

Building Resilience through Integrated Knowledge Transfer in Public Safety Organizations

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Resilience is an individual's ability to cope effectively with extreme stress and persevere through adversity. This concept is especially important for fire and police organization employees who are exposed to operational stressors (e.g., potentially psychologically traumatic events) as well as organizational stressors (e.g., shift work, leadership, relationships with colleagues, overtime) that are unique to public safety organizations. Traditionally most of the work on resilience had focused at the level of the individual, such as creating programming for individual workers; however, the impact of the interactions with family and organization (including chronic/cumulative workplace stressors) has largely been ignored. This study adopts a novel operational definition of resilience, conceptualized as an eco-system that includes **three pillars of resilience - the individual, their family, and their workplace** - as its framework. Each of these pillars influences one another reciprocally and has a major impact on an individual's ability to respond to traumatic exposures. In addition, a holistic multi-level perspective of resilience, including biological, psychological, social, sex, gender, and environmental factors, is recognized in this study.

The immediate aim of the project is to promote resilience in fire and police organizations to foster long-term post-traumatic growth and offer protection to employees from the risk of developing post-traumatic, operational and organizational stress injuries. The long-term goal over the course of this three-year project is to **develop and implement user-informed psychoeducational materials that will improve resilience and mental health knowledge**, which in turn will reduce the risk of developing post-traumatic stress injuries and/or mental health disorders that plague public safety employees.

Using integrated knowledge transfer [**iKT**], this innovative study takes a co-creation approach to research where participating organizations are viewed as partners and knowledge users. This collaborative approach enables the research direction to be streamlined, filling in potential gaps that are already recognized by each police and fire organization. It includes the co-creation of research questions, methodologies, data collection, analysis, and interpretation with full participation of knowledge users through the entire process so as to provide research and deliverables tailored to the wants and needs of the participating public safety organization.

This study consists of several sub-projects meant to supplement and enhance existing efforts to improve workplace health through the exploration of organizational system interactions. Each sub-project can include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Examination of existing organizational policy and procedures regarding psychological health and safety systems. This includes a review of policies, standard operating procedures, communication strategies (e.g., newsletters, websites, social media accounts), and available programming and resources, including community networks.
2. Provision of subject matter expertise of psychosocial factors specific to police and fire employees to complement the psychological health and safety management systems being implemented.
3. Evaluation of change related to implementation of psychological safety system through analysis of individual and organizational level data. Collection and analysis of quantitative data may include measures that have been previously developed and validated (e.g., for coping, resilience, present mental health status, and employee engagement). Qualitative data may include data from individual interviews with administrators, union leaders, and support staff. Analysis will be based on cases (i.e., the individual organization) to identify organization specific factors related to workplace health.

4. Data from each organization will be combined into a large data set and compared using artificial intelligence (i.e., machine learning) to determine a broad view of enabling factors for a psychologically safe workplace.
5. The development of psychoeducational content specifically for police and fire employees, through collaboration with experts in public safety education and mental health, and knowledge users, will deliver new tools and strategies that support the needs of employees and organizations more comprehensively than previous programs that place the onus of psychological health on the individual.
6. The research team will work with these agencies to deliver training and help implement organizational changes.

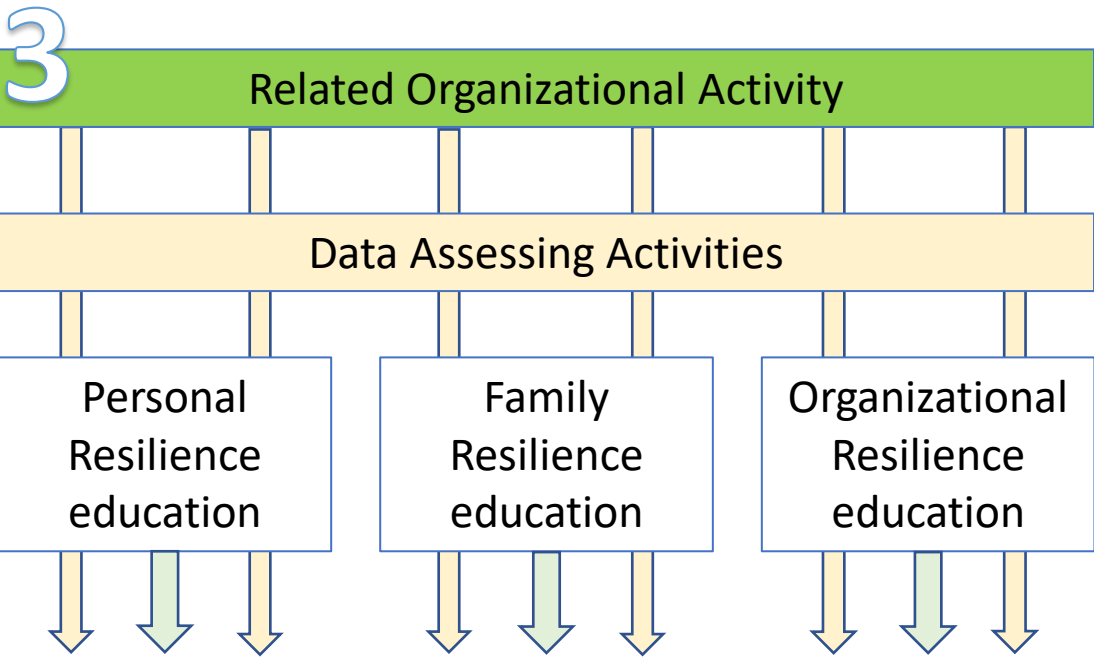
The data analysis from each organization and aggregated data sets will determine what is working in these police and fire organizations to improve mental health outcomes and what is not. The results will inform the development of training and psychoeducation to build resilience and a psychologically safe environment targeted to each participating organization, and will provide an inter-organizational view of factors related to mental health outcomes. Our research will determine the impact of a psychoeducational intervention on mental health and well-being of the individual, and downstream on the family and organization. It is also expected that our research will be used to develop a model of organizational culture that will support mental health and reduce psychological stress in public safety organizations.

1 Introduction of a Psychological Standard
Supported with training on personal, family and organizational resilience will reduce short-term/long-term disability



2 Implementation of a Psychological Standard
Represents a common goal for organization, with many touch-points over a long period.
- assist w/measuring impact
- created PHSMS summary: Police-specific additions to [Paramedic Psych Standard](#)

4 Case Study Findings & Recommendations to Organization
• Summary of impact of interventions on employee health and engagement



5 Artificial Intelligence

Multiple case studies

E.g. Reduce short-term or long-term disability



Examples of data for cross-reference and pre-post evaluation

- Critical incident exposure
- Absenteeism
- Health benefit usage
- Health & wellness policy
- Mental health survey results
- Employee engagement results
- Peer support program usage

Organization "Health Check"

Impact of Training/Psychoeducation