Behind blue doors: Cisgender female police officers' experiences of psychological stress and
mental health

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe how female police officers experience psychological stress, what elements or factors impacted their experiences of psychological stress, and why psychological stress was experienced within their employment as officers. It explored the impacts of psychological stress on overall mental health. Critical realist theory informed the multiple case study design that revealed generative mechanisms capable of producing the participants' lived experiences. The data were collected from semi-structured interviews with 14 cis-gender female police officers employed within 10 Canadian policing organizations across 11 diverse geographical locations. Additional data sources (grey literature, newspaper articles, a documentary) were analyzed as well. Thematic analysis was completed through which five themes were revealed: moral toll, procedural injustice, mental health impacts, mental health support/promotion, and mentorship, interpersonal relationships, and shared experience. A critical realist framework highlighting anti-oppressive and feminist concepts was used to analyze the data related to the identified themes. The results suggested that cis-gendered female police officers' psychological stress experiences occurred due to complex and compounding interactions between various system levels (macro, meso, and micro), each containing intricate entities of its own. Patriarchal ideology and continued measures intended to preserve male domination over females were the mechanisms that generated much of the women's stress and mental health problems. Theoretical contributions include the application and elaboration of anti-oppressive concepts to a new setting, a police context. This inclusion helps provide a solid rationale for integrating both anti-oppressive and gendered lenses when designing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programming to ensure that the needs of policewomen are accurately represented and included. Such inclusion may help mitigate oppressive aspects and practices and prevent harm from occurring where possible. The findings also suggest the need for policing organizations to assess and interview potential therapist candidates to ensure they possess such knowledge and provide members with a list of suitable options. Future studies could include a more racially and sexually diverse group of participants, both on active duty and retired, to explore their experiences of psychological stress and mental health impacts.

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Dedication

To Chad, my biggest fan.

To my Ella, I love you to the moon and back. Know that you are capable of amazing things.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study explored cisgender female police officers' experiences of psychological stress connected with their employment as police officers. More specifically, cisgender female officers from Canadian policing organizations were selected as part of a multiple case study designed to describe critical factors related to their psychological stress experiences.

Research Problem

Canadian police officers are at higher risk of suffering psychological stress, mental health problems, and mental illness than the general population due to stressors they face in their role as police officers (Bastarache, 2020; Bullock & Garland, 2018; Carleton et al., 2018; Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health [CAMH,] 2018). Numerous studies of police officers revealed that psychological stress and mental illness as experienced by officers are commonplace and widespread (Ahlgren, 2017; Bell & Eski, 2016; Bullock & Garland, 2018; Carleton et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; Geronazzo-Alman et al., 2017). Officers experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than the general public (Bullock & Garland, 2018; Carleton et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018), as well as higher rates of substance use disorders (Cidambi, 2018). Additionally, depression and anxiety were found to be equally as debilitating and impactful on officers as PTSD (Bell & Eski, 2016; Bishopp, Leeper Piquero, Worrall, & Piquero, 2018; Bullock & Garland, 2018; CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities & Sciences, Films Media Group, & New York City Police Foundation, 2006; Kleider, Parrot, & King, 2010; Magnus, 2017; Marin, 2012), and depression and anxiety were found to be more prevalent in officers than PTSD. An overview has been provided in Appendix A.

Recurring thoughts of death are also a common symptom for officers experiencing depression (Regehr & Glancy, 2014). Given this, it is not surprising that suicidal ideation, planning, and attempts are also of grave concern regarding police officers. According to Cidambi (2018), police officers' rate of suicide were four times higher than that of firefighters. Compared with the general population, Canadian police officers had higher rates of suicidal ideation and planning, and a similar level of attempts (Carleton et al., 2018), in addition to the elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. According to the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health [CAMH] (2020), when depression is left untreated, officers are at greater risk for anxiety disorders, PTSD, addictions, and suicidal behaviours. Cidambi (2018) noted that untreated

depression, anxiety, and PTSD could increase substance use and addictions in officers as a coping mechanism.

Untreated psychological stress has been connected to increased mental health issues and mental illness in officers (Bishopp et al., 2018; Burke, 2017; CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006; Kleider et al., 2010; McCreary, Fong, & Groll, 2017; Noblet, Rodwell, Allisey, 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017) as well as officer misconduct with the public, including excessive use of force and assault (Bishopp et al., 2018). Implications for the public when they are the subject of police encounters may include anger, discrimination, and misuse and excessive use of force on the part of the officer (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018).

Additionally, sick time and long-term absentee rates are likely to increase as a result of psychological stress (Bishopp et al., 2018; Magnus, 2017; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2010; Violanti et al., 2017). Personal relationships and families of police officers are also impacted, as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance abuse touch every facet of an individual's life (CAMH, 2020; Films for the Humanities et al.2006). It is clear that the above outcomes are costly to officers, their families, the police organizations and governments they serve, and the general public.

Currently, the policies in place regarding police officers' mental health are insufficient, resulting in high levels of psychological stress, mental health problems, and mental illness among officers. The sources of stress must be identified to create effective and impactful policies and programs that support police officer mental health. Research has distinguished two substantial sources of psychological stress for police officers: operational or environmental stress (after this referred to as operational stress) and organizational stress (Burke, 2017; Violanti et al., 2017 as cited in Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018). However, these studies fail to take gender into account in their consideration of the differences and similarities in the officer experiences of each type of stress and the impacts, and perceptions of the same.

CAMH (2018) expressly states there is a need to "better understand the unique aspects of police mental health" (p. 9). Female police officers' experiences of psychological stressors and the impact on mental health are often overlooked in consideration of the unique aspects of police mental health. According to Police Resources in Canada (2020), the number of sworn police officers who are female has risen substantially since 1986. In 2019, females accounted for 22% of sworn members in Canada (Connor, Carrière, Amey, Marcellus, & Suavé, 2020). Given that

the number of women serving as police officers has continued to increase, their experiences must be considered. Researchers have noted the limitations of strictly relying on quantitative data and have articulated the importance of qualitative studies in providing a deepened understanding of experience (Bishopp et al., 2018; Brown, Baldwin, Dierenfeldt, & McCain, 2020; Carleton et al., 2019; Magnus, 2017). Current literature relating to policewomen falls into several categories including gendered institutions, gender identity and gender roles and differences in policing; sexual harassment and discrimination; gender, career progression, promotion, and retention; policewomen, pregnancy, and parenting; policewomen and organizational change; and psychological health and police women. Few studies have pointedly explored how female police officers experience psychological stressors, and none have explored the broader connection of female police officers' experience of psychological stress to coping strategies, help-seeking behaviour, and overall mental health.

Purpose of the Study

As noted above, this multiple case study explored cisgender female police officers' experiences of psychological stress in connection with their employment as police officers. Its purpose was to identify and describe how female police officers experience psychological stress; to identify and describe what elements or factors impacted their experiences of psychological stress; to identify and describe why psychological stress was experienced within their employment as officers; and explored the impacts of psychological stress on overall mental health. A qualitative multiple case study allowed for an enriched understanding of the how, why, and what of the experience of psychological stressors by female police officers (Stake, 2006).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Mental health issues significantly impact police officers, and mental illness is more prevalent in police officers than the general population (CAMH, 2018). Currently, the policies in place regarding police officers' mental health are insufficient, resulting in high levels of psychological stress, mental health problems, and mental illness among officers. CAMH (2018) expressly states there is a need to "better understand the unique aspects of police mental health" (p. 9). Female police officers' experiences of psychological stressors and the impact on mental health are often overlooked in considering the unique aspects of police mental health. According to Conor, Carriére, Amey, Marcellus, and Sauvé (2020), the number of sworn police officers who are female has risen substantially since 1986. In 2019, females accounted for 22% of sworn members in Canada. Given that the number of women serving as police officers has continued to increase, their experiences must be considered. Before turning to the literature on female police officers, it is essential to review the literature on overall police mental health to understand where the topic of female officers' experiences of psychological stress is positioned within it.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research strategy for this study. I then provide an overview of police mental health, followed by a discussion of police officers' experiences of stress, including operational and organizational stress as identified in the literature. From there, I apply a critical lens to organizational culture and mental health using theories of gender, masculinity, and oppression. Following this, I review and critique the recent and current literature relating to women in policing as categorized within the following: gendered institutions, gender identity, and gender roles in policing; sexual harassment and discriminatory experiences of policewomen; gender, career progression, promotion, and retention; policewomen and parenting; organizational change and policewomen; and psychological health and policewomen. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the existing research on female police officers and a highlighting of future areas for research in consideration of the gaps. I then examine the theory of planned behaviour, anti-oppressive theory and feminist theory, and briefly discuss how each of these can be applied within a policing context to explore female police officers' experiences and change within various levels (organizational/structural, cultural, and individual).

Research Strategy

To obtain research related to police mental health, psychological stress, and policewomen, the researcher utilized the University of Manitoba library and conducted manual searches of numerous databases, including Web of Science, PsychInfo, PsychArticles, ProQuest PAIS Index, EBSCOhost, Ageline, Google Scholar, and CINAHL. The researcher also manually reviewed references within articles. Search items and keywords included but were not limited to *police, law enforcement, police officer*, police personnel, psychological distress, psychological stress, mental stress, mental distress, mental health, operational stress, organizational stress, occupational stress, female, women, gender*, and female attitudes.* All searches were of peer-reviewed journals. Book chapters and grey literature were also included in the literature review to provide additional information. The date ranges began with a search of the last ten years, moving to five years. All articles and book chapters were separated by topics including police mental health, psychological stress experiences, organizational culture, and research about female officers. The researcher accessed Statistics Canada for the most recent information regarding policing demographics in Canada.

Police Officers and Mental Health: A Distinct Population

Numerous studies of police officers elucidated that psychological stress and mental illness as experienced within police settings, as a result of their job, are commonplace and widespread (Ahlgren, 2017; Bell & Eski, 2016; Bullock & Garland, 2018; Carleton et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; Geronazzo-Alman et al., 2017). Police officers were found to be at higher risk of experiencing depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder than the general public (Bullock & Garland, 2018; Carleton et al., 2018a; CAMH, 2018).

A comparison study of the prevalence of mental health problems and illnesses frequently cited by police officers from two Canadian urban police agencies compared to the general population has found significant differences. Table 2.1 details information as combined from six sources, five of which are noted in CAMH (2018). Suicidal ideation and behaviour are also a concern. Canadian police officers were found to have similar levels of attempts compared to the general population; however, higher rates of suicidal ideation and planning were present among officers (CAMH, 2018). In another recent study, Cidambi (2019) found that police officers were three times more likely to have substance use disorders than their civilian counterparts.

Table 2.1

Comparison of the Prevalence Rates of Mental Health among Police Officers and the General Population

Type of Mental Health Issue or Illness Reported	Police Officers	General Population (one year period)
Moderate to severe stress	52% (11% extremely severe)	unknown
Moderate to severe depression	88% (12% extremely severe)	7.9%-8.6%
Moderate to severe anxiety	87% (13% extremely severe)	12%
Those in the clinical diagnostic range for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	29%	Approximately 9%

Note. Compiled from data in CAMH (2018) and Regehr & Glancy (2014).

It should be noted that officers are at elevated risk of experiencing co-occurring disorders, which include a combination of depression and anxiety disorders, PTSD, substance use disorders and addictions (CAMH, 2019). Bishopp and colleagues (2018) indicated that each of these conditions, whether occurring independently or concurrently, can negatively impact an officer's performance. The authors cited the occurrence of negative affective responses, which include burnout, depression, and anger. They identified two potential outcomes of the same increased misuse and abuse of force and increased sick time. Not only can work performance be negatively affected, but an officer's daily life outside of the job and interpersonal relationships may also be at risk (CAMH, 2019; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006).

CAMH (2018) notes two primary sources of police psychological stressors: operational stressors and organizational stressors (which includes organizational culture). When left untreated, operational stress can lead to operational stress injuries (OSI), including psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, he relays that officers' psychological stress is associated more with organizational stressors and the organizational culture than operational stressors.

Police Officers' Experiences of Stress

Police officers serve as an essential element in the safety of communities. The expectation is that they run towards danger to serve to protect all others so that those they are protecting may flee and ensure safety. They are equipped with deadly weapons, and they are tasked with responding to and managing any harm that may occur in the fulfillment of their duties. Officers often have a split second to make life and death decisions which will be scrutinized for months, even years to come, not only by police personnel and other government agencies but by the general public as well (Bishopp, Leeper Piquero, Worrall, & Piquero, 2018; Violanti et al., 2017). While these types of dangerous situations are rare in policing (Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020), these situations still pose risks to officers in the course of their everyday duties, and these risks can present as stressors which must be considered (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017). Additionally, it is imperative to explore the impacts of non-traumatic workplace stressors on officers, organizations, and the work carried out with the public as such stressors can have a direct impact on mental health, which in turn, can impact each of these areas (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017).

As such, identifying the various types of stress experienced by police officers is a critical factor in ensuring the psychological fitness of officers, especially since stress has been linked to numerous adverse outcomes (Bikos, 2020; Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017). Not only does the experience of psychological stress by officers negatively impact these individual officers and police organizations (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Violanti et al., 2017), the general public can be impacted as well (Bikos, 2020; Bishopp et al., 2018; Noblet et al., 2009). The implications of such impacts must serve to inform and guide the development of strategies and interventions to help mitigate the adverse effects of psychological stressors (Bikos, 2020; Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017).

Stress

Policing has been identified as a stressful occupation (Bikos, 2020; Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017), with officers

having reported experiencing high rates of stress (CAMH, 2018). While most of the authors mentioned in this paper did not concretely define stress, Violanti and colleagues (2017) defined the same as follows:

> Stress is a general rubric used to describe a physiological change or impact brought about by environmental stimuli and psychological mediation (Semner et al., 2004; Levi, 2004; McEwan, 1998; Webster, 2014). Stress is a biosocial process, where environmental stimuli place an undue strain on an organism (Theorell, 2004). (p. 199)

As defined above, stress is a physical and psychological response to external stimuli. As such, it is imperative to understand the various external stressors that impact police officers' physical and psychological health and well-being, and the impact on the work they carry out.

Sources of Stress in Policing

Research has distinguished two substantial stress sources for police officers: environmental stress (Bishopp et al., 2018) or operational stress and organizational stress (Bikos, 2020; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017). McCreary and colleagues (2017) differ in that, at times, they refer to operational stressors as non-traumatic workplace stressors. Violanti and associates (2017) also differ in that they indicate stress arising from "job content" instead of operational stressors. While they refer to operational stressors later in their article, no definition or connection to job content is provided. Shane (2020) contextualized stressors and stated that operational stressors arise from job content, and organizational stressors arise from job context. For this proposal, stress sources due to traumatic and non-traumatic workplace stress will be referred to as operational stressors, and environmental stress(ors) will be referred to as operational stress(ors).

Operational Stress. According to Shane (2020), "operational stressors, are the aspects of police work inherent in the occupation" (p. 2). CAMH (2018) stated further, "[o]perational stress is commonly understood to mean the stress and trauma that police officers encounter in the course of their work" (p. 3). Examples include experiencing murder scenes, domestic and sexual assaults, fatal collision scenes, and suicides and violence (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017).

Additionally, operational stressors include environmental uncertainty and risk of being injured while working; shift work (McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020; Violanti, 2017); sleep deprivation (Bishopp et al., 2018); court time; outside employment (Shane, 2020); public

scrutiny (Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017); overtime; and occupation-related health issues (McCreary et al., 2017; Violanti, 2017). Furthermore, McCreary and associates (2017) identify the following as operational stressors: working alone at night; excessive workload; time pressures; lack of autonomy in job performance; role conflict; role ambiguity; hostile or disrespectful workplace; work-family/relationship conflict; limitations to one's social life; self-sacrifice; fatigue; eating healthy at work; finding time to stay in good physical condition; work-related duties on days off including court-time; and workplace organizational constraints such as inadequate resources to complete the expected duties.

It should be noted that shift work (Bishopp et al., 2018; Noblet et al., 2009) and work schedules, bureaucratic processes (Bishopp et al., 2108; Shane, 2020), supervisors (Bishopp et al., 2018), promotional processes (Bishopp et al., 2018), role ambiguity and role conflict (Shane, 2020), lack of autonomy in job performance, inadequate resources to complete the job (Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2016), excessive workload, and work-family/relationship conflict (Noblet et al., 2009; Violanti et al., 2016) have been classified as organizational stressors in other literature. Additionally, CAMH (2018) calls attention to the unique operational stressors that may be experienced by remote and Indigenous policing agencies. Factors to be considered include isolation; extreme environmental conditions; long travel distances; a lack of back-up; a lack of health and social services; working in communities with high rates of crime, victimization, poverty, substance use and family disruptions; a lack of acceptance into the community; and broader role expectations.

Organizational Stress. Violanti and colleagues (2016) provided the following broad definition of organizational stressors: "the characteristics of the organization and behavior of the people that produce stress" (p. 643). A similar definition is provided by Shane (2020). Other organizational stressors identified include items such as ineffectual leadership (CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009); difficult and challenging promotions and tenure procedures (CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020); staffing shortages (CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017) inadequate resources (CAMH, 2018) which McCreary and colleagues (2017) classified as an operational stressor; and organizational culture (CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017).

While McCreary and colleagues (2017) noted each of these stressors, they suggested further organizational stressors. These included feelings of having to prove oneself; the feeling

that different rules applied to different people (also noted by Shane, 2020); excessive administrative duties (which CAMH (2018) cites as operational stress); constant changes in policy/legislation (also noted as an operational stressor); bureaucratic red tape; too much computer work; lack of training on new equipment; perceived pressure to volunteer free time; dealing with supervisors; unequal sharing of work responsibilities; stigma from coworkers if sick or injured; over-emphasis of the negatives by leaders; internal investigations; dealing with the court system; and job performance accountability. Shane (2020) also cited the following organizational stressors: being "second-guessed" in fieldwork, punishment for "minor" infractions, lack of reward for excellence in the work completed, fear of being disarmed, and low morale. Another organizational stressor cited was scrutiny from supervisors and management (Bishopp et al., 2018). As noted above, Bishopp and colleagues (2018), Noblet and colleagues (2009), Shane (2020), and Violanti and colleagues (2017) recognized other sources of organizational stress which have been categorized as operational stressors in the other literature, also mentioned above.

