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Exploring Workplace Wellness Programs From a Police Officer's Perspective

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Requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Public Administration

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# Exploring Workplace Wellness Programs From a Police Officer's Perspective

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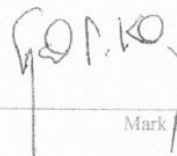
Division of Online and Professional Studies at California Baptist University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

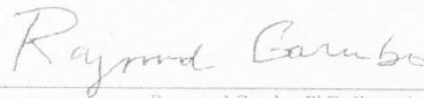
for the degree Doctor of Public Administration



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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose.** The purpose of this study was to explore police officers' perceptions of what components within a workplace wellness program (WWP) they perceive to affect their wellness.

**Theoretical Model.** The theoretical model for this study was based on the job demands/resources model. This model does not limit itself to specific job demands or resources and assumes any resource or demand may impact employees' health and well-being. According to the model, job demands cause a health-impairment issue to the employee while job resources impact the individual's motivational process.

**Methodology.** In this qualitative research study, 34 volunteers were interviewed via the online Zoom video conferencing platform. The study asked 6 semistructured, open-ended questions about which wellness components were perceived to be beneficial to their wellness and what components were perceived to be less beneficial. In addition, this study explored what components of a WWP are perceived to affect physical health, mental health, and stress. The participants are sworn police officers from eleven independent police agencies within Riverside County, California, USA.

**Findings and Conclusion.** The study produced several repeated themes from the participants for which wellness components they perceived could be beneficial, less beneficial, and affect physical health, mental health, and stress.

**Recommendations.** There were several limitations dealing with the convenience, snowball sampled participants that prevent the results from being generalizable to all police officers. Implications and suggestions for law enforcement agencies are discussed.

*Keywords:* law enforcement, police officer, wellness, workplace wellness program (WWP), job demands/resources model, physical health, mental health, stress

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## CHAPTER 1: WELLNESS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

*“The part can never be well unless the whole is well”*

—Plato

This study explores the components of Workplace Wellness Programs (WWP) as they relate to the profession of law enforcement. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a workplace wellness program as “a health promotion activity or organization-wide policy designed to support healthy behaviors and improve health outcomes while at work” (Astrella, 2017, p. 379). For this study, health must also be defined. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Definitions & Distinctions Between Health, Prevention & Wellness, 2016). WWPs offered by employers vary in approach and philosophy but their common aspect is they introduce resources designed to benefit the employee’s health and well-being. Private business research studies have suggested that wellness programs may improve productivity, decrease absenteeism, help reduce health-care costs, and reduce unhealthy lifestyle choices (Pescud et al., 2015). In some studies, WWPs have indicated they may improve employees’ motivation and job performance, enhance job satisfaction, and increase recruitment and retention while also creating costs savings in the reduction of health-care premiums and absenteeism rates (Williams & Ramsey, 2017). In addition, a 2017 study found that employees who exercised together at work were less worn down and more energetic after 10 weeks than their counterparts who worked out alone at home. In that study, it was suggested that WWPs may improve the mental and emotional states of employees (Jakobsen, Sundstrup, Brandt, & Andersen, 2017).

## **Background of the Problem**

A WWP could be valuable in the law enforcement community because of the high job demands placed upon law enforcement officers during their career. Some studies have demonstrated that increased job demands can increase the stress felt and the employee is more likely to consider leaving an organization if the stress is not mediated (Allisey, Noblet, Lamontagne, & Houdmont, 2014). In addition, job demands may be associated with higher burnout if social support is low (Smoktunowicz et al., 2015). This section deals with the different types of demands that law enforcement officers must encounter during their career.

Some researchers have divided job demands within law enforcement into two categories: occupational job demands and organizational job demands (Anderson, Litzenberger, & Plecas, 2002; Burke & Paton, 2006). Occupational job demands include the inherent risk that officers assume to do the job including investigating abuse and emotional traumatic cases (Burke & Paton, 2006), the risk of physical harm to themselves or others (Anderson et al., 2002), shift work (Ma et al., 2015), and public criticism (Tanigoshi, Kontos, & Remley, 2008). In addition to the operational stress that is inherent with the job, there are also organizational stressors present in law enforcement. Law enforcement is a hierarchal, paramilitary organizational structure where judgement and job autonomy are traditionally controlled or limited by the higher management of the organization (Shane, 2010). Organizational job demands are the activities associated with the officer being part of the agency's organizational membership. These job demands include the training process that includes being exposed to the cultural beliefs of the organization (Burke & Paton, 2006), socialization (Shane, 2010), the promotional

process, and supervisor and peer criticism (Garner, 2008). Research has found that police officers perceive organizational job demands as more stressful than operational job demands (Anderson et al., 2002; Burke & Paton, 2006; Juniper, White, & Bellamy, 2010; Shane, 2010). Both occupational and organizational job demands may create emotional strain on the law enforcement officer.

Emotional labor is another job demand found within law enforcement. Emotional labor is the ability to suppress personal feelings and emotions to complete a job (Guy, Newman, & Mastracci, 2008). As a public service employee, a law enforcement officer must always portray an image suitable for the occupation. The public has come to expect law enforcement officers to carry themselves with professionalism and have a controlled emotional response to traumatic incidents (Martin, 1999). To satisfy this expectation, officers must suppress their own emotions to safely and efficiently perform their job. Emotional labor as further defined by Mastracci, Guy, and Newman (2012) in their book *Emotional Labor and Crisis Response* is “the effort within oneself to conjure appropriate feelings or subdue inappropriate ones, and the effort to induce particular feelings in another person or stifle other feelings” (p. 28). Suppressing true feelings to perform the job effectively can create stress within the law enforcement professional (Guy et al., 2008). When employees are exposed to operational and organizational job demands yet must suppress their feelings, the job is producing excessive demands on the employee. This study now examines the different traumatic risks that may occur as a result of these demands.

The law enforcement profession is one of the most stressful and dangerous occupations (Zimmerman, 2012). What research has demonstrated is that excessive

demands have a detrimental effect on both the job performance and the health of the public safety personnel (Frank, Lambert, & Qureshi, 2017). When officers fail to manage their emotions for a given situation, the result can create unproductive encounters with the public and could translate to lack of self-restraint, which could lead to dangerous situations where the public is threatened instead of protected by the officer (Spence, Fox, Moore, Estill, & Comrie, 2019). The build-up of stress during critical incidents that become common place for the police officer is also a demand that appears to affect the officer over time. Law enforcement officers deal with traumatic stressful events throughout their career. Some research had termed this stress accumulation, cumulative career traumatic stress (CCTS; Marshall, 2006). Research has proposed that without resources that allow the ability to recover from this stress, it will create work-family conflict at the home of the officer and emotional exhaustion at work (Hall, Dollard, Tuckey, Winefield, & Thompson, 2010).

CCTS within the law enforcement profession creates unhealthy responses to stress within the human body. The body's response to these numerous stressors can be explained by police officers attempting to respond to the "fight or flight" reaction within the context of their job. A person's response to sudden-onset stress (fight or flight) is to flood the body with hormones that improve arousal, alertness, and enhanced memory (Anderson et al., 2002).

This reaction is controlled by the sympathetic nervous system, and its goal is to increase readiness and override the many normal daily functions in the body to create a response for action. For animals in the wild, this is the point where they would fight or flee danger, and the physical exertion would signal different hormones to would return

the body to a normal state. This limits the body's exposure to the trauma it just experienced. For officers, this is when they are preparing for a physical encounter or just the unknown of a stressful incident. If not allowed to move from this danger, the body will begin to release different hormones from the parasympathetic nervous system. For animals, when both the sympathetic and parasympathetic are cycling at the same time, this would create a shock response and the animal would collapse and dissociate from its senses. Once the danger has left, the animal would kick and run away, naturally helping the body to remove the hormones. Although exposed to more trauma in this example, the exposure can be minimized by the kicking and running activity helping to clear the combined parasympathetic and sympathetic hormones. For the officer under stressful situations where physical activity is not a viable option, these two competing systems continue to cycle creating traumatization, which is when the shock response cannot be processed by the system and the person could suffer psychological and emotional damage as a result (Rees & Smith, 2007). This type of trauma is termed direct trauma and could result in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Spence et al., 2019).

Another potential trauma risk that police officers are exposed to is termed vicarious trauma (VT) or secondary traumatic stress (STS). VT has been defined as the exposure to the trauma experience of others. A closely related term is STS, which is when professionals are psychology overwhelmed by their desire to provide assistance and comfort trauma victims (Figley, 1995). The behavioral and psychological symptoms displayed by STS may be similar to those from PTSD (Molnar et al., 2017). Currently, there have been no studies conducted that show a delineation of the effects of direct trauma from those of secondary trauma, and therefore it is uncertain when examining

PTSD found within law enforcement officers whether it is direct trauma, secondary trauma, or a mixture of both (Lawrence, 2017). Studies have shown when helping victims of trauma, first responders may change their “worldview” and put them at risk for developing a negative perception about safety and the ability to trust others (Vicarious Trauma Institute, 2015). Up to this point, this introduction has briefly described some of the job demands of this stressful occupation and the potential traumatic conditions that can result from these demands. The researcher now examines how these issues impact the health of law enforcement officers.

The reason to be concerned with these job demands is they impact the health of law enforcement officers during their career. A study that was conducted between 2004 and 2009 of Buffalo police officers found a higher percentage of officers were obese (40.5% versus 32.1%), had metabolic syndrome (26.7% versus 18.7%), and had higher cholesterol serum levels (200.8 mg/dL versus 193.2 mg/dL) than the general population (Hartley, Burchfiel, Fekedulegn, Andrew, & Violanti, 2011). In addition, officers are also exposed to nontraditional cardiovascular risk factors including high-stress incidents and persistent hypervigilance, which are linked to elevated levels of cortisol in the body (Gilmartin, 2002). Another police study suggested that the shorter sleep duration combined with midnight shift work may be important to the cause of metabolic syndrome (Violanti et al., 2009). According to peer-reviewed research studies that examined cancer within law enforcement, although limited data were present, it appears that exposure to known and unknown agents or activities possibility increases the risk of cancer (Wirth et al., 2012). All these physical health issues present in law enforcement may cause overall mortality issues. Studies have found that law enforcement officers, on average, have a

lower life expectancy and probability of death is higher than the general population (Violanti, Fekedulegn, et al., 2013). This background of the problem has led the researcher down the path that indicates the high demands present in law enforcement can create different types of stress on the human body. These stressors may create serious negative health issues. One possible way to help with these negative health issues is a WWP, which may help to provide positive resources to the law enforcement officer.

### **Problem Statement**

Although there are numerous studies that document the positive effects of wellness programs, there is limited research examining their impact on law enforcement officers (Mumford, Taylor, & Kubu, 2014). The available studies of wellness in law enforcement mainly focus on the areas of mental counseling of traumatic events (Tanigoshi et al., 2008) or physical fitness and weight loss to prevent chronic health conditions (Gu et al., 2013; Williams & Ramsey, 2017). Possibly because of this lack of research, there has not been large scale implementation of WWPs within the law enforcement community. In addition, there have been few studies that document mental wellness programs for law enforcement agencies and whether these proactive prevention efforts make a difference in mental health and well-being (Kuhns, Maguire, & Leach, 2015). With the decline of physical and mental health of law enforcement professionals documented (Hartley et al., 2011; Spence et al., 2019; Thoen, Dodson, Manzo, Pina-Watson, & Trejos-Castillo, 2019), there is a need for more research in WWPs for the law enforcement professional.

### **Basic Assumptions of the Study**

This is a perceptual study attempting to gain insight from police officers about WWPs. The study is designed to better understand how they feel about certain aspects of a WWP and is not concerned with whether these feelings can be proven or supported by research. The basic assumption with this type of research is that perceptions will vary.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore law enforcement officers' perceptions of Workplace Wellness Programs (WWPs). This was done by asking law enforcement officers which components within a WWP they perceived to be beneficial to their wellness and which components they perceived to be less beneficial to their wellness. In addition, this study also explored which components of a WWP law enforcement officers perceived to affect physical health, mental health, and stress.

### **Research Questions**

1. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect their wellness?
2. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to be beneficial to their wellness?
3. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to be less beneficial to their wellness?
4. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect physical health?
5. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect mental health?

6. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect stress?

### **Significance of the Problem**

The significance of this study is to provide research into the perceptions that law enforcement officers have about WWPs. This topic presents a gap of research within the field of WWPs, especially when addressing wellness programs for first responders (Spence et al., 2019). Much of the research for law enforcement wellness focuses on the effects of wellness on officers (Mumford et al., 2014), the need for wellness programs because of the negative health issues and conditions associated with the profession of law enforcement (Violanti et al., 2009; Violanti, Fekedulegn, et al., 2013), and whether prevention efforts affect mental health and well-being (Kuhns et al., 2015). This researcher could not find any research on the perceptions that law enforcement officers have regarding WWPs. A 2013 study found that this is a critical component for a WWP. Although not specific to law enforcement, the study determined the most effective WWPs should be designed for the employees they will serve and the culture of the business (Goetzel, Roemer, Smith, Kent, & Tabrizi, 2013). With a good quantity of research on the uniqueness of police culture (Cockcroft, 2013; Kates, 2008; Mastracci et al., 2012), having a WWP that is tailored to the police culture should be a key piece of research included in law enforcement wellness programs.

This study's findings begin the process of creating research that can help explore this missing aspect of law enforcement wellness research. Ultimately this study will document law enforcement officers' perceptions of wellness programs, and this can assist

in the design and implementation of WWP specifically designed for law enforcement officers.

### **Methodology and Research Design**

The methodology that was used for this study is a semistructured qualitative design. This design allowed the researcher to target the specific questions of the study but also allowed the participants to explain their reason for their response. This helped develop a rich, meaningful response from the participant.

This was a qualitative study focusing on police officers who work for independent police agencies within the county of Riverside, California, USA. This convenience sample of participants was limited to active, sworn police officers. This study utilized individual interviews conducted over the Zoom™ Internet video conferencing application to determine what components of a WWP are perceived by the participants to affect their overall wellness. The study asked open-ended questions to help discover the perceptions the participants have to wellness programs and how they impact physical health, mental health, and stress. The results were analyzed and coded to find potential themes.

### **Theoretical Model for the Study**

The theoretical model used in this study as the job demands/resources model. This model was initially created as only a job demands model that examined “the psychological stressors involved in accomplishing the workload, stressors related to unexpected tasks, and stressors of job-related personal conflict” (Karasek, 1979, p. 291). Between 1996 and 2001, this model was expanded by several researchers who added job resources along with the job demands to look at employee stress and burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Lee & Ashford, 1996). This model does not

limit itself to specific job demands or job resources and assumes any resource or demand may affect employee health and well-being (Hu, Schaufeli, & Taris, 2011). This model is an appropriate theoretical model for this study because it looks at both resources as well as demands. There are two moderating effects of this model: (a) job resources buffer the negative effects of job demands on employee well-being and (b) jobs that require highly demanding work but also come with high levels of resources will create higher levels of worker engagement. Because law enforcement has numerous job demands, adding additional resources such as a WWP may help buffer the negative aspects of the stress of the job and may help to improve the officer's overall well-being (Hu et al., 2011). This study explored what resources of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to impact physical health, mental health, and stress. This could help drive future research to see what components of a WWP specifically designed for law enforcement officers may help buffer the high demands imposed by this occupation.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Job demands.** “Those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016, p. 274).

**Job resources.** “Those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016, p. 274).

**Mental health.** A state of well-being in which individuals realizes their abilities, copes with normal stress, works productively and can make contributions to their community (Herrman, Saxena, & Moodie, 2005).

**Physical health.** Health related to the components of physical fitness that have a relationship with good health. These components are body composition, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, muscular endurance, and strength (Corbin, Pangrazi, & Franks, 2000).

**Stress.** An adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them (Pignata, Boyd, Winefield, & Provis, 2017).

**Traumatic event.** An event that an individual has experienced, witnessed, or is confronted with that involves death or the threat of death or serious physical injury to the self or others and causes the individual to experience intense fear, helplessness, or horror (Marshall, 2006).

**Workplace Wellness Program (WWP).** “A health promotion activity or organization-wide policy designed to support healthy behaviors and improve health outcomes while at work” (Astrella, 2017, p. 379).

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 of the study presented the introduction, the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the methodology and research design, the theoretical framework of the study, and the definitions of terms.

Chapter 2 is a review of relevant literature. It is broken down into the four major parts: The Theoretical Model, Workplace Wellness Programs, How Workplace Wellness Programs Impact Law Enforcement, and Why Law Enforcement Needs Workplace

Wellness Programs. Each section is subdivided into smaller sections. Part I: Theoretical Model has a section discussing the theoretical foundation of the job demands and job resources model. Part II: Workplace Wellness Programs has five sections dealing with What is Wellness, Dimensions of Wellness, Components of Wellness, Design of Workplace Wellness Programs, and Workplace Wellness Programs in Law Enforcement. Part III: How Workplace Wellness Programs Impact Law Enforcement has two sections covering How Workplace Wellness Programs Impact the Law Enforcement Officer and How Workplace Wellness Programs Impact the Law Enforcement Organization. Finally, Part IV: Why Law Enforcement Needs Workplace Wellness Programs is broken down into three sections covering Job Demands Within Law Enforcement, Physical Health Issues, and Emotional/Mental Health Issues.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the study, including the research questions, research design and procedure, interview script, population and sampling procedure, and the instrumentation together with information on validity and reliability and the researcher's role. The chapter goes on to describe the procedures for data collection and the plan for data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. It starts by addressing the interview protocol followed by an assumptions section. Then, the demographics of the study participants were discussed. Finally, the results of the study are presented. It finishes with a conclusion of the findings.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the study and then discusses the limitations of this study. Next, the chapter discusses the interpretations of the study results. It then

presents a section for recommendations for law enforcement leaders, a section addressing future research recommendations, and finally, a conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Several of the studies that are introduced within this literature review examine police officers employed outside the United States. This might be seen inappropriate to people not in law enforcement, but wellness is not something only needed by police officers within the United States; it is relevant to all police officers worldwide. Although there might be differences between U.S.-based police agencies and worldwide police agencies dealing with organizational structure, resources, and types of laws enforced, one thing that is consistent is being exposed to the negative elements of the human condition. Whether that is horrific traffic collisions, violence against women and children, or seeing death frequently and up close, all police officers must process, internalize, and deal with these vicarious traumas. Therefore, all police officers can benefit from wellness programs, and for this reason, research was not confined to just U.S. police officers.

### **Introduction**

This study examines workplace wellness programs (WWPs) as they relate to the profession of law enforcement. Although there are numerous studies that document the positive effects of wellness programs in other fields, the research is limited in scope that examines their effect on law enforcement officers (Mumford et al., 2014) and whether these proactive prevention efforts make a difference in mental health and well-being (Kuhns et al., 2015). The purpose of this study sought to expand the breadth of research on wellness in the law enforcement profession and specifically attempted to identify what perceptions law enforcement officers have in regard to WWPs. A WWP is valuable in the law enforcement community because of the high job demands required by the profession. Research has shown that increased job demands increase the stress felt, and

the employee is more likely to consider leaving the organization if that stress is not mediated (Allisey et al., 2014).

The purpose of this literature review is to give a historical overview of wellness and how this concept applies to the field of law enforcement. As part of one of the most stressful and dangerous occupations (Zimmerman, 2012), law enforcement officers are exposed to large amounts of stress and traumatic critical incidents that become common place for the police officer (job demands). This chapter addresses the theoretical model of the job demands/resources model and how it applies to the concept of WWP. This literature review also covers the types of wellness programs available to law enforcement and the current research of the impact of these programs to the office and the organization. Finally, this literature review discusses the different types of job demands within the law enforcement profession and how officers deal with this stress and the health conditions that develop as a result.

### **Documentation**

This review was primarily conducted with the use of databases from the Annie Gabriel Library at California Baptist University and Google Scholar.

Key words were law enforcement officer, wellness, workplace wellness program (WWP), emotional labor, job demands-resources model, dimensions of wellness, and components of a workplace wellness program.

### **Part I: Theoretical Model**

#### **Job Demands/Resources Model**

The theoretical model that was used in this study was the job demands/resources model (JD-R). This model was initially created as only a job demands model that looked

at what Karasek (1979) termed “the psychological stressors involved in accomplishing the workload, stressors related to unexpected tasks, and stressors of job-related personal conflict” (p. 291). Between 1996 and 2001, this model was expanded by several researchers who added job resources along with the job demands to look at employee stress and burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001; Lee & Ashford, 1996). The JD-R is one of the leading models when it comes to understanding the well-being of employees (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004).

As of 2016, the JD-R model has been applied in thousands of organizations and used in hundreds of empirical studies (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016). This model does not limit itself to specific job demands or job resources and assumes any resource or demand may impact employees’ health and well-being (Hu et al., 2011). This model is a useful theoretical framework for this study because it looks at both the resources and the demands. Job demands were defined by Bakker and Demerouti (2016) as “those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs” (p. 274), while job resources were defined as “those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development” (p. 274).

One of the propositions of the JD-R model is that job demands and job resources impact the person in two very different processes. Job demands cause a health-impairment process, but job resources impact the individual’s motivational process

(Mudrak et al., 2018). Several moderating effects of this model that are important to this study are (a) job resources buffer the negative effects of job demands on employee well-being and (b) jobs that require highly demanding work but also come with high levels of resources will create higher levels of worker engagement (Hu et al., 2011). Both moderating effects are important because a law enforcement job is one of the most demanding jobs (Anderson et al., 2002), and increasing the resources available to the officer may possibly create higher worker engagement as observed in other studies (Hopstaken, van der Linden, Bakker, & Kompier, 2015; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). There are a few studies where JD-R model has been used either to examine law enforcement officers directly or to examine workplace safety of law enforcement officers.

