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## Effectiveness of Counseling Programs in Addressing Mental Health Issues Among Police Officers in Selected Police Stations in Nairobi City County Kenya

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<p><b>Chief Editor</b> Web: <a href="http://www.ijsd.org">www.ijsd.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@ijsd.org">info@ijsd.org</a></p> <p><b>Editing Oversight</b> Impericals Consultants International Limited</p>	<p><b>Abstract:</b> Addressing mental wellness among police officers is crucial given the high-stress nature of law enforcement work, particularly in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This study investigates the effectiveness of counseling programs in addressing mental health issues among police officers, focusing on a sample of 112 officers from 10 selected police stations, drawn from a target population of 500. The study was guided by Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Bandura of 1986. A mixed-methods approach with a descriptive research design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data were gathered using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Qualitative data were collected via interviews and focus group discussions, and were thematically analyzed. Findings reveal that although the effectiveness of the services was generally viewed positively, confidentiality concerns emerged as a significant issue. The study highlights a critical need for 24/7 access to mental health services, improved confidentiality measures and increasing family support programs. The findings underscore the importance of tailored interventions to address the diverse needs of officers and create a more supportive environment for their mental health. By implementing these recommendations, the National Police Service could significantly enhance the mental health support available to officers, thereby improving their overall job satisfaction and performance.</p> <p><b>Key words:</b> Counseling Programs, Mental health/wellness, Police officers, Guidance and Counseling, Stress</p>
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### 1.1 Study Background

The perception of counseling in the context of mental wellness is a critical component of fostering psychological well-being and resilience, particularly within high-stress environments such as law enforcement agencies. Counseling services support for the mental health and well-being of police officers worldwide is vital. The profession of policing is highly stressful and exposes officers to traumatic events, which can result in mental health issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. Recently, there has been growing acknowledgment of the need for counseling services to assist officers in managing the intense demands of their roles. Research has shown that the perception of

counseling services among police officers varies across different countries and police departments. While some officers may view these services positively and seek help when needed, others may perceive them as a sign of weakness or fear stigmatization within the police culture. The attitude towards seeking counseling often depends on various factors such as organizational support, availability of services, confidentiality, and the individual officer's beliefs and attitudes towards mental health.

Research by Garcia et al. (2021) in Australia emphasized the importance of proactive mental health strategies within police departments to promote a positive perception of counseling services among officers. The study highlighted the need for destigmatizing mental health issues and encouraging a culture of seeking help when needed to improve the overall well-being of police officers. Lang, (2011) carried out a research on police offices within Georgia in the United States, and found out that after a successful guiding and counselling program, 74 per cent of police officers in the Georgia Bureau of Investigation became more effective on their job by enhancing their morale, thereby improving attendance, work relations, and quality of work. Another research by (Gupton et al., 2011) asserts that counselling among employees relieves poor mental wellbeing attributes, manifesting as anger, violence, substance abuse, absenteeism, and work-related accidents that negatively affect job performance. This finding also agrees with Ayres and Flanagan (1990) and Clavelle, Dicherson and Murphy (2012) that police officers with high- stress levels perform less, while those without stress are better performers and with good mental wellbeing. According to Clavelle et al. (2012), 68 per cent of the respondents agreed to have increased their functioning at work, 86 per cent reported reduced dysfunction, 79 per cent were less distressed, and 68 per cent had improved their interpersonal relations after going through employee counseling programs.

In the context of African nations, where law enforcement officers often face unique challenges related to resource constraints, corruption, and high levels of crime, the need for effective counseling programs is ever more crucial. Research by Maslach and Leiter (2016) highlighted the concept of burnout among police officers, emphasizing the importance of addressing emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment through effective counseling interventions. In the African context, where burnout is a prevalent issue among law enforcement officers, providing access to counseling services tailored to their needs can mitigate the negative impact of stress and trauma on their mental health. In many African societies, there is a prevalent belief that asking for help is a sign of weakness, particularly in professions like law enforcement where strength and resilience are highly valued. This stigma can prevent police officers from seeking the counseling they may desperately need, leading to increased mental health issues and reduced job performance. The study by Ochieng and Apondi (2019) examined the barriers to seeking counseling among police officers in Uganda. The findings revealed that factors such as fear of stigmatization, lack of confidentiality, and misconceptions about counseling services deter officers from accessing support. Addressing these barriers by implementing confidential, stigma-free counseling programs can help improve the perception of counseling within police departments in African countries.

In addition, the study by Odhiambo et al. (2020) emphasized the positive impact of comprehensive counseling programs on the overall well-being and job satisfaction of police officers in Kenya. The findings revealed that officers who received regular counseling reported lower levels of stress, improved coping mechanisms, and increased job performance. This underscores the potential benefits of investing in robust counseling services tailored to the specific needs of police officers in African nations

health and well-being of police officers have come under scrutiny due to the demanding nature of their job. Counseling services play a crucial role in addressing the psychological challenges faced by law enforcement officers. However, the perception of such services among police officers in Kenya remains relatively unexplored. Police officers are often exposed to trauma, stress situations, and long working hours, leading to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout. Counseling services can help officers cope with these challenges, manage their mental health, and improve their overall well-being. Research has shown that access to counseling services can reduce absenteeism, promote job satisfaction, and enhance job performance among police officers (Mustafa et al., 2019).

Recent studies in Kenya have also highlighted the impact of prolonged exposure to traumatic incidents on the mental wellbeing of police officers. The nature of their work often leads to high levels of stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms among officers. A study by Muthoni et al. (2021) revealed that a significant number of Kenyan police officers reported exhibiting PTSD symptoms as a result of encountering traumatic incidents while on duty. Despite the benefits of counseling services, police officers in Kenya may face various barriers. Stigma around mental health issues, concerns about confidentiality, and without awareness about available supporting services are some of the factors that can deter officers from accessing counseling. A study by Nyamasege and Gitimu (2018) found that a significant number of Kenyan police officers find seeking support for mental health as a sign of weakness, which hinders their willingness to seek counseling. Within the Kenyan context, the utilization of counseling services for mental wellness among police officers is influenced by a range of factors. Historical and cultural perspectives on mental health, as well as the availability and accessibility of support services, shape the perception and utilization of counseling. Additionally, the social and economic dynamics of Nairobi County contribute to the unique challenges faced by law enforcement personnel in seeking and accessing mental health support (Bophella & Govender, 2015). Amid this evolving landscape, the perception of mental wellness and counseling services within the context of law enforcement in Kenya presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. As the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi County serves as a focal point for examining the intersection of mental health, law enforcement, and societal perceptions within the Kenyan context. Police officers in Nairobi County face a multitude of stressors, including high levels of crime, resource constraints, and the often-overlooked emotional toll of their duties.

