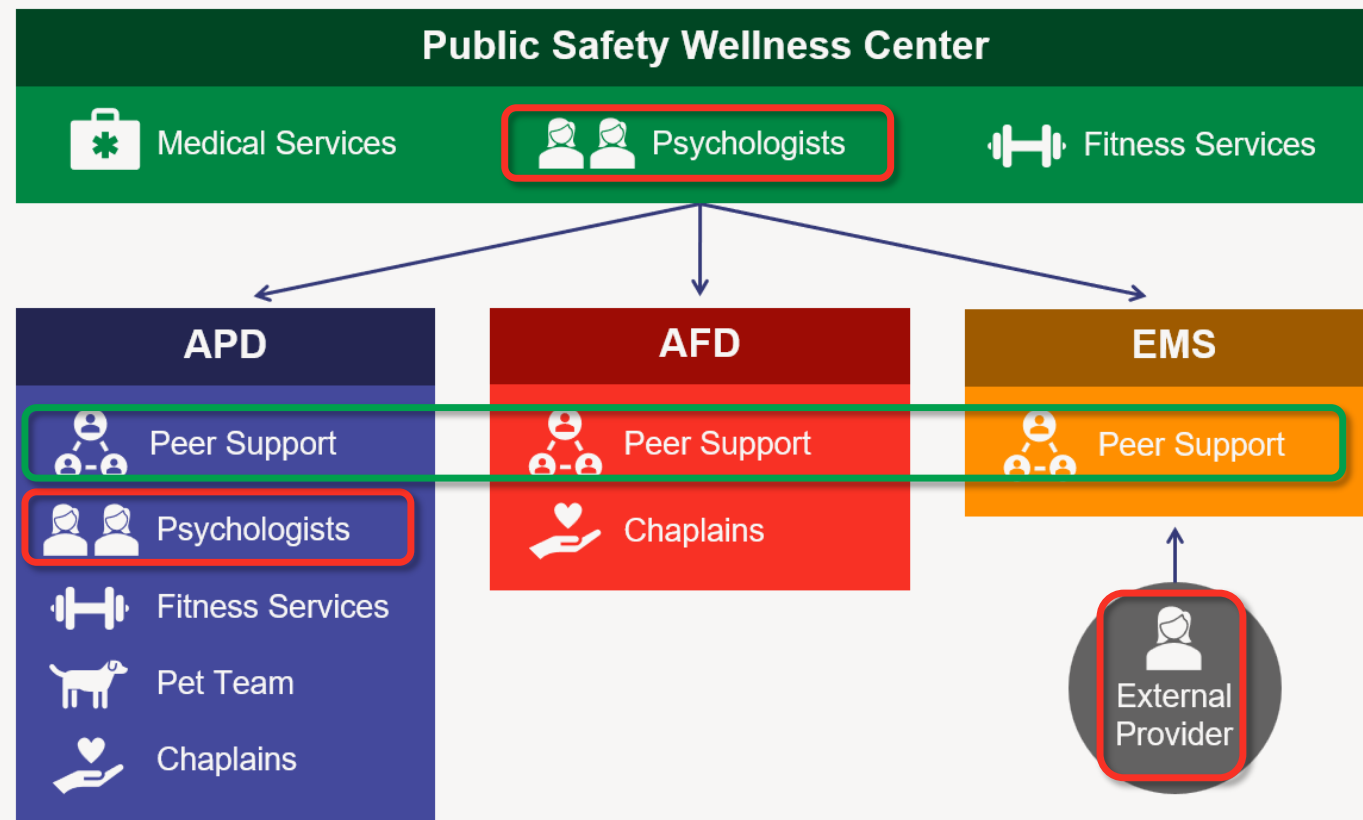
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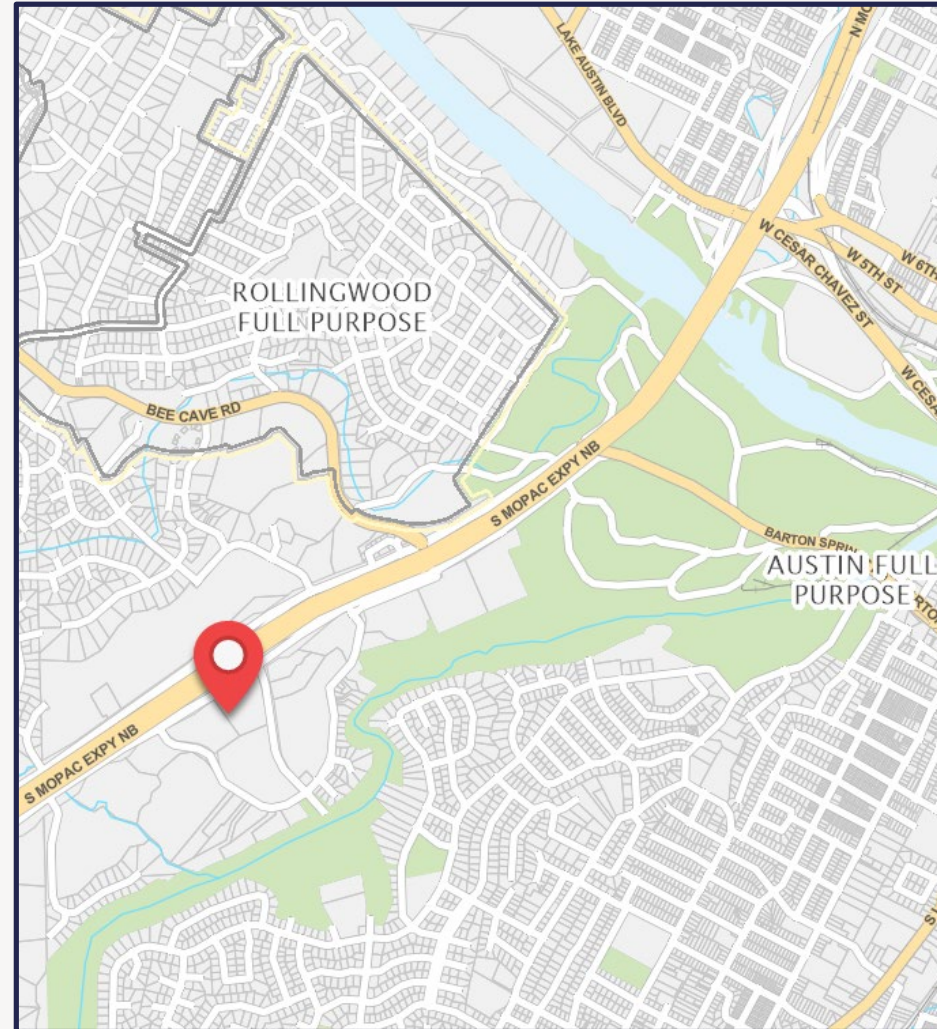
Proactive interventions could be enhanced