In a 2011 study by Bakker, ten Brummelhuis, Prins, and van der Heijden, researchers examined medical residents to see whether high job demands combined with low job resources contributed to work-home interference. The study used the JD-R model as the theoretical framework and sampled 230 medical residents. The results demonstrated that the combination of high job demands along with low job resources was positively related to work-home interference. This study illustrated that the JD-R model is a conceptual framework and can be applied to work-family interface (Bakker et al., 2011).

In a 2017 study, researchers used the JD-R model to examine police officer stress in India (Frank et al., 2017). The study found that the job demands of ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload created stress to the officer, but this stress was reduced when

the job resources of organizational support, formalization, and employee input in decision-making were available (Frank et al., 2017).

A 2016 unpublished doctoral dissertation demonstrated the JD-R model can be applied to workplace safety. The study conceptualized that the job resource of a sense of belonging at work helped buffer the job demands of fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and undesirable workplace safety outcomes. Employees who showed a stronger sense of belonging reported fewer feelings of fatigue and emotional exhaustion and had higher safety motivation (Malone, 2018).

Section one of this literature review focused on the introduction and the theoretical model that was used for this study. The remaining sections of this literature review concentrate on the types of WWP available to law enforcement officers and the current research dealing with the reasons WWPs are needed in the profession of law enforcement.

## **Part II: Workplace Wellness Programs**

### **What is Wellness**

Wellness was introduced by Dr. Halbert Dunn in his 1961 book *High Level Wellness* as a positive focus on the quality of life—not to prevent disease but to enjoy an enriched life (Dunn, 1961). The World Health Organization (WHO) defined wellness as “A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (Definitions & Distinctions Between Health, Prevention & Wellness, 2016). The National Wellness Institute defines wellness as an active process of how people are aware of and make choices toward a more successful existence (National Wellness Institute, 1976). Regardless of the way wellness is defined, for the

concept of wellness to be applied to a person's life, it is more important to understand how the dimensions of wellness are used to help define a WWP.

### **Dimensions of Wellness**

For a wellness definition to be applied, specific dimensions of health need to be incorporated into a WWP. A dimension of wellness targets a specific aspect of the person's well-being. All these dimensions are interdependent, and overall wellness encompasses all the dimensions (Strout & Howard, 2014). Wellness programs may include a wide variety of dimensions, and there is no set standard to the number of dimensions that need to be present for WWPs to be effective. The National Wellness Institute has a six dimensions model that includes emotional, occupational, physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual (National Wellness Institute, 1976). The wheel of wellness model incorporates the following seven dimensions: community, family, religion, education, business, media, and government while the Indivisible Self utilizes five dimensions that include creative, physical, essential, social, and coping (Myers & Sweeney, 2005). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration uses an eight-dimension wellness model (Society for Human Resource Management, 2017), and the researchers of the Millennium Cohort Study, which examined wellness of military personnel being deployed, defined wellness with three dimensions: physical health, mental health, and stress (Bagnell et al., 2013). Regardless of the number of dimensions incorporated in a wellness program, the goal of all wellness programs is to holistically treat the whole person and realize these dimensions are interconnected when trying to achieve wellness (Hall et al., 2010).

For this study, the components of a wellness program that will be measured are the same ones that were measured for the Millennium Cohort study. That study looked at the health concerns of military members, covering service-related exposures as well as deployments into combat. Veterans who served during wartime faced a variety of physical and mental health issues that are more demanding than those faced by the traditional civilian working population (Ryan et al., 2007). Many of the issues that the participants of the Millennium Cohort study faced are similar to issues that law enforcement officers face. The Millennium Cohort study participants developed wellness issues because of being away from family, developing PTSD symptoms, depression, lack of exercise, and exposure to death (Bagnell et al., 2013). These are some of the same issues that are common within the law enforcement profession (Fiedler, 2015). The United States Congress felt that the military and law enforcement professions were so similar when it comes to wellness that they created a Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act (LEMHWA) where the primary goal is to determine whether existing military and veteran wellness programs could apply to law enforcement because the demands of the professions are closely related (Spence et al., 2019). The Millennium Cohort study used the following dimensions of wellness: physical health, mental health, and stress. Physical health was related to how well the participants physically functioned, which included daily activities, pain levels, and general health. Mental health dealt with the ability to handle emotions, vitality, mental health, and social functioning, and the stress category looked at how the participants dealt with stress in their life including relationship problems, personal identity issues, financial issues, and emotional

support issues (Bagnell et al., 2013). This present study utilizes the three dimensions of physical health, mental health, and stress as the definition of wellness.

### **Components of a WWP**

While the dimensions of a wellness program focus on the specific aspects of a person's well-being, the components of the program target the behaviors and needs of the individuals within the WWP (Society for Human Resource Management, 2017).

Components are the interventions that the program utilizes to target the wellness dimensions. For example, physical health is a dimension in many of the wellness definitions. An employer could utilize the components of having a lunchtime walking program or group exercise classes to impact the dimension of physical health. Both of these interventions or components target the dimension of physical health.

### **Designs of Workplace Wellness Programs (WWP)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a WWP as “a health promotion activity or organization-wide policy designed to support healthy behaviors and improve health outcomes while at work” (Astrella, 2017, p. 379).

Wellness programs have become more standard in the workplace during the last 20 years. In 2006, 27% of companies offered WWP compared to 75% in 2013. Another study found that in 2014, 60% of companies provided wellness programs as compared with 51% in 2008 (Richardson, 2017). Although these percentages are different and specifics of how the studies quantified wellness programs and how they classified businesses based on size can be open for discussion, the point that wellness programs are becoming increasing more common in the workplace is not being challenged. This increase can possibility be attributed to the studies that have shown wellness programs may improve

productivity and reduced health-care related costs (Batorsky, Taylor, Huang, Hangsheng, & Doeren, 2016). In addition to these employer benefits, organizations are beginning to look at wellness programs to create a health-oriented work culture that focuses on overall employee well-being (Richardson, 2017). According to a 2014 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health report, 75% of workers feel there is more job stress than experienced by the previous generation (Milligan, 2016). WWP may be a needed component to reduce workplace stress.

For an employer to offer a comprehensive WWP, thought must be given to what constitutes a complete program. Research has examined program designs that include a variety of physical activities, just educational workshops, or programs that offer discounts to wellness-related programs and activities. The program that included educational seminars on key topics such as nutrition, exercise, and stress while also providing on-site health check-ups was perceived to be the best program design for both management and nonmanagement employees (Caperchione et al., 2015). Medical insurance companies have stressed that WWP should include education, health risk assessments, incentives, coaching, environmental consultation, targeted programming, onsite health screening, and professional support of a full-time wellness staff (Murphy, Schoenman, & Pirani, 2010). The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act established grants and educational assistance for businesses to develop wellness programs and used regulations to increase the use of wellness programs (Kirkland, 2014). Employers have financial incentives for employees to achieve health benchmarks, and employers can use both incentives as well as penalties for employees who do not take the appropriate action to improve the health (Kirkland, 2014). With studies that show reduced health-care costs

associated with wellness programs and additionally the federal government offering incentives to provide these programs, more and more employers are looking into wellness programs and how they should be designed.

A WWP should be designed for the employees it services and the culture of the business. When determining the direction and specific interventions or components it will have, a company needs to look at several factors such as (a) Will the interventions/components align with the culture of the company and the demographics and health status of the employees? (b) How will the program be delivered, and what topics will be relevant to the employees? (c) Are the interventions evidence based, and will there be consistency and coherence within the program? and (d) Is there an infrastructure for the program, and what organizational resources are needed to keep the program functioning (Goetzel et al., 2013). Without these questions answered, the program structure will not be complete and the program might lack critical components for success.

WWPs have become more common within all occupations but no set standard of a WWP has yet to emerge. With the varying number of dimensions of wellness that can be followed and the numerous components of a WWP able to be implemented, WWPs can look drastically different from one other and have differing objectives for success. Next, the study presents an examination of the actual WWP that are present within the law enforcement profession.

### **Workplace Wellness Programs in Law Enforcement**

There have been several research papers that detail the need for a WWP within the law enforcement profession (Fiedler, 2015; Marx, 2016; Williams & Ramsey, 2017), but there are few studies that actually examine WWP within law enforcement. Many of

these studies focus on the following areas of research: mental counseling of traumatic events (Tanigoshi et al., 2008) or physical fitness and weight loss to prevent chronic health conditions (Gu et al., 2013; Williams & Ramsey, 2017). Possibly because of this lack of research, there has been a relatively small number of law enforcement agencies to implement WWP. With the decline of physical and mental health of law enforcement professionals documented in the research (Hartley et al., 2011), there is a need for more research in WWPs for the law enforcement professional. Later in this literature review, the researcher reviews the current research on WWP as it relates to law enforcement. To finish this section, the researcher examines actual WWPs that are currently in place in the law enforcement profession.

As already discussed, there is no set standard for WWP and no number of components of a WWP that must be incorporated for a program to be implemented. The following is an overview of several the current law enforcement WWPs. This is not meant as a complete list because only programs available to be viewed via the Internet or by online research methods are listed. If a local municipality listed a WWP but it was not specific to law enforcement, it was not included on this list. The purpose of this section was to list as many law enforcement specific WWPs as possible to give a breadth of the programs available and their variety in components.

In 2013, Denver Police Department started their Police Officer Wellness & Employee Resources program. This program uses a point system that offers time off incentives to officers who engage in healthy behavior and activities. This is a voluntary program with only an annual physical exam and online health assessment being the mandatory components of this program. The program gives points to doctor checks such

as physicals, mental health checks, eye exams, dental exams, colonoscopy, and mammograms to name a few. In addition, competing in fitness challenges, continuing wellness education, and fitness center attendance also acquires points. For every 250 points earned, an officer earns one vacation day that must be used within that year (Denver Police Department, 2013).

Oregon City Police Department started their WWP in 2011, and the only intervention initially was a \$25 credit toward membership fees at a local fitness facility. By 2015, the department opened their own “CrossFit” gym and offered professional nutritionist and personal trainer services to its employees as well as the employee’s family members. CrossFit is a specific exercise program that stresses constantly varied, functional movements at high intensity. This is an example of a WWP that is focused on only one dimension of wellness, physical health (Oregon City Police Department, 2015).

The Lakeway Police Department in Texas has created a Health and Wellness Policy that officers must follow as they would any other police policy. In this policy, there is a mandatory fitness test based on age, weight, and gender. This test is provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety-Education, Training and Research Division (ETR). All officers must pass the test or face disciplinary measures that include written counseling, ineligibility to participate in any promotional process, and being up to a fitness-for-duty evaluation. The department allows officers 1 hour each day to work out on duty time. In addition, the policy states the officer will participate in a mental health consultation and medical exam each year (Lakeway Police Department, 2014).

The Indianapolis wellness model was created in 2015 with the initial goals to identify red flag distress warnings, build a culture of trust and credibility, and stop the

stigma of weakness associated with officers asking for help. This program looked at negative work performance evaluations and used those to offer interventions for officers to target personal and behavioral issues that might be impacting those work issues. The goal was to use wellness components to attempt to correct work issues before they became punitive. The program incorporated educational seminars in five areas: addictive issues, behavioral and mental health issues, personality issues, general health issues, and relationship distress (Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, 2014).

The Sidney Police Department in Ohio has a wellness program consisting of proactive physical and mental components. The program started in 1999 and was based on the Cooper Institute's physical fitness guidelines for police officers. The program tests 300-meter sprint, bench press/push-ups, sit-ups, vertical jump, and 1.5-mile run. If officers pass at the top level of fitness, they can earn up to \$1,700 a year, but if they fail to meet the minimum standards, they receive progressive discipline starting with a verbal counseling, and by the fourth failure, they receive 3 days off. The department had two workout rooms, a full medical exam with a stress test each year, and a fitness specialist to help with goal achievement. The mental health program was created to combat the average of 150 police suicides nationwide each year and the issues related to posttraumatic stress and other mental conditions. The Sidney Police Department claims its officers are healthier, use fewer sick days, have fewer use-of-force incidents, are more productive, and have higher public trust although there is no evidence presented on their webpage to support these claims (Sidney Police Department, 2017).

The Rockville Police Department Wellness Initiative is called Body Armor. The program was implemented after one of their officer's committed suicide, and they had no

resources to handle how officers were dealing with the situation. A peer support group was created, and annual wellness check-ins were started. A department gym was created, and educational talks about financial stress, mental/emotional job stress, and physical health was started (Rockville Police Department, 2017).

In 2013, Harford County Sheriff's Office started their wellness program, which is a voluntary program that offers rewards and incentives for the employees. The program uses fitness devices like a Fitbit or Garmin to track physical activity. The officers must reach 600,000 steps every 6 months to receive incentives, and the officers must have a yearly physical to stay in the program. Officers can earn a minimum of \$175 dollars if they achieve the minimum step requirements and up to \$400 for 90% above the minimum, measured every 6 months (Harford County Sheriff's Office, 2014).

The La Mesa Police Department in Arizona follows the Federal Bureau of Investigation wellness philosophy of **Beyond Survival Towards Officer Wellness** (BeSTOW). This program focuses and trains officers in the three wellness dimensions of emotional, mental, and spiritual wellness (La Mesa Police Department, 2015).

The San Diego Police Department started their wellness program in 2011. The program offers two hours of wellness training every year, a monthly newsletter dealing with all aspects of wellness that is electronically sent to the employees, and a location that allows officers to meet with mental health professionals, free and confidential. This program was one of the programs studied by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) when it created the VALOR program, an online resource for officers and agencies addressing officer wellness and safety (San Diego Police Department, 2013).

The Bureau of Justice Assistance of the DOJ created the VALOR program in 2013. VALOR stands for Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability. This program was created to improve the immediate and long-term safety, wellness, and resilience of law enforcement officers and offers no-cost training to officers, conducts research, provides resources, and creates partnerships that benefit law enforcement officers. The VALOR initiative aims to provide the tools for individual officers and law enforcement agencies that address all aspects of officer safety, wellness and performance. Within the VALOR initiative, there are six different programs that focus on different aspects of officer safety and wellness (Bureau of Justice Assistance [BJA], 2018).

The actual VALOR program provides training and technical assistance for officer safety issues and wellness and officer resilience. A program with the VALOR program is the T3-Tact, Tactics, and Trust Training, which provides officers with the information and tools to help defuse and solve situations with the least amount of force needed. Destination Zero is a program that highlights promising safety and wellness programs that help agencies that are trying to implement similar programs. The Law Enforcement Agency and Officer Resilience Training Program seeks to identify, implement and analyze the effectiveness of resiliency concepts and skills to build more resilient officers and agencies. The next program of the VALOR initiative is the Law Enforcement and Community Crisis Intervention Training Model Program that helps deliver Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) programs to law enforcement agencies. The last program in this initiative is the Officer Safety and Wellness Pilot Research and Evaluation Program, which means to evaluate the impact of all the VALOR resources being used within three

law enforcement agencies and be able to share the successes and failures of the VALOR initiative with other agencies (BJA, 2018; VALOR Initiative, 2018).

The most recent attempt by the federal government to improve wellness within the law enforcement community is the LEMHWA, which was signed into law January 2018. This act requires the DOJ to submit a report to Congress on the mental health practices and services offered by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) for veterans and whether any of these services could be adopted by law enforcement. The report must also contain recommendations on several key components of this act, the effectiveness of national crisis lines specific to law enforcement, the efficacy of annual mental health checks, the expansion of peer support with law enforcement, and the way to ensure privacy considerations for these issues (Spence et al., 2019). This national program is based on research that demonstrates a person's mental state affects behavior and can influence decision-making. In addition, people under stress find it harder to connect and regulate emotions, have narrowed perceptions, increased anxiety and fearfulness, and degraded cognitive abilities (Vila & Samuels, 2011). This program found many similarities between the military and law enforcement, which is why one of the program's goals is to see the effectiveness of current DoD wellness practices applied to law enforcement. Several similarities include that men are 3.5 times more likely to commit suicide than females (International Association of Chiefs of Police [IACP] Center for Officer Safety and Wellness, 2018), the military gender composition is 83% being men with an average age of 34 years old while law enforcement is 87% being men with an average age of 39 years old (Spence et al., 2019). This national program has 22 different recommendations for implementation by law enforcement agencies and federal

government. These recommendations address the creation of public awareness for wellness of law enforcement and support for creating and embedding mental health professionals specifically trained for law enforcement officers and their family concerns. It attempts to expand the role of peer support programs within agencies as well as allow these programs to be used by retired law enforcement. The program will try create a national crisis hotline for law enforcement and create a law enforcement suicide event reporting process. It will support research in the efficacy of mental health checks and annual mental health check-ups with mental health professionals. Finally, it will attempt to address the privacy considerations of implementation of these types of programs both to protect the officer and the agency (Spence et al., 2019). Based on the current available research, this is the most proactive wellness initiative designed strictly for law enforcement to date.

As discussed previously and demonstrated with this variety of wellness programs currently in place in law enforcement, there is no one singular way to organize and implement a WWP. This section discussed WWPs and their implementation in the field of law enforcement. The next section of this literature review addresses all the different ways that wellness programs can impact the law enforcement professional.

### **Part III: How Workplace Wellness Programs Impact Law Enforcement**

WWPs not only impact the officer, but also the agency and the community who can benefit from these programs. A healthy police force is a better functioning police force because a person's mental state affects behavior and can influence decision-making. In addition, people under stress find it harder to connect and regulate emotions and have narrowed perceptions, increased anxiety and fearfulness, and degraded cognitive abilities

(Vila & Samuels, 2011). This section examines how studies have demonstrated that WWPs have the potential to improve the officer, the agency, and the community.

### **How Workplace Wellness Programs Impact the Law Enforcement Officer**

Earlier in this literature review, the job demands that can create health issues for a law enforcement officer were divided into three different categories: physical, emotional, and mental health issues. Now, the researcher examines currently available research on WWPs and how they impact these three health issues of the law enforcement officer.

In 2016, Kuehl et al. conducted a study to see whether creating a worksite wellness intervention training would be effective at reducing occupational risks and unhealthy lifestyle behaviors. The program was called Safety & Health Improvement: Enhancing Law Enforcement Departments (SHIELD). The SHIELD study was a 24-month study utilizing an evidence-based, peer-led, team-based format to educate law enforcement personnel of the unique occupational risk factors common among law enforcement. The study attempted to address the occupational risk factors that include high injury rates and early disability, high cardiovascular disease, increased mental stress and PTSD, sleep disorders, fatigue related motor vehicle accidents, poor dietary practices, and bad ergonomics. The study utilized 1-hour team meetings that were used for social support and to discuss habits and techniques to combat the occupational stressors present in the day-to-day activities of the participants. The findings suggested a positive impact on nutrition, stress, and sleep quality and quantity for a 6-month duration and a 24-month duration positive impact on the consumption of fruits and vegetables (Kuehl et al., 2016).

Arnetz, Arble, Backman, Lynch, and Lublin (2012) looked at whether implementing a prevention program for work-related stress would be beneficial for officer wellness. This study had a random sample of 37 police cadets who received psychological and technical techniques to reduce anxiety and enhance performance during critical incidents. Assessments of somatic and psychological health and stress biomarkers were done during the study and at 18 months as a regular police officer. This study showed that the intervention group improved in areas of general health and problem-based coping as compared to the control group at the 18-month testing. There were also lower levels of stomach problems, sleep difficulties, and exhaustion with the intervention group. This study suggested that programs aimed to reduce work-related stress may have an impact on general health including sleep, stomach issues, and exhaustion (Arnetz et al., 2012).

In another study that looked at reducing work related stress, Weltman, Lamon, Freedy, and Chartrand (2014) conducted a study of 12 sworn officers and two dispatchers from the San Diego Police Department using a stress resilience training system (SRTS) that was an application on an iPad. The participants utilized the SRTS app for 6 weeks. Pre and post testing using the Personal and Organizational Quality Assessment (POQA) was conducted, and all four categories measured (emotional vitality, organizational stress, emotional stress, and physical stress) in the questionnaire showed improvement. There were significant improvements in emotional vitality, improved by 25% ( $p = .05$ ) and physical stress, improved by 24% ( $p = .01$ ). This study utilized an application that helped provide practical self-regulation skills for managing work-related stress and

showed that this type of training can have a positive impact on the wellness of the officer (Weltman et al., 2014).

In a 2011 study examining whether sleep impacts occupational functioning, DuRousseau, Mindlin, Insler, and Levin (2011) used a music-based neurofeedback therapy intervention called Brain Music (BM). This was an 8-week wellness study that included 41 law enforcement participants. Each participant was given two 5-minute MP files, one to activate and the other to relax the brain. At the end of the 8-week study, statistically significant improvements in sleep quality (94%), insomnia (89%), mood (74%), and daytime function (82%) were observed. This study indicates that sleep interventions may help improve work performance and daytime functioning (DuRousseau et al., 2011).

In 2008, Tanigoshi et al. attempted to determine whether individual counseling sessions that were grounded in holistic wellness could increase wellness levels of law enforcement officers. Sixty officers from a southern Louisiana department participated in the study. The 5F-Wel inventory was used to test overall wellness of the participants pre and post study. The 30 treatment participants met with an individual counselor five times during the study and discussed holistic wellness concepts and stress of the job. The treatment group had significantly higher wellness scores after the study than the treatment group (Tanigoshi et al., 2008).

A 2008 study had 67 police officers participating in a 10-week intervention where physical fitness was performed five times a week and the participants blood lipids were measured pre and post study. The study found that there were significant ( $p < .001$ )

improved physical fitness measurements and reduced lipid profile scores (Anshel & Kang, 2008).

All these studies looked at specific components of wellness or an overall wellness program to see whether it would influence officer wellness. Next, the researcher examines how WWP can impact the law enforcement agency.