Nyamwamu et al. (2012) highlight that counseling programs are essential for enhancing job wellness among police officers. Their research found that 40 percent of regular police officers and 60 percent of special duty officers showed improved job performance following participation in these counseling programs. Notably, the programs led to better response times to emergencies, increased work morale, higher levels of customer satisfaction, and reduced social stress, all of which are signs of improved mental well-being. Looking at previous studies, the concentration has been centered on performance and less on efficacy, peer support networks on promoting a culture of openness an acceptance, accessibility and confidentiality and also long-term effects of comprehensive mental health initiatives. The interpersonal relationship and morale at the workplace is also gap which points to the mental wellbeing of an individual within his or her environment, (Mirriam, 2020). It is against this background that this study purposed to assess the effectiveness of counseling programs in enhancing mental health well-being of police officers in Nairobi City County.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Police officers are routinely exposed to high-stress situations, which can lead to significant mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Demou et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020). Despite the availability of counseling services, there is a notable deficiencies in counseling programs to enhance mental health among police officers and engage with the available resources. This reluctance is often rooted in cultural stigma, perceptions of vulnerability, and a belief that seeking help may be perceived as a weakness (Zhu et al., 2020; Marsden et al., 2020). Effectiveness of counseling programs is often questioned, with many officers expressing skepticism about the benefits of such interventions (Zhu et al., 2020; Marsden et al., 2020). This skepticism can be compounded by a lack of awareness regarding the role of counseling in promoting mental well-being and the potential positive outcomes associated with engaging in these services (Demou et al., 2020; Muthondeki & Musita, 2021). Understanding these perceptions is essential for developing targeted interventions that can improve the mental health landscape within police forces, particularly in Nairobi County, where the need for effective mental health support is increasingly recognized (Demou et al., 2020; Muthondeki & Musita, 2021). Prioritizing the mental health well-being of police officers in Kenya is paramount to ensuring their resilience, effectiveness, and sustained wellness. Through an assessment of the current guidance and counseling programs' effectiveness in addressing mental and health well-being of police officers in Nairobi City County, this research endeavors to provide valuable insights that could advance the field of mental health support in law enforcement environments. By implementing effective interventions and programs rooted in the conclusions drawn from this study, opportunities emerge to cultivate a healthier and more nurturing work atmosphere for police officers, thereby benefiting both the individuals themselves and the communities they serve.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

To assess the effectiveness of current counseling programs in addressing mental health issues among police officers in selected police stations, Nairobi County Kenya.

### **1.4 Justification of the study**

Police officers are often exposed to high-stress situations, traumatic events, and demanding work environments, which can have a significant impact on their mental health and well-being. It is essential to understand how counseling programs can support and enhance the mental health wellness of police officers to ensure they receive adequate support and care. By exploring the effectiveness of current programs, this study can provide valuable insights and recommendations to support the mental health of police officers and law enforcement systems. By understanding how police officers perceive counseling services, this study can provide insights into how these programs can be improved and tailored to better meet the mental health needs of this specific population. It can help in identifying gaps in current services and developing more effective interventions to support the mental well-being of police officers. *Providing Data-Driven Recommendations:* Through this study, data can be collected to support evidence-based recommendations for improving counseling practices for police officers. These recommendations can be used by law enforcement agencies, mental health professionals, and policymakers to implement targeted interventions that enhance the mental health wellness of police officers. *Contributing to the Body of Knowledge:* The findings of this study can add valuable insights to the literature and potentially inform future research and practice in this area.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study has demonstrated the positive impact of developing more effective counseling programs

designed to address the unique challenges faced by police officers. The findings show that targeted interventions can reduce stress, improve coping mechanisms, and promote a healthier work environment. This has resulted in increased overall well-being and job satisfaction within the law enforcement sector. The study's results have significant implications for policy development. By highlighting the critical need for effective counseling services, the research provides a strong foundation for influencing policy changes within police departments. These changes are expected to enhance the implementation of supportive measures and resources, promoting a culture of well-being and resilience within the law enforcement community. Additionally, this study contributes valuable insights to the broader research landscape on mental health wellness among police officers. The data collected enriches the understanding of mental health support in high-stress professions and provides a basis for future studies, interventions, and policy initiatives aimed at improving mental health and well-being among police officers and similar high-stress professions.

### **1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The study assessed the effectiveness of counseling programs in enhancing mental health among police officers in Nairobi City County. Conducted across selected police departments, the research evaluated the current landscape of counseling programs. The data collection phase utilized a range of methodologies, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to gather comprehensive insights and opinions from active police officers. The study focused on evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of existing counseling initiatives and their impact on officers' mental well-being. Demographic variables such as age, rank, tenure, and departmental affiliation were factored into the analysis, providing a nuanced understanding of diverse perspectives. The findings aim to generate recommendations to strengthen mental health support strategies within police forces, potentially leading to enhanced well-being outcomes for law enforcement personnel. Practical constraints, such as time and resource limitations, led to a selective inclusion of police departments and a smaller sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the findings across different departments or settings. The study's scope was intentionally narrowed to capture the unique experiences and challenges faced by police officers, rather than examining the broader mental health landscape or the qualifications of counselors. Additionally, the study did not explore other mental health interventions offered to officers, focusing solely on counseling services. This targeted approach enabled a deeper examination of the specific support mechanisms available within the law enforcement context. Challenges in gathering candid feedback due to potential reluctance among officers were addressed by creating a supportive environment for open dialogue, ensuring participant confidentiality. However, the study did not evaluate the qualifications or training of the counselors, concentrating instead on officers' perceptions.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

