



Public Safety Personnel

Organizational Factors and Public Safety Personnel Mental Health

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Mitigating Potential Bias

- The information presented in this program is based on recent information that is explicitly “evidence-based”.
- This Program and its material is peer reviewed and all the recommendations involving clinical medicine are based on evidence that is accepted within the profession; and all scientific research referred to, reported, or used in this CE/CPD activity in support or justification of patient care recommendations conforms to the generally accepted standards

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe organizational factors and their impact on PSP mental health
2. Recognize which organizational factors can be modified

Introduction

- Public safety personnel (PSP) have a higher prevalence of mental health conditions than the general population
- Worker's compensation mental health claims have risen for PSP in Ontario
- A multitude of complex operational, organizational, and personal factors contribute to PSP mental health
- Research to date has focused on person-level interventions, including psychotherapy, resilience training, and peer support
- ***Research related to organization-level interventions is still developing, along with the evidence for best practices in return to work for this population***

Review question

What organizational factors exist in public safety organizations, what are their mental health impacts for public safety personnel, and how does the frequency of organizational factors compare with personal and operational factors?

Scoping Review Process & Findings

- Followed JBI Scoping Review Guidelines
- 13543 records were retrieved, after screening, 97 primary studies remained for analysis
- The majority of included studies were conducted in North America (n=62)
- Police officers (n=48) were the most frequent population studied
- Correctional officers and paramedics (each n=27) were the second most frequently identified populations, followed by firefighters (n=20)

Factor Definitions

Operational	Content of the work
Organizational	Context of the work
Personal	Individual, family, and community elements

Factor Frequencies

Factor	Negative	Positive	Total
Operational	119	7	126
Organizational	145	63	208
Personal	206	67	273
Totals	470	137	607

Operational Factors

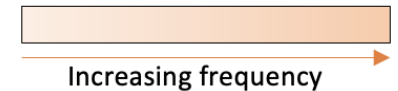
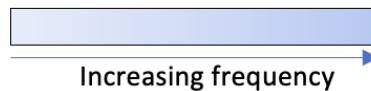
Positive		Negative
Role	Operational Factors that Impact Mental Health of Public Safety Personnel	Exposure to critical incidents
Tenure		High workload
Rank		Threats or risk of violence
Department setting		Administrative duties
Perceived threat to safety		Negative public perception of career
		Workplace stress
		Risk of injury
		Work overload
		Risk of death
		Experiencing violence

Increasing frequency

Increasing frequency

Organizational Factors

Positive		Negative
Co-worker support	Organizational Factors that Impact Mental Health of Public Safety Personnel	Lack of co-worker support
Supervisor support		Lack of supervisor support
Positive workplace culture		Negative workplace culture
Autonomy		Interpersonal conflict with colleagues
Adequate training		Limited resources to perform work
Access to mental health specialists, good leadership		Stigma/barriers to seeking help
Recognition of good work		Leadership issues
Role clarity		Overtime hours
Team dynamics		Understaffing



Personal Factors

Positive		Negative
Job satisfaction or meaning	Personal Factors that Impact Mental Health of Public Safety Personnel	Health conditions (mental)
Family support		Job dissatisfaction
Gender		Gender
Work/life/family balance		Work/life/family conflict
Adequate sleep		Poor sleep
Coping skills		Lack of coping skills
Good physical health		Health conditions (physical)
Race		Fatigue
Resilience		Substance misuse
Social support		Burnout



Increasing frequency



Increasing frequency

Organizational Factors & PSP Professions

- **Police & Corrections:** Workplace culture
 - Demou et al. (2020) identified that police officers in particular “are afraid of being identified as individuals who have been compromised by stress” (p. 703).
 - Dugan et al. (2021) noted that correctional officers operate in a masculine culture, where personnel are expected to display strength and control and suppress emotions.
- **Paramedics & Firefighters:** Limited resources to perform the work
 - Mahony (2001) identified that paramedics were, “constantly pushed to achieve more with less resources” (p. 141).
 - Smith (2019) identified that line-of-duty operations (such as firefighting) are expected to be performed flawlessly despite limited available resources.