Organizational Culture. Moral relativism and hegemony are pervasive in the police organizational culture. The very essence of the job is maintaining law and order by using laws created based on the dominant group's moral code. This moral relativism goes beyond maintaining law and order in society and can be found within police organizations' structures and cultures (McCartney & Parent, 2015) in that ethical judgements and actions are at times, based on an unwritten norms. Police cultures tend to adopt the unwritten norm of silence (i.e., not disclosing internal police problems or personal mental health issues) in fear of reprisal and retaliation (i.e., bullying, harassment, discrimination, career-related issues) (Bell & Eski, 2016; Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; Films for Humanities & Sciences et al., 2006; Magnus, 2017; Marin, 2012). This norm of silence serves to work against written policies.

The hiring of those individuals they believe will subscribe to the moral code created within the organization serves to bolster the culture (McCartney & Parent, 2015). Recruits are selected for the job based on attributes that most closely align with the organizational culture's values, attitudes, and beliefs (CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006; Paoline, 2003).

Once hired and on the job, "[i]t is through socialization that police recruits are inducted into the police subculture, enabling the subculture to maintain its norms and to continue its

existence", and these norms are embraced (Volti, 2008 in McCartney & Parent, 2015, p. 127; Paoline, 2003). Bikos (2020) noted that these norms embrace masculinity, resulting in the promotion of the ideal masculine norm. Officers who do not embrace and perform the masculine norms of their peers and superiors face stigmatization, discrimination, harassment, and bullying, which CAMH stated, "can lead to anxiety, depression, PTSD and other mental health problems in police" (p. 4), as well as career-related issues.

Organizational stressors have been found to have a more significant negative impact on police officers than operational stressors, the organizational culture in particular (Bikos, 2020; Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2016). Moreover, Bishopp and colleagues (2018) found that organizational stressors are intensified by and can exacerbate operational stressors. Each operational and organizational stressor has the potential to cause significant challenges for officers, whether occurring individually or cumulatively. As such, the impact of such stress must be surveyed.

Impacts of Stress

Numerous impacts of stress have been identified, including a deterioration of mental (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2016) and physical health (Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2016); and work-related effects (Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2016). Mental health-related impacts included: emotional exhaustion (Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017), psychological distress (McCreary et al., 2017) and strain; psychosomatic symptoms; hypervigilance (Violanti et al., 2016); increased feelings of irritability (Shane, 2020) and anger (Bishopp et al., 2018; Shane, 2020); negative emotions including frustration (Bishopp et al., 2018); cynicism (Bishopp et al., 2018; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020); anxiety (CAMH, 2018; Noblet et al., 2009); depression (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet, 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2016); post-traumatic stress disorder (CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Violanti et al., 2016); and suicidal behaviours (CAMH, 2018;).

Alcohol and drug use (Cidambi, 2019; Shane, 2020), and substance use disorders (Cidambi, 2019; CAMH, 2018; Violanti et al., 2016) were also noted. CAMH (2018) found that mental health issues and mental illness, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD, are experienced at higher rates than the general public. Also elucidated were negative impacts on

cognitive functioning, including learning, processing information (McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020), working memory (Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020), and reaction time (Shane, 2020).

The following physical health impacts were cited: metabolic syndrome; cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors, subclinical CVD, and CVD; increased cortisol; other unspecified chronic diseases; mortality; and unspecified injuries (Violanti et al., 2016). Also noted are sleep-related issues including sleep deprivation (Shane, 2020), sleepiness (Violanti, 2016), fatigue, sleep disturbances (McCreary et al., 2017; Violanti et al., 2016); decreased sleep duration and quality, and sleep disorders (Violanti, 2016).

Studies have also recognized multiple work-related effects of stress. These included the following: reduced employee engagement (McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009), organizational commitment (Noblet et al., 2009; Violanti et al., 2016), motivation (McCreary et al., 2017), job satisfaction (McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020) and job performance (McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020); job stagnation (Bishopp et al., 2018); burnout (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2016) which can lead to job turnover (Bishopp et al., 2018); and increased sick time and leaves of absence (Bishopp et al., 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet et al., 2009; Violanti et al., 2016) which place increased demands and strain on existing staff (McCreary et al., 2017; Shane, 2020). Noblet and colleagues (2009) identified an increased risk to community interactions and public safety resulting from stress in that officers may experience increased anger, of which include the consequence of increased use of force in the completion of their duties (Bishopp et al., 2018; Noblet et al., 2009; Violanti et al., 2016) as well as misuse and abuse of force (Bishopp et al., 2018). The use of excessive force could lead to a negative public perception of police (Shane 2020). Shane (2020) also noted distrust of those in leadership and supervisory roles as an additional impact of police stress.

Opportunities for Future Research Relating to Psychological Stress

Studies unearthed numerous gaps in the literature were identified, and opportunities for future research. McCreary and colleagues (2017) discussed the importance of obtaining data from a representative sample of the police population. They noted that the officers who responded to the study might possess different characteristics than those who did not respond. As such, additional studies should be carried out to ensure and confirm the generalizability of their

findings across multiple police settings. Additionally, these authors discussed the need to create norms for stressors relating to various policing sectors, such as undercover positions.

Noblet and associates (2009) commented on the need for more objective measures that do not rely solely on self-report measures. They suggested the development and use of objective measures, which could potentially corroborate self-report measures. Additionally, they suggested incorporating a broader scope and examining multiple police organizations and incorporating longitudinal research studies in "identifying the breadth of attitudes and behaviors that are influenced by the job characteristics" and organizational factors within a policing environment (p. 626). Violanti and associates (2016) also call for additional longitudinal research, explicitly exploring the long-term effects of the stress in policing on health. Additionally, they highlight the need for future etiological studies to assess possible factors that lead to increased risk.

CAMH (2018) discussed the importance of research involving the development of standardized indicators for monitoring and evaluating police officer stress, mental health, and any initiatives implemented that address the same. The experience of stress amongst police officers working in smaller policing organizations (Bishopp et al., 2018), remote and Northern communities (CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017), and Indigenous policing agencies (CAMH, 2018) were also noted to be of importance and requiring additional study. The intersectionality of the experience of stress and race should be considered in research studies as well, given that the unique aspects of an individual's race and ethnicity may well influence the experience of stress. Such exploration could extend to members of the LGBTQ* community as well in terms of the unique stressors these officers may experience.

Aside from CAMH (2018), none of the above authors discussed harassment, bullying, or discrimination as a stressor. Stress differences according to gender were only explored by McCreary and colleagues (2017), leaving further room for exploration. Female police officers' experiences of psychological stress and the impact on mental health are often overlooked in consideration of the unique aspects of police mental health (Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; McCreary et al., 2017; Noblet, 2009; Shane, 2020; Violanti et al., 2017). Not only should quantitative research studies be included, but qualitative research studies as well to provide a deeper understanding of these police officers' experiences of stress (Violanti et al., 2016). As such, a qualitative research study exploring cisgender females' experiences of psychological stress will add to the existing body of literature.

Theories: Organizational Culture and Mental Health as Viewed Through a Critical Lens

Gender, Masculinity, and Masculine Police Culture

The American Psychological Association (2018a) defines gender as being the "psychological, social, and cultural experiences and characteristics associated with the social statuses of…boys and men" (p.2). Those who deviate from traditional gender roles and do not display traditional characteristics attributed to their gender may be viewed as inferior and experience oppression. Of the masculine behaviours that are traditionally associated with being male, the words tough, loyal, brave, courageous, protector, macho, powerful, superior, emotional self-control, and authoritarian come to mind.

In 1976, David and Brannon (in Gerdes et al., 2017) were the first to attempt to define traditional masculinity by identifying four general norms associated with masculinity: ""no sissy stuff" (avoidance of femininity), "the big wheel" (men should strive for success/achievement), "the sturdy oak" (men should not show weakness), and "give 'em hell" (men should seek adventure, even if violence is deemed necessary)" (p. 584). Over the years, masculinity ideologies have evolved, and common traits have been found to be important when conforming to the masculine status quo. Some of these traits include emotional self-control or restrictive emotionality, avoidance of femininity, aggression and toughness, physical strength, self-reliance, dominance, and negativity towards those who do not fit the norm (Acker, 1992; Gerdes et al., 2017; Levant, 2017; Barrett et al., 2014 in Magnus, 2018; Yousaf et al., 2014).

The term hypermasculinity has also been used to describe some forms of masculinity and has been defined as "an exaggerated form of masculinity, virility, and physicality" (Zaitchik & Mosher, 1993 in Craig, 2009, p. 366). Any outward display of emotion other than via traditionally masculine traits is viewed as weakness and associated with feminine (Bell & Eski, 2016; Craig, 2009; Gerdes et al., 2017; Levant, 2017; Magnus, 2018; Yousaf et al., 2014). The promotion and acceptance of these traits are amplified within the organizational culture or subculture and structure of the police and places limitations on police officers when it comes to seeking help for mental health issues or mental illness (Bell & Eski, 2016; Bullock & Garland, 2018; CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006; Magnus, 2017; Paoline, 2003; Silvestri, 2017). What it means to be a man is deeply entrenched with what it means to be a police officer, and the "cult of masculinity" (Silvestri, 2017, p. 289) is promoted and perpetuated, remaining unquestioned and difficult to change (Carpenter, 2018). This "cult of

masculinity" can lead to the oppression of those who do not conform to the dominant masculine way.

Masculine police culture. The organizational culture or subculture of police is imbued with masculinity, moral relativism, and hegemony. The fundamental nature of the work of a police officer is maintaining law and order. Police officers do so by upholding laws produced and implemented by the dominant group in society, as informed by the dominant groups' moral code. This moral relativism is extended beyond maintaining law and order in the performance of their duties and can be found within the police agencies' organizational cultures and their structures (McCartney & Parent, 2015). McCartney & Parent (2015) asserted that the subculture is reinforced and preserved by hiring those applicants they believe will support and endorse the moral code created within the organization. While the recruits hired to serve as police officers are typically very ethical, they have also been chosen because they possess traits that most directly align with the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the organizational culture (CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006; Paoline, 2003). These traits tend to be associated with masculinity.

During and after recruit training, "[i]t is through socialization that police recruits are inducted into the police subculture, enabling the subculture to maintain its norms and to continue its existence" (Volti, 2008 in McCartney & Parent, 2015, p. 127) and these norms are supported (Paoline, 2003; Sever, 2008). The dominant group within policing can teach and control not only recruits but how all others within the organization and culture see their world. Expected behaviour for interacting with colleagues is entirely different from interacting with the public (Coleman, personal communication, November 2018; Magnus, personal communication, November 2018). While an officer may offer empathy to a member of the public experiencing mental health issues, the same empathy is not necessarily extended to a colleague experiencing the same issues. Officers who do not embody the masculine traits and meet the status quo are frequently seen as non-conforming, and often face bullying, harassment, and discrimination (Bullock & Garland, 2018; Magnus, 2017) and may be reluctant to seek psychological help (Yousaf et al., 2014).

There is a societal stigma attached to those who experience mental illness (Barnoff, 2017; Bullock & Garland, 2018; Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015). Within police organizations and culture, there is still much stigma associated with any mental health issue or illness (Bell & Eski, 2016;

Bullock & Garland, 2018; CAMH, 2018; Yousaf et al., 2014). Given the above traits are viewed as highly desirable, mental health problems and mental illness can be viewed as feminine traits and internal flaws, representing weakness. Regardless of the origin, those who experience mental illness are deemed as falling outside of the status quo of what is an acceptable ailment and deemed to be of weak character (Bell & Eski, 2016; Bullock & Garland, 2018; CAMH, 2018). The dominant group views the police officer who admits to experiencing mental health issues or mental illness as weak and feminine. He or she faces decreased social acceptance, stereotyping, discrimination, and bullying, which CAMH (2018) stated, "can lead to anxiety, depression, [post-traumatic stress disorder] and other mental health problems in police" (p. 4), as well as career-related issues (Bell & Eski, 2016). Police officers are "trained to appear invulnerable and in control, are less likely to admit they need help and are therefore at greater risk" (Films for the Humanities et al., 2006).

Policing organizations create and implement structural policies that support and maintain the dominant view of mental illness as weakness and uphold the masculine culture. The policies define and determine what is valued most within the organization (Mullaly & West, 2018). Many Canadian police organizations do not have policies that include regular mandatory psychological evaluations to ensure mental fitness beyond the initial recruitment stage. Through the creation or lack of policies, organizations send a message to police officers regarding what is most valued and essential, and what is not (Mullaly & West, 2018). For example, most police organizations mandate regular fitness testing and firearms and subject control re-qualifications. The completion of fitness testing typically occurs once per year, firearms testing two to four times a year, and subject control testing one to two times per year depending on the police organization. These types of testing are associated with physical actions, perceived as masculine, and, therefore, at the organizational level, written into policy to uphold masculine traits and the masculine culture. Mental health and mental fitness are not viewed as a priority at an organizational level, serving to support and reinforce this notion at the cultural and individual levels. Within the past twenty years, there has been a push for resiliency and mental readiness training and education, and this has been framed in a more positive light (Andersen et al., 2015a; Andersen et al., 2015b; Andersen et al., 2016) but again, this is only one component to increase mental health and fitness in officers.

When an officer sustains a physical injury in the line of duty and the injury results in an inability to perform regular duties, such an injury is viewed as an acceptable injury or ailment and accommodation is made. There is an acceptance that recovery from the physical injury is possible, and once attained, the previously injured officer is welcomed back into the line of duty. This acceptance does not apply as easily to OSIs sustained in the line of duty that result in mental health issues or mental illness, and even more so to organizational stress injuries. An officer who admits to experiencing either type of stressor, mental health issues or mental illness such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD, risks various forms of stigma and oppression, including discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice (Bullock & Garland, 2018; Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015) and labelling by their peers and superiors (Bullock & Garland, 2018). Utilizing a medical model, even if recovery is achieved, officers may continue to face stigmatization and be the subject of stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice, the labelling continues (Bullock & Garland, 2018; CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006; Magnus, 2017) and organizational stress increases.

The continuation of the stigma and oppression towards these individuals can lead to the internalized oppression of those who continue to experience or have previously experienced mental health issues or mental illness (Barnoff, 2017; Bell & Eski, 2016). Those officers who do not seek help or acknowledge their mental health and mental fitness as being important may "carry around excess baggage" (Films for the Humanities et al., 2006), internalize the oppression, and experience the above-noted impacts (see impacts of stress).

Additional issues. Other indicators of internalized oppression, negative emotions, and stress include negative affective responses. Johnson and colleagues (2005) note three types of negative affective responses: anger, depression, and burnout, identifying anger as the most prevalent (in Bishopp et al., 2018). Within the police culture, the expression of anger and aggressive behaviour maintain the norms of the masculine culture, and such expressions are often viewed as acceptable ways of dealing with psychological stressors and negative emotions. Bishopp and colleagues (2018) note two origins of anger. The first type, which these authors refer to as trait anger, originates due to personality traits. They identify the second type of anger as state anger and note a single stressful event causes it. Officers regularly encounter stressful events, which can trigger anger (Berking, Meier, & Wupperman, 2010 in Bishopp et al., 2018), whether they be operational stressors or organizational stressors. Research studies have linked officer misconduct

with the public as having been influenced by anger, including excessive use of force and assault (Bishopp et al., 2018).

Bishopp and colleagues' (2018) study, along with numerous others (Bell & Eski, 2016; Bishopp et al., 2018; CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities & Sciences et al., 2006; Magnus, 2017; Marin, 2012), have demonstrated the need for greater attention to interventions to ensure police officers are psychologically balanced. Bell & Eski (2016) expound the view of mental health and mental illness within the police subculture:

> Within policing there is a culture that makes it difficult to discuss psychological injury and mental health with colleagues and managers. To do so is often seen as career destroying. The inherent cynicism associated with policing, lack of empathy, and macho culture further impedes discussion and ultimately access to support services. Austerity has reduced police training. Inadequate training results in officers not understanding mental health issues. There is an argument that personnel policies and systems victimizes officers and fails to understand their needs. (p. 95)

In espousing a critical view of the current structures and systems within police organizations, it is clear that the masculine culture that exists maintains oppressive views towards those who experience mental health issues and mental illness. There must be consideration of the intersection of gender and mental health in the critical analysis of police structures and systems. As such, the design and implementation of strategies and interventions regarding the promotion of mental health and treatment of mental illness should be formed utilizing an anti-oppressive (AOP) lens that focuses on power relations, privilege, and inequality, and the various levels of oppression, including personal, cultural, structural/organizational levels (Mullaly & West, 2018). The utilization of an AOP concepts should include a gendered lens to explore gendered oppression, inequality, power, and privilege within a policing context. Change within police organizations must occur at each of the above levels. Such change cannot occur unless the mechanisms which keep oppression and privilege operating are unearthed, acknowledged, and acted on.

Application of Lukes' Theory of Power to Describe the Policing Institutions

Policing institutions are organized in a quasi-militaristic hierarchal formal structure. The structure can be described by applying Lukes' theory of power (Lukes, 2005 in Dumbrill & Yee, 2019). As found in Dumbrill & Yin Yee (2019), Lukes identifies three dimensions of

power. These include coercion (the first dimension of power), controlling agendas (the second dimension of power), and controlling the way others see the world (the third dimension of power).

Power over others includes power over others in uniform. The dominant group within policing can control the way others within the institutional structure and culture see their world, representing the third dimension of power (Lukes, 2005 in Dumbrill & Ying Yee, 2019). Officers are socialized to conform to a particular set of cultural norms, often not even aware that the third dimension of power is at play. Officers who do not embody these traits are often seen as non-conforming, and often face bullying, harassment, and discrimination (Bullock & Garland, 2018; Magnus, 2017), which are all forms of the first dimension of power, coercion (Lukes, 2005 in Dumbrill & Ying Yee, 2019). The dominant group does this in an attempt to cause a negative outcome for the officers in question, and then to "use this to force others into compliance" (Lukes, 2005 in Dumbrill & Ying Yee, 2019, p. 60). The officers targeted are often marginalized and left feeling powerless (Mullaly & West, 2018), which can lead to an increase in mental health issues and mental illness (Bullock & Garland, 2018).