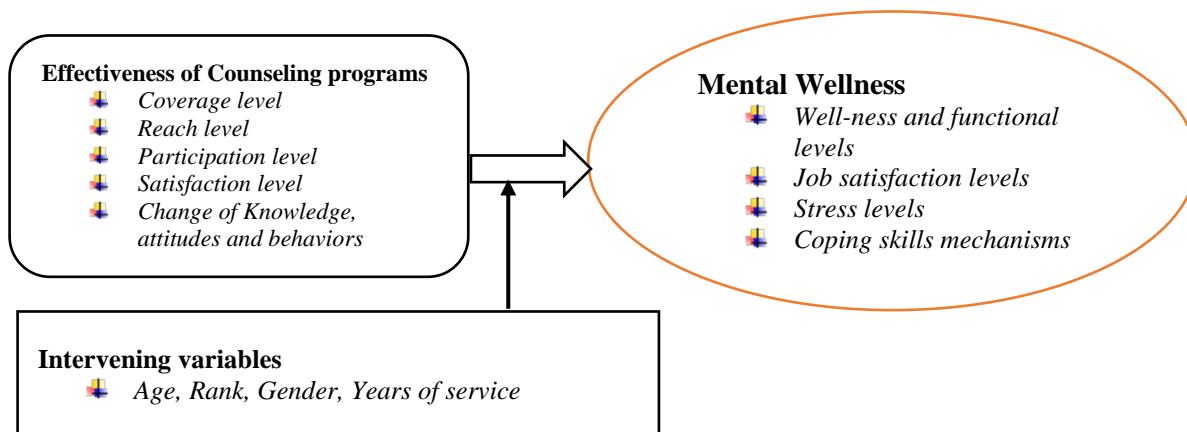
One significant limitation was the perceived stigma and reluctance among police officers to openly discuss mental health issues. The prevailing police culture, which values strength, resilience, and self-reliance, often acts as a barrier to seeking help. Officers may fear being judged as weak or incompetent if they disclose mental health struggles. Although efforts were made to establish trust and create a non-judgmental environment for open discussion, the stigma associated with mental health may still have influenced the depth and candor of the responses. Another limitation involved response bias and social desirability bias. Participants might have felt compelled to provide socially acceptable answers or minimize the extent of mental health issues within their ranks. Despite the use of anonymous and confidential data collection methods, such as sealed questionnaires, to mitigate these biases, the

possibility of skewed responses remains a concern. Emphasizing the importance of accurate reporting helped, but it is likely that some degree of bias persisted. Ethical considerations, including concerns related to confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent, were carefully addressed, given the sensitivity of mental health issues among police officers. The study adhered to ethical principles and guidelines to protect participants' rights and ensure data security.

### 1.8 The Conceptual framework

*Independent variable*

*Dependent variable*



**Figure1: The conceptual framework**  
 Source: Own conceptualization, 2024

### 1.9 Literature review

In this section, theoretical and empirical reviews of literature are presented

#### 1.9.1 Theoretical review

This study was guided by the **Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)**, developed by Albert Bandura (1986). This is a comprehensive framework that examines how personal, behavioral, and environmental factors interact reciprocally to shape human behavior. This theory is particularly relevant for understanding the effectiveness of Counseling programs in enhancing police officers' mental health wellness. SCT provides a valuable lens through which to explore how attitudes toward counseling are formed and influenced within the law enforcement community by focusing on the interplay between cognitive processes, observational learning, and environmental factors.

A central strength of SCT is its emphasis on **observational learning**, where individuals acquire new behaviors and attitudes by observing others (Bandura, 2016). This aspect of SCT is particularly pertinent in the context of police officers seeking counseling for mental wellness. Observing positive role

models—such as peers or supervisors—who have engaged with counseling services and experienced beneficial outcomes can foster a more favorable perception of seeking help. Recent research supports this notion, indicating that when officers witness their colleagues benefiting from mental health services, they are more likely to view counseling positively and be motivated to seek similar support (Vogt, 2022). This process of observational learning is crucial for normalizing mental health support within police departments and encouraging officers to engage with available resources.

Another significant aspect of SCT is the concept of **self-efficacy**, which pertains to an individual's confidence in their ability to perform specific tasks or handle challenges (Bandura, 2016). Enhancing self-efficacy is particularly relevant for police officers involved in counseling programs. Interventions designed to boost self-efficacy, such as training on stress management and coping strategies, can lead to increased engagement with counseling services and improved mental health outcomes. Research has shown that when officers feel more confident in their ability to manage stress and mental health challenges, they are more likely to actively participate in counseling programs and benefit from them (Falkenström et al., 2023). By focusing on improving self-efficacy through targeted interventions, counseling programs can become more effective in addressing the mental health needs of police officers.

SCT also highlights the role of **organizational support** in shaping attitudes toward counseling. Bandura (2016) posits that supportive organizational environments can significantly influence individual behaviors and attitudes. In the context of police departments, creating a culture that emphasizes mental health support and provides accessible counseling resources can help reduce stigma and encourage officers to seek help. Research supports this view, demonstrating that departments with supportive mental health policies and an open dialogue about mental wellness positively impact officers' willingness to engage with counseling services (Nix, 2019). This finding underscores the importance of fostering an organizational culture that normalizes mental health support and encourages officers to seek the assistance they need and therefore a need for understanding the effectiveness of counseling programs in supporting mental health and well-being among police officers.

## 1.9.2 Empirical review

### *Effectiveness of current counseling programs in addressing mental health*

The effectiveness of counseling programs in addressing mental health issues among police officers has been the focus of several significant studies, each contributing to our understanding of how to best support this unique population. Greenberg et al. (2018) conducted an extensive evaluation of a mental health support program implemented within a police organization. Their research revealed both strengths and limitations of the program, offering critical insights into its impact on officers' mental wellness. While the program showed promise in providing support, the study also highlighted areas needing improvement, particularly in tailoring interventions to meet officers' specific needs. This evaluation underscores the necessity of continuous refinement and adaptation of mental health programs to ensure they effectively address the concerns of police officers.

In line with these findings, Garcia et al. (2015) assessed a brief counseling intervention designed for police officers facing job-related stress. Their pre-post intervention study demonstrated significant improvements in stress levels, job satisfaction, and overall mental well-being among participants. This study highlights the potential benefits of targeted, short-term interventions in alleviating mental health

challenges within this population. However, the study's relatively small sample size poses a limitation, suggesting that further research with larger cohorts is needed to validate these results and ensure their generalizability across diverse police settings.