### **How Workplace Wellness Programs Impact the Law Enforcement Organization**

Although there is a limited number of studies on WWPs and their impact on the law enforcement officer, there was no research found on how these WWPs impact the police agency. A 2003 study, although not of law enforcement officers, looked at physical fitness levels and employee's productivity, job satisfaction, and absenteeism identified that higher levels of fitness may positively influence employees' productivity, job satisfaction, and absenteeism (Wattles & Harris, 2003). Although this study looked at the employees' perceptions, references can be made that a more productive, engaged, and satisfied worker would be more beneficial to the employer. This study adds credence to the idea that instituting an exercise wellness program may improve worker productivity. Another study looked at 200 female health-care workers who either exercised at home or with a group of employees at work. The study found that the group who exercised together at work were more effective than the home-based exercise group when it came to concern about pain of patients and their own vitality (Jakobsen et al., 2017). The social benefits of a group exercise again may benefit the employer by having a more productive workforce.

This section of the literature review dealt with how WWPs impact both law enforcement officers and the organization where they work. The next and final section of

this chapter addresses job demands within the law enforcement profession and the current physical, mental, and emotional health concerns of police officers.

#### **Part IV: Why Law Enforcement Needs Workplace Wellness Programs**

##### **Job Demands Within Law Enforcement**

A WWP is valuable in the law enforcement community because of the high job demands required of the profession. Research has demonstrated that increased job demands increase the stress felt, and the employee is more likely to consider leaving the organization if that stress is not mediated (Allisey et al., 2014). In addition, job demands have been shown to be associated with higher burnout if social support was low (Smoktunowicz et al., 2015).

Job demands within law enforcement can be divided into two main categories: occupational job demands and organizational job demands (Burke & Paton, 2006). Occupational job demands include the inherent risk that officers assume to do the job including investigating abuse and emotional traumatic cases (Burke & Paton, 2006), the risk of physical harm to themselves or others (Anderson et al., 2002), shift work (Ma et al., 2015), and public criticism (Tanigoshi et al., 2008). In addition to the operational stress that is inherent in the job, there are also organizational stressors present in law enforcement. Law enforcement is a hierarchal, paramilitary organizational structure where judgement and job autonomy are traditionally limited or controlled by the higher management of the organization (Shane, 2010). Research has found that police officers perceive organizational job demands as more stressful than operational job demands (Anderson et al., 2002; Burke & Paton, 2006). Organizational job demands are the activities associated with the officer being part of the agency's organizational

membership (Shane, 2010). These job demands include the training process that involves being exposed to the culture beliefs of the organization (Burke & Paton, 2006), socialization (Shane, 2010), the promotional process, and supervisor and peer criticism (Garner, 2008). Both occupational and organizational job demands create stress on the law enforcement officer. This stress can impact an officer's life in numerous ways. The researcher next examines the health issues that are seen in the police profession.

### **Physical Health Issues**

The law enforcement profession is a high-stress occupation and considered a dangerous profession. The majority of an officer's work shift is sedentary, consisting of computer work and sitting, but at a moment's notice, the officer might be exposed to a heart racing vehicle pursuit or a physical use of force struggle. These unpredictable emergencies can create an increase in work-related injuries and medical conditions (Zimmerman, 2012). In addition, police officers must perform shift work, which adds additional stressors on the body. Shift work has been associated with disruptions in the circadian rhythms in people as the sleep/wake cycle for people is misaligned with their 24-hour circadian clock (James, Honn, Gaddameedhi, & VanDongen, 2017). Officers are 4 times more likely to get less than 6 hours sleep in a 24-hour period than the general population (Hartley et al., 2011). A national sample of police officers found that 40% of officers suffer from at least one sleep disorder. Research has demonstrated that sleep disorders are associated with higher risk for other health issues, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, and depression (Rajaratnam et al., 2011). Metabolic syndrome is defined as elevated waist circumference and triglycerides, low HDL cholesterol, hypertension, and glucose intolerance (Violanti et al., 2009). A study

that was conducted between 2004 and 2009 of Buffalo police officers found a higher percentage of officers were obese (40.5% versus 32.1%), had metabolic syndrome (26.7% versus 18.7%), and had higher cholesterol serum levels (200.8 mg/dL versus 193.2 mg/dL) than the general population (Hartley et al., 2011). In addition to these traditional medical cardiovascular risk factors present, officers are also exposed to nontraditional cardiovascular risk factors including high-stress incidents and persistent hypervigilance, which are linked to elevated levels of cortisol in the body (Gilmartin, 2002). Another police study suggested that the shorter sleep duration combined with midnight shift work may be important to the cause of metabolic syndrome (Violanti et al., 2009). In a study of peer-reviewed research examining cancer and law enforcement, there are limited data, but it appears the exposure to known and unknown agents or activities can increase the risk of cancer (Wirth et al., 2012). All these physical health issues present in law enforcement may cause overall mortality issues. Studies have found that law enforcement officers, on average, have a lower life expectancy and probability of death is higher than the general population (Violanti, Fekedulegn, et al., 2013). Next, the researcher discusses the emotional health issues that are present in the law enforcement profession.

### **Emotional and Mental Health Issues**

As a public service employee, a law enforcement officer must always portray an image suitable for the occupation. The public has come to expect law enforcement officers to carry themselves with professionalism and have an unemotional response to traumatic incidents (Martin, 1999). To satisfy this expectation, the officers must suppress their own emotions to safely and efficiently perform their job. This ability to suppress

feelings and emotions to complete a required task is termed Emotional Labor. Emotional Labor was defined by Mastracci et al. (2012) in their book *Emotional Labor and Crisis Response* as “the effort within oneself to conjure appropriate feelings or subdue inappropriate ones, and the effort to induce particular feelings in another person or stifle other feelings” (p. 28). To suppress true feelings to perform the job effectively can create stress within the law enforcement professional (Guy et al., 2008). When an employee is exposed to operational and organizational job demands yet must suppress their feelings, the job is producing excessive demands on the employee. What the research has demonstrated is that excessive demands have a detrimental effect on both the job performance and the health of the public safety personnel. When officers fail to manage their emotions for a given situation, the result can create unproductive encounters with the public and could translate to lack of self-restraint, which could lead to dangerous situations where the public is threatened instead of protected by the officer (Frank et al., 2017). As job demands increase, the stress an officer feels also increases and can manifest itself in other areas besides emotional labor.

High demands at work can lead to job dissatisfaction, which can spill over to create problems in the officer’s home life (Hall et al., 2010). The high demands that are common in law enforcement have been shown to increase the stress that an officer feels. Research has shown that this increased stress and decreased job satisfaction could make officers more likely to consider leaving an organization (Allisey et al., 2014). As the stress increases at work without resources to mitigate this stress, it has been shown to spill over into the officer’s home life, creating work-family conflict. This work-family conflict prevents recovery from stress when the officer is away from the job influencing

emotional exhaustion (Hall et al., 2010). This can cause a downward spiral as the officer does not recover from the job demands when off work and instead increases the perceived stress as the work-family conflict escalates to the point of emotional exhaustion. This was shown in the Allisey et al. (2014) study where there was a significant relationship between job demands of police officers and intent to quit.

Perhaps the most tragic emotional health issue in the field of law enforcement is the elevated risk of suicide. In a study that looked at suicide rates in 1999, 2003-2004 and 2007, it was found that police officers had a much higher rate of suicide than the general working population (Violanti, Robinson, & Shen, 2013), although a different study found that suicide rates for police officers were comparable to general population suicide rates (Loo, 2003). The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) found that officer deaths by suicide occur 2.4 times more frequently than deaths by homicide. Approximately 25% of officers experience suicidal ideations versus 13.5% of the general population, which is strongly correlated to PTSD and depression among police officers (Violanti et al., 2008). In 2018, the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance looked at the profession of law enforcement and determined what were the top three areas that needed to be addressed for officer safety. They determined the most important issue to be addressed was law enforcement suicide (Spence et al., 2019).

The IACP Center for Officer Safety and Wellness created a document in 2018 to address law enforcement suicide. This report suggests that a wellness program should include psychological counseling, peer support, debriefing, resiliency training, and mentoring as the best practices to prevent police suicide (IACP Center for Officer Safety and Wellness, 2018). Two studies were conducted to look at what police agencies

throughout the nation were doing for suicide prevention within law enforcement. Two separate studies conducted a survey of law enforcement agencies to determine what current practices are being used for this issue. What was common in both of these studies was that the majority of officers were unaware of the wellness components offered by their agencies and that the suicide prevention program was not a widely utilized resource (Ramchand et al., 2018; Thoen et al., 2019). With the emotional and physical issues of the law enforcement profession discussed so far, the researcher now examines the mental health issues present in the profession.

The law enforcement profession is one of the most stressful and dangerous occupations (Zimmerman, 2012). The buildup of critical incidents that become commonplace for the police officer is also a demand that appears to affect the officer over time. Law enforcement officers deal with traumatic stressful events throughout their career. Officers are exposed to stress on a daily basis, and this accumulation of stress has been described as cumulative career traumatic stress (CCTS; Marshall, 2006), and research has shown without resources that allow the ability to recovery from this stress, it will create emotional exhaustion (Hall et al., 2010).

Another job demand that impacts the trauma that police officers are exposed to is termed vicarious trauma (VT) or secondary traumatic stress (STS). VT has been defined as the exposure to trauma experiences of others. A closely related term is STS, which is when professionals are psychologically overwhelmed by their desire to provide assistance and comfort to trauma victims (Figley, 1995). Although the actual definition of VT was designed to be used only for psychiatric clinicians (Branson, 2018), many studies have used the terms interchangeability (Molnar et al., 2017), and what many would consider

VT is actually STS. As Molnar et al. did in their 2017 study on advancing the science of VT/STS, this study uses VT and STS interchangeably.

The behavioral and psychological symptoms displayed by STS may be similar to those from PTSD (Molnar et al., 2017). Currently, there have been no studies conducted that show a delineation of the effects of direct trauma from those of secondary trauma, and therefore it is uncertain when examining PTSD found within law enforcement officers whether it is direct trauma, secondary trauma, or a mixture of both (Lawrence, 2017). What studies have shown is that when helping victims of trauma, first responders may change their “worldview” to put them at risk for developing a negative perception about safety and the ability to trust others (Vicarious Trauma Institute, 2015). First responders are exposed to cruel treatment of victims and witness to incredible traumatic incidents that can transform a person’s view of the world. Most people will view the world as mostly benevolent and meaningful; unfortunately, first responders may begin to view the world as malevolent and full of evil (Molnar et al., 2017). First responders, over time, have conditioned themselves to “put on their armor” and become disassociated to the emotional situation that they are placed in so that they can prevent themselves from being exposed to further trauma. Police officers are being placed in highly volatile, traumatic situations and have been given inadequate training to how the body responds to these conditions. This lack of support for the physiological responses that naturally occur in the body needs to be addressed with the first responder community (Rees & Smith, 2007). Much of the VT or STS that police officers are exposed to happens when the body’s natural hormonal response to a threat has been ignored because of the

requirements of the occupation. Next, the researcher deals with this concept, which is termed the Traumatic Cycle.

Much of the buildup of stress within the law enforcement profession is beyond the normal human experience. The body's response to these numerous stressors can be explained by the police officers attempting to respond to the "fight or flight" reaction within the context of their job. A person's response to sudden-onset stress (fight or flight) is to flood the body with hormones that improve arousal, alertness, and enhanced memory consolidation. This is the sympathetic nervous system functioning, and its goal is to increase readiness and override the many normal daily functions in the body to create a response for action. For animals in the wild, this is the point where they would fight or flee danger, and the physical activity along with the removal of the threat would signal different hormones that would return the body to a normal state. This limits the body's exposure to the trauma it just experienced. For officers, this is when they are preparing for a physical encounter or just the unknown of a stressful incident. If not allowed to move from this danger, the body will begin to release different hormones from the parasympathetic nervous system. For animals, when both the sympathetic and parasympathetic are cycling at the same time, this would cause a shock response from the animal, and it would and dissociate from its senses. Once the danger is gone, the animal would kick and run away, naturally helping the body remove the hormones and return to a normal, nonstressed state. Although exposed to more trauma in this example, the exposure can be minimized by the physical activity helping to clear the combined parasympathetic and sympathetic hormones. For the officer under situations where the body perceives stress, which could be the entire working shift depending on the

conditions and where physical activity is not a viable option, these two competing systems continue to cycle creating a traumatic cycle, which is when the shock response cannot be processed by the system and the person could suffer psychological and emotional damage as a result (Rees & Smith, 2007).

This type of trauma is termed direct trauma and could result in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Spence et al., 2019). Without the release of these hormones, the body remains in the traumatic cycle, and the brain is still perceiving a threat and the heightened state of alertness long after the reason for the stress reaction has been concluded (Anderson et al., 2002; Zimmerman, 2012). In addition to this hypervigilant status, law enforcement officers also must work atypical hours, which can create additional emotional and mental issues.

Law enforcement is a 24-hour, 7 days a week occupation, which means it is very common for officers to work atypical hours (outside of traditional daytime work hours) and for their shifts to regularly fluctuate. As discussed in the physical health issues, officers are much more likely to get 6 or fewer hours sleep in a 24-hour period than the general population. This lack of sleep may be a contributing factor to why officers have an increased chance of being diagnosed with depression (12.0% versus 6.8%) over the general population (Hartley et al., 2011). Shift work can also disrupt the circadian rhythms of the human body. In daytime workers, daytime wakefulness is in sync with the biological clock of the human body, the circadian clock, that drives alertness during daytime and decreased alertness during nighttime (James et al., 2017). When working shift work, the circadian clock is out of alignment with the sleep pattern of the person, which can disturb key regulators in the human body and hormone levels can be altered.

One example of this disrupted hormonal balance because of shift work can be seen in satiety and hunger, which are controlled by the hormones leptin and ghrelin. Because these hormones are tied to a typical sleep pattern and feeding pattern, when altered as in shift work, the hormone that controls satiety, leptin, is suppressed because of the change in natural sleep patterns. This change causes shift work employees to have a higher probability of obesity (James et al., 2017). A study examining police officers working the night shift found that they slept less and consumed more fast food than their day shift counterparts (Tewksbury & Copenhaver, 2015).

Shift work is also associated with an increase of stress and work discontent and safety outcomes. A study of 460 Swiss police officers found that shift work was associated with increased social stress, work discontent, sleep complaints, reduced quality of sleep, and less frequent visits to their primary healthcare practitioner (Gerber, Hartmann, Brand, Holsboer-Trachsler, & Puhse, 2010). In addition to the increased stress and work discontent, a 2011 study found that over 40% of the police officers in the study reported symptoms consistent with at least one sleep disorder. Most of those officers reported not having been diagnosed or not regular treating this disorder. Sleeping disorders can increase sleepiness, and there is an increased risk of motor vehicle crashes (Rajaratnam et al., 2011). Although there has been a steady decrease in the number of law enforcement officers killed by felonious assault since the 1960s, the number of officers killed by traffic collisions has relatively remained the same for that time period (National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2018).

This section of the literature review has described the health problems associated with the law enforcement profession. Many of these problems have been linked to the increase of stress because of occupational and organization requirements of the job.

### **Conclusions**

This literature review was divided into four different sections. The first section introduced the JD-R model that served as the theoretical model for this study. This model does not limit what is considered a specific job demand or job resource but assumes any resource or demand may impact the employee's health and well-being (Hu et al., 2011).

The next section of this review researched WWP and looked at how they are organized and defined and contrasted dimensions of wellness with components of a WWP. It then looked at the available WWP that are currently being administered in the law enforcement community.

The next section addressed current studies that deal with wellness in law enforcement. Although some of the studies were not based in the United States, they were important to this dissertation because they represent wellness and the traumatic conditions that law enforcement officers face regardless of the geographic location where it took place. This section was divided between research into how wellness programs impact the officer and research into how wellness programs impacted the organization.

Finally, the last section addressed the need for WWP within the law enforcement community. The occupation of law enforcement is considered a high demand job. Both occupational and organizational job demands create stress on the law enforcement officer. This stress can impact an officer's life in numerous ways. Research has shown

that law enforcement officers have increased physical, mental, and emotional health issues. The next chapter addresses the research methodology used for this study.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study explored the perceptions that police officers have of Workplace Wellness Programs (WWP). The purpose of this study was to explore law enforcement officers' perceptions of Workplace Wellness Programs (WWPs). This was done by focusing on participants who are sworn police officers employed by independent police agencies within the county of Riverside, California. This study explored which components of a WWP were perceived to affect wellness from the law enforcement officer's perspective. In addition, this study also explored officers' perceptions of how WWP components may improve physical health, mental health, and stress. This chapter includes the research questions, a description of the research methodology, the sampling procedure and population, instrumentation, the researcher role in the study, and procedures for data collection and analysis.

### **Research Questions**

1. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect their wellness?
2. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to be beneficial to their wellness?
3. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to be less beneficial to their wellness?
4. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect physical health?
5. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect mental health?

6. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect stress?

### **Research Design and Procedures**

This study attempted to provide additional research in WWPs and how these programs impact the profession of law enforcement by researching how law enforcement officers perceive workplace wellness. The results of this study may be beneficial to law enforcement agencies, who can more effectively and efficiently address WWP for their employees. This study focused on police officers in Riverside County of the Southern California geographic region of the United States.

This qualitative study used individual semistructured interviews utilizing open ended questioning. This process was identified as a suitable method because this is an exploratory study to identify perceptions of the target population.

Contact was made with police chiefs within the county of Riverside by means of an e-mail from the researcher to gain permission to contact their law enforcement officers as participants for the study. If interest was shown by an agency to allow their officers to participate in the study, an e-mail that was disseminated to all sworn personnel was sent by the researcher to that agency. Officers interested in participating replied to the researcher directly and were placed on a participant list. The agency was not part of any communication between the researcher and the officers who participated in the study. For confidentiality purposes, the agency was not aware which officers replied to the researcher. From the list of volunteers, an e-mail was sent from the researcher to the participating officers explaining the process of the study and giving the informed consent letter. Once the officers agreed to participate in the study and signed the informed

consent, a time was arranged for the interview. This study utilized the Zoom Internet video conferencing platform for the individual interviews between the participant and the researcher. Since law enforcement is a shift work occupation, the researcher made sure the interview happened at a time and date advantageous to the participant.

The Zoom interview began with the researcher explaining the purpose of the study and then presenting a short PowerPoint presentation that gave the definition of a wellness program, an explanation of dimensions of wellness, a definition of wellness components, and the three dimensions of wellness used by this study: physical health, mental health, and stress. After these ideas were introduced and explained, the researcher asked the participants the following semistructured questions.

### **Interview Script**

1. Let's start by creating a list of what you would consider a WWP component. Good or bad, big or small, realistic or "would never happen" doesn't matter, let's start a list.
2. Having these components in mind that we just discussed, which ones would you perceive as beneficial for the wellness of law enforcement officers? Why?
3. Having these components in mind that we just discussed which one would you perceive as less beneficial for the wellness of law enforcement officers? Why?
4. Which components would you perceive would affect the physical health of a law enforcement officer? Why?
5. Which components would you perceive would affect the mental health of a law enforcement officer? Why?
6. Which components would you perceive would affect the stress of a law enforcement officer? Why?

The interviews lasted between 20-30 minutes. To encourage participation, a \$10 Starbucks gift card was e-mailed to the participant at the conclusion of the interview.

### **Population and Sample**

This convenience sample of participants was limited to active, sworn police officers working in the county of Riverside within the Southern California geographic region of the United States. Riverside County is the second largest geographical county in the United States covering over 7303 square miles. As of July 1, 2018, the county had an estimated population of 2.45 million people. The demographic make-up of the county is 49.6% Hispanic, 34.7% White, and 7.2% Black. Eighty-one percent of the population has a high school education and 22% of the population has obtained a bachelor's degree. The median household income is \$63,948 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

Riverside County Sheriff's Department is the largest agency of sworn law enforcement officers within the county but was not contacted for this study because of the complexity of their management structure. With some divisions operating as a County Sheriff facility and others functioning as contract police agencies hired by cities within the county, there was no clear point of contact or method to gain entry into the organization, and each division functioned independently from one another. Instead this study focused on the 14 independent police agencies within Riverside County. These agencies ranged in sworn size from as few as 27 officers to as many as 380 officers. One agency was excluded from the study because the researcher was still employed there. This gave a potential sample size of roughly 500 officers from 13 different police agencies.

Since emotional labor and stressors from the job affect all officers regardless of rank, the study was open to all ranks within the law enforcement profession. The state of California requires the minimum age of 21 for an officer to be a sworn law enforcement officer; therefore, all participants were 21 and older. After an interview was completed, the researcher used snowball sampling and asked the participants whether they could recommend any additional officer to participate in the study.

### **Instrumentation**

An e-mail that included an informed consent letter to be signed and e-mailed back to the researcher before the interview was sent to the participants (see Appendix A). Once the Zoom interview began, a PowerPoint presentation covered the definition of a WWP, the components of a WWP, and the three dimensions of wellness used in this study and their definitions (see Appendix B). The interview questions were asked and discussed. The Zoom interviews were audio/video recorded to ensure accuracy and completeness.

The participants were told the following information about the dimensions of wellness used in this study. To define wellness, specific dimensions of wellness must be addressed. Although no one definition of the number of dimensions needed for wellness has been accepted by the scientific community, for this study wellness has the following three dimensions; physical health, mental health, and stress. Here are the following definitions of the dimensions used in this study.

*Mental health:* A state of well-being in which individuals realizes their abilities, copes with normal stress, works productively, and can make contributions to their community (Herrman et al., 2005).

*Physical health:* Health related to the components of physical fitness that have a relationship with good health. These components are body composition, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, muscular endurance, and strength (Corbin et al., 2000).

*Stress:* An adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them (Pignata et al., 2017).

### **Researcher's Role**

The most important instrument in a qualitative study is the researcher (Creswell, 2012). Because of this, it is important to address the researcher's rationale for using interviews and why qualitative research was used for this study.

Because this study focused on the limited population of police officers from independent municipal police departments located in the county of Riverside within the Southern California region of the United States, the researcher understood there would always be external validity issues about whether this study could be generalized to all law enforcement officers. The researcher selected personal interviews to allow the participant to respond with rich, detailed answers that included feelings and background to provide depth in understanding for the limited population of the study in an attempt to increase transferability and trustfulness of the results.