Structural policies are put into place which support and uphold this view, and they are an example of what Lukes (2005) in Dumbrill & Ying Yee (2019) referred to as the second dimension of power, which is controlling agendas. The upper management controls the agenda, and those who fall outside the rank of upper management are excluded from the decision making and realize this. For example, the majority of policing organizations have policies in place around pregnancy, maternity leave, and family leave as well as promotion. The policies with regards to these areas define and determine what is most important within the organization (Mullaly & West, 2018) and aid in the creation and maintenance of the third dimension of power, controlling the way others see the world (Lukes, 2005 in Dumbrill & Ying Yee, 2019). Many organizations have discriminatory policies relating to these areas, which serve to place police women at a disadvantage. By consciously writing into policy those items which are important and valued, a message is also sent with regards to what is not seen as important or valued (Mullaly & West, 2018). In addition to failing to be viewed as a priority within the police culture, the needs of women in policing are not viewed as a priority at an organizational level either.

Policing in Canada

According to Conor, Robson, and Marcellus (2019), Canadian policing is organized within three levels: municipal, provincial, and federal. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is responsible for the nationwide enforcement of federal laws and policing in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. Numerous provinces contract the RCMP to provide provincial policing except for Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland, each having provincially established police organizations. Similarly, smaller municipalities may also contract out their law enforcement to provincial agencies or the RCMP. As of 2018, there were 141 municipal police agencies in Canada. There were also 36 self-governed First Nations policing services created under federal, provincial, and municipal agreements.

While Northern and rural police agencies face similar stressors to their urban counterparts, additional factors can impact mental health. CAMH (2018) noted the following distinct stressors within these policing agencies: isolation, extreme environmental conditions, long travel distances, lack of back-up, lack of health and social services, communities with high rates of crime and victimization, communities with high rates of poverty, mental illness, problematic substance use, and family discord, and broader role expectations. Canada's history of colonization also presents distinct challenges for police agencies serving Indigenous communities. Before colonization, Indigenous communities employed their own systems of government, including policing and justice. With the invasion of settlers came dominance over Indigenous communities, which often included the use of police in enforcing government policies aimed at assimilation and focused on the destruction of cultural institutions of Indigenous peoples and their worldviews (Milloy & Edwards, 1999). As such, this historical context presents unique stressors for policing within First Nations communities, including continuing distrust of officers. Those communities that are self-governed also experience challenges in that Indigenous officers policing their own communities may have to police family members and close friends (CAMH, 2018), thus straining relationships, and potentially being viewed as betraying Indigenous ways for those of Westerners. While not the focus of this study, policing in rural, remote, and First Nations communities presents future research opportunities.

Relating to sex, Conor and colleagues (2020) noted that the number of sworn police officers within Canadian law enforcement agencies who are female has risen substantially since 1986 when gender data were first collected, at which time female police officers represented 4%

of sworn members. In 2019, females accounted for 22% (15,268) of the total number of sworn members (68,718). Given that the number of women serving as police officers has continued to increase, their experiences must be considered.

Recent and Current Research on Female Police Officers

While the body of literature relating to police officers is generally limited, it is even more so when considering female police officers. A search of relevant literature produced within the last 10 years regarding female police officers revealed studies of policewomen relating to the following: overall experiences (Brown et al., 2020; Cunningham & Ramshaw, 2020; Kringen, 2014); gendered institutions, gender identity and gender roles and differences in policing (Bikos, 2016; Cunningham & Ramshaw, 2020; Haake, 2018; Kingshott, 2013; Kringen, 2014; Kurtz, & Upton, 2018; Morash & Haarr, 2012; Murray, 2021; O'Connor Shelly, Schaefer Morabito, & Tobin-Gurley, 2011; Schuck, 2014; Silvestri, 2018; Silvestri, Tong, & Brown, 2013; Swan, 2016); sexual harassment and discriminatory experiences of police women (Brown, Fleming, Silvestri, Linton, & Gouseti, 2019; Lonsway, Paynich, & Hall, 2013; Murray, 2021); organizational interrelationships between gender and career progression and promotion (Alcocer Guajardo, 2016; Boag-Munroe, 2017; Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011; Shjarback & Todak, 2019); police women, parenting, and police organizations (Langan, Sanders & Agocs, 2017; Schulze, 2010), organizational change and police women (Brown & Silvestri, 2019; Schuck, 2014; Ward & Prenzler, 2016); and stressors and associated health effects for women police officers (Hartley, Mnatsakanova, Burchfiel, & Violanti, 2014). A summary table has been provided in Appendix B. It includes the name(s) of the author(s), the primary focus of the study, engagement (planning, sampling, and recruitment), implementation (data collection), evaluation (data analysis), termination and reporting, and a critique of each study.

Gendered Institutions, Gender Identity, and Gender Roles in Policing

Both women's physical and emotional/psychological ability to successfully complete the tasks associated with policing have been the focus of debate within policing organizations (Brown et al., 2020; Gosset & Williams, 1998; Morash, Kwak, & Haarr, 2006; Seklecki & Paynich, 2007 in Hartley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; Morash & Haarr, 2012; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011; Schuck, 2014), both of which Hartley and colleagues (2014) cited as stress sources for female officers. Kringen (2014) identified "masculine hegemony of policing" as one of the

factors that make female integration into police organizations difficult (p. 370). Brown and colleagues (2020) found that female officers were often identified as lacking the masculine traits associated with the ideal male officer, which led to differences in treatment. The masculine culture of policing, perceiving female officers as weak or deviant, and questioning of female officers' abilities creates an atmosphere in which they are "othered" and continuously need to prove themselves to fit into the culture (Brown et al., 2020; Haake, 2018; Hartley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2014) and gain acceptance (Kingshott, 2013). Bikos (2016) noted that respondents from her study "conformed to the masculine performance expected of them, despite their criticism of it" (p. 13). Further, she found that those policewomen who "aligned" with their male counterparts and did not 'cause trouble' reported greater success in their careers, a finding that was confirmed by Magnus (2017).

A lack of acceptance can result in differential treatment of female officers compared to their male counterparts (Brown et al., 2020; Hartley et al., 2014; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011). This lack of acceptance can manifest in actions such as inadequate back-up and the assignment of "gendered tasks" such as administrative and non-emergency work (Bikos, 2016; Haake, 2018; Hartley et al., 2014; Murray, 2021; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011). The differential treatment has also been found to include particular types of police work, such as those assumed to require emotional labour (Schuck, 2014), including child abuse investigations, domestic abuse investigations, and community relations (Haake, 2018; Hartley et al., 2014). The task assignment based on gendered assumptions and stereotypes provides decreased opportunities for policewomen in acquiring experience and career advancement (Brown & Fielding, 1993; Dick & Jankowicz, 2001 in Hartley et al., 2014; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011), as well as accessing specialty units such as Canine and SWAT (Bikos, 2016; Haake, 2018).

The gendered-work assignment reinforces and perpetuates stereotypes that women are better suited for specific roles, which further extends to the belief that men are ideal candidates for leadership roles (Haake, 2018). In fact, in Haake's qualitative study of gender equality in police leadership, involving 28 Swedish police leaders (male = 17, female = 11), she found that the male respondents often attributed higher rates of men's promotion to leadership roles with individual skill levels. The female respondents attributed that same to the inner workings of the police organization and culture. The above-noted issues may create and result in interpersonal and psychological stress, thus adding to and exacerbating stress female officers' stress levels.

While Haake's study failed to consider limitations of the same, including a lack of generalizability to other contexts and settings, or that the participants may differ in ways unknown as compared to those who chose not to participate, rich, in-depth data were obtained which serves to build on the existing literature of women's experiences in policing.

In Bikos' (2016) qualitative study on the effect of masculine police culture on Canadian policewomen's identities, she found that the respondents (n = 15) experience a "bifurcated consciousness, dividing the world as they actually experience it from the hegemonic masculine view they adopt as officers" (p. 1). The masculine view and organizational cultural values overshadow and diminish the female experience, often leading to conflicted feelings. She found that mothers (single and partnered) experienced difficulties with fulfilling the role of officer and mother, and many of the women experienced conflicting identities of mother and police officer. The study confirmed that the labelling, stigmatization, and devaluing of women within the police culture continues to be perpetuated by masculine police organizations, a finding that was supported by O'Connor Shelley and colleagues (2011). While this study made significant contributions to the existing literature base, particularly in capturing women's voices and experiences, there was a lack of variation within the sample (i.e., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, rank). The lack of variability decreases the generalizability and transferability of the findings to all women police officers and reveals the need for consideration and inclusion of diversity within future research studies.

As noted above, the masculine police structure and subculture are reinforced and preserved by hiring specific applicants management believes will support and endorse the moral code created within the organization. They have also been selected because they possess traits that most directly align with the organizational culture's attitudes, values, and beliefs (CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006; Magnus, 2017; Paoline, 2003). These traits tend to be associated with masculinity.

McCartney and Parent (2015) found that socialization is a significant factor in maintaining and propagating police organizations' moral codes and values. In Kurtz and Upton's (2018) qualitative study of 28 officers from 3 US police departments in the Midwest (as informed by narrative theory and ethnographic research), they identified the importance of police narratives and storytelling in shaping, (re)producing, and preserving hypermasculinity and misogyny within policing institutions. It should be noted that they do not include the entire

study's findings; rather select themes as related to storytelling and gender. Additionally, this study included few women in the sample, which can impact the generalizability of the findings to all officers. While the findings may lack generalizability and transferability to other officers and contexts when considered independently, they are similar to those of other studies, thus adding to their credibility. These findings also build on the growing foundation of narrative inquiry in criminology.

The importance of narratives and discourse was echoed by Haake (2017) in terms of their use in creating positions of inclusion for men and exclusion for women relating to the cultural norms established within policing organizations. As a result, socialization through various means can lead to the oppression within policing organizations (Bell & Eski, 2016; McCartney & Parent, 2015), particularly policewomen (Bikos, 2016). The continuation of this oppression can lead to the internalized oppression of those experiencing the same (Baines, 2017; Bell & Eski, 2016).

Bikos (2016) applied socialization within police culture to policewomen specifically and discussed how it serves to shape "the way policewomen see themselves, the world, and each other" (p. 1). She noted that policewomen could act as both the oppressed and the oppressor resulting from the intersections of both their social locations as women and police officers. As highlighted by Magnus (2017), numerous studies (Agocs et al., 2015; Graue et al., 2016; Spasic et al., 2015; Swan, 2016; Yu, 2015) determined that female officers "give up their feminine characteristics" to navigate the masculine culture (p. 126). Contrary to these findings, Schuck's quantitative study (2014; n=897) revealed that female police officers (n=192) were less likely than their male counterparts (n=672) to embrace hypermasculine attitudes as part of their identity.

In exploring how men and women police officers view and perform gender based on 20 qualitative in-depth interviews (n = 20, female = 10, male = 10), Murray (2021) found that the majority of male officers deny gender-based differences and bias, while female officers identify the same and shared adaptive approaches that they use as a means of defying gender discrimination. Murray highlighted three adaptive strategies employed by female officers including "choosing work roles that allow for care work at home; responding to sexism from subordinates using the paramilitary structure and rules; and creating community with other women and mentoring young female officers" (p. 106). Limitations of this study include a lack

of clarity of whether the males truly fail to perceive inequality based on gender or if they perceive it but fail to acknowledge it. The small sample size and lack of racial diversity also presents as a limitation; however, the study included rich data, presented a new context (Canadian), and identified gaps in the literature. Future studies should continue to explore policing and gender and sexual diversity and racialized experiences of officers within a Canadian context.

In their qualitative study of gender identities of women working as police officers, Morash and Haarr (2012) found that all of the female respondents (n = 21) mixed individually selected feminine and masculine characteristics in describing themselves in connection with their role as officers. Moreover, the vast majority noted that their gender performance within their role as police officers was dependent on the context at any given time, rather than traditional static gender stereotypes and characterizing gender in binary terms of masculinity and femininity. Further to this, their study found similar results to Moore's study (1999) of Israeli policewomen and confirmed that "occupational identity was more salient than their gender identity" (Morash & Haarr, 2012, p. 8). Such differences between findings may be attributed to contextual differences such as physical geographical location, organizational differences (i.e., structural and or cultural differences), as well as individual differences between the individual participants within each study sample. Regardless of the competing findings, the discord between role and gender identity can negatively impact female officers' stress levels and mental health.

In her quantitative study of gender identity's influence on job satisfaction among female police officers in the USA using the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) and Job Descriptive Index scales, Swan (2016) found that policewomen with masculine gender identity experienced less job satisfaction than those identifying as androgynous. Participants were recruited through the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives via an online survey sent to all members (approximately 300). The majority of respondents (n = 100) reported high levels of job satisfaction overall. She found that through the performance of gender on the spectrum of masculine and feminine traits, policewomen have found ways to balance the same. Despite this, she noted that policewomen still have a long way to go to receive full acceptance and integration into masculine police institutions, as echoed by Kingshott (2013). While Swan's sample lacked diversity within the sample (89% white females, lack of inclusion of women in lower rank roles), it presented an opportunity for future research to address these gaps in the literature.

Silvestri (2018) presented the unique solution of direct entry as a disruptive tool to the same in her article titled, *Disrupting the "Heroic" Male Within Policing: A Case for Direct Entry* (similarly echoed by Silvestri and colleagues, 2012). She asserted that "cultural and structural conditions…enable the "heroic male" to emerge as the "ideal" police leader" while relegating female police officers to the sidelines (p. 309). She discussed the construction of the ideal leader within policing as being tied to masculinity and masculine traits, such as "strength, stamina, and endurance" (p. 315) as well as displaying "credibility, commitment, and competence" (p. 317). Such traits are legitimized and upheld within policing organizations, and ultimately, rewarded through actions such as promotion. Silvestri (2018) suggested that Direct Entry for senior officers be used in England and Wales as a "disruptive tool to the gendered order within policing" (p. 309). While this suggestion presents an ideal solution to ensuring greater representation of female officers across ranks, it is not without its limitations. While policewomen already experience difficulty fitting in, as noted above, recruiting women for direct entry who have not already demonstrated credibility, commitment, and competence in the role of officer may serve to further marginalize these individuals (Silvestri, 2018; Silvestri et al., 2012). As Haake (2017) noted, "[a]chieving gender equality is about undoing or redoing gender…in a way that breaks our gender-stereotyped thoughts and actions and helps reduce gender-biased attitudes and behaviours" (p. 250).

Sexual Harassment and Discriminatory Experiences of Policewomen

In their book chapter titled, *Stressors and associated health effects for women police officers*, Hartley and colleagues (2014) expressly cited sexual harassment and sexual discrimination as two possible sources of stress for female officers (Chaiyavej & Morash, 2008; Deschamps, Paganon-Badinier, Marchand & Merle, 2003; Greene & del Carmen, 2002; Liberman et al., 2002; Morash et al., 2006; Thompson et al., 2006). In their qualitative study of police women (n = 9) in a populous Southern US region, Brown and associates (2020) distinguished two categories of sexualized behaviour: sexual teasing and sexual harassment. They detailed that sexual harassment was more overt, occurred both physically and verbally, and typically originated from members in positions of power. Instances where a member was targeted by members of the same rank were considered as part of the sexual harassment category as well. The neutralization of sexual harassing behaviour through the minimization of less severe forms of sexual harassment was common and was found to typically occur between two parties

of similar rank and involved behaviours that were not considered derogatory. No examples as to what the participants considered to be sexual teasing were provided. Similar to Murray (2021) as reviewed above, Brown and colleagues (2020) found that female officers also use neutralizing strategies such as engaging in sexual teasing and banter with colleagues to gain acceptance and cope, which, rather than resisting gender inequality, serves to reinforce and maintain the status quo, gendered stereotypes, and oppressive systems within policing organizations.

In their mixed methods studies of sexual harassment in U.S.A. law enforcement, Lonsway and associates (2013) found that 93.8% of the female participants sampled (n = 679; females 69, men 607) had experienced one of the behaviours identified in the *Sexual Experiences Questionnaire* (SEQ) during their policing career. Subscales of the SEQ included unwanted sexual attention (sexual comments or inappropriate touching), quid pro quo sexual harassment (submission to unwanted sexual propositions resulting in reward for compliance or punishment for refusal), and gender harassment (telling of dirty jokes or disparaging comments about women).

For the qualitative portion of the study, female participants (n=531) described their experiences with the SEQ behaviours via narrative responses, of which gender harassment was the most common experience of female police officers (91.3%). Incidents described involve telling dirty jokes, displaying pornography, derogatory and discriminatory statements towards women, and respondents insulted, harassed and discriminated against "based on their gender or sexual orientation" (p. 191). Unwanted sexual attention was the second most common behaviour experienced by the respondents (74%), followed by quid pro quo sexual harassment (15.2%).

In 2019, Brown and colleagues published their study, which explored the implications of police organizational culture for senior women's discriminatory experiences in police forces in England and Wales. The researchers specifically examined sexual harassment (unwanted verbal or non-verbal advances, physical contact, sexual attention and propositioning, both direct and indirect) and gender harassment (discriminatory and insulting comments based on gender). Of the senior policewomen surveyed (n = 117), Brown and colleagues (2019) found the following: relating to unwanted comments or jokes, 34% had been the target, and 41% had been a bystander; relating to unwanted physical contact, 6% had been the target and 1% had been a bystander; relating to unwanted sexual propositioning, 11% had been the target, and 3% had been a bystander. They found that many experienced other discriminatory behaviours as well.

Notable discriminatory behaviours included: men applying for promotion even if not fully qualified (93%); women less willing to apply for promotion unless fully qualified (85%); stereotypic gender tasking (63%); men taking credit for the work of a woman (60%); and being bullied by someone more senior (56%).

While Brown and colleagues (2019) study was specific to England and Wales, it echoed O'Connor Shelley's and associates' (2011) findings from their literature review regarding sexual harassment within policing organizations. O'Connor Shelley and associates asserted that "[p]olicewomen experience a great deal of control, exclusion, and stress associated with sexual harassment from individual officers and an organizational subculture that tolerates, endorses, and/or ignores/denies such behaviors" (p. 355). This finding of sexual harassment, discrimination and exclusion directly supports numerous studies regarding female officers and police organizations, and the same can have a direct impact on female officers' career progression (Bikos, 2016; Brown et al., 2019; Cunningham & Ramshaw, 2020; Hartley et al., 2014; Kingshott, 2013; Lonsway et al., 2013; Magnus, 2017; Silvestri, 2018). In fact, Magnus (2017) noted that fear of intimidation, retribution, and reprisal, including stalled career progression, can prevent officers, both male and female, from reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment.

