LDR 807-12 Leadership Development: Transforming Self-Concept

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Professor

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Assignment

Assignment #2 – Developmental Readings

1. Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles. Review the instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements, and course readings to identify selections of books and journals to create entries.

a. Refer to the "Student Guide to Developmental Readings" in the General Helps folder for updated information on sample comments, the grading rubric, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source** One: Clifton, S., Torres, J., & Hawdon, J. (2018). Whatever Gets You Through the Night: Officer Coping Strategies after the High-Profile Line of Duty Deaths in Dallas and Baton Rouge. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *43*(4), 871–885. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-018-9437-7

**Comment 1:** Coping Strategies after a line of duty death

**Comment 2:** Law enforcement being the target of attack

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The policing profession has recently experienced events that affected officers nationwide. Several high-profile cases involving police and members of minority communities intensified the tensions among these groups. Amid public criticisms of policing, law enforcement officers have become targets of attacks (Clifton et al., 2018).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with multiple cases of targeted attacks on police officers also began to increase, including the assassination of two officers in New York and the ambush of two state troopers in Pennsylvania (Clifton et al., 2018).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive to mental health in policing, coping with the stress of line-of-duty deaths. Law enforcement is entrenched in providing a high-stress environment for sworn personnel. Police stress originates from organizational and environmental aspects. These types of stressors expose officers to trauma in ways the general population may find difficult to understand. For example, police officers witness violence, death, and victims of crime daily. Officers who often encounter or witness violent acts are more at risk of developing a trauma-related mental health disorder compared to the general population (Velazquez & Hernandez, 2019).

**Contextualization:** The loss of a friend and colleague in the line of duty is a heartbreaking and profoundly distressing reality of my career in law enforcement. Every year, police officers around the world put themselves in harm's way to serve and protect their communities. Tragically, some pay the ultimate price, sacrificing their lives in the line of duty. The toll of these losses is immense, impacting not only the families and close colleagues of the fallen officer but the entire law enforcement community. The grief and sense of loss reverberate throughout, affecting emotional well-being, morale, and mental health. Such losses can have a long-lasting impact on all those directly and indirectly affected.

**Source Two:** Velazquez, E., & Hernandez, M. (2019). Effects of police officer exposure to traumatic experiences and recognizing the stigma associated with police officer mental health. *Policing: An International Journal*, *42*(4), 711–724. https://doi.org/10.1108/pijpsm-09-2018-0147

**Comment 3:** The Work of police officers worldwide is very challenging

**Comment 4**: Work stress and anxiety have risen among law enforcement officers, and it results in inadequate psychological wellness

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Being a law enforcement officer appears to be an extremely demanding and challenging occupation because of the qualities of modern-day societies, such as the rise in physical violence with guns in metropolitan areas, as well as insufficient human and material resources (Singo & Shilubane, 2022). Furthermore, police officers have to work in an emergency, facing a lot of hindrances, including political pressure, exertion, and working late. Such stressors cause a noteworthy job strain on police officers (Singo & Shilubane, 2022).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the daily, weekly, and monthly accumulated stress and anxiety that law enforcement officers worldwide experience.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discussion. In the last few years, there has been a surge in occupational stress research in the police. Some developed countries have taken the adverse effect of strain on police officials seriously and taken steps to tackle police stress. The ability to identify signs and symptoms of stress would enable them to know when to seek help. Similarly, supervisors should be able to identify the stress affecting their subordinates and deal with it effectively (Singo & Shilubane, 2022).

**Contextualization:** Being a police officer can be highly demanding and stressful. Effectively coping with stress is crucial. Practicing self-care, caring for one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, seeking support, and not hesitating to ask for help are all essential. Setting boundaries between work and personal life is important, as is allowing oneself time to disconnect from work-related stressors and engage in relaxing activities. Finding coping strategies that work for you and making them a regular part of your routine is critical. Prioritizing your well-being and seeking support when necessary can help you navigate the challenges of being a police officer more effectively.