A researcher's role in qualitative research is to decipher the meaning of the interviews in a natural setting and to not only interpret answers but also to observe the behavior of the subjects during the interview (Creswell, 2012). Because the participants were spread out over a large geographic region, Zoom video interviews were chosen to still allow for the face-to-face exchange of ideas during the process. Because qualitative

research relies on the researcher's interpretation of the interviews, it is important for researchers to acknowledge their personal background, values, and bias.

The researcher has 18 years of experience as a police officer, is still actively employed within the field, and has been involved in numerous critical incidents during this time to include an active shooter incident, an officer-involved shooting, numerous vehicle and foot pursuits, crimes against children, physical struggles with suspects, observing death involving all age groups, and fellow officers killed in the line of duty. The researcher has seen the negative toll this occupation has taken with other officers and has personally experienced it as well. It is the opinion of this researcher that wellness is an important but neglected topic that needs scientific research to help increase its use within the field of law enforcement. The researcher has personally seen the need for mental health intervention within law enforcement and has felt the compounding mental and emotional strain that a career can accumulate. In addition, the researcher has a master's degree in exercise science and feels exercise is the key component to any wellness program. Another important bias of the researcher that needs to be addressed is the belief that an organized, structured physical fitness wellness component offered by a police agency would have a positive impact to the wellness of its employees. Although the researcher does acknowledge bias in this topic, this study and the data collection was designed to limit bias by question design and intentionally asking nonleading follow-up questions from the researcher to illicit authentic response from the participants.

### **Data Collection**

After receiving approval through the California Baptist University IRB on February 2, 2019, initial letters addressed to all the police chiefs were mailed out and

follow-up phone calls and e-mails were conducted over the following 2 weeks. After receiving approval from the police chiefs to use their officers in the research study, an e-mail was sent out by the department with the researcher contact information and a description of the study. Officers who replied to the e-mail and showed interest signed an informed consent prior to the interview and became participants, and the interviews were scheduled. All 34 interviews were conducted between March 1, 2019 and December 1, 2019. All interviews were conducted between the researcher and the participant via Zoom online video conferencing application, which recorded the interviews. These interviews were adjusted for the participants' schedule, so they varied by day and time. Some of the interviews were as early as 5 a.m. while some were conducted in the evening hours and used both weekdays as well as weekend days of the week. Since the Zoom conferencing interface can use a smart phone application or a computer with a camera, this gave the participants the maximum freedom to pick the interview time and location of their choosing. This created a variety of locations where the interviewees participated in the process. Some participants gave interviews from their work office or home, or some participants gave the interview from inside their police unit during a break in the participant's work shift. The interviews lasted between 15 to 30 minutes in length.

The interview process started with the researcher creating a Zoom interface that could only be accessed by the researcher and participant. Once the participant logged into the interface, the researcher introduced himself, confirmed the informed consent was valid, and asked whether there were any questions prior to starting. The first portion of the interview covered the four slide PowerPoint presentation that explained the study, what is a wellness dimension, what is a wellness component, and the three dimensions of

wellness this study utilized (see Appendix B). After that was concluded, the actual interview started first by gathering demographic information including age, sex, race/ethnicity, rank within agency, and number of years sworn. Once that was done, the researcher began to ask the participants the study's six questions. In addition to all interviews being recorded by the Zoom application, the researcher also took notes of all interviews. Access to the survey results was accessible only by the researcher on a password protected computer. Confidentiality was kept for all participants, all personal identifying information was deleted, and the participants were assigned an identification number as a code.

### **Data Analysis**

The interviews were audio/video recorded and were later transcribed using Temi speech-to-text algorithm transcription software that uses speech recognition software. The researcher uploaded the completed Zoom interview recording into the secured researcher account. The uploaded data were processed by the software and created a text account of the interview. The software allows editing by the researcher only and allows the researcher to download the text account of the interview into a Word document. Once the completed text account of the interview was reviewed for errors and completeness by the researcher, it was then converted into a Word document. This document was then reread and coded for themes by the researcher.

These transcriptions were then entered into Quirkos qualitative data analysis computer program. This software allows the researcher to place participants' responses into researcher-chosen themes. With each selection in a theme, a key quote or specific rationale from the interview text can be saved along with the participant's response. The

software also allows for searches by key terms. Once themes were identified, a specific rationale given by participants for each theme was retrieved and documented to support the themes.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This study utilized a convenience, snowball sample of participants who were active, sworn police officers from independent police departments located in the county of Riverside within the Southern California geographic region of the United States. There are 14 independent police departments within Riverside County with 11 agencies participating in this study. This gave a population size of approximately 500 police officers from which to pool participants.

### **Interview Protocol**

Contact was made with the police chiefs of the independent police agencies within Riverside County by means of an e-mail from the researcher to gain permission to contact their law enforcement officers as participants for the study. Officers from the 12 agencies who agreed to the study received an e-mail describing the study and requesting their participation. One of the 12 agencies that agreed to participate in the study did not have any officers volunteer for the study. A total of 34 police officers from 11 different agencies agreed to participate in the study. All interviews were conducted between the researcher and the participant via Zoom online video conferencing application. In addition to recording all interviews, the researcher also took written notes of all interviews. All video recordings were later transcribed by the Temi speech to text algorithm transcription software. These transcriptions were coded for themes by the researcher then downloaded into the Quirkos qualitative software. The Quirkos software allowed the researcher to track the participant's specific quote or rationale from the interview text to allow for easier recall during the analysis portion of this study.

Four of the interviews had technical difficulties with recording. During one of the interviews, the participant explained that the Internet connection was weak and caused the video/audio recording to freeze at times, but the researcher could still hear the participant. During another interview, the error was by the researcher who did not activate the recording until midway through the interview. During the third and fourth problem interviews, the audio capabilities were not working with the Zoom interface. Several attempts by both the researcher and participants could not fix the issue, and ultimately the interviews were conducted using a cellular phone. Because the researcher was taking notes during all interviews, the notes were used as a substitute for a complete recording in all four of these issues.

Before addressing the study itself, this section addresses the difficulty in obtaining participants for this study. The researcher feels this background is necessary because this difficulty created possible limitations of the study, which are discussed in Chapter 5.

This study required an initial letter to the chief of police for each agency to allow the researcher to contact the individual officers who would be the participants. The initial letter addressed to the police chief was accompanied with a support letter by a well-respected public figure within Riverside County. This support letter was completed to help reduce any barrier so the initial letter would be seen by the chief of police and not a person who would withhold the letter as being junk mail. The next hurdle was to get the individual officer to respond to an e-mail that was sent out to the entire department. Initially, there was little interest to the e-mail sent out to the officers. The researcher had to contact several departments more than once and have this interest letter sent out multiple times within the departments. Once a participant expressed interest, even setting

up a Zoom interview proved difficult and normally took several e-mails from the researcher before a Zoom interview was scheduled. The researcher expected difficulty in obtaining participants, so snowball sampling was utilized to recruit more participants.

This is not an isolated phenomenon when it comes to researchers working with police officers. In 2013, a research paper was published that explained the difficulty in conducting research studies with police officers as participants (Alpert, Rojek, & Hansen, 2013). The study found on average there was an 18% agency participation in coordination partnerships (defined as a formal and short-term form of research partnership) with researchers. There was 32% agency participation when the agency had more than 100 sworn officers and only 11% with agencies with 50-99 sworn and continual declines with agency size thereafter. This study found several barriers that led to this low number including financial support, proximity of partnership, permanence of key participants, institutional demands, practitioner values, researcher values, communication, and trust (Alpert et al., 2013). The researcher attempted to overcome several of these barriers. First, by using a trusted, well respected public figure within the county to make initial contact with the agency, the researcher attempted to increase partnership and help increase trust because many of the police agencies were over 100 miles from the researcher. Second, in the e-mail that was send out to contact possible participants, the researcher identified himself as an active police officer within the county to help gain trust and establish common ground with the participants. In addition, the study was explained as the goal to gain insight that could help provide wellness programs that could help officers in the hope to show there was a combined benefit for the researcher and the participants.

## **Assumptions**

Because the researcher's role in qualitative design is to interpret the results, it is important for the researcher to formally acknowledge all biases, values, personal background, and assumptions that might influence that interpretation (Creswell, 2012). Chapter 3 has already addressed the researcher's biases, values, and personal background in relation to Workplace Wellness Programs (WWPs), and in this section, the assumptions that the researcher had going into the study are discussed.

With 18 years within the field of law enforcement, the researcher had some assumptions about how the participants would answer the study's questions as well as how police culture would play a role in the participant's answers. The following are the assumptions the researcher had prior to the study being conducted.

1. Most police employees will view wellness only as it relates to physical fitness, and most wellness components that will be presented by the participants will deal with some sort of physical activity.
2. The police culture greatly influences the profession, and seeking help for mental or emotional wellness is viewed as a weakness within the profession; therefore, support for mental or emotional wellness components will be low during the study.
3. The police culture will influence participants to respond to the research questions by how they think their fellow employees would expect them to answer, not their own opinion for the question.

Before moving to the results of the study, the researcher first would like to address a validity issue that was uncovered during the data review for this study. When looking at the population sample, the researcher found a glaring accidental omission of

the lack of a Black police officer's perspective (Diangelo, 2018). Although not deliberate, the omission of this section of the population would threaten the overall validity of the study. Both civilian and law enforcement readers would notice; therefore, with the approval of my committee and keeping within the IRB approved guidelines, a second search for the missing Black perspective was started.

Contact was made with all the prior participants to address this missing perspective. In addition, the researcher e-mailed the contact person for each policy agency to explain the request for additional participants. There was an extremely limited response, and the researcher was only able to schedule two added interviews with new participants. The researcher sent out another round of e-mails and was able to gather an additional two participants. The researcher intended to find other interested participants, and a third round of e-mails was sent out as well as attempts for snowball sampling by the most recent participants. After over 3 weeks with no responses from all parties attempted, the researcher sent out another round of e-mails to all parties. After several additional weeks, there were no additional responses, and the researcher was faced with the decision to either conclude the study or look for possible participants outside the original parameters of the study that stated all participants were working within Riverside County. Because the winter holiday season had begun and the researcher had limited time to complete the dissertation before the end of the academic year, the researcher felt even if the scope of the participant search was widened outside Riverside County, it would still be difficult to gather more participants in the required time before the study would need to be concluded; therefore, the decision to the end the study was made. Although this was a pragmatic decision to end the study early because of lack of

participants and not wanting to widen the study's original parameters, this should not suggest that the study ended with the demographic makeup of the study's participants not reflecting current police officer demographics. The DOJ conducts ongoing statistical analysis on police officer demographics, and the most current study concluded on June 30, 2016. These results indicate nationwide 71% of police officers are White, 13% are Hispanic, 11 % are Black, and 12% of police officers are female. The average age for a police officer is 39 years old (Hyland & Davis, 2019). As observed in the results below, this current study concluded with 59% of the participants being White, 29% being Hispanic, 12% being Black, and 15% being female. The average age of police officers in this study was 43 years old. The overall study results, including all participants, are listed in the following sections.

### **Demographics of Study**

The specific demographics of age, gender, race, and rank within the department and years as a sworn police officer of all 34 participants were tracked (see Figures 1-5).

### **Interview Questions**

This study asked six open-ended questions that were meant to explore the perceptions of the participants dealing with WWPs. The responses from the participants are broken down for each question individually and discussed next. As stated earlier in the literature review, research shows there is no one set way for a WWP to be organized or what components should be included within that program. There was no limit to the number of components the participants could include in their response. Some participants only stated one component and others included up to four components.

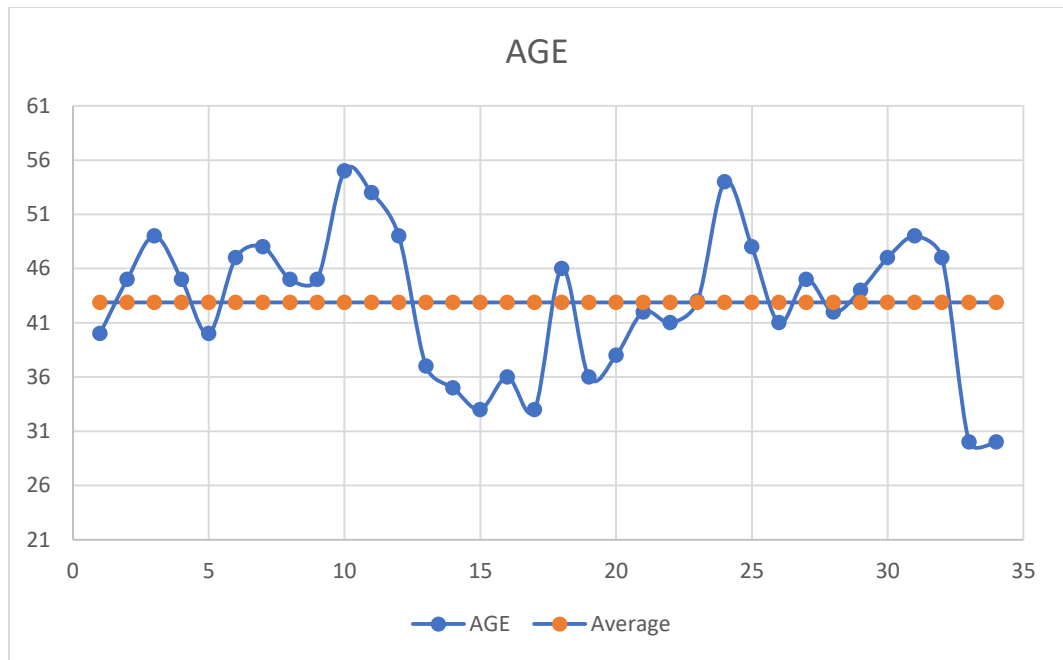


Figure 1. Age. Age range: 30-55 years old; average age: 43 years old.

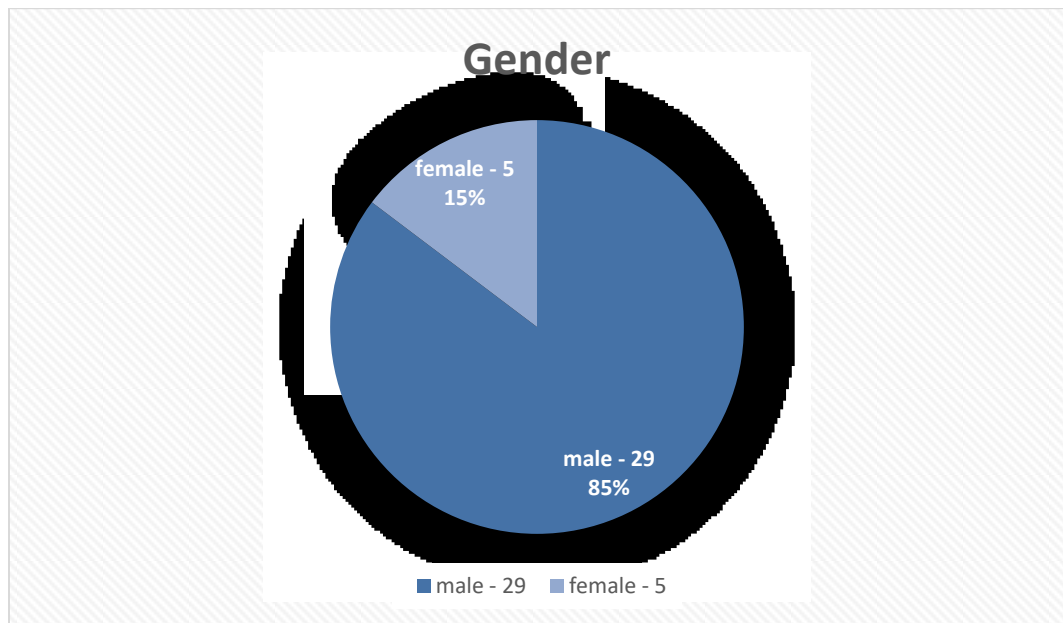
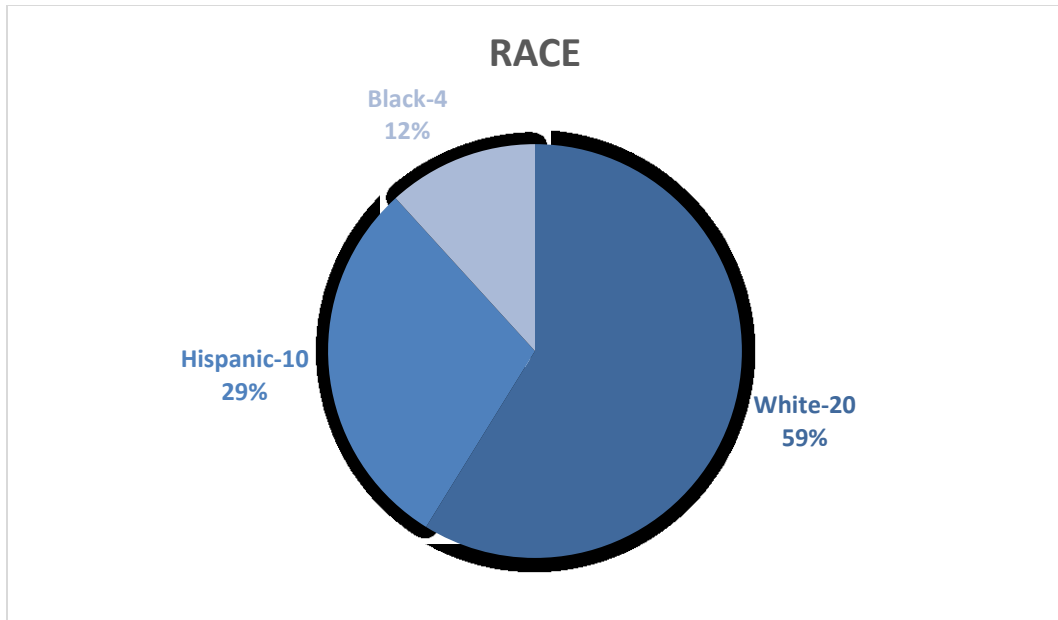
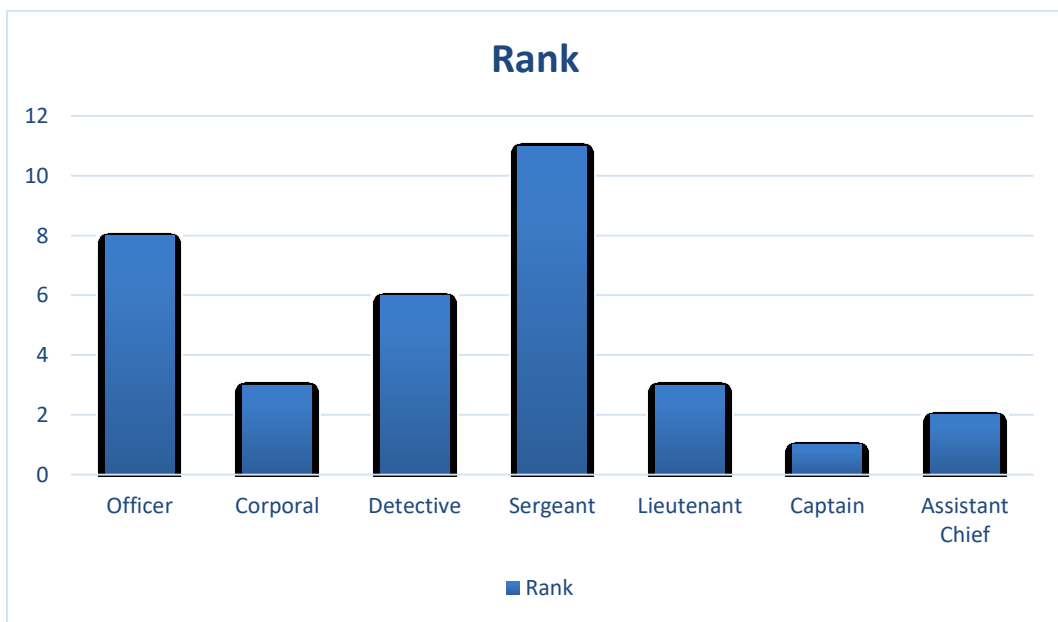


Figure 2. Gender.



*Figure 3. Race.*



*Figure 4. Rank.*

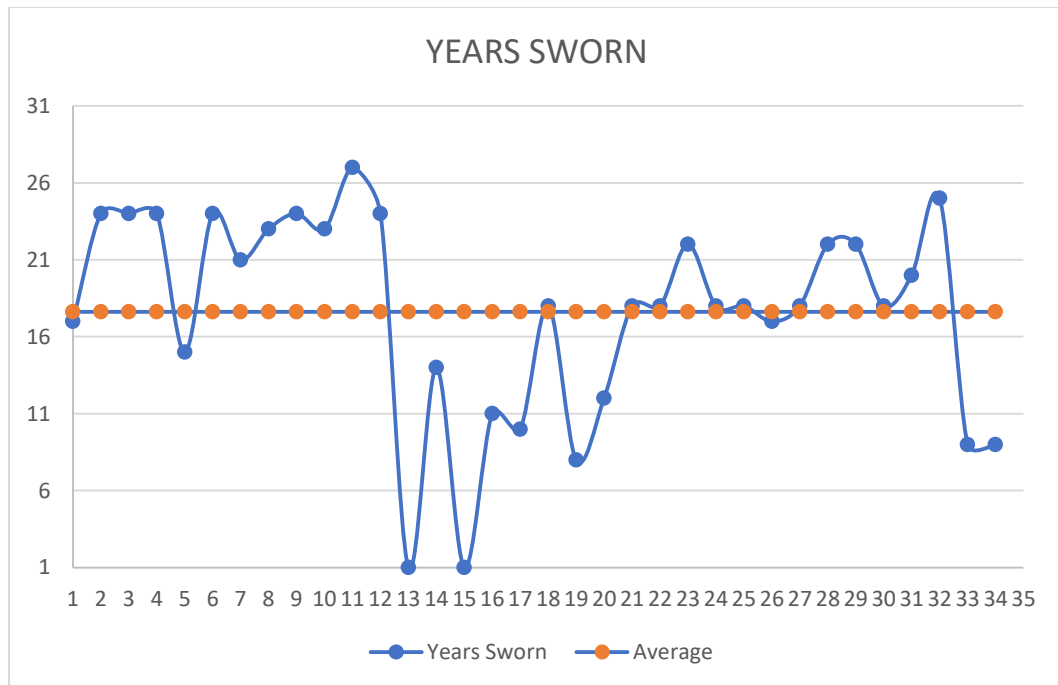


Figure 5. Years as a sworn police officer. Year range: 1-27; average years sworn: 18 years.