Gender, Career Progression, Promotion, and Retention

Bikos (2016) cited barriers to promotion and a lack of inclusive workplace policies that consider the needs of women with children as a primary source of frustration for policewomen. Barriers to promotion included a lack of opportunity for female officers to gain experience including receiving mentoring (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Harley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley, 2011; Swan, 2016), which in turn provides a direct benefit to male officers who receive the same and increase male officers opportunities for promotion (O'Connor Shelley, 2011). Other barriers to promotion, such as gendered-expectations (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Haake 2017), cultural stereotypes (Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Haake, 2017), and discrimination (Magnus, 2017; Shjarback & Todak, 2019) were also cited.

Alcocer Guajardo (2016), Shjarback & Todak (2019), and Swan (2016) suggested that there has been no significant increase in policewomen in leadership roles over time. In their quantitative study, which included a large sample (n=2826) drawn from the 2013 USA Law

Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics survey of agencies with more than 100 officers, Shjarback & Todak (2019) noted that while promotion in policing is rare regardless of gender, it is even rarer for female officers. Intriguingly, they suggested that policing organizations with higher degrees of professionalism (i.e., accreditation, community policing initiatives) seem to increase the likelihood of female representation at higher levels. Despite this factor, overall, studies have found that female police officers have fewer opportunities for advancement, and they are reluctant to pursue such opportunities when presented (Alcocer Guajardo, 2016; Brown et al., 2019; Swan, 2016).

Due to the barriers, as mentioned earlier (barriers to promotion and lack of inclusive workplace policies), Boag-Munroe (2017) suggested that even if desired, "career progression may not be seen as feasible" for some policewomen (p. 428). Due to the feasibility factor, she noted that lower rank expectations and aspirations might be an additional barrier to gender equity across all ranks. While Boag-Munroe's study contained a large sample (n=21,490), limitations of the study included: questions relating to generalizability and transferability to other contexts outside of England and Wales; an under-representation of females (24% of respondents); lack of diversity of sample (5% from a racial minority background); a low response rate overall having implications for potential bias due to characteristics of those who chose to participate versus those who did not; revealed differences exist but not the reasons why; and the study only addressed hierarchical progression with police agencies and not lateral progression to specialist roles. Noting these limitations provides opportunities for future research to address these gaps, including further research exploring a Canadian context to help elucidate similarities and differences.

Family commitments (Schulze, 2010a; Schulze, 2010b; Shjarback & Todak, 2019; Swan, 2016) and a lack of family responsive policies (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Schulze, 2010b) including inflexibility in working time (Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Magnus, 2017; Shjarback & Todak, 2019) were also identified as barriers to women's opportunities and advancement. Kingshott (2013) and O'Connor Shelley and colleagues (2011) found issues around the retention of pregnant and child-rearing female officers due to insufficient policies around pregnancy, family leave, and flexible work schedules.

In examining the growth in the number of policewomen in supervisory and high-level positions within the New York City Police Department (NYPD) from 2000-2013 using detailed

demographic employment data, Alcocer Guajardo (2016) found that female officers had made little progress in advancing through the ranks. He cited annual attrition rates, a lack of new positions, a shortage of female applicants, and the male-dominated culture as possible reasons for this finding. In fact, he found that, overall, female representation among officers had decreased during this period and was significantly lower than its counterparts in other areas of the United States. While not generalizable across contexts or sub-groups due to sampling issues (lack of diversity relating to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender spectrum, and geographical and organizational contexts), the results of this study have implications in considering the barriers women face once on the job, and issues related to the hiring and retention of women in policing.

Regarding the retention of female police officers, Charlesworth and Robertson (2012) identified part-time work as a critical mechanism for achieving the same. In their case study review of a discrimination complaint pursued by an Australian police detective who requested to work part-time, they explored the forms of resistance to part-time work within the Victoria Police and connections between gender and working time (full-time versus part-time). They found that the resistance to part-time work occurred via three main avenues: limiting access (denial of access to part-time work), institutional barriers (inflexible organizational structures and policy), and cultural barriers (cultural stereotypes about the value of part-time, lack of commitment of part-time workers, the inability of part-time workers to complete their duties successfully, the superiority of full-time workers who are more deserving of opportunities for advancement and promotion). They argued that resistance to part-time work is, in fact, an indirect means for resistance to women in policing, given that women continue to face gendered expectations as primary care-givers. As such, part-time work serves as a tool of exclusion and reinforces stereotypes and police narratives that policing is men's work and that women do not belong, potentially adding to stress levels. Additional studies examining part-time work and connections between gender and working time present an opportunity to build the literature in this area and potentially impact policing organizations and policy on a larger scale in multiple contexts.

Interestingly, in their phenomenological qualitative study in England and Wales in which they explored the lived experiences of 23 female police officers over 40 years of practice, Cunningham and Ramshaw (2020) found that during "certain times of unrest, riots or threats,"

some of the respondents were able to access career experiences and roles not previously available because their male counterparts "were busy being 'heroic' at the source of the threat or unrest" (p. 26). Despite a limited sample and potential lack of generalizability across individuals (relating to subjective experience) and contexts, rich, in-depth data were collected. The findings suggested that the organizational structure presents a formidable barrier for policewomen rather than individual attributes and characteristics. Therefore, greater attention should be paid to the police organizational structures, policies, and protocols.

Policewomen and Parenting

While numerous studies mentioned the issue of family balance issues due to a lack of inclusive policy towards the needs of policewomen who are pregnant or parents (Bikos, 2016; Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Hartley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley, 2011), few made this their primary focus (Langan et al., 2017; Schulze, 2010). Hartley and colleagues (2014) and Magnus (2017) identified this as a stressor for many policewomen. In fact, Charlesworth and Robertson (2012) noted that female officers had been found to resign at a higher rate than their male counterparts, predominantly during childbearing and early parenting years within Australian policing organizations, a result also cited by Langan and associates (2017). Swan (2016) noted several other impacts resulting from work-family tensions, including increased stress levels, absenteeism, turnover, and decreased productivity, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Hartley and colleagues (2014), Magnus (2017), and O'Connor Shelley and colleagues (2011) described organizational barriers such as lack of part-time work, inflexible hours as impacting policewomen's decision-making around starting and caring for a family. They noted that some women forgo or delay having children to meet the scheduling demands and progress within their careers, while others sacrifice career progression to have a family. In her qualitative multiple case study of seven police women working in Alberta police agencies, Magnus (2017) revealed that "[d]ue to childcare and family obligations, female officers with families are perceived as a burden or deemed unsuitable for policing" (p. 53), thus facing increased discrimination because of the intersecting social locations of police officer, woman, and mother. In contrast, some women from Bikos' study (2016) elucidated that they experienced greater flexibility with schedule accommodations because they had secured their place with the dominant group.

Langan and colleagues (2017) and Schulze (2010) exclusively focused on the intersection of the roles of policewoman and mother. In her quantitative study of 73 policewomen in the Unites States, Schulze (2010) found a lack of formal policies relating to pregnancy and that many agencies managed the same informally, resulting in dissimilar accommodation within and between organizations. Further, leave due to pregnancy and child-birth was often managed under illness and disability policies, therefore relegating these policewomen to the category of 'disabled.' While Schulze (2010) identified several limitations, including limited sample size and the consideration of other intersecting social factors (i.e., race, ethnicity), this study could be used to help inform future policies relating to gendered needs, including a redefinition of fathers' needs and roles and promote transformative organizational change.

In their qualitative study with 16 Canadian police mother (all white, similar class), Langan and colleagues (2017) "explore[d] police mother's perceptions of their workplace experiences during pregnancy and maternity leave and returning to work" (p.235). They unearthed that policewomen work significantly harder than their male counterparts to prove themselves and gain acceptance; they contend with adverse reactions to pregnancy; they face demotion and reassignment during maternity leave; and they grapple with challenges when returning to work from pregnancy leave, such as the informal requirement of having to re-prove themselves. They highlighted the need for future studies focusing on retaining policewomen and the police organizations' overall efficiency and sustainability. Additionally, they emphasized the need for police leaders to understand better and value policewomen's experiences, and challenge masculine culture to achieve organizational change. While lack of diversity was a limitation in this study, the need for diversity within a given sample to explore the intersections of race and class, among other factors, when considering the needs of women in policing, was highlighted. It is essential to recognize that female police officers' experiences are not homogenous, but rather diverse and unique, thus having implications for programming and supports beyond 'one size fits all' based on gender or role.

Organizational Change and Policewomen

Police organizational change is an arduous task given the entrenchment of the masculine culture. Despite this, Schuck (2014) highlighted the possible significance of gender diversity in achieving organizational change and cultivating a new culture. In their literature review and secondary analyses of current police organization trends in England and Wales, Brown and

Silvestri (2019) found that, despite increased numbers of policewomen overall (as well as in higher-level roles), present trends in policing have served to be an influential factor in preventing the demasculinizing and feminizing of police culture and may even be a factor in reinforcing the masculine culture. Such trends included community policing, acknowledging sexual harassment and discrimination, and introducing gender-neutral and feminizing shifts to the professionalization of policing. Additionally, increased female officer representation has been attributed to a decrease in male officer representation. Therefore, increased gender-equity within policing may reinforce the discriminatory position that female officers are taking away jobs from hardworking males, thus preserving the males' status as 'bread-winners' and traditional conceptions of masculinity and the performance of gender.

Relating to gender equity within policing organizations, Ward and Prenzler (2016) investigated five police agencies in various parts of the world that had above-average gender equity in their recruitment or employment of officers. They used a case study methodology to research organizational strategies that may have shaped the outcomes, and drew on existing quantitative data. They found that numerous initiatives may support the goal of improving female representation within policing organizations, "includ[ing] the support of top management, numeric targets, support networks and monitoring of progress" (p. 249). Broader government agendas and outside stakeholder support groups may also influence the decision to achieve greater gender equity. That being noted, these researchers found a critical nexus between achieving the goal of gender equity and buy-in and support at the top levels within policing organizations. Unfortunately, due to a lack of resources, the study was unable to investigate all of the factors that may have accounted for high performance in gender equity, including department demographics, history, and leadership. However, this study highlights the need for the exploration of success stories and research relating to successes to identify factors that aid in the equity of women in policing. Implications for organizational improvement exist not only through investigating problematic practices, policies, and experiences, but also by studying adequate and suitable ones.

Psychological Health and Policewomen

Hartley and colleagues (2014) are the only authors to have discussed female police officers' mental health. They exposed a lack of research overall relating to police stressors and psychological health and outcomes, and the research studies involving policewomen are even

more sparse. The majority of studies involved male officers, of which the findings were broadened to include female officers. Of the studies that included male and female officers, female sample sizes tended to be small, thus posing as problematic in identifying meaningful differences. While informative, none of the research studies that Hartley and colleagues cited identified causal factors of stress, but rather highlighted correlations. In a manual scan of the literature, Yoo and Franke (2010) completed a study comparing stress between genders. They found significantly higher levels of perceived stress and job demand, lower job control, higher levels of fatigue and tiredness, and higher levels of effort-reward imbalance in female police officers as compared to their male counterparts.

Limitations of Existing Research on Female Officers

Numerous studies highlighted the need for future research studies to include more policewomen, particularly senior women in policing (Brown et al., 2019), those who are racially diverse (Swan, 2016), from smaller policing organizations (Hartley et al., 2014), and between various policing contexts (O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011). Silvestri (2018) called on researchers to explore the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, to reveal the complex power relations. Additionally, Kringen (2014) and O'Connor Shelley (2011) pointed towards the need for research to explore policy issues within policing organizations relating to female officers. Kringen (2014) also noted the need to publish these studies in trade magazines in addition to academic journals to reach practitioners and those in decision-making positions within policing organizations to create meaningful change within them (Kringen, 2014).

In line with the need for police organizational policy exploration, more research exploring the key factors that optimize women's participation in policing is necessary (Ward & Prenzler, 2016), including working time (Alcocer Guajardo, 2016; Magnus, 2017), maternity leave, and return to work (Magnus, 2017) policies. Alcocer Guajardo (2016) proposed future research should include the consideration of organizational factors (i.e., hiring, retention, and promotion) on the outcomes of various female officer groups within the police organizations, as well as a narrower focus on specific positions (i.e., supervisory versus command positions). Boag-Munroe (2017) called on the need for greater exploration of policewomen's attitudes towards what they desire to accomplish regarding hierarchical promotional aspirations and lateral promotions to specialist roles versus what they believe is realistic. They also noted the

importance of investigating how these beliefs and attitudes are formed and compare to each other.

Additionally, missing from the existing literature relating to female police officers is a definition of female in each study. The definition is critical in understanding the experiences of this specific group of police officers and the development of adequate policies and interventions. For this study, the researcher explored how cisgender female police officers experience psychological stressors connected with their employment as police officers. Broussard, Warner, and Pope (2017) defined cisgender as those whose gender identity matches their biological sex label (male or female) assigned at birth. Cisgender female refers to those whose biological sex and gender identity are female. For this study, cisgender female will be referred to as female.

The inclusion of qualitative studies to add to the existing body of literature was also indicated as a vital next step in research regarding female police officers (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Shjarback & Todak, 2019; Swan, 2016), particularly in exposing differences between policing organizations (Shjarback & Todak, 2019) not only nationally, but on a global scale. Ward and Prenzler's (2016) study brought attention to the need for and importance of exploring success stories and research relating to successes to identify factors which aid in the equity of women in policing. Given the lack of research explicitly investigating female officers' experiences of psychological stress connected to their employment, and the lack of connection to overall mental health, a study exploring the same is warranted to add to the existing literature body.

Future Direction

While a wide array of topics have been researched ranging from police mental health to officer experience of psychological stress to discrete topics involving women in policing, few have pointedly explored how female police officers experience psychological stressors in connection with their employment as officers, particularly within the past five years. Further, none have explored the broader connection of female police officers' experience of psychological stress to overall mental health, and the implications of the same in developing policies and interventions for this specific population of officers. According to Kringen's (2014) systematic literature review, "[f]ailing to include gender ignores the possibility of gender differences" (p. 368). Moreover, failure to recognize gender assumes that the needs of all are the same and that organizational policies and interventions to treat the outcomes of psychological stress will be effective across gender (cisgender female, cisgender male, transgender, and gender

non-binary). Additionally, the successes of female police officers should be explored to uncover mechanisms which support women in policing. Such a study could be contrasted against barriers these women face and provide an opportunity for structural improvement within organizations.

Furthermore, current contextual factors, such as the global pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, could also be factors in the experience of psychological stress for female officers in Canada. Contextual factors will be explored in this study, and the intersectionality between them and their connection to overall mental health. Failing to include gender and gender differences also fails to recognize the power and privilege within police structures. As such, issues relating to gender, psychological stress, and mental health must be viewed through anti-oppressive and feminist lenses.

Anti-Oppressive Theory

Anti-oppressive theory is situated under the critical theory umbrella. According to Morris (2006), critical theory was born in the 1920s and developed by an academic group at the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, who questioned scientific measures. The use of critical theory involves studying human phenomena. Critical theory includes anti-oppressive ideologies that seek to address concepts of power, privilege, and oppression. As such, power, privilege, and oppression will be used as sensitizing concepts in the study (Patton, 2015). As Mullaly and West (2018) noted, overall, anti-oppressive theory postulates that "all subordinate groups are oppressed on personal, cultural, and institutional levels by visible and invisible structures and by conscious and unconscious means" (p. 87-88). This research study will utilize an umbrella approach to exploring oppression against women and those living with mental health issues. Additionally, this study will explore the tension that policewomen may experience as both the oppressed (lacking power within the police culture due to their status as females) and the oppressor (holding power over others in the execution of their duties in the role of police officer).

Anti-oppressive Organizational Change

For individual and cultural change to occur within police agencies regarding women and the destigmatization of mental health challenges, organizational change must occur first (Berdahl, J., n.d. in Carpenter, 2018; CAMH, 2018). Research has confirmed this level of change is necessary, with the leaders in particular (CAMH, 2018; Langan et al., 2015). Sever (2008) contended that leaders can negatively influence the internal character of those working within

police organizations. Yancey (n.d. in Carpenter, 2018) supports the proposal that change must start at the organizational level stating, "When you've got these 'bro-cultures' you'll see it takes a change in management…We're seeing some organizations try to change their culture now and it's really difficult, because once a culture is in place, then you're stuck" (Detoxifying the culture, para. 4). Yancey went on to say that in order to achieve a cultural change, "it takes transitioning out a big section of the workforce and the people in the workforce to really start changing" (Detoxifying the culture, para. 4).

Magnus (2017) also corroborated this, stating, "Abusive police behavior becomes internalized and reproduced through a process of learning and socialization, with leaders passing on inappropriate, discriminatory, and tyrannical behavior generationally, in turn impacting the entire leadership team" (p. 26) and the policies then created by these leaders. Concerning mental health and illness, CAMH (2018) acknowledged that the "philosophy of others in leadership positions" (p. 4) can impact the organization as a whole. Ahlgren (2017) asserted that mental health needs to be considered on the same footing as physical health, and education designed specifically for police officers is the key. Given this knowledge, it is critical to explore the application of an anti-oppressive framework within police organizations.

Baines (2017) defines organizational change as "a planned, systematic, ongoing, organizational intervention in order to implement and solidify a particular kind of change at an agency-wide level" (p. 172). Baines elucidated five anti-oppressive practice (AOP) themed strategies that need to be utilized at the organizational level, which includes:

1. Increasing diversity;
2. Developing and implementing anti-oppressive policies;
3. Engaging in effective anti-oppressive education and training;
4. Fostering an organizational culture conducive to AOP;
5. Ensuring the agency engages in social action. (p. 173-174)

Given that change at the organizational level is the fundamental first step to change at the cultural and personal levels, future research should be completed to explore how organizations can cultivate change using an AOP framework. Only once change has begun at the organizational level can change occur at the cultural and individual levels, including implementing the necessary policies and interventions. As suggested by Geronazzo-Alman and colleagues (2017), anticipating the foreseeable impact of the increased burden and early

identification of individuals at risk of mental health issues due to multiple factors could lead to timely interventions.