Johnson et al. (2020) extended this research by evaluating a mindfulness-based counseling program's long-term impact on police officers. Their study included assessments of stress, burnout, and job performance before and after the intervention, with follow-up over six months. The sustained improvements in mental health and job-related outcomes reported in this study contribute valuable insights into the efficacy of holistic counseling approaches. The findings suggest that integrating mindfulness techniques into counseling programs can offer lasting benefits for police officers' mental wellness, emphasizing the value of incorporating such practices into broader mental health strategies. Despite these advances, a notable gap remains in the literature regarding the specific components of mental health programs that are most effective for addressing police officers' unique challenges. While existing studies primarily focus on evaluating established programs, there is a need for more granular analyses of program components and their impact on mental health outcomes. Research that explores innovative intervention models tailored to the distinct needs of police officers could significantly enhance the design of future programs. By identifying and testing new approaches, researchers can contribute to the development of more effective mental health support tailored to this high-stress profession.

Expanding on this, recent studies have begun to address the effectiveness of different mental health interventions for police officers. For instance, Miller et al. (2022) explored the use of virtual reality therapy as a novel approach to stress reduction among officers. Their findings indicated that immersive, technology-based interventions could offer an engaging and effective alternative to traditional counseling methods. Similarly, Adams et al. (2023) examined the role of peer support networks in complementing formal counseling programs. Their research highlighted that peer support can enhance the effectiveness of professional counseling by providing additional layers of understanding and relatability.

Moreover, the research by Robinson and Lee (2024) highlights the importance of integrating culturally competent practices into counseling programs for police officers. Their study found that programs incorporating cultural sensitivity and understanding of the police culture were more effective in engaging officers and addressing their specific mental health needs. This underscores the necessity of designing interventions that not only address general mental health issues but also consider the cultural and organizational context of law enforcement.

While the literature provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of various counseling programs for police officers, it also reveals critical gaps that need addressing. My study aims to build on these findings by examining specific components of mental health interventions and exploring innovative approaches tailored to the unique needs of police officers. By integrating these insights, the study will contribute to the development of more effective and culturally sensitive mental health support programs within law enforcement agencies. The effectiveness of current counseling programs for police officers has been scrutinized in various studies. Greenberg et al. (2018) evaluated a mental health support program and highlighted its strengths and limitations in addressing officers' mental health concerns. However, their study revealed gaps in evaluating the long-term effectiveness of these programs and understanding which



components are most effective. Jones et al. (2018) found high satisfaction with counseling services among officers but noted challenges in maintaining long-term mental health improvements, underscoring the need for longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of such programs.

### 1.10 Research Design and methods

This study employed a mixed-method approach and a descriptive research design. The quantitative aspect of the study involved surveys to assess the effectiveness of counseling programs on addressing mental health and well-being of police officers in Nairobi City County. The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews with a subset of police officers to delve into understanding the effectiveness of counseling programs on addressing mental health and well-being of police officers in Nairobi City County. These interviews provided rich, detailed insights that complemented the quantitative findings and offered a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. The study was undertaken in Nairobi City County, positioned at coordinates 1.2921° S, 36.8219° E. Nestled on the banks of the Nairobi River and elevated at 1,795 meters above sea level, Nairobi stands as the epicenter of Kenya's political, economic, and cultural landscape. With a population exceeding 4 million, the city is renowned for its rapid pace of life, modern infrastructure, and vibrant entertainment options (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The city's dynamic and high-pressure environment significantly impacts its residents, including law enforcement officers. The unique challenges of urban policing in Nairobi characterized by high population density, diverse socio-economic conditions, and complex social issues can exacerbate job-related stress and affect officers' mental well-being. This context is crucial for understanding how these environmental factors influence the efficacy of mental health support systems and the overall mental wellness of police officers.

The target population for this research consists of 500 police officers from selected police stations within Nairobi County. This focus allows for an in-depth examination of the specific dynamics within Nairobi's police force. Officers selected for the study must have served at these selected stations for a minimum of 10 years. This requirement ensures that participants have substantial experience and can provide detailed insights into the counseling services available, the effectiveness of these services, and the barriers encountered. The emphasis on officers with long-term service is intended to capture a comprehensive perspective on the evolution and impact of mental health support programs over time. By concentrating on officers with significant tenure, the study aims to understand how their extended exposure to the pressures of police work influences their engagement with counseling services and their overall mental well-being. This targeted approach will provide valuable data on the effectiveness of counseling programs on addressing mental health and well-being of police officers in Nairobi City County and highlight areas for improvement in the support structures available to law enforcement personnel in Nairobi.

For this study, the target population was 138 police officers from selected stations within Nairobi County. To put this into perspective, this number represents approximately 10 percent of the total number of police officers in Nairobi County. To determine the appropriate sample size from this target population, I utilized the formula proposed by Smith (2003), which is particularly effective for estimating proportions in survey research.

The formula used is:

$$N = Z^2 * p * (1-p) / E^2$$

Where:

**Z** is the Z-value corresponding to the desired confidence level. For a 95% confidence level, Z is 1.96.

**p** is the estimated proportion of the population. In this case, p is 0.10 (10%).

**E** is the margin of error. For this study, E is 0.05 (5%).

Using these parameters, the calculation for the sample size proceeds as follows:

Rounding this result to a practical number, the required sample size is approximately **138**.

This calculation ensures that the sample size is adequate to provide reliable estimates of the proportion of police officers' attitudes, effectiveness of counseling programs, and barriers to accessing mental health services, given the specified margin of error and confidence level. The sample matrix for this study consists of 112 police officers drawn evenly from ten different police stations across Nairobi County, with each station contributing over 10 officers. The stations included in the study are represented by A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J and K. This uniform distribution ensures that each station is proportionately represented, providing a balanced and comprehensive view of attitudes towards counseling services related to mental wellness. By sampling equally from diverse locations, the study aims to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives, enhancing the reliability of the findings and allowing for meaningful analysis of the effectiveness and barriers to these services across different precincts.