Supervisor support

- Training, mental health promotion, cultural competence

Leadership style

- Leadership development, employee-centric approaches

Stigma and workplace culture

- Access to mental health resources, stigma reduction programs

Shift work models

- Shift work recently listed as a carcinogen by WHO, 10 hr vs 24 hr

Staffing levels

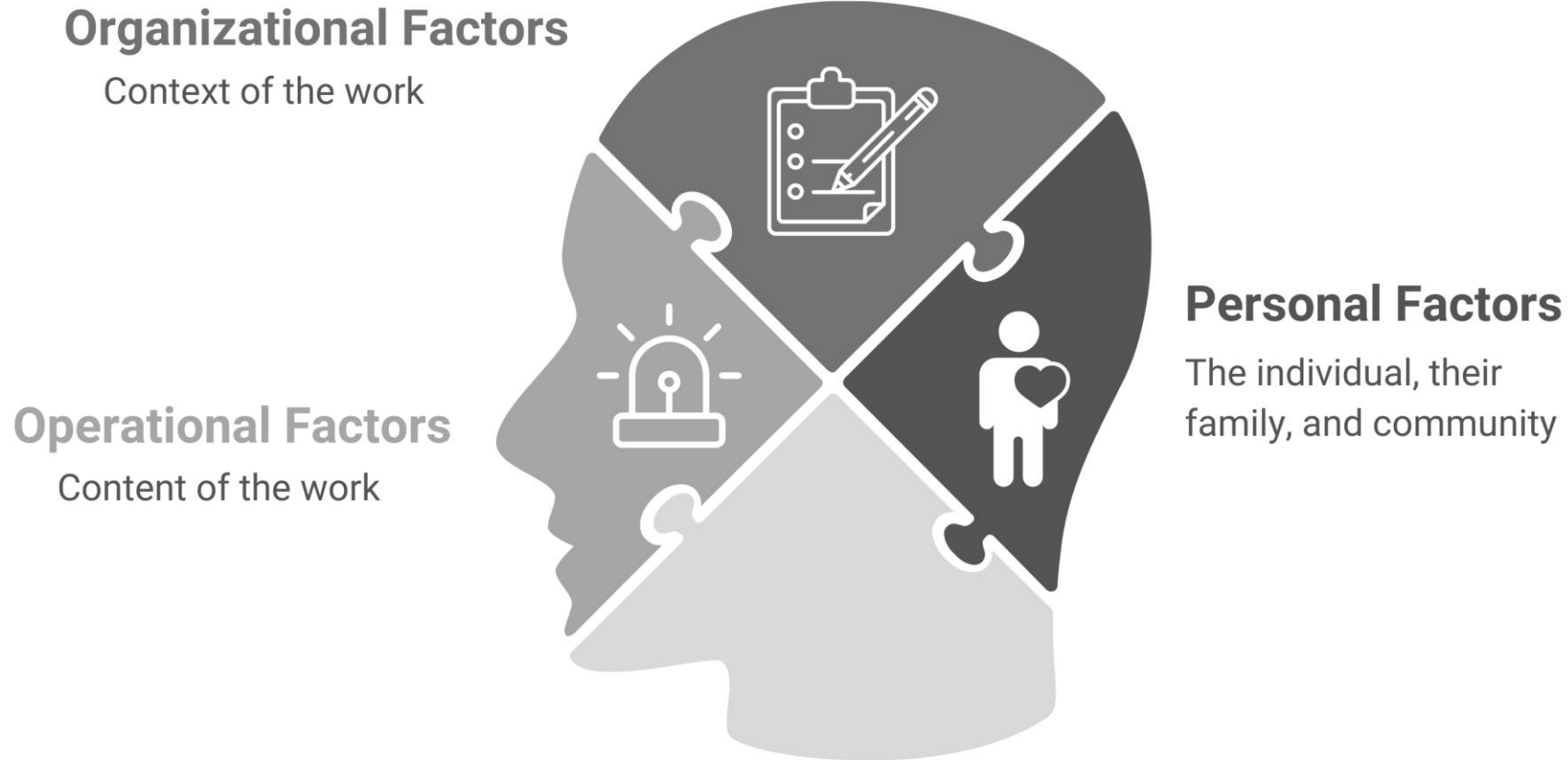
- Burnout prevention, adequate funding, culture of rest and breaks

**Factors
Most
Amenable
to Change**

Developing the TROOP Model

- Literature review scoped the most relevant workplace factors (Edgelow et al., 2022) and contributed to the development of a novel model
 - Model highlights the need to consider the combined impacts of operational, organizational, and personal factors on PSP mental health
- The **TRi-Operational-Organizational-Personal Factor Model (TROOP)** depicts these key factors as three large pieces of a larger puzzle that is PSP mental health
- The TROOP gives working language for public safety organizations, leaders, and researchers to broadly consider the mental health impacts of public safety work

Tri-Operational-Organizational-Personal Factors Model (TROOP)



Managing Workplace Factors

- Operational risks associated with PSP work are often thought of as inherent to the job
 - BUT- All jobs with safety risks can be approached with an occupational and public health lens to reduce work-related risk
- Personal factors are also complex
 - BUT- Organizations can offer mental health supports to employees and their families and adopt policies that encourage work-life balance
- ***Organizational factors may be the most modifiable***

Take home messages

1. Operational, organizational, and personal factors all impact PSP mental health
2. Organizational factors can be modified, and employers have a responsibility to manage these
3. Moving beyond a person-level focus in public safety mental health research is important

References

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Questions?

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