Anti-oppressive Cultural and Personal Change

With the implementation of an anti-oppressive framework and change at the organizational level will come change at the cultural level. Mullaly & West (2018) suggested that as the organization's language and mentality transforms, so will the language and mentality of the culture. Organizational change and cultural change go hand and hand. Even though many police members accept mental health initiatives, the culture within policing prevents them from stepping forward for fear of being ostracized. This could prove to be true for female officers, who experience intersectionality between gender and mental health factors.

CAMH (2018) explained that the police organization and culture can sway how officers respond to mental illness indications, not only in their colleagues but also in themselves. As the As Marin (2012) made clear, "[p]eers bring credibility to mental health initiatives and can assist in reducing the stigma associated with seeking help for psychological injuries" (p. 110). Regarding mental health, the focus at the cultural level needs to be aimed at "eliminating stigma associated with OSI and member suicide" (p. 9). The same (peers bringing credibility to initiatives) could apply to the cultural values and beliefs around females in policing.

This shift in the cultural mentality towards the destigmatization of police mental health issues, illness, and suicide may decrease the incidence of organizational stressors experienced by officers as well because officers who come forward with OSI may be less likely to face labelling, discrimination, bullying, and ostracising, and career jeopardy. It could also lead to return-to-work policies that make returning to work after completing a leave due to OSI or organizational stressors easier. Additionally, a cultural mentality shift towards females in policing could result in decreased incidences of organizational stressors. Such organizational and cultural change will directly support personal change. Personal change is supported by Ajzen's (2019a) Theory of Planned Behavior.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour

According to Ajzen (2019a), The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) explains how a change in human behaviour first requires a change in attitudes and beliefs. In order for the change in attitudes to occur, first, there must be a change in beliefs. Ajzen proposes that individuals engage in certain behaviours based on their attitudes towards those behaviours,

resulting from their beliefs. Beliefs are influenced by numerous conditions and factors, including individual and social factors. Individual factors may include values, stereotypes, knowledge, intelligence, personality, age, gender, income, education, emotion, and income. Media, geography, culture, laws, intervention, religion, ethnicity, race, and economy are examples of social factors. These factors directly influence three types of personal beliefs: behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs (see Appendix C).

As described by Ajzen (2019b), behavioural beliefs are beliefs about a given behaviour's likely outcome. Subjective values about the expected outcome influence behavioural beliefs and shape the dominant attitude toward the behaviour. The outcome or perceived outcome experienced directly influences the probability that the person will engage in the behaviour or inhibit their behaviour.

Ajzen (2019b) defines normative beliefs as "the perceived behavioral expectations of…important referent individuals or groups" (Normative Beliefs, para. 1.). Through the process of socialization, individuals learn what behaviours are considered socially acceptable and unacceptable. It is assumed that an individual's subjective norms result from a combination of their normative beliefs and the individual's motivation to comply with the behaviours identified as socially acceptable by others. That is, the more the individual believes they should behave in a way congruent to that set out by the referent individual or group, the more likely it is that the individual will behave in ways that do so.

The third type of beliefs are control beliefs. Control beliefs refer to "the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behavior" (Ajzen, 2019b, Control Beliefs, para. 1.). It is a combination of an individual's control beliefs and perceived power over each factor that influences their perceived behavioural control. That is, an individual's perception that he or she will be able to perform the behaviour based on perceived ability to control factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of the behaviour will predict the probability that he or she will perform the behaviour. Perceived behavioural control influences both the attitude toward the behaviour and the subjective norm and each of the three beliefs transacts to influence the others. As identified in the TPB, values, stereotypes, knowledge, and culture are some of the factors that shape beliefs (Ajzen, 2019c).

Feminist Theory

Falling under the umbrella of critical theory, feminist theory rejects the claim that men are superior to women (England, 2001). It aims to explore power differentials and understand the nature of and mechanisms behind gender inequality and women's oppression (England, 2001; Farrell, Monk-Turner, Danner, & Scallon, 2018), that which serves to marginalize and shape the lives of women at multiple levels (structural, cultural, and individual). Societal or cultural expectations of women based on stereotypes that view women as nurturers and caregivers can exclude women from certain work types, particularly work that is deemed masculine, such as policing. Within policing organizations, organizational policies such as those relating to shift work or maternity and child-care leave can serve as barriers to women's success in policing. Cultural biases and stereotypes of women can make it difficult for women to fit into the workplace at both the cultural and individual levels and serve to place women in the category of "other." This may be exacerbated when intersecting factors such as race, disability (i.e., mental health challenges), ethnicity, religion come together. As described above, feminist and AOP theories are useful in examining female police officers' experiences and change at various levels. The theory of planned behaviour provides implications as to how change may occur within policing organizations.

For any of these levels of change to occur, though, female officers' experiences must be considered and explored, as the issues related to their experiences cannot be addressed if they are not acknowledged. As such, the research question in this study is: What is the experience of cisgender female police officers relating to psychological stress in connection to their employment as police officers? The research sub-questions are: In what ways do factors impacting psychological stress intersect and compound? How do the experiences of cisgender female officers influence their overall mental health and help-seeking behaviors? The PIE method was used in the development of the research question (See Appendix C).

Chapter 3: Research Method

The Use of Critical Realism Paradigm

Danermark, Ekstöm, Jakobsen, and Karlsson (2005) noted the roots of critical realism date back to the 1930s; however, critical realism has more recently been connected to the work of Roy Bhaskar (Danermark et al., 2005; Edwards, Mahoney, & Vincent, 2014; Kjørstad & Solem, 2018), a British philosopher, in his development of "a coherent philosophical language" (Danermark et al., 2005, p. 4). Critical realism, emerging as a criticism of positivism, provides a holistic perspective that acknowledges both the objective (intransitive) world and an individual's subjective (transitive) interpretations of the world. It is the combination of both objective and subjective reality that shape individual experience and perception. Further, critical realism acknowledges that "there exists both an external world independently of human consciousness, and at the same time a dimension which includes our socially determined knowledge about reality" (Danermark et al., 2005, p. 5). When applied to the study of female police officers' experiences of psychological stress and mental health, critical realist researchers acknowledge that objective and subjective reality influence these officers' experiences and perceptions.

According to Edwards and colleagues (2014), critical realists posit that reality can never be fully known through positivist methods alone (ontological beliefs) and elucidated that neither positivism nor constructivism are sufficient explanative theories. Danermark and colleagues (2005) and Kjørstad & Solem (2018) echoed this stance. Instead, unknown and unseen mechanisms exist which may, or may not, explain how two occurrences are related. For Danermark and associates (2005), the critical realist researcher's focus becomes the mechanisms behind a given event (i.e., psychological stress). Therefore, reality cannot be solely explained through positivist measures because social phenomena occur in complex open systems that can be influenced by any number of seen or unseen mechanisms and processes, which are then subjectively interpreted (Edwards et al., 2014; Wynn & Williams, 2012).

Rather than epistemological beliefs, ontological beliefs guide the critical realist researcher (Danermark et al., 2005). As detailed by Danermark and colleagues (2005), Bhaskar (1978) proposed three ontological domains:

the empirical, the actual, and the real. The empirical domain consists of what we experience, directly or indirectly. It is separated from the actual domain where events happen whether we experience them or not. What happens in the world is not the same as that which is

observed. But this domain is in its turn separated from the real domain. In this domain there

is also that which can produce events in the world, that which metaphorically can be called

mechanisms. pp. 20

Therefore, critical realism assumes that the world exists as it is whether we know it or not

(Danermark et al., 2005). The overall aim of a critical realist researcher is to "explain events and

processes" by "describing and conceptualizing the properties and causal mechanisms generating

and enabling events, making things happen…, and then describing how different mechanisms

manifest themselves under specific conditions" (Danermark et al., 2005, p. 74). Table 3.1

provides a visual depiction of how the real, actual, and empirical domains intersect (or fail to

intersect) with one another (Wynn & William, 2012).

Table 3.1

Stratified Ontology of Critical Realism (adapted from Bhaskar 1975, p. 13)

	Domain of the Real	Domain of the Actual	Domain of the Empirical
Mechanisms	X		
Events	X	X	
Experiences	X	X	X

Note. Wynn, W., & William, C. K. Principles for conducting critical realist case study research

in information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, *36*(3), 791, 2012, APA, reprinted with permission

(Appendix K).

When working with the study participants, exploring a vulnerable topic like female police

officers' experiences of psychological stress needs to be carefully designed. Critical realist

researchers must be logical, imaginative, and creative in analyzing and interpreting data and

exploring and inferring mechanisms behind an event's occurrence (Danermark et al., 2005).

Archer (1995; 2000) suggested that using a critical realist paradigm can influence change

at the structural level, thus impacting the individual level (Kjørstad & Solem, 2018). Using a

critical realist paradigm in this study will allow for acknowledging each female participants'

unique subjective perceptions and experiences while providing insight into potential mechanisms

and processes that occur within police organizations that may impact these officers, as well as

external mechanisms and processes (i.e., court process, worker's compensation, insurance

benefits, and legislative mechanisms). As noted above, the findings will have important

implications for policing organizations regarding women in policing, specifically relating to education and awareness, service provision, and organizational culture, structure, and policy.

Simultaneously, a critical realist paradigm recognizes the limitations of solely using a qualitative approach and the use of quantitative measures is supported within it. Not only will some mechanisms and processes as experienced by female police officers remain unknown or unseen, but they may also occur outside of the organizational context at other systemic, institutional, and societal levels. The inability to recognize or identify all variables impacting experience could be considered a critique of the theory and a limitation of the study. Additionally, while inferences may be made about the mechanism or event being studied (psychological stress), causal explanations cannot be verified using qualitative methods informed by a critical realist framework, nor can all mechanisms impacting an event ever fully be known (Danermark et al., 2005; Edwards, Mahoney, & Vincent, 2014; Kjørstad & Solem, 2018). Despite these limitations, valuable data and information can be obtained in qualitative studies.

Anti-Oppressive Framework Through a Gendered Lens

This study's ideological position is that psychological stress and languishing mental health in female officers, brought on by female officers' oppression, can be decreased by re-socializing perceptions of women in policing at organizational and cultural levels. In applying an anti-oppressive lens (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015; Mullaly & West, 2018), I suggest that indoctrinating male and female officers with the misconception that policing is men's work is a method through which the patriarchy attempts to devalue, manipulate, oppress, and control women. I hypothesized that this devaluation, manipulation, oppression, and control are included in psychological stress sources for female officers. A feminist approach (Mason & Stubbs, 2010) was used in this study by attempting to unearth and understand how female officers experience psychological stress. This study placed women's experiences at the heart of the research and elevated their experiences, a defining feature of a feminist approach (Mason & Stubbs, 2010). Additionally, I emailed a final report to those participants who identified that they wished to receive it when they signed the consent form.

As such, the research question in this study is: What is the experience of cisgender female police officers relating to psychological stress in connection to their employment as police officers? The research sub-questions are: In what ways do factors impacting psychological stress

intersect and compound? How do the experiences of cisgender female officers influence their overall mental health and help-seeking behaviors?

Qualitative Multiple Case Study Design

Rooted in anthropology and sociology (Patton, 2015), a case study approach is used to develop a "rich, in-depth, description of the subject case" (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 292) or multiple cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study approach has been used across various disciplines, including psychology, political science (Creswell & Poth, 2018), medicine, law (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014) and business (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014) as well as education (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014) and social work (Gilgun, 1994; Shaw & Holland, 2014). In their book about qualitative research in social work, Shaw and Holland (2014) asserted that the "value of knowledge gained from case study research is valuable – we understand and learn from specific cases and contexts" (p. 88). According to Patton (2015), cases can be either an empirical unit such as "individuals, families, or organizations" (p. 259) or theoretical constructs such as happiness, achievement, or psychological stress. He also noted that they can be general or specific, "physically real…socially constructed…or historical/political" (p. 259) and involve a single case or multiple collective cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gilgun, 1994; Patton, 2015; Shaw & Holland, 2014; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

Additionally, the theoretical paradigm or framework chosen to inform the study will, in turn, impact how the case is defined based on that paradigm's underlying assumptions. Despite any differences based on theoretical orientation, all case studies are defined by overall features or characteristics. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined these characteristics as follows:

- Case study research begins with the identification of a specific case that will be described and analyzed…
- The key to the case identification is that it is bounded, meaning that it can be defined or described within certain parameters [such as time, place, certain people]…
- The intent of conducting the study is also important to focus the procedures for the particular type [(i.e. intrinsic case versus instrumental case)]…
- [I]t presents an in-depth understanding of the case…
- The selection of how to approach the data analysis in a case study will differ.
- A key to generating the description of the case involves identifying case themes.

· Case studies often end with conclusions formed by the researcher about the overall meaning derived from the case(s). (p. 97-98)

With these features at the forefront, a multiple case study approach is ideal for exploring female police officers' experience of psychological stressors resulting from their employment as police officers.

Specific to a qualitative critical realist case study, Bygstad, Munkvold, & Volkoff (2016) drew on Wynn and Williams' (2012) work and presented five research steps for the same. These included:

(i) Explication of events: Identify the key events of the case, building on experience and abstraction. These events are outcomes, which we want to explain.

(ii) Explication of structure and context: Identify the human, social and physical entities of the case, and the relationships between them. These relationships may reveal emergent properties.

(iii) Retroduction: Identify the mechanisms (powers and tendencies) that explain the outcomes. The analysis should give logical and analytical support for the existence of the proposed mechanisms linking the structure to events.

(iv) Empirical corroboration: Ensure that proposed mechanisms have causal power and that they have better explanatory power than alternatives: Assess the explanatory power of each proposed mechanism with the empirical evidence.

(v) Triangulation and multiple methods: Use a variety of approaches to identify causal relationships, and build on different sources and data types in order to explore the diversity of underlying structures and to control for bias. pp. 86

Defining the Case

Multiple cases are studied as a means to understand the case within defined boundaries (quintain). A qualitative multiple case study can be used to explore female police officers' experience of psychological stressors and mental health connected to their employment as police officers. This approach allowed for an enriched understanding of the how, why, and what of the experience (Stake, 2006) of psychological stressors for female police officers to provide a deeper understanding of the cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenon being explored is female police officers' experiences of psychological stress. The quintain (defines the boundaries of the

case) will be female police officers' experience within Canadian police organizations. The unit of analysis for each case will be female officers.

Role of the Researcher

As researchers, we bring our own worldviews and values to the study, which inherently creates bias within it in the way that the study is formulated, implemented, and reported. It has been noted that "[t]he researcher and the researched co-create the knowledge, in interaction with their environments, others, and between researchers and participants" (Luo, 2020, p. 13). In using critical frameworks such as an anti-oppressive framework with a feminist lens, the researcher works collaboratively with the study participants to gather data on experiences and mechanisms of oppression and privilege (Morris, 2006). In working collaboratively with each participant, an essential component of each interview was allowing space for the participant to discuss anything that may be relevant to her. The final interview question was is there anything else you would like to share? Member-checking was used to enhance collaboration and ensure the researcher is relaying the participant's stories with accuracy. A vital component of the research process is researcher reflexivity, in which the researcher locates him or herself within the study. Researchers must be aware of their own biases and power within the dynamic, complex, and varied interactions they have with the participants. Thus, steps must be taken towards employing ethical strategies in the research, such as practicing self-reflexivity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183). Additionally, I reflected on and drew upon my own experiences as data (Brisola & Cury, 2016; Du Preez, 2008).

My Role of Researcher in this Study

I am a former police officer having served three years with an Alberta police agency. My partner and spouse is a former member of the same agency, having served 13 years. I am privileged for several reasons. I am not only partnered, but I have the privilege of being married and openly referring to my partner as my husband. I identify as cisgender and heterosexual. I am middle-class, and most of my ancestors originated in France, although I also have Romanian, Algerian, and Indigenous roots. Family members on both my mother's and father's sides of the family are products of assimilation, and our Indigenous history was buried for many years until recently. My partner is of European descent (Ukrainian, Irish, and Polish). I was raised in an upper-class family and had the privilege of the opportunity to pursue higher learning. Additionally, I do not have any physical or cognitive disorders that negatively impact my

opportunities. I live with co-occurring mental health issues, which at times, have impacted my ability to participate in life.

While my time as a police officer was short, I experienced discrimination, including sexual harassment, gender discrimination involving my ability to perform the role as well as discrimination linked to family status. I experienced increased psychological stress and languishing mental health due to these experiences, taking a medical leave at one point, and ultimately leaving the profession due to the systems of oppression within which the organization operated. I found that the organization was not one that was kind to women and hid behind the slogan, "needs of the service" to justify the hardship it created for members. I remember early on in training I had a male senior training member tell me that I would be labelled *"a bitch, a slut, or a dyke,"* implying that no matter how skilled I was at my job, none of it would matter as these were the only possibilities I could expect and basically, get used to it. I was sexually harassed by a colleague and when I refused to sleep with him, he spread rumours about me which seemed to follow me wherever I went (I later heard he went on to do this to two other female members, hearing this directly from one of them). I did not even mean to make a complaint, however, a female Sergeant noticed that I was not doing well, my firearms abilities were off (I had been one of the most proficient and accurate shooters), and she inquired. What I thought was a casual discussion turned into a formal complaint. As a result, I was made to go to mediation with the person doing the harassing and subsequently forced to work alongside this individual.

Other experiences include being told by a male colleague that I needed to go for coffee with "the guys" more as I was starting to draw attention to myself for working hard. Another male member improperly used the workplace computer system to search for my telephone number and called my residence, looking to ask me on a date. I became the target of another male colleague who became my Acting Sergeant and was looking to get promoted. It was like being under a microscope and nothing I could do or say made it better. I was extremely anxious going to work, constantly feeling sick to my stomach and physically trembling, never knowing what to expect from my peers, worried if I was going to receive back up or be blamed or torn apart for not using enough force. I lost all self-confidence. I had difficulty concentrating because I was constantly in my head, worrying and playing out the worst. I could not sleep and when I did, I had night terrors and I would wake up screaming. I lost my appetite and developed Irritable Bowel Syndrome. I lost 30 pounds of mostly muscle (weighing in at 110 pounds at my lowest)

because I was too exhausted to exercise. I became a bag of bones and looked unwell. My change in appearance was so drastic that my older brother asked me to coffee because he was concerned for my well-being. I felt completely powerless and the only way that I could see through it was to take a leave of absence to remove myself from the situation because I knew staying would result in dire consequences for me (both personally and professionally).