**Table 1: Sample matrix for selected police stations in Nairobi City County**

Police station	Sample size	Percentage	Target pop.
A	12	24%	50
B	10	20%	50
C	11	22%	50
D	11	22%	50
E	12	24%	50
F	10	20%	50
G	13	26%	50
H	11	22%	50
J	10	20%	50
K	12	24%	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>500</b>

Source: Field data, 2024

***Tools of Data Collection***

In this study, structured questionnaires were administered to police officers to assess the effectiveness of counseling programs on addressing mental health and well-being of police officers in Nairobi City County. The questionnaires included close-ended questions with Likert scales to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with statements. Open-ended questions were also included to gather qualitative insights. Organizing focus group targeted a group of 5 to 6 respondents per group to help

share views on their opinions on the effectiveness of the counseling programs. Analyzing existing documents, such as internal reports, policies, and procedures related to mental health wellness programs for police officers, provided additional insights into the effectiveness of current programs. This method complemented data collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Several statistical techniques were employed to analyze and interpret the collected data effectively. One commonly used method in data analysis was descriptive statistics, which involved summarizing and presenting the basic characteristics of the data. This included calculating measures such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and frequency distributions to provide a clear overview of the data set. Another essential technique was inferential statistics, which allowed researchers to make inferences and draw conclusions about the population based on sample data. This involved regression analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and correlation analysis to explore relationships between variables and test for significant differences. Qualitative data analysis techniques, including thematic analysis and content analysis, were employed to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the textual data collected from interviews, focus groups, or open-ended survey responses. This approach offered valuable insights into the subjective experiences and perceptions of police officers concerning mental health support programs and counseling services. In addition to these statistical methods, researchers also considered using data visualization techniques, such as charts, graphs, and tables, to present findings in a visually appealing and easily interpretable format. All ethical and approval procedures for this study were followed.

## 1.11 Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation

### *Questionnaire and Focus group return rate*

This represents the number of questionnaires that were duly filled and returned. It is a percentage of all the questionnaires administered and returned. It also gives the total number of informants who actually participated in the study against the selected number of informants for the study Morton et al (2012). Mugenda (2003) states that a response rate above 50% is sufficient for analysis and reporting, with rates of 60% considered good and rates of 70% or higher deemed excellent. Therefore, a response rate of 63.2% was deemed appropriate for the study.

The questionnaire response rate is tabulated in table 2 below

**Table 2: Questionnaire Response Rate**

Response	Number of informants	Percentage
Filled Questionnaires	112	81.2
Un-returned Questionnaire	26	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2024**

According to table 2, the results show that the total number of informants targeted were 138 to fill the questionnaire, out of which 112 duly filled the questionnaire and returned. This represented 81.2% which according to literature is a good response rate. There were 8 targeted focus groups. However, the returned filled focus group questionnaire was 5, making a response rate of 62.5%

### **Gender of the respondents**

The study included a balanced representation of both male and female police officers though duly filled response showed some slight difference in numbers. This diversity allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how perceptions of counseling on mental health may vary across genders within the police force. The findings are tabulated in table 3.

**Table 3 Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	63	56
Female	49	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field data, 2024**

The study on the perception of counseling on mental wellness among police officers in Nairobi shows that 56% of the participants were male, while 44% were female. This gender distribution illustrates the representation of male and understanding their experiences regarding mental wellness and counseling services.

### **Age of the respondents**

Participants were categorized into specific age brackets, allowing us to analyze trends and perceptions regarding mental health support based on age. This categorization helps identify whether younger or older officers have differing views on the effectiveness of counseling services offered. The findings are

tabulated in table 4.

**Table 4: Age of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Below 35 years	38	34
36-40	51	46
41-45	22	20
46-50	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2024**

The age distribution of participants revealed that 34% were below 35 years, 46% were aged 36-40 years, 20% were between 41-45 years, and 1% were aged 46-50 years. The age distribution is of great importance since it gives a picture of who is likely to participate in community projects.

### Rank of Participants

The officers surveyed held various ranks within the police force, ranging from constables to higher-ranking officials. This stratification provides insight into how rank may influence perceptions of mental health resources and the willingness to seek help. Table 5 represents the distribution of police officers' ranks at work

**Table 5: Participant Rank**

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Constable	7	6.25
Corporal	18	16.07
Sergeant	39	34.82
Senior sergeant	25	22.32
Inspector	11	9.82
Chief Inspector	12	10.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2024**

The results show that a majority of the officers (34.82% and 22.32%) were of middle ranks as sergeants and senior sergeants respectively, 7 (6.25%) constables, 18 (16.07%) corporals, 11 (9.82%) inspectors, 12(10.71%) a chief inspector. This points to most of the respondents were officers were of middle ranks as sergeants.

**Table 6: Effectiveness in addressing mental health**

Effectiveness rate in addressing mental issues	Frequency	percentage
1- Poor	1	0.90%
2-Bad	8	7.10%

3-Average	67	59.80%
4- Good	8	7.10%
5- Excellent	28	25.00%

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

59.80% respondents felt that it was average with 25% feeling the rate was excellent. This gives a halfway response of counseling in addressing mental health within the police. The effectiveness of current mental health support programs in reducing stigma associated with seeking counseling was also other areas that the respondents and the results indicated the table 7 below. Also perceptions of the accessibility and confidentiality of counseling services within the department was sort from the respondents to understand the tenets of counseling particularly with confidentiality which plays a greater role for officers to accept to open up their issues. The results are tabulated in table 8.

**Table 7: Effectiveness of current mental support programs**

Efficacy of current mental health support program	Frequency	percentage
1-Poor	5	4.46%
2-Bad	2	1.79%
3-Average	24	21.43%
4-Good	77	68.75%
5-Excellent	4	3.57%

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

From the table, 68.75% felt there was good effectiveness of current health support while 21.43% feel it is average. A point of concern is the 4.46% who feel it is poor in dealing with stigma within the department. These results lead to another reason as to why respondents felt that some of the services being offered are of no value. The study sort to find out the perceptions of the accessibility and confidentiality of counseling services within the department. The responses are captured in table 8 below which has 67.0% of respondents who issues of confidentiality and confidence has been well dealt with 13.4% thinks its average while 8.9% still shy away from the service because either they feel they are not being treated with confidentiality of the service is hard to come by.