### Interview Question 1

*What components of a Workplace Wellness Program are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect their wellness? Why?*

This question was asked of participants in order that each could respond with any component that one perceived would affect one's wellness. The script that was read to the participants prior to the interviews relayed that the participant should not answer the question based on whether their agency could afford or would support such a wellness component but instead what the officer perceived to affect wellness, regardless of cost, feasibility, or complexity. During the analysis portion, several themes began to repeat, and coding became clearer on numerous themes. The graph in Figure 6 shows a list of common themes that emerged and the number of participants who responded for each

theme. If a response was not repeated at least three times, it was placed in the *all other* category.

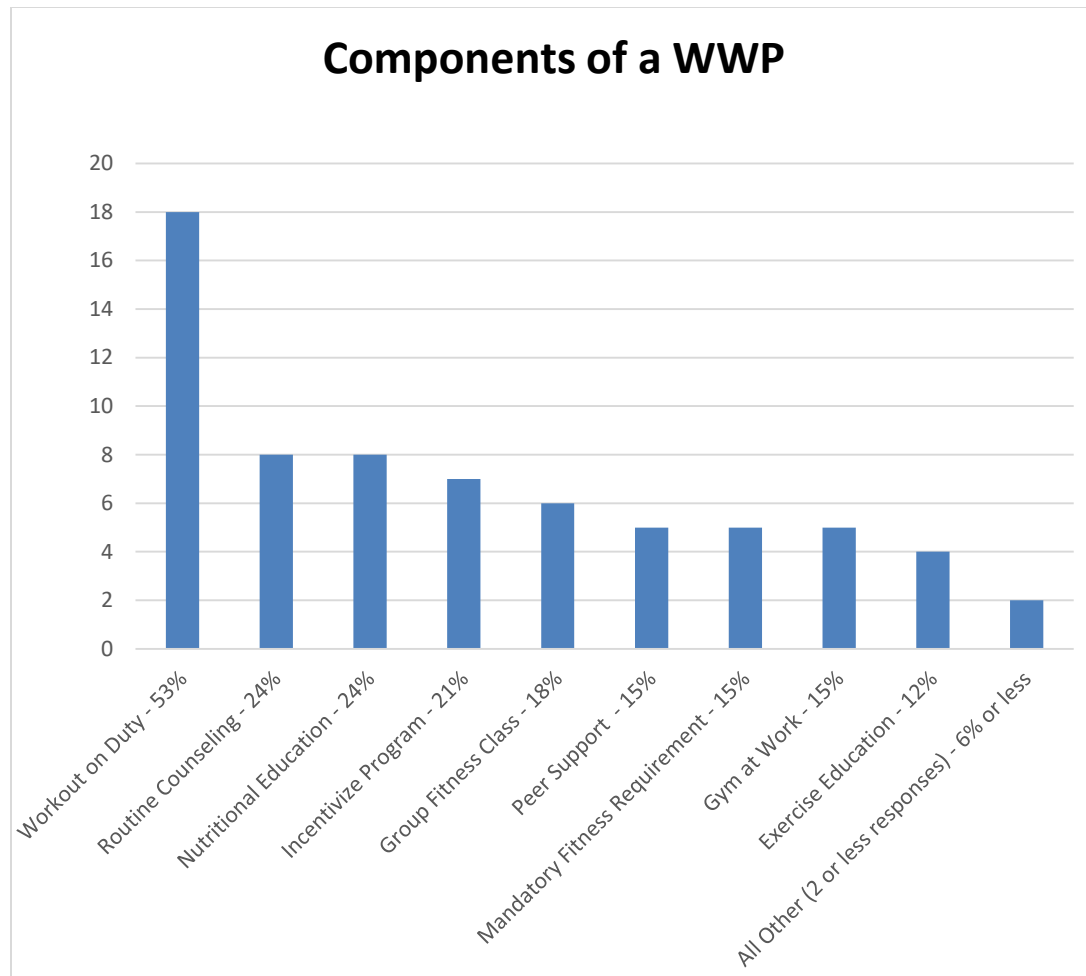


Figure 6. Components of a WWP.

The most repeated theme that was perceived to affect police officer wellness was being able to work out while on duty. This theme was repeated by 18 participants, which is 53% of the study population. Many of the participants felt that working out either the first hour of the work shift or the last hour would be beneficial to their wellness.

Participant E3 said, “Just creating something into the shifts would be great to work out,

debrief, and decompress with the calls that you went through that day.” Many of the participants who responded with working out while on duty also echoed this sentiment of being able to not only get physically fit by exercising but also to have group time with fellow officers away from actual work requirements. The ability to decompress by debriefing the day’s activities and calls for service was a common reason why participants felt that working out on duty was important. Participant E7 said, “I normally get a better workout doing it by myself but getting a bunch of cops together to work out leads to conversations, talking, bitching, and building comradery, and that’s, uh vital for a cop’s mentally.”

Routine counseling and nutritional education were tied as the second highest themes that emerged with seven participants supporting these components (24% of study population). Participant K2 best described why routine counseling is perceived as important to the wellness of a law enforcement officer: “I would definitely say counseling. I think a lot of law enforcement officers don’t want to admit that at some point in their career that their mental health is, um, is affected.” Participant L4 talked about how counseling check-ups should be more than just after critical incidents and should be more routine thorough the year:

And same thing with like, mmm, psychological help having a therapist or a psychologist or whatever, is good. But usually we only get those things if there’s been some critical incident, you know, that might be something that they may want to have come in quarterly basis or biannually or something like that, where to remind people, hey, we’re here.

When looking at nutritional education, many participants understood the need for this based on the unknown, rapidly changing environment of a police officer. Participant G1 described this as follows:

Maybe hiring a couple of dietitians to help us eat healthier, because as you know, that's one of the biggest things I've seen in my history of law enforcement. Cops just eating very unhealthy because we're so, you know, you never know what's going to happen, so you don't, you just try to get some quick food and usually that results in fast food. So I would like to see a program that would, uh, help us out with eating healthier.

Incentivizing the wellness program received seven responses (21% of the study population). Although incentivizing a wellness program isn't an actual component of a wellness program, it appears that many of the participants perceived this as important to an overall wellness program. There were several different types of incentives that were described by participants when they were asked to clarify. Several participants, including participant H1, felt pay should be given to officers that participant in a wellness program: "Pay an incentive for officers to stay fit. Um, and then obviously there would be some kind of equivalency tests that would define that whether it's every 6 months or yearly." Other comments included giving days off or raffles of equipment and gear each month. Participant E7 thought giving officers days off would make it worth their while:

If we set a percentage, say 80%, that the officer must attend 80% of all the required wellness sessions, whether physical or mental, and they could get 1 day off per quarter. So that would still allow them to miss a day here and there but still be rewarded. Four days off per year is significant to officers and 80%

participation into a wellness program is also significant for the department. It's a win-win.

Group fitness classes had six responses (18% of study population). The theme about how physical fitness can impact many dimensions of wellness was touched on by another participant who described the need for group fitness classes. Participant L5 said,

Like CrossFit (what) I do like is it incorporates all of the aspects, and it's a group setting so it's always nice to be able to do something like that in a group setting so that you can maybe talk about things that are going on that get off your chest or I dunno, just have a way to be social. Yeah. And get your physical conditioning.

The theme of peer support, mandatory fitness requirement, and a gym at work each received five responses. Participant I2 felt a strong need for peer support by saying,

It's nice to be able to go and sit down and talk to someone that maybe already went through it and can give you that advice or kind of guide you through it and pointed in the right direction to get through all that.

All participants who discussed having a fitness requirement felt it should be connected with an incentive. Participant A1 said, "Pass a test, like the academy tests for physical fitness, and you get paid a little bonus or get a day off or something." Having a gym or fitness equipment at work was a theme also repeated five times by the participants. Most participants felt having equipment both for cardiovascular fitness and muscular strength needed to be present within the gym. Participant I4 said, "Right now the gym at work is designed for CrossFit, and I like more cardio work, so it doesn't really work for me.

Having a gym that can accommodate all types of exercise is key."

The exercise education theme received four responses, and there were several different ways the participants described how this could be achieved. One participant said clinics should be put on occasionally to properly train officers in exercise techniques. Another participant felt that providing personal trainer access to officers would help prevent injuries. The third responder felt having outside professionals help create individual fitness goals and programs that could be followed would be beneficial. Several responses were not repeated or only repeated once. Those responses were placed within the all other category, and they are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

*Interview Question 1: All Other Responses*

Response	# of responses
Medical exams	2
Meal prep program	2
Team building	2
Flexible time off	2
Meditation	1
Yoga/stretching	1
Debrief critical incidents	1
Sleep education	1
Self-defense training	1
Stipend for gym memberships	1
Provide health resources	1
Administer a hearing test yearly	1

The response medical exam was repeated twice, and both participants felt medical exams should be part of an overall program that also included a fitness requirement and receiving an incentive for doing both the medical exam and fitness test. The response

flexible time off was an interesting response because it is not necessarily a part of a wellness program but more related to an agency's policies and procedures. Participant E6 said,

Create a wellness day. Okay, not having to lie and say you are sick, but not a vacation day. Something happens over the weekend, a family member, spouse, partner, child that you can just say, my head's not in the game today. I'm not 100% and I'm going to call in today without consequences or repercussions.

The other participant who selected this response just felt the department could be more understanding to take time off, to de-stress, when things are bad.

A qualitative research study utilizes an emergent design that allows the researcher to make changes to the study during the process of collecting data (Creswell, 2012). During this first interview that was conducted, the researcher felt a need to adjust the follow-up questions in one specific aspect of the study. This change was followed for the remainder of the study. When participants stated that a component of physical fitness would be beneficial to their wellness, the researcher asked follow-up questions attempting to determine the type of exercise the participant was describing and why the participant felt that type of exercise was beneficial. But the researcher decided that any follow-up question trying to determine whether the participant wanted this type of activity to be during work hours might be a leading question that was influenced by the researcher's bias in this subject. The researcher felt a more authentic response from the participant could be obtained by not suggesting something that could influence a response by the participant. Therefore, when a participant suggested a physical fitness component was beneficial, the researcher did not ask whether the participant was suggesting this

physical fitness component should be done during work hours or not. If a participant stated that working out while on duty was beneficial, it was noted, but if a participant responded that a form of physical fitness, such as group exercise, was beneficial, the researcher did not ask whether the participant meant during work hours. It can be argued that this approach created some limiting aspects for this study, but in the researcher's opinion it helped to avoid introducing the researcher's bias that could unduly influence the participants' responses.

There are two underlying reasons for this decision. First, although it cannot be found in any current research, this is a current controversial topic within law enforcement. The two sides in this controversy, management within law enforcement and line-level sworn personnel, have debated this topic about providing time to exercise during work hours. The management side of the profession is concerned with the costs of paying an officer to work out, the financial costs of covering injuries that occur during this time, and labor union disagreements about creating a physical fitness for duty test. The line-level personnel debate the benefit of allowing officers the ability to be in better shape to perform their job; the team-building aspect of a group workout and this benefit can be seen as a positive recruitment tool to entice new employees within a competitive workforce. With this already an ongoing debate within the law enforcement community, the researcher did not want to turn this study into a discussion about whether participants desired components within an on-duty workout program or not, especially if the idea was introduced by the researcher after a participant answered a question related to a component of a wellness program.

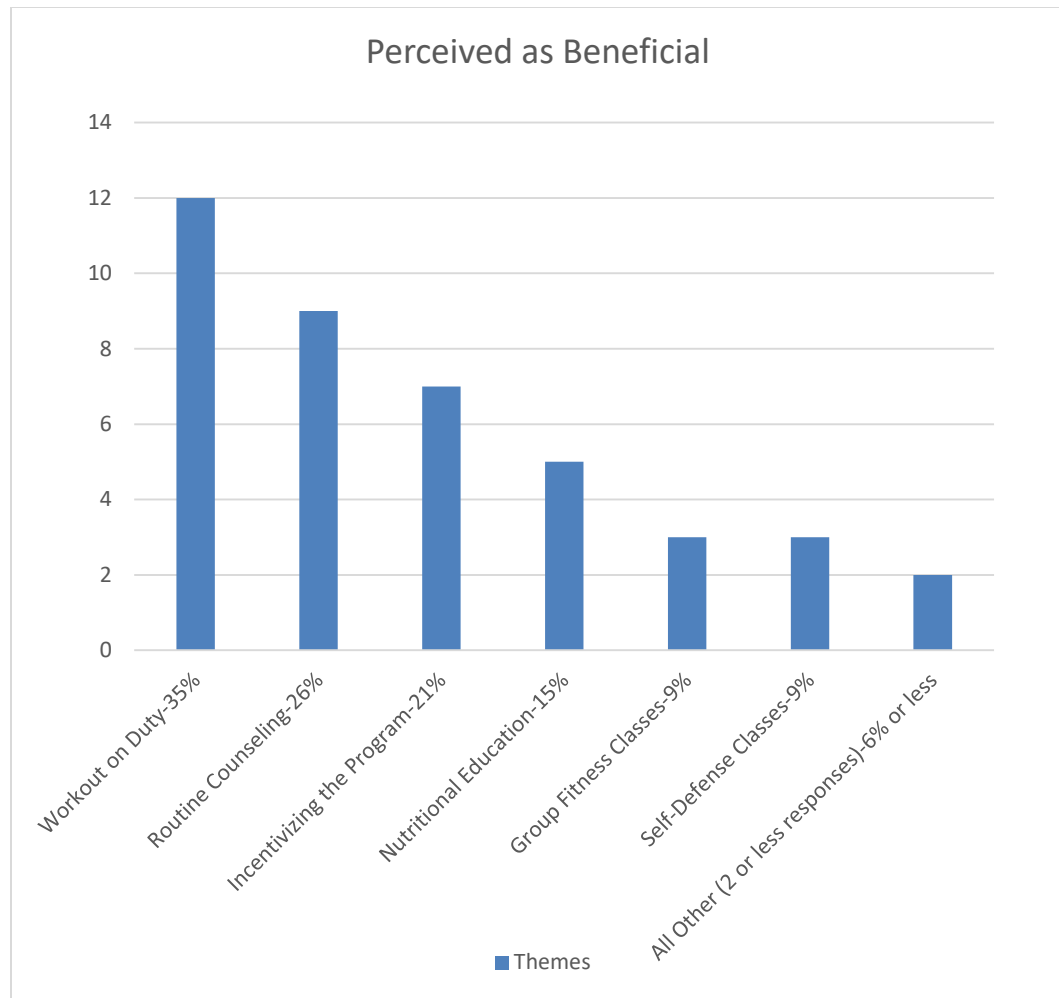
Second, as a current practitioner, this was an interview between sworn police officers; therefore, I took the scope of the study at face value. To question officers about an existing controversy that was not the goal of this study would create doubt in the mind of the participants. Under normal conditions of field research, asking probing questions is recommended. But in this setting, dealing with an already controversial topic, a follow-up probe could be seen as the researcher questioning the participant's stance on this topic and could lead to a lack of trust (Maxfield & Babbie, 2015).

This was a question meant to explore which components of a wellness program would be perceived to affect the officer's wellness; the next two questions began to narrow the focus for the participants to what is or is not perceived beneficial to their wellness.

## **Interview Question 2**

*Which components would you perceive as beneficial for the wellness of law enforcement officers? Why?*

This question was intended to identify components of a WWP that participants perceive as beneficial specifically for law enforcement. During the analysis portion, several themes began to repeat, and coding became clearer on numerous themes. The graph in Figure 7 shows a list of common themes that emerged and the number of participants who responded for each theme. If a response was not repeated at least three times, it was placed in the all other category.



*Figure 7.* Perceived as beneficial.

Similar to Interview Question 1, the top coded theme was working out while on duty, which 12 participants perceived as beneficial (35% of study population). Routine counseling was again the second most repeated theme as it was in Interview Question 1 with nine responses (26% of the study population). Incentivizing the program and nutritional education themes were also roughly in the same position as in Interview Question 1, having seven and five responses respectively. The group fitness classes and self-defense classes themes each received three responses.

For the first five themes of this question—working out on duty, routine counseling, incentivizing the program, nutritional education, and group fitness classes—the justifications presented by the participants were the same as they were in the first question. Participant I3 felt strongly that departments need to create a contract with a counseling service:

Most departments only allow counseling if you were in a shooting or you request it through them, but it would be beneficial to have a counseling service you could go to without getting approval or after something bad. Just to be able to schedule with them and not the department.

Three participants felt that self-defensive training would be beneficial to officers' wellness. All three participants felt that violent attacks on police officers are increasing, and yet the public is expecting officers not to draw their weapon during these encounters. Because of this, they felt the need for officers to be better trained in defensive tactics more than ever before.

Several responses were not repeated or only repeated once. Those responses were placed within the all other category, and they are listed in Table 2.

When examining the responses in the all other category, the researcher discovered some interesting responses that do not necessarily fit into a component of a wellness program, but some of the participants felt these issues could be beneficial to the wellness of a law enforcement officer. These include allowing officers to take breaks together and team-building exercises. Participant K3 talked about how just allowing officers to be able to spend time together away from work stress can be an important aspect of wellness: "I know some agencies don't, don't allow officers to take breaks at the same

Table 2

*Interview Question 2: All Other Responses*

Response	# of responses
Medical exams	2
Yoga/stretching	2
Team building	2
Gym at work	2
Exercise education	2
Debrief critical incidents	2
Mental health talks	1
Physical therapist available	1
Meal prep program	1
Meditation	1
Address suicide	1
Resilience training	1
Allowing officers to take breaks together	1
Group counseling	1
Peer support	1

time. And when it's like that, it's kind of cuts off that human relationship that you can develop with your partners." Many people outside of the first responder professions would not even consider that taking a break together with a colleague to talk about normal activities would not be allowed. But for many departments because of the volume of calls for service, only one officer at a time is allowed a break. Again, developing personal relationships was brought up again when Participant D6 stressed that team-building activities would be beneficial for wellness:

We don't do enough of, why we don't have like an annual barbecue, we don't have like an annual event that we could just all get together with families and just

kind of distress and spend time getting to know each other a little bit on a different level than a, than a work environment level.

Both of these responses demonstrate how some officers would appreciate time to develop personal relationships with other officers. Unfortunately, the nature of the job of a first responder makes this a difficult goal to obtain. With many police departments not having recovered from the 2008 recession with personnel (Kuehl et al., 2016), doing more with less has become more common.

The next question asked which components the participants perceived as less beneficial to their wellness.

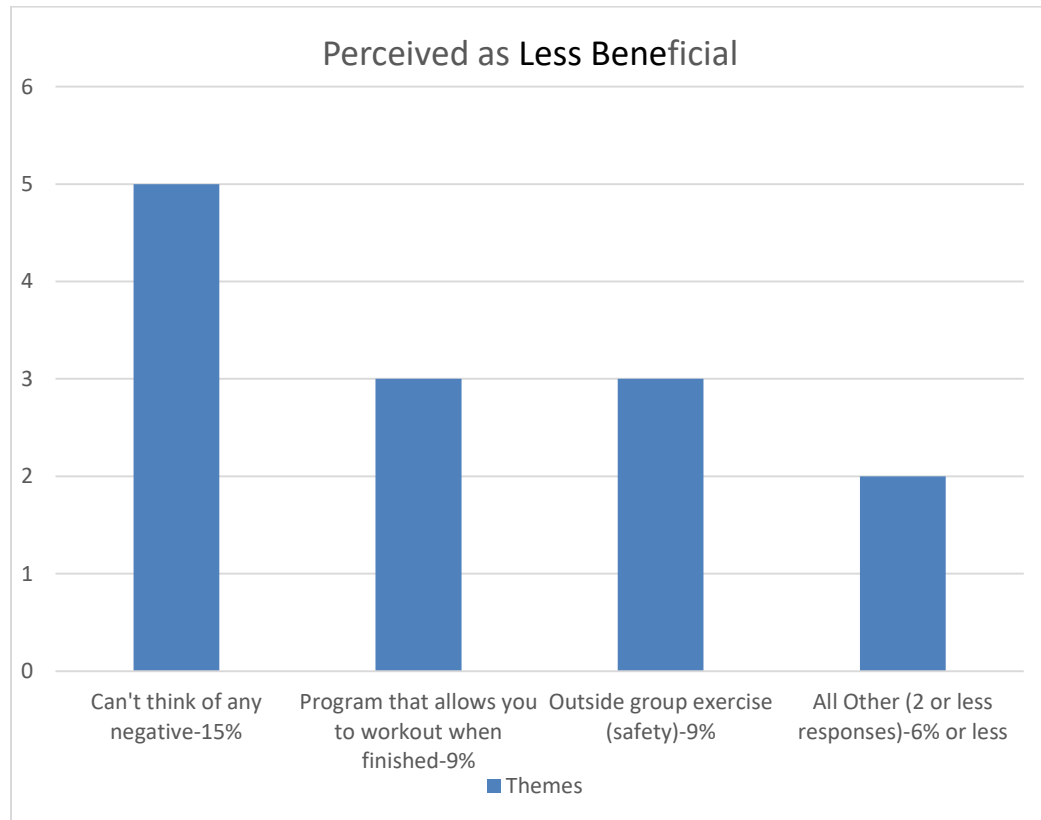
### **Interview Question 3**

*Which components would you perceive as less beneficial for the wellness of law enforcement officers? Why?*

This question was intended to have participants identify components of a WWP that they perceive as less beneficial specifically for law enforcement. During the analysis portion, themes began to repeat, and coding became clearer on a few themes. The graph in Figure 8 shows a list of common themes that emerged and the number of participants who responded for each theme. If a response was not repeated at least three times, it was placed in the all other category.