I remained on leave for 116 days, the maximum duration allowed to receive short-term disability pay. I contemplated quitting before choosing to go back but being a police officer had been my dream and I had worked too hard to achieve it. I returned to a different district but before doing so I was made to meet with the Acting Sergeant and my probationary representative (I was still on 18 months of probation and entitled to a representative, although I do not know if this person was part of the union). To return to work, I had to sign off on the Acting Sergeant's review of my performance, despite wholeheartedly not agreeing with it and knowing it would be permanently placed in my file to follow me wherever I went for the rest of my career.

Upon returning to work, I was told by a female Sergeant that it was a good thing I had taken a stress leave because the Acting Sergeant was looking to get me fired and use this as an example for his promotional package. This was also confirmed by a second male Sergeant that I worked with a year later who said he did not understand why this person had it out for me as I was a hard worker and did a good job. Other experiences I had post-leave return included receiving an email from yet another male member that was sexually harassing and demeaning. When I complained, I was told that the individual had left his computer unlocked and it was a male Sergeant who had sent the email, intending it as a "joke." The Sergeant, who I continued to have to work for on the street, was made to informally apologize to me and that was the extent of him being held accountable.

Not all my experiences were negative. There were people along the way who recognized my contributions and the value I brought as an officer. I had two male Sergeants towards the end of my time as an officer who commended the work that I did. After three years of hell, I finally had four months of reprieve at the new district, and I loved my job.

This came to a grinding halt, though, once I required an accommodation for reproductive medical reasons and my doctor had written me a note restricting my hours of work to consistent daytime only hours. Due to a change in leadership that occurred simultaneously to this (at the Inspector level of my district), while I was initially supported by the out-going Inspector to

remain at my district and on the street (he refused to accept my resignation and asked for time to sort out the situation), the in-coming Acting Inspector did not feel the same way. Rather than allowing me to stay on the street as a valued team member in my district, I was to be moved to the furthest district possible from where I lived and placed on the front counter (a menial task), despite there being no mention by my doctor that I could not participate in regular street duties. All I needed was a regular schedule. If I were to have moved locations, this would have substantially increasing my driving time to and from work and I would have had less time with my spouse (also an officer and very much needed in the reproductive process). The action taken felt very retaliatory given I had brought forth two previous complaints of sexual harassment and now needed an accommodation for medical reasons relating to reproductive issues. My spouse and I even tried to trade positions so that I could remain closer to home and remain on the street; however, this was quickly shut down with a female superior berating him in the hallway, shouting, *"who do you think you are?"* (amazingly, this female superior has since retired and purports to be an advocate for women in policing on social media). At this point, I resubmitted my resignation, which was accepted.

My experience, while only scratching the surface, serves as the backdrop and inspiration for this research. During each interview, I was left speechless multiple times when hearing of these brave women's negative experiences. As I completed more and more interviews, my spouse noted that I appeared more tired than usual and somewhat sullen. In knowing my own history as a female officer, he could see that my own pain and feelings of loss were being triggered, something I was not prepared for and had not expected given that I felt I had dealt with them many years ago. This required me to practice additional self-care and served as a catalyst for my desire to complete more interviews as I felt that if these courageous women were willing to share their stories with me, I needed to honour that and listen. To insure I maintained capacity to complete each interview, I took a short week-long break at one point to recharge.

I had to remind myself that my experiences serve as my passion for this research and have helped to shape this study. As such, it was critical for me to recognize and bracket these experiences to uncover any bias I may have regarding this study, particularly relating to analyzing the data, leaning towards particular themes "to create favorable or unfavorable conclusions" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 184). As such, I employed strategies to enhance this study's rigor, which will be detailed below (See Strategies to Enhance Rigor).

Data Collection Procedures

Sampling and Participant Recruitment

The nonprobability sampling methods of purposive intensity and snowball sampling were used to recruit the participants using the author's police contacts. While my former role as a police officer provided me with credibility and the ability to quickly establish rapport with the participants, it was not initially fruitful in recruiting participants. Initially, I sent an email to the personal accounts of female police officers and one male officer that I have maintained contact with, and provided the details of the study, including the purpose of and potential implications of completing the study, and reviewed risks and benefits. Additionally, the email requested that the receiver forward the email to any female police officers the recipient believes would be interested in participating in the study. I also made contact with a former mentor, Dr. Renee El-Gabalawy, via email. She is an assistant professor in the Departments of Clinical Health Psychology and Anesthesiology, and Perioperative and Pain Medicine at the University of Manitoba. She identified as having access to female police officers from previous research studies who indicated their willingness to participate in future studies. This strategy failed to produce any responses.

Two individuals responded within one week. Soon after, it became clear that this method of sampling may not result in the intended number of participants. As such, I received an amendment through the Ethics Review Board to expand my sampling strategy. This included making contact via telephone with three police women who had been vocal on social media and included their telephone numbers on public websites, encouraging readers to make contact. Three additional participants were interviewed as a result of making telephone contact. Through snowball sampling related to this strategy, an additional two participants were recruited and interviewed. Additionally, the amendment allowed for the promotion of the study via social networking sites and contacting various independent women in policing associations directly via email. Through social media promotion, I was able to recruit and interview one participant. Through contacting various women's policing associations across Canada, I was able to recruit nine additional participants. Of the nine, I interviewed six. Of the three who were not interviewed, one woman was scheduled to be interviewed and did not attend. At the time the other two participants had made contact, it was not feasible within the scope of this study to include additional participants. The remaining two participants agreed to be contacted about

future research studies. Another police woman contacted me, indicating she had received information about my study from an individual working in an academic capacity. In total, I was able to complete fourteen interviews. After the completion of all interviews, one of the participants emailed me the contact information of a police woman she knows who was interested in participating in the study. I emailed this police officer and indicated I had concluded the interviews.

Relating to sample size, Stake (2006) recommended selecting between four to ten cases, noting the benefits would be limited if the number of cases explored are outside of this range. Yin (2014) recommended four to five cases as the ideal number of cases. Originally, I had planned to interview 4 to 10 female police officers. The total number was to be dependent on achieving data saturation (no new categories or themes are revealed, thus making the data repetitive). I kept a log of evolving themes and while I reached data saturation (no new themes) after interviewing the eleventh participant, due to the rich data that was being provided and diversity among various locations throughout Canada, I chose to complete an additional three interviews.

Data Collection Types and Data Recording Procedures

Informed consent and Demographic questionnaire. According to Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009), before the one-to-one interview commences, an introduction to the study must be given to each participant and written informed consent must be provided by the interviewee (See Appendix F). It was vital to share the expected length of the project with the participants and explore whether they would be open to remaining committed for such a length of time (Morris, 2006). Due to the interviews taking place over a secure online platform, I used the secure online program, Docusign, to present and obtain the signed consent form from each participant. Once received, I uploaded the signed consent form to an encrypted USB stick, which remains locked in my fireproof safe.

Additionally, due to COVID protocols and the inability to complete in person interviews, I filled out the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix F) on behalf of the participants. Before the start of each interview, I verbally asked each of the participants the demographic questions and recorded the responses on the demographic questionnaire. The demographic information provided an overview of the participants taking part in the study. Completing these steps allowed

for rapport building between the interviewee and myself before beginning tending to the interview questions, which may be perceived as being more sensitive.

After the completion of nine interviews and identifying each participant in the following manner, PW1, PW2 and so on, I decided this method seemed to dehumanize these women and reduce their experiences and stories to merely a number. As such, I emailed each of the nine participants requesting each choose a pseudonym that would not reveal identity and that I could use when describing each in this study. I asked those who had not been interviewed yet (participants 10 to 14) what pseudonym they would like to use at the end of each demographic questionnaire. Providing each woman with opportunity to choose how she would like to be identified allowed a sense of agency. The names chosen are as follows: PW1 chose the name Effy (it should be noted that Effy chose to be identified by her name and not a pseudonym, sharing that she wanted her voice to be heard); PW 2 chose the name Kelly; PW3 chose the name Carley; PW4 chose the name Rebecca; PW5 chose the name Brenda; PW6 chose the name Xena; PW7 chose the name Mary Jane; PW8 chose the name Anne; PW10 chose the name Kathleen; PW11 chose the name Marie; PW12 chose the name Clair; PW13 chose the name Olivia; and PW14 chose the name Sally. Additionally, having each participant review typed transcripts for clarity and have the final say as to the description provided and quotations used also increased individual agency and autonomy over sharing their stories.

One-to-one semi-structured interviews. While there are three possible interview choices (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), a one-to-one semi-structured interview was used in this study. A one-to-one semi-structured interview was an ideal choice in this study as this tool involves a set of predetermined questions (See Appendix D), also referred to as an interview protocol; however, it allows for additional questions to be asked. Structured interviews involve a formal set of predetermined questions to be asked and do not allow for further expansion beyond these questions. In contrast, unstructured interviews allow for the free flow of conversation as directed by the participants and do not involve a predetermined set of questions. Given that I was interested in exploring female officers' experiences with psychological stress and the greater connection to overall health within the context of their employment, the one-to-one semi-structured interview was the best choice to allow for both predetermined questions to be asked and flexibility within the interview (Stake, 2006).

I used Patton's skilled question formulation guide from his book, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (2015, p. 444), to develop the interview questions and prompts. These included experience and behavior questions, opinions and values questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and demographic questions. Initially, the interview protocol included eight questions; however, I sought an amendment to expand the protocol to 10 questions (adding questions four and nine) after the completion of the first interview.

Grinnell and colleagues (2019) noted multiple benefits of the one-to-one interview, including allowing for a more in-depth understanding of experience within a specific context. The interviewer has the opportunity to establish greater rapport with the participant, ask clarifying questions and probe further as needed, and observe non-verbal communication as well. Additionally, the response rate is higher, as is the completion rate. These authors identified two disadvantages to one-to-one interviews (time-consuming and costly); however, other disadvantages include limited sample size, potential interviewer bias, participant answers based on social desirability, lack of anonymity, and the intrusiveness of the questions. Each of these disadvantages were taken into consideration in the development and implementation of the interviews.

Given the current global pandemic and the necessity of protecting all parties' health and well-being, the one-to-one interviews took place via Cisco Webex. Thirteen of the participants shared their camera and one chose to keep her camera off. While the use of a telephone interview impeded any physical observations of the participant, I recognized that the participants' comfort level was paramount during the interview. All participants agreed to audio-recording of the interview. The interviews took place between January 12, 2021 and March 5, 2021. Overall, the interviews went well. Almost all of the participants were eager to share their experiences with me and had much to say. That being said, there were two shorter interviews (41 minutes and 28 minutes) that yielded rich data as well. I will further describe my meeting with each in the findings section. Many of the participants thanked me for completing this research study and noted its importance. During debriefing after the interview, five participants brought up unique topics that were relevant to the study. I asked each if I could begin recording again due to the rich content that each was continuing to provide.

The length of the interviews are follows: Effy = 43 minutes; Kelly = 58 minutes; Carley = 1 hour and 29 minutes + 5 minutes; Rebecca = 1 hour and 12 minutes + 5 minutes; Brenda = 1

hour and 54 minutes + 4 minutes + 1 minute; Xena = 1 hour and 33 minutes; Mary Jane = 50 minutes + 1 minute + 3 minutes; Victoria = 41 minutes; Anne = 2 hours and 56 minutes + 13 minutes; Kathleen = 3 hours and 35 minutes; Marie = 1 hour and 42 minutes; Clair = 1 hour and 50 minutes; Olivia = 28 minutes; and Sally = 1 hour and 10 minutes. The total length of the interviews (sum) is 1293 minutes or 21 hours and 33 minutes (21.55 hours). The average (mean) length of interviews is 1.54 hours or 1 hour and 32 minutes. The standard deviation is 54.274 minutes.

   Observations. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Morris(2006), observations are a type of data collection. I used an observation protocol for recording information about observations during each interview (See Appendix G). Using an observational protocol allowed me to record observations in real-time and proved useful in exploring uncomfortable areas. It also allowed me to make notes about key comments made by the participant to circle back on, without having to interrupt her midstory. It also helped me to identify any bias or feelings I had about what was being discussed, particularly during the analysis phase of the study. A limitation of the observational protocol is that it can diminish the rapport with the participant, particularly if the researcher is unable to attend to and observe the participant at the same time. For this reason, my note taking was minimal as I wanted to remain actively engaged with each participant and more so involved noting themes eliciting further curiosity, again, to not interrupt the participant. It is also "a demonstration of power, since it usually does not take into account the perceptions of those being observed" (Morris, 2006, p. 163).

   Public documents. I explored and analyzed the final report on the Merlo Davidson Settlement Agreement (Bastarache, 2020) titled, *Broken dreams broken lives: The devastating effects of sexual harassment on women in the RCMP,* as a case, incorporating it throughout the critical realist analysis of the themes. Upon the completion of the critical realist analysis, I compared and contrasted the Report findings with the interview findings, as well as with data from a selection of recent newspaper articles, the Ottawa Police Service Gender Audit Report (2016-2017), and the audio-visual documentary titled, *The tarnished badge* (2021). This allowed for the verification and refutation of the findings. This also enhanced, enriched, and strengthened the rigor of the study and allowed for the triangulation the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Bowen, 2009). According to Bowen (2009),

   documents provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary

data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources. Moreover, documents may be the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed or when informants have forgotten the details. (p. 30-31). Document analysis allowed for triangulation within each case and across cases to enhance the study's credibility and reduce the impact of researcher bias (Bowen, 2009; Stake, 2006).

Data Analysis Procedures

Creswell and Creswell (2018) provided a detailed account of the process of data analysis in qualitative research (p. 194). They highlighted five steps in this process, which fall in line with using an inductive approach (although a deductive approach may also be used; however, it is less common). These steps included:

(1) Organize and prepare the data for analysis: The researcher transcribed all interviews, visually scan this material, reviewed the observation protocols and field notes from the review of visual materials, and sorted and arranged the data according to type and source.

(2) Read or look at all the data: The researcher reviewed all the data, reflecting on the larger meaning and themes.

(3) Start coding all of the data: According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), codes can fall into one of three categories: expected codes, surprising codes, and unusual or conceptually interesting codes. I began the analysis using the qualitative analysis program, Dedoose, to enhance the coding process and assess the transcribed interviews' narratives. While I used the program to manage the demographic data, I chose not to continue using this method for the case-by-case data analysis as I found doing so frustrating in that I could not see all the cases and how they compared on one screen. Instead, I printed each transcribed interview. I proceeded to review each interview and highlight commonalities according to the critical realist domains (empirical, real, actual). I then created a digital table in which I completed an analysis of each case, coding within each case. I assigned a unique color to each case for ease.

(4) Generate a description and themes: Using the coding process, I generated a description of the categories or themes for analysis. Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested using coding to generate a smaller number (five to seven) of categories or themes. I then analyzed for each case and across cases to "form complex theme connections" (p. 185). Additionally, these authors noted that the coding process could produce detailed

descriptions about "people, places, or events in a setting" (p. 194). The analysis of the same can be useful in creating comprehensive case study descriptions.

I was able to generate themes using the coding process. I did so by printing each transcript, reviewing the data, and physically cutting out excerpts and placing them into various corresponding codes. Following this, I created a table of codes. I took each physical pile of excerpts as coded, and manually entered them into the table under the corresponding code. I highlighted and made digital notes in the margins detailing possible mechanisms and explanatory theories. This resulted in a cross-case comparison of events that allowed me to continue with the critical realist analysis.

(5) Represent the description and themes: To enhance the representation of the themes, I created a table which included each main theme as well as the critical realist domains, utilizing excepts throughout. I used narrative passages from the transcribed interviews to communicate the analysis findings. This involved a detailed discussion of the themes, sub-themes, and inter-connecting themes.

Critical Realist Data Analysis

In the data analysis of a study informed by the critical realist paradigm, the researcher is concerned with tendencies in the data (Bygstad, Munkvold, & Volkoff, 2016; Danermark et al., 2005; Fletcher, 2017). According to Fletcher (2017), "[t]hese tendencies can be seen, for example, in rough trends or broken patterns in empirical data" (p. 185). She further noted that these tendencies are also referred to as demi-regularities by critical realists and that they can be successfully unearthed through qualitative data coding.

For the data analysis in this study, I used the stepwise framework for critical realist data analysis (Bygstad et al., 2016) as informed by the methodological principles of critical realism (Wynn & Williams, 2012) to complete the data analysis and identify the generative mechanisms (Bygstad et al., 2016; Wynn & Williams, 2012). Bygstad and colleagues (2016) identified six steps for data analysis, which include the following: (1) description of events and issues; (2) identification of key entities; (3) theoretical re-description (abduction); (4) retroduction (identification of candidate affordances); (5) analysis of the set of affordances and associated mechanisms; and (6) assessment of explanatory power. These authors broadly defined an affordance as "a possibility for action" (p. 84). A detailed table of the methodological principles and stepwise framework is provided in Appendix I. I highlighted themes relating to oppression,

privilege, and gender during the analysis process and interpreted any "power relationships being revealed" (Morris, 2006, p. 174).

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Ethical considerations were considered when completing the study. Ethical considerations included recruiting participants, obtaining informed consent, and confidentiality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Grinnell, Jr., Gabor, and Unrau, 2019). Confidentiality was addressed with the participants to ensure they understood precisely how it would be achieved, and written consent was obtained before each interview (See Appendix E; Grinnell et al., 2019). Details such as the purpose of the study, privacy issues including confidentiality, risks and benefits, and the research design, including the delivery of feedback and results, were shared with the participants on the consent form so that participants could make an informed decision as to if they wished to participate. Participants were also made aware that they could change their minds at any point prior to the final thesis submission, discontinue participation, and know that confidentiality would continue to be maintained ongoing. None of the participants requested to discontinue the study.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) proposed numerous ethical considerations that the researcher incorporated in the study. I presented a proposal to her committee members for review to ensure all aspects of the proposed study adhered to ethical standards. I obtained ethics approval from the Ethics Review Board at the University of Manitoba before conducting any research. In the collection of data, I ensured as little disruption to the participants as possible. I disclosed the study's purpose and did not apply pressure or coerce any of the participants into signing the consent forms or participating in the study. This included allowing the participants to discontinue the study and request the removal of their information before the final thesis submission. I ensured that consent was informed by providing a document that introduced and details the purpose of the study. I respected any potential power imbalances and avoided exploiting any of the participants. This included disseminating a final research report to those participants expressed interest in receiving it. I conveyed to the participants at the outset of the interview that all information will be kept confidential. However, I noted that there are some exceptions to this rule. If a participant disclosed intent to harm ones-self or harm to another, I would have to report the same to a 911 emergency operator. I emailed a list of regional crisis

services to some of the participants post-interview. Other participants verbally declined this offer.