**Table 8: perception of accessibility and confidentiality of counseling**

Accessibility and confidentiality of G&C	Frequency	percentage
1-poor	10	8.90%
2-Bad	6	5.40%
3-Average	15	13.40%
4-Good	75	67.00%
5-Excellent	6	5.40%

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

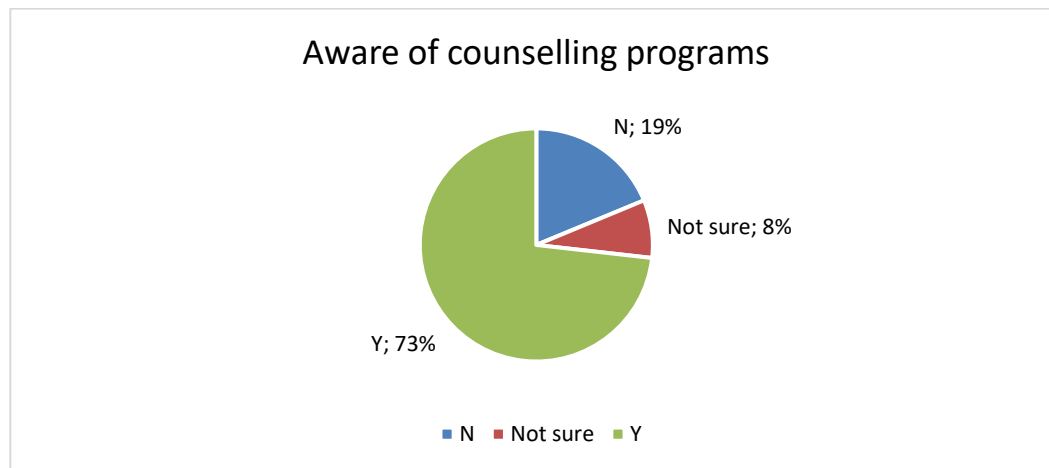
On the issue of current counseling programs that can be improved to better address the mental health needs of police officers, the data highlights several key areas for improvement in the current governance and community (G&C) framework, with confidentiality standing out as the most pressing issue. With 56 mentions, it represents a substantial 50% of the feedback, indicating a strong concern among stakeholders

about the protection of private information. This suggests that many individuals feel their privacy is not adequately safeguarded, which could deter them from seeking necessary support services. Furthermore, aspects such as accessibility (4 – 3.57%) and timely support (1 – 0.89%) also reflect a need for enhanced service delivery mechanisms that allow for easier reach and navigation of available resources. The low counts in community outreach, police support services, and other categories emphasize a potential gap in communication and engagement with the community to foster trust and encourage wider utilization of services. To underscore the importance of confidentiality, a whopping 110 (98%) answered yes when asked if they are ready to engage with counseling services if they were offered in a more confidential or anonymous setting. In addition to confidentiality, training and education (7 – 6.25%) and stigma reduction (2 – 1.79%) emerge as critical areas for development. These aspects underscore the necessity for comprehensive awareness programs aimed at reducing negative perceptions surrounding mental health and victim support services. Increased training for staff and volunteers can further empower them to provide better service while fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding. Moreover, establishing peer support programs (1 – 0.89%) and intervention programs (1 – 0.89%) may help create supportive networks that individuals can rely on during crises.

Data on ways improved mental health support programs could contribute to a more positive work environment for police officers also showed different outcomes. The data illustrates various ways in which improved mental health can enhance positive work environments, revealing significant benefits across multiple areas. A substantial portion of respondents, 16.07%, highlighted that prioritizing mental health leads to greater job satisfaction, while an impressive 14.29% noted its contribution to enhanced job performance. This suggests that when organizations focus on their employees' mental well-being, those employees tend to feel more fulfilled and effective in their roles. Additionally, the reduction of stigma associated with mental health issues emerged as a key finding, with 9.82% of responses indicating its importance. By fostering an open and supportive culture, organizations can encourage employees to seek help, which is vital for maintaining a healthy workplace environment. Supportive leadership was also identified as a critical factor by 4.46% of respondents, highlighting the need for a culture of awareness where employees feel safe discussing mental health concerns.

Moreover, improved mental health initiatives can lead to reduced stress (2.68%) and a decrease in burnout (4.46%), directly influencing employee well-being and productivity. With 1.79% of respondents noting increased productivity as a benefit, it becomes clear that healthier employees contribute to higher efficiency within their teams. The presence of coping skills and resilience programs, emphasized by 0.89%, reflects a proactive approach to mental well-being, equipping employees to handle challenges effectively. Family-oriented programs were mentioned by 4.46% of respondents, indicating the impact of personal lives on professional success. This aligns with the emphasis on education and awareness initiatives regarding mental health, which garnered multiple responses (8.04%). Such training is essential for informing employees about available resources and support systems, underscoring the multifaceted impact of improved mental health on creating positive work environments. Organizations that invest in these initiatives not only promote employee well-being but also strategically position themselves for greater organizational success, resulting in enhanced job performance, satisfaction, and a more supportive workplace culture.

Figure 2 represent police officers' awareness of enough counselling programs availability in their respective police departments.



**Figure 2: Awareness of counseling services in a police station**  
 Source: *Field data, 2024*

Regarding officers' awareness of available resources for mental health issues within their police stations, 73% of respondents indicated they felt adequately informed about such support, reflecting a substantial level of familiarity among officers concerning accessible mental health resources. However, it concerning that 19% selected "No," indicating insufficient information, while 8% expressed uncertainty about the availability of these resources. This data reveals potential gaps in communication or outreach efforts within departments, highlighting the need for ongoing initiatives to enhance awareness and education regarding mental health counseling services. The critical role of counseling services for police officers, focusing on several key variables being measured: emotional support, coping strategies, mental well-being, and job performance. These services aim to provide officers with essential emotional assistance to process traumatic experiences, equip them with effective coping mechanisms tailored to unique stressors, and promote overall mental health, thereby enhancing their job performance. Additionally, improvements in teamwork, communication, and departmental trust are acknowledged as potential benefits that can emerge from implementing such support systems. The results of the sample are captured in table 9 below.

**Table 9: Responses on counseling contribution to mental health wellness**

G&C help the police officer in dealing with Trauma and stress	Frequency	percentage
Coping strategies	5	4.46%
Coping strategies, Improve job performance	19	16.96%
Emotional support, Coping strategies, Improve job performance,	5	4.46%
Emotional support, Mental wellbeing, Coping strategies	3	2.68%
Emotional support, Mental wellbeing, Coping strategies,		
Improve job performance,	33	29.47%
Emotional support, Mental wellbeing, Improve job performance,	10	8.93%
Improve job performance	8	7.14%
Mental wellbeing	2	1.79%
Mental wellbeing, Coping strategies	2	1.79%
Mental wellbeing, Improve job performance	25	22.32%



Source: *Field data, 2024*

Based on the results, Emotional support, Mental wellbeing, Coping strategies, Improve job performance combination had the highest count as most of the respondents 33 (29.47%) believed counseling offers those kind of solution followed by a combination of mental wellbeing and improve job performance with 25 (22.32%) count.