**Source Three:** Queirós, C., Passos, F., Bártolo, A., Faria, S., Fonseca, S. M., Marques, A. J., Silva, C. F., & Pereira, A. (2020). Job Stress, Burnout and Coping in Police Officers: Relationships and Psychometric Properties of the Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(18), 6718. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17186718

**Comment 5:** The operational duties of police causes stress

**Comment 6:** The organizational hierarchy in police departments affects young officers

**Quote/Paraphrase:** olicing, which can be operational or organizational (Queirós et al., 2020).

**Essential Element:** Resilience and coping facilitate job stress management (Queirós et al., 2020).

**Additive/Variant Analysis: T**his is an addition to the discussion. Despite the multiple policing stress sources, they can be divided into operational and organizational stressors, two distinct and specific constructs for police forces (Queirós et al., 2020).

**Contextualization:** Police officers face various operational and organizational challenges. Every department has its own organizational culture and bureaucracy; the bureaucratic processes, administrative tasks, and organizational politics stress young officers, impacting their job satisfaction and overall well-being. We are frequently exposed to dangerous and high-risk situations, including confrontations with armed individuals or responding to emergencies. The constant need to be prepared for potential threats results in hypervigilance until you gain the skillset to manage the hypervigilance. Police departments in Maryland are now required to implement measures such as regular mental health check-ins, providing access to counseling services, offering training on stress management and resilience, and promoting a supportive and inclusive organizational culture, which can help mitigate the impact of operational and organizational stress on police officers.

**Source Four**: Allison, P., Mnatsakanova, A., McCanlies, E., Fekedulegn, D., Hartley, T. A., Andrew, M. E., & Violanti, J. M. (2019). Police stress and depressive symptoms: role of coping and hardiness. *Policing: An International Journal*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/pijpsm-04-2019-0055

**Comment 7:** Police stress is strongly and significantly related to depression

**Comment 8:** The pressure of needing to be strong

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Chronic exposure to occupational stress may lead to depressive symptoms in police officers. The association between police stress and depressive symptoms and the potential influences of coping and hardiness were evaluated (Allison et al., 2019).

**Essential Element:** Depression is estimated to affect 6.7 percent of adults in the USA, many of whom are working-age adults (Allison et al., 2019). With a combination of sustained exposures to critical incidents and routine work stressors, high levels of stress are ubiquitous in law enforcement and may be associated with depressive symptoms (Allison et al., 2019).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discussion. Police are at high risk for depression symptoms due to the occupational stressors in police work that involve physical and psychological threats (e.g., unintentional and intentional injury on the job or critical incidents) and organizational challenges (e.g., departmental policies and procedures, inadequate support from supervisor or excessive paperwork) (Allison et al., 2019).

**Contextualization:** Depression is a prevalent but often overlooked issue among police officers, with potentially severe consequences for both the officers and the communities they serve. The demanding nature of police work, exposure to traumatic events, and pressure to maintain a stoic image have all contributed to the development of depression among officers over the years. Chronic job-related stress is a significant factor that contributes to depression, as we face high levels of stress daily, dealing with dangerous situations, witnessing violence, and working long hours. This ongoing exposure to stress can eventually lead to the development of depression.

**Source Five:** Lee, N., & Wu, Y.-K. (2024). Work-Related Stress and Psychological Distress among Law Enforcement Officers: The Carolina Blue Project. *Healthcare*, *12*(6), 688–688. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12060688

**Comment 9:** Law enforcement is an inherently stressful occupation that places significant emotional and psychological demands on those in this role.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Law enforcement officers (LEOs) are inevitably exposed to diverse traumatic and stressful situations, including engaging in shooting incidents, investigating crime scenes with deceased individuals, and dealing with traffic fatalities, child abuse/neglect, or exposure to illicit drugs. Constant exposure to violence, trauma, and crises could lead to work-related stress and psychological distress, such as burnout, chronic stress, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health disorders (Lee & Wu, 2024).

**Essential Element:** Addressing work-related stress and psychological distress among LEOs is imperative to preventing and ensuring the well-being of those upholding public safety and health.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive of the discussion. The study investigated various factors such as race, geographical location, and exposure to toxic materials to determine the severity of burnout, operational police stress, depression, anxiety, stress, and PTSD symptoms experienced by LEOs. We also measured and included the comparisons of work-related stress and psychological distress based on sex, education, job category, and whether they served in leadership positions, were required to perform rotation shifts, or were required to perform patrol duties. Examining these variables helped identify potential disparities and unique stressors associated with different socio-demographic and work-related variables (Lee & Wu, 2024).