Five participants said they could not think of anything negative when it came to a WWP, and that was the most repeated response and accounted for 15% of the study population. Interview Question 3 was answered slightly differently than the other questions by most of the participants. Although the other questions were mostly answered giving specific components of wellness that should be used, when asked what

would not be perceived as beneficial, many of the participants answered the question by describing how specific conditions of a component would not be beneficial instead of a specific component as a whole not being beneficial.



*Figure 8.* Perceived as less beneficial.

For example, a theme that emerged the participants perceived would not be beneficial to their wellness was a workout program that allows officers to exercise when finished with their required work. Participant C1 talked about the problems with having a fitness program when officers complete their required work:

But I know that fiscally and personnel wise and constant emergency wise things that attached to an already 12-hour shift and, and being held over because you

have handled the call at the end of watch or something like that. I don't know how practical regularly scheduled things like that [are].

Another example of how specific conditions of a wellness component might not be beneficial to law enforcement was seen is the theme of outside group activity. The participants felt that police officers exposed to the public would not be perceived as beneficial to their wellness. This was not because they felt outside exercise was not beneficial, but they felt it might possibly pose safety risks for uniformed police officers. Participant L3 said, "I think the formalized program, everyone getting together and walking around at lunch may not actually work for police officers in a uniform capacity."

Several responses were not repeated or only repeated once. Those responses were placed within the all other category, and they are listed in Table 3.

In looking at some of the responses that were grouped into the all other category, the researcher found several interesting responses. There were a couple more examples of limiting specific conditions of a wellness component described by participants. Participant L6 said that low intensity, steady-state cardiovascular exercise is less beneficial to police officers than exercise that more realistically simulates the police officer environment. Another example of this narrowing of specific components appeared when Participant E2 talked about forcing specific types of exercises on police officers:

So when something is kind of forced on you, when you, you know personally from injuries, that you have or whatever, that you're going to do something a different way and they're saying, no, you're going to have to do this.

It appeared that many of the study participants did not perceive any specific component of wellness as not beneficial but described a more narrowing of wellness components to remove certain aspects or modify pieces of the components that would be perceived as less beneficial to law enforcement.

Table 3

*Interview Question 3: All Other Responses*

Response	# of responses
Working out during lunch break	2
Forcing a specific exercise (injury problems)	2
Nap pods/sleep room	2
Don't try to create the program because too much resistance	2
Forcing working out at work	2
Group critical incident debriefs	2
Forcing counseling	2
Program focused on BMI/body fat	1
Getting wellness training from police officers	1
Getting wellness training from outside sources	1
Paid gym memberships (won't go)	1
Going out and drinking excessively	1
Low-intensity, steady-state exercise (not job specific)	1
Maintain a workout log to be turned in	1
Any wellness requirements outside of work	1
Injuries	1

This question showed the diversity of perceptions with respect to wellness programs and underscored the difficulty in creating a wellness program that could be universally accepted by police officers. Although working out while on duty ranked as the most chosen theme in the previous question and several other themes focused on physical fitness available at the workplace, in this question, one participant felt forcing

officers to work out at work would not be perceived as beneficial. Participant J4 said, “I don’t particularly like to work out here at work. I’d rather do my thing outside of this place. If I’m here, somebody’s going to find me and have something for me to do or bother me.” There were also conflicting recommendations where one participant felt outside speakers educating officers on wellness topics would not be successful and another participant felt having police officers from within the department talk about wellness topics would not be beneficial.

These last two questions dealt with the officers’ perceptions about wellness components that are both beneficial and less beneficial to law enforcement officers. For the next three questions, the study focuses on specific components that affect physical health, mental health, and stress.

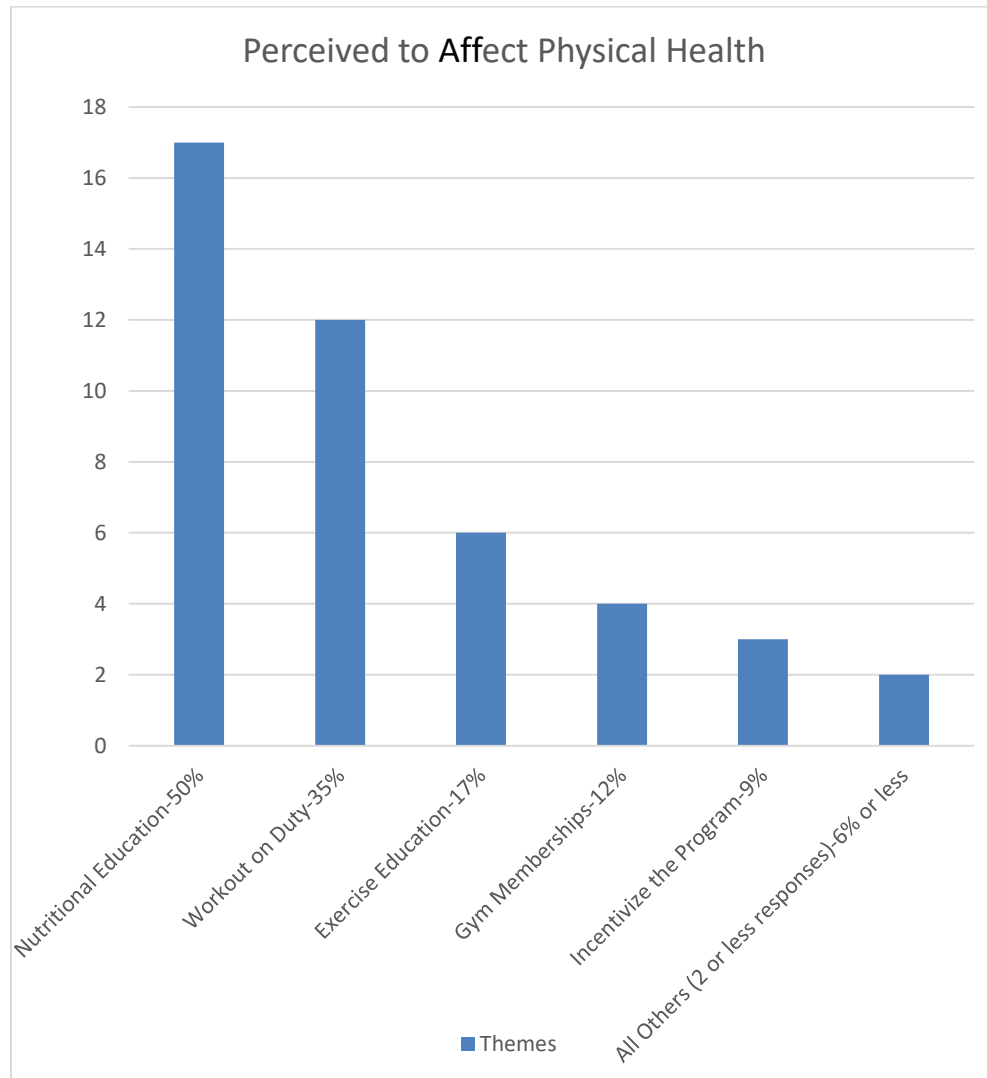
#### **Interview Question 4**

*Which components would you perceive would affect the physical health of a law enforcement officer? Why?*

This question was intended to have the participants identify components of a WWP that they perceive to affect physical health specifically for law enforcement. During the analysis portion, themes began to repeat, and coding became clearer on a few themes. The graph in Figure 9 shows a list of common themes that emerged and the number of participants who responded for each theme. If a response was not repeated at least three times, it was placed in the all other category.

The most repeated theme in this question was the need for nutritional education to improve physical health, which received 17 responses, 50% of the study population. The theme of work out on duty received 12 responses, which is 35% of the study population.

The third most repeated theme was exercise education, which 17% of the study population responded as important. Providing a gym membership received four responses, and incentivizing the program was repeated three times by participants.



*Figure 9.* Perceived to affect physical health.

Prior to the study results, the researcher assumed most participants would only list physical fitness components of wellness when asked this question. With the most repeated theme (50%) being nutritional education, it appears that the participants perceive

that nutrition is as or more important to physical health than other physical fitness components such as fitness classes or working out while on duty. Many police departments already provide a gym at the police department for officers to use. Seventeen percent of this study felt that it is important to provide education on how to utilize weight equipment.

Several responses were not repeated or only repeated once. Those responses were placed within the all other category, and they are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

*Interview Question 4: All Other Responses*

Response	# of responses
Meal prep program	2
Sleep education	2
Functional fitness classes	1
Medical exams	1
Fitness requirements	1
Sleep rooms	1
Rotating work schedules	1
Physically demanding training scenarios	1
Self-defensive training	1
Providing employee assistance programs	1
Yoga/stretching	1
Improve staffing	1
Eating healthy meals as a group	1
Counting step competitions	1
Employee fitness competitions	1
Having department compete in local runs	1
Create department policy for wellness	1
Healthy vending machine options	1

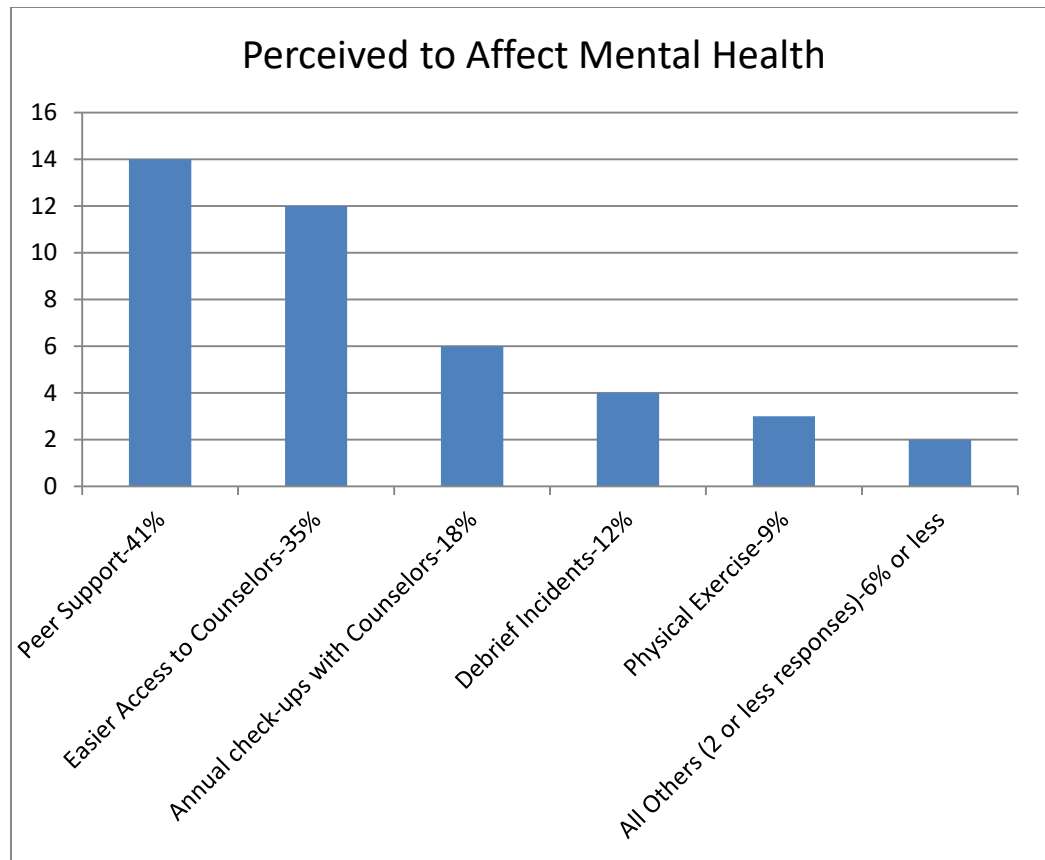
Some of the responses in the all other category were not specific components of wellness but again show the perceptions from the participants who could improve their physical health. One participant thought that implementing rotating work schedules so officers can get better sleep would improve their physical health. Another response that is also not a specific component of wellness but was perceived to affect physical health is to improve staffing levels. Participant A1 stated, “I think staffing, because you know, you run thin staffing. Not only mentally are you draining someone but physically, you’re making them go up and down, back and forth [across the city].”

This question dealt with wellness components that are perceived to affect the physical health of the police officer; next the study explores which WWP components would improve mental health.

#### **Interview Question 5**

*Which components would you perceive would affect the mental health of a law enforcement officer? Why?*

This question was intended to identify components of a WWP that participants perceive would affect mental health specifically for law enforcement. During the analysis portion, themes began to repeat, and coding became clearer on a few themes. The graph in Figure 10 shows a list of common themes that emerged and the number of participants who responded for each theme. If a response was not repeated at least three times, it was placed in the all other category.



*Figure 10.* Perceived to affect mental health.

When the participants were asked what components would affect mental health, the top three responded themes dealt with counseling resources. Although peer support is not a clinical counseling service, it is the first step of psychological help when it comes to law enforcement (Spence et al., 2019). Participant C3 described why peer support affects mental health: “Having officers that are properly trained to know how to deal with problems, you know, say there’s something that’s going on at home or something that’s going on at work.”

The responses suggested there were two different themes that both dealt with counseling. The first theme was access to counselors and the second theme was annual check-ups with counselors. The participants were clear in their responses to these two

themes. Many departments provide access to counselors only after critical incidents (Spence et al., 2019). Some participants in the study perceived a more open access to counselors would be beneficial. Participant K3 said,

A program that you could go in there, you can speak with a counselor and just talk about whatever traumatic calls or just whatever issues you have going on in your life. Uh, I would like to see more of that implemented to help with mental health.

The other theme that emerged when participants talked about counseling was annual check-ups with counselors. Many of the participants felt some formal meeting with counselors should be done as part of the yearly performance evaluation of the police officer. Participant E1 said, “I’d say it should probably be on your yearly evaluation that maybe you have people come in and talk about stuff” and E5 echoed that statement when they said, “annual checkups with a, with a licensed professional.”

Another theme that emerged was the debriefing of incidents with four participants agreeing this would improve mental health. Many police departments routinely debrief critical incidents involving their officers. But, many of the participants felt the debrief should include more than what would be considered a critical incident. Participant E4 stated,

Debrief incidents sooner than we do. Normally do. Sometimes we don’t even, um, major or not even any major incidents, but you know, life changing, things like that. A baby death or certain things, we tend to forget about it, move on to the next call and never address it with our, our troops to get it out in the open and see how people are feeling.

The theme of physical exercise received three responses, and all three participants felt that physical exercise affects more than just physical health. Participant J1 said,

I know physical exertion and a physical fitness regime has been shown to have a huge benefit to mental health. I have seen several articles that say not only do you feel better to exercise but it helps to relieve stress and helps you sleep better too.

This concept that physical fitness improves sleep and lowers stress was supported in a 2013 study that looked at 460 Switzerland police officers. The results suggested that the better self-reported physical fitness level of the officer, the better the sleep score and the lower the stress levels (Gerber et al., 2013).

Several responses were not repeated or only repeated once. Those responses were placed within the all other category, and they are listed in Table 5.

One interesting response from the all other category was promoting available resources better. Participant L7 said, “I think more knowledge of resources, access to people who could help people become more mentally, uh, health aware.” This is addressed in more detail in Chapter 5 under both the Recommendations for Law Enforcement Leadership Section and the Future Research Considerations Section.

This question explored the perceptions of the study participants with regard to wellness components that could improve mental health, and the next question examined what components of wellness would be perceived by the study participants to affect stress.

Table 5

*Interview Question 5: All Other Responses*

Response	# of responses
Yoga/meditation	2
Access to employee assistance program	2
Group counseling sessions	2
Mental health education	2
Retreat after critical incidents	2
Stretching routines during roll call	1
Ability to access mental health resources	1
Creating a mentorship program	1
Shift rotation every 4 months to have full weekends off	1
Chaplain program	1
Journaling about stressors	1
Educate officers that asking for help is normal and beneficial to help to remove stigma of weakness when asking for help	1
Sleep education	1
Promoting the program better so officers understand what is available	1

**Interview Question 6**

*Which components would you perceive would affect the stress of a law enforcement officer? Why?*

This question was intended to identify components of a WWP that are perceived to affect stress specifically for law enforcement. During the analysis portion, themes began to repeat, and coding became clearer on a few themes. The graph in Figure 11 shows a list of common themes that emerged and the number of participants who responded for each theme. If a response was not repeated at least three times, it was placed in the all other category.

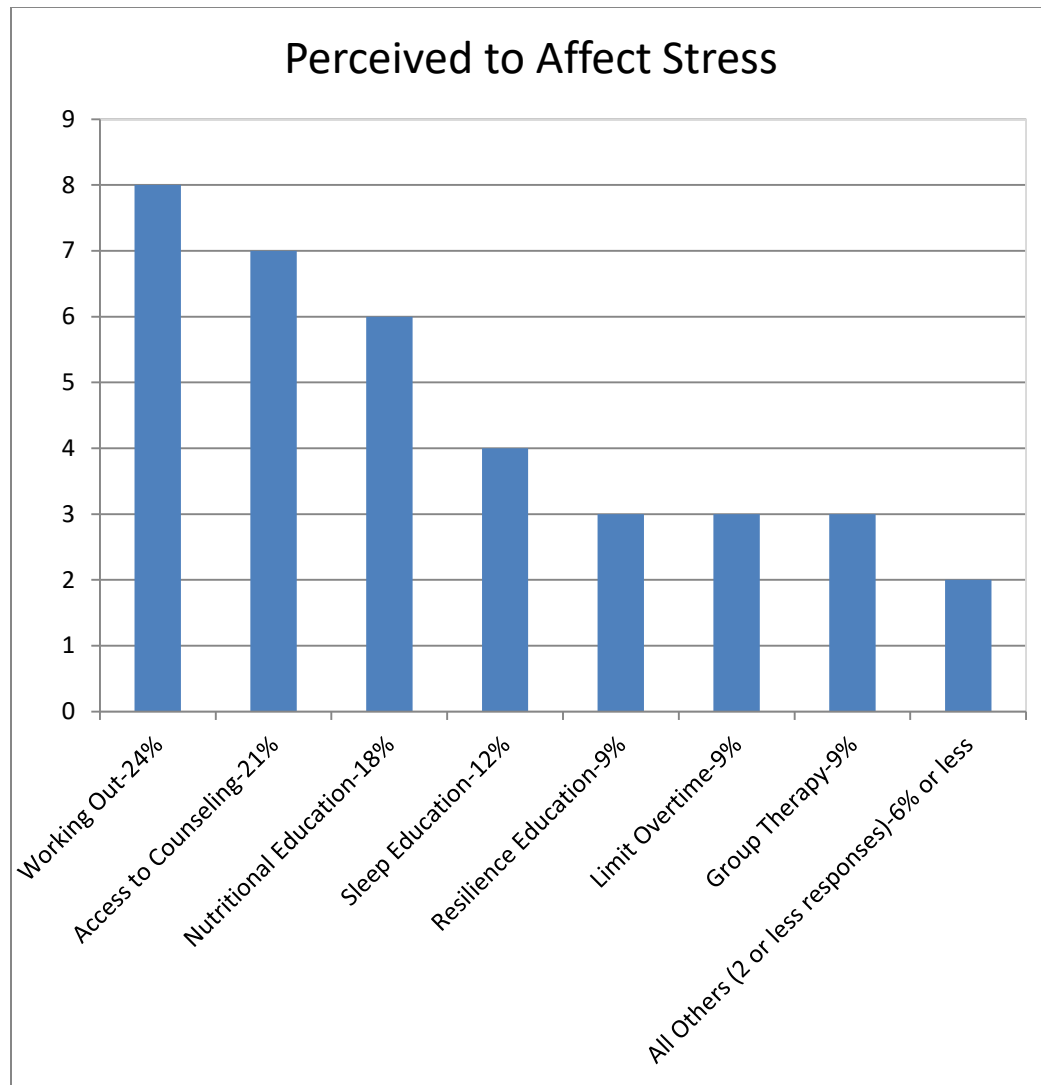


Figure 11. Perceived to affect stress.

When participants were asked what components of a WWP would affect stress, 24% of the study population stated that some sort of physical exercise would help with stress. When asked why working out helps with stress, Participant L1 said, “Exercise is an absolutely necessary part of my stress reduction plan. It helps put things in focus and reset my brain.” Access to counselors received seven responses, which is 21% of the study population. As in previous questions where participants talked about counseling services, the participants felt that a more open access to counseling was important for

stress reduction, not just after critical incidents. Participant D5's response summed up this view: "I think a big thing would be seeking out a therapist every now and then, when you felt it was needed, kind of just decompressing and getting rid of whatever baggage you're carrying."

Nutritional, sleep, and resilience education themes also received multiple responses from study participants. Many of the participants felt that eating unhealthily does not help with stress within the body and by educating employees about this, a department could help reduce the stress of their employees. Participant C3 said, "I think diet is important; some food and too much sugar make chemical imbalances that, you know, make you stressed out and do not help lower your stress." This claim that what one eats and stress levels has been indirectly supported in a 2012 study of military police officers in Brazil. The study looked at body mass index (BMI) and stress. It found the higher the BMI level of the officer, the more perceived stress they felt (Santana et al., 2012). Although there are exceptions where a physical fit person would have a high BMI (very muscular), most studies have correlated that high BMI translates into obesity. It has been demonstrated that eating healthier is one of the best ways to reduce body weight. Sleep education was a theme repeated by four different participants. Most participants acknowledged that police shift work is unavoidable, and it creates sleep issues. But they felt that educating officers about these issues can help. Participant J4 said, "There has got to be some training component of how shift work affects your body. There is a lack of sleep, and you need sleep, because with minimal sleep, the stress becomes more difficult to deal with." The final education theme from this question was resilience education. Participant J4 said, "Training folks on how to better care for their

mental health and stress, by identifying the triggers of stress and the proper coping mechanisms, healthy coping mechanisms that are not Coors Light therapy.” This response touches on the police culture as to how officers have traditionally dealt with stress at work. Following critical incidents, many police officers turn to alcohol to cope with the stress of the incident. A 2013 study of 750 American police officers found that alcohol use was positively associated following critical incidents (Menard & Arter, 2013).