- More than 50% of respondents said they never or rarely received **follow-up after a major incident**
- Only AFD employees receive **regular mental health screenings**
- **Ongoing education** on mental health may be limited

Additional Observation

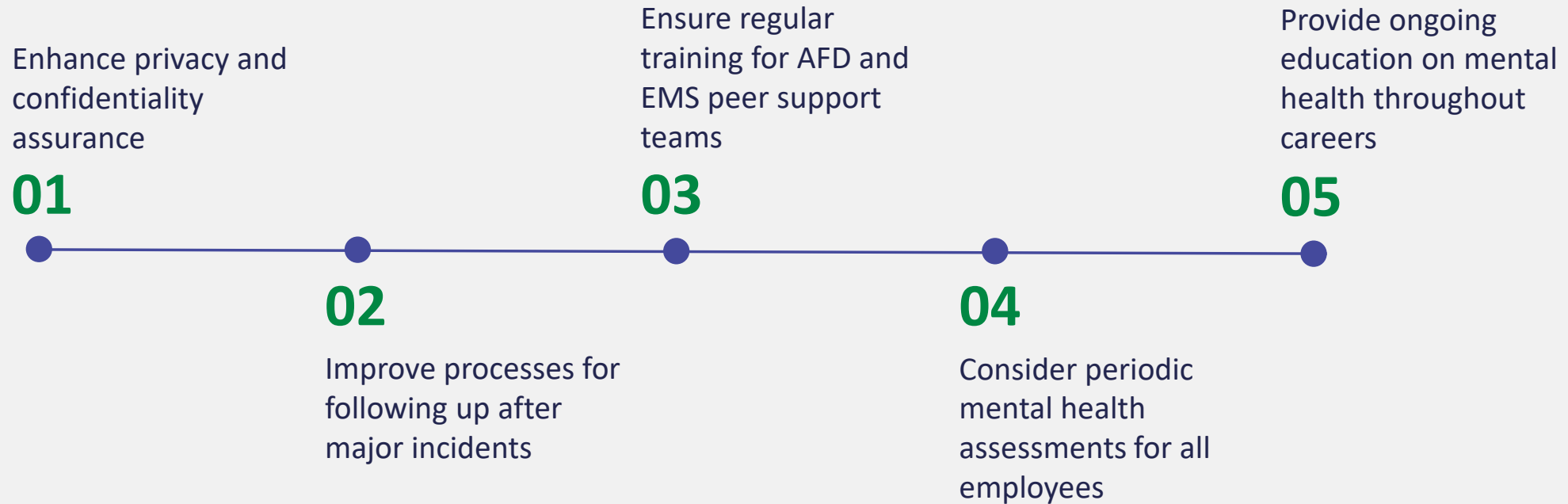
A **new wellness center** is in development at the new public safety headquarters

- Bring all resources across departments together
- Provide an improved and dedicated space for wellness





Recommendations





Questions?