**Perception on current counseling programs**

The table 10 below contains the descriptive statics for the perception of current counseling services within the police. The tabulated data includes the composite mean with grand mean and composite standard deviation.

**Table 10: Response analysis for current counseling services**

	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Sd	Decision
<b>1. The current counseling programs adequately address the mental wellness needs of police officers</b>	58	27	15	1	11	4.071429	1.257155	Low perception
	51.80%	24.10%	13.40%	0.90%	9.80%			
<b>2. I feel comfortable seeking counseling support through the current programs.</b>	34	55	8	9	6	3.910714	1.086805	Low perception
	30.36%	49.11%	7.14%	8.04%	5.36%			
<b>3. The current counseling services provide timely and accessible support for mental wellness concerns.</b>	56	31	13	7	5	4.125	1.124061	High perception
	50.00%	27.70%	11.60%	6.20%	4.50%			
<b>4. I believe that the current programs contribute positively to the overall mental well-being of police officers.</b>	74	19	10	4	5	4.366071	1.082169	High perception
	66.07%	16.96%	8.93%	3.57%	4.46%			
<b>5. The counseling programs effectively address the unique stressors and challenges faced by police officers.</b>	61	21	17	5	8	4.089286	1.234296	High perception
	54.50%	18.80%	15.20%	4.50%	7.10%			
<b>6. I have confidence in the confidentiality and privacy measures of the current counseling services.</b>	29	53	11	11	8	3.75	1.158595	Low perception
	25.90%	47.30%	9.80%	9.80%	7.10%			
<b>7. The current programs have been successful in reducing stress and promoting mental wellness among police officers.</b>	55	27	16	10	4	4.0625	1.149079	Low perception
	49.10%	24.10%	14.30%	8.90%	3.60%			
<b>8. The current counseling services offer diverse and</b>	53	34	9	9	7	4.044643	1.203511	Low perception
	47.30%	30.40%	8.00%	8.00%	6.20%			

relevant resources to support mental wellness within the police force.								
9. I am satisfied with the quality of counseling services available through the current programs.	56	28	19	3	6	4.116071	1.121016	High perception
	50.00%	25.00%	17.00%	2.70%	5.40%			
10. The current programs effectively promote a supportive and stigma-free environment for seeking mental wellness support.	68	18	14	5	7	4.205357	1.201638	High perception
	60.70%	16.10%	12.50%	4.50%	6.20%			

N = 112, 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree  
 Grand mean = 40.74107/10 = **4.074107**

Source: *Field data, 2024*

The data results provide a nuanced understanding of police officers' perceptions of the current counseling programs. The analysis of mean scores and standard deviations for each survey item reveals areas of both strength and concern within the programs. Overall, the grand mean score of 4.074107 serves as a benchmark for evaluating perceptions. Scores above this value indicate a generally high perception of the programs, while those below suggest areas needing improvement. The item regarding whether the counseling programs adequately address the mental wellness needs of police officers received a mean score of 4.071429. Although this is close to the grand mean, it falls just short, indicating a lower perception. The high standard deviation of 1.257155 reflects considerable variability among respondents, suggesting differing views on how well the programs meet mental wellness needs.

Comfort in seeking support through the current programs had a mean score of 3.910714, which is below the grand mean. This lower score, coupled with a standard deviation of 1.086805, underscores that many respondents feel less comfortable with the support systems in place. This finding highlights a critical area for improvement, suggesting that enhancing the accessibility and supportiveness of the programs could address these concerns. In contrast, the item concerning the timeliness and accessibility of counseling services achieved a mean score of 4.125. This score is above the grand mean, indicating a high perception of how promptly and accessibly services are delivered. The standard deviation of 1.124061, while still showing some variability, supports the overall positive feedback on the services' effectiveness in addressing mental wellness concerns. The belief that the programs positively contribute to overall mental well-being received the highest mean score of 4.366071. This score, significantly above the grand mean, reflects a strong positive perception of the programs' impact on mental well-being. The relatively low standard deviation of 1.082169 further supports the consensus on the beneficial effects of the programs.

However, confidence in the confidentiality and privacy measures of the counseling services had a mean score of 3.75, indicating a lower perception in this area. The standard deviation of 1.158595 reveals that trust in privacy measures varies considerably among respondents. This suggests that improvements in confidentiality and privacy could enhance overall confidence in the programs. The perception that the programs successfully reduce stress and promote mental wellness received a mean score of 4.0625,

which is slightly below the grand mean. This score reflects a generally positive view but also indicates room for improvement. The standard deviation of 1.149079 further emphasizes variability in perceptions of the programs' effectiveness in reducing stress. Similarly, the item on whether the programs offer diverse and relevant resources to support mental wellness had a mean score of 4.044643, just below the grand mean. This suggests that while there is some positive feedback, there is also significant room for enhancement in the diversity and relevance of the resources provided. The standard deviation of 1.203511 reinforces the diverse opinions on this aspect of the programs. Satisfaction with the quality of counseling services, with a mean score of 4.116071, reflects a high level of contentment among respondents. This score is above the grand mean, indicating that overall quality is perceived positively. The standard deviation of 1.121016 shows some variability in satisfaction levels but generally supports the positive feedback. Finally, the item about the programs effectively promoting a supportive and stigma-free environment had the highest mean score of 4.205357. This suggests a strong positive perception of the programs' role in fostering a supportive environment for mental wellness. The standard deviation of 1.201638 indicates some variation in responses but supports the overall positive view.

In summary, the survey results indicate that while some aspects of the counseling programs are viewed positively, there are critical areas that require attention. The variability in responses across different items highlights the need for targeted improvements to enhance overall satisfaction and effectiveness. Addressing the concerns related to confidentiality, comfort in seeking support, and the diversity of resources could significantly improve the perception and impact of the programs.