The next theme that emerged in the responses was to limit overtime. As with some other themes in this study, this does not fit the traditional definition of a component of wellness, but again demonstrates how the participants perceive police agencies can help with stress reduction. Participant L4 also touched on not only the stress of the job but also how the police culture can create stress as well:

I think also just not the pressure to always be at work is important. I mean this job consumes so many guys, you know, the job becomes their life and then their life becomes secondary. Limit overtime, to force these guys to stay away from the job. Because lack of sleep, being on too many calls and seeing too much bad stuff. That is what compounds and compounds and compounds.

The last theme from this question was group therapy. Three participants felt that getting together in a group setting to discuss work issues would not only offset stress but also help build the relationships with partners at work. This idea is not without controversy within the participants of this study. During several of the questions of this study, participants felt that counseling was important but numerous times stated that they would not feel comfortable talking in a group setting and the only way counseling would

be effective was if it was away from work and individualized to prevent people from thinking negative of the person and the stigma of weakness being placed on them for struggling with things. This is another view of how police culture can influence wellness components.

Several responses were not repeated or only repeated once. Those responses were placed within the all other category, and they are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

*Interview Question 6: All Other Responses*

Response	# of responses
Peer support	2
Easier ability to take time off	2
Create a positive climate within the organization	2
Yoga/meditation	1
E-mail book reviews of wellness books	1
Access to therapy dogs	1
Do things to have people laugh	1
Properly trained supervisors	1
Supervisors and managers must remain calm under pressure	1
To allow officers to not deal with work when on days off	1
Work longer hours to allow more days off	1
Team-building activities	1
Remove statistics from yearly evaluations	1
Debrief critical incidents	1
Increase staffing levels	1
Include officer's family in the incentive program	1
Make all patrol ride two-person cars	1

Some interesting responses from the all other category are similar to the previous questions where they might not exactly fit the definition of a wellness component. It

appears the participants felt actions that could be taken by police management to change working conditions outside a wellness program could be perceived as ways to reduce stress felt by the police officer. Several participants noted ways that a department could help with stress that would not necessarily be considered a wellness component.

Participant E6 said this about annual employee performance evaluations: “Get rid of the stats based, uh, evaluations or promotions. Look at what we’re having to do and the hours that we’re having to work and the reports. That we’re having a team base it on.”

Participant E5 said this about increasing staffing levels to reduce stress: “[We] need more personnel, so it just seems like we’re, we’re struggling with the calls for service and the amount of work versus the number of employees.” Participant D6 felt allowing people to more easily take time off would help reduce stress: “More open to allowing our folks to take time off or away.” These are examples of possible ways that police management could reduce stress not directly tied to a wellness program and they are expanded upon in Chapter 5.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose for this qualitative research study was to gain an understanding from police officers about workplace wellness components that could affect their wellness.

The researcher coded the themes prior to using the Quirkos qualitative data analysis software that helped to organize and highlight the responses from the participants. Data analysis included participants’ perceptions of components of a WWP that affect police officer wellness. All six research questions of this study dealt with a different aspect of WWP and law enforcement officers’ perceptions to these issues.

The study explored six different questions relating to police officer wellness. This chapter included a presentation of the demographics of study participants, data collection and data analysis process, and the research study findings.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of this study as well as recommendations for law enforcement leadership and additional research that resulted from the data analysis. Chapter 5 includes the specific sections limitations, interpretations of study results, recommendations for law enforcement leaders, future research considerations, and the conclusion.

## CHAPTER 5: STUDY RESULTS

This study's purpose was to explore police officers' perceptions about Workplace Wellness Programs (WWPs). As a perceptual study, it was focused more on gathering the participants' views, beliefs, and feelings about a topic than it was on attempting to prove any facts or confirm any previous research findings. By exploring the participants' authentic viewpoints related to WWP, this study sought to produce findings that could possibly aid in the design of a WWP specific to law enforcement. The importance of this concept was not lost in a previous study that determined there is a need in wellness program design to create a wellness program based on the employees that it will serve and the culture of the business (Goetzel et al., 2013). This study was meant to explore wellness components that police officers perceived to affect their wellness, thereby helping to expand the research.

The six research questions posed by this study were not meant to find an exact answer but were geared to explore the participants' perceptions of Workplace Wellness Programs. The six questions were as follows:

1. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect their wellness?
2. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to be beneficial to their wellness?
3. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to be less beneficial to their wellness?
4. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect physical health?

5. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect mental health?
6. What components of a WWP are perceived by law enforcement officers to affect stress?

Before presenting the results of this study, the researcher felt it appropriate to have a discussion that references the limitations of this study.

### **Limitations**

This section addresses both generalized and specific limitations to this study. The topic of how a relatively small study can be generalized to all law enforcement is obviously a limitation that needs to be discussed. Generalizability of qualitative research has always been a controversial topic with academic scholars. Generalization of research studies requires the reader to make broad conclusions from the research presented, making inference about the unobserved based on the observed. The underlying issue with this generalization as it relates to qualitative research deals with the sample population of a qualitative research study, not only the size of the sample but how the sample was obtained (Polit & Beck, 2010).

While quantitative studies have a goal of obtaining significant results that will aid in generalization, qualitative studies have the underlying goal to better understand a phenomenon, and generalization is not necessarily part of the study design. With respect to sample size, because qualitative research is more concerned with gathering rich, thick, and meaningful data from participants, interviews are longer and data analysis is much more labor intensive than quantitative studies, thereby limiting the size of qualitative studies compared to their quantitative counterparts (Malterud, 2001). In an analysis

examining 560 doctoral dissertation studies that utilized qualitative research methods, the average sample size was just 31 participants, making generalization to a larger population difficult (Mason, 2010). Another study that examined qualitative studies in the health field over a 15-year period (2003-2017), found the average population to be 31.3 participants (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018). In addition, most qualitative studies seek to explore a specific issue, and they do not use random selection methods to find their participants. Instead, purposeful sampling is utilized to find participants who can better explain or help answer the question the research is posing. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to gather more specific data to help explain the social phenomena being explored. Although this helps gain a better understanding of the issue at hand, a lack of true random sampling weakens the argument that qualitative study results can be generalized to a larger population (Shenton, 2004). Although some researchers argue that qualitative research cannot be generalized to a larger population because of these population sample issues (Amankwaa, 2016), others argue that different criteria should be applied to qualitative research than to quantitative research (Polit & Beck, 2010). Some argue it is impossible to apply quantitative statistical generalization to a qualitative study (Polit & Beck, 2010). In addition, it has been postulated that a different type of academic rigor needs to be used for qualitative papers rather than the validity, reliability, and generalizability that is used for quantitative research studies. Guba and Lincoln in 1981 introduced trustworthiness, which is analogous with quantitative rigor. Trustworthiness includes four different criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Credibility can be defined as confidence in the answers obtained during the study, transferability

shows the findings can be applied in other content, dependability describes how the findings are consistent and repeatable, and confirmability shows the findings are based on the study's participants and not shaped by the researcher bias, motivation, or interest (Amankwaa, 2016). Creswell (2012) recommended that qualitative researchers should engage in at least two of these criteria for a study.

This was presented not to engage in this argument but to help explain that this idea of generalizability of qualitative studies has been a controversial topic for some time. Whether one calls it generalizability or transferability, it is an important topic and should be addressed within the limitation section of every qualitative study. Generalizability should be approached with moderation of the results from any qualitative study (Payne & Williams, 2005). Any attempt to overgeneralize study results can weaken the results of what could have been considered a solid research study. Therefore, the researcher discusses the limiting factors that affect generalizability and how they are related to this study.

The first limitation of generalizability has to do with the sample population of this study. There are several issues that need to be examined relating to the sample size of this research study. First, this was a convenience sample based on the ability of the researcher to have access to the population. The researcher, who works in law enforcement within the geographical county, had insight to and was familiar with the police departments where participants were pooled from but, more importantly, had a local, trusted, and well respected governmental figure who helped him gain access to the decision makers of the organizations and allowed the initial participation requests to bypass the gatekeepers who would normally prevent such direct communication. The

researcher did not have the ability to do this anywhere else and will moderate the ability to make the results generalizable to other areas outside Riverside County in California. Another possible limitation of this study is the possibility that only police officers who were interested in wellness responded to be participants, and this could be further compounded with snowball sampling because those participants who showed an interest could possibly only have recruited other like-minded individuals. This could have created responses that did not include a full spectrum of perceptions regarding WWP. Additionally, the sample size itself was a possible limitation. With a potential population of 500 police officers to recruit from within Riverside County, having 34 participants might be a limiting factor to generalize not only to the other 466 police officers within Riverside County but also beyond that to the over 680,000 police officers in the United States. Finally, the lack of saturation of study responses might impact generalization of these study results. The last four participants only produced one new theme on only one question, so saturation was very close to being achieved, but because the data collection was stopped on pragmatic grounds, there is no way to know whether saturation actually occurred in this study. While many themes were replicated among participants, it is unclear whether any of the other responses would have become a theme if further participants were interviewed.

One recommendation by Payne and Williams (2005) in reference to generalization of qualitative research is to allow the receiver to determine whether the study results can be generalized or not. This is done by giving the reader as much data as possible in relation to the population of participants, geographical information of the study location, depth in detailing the research methods, researcher biases and what was

done to limit these within the study, any issues with the data collection, and details of the findings. This detail description of all aspects of the study allows the receiver to determine whether the study would be applicable for their given situation, thereby placing generalizability more on the reader than the researcher (Morse, 2015; Payne & Williams, 2005). The researcher now addresses the generalizability issues discussed above.

The first possible limitation discussed was the use of a convenience sample. This is a limitation of this study that hampers generalizability. The researcher did describe in detail the population and demographic make-up of Riverside County as well as the demographic composition of the participants so the reader could determine whether there are similarities in their population and demographics as to the study participants and population of the geographical area. The second limitation discussed was the concern that only officers interested in wellness volunteered for the study and using snowball sampling might have compounded this issue and skewed the results to a pro-wellness viewpoint. Although this is a very real possibility, it is unclear whether there is anything that could have been done to remedy this issue. The research design was created to gather volunteers without the pressure or coercion from the police agency. Once the e-mail was sent out to officers from the agency, there was no further interaction with the agency, and they would not be privy to which officers responded and which did not. So by not including the agency in picking participants, the study limited the coercion from the agency, which helped in gathering authentic viewpoints; however, there was no real way to screen to determine whether participants were participating because they were interested in wellness or because they wanted to help advance research. It was assumed

by the researcher that most participants had an interest in wellness and the results could be skewed in favor of positive responses for wellness, which limits generalizability. The third limitation was the sample size of 34 participants being too small for generalization. On this topic, the researcher does not feel this sample size was in fact too small for generalization. The two studies referenced that examined qualitative research studies suggested that a number of 34 was actually more than the average for both of those studies. Again, one side of this argument is that there must be a large, random sample size to create any generalizability about study results to a larger population. But if the research goal is to gather a rich and meaningful exploration of the phenomena studied, a random sample is very difficult to obtain within a qualitative study. In addition, it is incredibly difficult to gather enough participants to produce a number that other researchers would say is large enough because that number would vary depending on who was being questioned. This sample size was impacted by pragmatic issues that included difficulty obtaining participants and lack of assistance with the snowball sampling as described in Chapter 4. This difficulty is touched on in the next possible limitation, but the researcher feels the number of 34 participants is in accordance with typical qualitative research studies and does neither positively nor negatively impact generalizability. The final possible limitation to this study deals with the issue of saturation. Creswell (2012) stated that when determining when a population sample size is sufficient, the researcher should continue until no new themes emerge for the participants. This concept of saturation signals to the researcher that the study can be concluded. Saturation is a difficult concept to clarify. In a qualitative research meta-analysis study, the analysis of the studies examined determined that code or theme

saturation was achieved around the ninth interview while meaning saturation, the point where no new insights or nuances were added occurred between 16 to 24 interviews (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Although this research study had more participants than both of these thresholds, the researcher feels saturation did not occur since the study was concluded for reasons other than saturation. After 34 participants had been interviewed, the researcher was still attempting to find additional participants, but after nearly 6 weeks of no response from any potential participant as well as no response from current participants for snowball sampling requests or the contact person for the respective police agency, the researcher concluded the study.

Because this study was concluded before saturation could be confirmed, this is a limitation for generalizability. All these limitations and how the current study addressed or failed to address these limitations needed to be discussed so the receiver can draw conclusions from this study about the generalizability to other situations. To conclude this section, the researcher attempted to help improve generalizability by presenting as much as possible about the study to allow the receivers to determine the worth of the study to their unique set of circumstances. Having said that, the researcher would be over ambitious to say this study is generalizable to all police officers. With the limitations of a convenience sample population that might have participated because of a pro-wellness view and the fact that the study was concluded because of pragmatic reasons and not because of saturation, the researcher feels it would be an overstatement to conclude these findings are generalizable to all police officers. Despite these limitations, the researcher felt this study garnished richness of meaning in the responses, which is the purpose of

qualitative studies (Maxfield & Babbie, 2015). Next the study explores the researcher's interpretation of the study participant population.

### **Study Participant Population**

When examining the age of the study participants, the researcher noted an observation worthy of discussion. The average age of the study, 43 years old, is comparable with the nationwide average age for law enforcement officers, 39 years old. What was troubling was that the youngest participant in this study was 33 years old. This requires further discussion. There are obviously younger police officers working for these departments under the age of 33 years, yet none volunteered for this study. To further compound this question, most younger police officers, still fresh from the training of the academy, tend to be more physically fit and healthy compared to their older veteran counterparts (Spence et al., 2019). While there is no research that can point to an explanation of why younger police officers did not participate in this study, it can be speculated that police culture might explain this missing age group. While it is traditionally accurate within the police culture that a younger officer is more concerned with his physical fitness than an older officer, the e-mail requesting volunteers for this study talked about wellness to include mental health and stress. One can speculate based on police culture that the police officers who showed interest in this study were more concerned with overall wellness to include the mental health and stress. It is the researcher's opinion that this gap in age participants is due to the younger officer not having a need for an overall wellness program that includes mental health and stress. To put it plainly, they have not seen the overwhelming negativity, felt the accumulating pressure, or maybe have not been involved in the critical incidents that veteran officers

have dealt with over the years. To ask younger officers to express their views on physical health, mental health, and stress just does not appeal to them as it does to someone who has been involved in the job demands of law enforcement for numerous years. This is also supported by the study demographics that show the average years as a sworn police officer to be 18 years. It would appear this study drew the interest of seasoned, older police officers. The reader needs to keep this age difference in mind while viewing the results of this study.

In Chapter 3, in the researcher's role section, it was discussed how the researcher is an 18-year veteran of law enforcement and because the researcher did not want to push any biases of WWP onto the participant, the follow-up questions were designed to be nonleading and as bias free as possible. After analyzing the results of this study, the researcher must admit the lack of focused follow-up questions has weakened this study. The research addressed how police culture may have influenced participants' responses throughout this study, but the researcher failed to consider that as a police officer, police culture can still influence how the researcher conducted the study. As a police officer talking to another police officer, asking too many probing questions can be viewed as challenging the view or belief of another police officer (Paoline, 2004), yet as a researcher, those deep probing questions are what separates a detailed study from an average study. By not separating the police culture mentality from the role of researcher during the interview process, some of the more controversial topics, such as whether working out should be done while on duty and why the majority of the participants could not think of anything less beneficial within a WWP, did not garnish the deep, meaningful detailed responses. This is not to say this study did not produce positive results detailing

perceptions of police officers with respect to WWP, but some of the controversial questions lack the depth they could have potentially received.

### **Interpretation of Study Results**

Interview Question 1 was intended to elicit an overall view of which wellness components participants would include in a WWP. The top theme was working out on duty, and other physical fitness related themes included group fitness classes, mandatory fitness requirement, access to a gym at work, and exercise education. Physical fitness is a concept that is taught and reinforced while officers attend the police academy, yet the literature review conducted for this study found that police officers have a higher percentage of obesity than the general public (Hartley et al., 2011). The literature review also noted that there is a relatively low number of WWPs within the law enforcement community (Spence et al., 2019). It is the researcher's opinion that these two issues are related. With the sleep issues associated with shift work, the unhealthy stress response that results from maintaining a hypervigilant officer safety approach, and the high level of stress that an officer must deal with on a daily basis, the police profession is in need of a WWP that targets physical health, mental health, and stress at a minimum.

One theme that was present for many of the responses was the need to incentivize the program. There were several different methods suggested by the participants in how a wellness program could be incentivized. Responses included giving days off from work for being part of the program, extra monthly pay, and giving out raffle prizes/equipment. These responses were very similar to common incentives offered by many wellness programs (Jenkins et al., 2018). Also, the Jenkins study found that although it is widely acceptable that wellness programs are incentivized, little was known

about employees' preferences regarding incentives. This leads to a recommendation for further study on this topic and will be discussed in the future research considerations section. Interview Question 1 asked the participants to give responses for a wellness program without a specific focus giving them the chance to respond with what they felt would be important in a WWP. The next questions began directing the participants to give responses for components to fit within specific conditions.

In Interview Question 2, the study asked the participants what they would perceive as beneficial specifically for law enforcement officers. In the analysis of this question, there was an interesting result related to peer support, which was a theme in Interview Question 1 about what components the participants would add to a wellness program, but it only received one response when they were asked what component would be beneficial for their wellness. It is unknown whether participants felt that because they used the response for Interview Question 1 they could not use the same response for Interview Question 2. But other responses such as working out on duty ranked high in both questions, so that does not appear to be the case. While the first question received 71 responses from the participants, the second question only received 54 responses. One possible explanation could be that some of the participants felt that Interview Question 2 was asking for only one component they thought beneficial for each dimension discussed in the introduction, physical, mental, and stress. Since counseling was the second most frequent response, it is possible that the participants felt counseling was more important than peer support because the two are similar in nature. After analyzing the questions, it might have been an error in the researcher's explanation of the study. Possibly the participants understood "perceived to be beneficial" as something they currently do not

have and therefore they answered the question more as a “wish list.” Since peer support is a wellness component that is already widely utilized within law enforcement, it could be their responses reflected wellness components that they are not experienced with but feel would be beneficial if their agency had such a component.

Interview Question 3 explored wellness components that were less beneficial for the law enforcement officer. This question seemed to produce the most interesting results of the study as many of the responses were not describing a wellness component as less beneficial. Instead, the participants described specific actions or conditions that if present would be less beneficial. Three of the participants expressed outside exercise as a safety issue. In recent years, ambush style killing of police officers has increased; in 2016, officers being shot by suspects increased by 67% over 2015 (White, Dario, & Shjarbuck, 2019). It appears some of the study participants may have felt police working out as a group could be a target, and this type of exercise should be avoided.

Another interesting result from this question was the number of responses that directly deal with the concept of police culture. Nap pods/sleep room, don't try to create a program because there is too much resistance, and information sources from within the department were all responses for Interview Question 3. In each of these responses, the participant expressed that the idea would have trouble succeeding because of the police culture not allowing it. Participant E7 said this about nap rooms: “Places have like a timeout rooms or break rooms where you can go and smell scented oils and look at stars painted on the ceiling. I don't think you get that accepted to the, uh, the police culture.” Participant L7 touched on police culture when he expressed doubt about mental wellness being successful, “So I think, I think they're all beneficial. I just think you would have a

less buy in a program that is mostly mental health based, that'd be my opinion.”

Participant J2 talked about how the police culture deals with receiving information:

The problem with cops, his credibility is everything. And if you get a group of people that say, don't like one person who's preaching this stuff, well you know how far it's going to go. So, um, that's why I think it's important where you bring in those outside resources because you know, cops here, what their best friend is saying all day long and they'll tell him to go fuck themselves. You get another [outside] person to come in and tell the exact same thing and they'll be like, oh my God, this is, this is brilliant.

The researcher feels all three of these responses dealt more with whether the participant felt the idea would be accepted in the police culture of the agency rather than whether the participant perceived it beneficial or not beneficial.

Police culture is not some monolithic view that is universal with all organizations. Cockcroft (2013) stated,

Organizational culture tends to be unique to a particular organization, composed of an objective and subjective dimension, and concerned with tradition and the nature of shared beliefs and expectations about organizational life. It is a powerful determinant of individual and group behavior. Organizational culture affects practically all aspects of organizational life from the way in which people interact with each other, perform their work and dress, to the types of decisions, its organizational policies and procedures, and strategy considerations. (p. 6)

Additionally, organizational culture is expressed as the norms that are adopted by the people within that organization (Ahumada, 2005). Some researchers have divided police

culture into two categories: street cop culture and management cop culture. The management culture sets the specific styles and mission for the agency while the street cop culture usually determines the occupational norms and values for the organization (Demirkol & Nalla, 2019). As stated earlier in this research, many of the participants did not state the wellness component would not be beneficial but instead expressed that certain conditions would not be beneficial. It is the researcher's belief that many of these responses were touching upon how the police culture would respond to the component or idea rather than whether the component would indeed be beneficial for the officer. The three examples discussed above did not perceive a specific component as not being beneficial but more as a question of how the culture of their organization would accept the wellness component. This group thought is not unusual for the police culture because officers tend to share the same values, norms, and behaviors because the danger within the shared work they perform creates unity. The isolation that is normal for police officers with people outside the profession creates additional shared loyalty (Demirkol & Nalla, 2019) and reinforces the concept of "us versus them" or "the thin blue line." In addition, police culture provides a way that new officers are introduced to the informal organization of their department, which is an important factor for the development of the police agency as a whole (Kling, 2003). This is an interesting topic that will require further study to examine its effect of how wellness programs may need to be specifically tailored to each organization because police culture is not universal.