In acknowledging the unique police organizational culture, cultural considerations were made. As stated by Grinnell and colleagues (2019), the researcher must understand the culture at both the macro-level as "is manifested in their mandates, policies, and practices" (p. 93), as well as the micro-level as is reflected in individual "values, beliefs, communication styles, and behaviors" (p. 93). I ensured that I had possessed a solid understanding of the culture at both levels, including traditions and values, and this aided in the intercultural communication necessary for completing the interviews and working with the participants. For example, many of the participants used acronyms in their descriptions of events. Given my history in policing, I had knowledge of what the acronyms were short for and did not need to ask participants for clarification. Additionally, some of the participants would make statements such as, *"you know what it's like,"* recognizing our shared experience as officers. My former police officer status gave me built-in credibility that other researchers may not possess, thus making the participant recruitment and interview process less challenging.

Strategies to Enhance Rigor

It is important to note that a qualitative study is not a natural substitute for a quantitative study that focuses on statistics (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Despite this, there are several ways to enhance rigor in qualitative studies. This study engaged in many of these strategies, including committing a large quantity of time in the field (i.e., formulating research questions, building rapport and trust with the participants, and collaborating with participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences and perspectives). Next, although qualitative studies do not produce numbers, they create large amounts of data that must be analyzed in a time-consuming process that includes creating and sorting themes to make sense of the data.

I also clarified any bias and bracketed my experiences (see above My Role as Researcher). Researchers must understand that they influence the interview in several ways, including in subconscious non-verbal cues, word choice, the phrasing of questions, and how the data are interpreted, and the knowledge is interpreted (Luo, 2020). Therefore, researchers must be aware of their own biases and power within the dynamic, complex, and varied interactions they have with the participants. Thus, I engaged in steps towards employing ethical strategies in

the research, such as practicing self-reflexivity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183). This enhanced the trustworthiness of the study's findings.

I used additional validity procedures to enhance the findings' accuracy and the rigour of the study, including triangulation (utilizing different data sources – interviews, public documents), member checking, the use of rich, thick description (detailed descriptions, numerous perspectives), presentation of negative or discrepant information contrary to identified themes, and peer debriefing provided by my advisory committee (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Reliability procedures included the use of a reflective journal and double-checking transcripts to ensure there are no errors and ensuring there is no drift in the definition of codes (use of a codebook). Such strategies helped to enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study (Morris, 2006).

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter provides a description of the participant data and each participant. This is followed by the content analysis of the data obtained from the participants and the final report on the implementation of the Merlo Davidson settlement agreement (Bastarache, 2020), including mental health impacts (table 4.1). Based on the analysis, the presentation of the main themes that emerged from the data is described (table 4.2). This chapter concludes with a critical realist analysis of the main themes using explanatory participant excerpts and data from Bastarache's report (2020) titled, *Broken lives, broken dreams* (table 4.3). A selection of newspaper articles, and audiovisual documentary, *The tarnished badge*, as well as the Ottawa Police Service gender audit were also included as secondary data sources to verify and refute the findings.
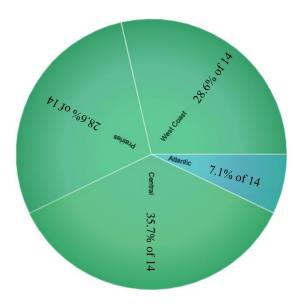
Participant Data (14)

I conducted interviews with 14 participants. The participants' ages ranged between 32 and 55 years of age (mean = 44; standard deviation = 5.44). The following figures represent demographic data obtained at the outset of each interview and include the geographical location of service within Canada (figure 4.1), service years (figure 4.2), rank category (figure 4.3), and work status at the time of interview (figure 4.4). While I did not collect demographic data relating to race, ethnicity, or religious background, two participants identified as belonging to racially marginalized groups. One participant identified as Persian and Muslim. The other participant did not state which minority group to which she belonged.

The Canadian geographic regions presented in figure 4.1 are defined as follows: West Coast includes the province of British Columbia (n=4); Prairie region includes Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta (n=4); Central region includes Ontario and Quebec (n=5), Atlantic region consists of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (n=1); and Northern territories are comprised of Nunavut, the Yukon territory, and the Northwest territories (n=0). The years of service presented in figure 4.2 are displayed as follows: 0 to 5 (n=0); 6 to 10 (n=0); 11 to 15 (n=5); 16 to 20 (n=6); 21 to 24 (n=3); and 25+ (n=0) (median category =16 to 20). I did not gather the participants' exact years of service; therefore, I am not reporting the mean and standard deviation. The rank categories displayed in figure 4.3 are as follows: Constable/Senior Constable (n=8), mid-level management (Sergeant and Staff Sergeant ranks [n=5]), and upper-level management (ranks of Inspector and higher [n=1]). Figure 4.4 refers to the participants' work status (active duty [n=7] and on leave [n=7]).
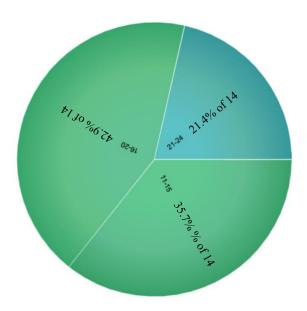
Figure 4.1

Geographic Location

Note. Geographic locations that participants are employed in Canada.
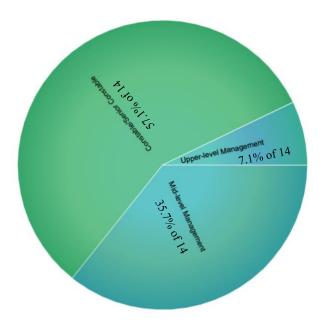
Figure 4.2

Years of Service

Note. Years of service categories (0 to 5; 6 to 10; 11 to 15; 16 to 20; 21 to 24; and 25+).
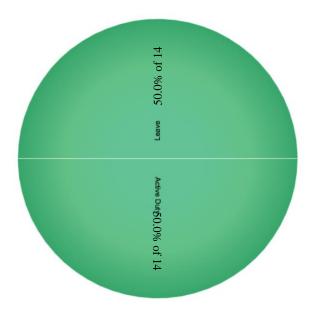
Figure 4.3

Rank

Note. Participant identified rank (median rank category = Constable/Senior Constable).
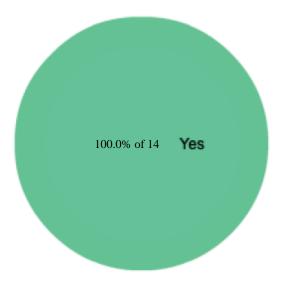
Figure 4.4

Work Status

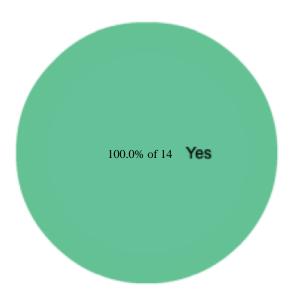*Note.* Active duty versus on leave at time of interview.

The following figures present the data on workplace experience and mental health. As per figure 4.5, all participants (n=14) indicated that they have had negative experiences because of working as a police officer. Additionally, all participants (n=14) had a workplace experience that negatively impacted their mental health (figure 4.6). Relating to experiences of workplace discrimination and mental health, 42.9% of the participants (n=6) identified as having been discriminated against as a result of their mental health, whereas 57.1% of the participants (n=8) reported that they had not been discriminated against for mental health reasons. Figure 4.8 provides a cross tabulation of rank category and mental health discrimination experience. A Fisher's exact test was conducted and found there was no significant association between the rank category and mental health discrimination experience (Table 4.1).

Figure 4.5

Negative Experiences

100.0% of 14   Yes

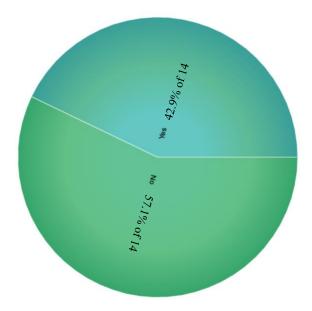*Note.* Have you had any negative experiences because of working as a police officer (yes/no)?

Figure 4.6

Workplace Experiences and Mental Health

Note. Have you experienced any workplace situation that have impacted your mental health (yes/no)?

Figure 4.7

Discrimination and Mental Health

Note. Have you experienced workplace discrimination because of mental health issues (yes/no)?
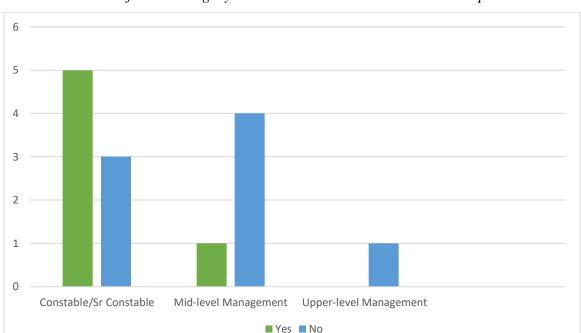
Figure 4.8

Cross Tabulation of Rank Category and Mental Health Discrimination Experience

Note. Mid-level management = Sergeant/Staff Sergeant; Upper-level management = Inspector and higher.

Table 4.1

Fisher's Exact Test

	Yes	No	Marginal Row Totals
Lower level	5	3	8
% within lower level	62.5%	37.5%	100%
Mid and upper levels	1	5	6
% within upper levels	16.7%	83.3%	100%
Marginal Column Totals	6	8	14 (grand total)

Note. The 2-tailed P value equals 0.1375. The association between rank category and mental health discrimination experience is considered not to be statistically significant at p < .05.

Participant Description

In this section, I will provide a brief introduction of each participant and our time together.

Effy

My meeting with Effy was the first interview I conducted. After sorting out some technical difficulties, Effy was able to access Cisco Webex on her cell phone. She appeared to be

sitting in a sunroom of sorts, wrapped in a blanket, hair pulled back in a messy bun. While I was initially unsure of how the interview would unfold over the video platform, it became clear that Effy had much to say about her experiences and the impact on her mental health. I began by asking Effy the demographic questions I had prepared, after which I moved to the interview questions. She seemed to have no fear of speaking her truth and having it known.

Effy shared stories of sadness, loss, and trauma that she had witnessed while performing her duties, as well as stories of sadness, loss, trauma, anger, and grief that she had experienced as a direct result of the actions of her colleagues and the police organization for which she works. She spoke of lost dreams, lost hope, lost future, and ultimately her loss of identity. At one point, she began crying as she spoke of what had been done to her and what she has endured and continues to endure. She spoke of various coping mechanisms she uses to manage the emotions, including her connection with her dog, who she got after taking leave from her job. Effy indicated that her bond with her puppy has been a huge element in her recovery journey. Of equal importance to Effy, she spoke of turning her pain into purpose to help others as a key element in her road of recovery. Effy's identification of the importance of recovery as a journey inspired me to add the element of recovery to the study and include this as a specific question in each interview that followed.

Kelly

Kelly attended the online interview while at work, although initially, I did not realize this was the case. It was mid-morning, and she was sitting in an office-type chair, earbuds in, and a window in the background with an inlay of blue sky beyond. I could not tell if she was in uniform as she was wearing a dark colored zippered sweater. I began with the demographic questions and then moved into the interview questions. Kelly appeared relaxed throughout the interview. While she indicated that she had experienced traumatic events throughout her career, both while performing her duties as an officer and at the hands of colleagues (mostly early on) and, most recently, those in supervisory and management roles, she appeared to have a certain amount of resolve relating to these events. She did not show any overt signs of distress when discussing them. Kelly noted that in part, this was due to the medication which she identified as helping to keep her emotions on an even keel rather than extreme highs and lows, something that I immediately identified with given my own recovery journey. Additionally, she cited exercise,

knowledge, therapy, and an informal peer support network as being part of her recovery and maintaining positive mental health.

Kelly shared that through time and her personal educational journey outside of policing, she has come to understand the impacts of stress on mental health and the connection to her own mental health experience. Kelly stressed the importance of early detection of mental health issues, including implementing regular psychological assessments in mitigating adverse outcomes on mental health. She also noted education in understanding the causes, signs, and symptoms of stress and mental health issues as a key component of future change. Regarding gender-specific issues such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, and discrimination, Kelly felt that her organization needs to provide better information and tools that enable new female recruits and new female officers to cope with the existing police culture. For Kelly, informal peer support networks with fellow officers who had similar experiences, both within her current police organization and policing organizations abroad, serve as an important part of her recovery.

Carley

My interview with Carley took place mid-morning. She was in her home and appeared to be sitting in a bedroom, natural light filtering through a nearby window that was out of view. The occasional bark of a dog and construction work sounded in the background at times. Carley appeared comfortable throughout our meeting, speaking of her experiences calmly and factually, noting that there is not an area of her life that the stress has not touched. She was very descriptive when providing details of the events that had transpired over time and had brought her to her current status, that of being on leave from her work, and her experience with mental health and recovery. She described experiencing operational trauma, compounded by the targeting, sexual harassment and abuse she experienced from her colleagues and supervisors. Additionally, Carley discussed how various systems have interacted to create further trauma, with an intent to discredit her not only as an officer, but as a woman, not to be believed. She described being punished and retaliated against by colleagues and the organization in speaking out against this treatment, all while the same individuals protected the perpetrator, leaving her feeling powerless and morally injured.

Carley shared that all these factors led her to a place of poor mental health, suicidal thoughts in the context of wanting to escape the pain, and the negative coping strategies she engaged in as a result. It is through her personal grit and resilience that she instigated seeking

help. Through therapy, medication (although initially being averse to medication because of the stigma), and an informal peer network, she has been able to enter her recovery journey. Carley speaks of her passion for helping others. She has zero fear in calling out those who try to silence not only policewomen who are the targets of sexual violence but all women who experience sexual violence. She has turned her pain into advocacy for others and she is not afraid to share her story and publicly challenge her police chief for his disingenuous portrayal of support for the MeToo movement and women. Despite being threatened with charges by the organization, Carley's stance is *"do your worst,"* noting there is nothing that he or the organization can do to her anymore that has not already been done. She has taken her power back and now uses it to connect and help others experiencing the same.

Rebecca

Rebecca appeared to be sitting in her living room, many windows behind her, the day appearing overcast. Our meeting got off to a slow start due to technical issues. While we were initially sharing our videos, we experienced intermittent loss of connectivity. Once Rebecca turned off her video, we were off to a flying start. She presented as a highly articulate and passionate individual. Rebecca provided a unique perspective on policing as she served as an officer in a different country before joining a Canadian police agency. She revealed the difference between agencies is like night and day in terms policy and policy application within the organization regarding dealing with conflict and holding officers accountable when they behave inappropriately. Rebecca noted that tolerated and undealt with behaviours within her current agency would have been swiftly dealt with in her previous work environment. She also spoke of experiencing extreme scrutiny concerning a serious case, one in which she was initially cleared of any wrongdoing. She cited political reasons as the driving factor in reopening the case, which led to her becoming a *"sacrificial lamb,"* dragged through the mud, only to be cleared of any wrongdoing a second time. During the height of the re-opening of the case, Rebecca details the anguish she experienced and feelings of abandonment by her organization, and a lack of self-esteem and confidence in performing her role (for which previously she had always been commended).

While Rebecca initially returned to work, the layers of trauma that had built over the years resulted in her taking leave, which she is currently on. She described how her sense of self has changed throughout her time as an officer. Once a *"social butterfly,"* Rebecca prefers to

isolate and keep to herself more so these days. She shared that her partner has been her *"rock"* throughout, along with a few close friends. Additionally, she spoke of the value of therapy in helping her on her road to recovery. She also identified her pup as being a positive factor in maintaining positive mental health (her dog was scratching at the door which prompted the discussion of dogs and healing). One positive that Rebecca mentioned was that her organization provides numerous psychological services for staff use. She identified therapy as particularly helpful in addition to time away from the organization through a leave of absence.

Brenda

My interview with Brenda took place mid-day. She appeared to be in her bedroom, dressed casually, hair pulled back in a ponytail. Brenda had a smile on her face for almost the entire interview, which was longer in length than the others. In addition to being committed to her role as a police officer, it was clear that she is committed to her family. This was evident when Brenda spoke of the challenges of being a parent and a police officer, emotion in her voice, detailing the guilt she felt because of not always being mentally and physically present because of not only shift work but ongoing battles with the organization for a fair shot (one not based on perceived deficiencies associated with gender). On several occasions, Brenda's children or spouse came into the room, asking about this or that (and their dog at one point, although not asking for anything). After each left, she seamlessly transitioned back into answering questions and sharing her experiences.

As Brenda relayed event after event, struggle after struggle, her intense grit and determination were as striking as a full moon on a cloudless night. It was big and bright, never letting anyone forget that it's there, always present, even if just a sliver at times. She used terms like victim-guilt and moral injury in the context of what she has endured. Brenda spoke of her stubbornness and not letting *"them"* win when I asked how she has managed after experiencing being physically assaulted at the hands of a colleague, as well as the multiple times she has experienced gender and family-based discrimination. With passion, she told me it is because she knows that she is *"smarter than them…faster than them…and can think on* [her] *feet,"* those attributes she learned she possessed from her time in a similar profession before becoming an officer. Brenda also spoke of her family and her faith as protective factors for her mental health and her will to persevere. She made it known that the service's lack of flexibility relating to the accommodation of officers requiring the same (for whatever reason) was not about the needs of

the service. Instead, it is about demonstrating power and making things difficult for the sake of making things difficult much of the time, which has been exacerbated during the pandemic.

Brenda painted a comprehensive picture of the interconnectivity of systems and structures, not only within policing but between outside institutions and her police organization as well. She provided numerous accounts of how these systems interact, resulting in the continued marginalization of female officers. After the interview had concluded and I had turned off the recorder, Brenda continued to provide additional relevant data around the inner workings of her police organization, police association, and politics. As a result, I requested and received consent to begin recording again to capture the rich data she continued to provide.

