

## Peer Support Counseling; HB 2557

**HB 2557** amends the definition of the term “peer support counseling session” within the Kansas Rules of Evidence.

Under law, members of law enforcement, emergency services, or the Kansas National Guard may utilize a peer support counseling session to discuss a critical incident or traumatic event.

The bill amends the term “peer support counseling session” to expand the reasons a participant may seek a counseling session to include a professional, personal, or social problem, or a difficult life event where peer counseling assistance and guidance would benefit the participant.

Certain information conveyed in a peer support counseling session by a participant or peer support specialist will be considered privileged and may not be disclosed or be considered admissible in judicial, administrative, arbitration, or other adjudicatory proceedings.

The bill extends the privilege to communications made in the counseling session regardless of:

- How the peer support specialist is contacted;
- Whether the session is conducted in a group or in private;
- Where the session is requested or conducted; or
- Whether the session was conducted electronically.

Exceptions to the privilege include certain information related to threats of suicide or criminal acts, information relating to the abuse of persons, admission of criminal conduct, or certain information disclosed with consent. [*Note:* The bill does not amend provisions in law concerning non-privileged disclosures made in a counseling session.]