Interview Question 4 was asked to see how the participants viewed physical health and what wellness components they perceived to affect their physical health. Although in previous questions, working out on duty was the most repeated theme for

Interview Question 1 (components to put in wellness program) and Interview Question 2 (what component would be beneficial), it was the second most repeated theme in this question. Nutritional education was the top theme and exercise instruction was the third most repeated theme. It seems the participants perceive the educational aspect of wellness to be just as important as actual physical exercise. This may be related to the increasingly evidence-based dietary education being applied in the United States. Since 1980, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has required reissuance and reassessment of the dietary guidelines every 5 years. This has led to an increase in research and a better understanding of how the body consumes and utilizes food as a fuel (Jahns et al., 2018). Police officers are exposed to this improved understanding of nutritional education just like the general population. In examining the responses, in addition to the nutritional education and exercise education, also on the list with multiple responses was injury prevention education and sleep education. The perceptions of the participants on the importance of sleep education and nutritional education are supported by other studies.

When working shift work, the circadian clock is out of alignment with the sleep pattern of the person, which can disturb key regulators in the human body, and hormone levels can be altered for an individual. One example of this disrupted hormonal balance because of shift work can be seen in satiety and hunger, which are controlled by the hormones leptin and ghrelin. Because these hormones are tied to a typical sleep pattern and feeding pattern, when altered as in shift work, the hormone that controls satiety, leptin, is suppressed because of the change in natural sleep patterns. This change causes shift work employees to have a higher probability of obesity (James et al., 2017). A

study examining police officers working the night shift found that they slept less and consumed more fast food than their day shift counterparts (Tewksbury & Copenhaver, 2015). Many physical fitness related components were addressed by participants during this study, stressing the importance of physical fitness on perceived wellness, but this question shows that they perceive other components as just important for their physical health, including nutritional education, injury prevention, and sleep education. This question dealt with wellness components perceived to affect physical health; the next section discusses wellness components perceived to affect mental health.

Interview Question 5 was intended to have the participants identify wellness components that would affect mental health. Thirty-five of the 59 total responses for Interview Question 5 dealt with some form of counseling. Peer support was the top repeated theme, but responses also included the themes access to counseling and annual check-up with counselor; less repeated responses included employee assistance program (EAP), group counseling sessions, retreat after critical incident, and a chaplain program. These perceptions are supported by research. Tanigoshi et al. (2008) found that police officers who met with individual counselors on a regular basis had significantly higher wellness scores. In the current study, over half of the responses (32 of the 51) dealt with some form of counseling, which means that many of the participants perceive counseling to affect mental health. This is promising because the Tanigoshi research tends to support that the participants in this study are correct in their perceptions that counseling will affect mental health. This could also signify a change in the police culture. Police culture had previously attached a stigma of weakness when an officer went to a counselor (Spence et al., 2019).

One interesting theme that emerged in this question was that counseling should be a regular, on-going component and not just used after critical incidents. According to a national police agency policy software, LEXIPOL, a critical incident is defined as follows:

1. Any incident involving the use of lethal force by department personnel.
2. Any unplanned occurrence, event, or disaster which threatens the peace or safety of the community.
3. Any planned or unplanned event which requires the implementation of the law enforcement incident command structure to manage assets and response.
4. Any other incident which requires the use of significant department assets or which is deemed to be significant by the Chief of Police or commanding officer for that incident (LEXIPOL, 2019, Policy 301).

Once again, the participants' perceptions that counseling should be on-going and not only used for critical incidents is backed by research. Law enforcement officers deal with traumatic stressful events throughout their career. Research has shown the lack of resources that allow the ability to recovery from this stress creates emotional exhaustion (Hall at al., 2010). Police officers are being placed in highly volatile, traumatic situations and have been given inadequate training to how the body responds to these conditions (Rees & Smith, 2007). It appears in this study, some of the participants are correct in their perceptions that routine, regular counseling is perceived to affect their mental health. If counseling is only utilized during critical incidents, officers may never be exposed to counseling or so infrequently it would prevent counseling professionals to help prepare officers for the emotional situations they are placed in daily. This question

dealt with the perceptions of the types of wellness components that could affect mental health. The last question dealt with wellness components that affect stress.

Interview Question 6 of this study explored the perceptions of what wellness components could affect stress for law enforcement officers. As discussed in the analysis of this question in Chapter 4, it appears the participants felt actions that could be taken by police management could be perceived to reduce stress felt by the police officer. There were numerous responses that would not fit into a component of wellness that could be applied within a WWP. These include the following:

- Limit overtime
- Properly trained supervisors
- Create positive climate within organization
- Remain calm under stress
- Not be bothered with work when away from the job
- Work longer hours with more days off
- Easier ability to take time off
- Remove statistics from yearly employee performance evaluations
- Debriefing critical incidents
- Increase staffing.
- Have officers utilize only two-person units during patrol.

Although not traditional components of wellness, the participants perceived that these changes could affect stress. These responses given by the participants deal directly with the organizational stressors that are felt by police officers. Research has shown that police officers perceive organizational job demands as more stressful than operational job

demands (Anderson et al., 2002; Burke & Paton, 2006). Organizational job demands are the activities associated with the officer being part of the agency's organizational membership. Some of the organizational job demands include assimilation into the police culture of an organization (training), the promotional process, and discipline and criticism (Anderson et al., 2002; Juniper et al., 2010). Many of these demands center on the officer being accepted and part of the organization. In this study's discussion of police culture, the need to be part of the shared values of the organization will many times supersede the need to be accepted by people outside of the department. This section dealt with the participants' views on stress. Next, the researcher explores how the study's theoretical model tied in with the participants' responses.

The theoretical model for this study was the job demands/resources model (JD-R). Job demands placed on the employee may cause a health-impairment process while job resources may impact the employee's motivational process (Mudrak et al., 2018). In reviewing the responses from this study, the researcher found these perceptions were also present with the participants. Many participants talked about the stress of the job demands such as the long hours of the job and forced overtime, lack of adequate staffing, lack of resources, and constant negative interactions with the public. Participants also talked about the difficulty in getting time off from work creating tension at home. The participants expressed that these demands made them tired and at times frustrated with work. In this study, some participants perceived the job demands as something that wears down the officer. Participant K3 echoed this statement when discussing his perceptions when an agency does not try to implement a wellness program:

I think everything's worth a try to see it implemented to see if it will work. I think the things not working is not having a plan or not, uh, putting anything into action. I think when you have an agency like that doesn't have anything set up, uh, it can be really stressful on the officer and then they tend to bring that stress home with them.

When the participants talked about the different wellness components, many of them perceived how implementation of these components may improve employee morale, whether it was how working out during duty hours may increase team unity and help with decompressing from the shift or how providing nutritional education could benefit overall health and help officers make good choices when it comes to nutrition. Probably one of the best examples from a study participant that demonstrates how resources help with the motivation process of the officer dealt with counseling services. The participant discussed how at first, they believed counseling would not be effective but then they were positively impacted by the wellness component:

You have to go talk to a counselor. That actually, uh, helps out because, uh, at first you, you're thinking like, Nah, this is stupid. There's nothing wrong with me. I'm fine. Why do we go, it's a waste of time? But you realize when you're there, I ended up talking a lot more than I expected and realize I'm a little bit more normal than I thought. And um, that's, that was good for me.

One of the most common issues for officers who were involved in critical incidents such as a shooting is they feel they are alone. They perceive no one can understand them, and they feel it is a sign of weakness to discuss this to other officers (Fiedler, 2015; Spence et al., 2019). The perceptions from this study's participants tended to echo the JD-R model.

Participants described how the demands of the job, such as overtime and lack of staffing, created stress both at work and at home. They also perceived certain components of a WWP, such as working out on duty and regularly seeing a counselor, might be helpful to motivate the employee. These perceptions help to show support for the JD-R model that the demands of the job can create a health-impairment process and the resources may help with the employee's motivational process.

This section dealt with the interpretation of the results for this study and how many of the perceptions by the participants were supported by research. The next section addresses recommendations for law enforcement leaders.

### **Recommendations for Law Enforcement Leaders**

For the law enforcement practitioner, this study presents several ideas and concepts that could be implemented into WWPs. In addition, there were some perceptions that were discovered that may affect officer morale that do not necessarily relate to WWPs.

An overall point presented in this study that law enforcement practitioners may need to address is the lack of awareness for current wellness programs. During the interviews and the follow-up question discussion, numerous participants stated they were not sure what should or should not be in a WWP because they had never had one at their department before. One study participant perceived their agency did not properly promote their current WWP. Although only one participant stated this in this study, it is not an isolated perception because several previous studies have uncovered the same issue. In both Ramchand and Thoen studies, they found the majority of law enforcement

officers were not aware of all the wellness resources offered by their agencies (Ramchand et al., 2018; Thoen et al., 2019).

When looking to the dimension of physical health, several interesting issues were presented that deal with working out while on duty. Participants were asked which components of wellness are perceived as beneficial; the top repeated theme was the ability to work out while on duty. In another question that asked which wellness components the participants would include in a WWP, again the top repeated theme was working out while on duty. Attempting to create a wellness program that incorporates physical fitness during duty hours would present numerous challenges to an agency including workers compensation issues, staffing issues to take patrol officers out of the field, providing a suitable fitness center/area that is equipped and able to handle this demand, and negotiations between the agency and the officers' representation for any required policy changes. Even with all these obstacles, having a wellness component that targets fitness while officers are on duty could be worth the effort for leaders to explore for the following reasons.

Although considered a dangerous profession, much of the job of a police officer is sedentary (Zimmerman, 2012), and police work is shift work, which puts additional stressors on the body (James et al., 2017). Forty percent of officers have at least one sleep disorder, are at higher risk for chronic health conditions (Rajaratnam et al., 2011), and are at greater risk of obesity (Hartley et al., 2011) than the general population. But how are these conditions tied to fitness? Highly stressed officers tend to be in poor physical health and also tend to be poor sleepers (Gerber et al., 2013). A healthy police force is a better functioning police force because a person's mental state affects behavior

and can influence decision-making. In addition, people under excessive stress tend to find it harder to connect to people and regulate emotions, and they have narrowed perceptions, increased anxiety and/or fearfulness, and degraded cognitive abilities (Vila & Samuels, 2011).

The job demands of this profession can negatively impact police officers and their health. Physical fitness has been shown to have a positive impact on police officers. A 2008 study that had 67 police officers participating in a 10-week intervention where physical fitness was performed five times a week and the participants blood lipids were measured pre and post study. The study found that there were significant ( $p < .001$ ) improved physical fitness measurements and reduced lipid profile scores (Anshel & Kang, 2008). This increased physical fitness could have positive benefits to an agency. A 2003 study, although not of law enforcement officers, looked at physical fitness levels and employees' productivity, job satisfaction, and absenteeism. It found that higher levels of fitness may positively influence employees' productivity, job satisfaction, and absenteeism (Wattles & Harris, 2003). Although this study looked at the employees' perceptions, references can be made that a more productive, engaged, and satisfied worker would be more beneficial to the employer. Because officers perceive organizational job demands, such as acceptance and criticism, as more stressful than the actual occupational job demands, it can be postulated that officers also desire engagement and satisfaction in their job. Another study looked at 200 female health-care workers who either exercised at home or with a group of employees at work. The study found that the group who that exercised together at work were more effective than the home-based exercise group when it came to concern about the patients and their own vitality

(Jakobsen et al., 2017). The social benefits of group exercise again may benefit the employer by having a more productive, caring workforce. Both of these studies used participants outside the profession of law enforcement, but both studies had positive results that show that physical fitness and group exercise might affect the community that the agency serves in addition to the officer.

The occupation of law enforcement places numerous job demands on officers. Wellness Programs bring additional job resources to the officer. One of the propositions of the job demand resources model is that job demands and job resources impact the person in two very different processes. Job demands cause a health-impairment process, but job resources impact the individual's motivational process (Mudrak et al., 2018). Increasing the resources available to the officer may possibly create higher worker engagement as observed in other studies (Hopstaken et al., 2015; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Although implementing a physical fitness program while on duty wellness component might be a difficult proposal for an agency, there is positive research that shows it could not only improve the health of officers but also possibly impact productivity and employees' concern for the community they serve. In addition, this study has shown that working out on duty is one of the most repeated wellness components that officers perceive to affect their health.

When looking at the dimension of mental health, police managers can add components to a wellness program that may affect officers' mental health. Officers are exposed to stress daily and this accumulation of stress has been described as cumulative career traumatic stress (CCTS). In addition, vicarious trauma (VT) or secondary traumatic stress (STS) has been defined as the exposure to trauma experiences of others.

The behavioral and psychological symptoms displayed by CCTS and STS may be similar to those from PTSD (Marshall, 2006; Molnar et al., 2017). First responders are exposed to the accounts of crime victims of the cruel treatment they experience from their perpetrators and witness traumatic incidents that can transform a person's view of the world. Most people view the world as mostly benevolent and meaningful; unfortunately, first responders may begin to view the world as malevolent and full of evil (Molnar et al., 2017). Police officers are being placed in highly volatile, traumatic situations and have been given inadequate training about how the body responds to these conditions. This study showed that participants perceived numerous counseling services as the most repeated responses to affect their mental health and included peer support, access to counselors, annual check-ups with counselors, EAP, chaplain program, and group counseling services. Officers receiving counseling services in the past would be perceived as a weakness within the police culture, but this study showed the majority of the participant's responses support some form of counseling. Participants expressed their desire to be able to see counselors more often and not just after a critical incident. Police practitioners should be encouraged to look at all forms of counseling services as possible options for their officers. With research showing that CCTS and STS can create behavioral and psychological symptoms similar to PTSD, there is a pressing need for officers to receive more counseling than just after a critical incident. Routine, regular counseling for law enforcement is what psychological professionals are requesting for police officers (Spence et al., 2019), and the perceptions of the participants from this study support that statement.

In dealing with the dimension of stress, based on some of the statements made by participants in this study, law enforcement managers may be able to affect perceived stress of their officers by dealing with conditions that are not necessarily related to WWP. This study explored wellness components that may affect stress, and several of the responses that the participants perceived to affect stress were outside the scope of wellness programs. These responses included the following:

- Limit overtime
- Properly trained supervisors
- Create positive climate within organization
- Management and supervision need to remain calm under stress
- Not be bothered with work when away from the job
- Work longer hours with more days off
- Easier ability to take time off
- Remove statistics from yearly employee performance evaluations
- Debrief critical incidents
- Increase staffing.
- Only deploy two-person patrol units.

It appears the participants felt actions that could be taken by police management could be considered as ways to impact the stress felt by the police officer. These responses given by the participants deal directly with the organizational job demands of police officers. It has been shown in numerous studies that organizational job demands are more stressful to police officers than occupational job demands. The occupational job demands, such as dealing with a hostile subject or viewing death, are what officers deal

with in the performance of their job. They come to accept these demands as routine and have more autonomous control over these demands. Organizational job demands, such as assimilation in the police culture, working conditions, promotional process, and discipline, are more stressful for the police officer. This is due to the lack of control the subject perceives they have when dealing with organizational job demands. The perceptions presented by some of the study participants may help reinforce this concept that show organizational job demands are perceived as more stressful than occupational job demands. Police managers should remain cognizant that organizational job demands are more stressful than occupational demands for the police officer. When looking to reduce stress within a department, making changes to organizational job demands could have a stronger perceived effect on stress than changes to occupational job demands.

This section addressed what law enforcement practitioners could take from this study and possibly incorporate into their agency. The next section looks to future research considerations based on this study's results.

### **Future Research Considerations**

In retrospect, one important question that was not addressed in this study was participation in a WWP—whether the participants' perceptions were due to a current or previous personal knowledge with wellness programs or whether their perceptions were without any prior experience. A future study that addresses the question of prior experience with wellness programs would help strengthen the validity of these perceptions. Another future study could be to see how successful police departments are in promoting available wellness resources. Finally, one response that was repeated in several different questions of this study was the need to incentivize the program.

Responses included giving days off work for being part of the program, extra monthly pay, and giving out raffle prizes/equipment. These responses were very similar to common incentives offered by the majority of wellness programs (Jenkins et al., 2018). Also, Jenkins et al. found that although it is widely acceptable that wellness programs are incentivized, little was known about employees' preferences regarding incentives. This leads to a recommendation to further study this topic as there were several different types of incentivized recommendations presented by the participants. However, because that was not part of the research questions in this study, clarification to why one type of incentive was more important over another was not pursued. This section covered possible future research recommendations based on this study.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to explore law enforcement officers' perceptions of WWPs. This was done by determining which WWP components the study participants perceived may affect their wellness. In addition, the participants of this study were also questioned to explore which components of a WWP may affect physical health, mental health, and stress.

This study used a sample of 34 participants who were active, sworn police officers from 11 independent police departments from the County of Riverside within the Southern California geographic region of the United States. The six semistructured, open-ended questions were designed to explore perceptions that police officers have regarding WWPs. Each question produced responses from the participants about their perceived effect on the wellness of law enforcement officer. This study's findings begin the process of creating research that can help explore this missing aspect of law

enforcement wellness research. The significance of this study is to provide a baseline for the perceptions of law enforcement officers on wellness programs. This research should give value to officer's perceptions of the components offered in WWP for law enforcement.

As researcher, it is acknowledged that there were limitations of this study that prevent it from being generalized to all police officers. However, this study did produce perceptions from law enforcement officers that address several aspects of how WWPs affect police officers' wellness and include recommendations to police leadership about the results of this study. With the decline of physical and mental health of law enforcement professional documented in the research (Hartley et al., 2011; Spence et al., 2019; Thoen et al., 2019), this study helped to expand the breath of research in the field of law enforcement wellness programs. There continues to be a need for additional research in WWPs for the law enforcement professional.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Informed Consent

TITLE OF STUDY: Exploring the value of wellness programs from a law enforcement officer's perspective

Researcher: Michael Crawford, Graduate Student, Cal Baptist University, Doctor of Public Administration

### PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study will explore Workplace Wellness Programs (WWP) as they relate to the profession of law enforcement. The purpose of this study is to explore the law enforcement officer's perceptions of wellness programs within the Inland Empire geographic region of Southern California. This will be done by determining what components of a Workplace Wellness Program are perceived beneficial from the law enforcement officer's perspective. In addition, this study will also explore officer's perceptions of how WWP components may improve Physical Health, Mental Health, and Stress reduction.

### PARTICIPANTS

Participants will be limited to active, sworn law enforcement officers within the Southern California geographically region of the United States. Since the state of California requires the minimum age of 21 for an officer to be a sworn law enforcement officer, all participants will be 21 and older. For this study, the Southern California geographically region includes any law enforcement agency in the following counties within California: Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura.

## RISK AND CONFIDENTIALITY

This study possesses minimal risk to subject participants. However, there is the possibility that some participants may experience discomfort when answering questions about wellness programs. All participants can choose to stop the interview at any time without penalty if the discomfort becomes intolerable for them. Responses in this study will be strictly confidential and your department will not be provided with any of your responses.

The written notes and audio recordings of the focus groups will be stored on a password protected computer and will be deleted after analysis and coding. There will be no personal identifiable information used on the study and all participants will be given a numerical code for identification that only the researcher will be able to access. This also will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

## INCENTIVES

There will be a raffle incentive for completing this study. All participants who wish to possibly be chosen for the raffle prize will leave their name and e-mail address with the proctor during the focus group. This will be kept separate from the study and after all the focus groups are completed, all participants who entered the raffle will have their name placed in a box and a random winning will be selected until all the prizes are gone. Winners will be notified via e-mail.

## BENEFITS

This study will help the researcher better understand the components offered within Workplace Wellness Programs (WWP) within the Southern California Region.

The results of this study can be beneficial to law enforcement agencies, who can more effectively and efficiently design WWP for their employees.

#### YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research and feel discomfort during the focus group, you may stop participating at any time. You will receive a copy of this consent form and the summary of the study that will be discussed with you. If you have any issues or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Cal Baptist University Institutional Review Board at 951-552-8826 or through e-mail at [IRB@calbaptist.edu](mailto:IRB@calbaptist.edu).

#### CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS

Contact Michael Crawford at xxx-xxx-xxxx or at [xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx](mailto:xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx) or Dr. Elaine Ahumada at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or at [xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx](mailto:xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx) if you have questions about the study or if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant and do not feel comfortable contacting Michael Crawford or Dr. Elaine Ahumada, you may contact Cal Baptist University's Institutional Review Board at 951-552-8826 or through e-mail at [IRB@calbaptist.edu](mailto:IRB@calbaptist.edu).

## APPENDIX B

### Participant PowerPoint

Slide One:

#### EXPLORING THE VALUE OF WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS FROM A POLICE OFFICER PERSPECTIVE

##### Basic Definitions

Slide Two:

##### What are Workplace Wellness Programs (WWP)?

For this study, we will use the CDC definition: “A health promotion activity or organization-wide policy designed to support health, behaviors and improve health outcomes while at work.”

Slide Three:

##### Two Key Concepts Explained

##### WWP Dimensions

- A dimension of wellness is a focus of the WWP that will target a specific aspect of wellness.
- Example: A dimension of a WWP is Physical Health.

##### WWP Components:

- A component is a specific intervention that targets a dimension within the WWP.
- Example: A lunch time walking group is the actual component of WWP that impacts the physical health dimension.

Slide Four:

##### Dimensions of WWP Used in this Study

##### Physical Health

- The components of Physical Health that have a relationship with good health to include; body composition, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, muscular endurance, and muscular strength.

### Mental Health

- A state of well-being in which an individual realizes their abilities, copes with normal stress, productive at work and make contributions to their community.

### Stress Reduction

- An adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them.