**Differences of factors impacting perception for current guiding and counseling services**

**Table 11: ANOVA for current guiding and counseling services**

Question	Sum of Squares	df	F-Statistic	P-Value
q1	8.253987	3	1.770199	0.157249
q2	14.78318	3	4.579882	0.004667
q3	1.859999	3	0.482061	0.695446
q4	11.24076	3	3.387732	0.020778
q5	8.630245	3	1.928164	0.129395
q8	16.80544	3	4.190089	0.007592
q9	6.599605	3	1.781835	0.155014
q10	14.03565	3	3.438126	0.019502

**Source: Field data, 2024**

The analysis of the counseling programs reveals several key insights into their effectiveness and how different factors impact perceptions. The examination of the statement "The current counseling programs adequately address the mental wellness needs of police officers" indicates a P-Value of 0.157, which is higher than the standard significance threshold of 0.05. This suggests that there are no significant differences in how various factors affect the perception of whether these programs adequately address mental wellness needs. Conversely, the statement "I feel comfortable seeking counseling support through the current programs" shows a statistically significant P-Value of 0.0047. This result implies that the comfort level in seeking support is notably influenced by different factors, emphasizing the need for improved accessibility and reassurance in the programs.

The question "The current counseling services provide timely and accessible support for mental wellness concerns" yielded a P-Value of 0.695, indicating that the perceptions of timeliness and accessibility are not significantly affected by the factors analyzed. Similarly, the statement "I believe that the current programs contribute positively to the overall mental well-being of police officers" had a P-Value of 0.0208, signifying a statistically significant result. This suggests that perceptions of the programs' contribution to mental well-being differ significantly based on the factors, highlighting the importance of understanding which aspects influence these positive contributions.

On the other hand, the statement "The counseling programs effectively address the unique stressors and challenges faced by police officers" had a P-Value of 0.129, which is above the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that perceptions of how well the programs address specific stressors are not significantly influenced by the factors under consideration. The analysis also highlights the statement "The current programs have been successful in reducing stress and promoting mental wellness among police officers," although data was not provided for this question in the results.

Regarding the statement "The current counseling services offer diverse and relevant resources to support mental wellness within the police force," there was no specific data available. However, the statement "I am satisfied with the quality of counseling services available through the current programs" showed a significant P-Value of 0.0076. This suggests that perceptions of service quality vary significantly across different factors, indicating that improvements in service quality could be perceived differently based on these factors.

Lastly, the statement "The current programs effectively promote a supportive and stigma-free environment for seeking mental wellness support" also revealed a significant P-Value of 0.0195. This result suggests that perceptions of how well programs promote a supportive and stigma-free environment are significantly affected by the factors considered. Overall, the findings underscore areas where the programs can be improved, particularly in enhancing comfort and satisfaction with the support provided, and ensuring that the programs effectively address unique stressors and contribute positively to mental well-being.

### ***Focus group discussion on current counseling programs***

Focus group discussion evaluating current counseling programs for police officers, respondents emphasized the critical role these services play in promoting wellness. Many participants acknowledged that counseling is essential for addressing the mental health challenges unique to police work, such as stress from high-risk situations, exposure to traumatic events, and the emotional burden of the job. They noted that these programs are designed to offer valuable support and coping strategies, which can significantly enhance overall well-being and job performance. Despite recognizing the importance of these programs, there were varied opinions on their effectiveness. Some respondents felt that while the programs are well-intentioned, they may not fully address the specific needs and challenges faced by police officers. There was a sense that current services might lack elements that are tailored to the complexities of police work, potentially limiting their impact. This feedback suggests a need for more customized and responsive programs that are closely aligned with the unique stressors and demands of the police profession. Participants also discussed essential elements that should be included in effective counseling programs. They advocated for programs that ensure confidentiality, are easily accessible, and are specifically tailored to the police context. The focus group highlighted the importance of ongoing

evaluation to identify areas for improvement. Strengthening collaboration between police officers, counseling professionals, and social workers was seen as vital for creating a more integrated support system. By enhancing program components and fostering stronger partnerships, the effectiveness of mental wellness support for law enforcement personnel could be significantly improved.

### 1.12 Conclusion

The success of counseling programs was generally dependent of the level of the service utilization by the force. The study concludes that perceptions of counseling programs vary significantly across age groups, with younger officers generally having a more positive view compared to older officers. While overall effectiveness is acknowledged, specific aspects such as confidentiality and financial barriers require targeted improvements. Understanding these variations is essential for developing effective and inclusive mental health programs.

### 1.13 Recommendations – Action/Policy Change

- **Mental Health Program Developers:**
  - **Customization for Age Groups:** Develop and tailor mental health programs to meet the specific needs of different age groups within the police force. Ensure that these programs include elements that resonate with both younger and older officers to address their unique challenges and preferences.
  - **Enhancing Confidentiality:** Implement robust confidentiality and privacy measures within counseling services to build and maintain trust among officers. This will encourage more officers to seek help without fear of their personal issues being exposed.
- **Financial Support Entities:**
  - **Subsidized Counseling Options:** Develop financial support mechanisms such as subsidized counseling options or sliding scale fees. This will help alleviate financial barriers, particularly for younger officers who may face financial constraints in accessing mental health services.
- **Law Enforcement Agencies:**
  - **Round-the-Clock Services:** Ensure that mental health support services are available 24/7 to accommodate the demanding and unpredictable schedules of police officers. This will improve accessibility and convenience for those needing support.
  - **Family-Oriented Programs:** Develop and implement family-oriented mental health programs to address the broader impact of mental health on personal and family dynamics. These programs can provide support not only to officers but also to their families.
- **Counselors and Mental Health Professionals:**
  - **Cultural Competence Training:** Receive and integrate cultural competence training to effectively address personal and cultural beliefs that may hinder engagement with mental health services. This will help tailor counseling approaches to the diverse backgrounds of officers.

- **Awareness and Education Programs:** Create and participate in awareness and education programs that challenge personal and cultural barriers to mental health. This will foster greater engagement and reduce stigma associated with seeking help.
- **Policymakers and Advocates:**
  - **Reducing Procedural Barriers:** Work towards streamlining access to mental health services by reducing procedural barriers. Advocate for increased funding and resources to ensure that services are adequately supported and accessible.
  - **Ongoing Education and Training:** Implement ongoing education and training programs to enhance mental health literacy among officers and reduce stigma. This will support the overall effectiveness of mental health initiatives and encourage proactive engagement with available services.

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