**Contextualization:** Police officers often hesitate to seek help for depression due to the perceived stigma that pervades police culture. This stigma emphasizes strength, resilience, and self-reliance, which can make officers feel vulnerable or judged if they admit to struggling with mental health issues like depression. Sadly, the notion that seeking help is a sign of weakness or vulnerability has deterred many officers from seeking the assistance they need. The potential impact on their careers is a common concern, as officers worry that disclosing their mental health struggles could lead to negative consequences, such as being seen as unfit for duty, losing opportunities for advancement, or facing discrimination within the department. For many officers, the greatest fear is being taken off duty, as we are dedicated to their work and worry that seeking help for depression could jeopardize their sense of purpose, identity, and connection with their colleagues.

**Source Six:** Violanti, J. M. (2021). *Occupation under siege: Resolving mental health crises in police work*. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Ltd.

**Comment 10:** Crises in police work understanding depression

**Comment 11:** Resolvimg the mental health crises in police work

**Quote/Paraphrase:** In our time, the police are under siege in American society. The consequences are far-reaching regarding the mental and physical health of the men and women who work in the profession (Violanti, 2021).

**Essential Element:** This book discusses work, social, and biological aspects associated with increased risk for outcomes of police mental strain, protective factors associated with the amelioration of stress, and strategies for prevention.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive of the discussion. Because of the aftereffects of civil unrest, riots, negative societal attributions, and the COVID-19 pandemic, the police are under tremendous psychological pressure in present-day America. The strain brought about by these situations weighs heavily on the mental well-being of police officers (Violanti, 2021).

**Contextualization:** The pressure of being a police officer has a profound impact not only on my mental health and well-being but also on the officer that I work with daily. We all see and do the same things daily, and the cumulative effects are that It is an unfortunate reality that exposure to traumatic events can result in psychological distress, with post-traumatic stress disorder being an expected outcome. Police officers are frequently confronted with complex and emotionally taxing scenarios that can significantly impact their mental well-being. By prioritizing the promotion of mental wellness and treating depression, police departments can provide valuable support to their officers, leading to improved job satisfaction, performance, and, ultimately, the ability to serve and protect the community effectively.

**Source Seven:** Johnson, O. (2013). *Blue wall of silence: Perceptions of the influence of training on the law.* Lulu Com.

**Comment 12:** Understanding the mental health crises in police work

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Being Male increases one's risk for complete suicide. However, other factors increase one's risk of suicide, including occupation. Policing is and has always been a male-dominated profession, more specifically, a white male-dominated profession. White males, including those working as police officers, seemingly never "age out" of their risk for suicide (Johnson et al., 2022).

**Essential Element:** Suicide is a leading cause of death among all ages, with males being four times more likely than females to die by suicide. However, understanding the role of suicide in this occupational group is not cut and dry (Johnson et al., 2022).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is a variant of the discussion. Suicide is a very complicated and dynamic phenomenon and cannot, in most cases, be explained by a single reason or factor. The belief that suicide can be explained so simplistically, unfortunately, may also contribute to the growing inability to slow or reduce these deaths (Johnson et al., 2022). The policing profession has consistently been recognized for maintaining law and order, keeping the peace, and protecting the public. Typically, sought-after traits for a police officer included having a type "A" personality, being authoritative, making quick life-or-death decisions, and being stoic and fearless. Being male and exceeding in physical fitness were desirable qualities for success as a police officer. The criteria for becoming a police officer were sparse, and higher education qualities were not mandatory.

Fast forward, and although the policing profession is based on the same foundation as hundreds of years ago, the role of a police officer has dramatically changed (Johnson et al., 2022).

As society has evolved, the expectations of a police officer have increased, and police organizations are starting to re-evaluate how they select and screen potential recruits. In addition to being physically fit, police officers are expected to fulfill many roles, including dealing with people in crisis, de-escalating volatile situations, regulating emotions, and staying calm under pressure. They are also expected to work in high-stress situations, deal with people at their worst, and respond to trauma-related calls. The type of work faced by police officers includes a significant amount of operational, organizational, and personal stressors that, if not kept in check, can lead to a variety of mental health issues (Johnson et al., 2022).

**Contextualization:** The issue of suicide among police officers deserves significant attention and understanding. The nature of police work is demanding; the nature of police work is often demanding and emotionally taxing, which can lead to a heightened risk of mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The compounding effects of these challenges can contribute to an elevated rate of suicide within law enforcement, as studies indicate that officers are more likely to die by suicide than the general public and even in the line of duty.

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# References

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