Xena

My meeting with Xena took place early morning. While initially struggling with some connectivity issues, she was able to connect with me on video via her cell phone. She was meticulously put together, her hair in a half ponytail, make-up pristine. Not only could I tell that she takes great pride in her appearance and her home, but she has a beautiful soul and spirit about her too, which became more and more evident the longer we spoke. Xena came across as an empath, someone who creates deep relationships and genuinely cares about those she is charged to serve and protect, which I suspect translates to her personal life as well based on stories she told of her family and friends. Xena is not currently partnered, citing an inability to trust men because of what she has seen and experienced due to not only the specialty units she has worked in throughout her career but also due to negative experiences with colleagues. Xena shared intimate details surrounding a case involving a small child, including holding the child's hand as he died. We shared tears together, which she said was unusual for her, as most of the time she is unable to cry due to the medication she is prescribed.

Xena also shared stories of the sexual harassment and sexual assault that she endured at the hands of colleagues and a supervisor, and the fallout from coming forward, including an inability to escape reprisal and retaliation, even while on leave. The cumulative layers of stress and trauma resulted in a negative self-image, grief over what she believes is the loss of her career, a shift in her worldview, languishing mental health, and a severe physical illness (one which her doctors could find no reason for other than extreme stress and duress). Xena noted that the pandemic has made an already challenging time even more challenging relating to recovery and healing. As part of her recovery and spiritual journey, she travels and attends spiritual-

related events, which she can no longer do. As she spoke of one such occasion, her entire demeanor shifted. It was as though she was filled with light, and positive energy emanated from her. Spirituality and connectedness form a large part of her healing and appear to be at the center of her being.

Mary Jane

My interview with Mary Jane was scheduled for mid-day, and I was waiting online for her arrival. After 15 minutes of waiting, I called her and discovered there had been a misunderstanding and she thought it was going to be a phone interview. I helped her connect to the video platform; however, she chose to keep her video off and joined via phone. Mary Jane has experience working for several police agencies but has been at her current organization the longest. She spoke of her belief that the stress involved in policing *is "under-rated,"* not only from an operational standpoint, but also from an organizational and cultural perspective. The anger and rage that she described feeling were palpable in her voice. Mary Jane told a story of great successes and a bright future, having been snuffed out after becoming a target in her organization. She shared how she was micromanaged, and after speaking out, was retaliated against at all levels within her organization.

Mary Jane described the events that transpired as *"crippling,"* noting the impacts have been vast. She said she is unable to function on a daily basis, often unable to get out of bed. Her relationships with her partner and children have been negatively impacted as well. She continues to struggle with various mental health issues and shared that she continues to struggle with suicidal thoughts over the loss of her career, something she has worked so hard for and given her life to. She has been further traumatized and stigmatized by the organization's treatment towards her regarding her mental health issues, stating, *"we're all just broken toys."* She continues to take medication for her mental health and sees a therapist regularly. She assured me that she has a safety plan in place to manage the suicidal thoughts as well as a support network. Despite this anguish, Mary Jane expressed an inability to have resolve or move forward until there is some justice and those responsible are held accountable. Until then, she does not feel like she will be able to recover and heal.

Victoria

When she first appeared on the screen, I noted that Victoria was in uniform, her hair neatly pulled back. She was sitting in an office with the door closed. Victoria's story was unique

in that she has not experienced severe or debilitating mental health issues or discrimination because of mental health issues. She reported engaging in many self-care techniques, including exercising regularly, practicing healthy eating habits, and remaining in tune with her body to recognize when she needs a break, noting that she will use her vacation time if necessary. She spoke more about the operational stresses associated with her position and how police are often in the spotlight, their every moved being picked apart. Victoria acknowledged that her gender has been a factor, at times, throughout her career; however, she did not provide details about this, other than that male officers greatly outnumber female officers, a common trend across the country.

For Victoria, the biggest issue is recognizing mental health issues as a legitimate concern and not stigmatizing fellow members when they come forward. She told me that she makes a point of reaching out to her colleagues on mental health leaves to ensure they do not feel forgotten or abandoned. She also noted the importance of providing her colleagues with the information they need to access mental health services, whether they want this information or not, and tries to bring greater awareness of the potential impacts of policing stress.

Anne

My online interview with Anne began mid-morning. She appeared to be sitting in her living room on a comfortable couch, hair pulled back, and I could hear her pup in the background. Anne was articulate, well-spoken, and soon after the interview began, I could tell that she was a highly educated woman. She intricately described the complex nature of the policing world, the various systems, and their impact on officers, particularly those experiencing mental health issues. She was exceptionally committed to ensuring that she answered my questions with detail, thus providing rich data.

Like the other participants I had previously spoken with, Anne sadly told a story of a lost career and her continual struggle for being treated with fairness and receiving justice for what she has been forced to withstand. In addition to the traumatic events she witnessed in her work, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and discrimination based on gender and disability have led to layered trauma. Anne shared her history of becoming a target at work, which led to further victimization when she came forward. She was then further victimized, noting she suffered *"psychological warfare"* at the hands of the organization, which she cited as the catalyst for the use of negative numbing activities as a means of coping with the layered trauma. Anne also

began to question her identity and described how various systems meant to protect her, have collectively worked together to discredit her, and punish her, creating more trauma in her life.

Despite all these damaging events, Anne also told a story of resilience and recovery, along with her fight for justice. While she comments on a lack of organizational support and acknowledgment of recovery as part of the offered mental health regime, Anne personally views recovery through a holistic lens. She spoke of the mind-body connection and the importance of knowledge in healing. Anne also mentioned the importance of her bond with her dog in her recovery journey. Interestingly, Anne articulated how the withholding of information relating to police officer causes of stress and their impacts was a tool of control used by her police organization, which she believes makes them complicit in maintaining a culture that does not support mental health, despite how the organization portrays itself publicly. Anne held that despite the organization's continued attempts to exert power and control over her, she will continue to fight for what is right and serve as a mentor for other women in policing.

Kathleen

It was early morning when I met with Kathleen over the Webex platform. Initially, she thought our meeting was going to be a telephone call but was agreeable to meeting online and sharing her video after I reached out to her. I could not tell what room she was sitting in at home, only that the sun appeared to be shining that day. She had her hair pulled back and said if she had realized we would be meeting over video, she would have done her make-up. Kathleen was extremely personable and very candid in sharing her experiences with me during our numerous hours together (we took a 10-minute break halfway through). She told multiple stories of literally life and death experiences that left me speechless, including tales of how the community stepped in to help her on numerous occasions. Kathleen expressed the critical importance of building relationships with the people in her community and noted that, at times, these relationships helped to keep her alive in high-risk situations when working alone. Each event described sounded like it could be the plot of a movie. She discussed the increasing self-doubt and anxiety she felt over the years, which she attributed to the workplace stress with various colleagues and her organization's inability to manage conflict (resulting in additional stress and trauma on top of operational trauma). Those experiences, compounded with years of sexual harassment, a sexual assault by a colleague, and gender-based discrimination, not only resulted in her body physically

shutting down requiring her to take a leave, but also recently receiving a mental health diagnosis from her psychologist.

Currently on a medical leave, Kathleen spoke of being thankful that she had received a medical diagnosis. This allowed her to articulate her reason for taking leave was medical rather than for mental health, as the stigma associated with a mental health leave would have added an additional layer of stress. She does not feel that mental health is widely accepted in her organization despite the public messages it touts. While acknowledging that she is still early in her healing and mental health recovery journey, Kathleen recognized its integral connection to her physical health. She spoke of the importance of receiving wrap-around care, with regular communication between her therapist and doctor being a key component of its success. While she was unsure what her future in policing will look like, she planned to focus on getting healthy and enjoying time with her family.

Marie

My meeting with Marie took place mid-afternoon. She, too, did not realize that it would be occurring via video and laughed that she had wished she had done her hair. Marie completed the meeting while at work, situated in an office, dressed in uniform. Throughout our time together, she had numerous colleagues knock on the door, yet each time returned ready to speak further, never rushing. I immediately gelled with Marie. We share many similar views as to what mental health and policing should look like. These include regular mandatory mental health check-ins, the promotion of servant leadership (Gardner & Reece, 2012) and its ability to serve as a protective factor in employee mental health, and knowledge and education as critical factors in recognizing stress symptoms and preventing further mental health deterioration and normalizing mental health.

Marie also shared some intense experiences that she has had as an officer, including one high impact, short duration call that unfolded and concluded in seconds and was life altering. She expressed frustration in that if one of her male counterparts would have been involved in the same situation he would have been glorified, while she was told she was just doing her job. The disparity in gendered treatment did not end there, she said. She detailed numerous instances in which she was treated differently than her male colleagues, having lost out on career opportunities as a result. In one instance, she brought the disparity to the attention of higher management, and a new policy was created and implemented. Despite all these steps, she was

still an unsuccessful applicant as this specialty unit was able to circumvent the policy and procedure without reprimand. Despite the negatives, Marie loves her job. She can balance having children, a spouse, and a successful career.

Clair

When Clair met with me, she was in her living room, fireplace behind her, and it appeared to be an overcast day. She was dressed casually, hair down, and mentioned that she was still trying to adjust to daytime hours as she had finished a series of night shifts the day before. She was very thoughtful and deliberate in her answers, taking her time as she answered. Clair's experience with mental health was markedly different from the other women with which I had spoken. While she detailed experiencing poor mental health at various points throughout her career, she said she has never tried to hide it and makes a point to bring it up in conversation with colleagues. She commented that she will let people know if she has a check-in scheduled with her therapist, and about the different coping techniques she uses, such as exercise and travel. Clair commented that the pandemic has been impactful in that she has been unable to access her go-to coping strategies, resulting in languishing mental health. She recognized that this was the case and was able to adapt.

For Clair, one of the most significant elements relating to women in policing is peer-led mentorship. Clair spoke at length about her first experience in attending the International Women in Policing Conference. She shared that she was inspired and somewhat awestruck by the conference and hearing the voices and struggles of other women in policing from across the globe. This led her and a few of her female colleagues to start a support network for policewomen in her province. She identified a gap in many police services relating to females in various roles, including upper management, resulting in an overall lack of mentorship opportunities, including those who aspire to advance through the ranks. Clair identified that this network is now able to fill this gap.

Olivia

My meeting with Olivia took place early morning. When we connected online, I could tell that she was in a vehicle. Olivia noted that she was at work and sitting in a car in the parking lot. It appeared to be an overcast day, and she was wearing street clothes, hair pulled back. Olivia spoke of the negativity associated with her job, and that police officers often do not get to see the positive in the world. She commented on how she now lives with anxiety, which was not present

before she became an officer. In her reflection, she described increased worry. As an example, Olivia detailed that when she goes on vacation with her family, she will envision the worst, stating, *"how bad would this be in the news, the family that's going on vacation, they all died in a car accident."* Olivia acknowledged that most people outside of policing do not think this way. She conveys that it is an accumulation of many *"little stresses"* that compound over time and impact mental health.

Olivia identified as being able to compartmentalize the anxiety and relayed that she is impacted most at home. She cited difficulty making small decisions (such as what to have for supper), decreased patience, and becoming more easily upset at small things that would not phase her before. For Olivia, exercising serves as a large part of maintaining positive mental health. While she has not sought help for mental health purposes before, she shared that she has an upcoming appointment with her family doctor to discuss her anxiety. She cited family stress as the catalyst, including a forthcoming work move to another area and stress associated with family planning and being a mother. This stress is compounded by feelings of a lack of support and accommodation in her organization. Olivia also spoke of her frustration with problematic and discriminatory policies and processes related to applying for various positions within her organization, specifically for members who have been on maternity leave.

Olivia confided that she does not feel that her organization adequately addresses mental health, even though they say they are addressing it. She expressed support for the implementation of a yearly mental health assessment in supporting and normalizing mental health. Olivia believes this would be welcomed by most of the organization's members and could help to mitigate adverse mental health outcomes.

Sally

My final interview took place with Sally. We connected in the early-morning hours by video online. Sally was at work and dressed in plain clothes with her hair down. I could not tell where she was sitting. It appeared to be a smaller room, and there was a bit of an echo. The door remained open, and I could see people passing in the background. At one point, a member of the janitorial staff entered, at which time we stopped talking and resumed once this staff member left. It was clear to me that Sally did not have an issue with others overhearing our conversation.

Sally spoke of the various areas that she has worked in throughout her career, identifying being assigned gendered work such as attending sexual assaults, child abuse, and domestic

violence calls. She spoke of consistently being tasked with interviewing children, whether she was the lead investigator or not. With emotion in her voice and tears in her eyes, Sally told of the emotional toll this has taken on her, particularly after becoming a mother, taking a moment of silence to reset. Sally detailed negative experiences with pregnancy and maternity leave, both for colleagues and herself, and highlighted the stigma attached to taking a family leave. She reported being made to feel guilty and told she was *"failing"* the organization by being pregnant. Additionally, Sally spoke of experiencing a loss of identity when she was on maternity leave in that she had so heavily identified with her police officer role that when on leave, she felt like she was *"just a person with a baby."* These were only a couple of the many examples she provided.

Sally revealed that for many years, she did not realize when she was experiencing stress. It was not until she met with a psychologist that understood how stress manifests for her. Sally advised that she is physically impacted by stress and experiences stomach issues, including vomiting for *"no reason."* She indicated that she can *"mask"* the stress well, noting that no one would be able to identify that she is experiencing it. Sally shared that she would use numbing techniques, such as online shopping and binge-watching Netflix when feeling discomfort in her body. Now that she is aware of how her stress manifests and the potentially problematic numbing practices she would engage in, she has transitioned to more positive outlets such as journaling, meditation, being in nature, and spending time with her family. Sally indicated that she regularly sees a therapist, even if she is feeling well, and makes a point to speak of the importance of mental health with her colleagues. She believes that the conversation about mental health is more widely accepted within her organization these days and society at large.

Sally hopes that her organization will continue the conversation about mental health and increased collaboration between healthcare professionals (i.e., psychologist, nurse, medical doctor) to provide more comprehensive and wrap-around care to members. She would also like to see an increase in educational seminars that relate specifically to police mental health and how officers can care for themselves and other members.

Comprehensive Participant Overview

While all participants discussed their experiences of operational, organizational, and culture stress, the impacts were varied. For Mary Jane, it was the combination of stress that had significant impacts:

nobody warns you about the magnitude of the things that you're going to see and deal with, and then there's zero follow-up or zero check-in for well-being after you've dealt with all of these calls. I found being a female police officer has been a challenge. The discrimination within that, and the sexual harassment. The whole thing's been a nightmare, to be honest.

More potent than the operational stress experiences were organizational and cultural stressors. Most participants indicated that organizational stressors were the more significant cause of mental health injuries than exposure to trauma when performing policing duties. The following are excerpts as detailed by participants:

- *The psychological stress, I was surprised to find out, was worse with the internal politics than being a first responder and being our first responder is already a hard thing to do. It does take a toll on everybody, but the internal toxicity just far overshadows any of the trauma that I witnessed or I was a part of as a part of my duties.* Carley

- *I fully understood that I might be subjected to trauma being a police officer. What I didn't expect was that trauma to come from within and to be essentially like COVID, the invisible virus or the invisible attacker that comes up.* Rebecca

- *The greater psychological stress than going to calls is the internal stress because, like any family, you can face the bullying outside if you have a supportive family at home, but if you are facing stresses outside, like in the job, and then you come back to your station or whatever, and it's not a safe place, I think that's a psychological stress. But a lot of that is due to moral injury. These are the people that supposed to be taking care of you, and they're not.* Brenda

All participants discussed experiencing gender-based discrimination, various forms of micro-aggressions, and harassment (both directed to themselves or other female officers), including sexual harassment, and in some cases, both. Some participants described experiences in which male colleagues, including superiors, had sexually assaulted them. In instances where participants came forward about the assaults, they shared that the retaliation after coming forward had been equally as bad or worse than the assaults themselves. As detailed by Xena, *"the reprisal for coming forward about a* [superior] *sexually assaulting me has been the biggest assault I've ever had to deal with."*

While most participants detailed accounts in which they directly experienced gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment as impacting their mental health, Rebecca shared that she

had not directly had such experiences. She shared that her male colleagues often disparaged female officers; however, she was viewed as a *"good officer."* Instead, she referred to a leadership change as creating *"the perfect storm"* that resulted in her being *"offered up as a sacrificial lamb with the service to save their skin."* It was this experience that led Rebecca to have languishing mental health and resulted in a work leave. Additionally, Victoria indicated that while she had experienced gender-based discrimination and microaggressions by male officers, her mental health had not been negatively impacted. In speaking of psychological stress generally, she shared, *"I'm not saying that it couldn't hit me tomorrow, but I always try to keep myself in check."*

One interesting similarity between participants that arose was the importance and need for support, female mentorship, story sharing, and building relationships with other females. These elements were seen as critical components towards improving mental health within policing and increasing female representation across the ranks. Clair stated, "*it's all about making the other women realize that they're capable of doing this."* Carley spoke of initially feeling isolated in her agency and experiences, revealing,

> *We have a small little network, and we all realize our stories are all the same. I recognize that we all have the same struggles in this group, but I definitely didn't while I was at [police agency] and going through what I was going through.*

Marie noted being in a unique position because of her rank in that she can call members out when they are acting in a derogatory or discriminatory manner. Having experienced many derogatory and discriminatory instances within policing, she disclosed that she could call people out on their behaviour and her rank allows her to do so. For example, she shared the following relating to a colleague commenting on being promoted while on maternity leave:

> *Oh, must be nice you're on mat leave at home doing nothing, but you still managed to get promoted. And I'm like, yeah for sure, this hasn't been 10 years in the making to get promoted, same as you. Can you imagine trying to navigate a career and getting promoted while also pro-creating for your family and doing most of the management of your reproductive, infant breastfeeding, housekeeping and still trying to work hard enough to get promoted? 'Cause clearly I beat you in the process 'cause I got promoted.*

Marie also detailed how she is in a position where she can advocate and support for other female members now, noting,

That is something, an example, where the younger gals would come to me and say, oh so and so's trainer is telling everyone this and she's pregnant and she's about four and half, five months pregnant, still trying to squeeze it into the belt and get on the streets so no one knows. And it's shaming her. And so, I would take the opportunity to pull that fellow in and say, hey I know you're training so and so, and I just want to make sure, there's a few rumours out there that a few people are saying, you know this and that about her reproduction and her family planning. I said I know you, as having a professional wife who's a nurse and stuff, I'm sure you can't even imagine having someone talk like that to your wife in her workplace or telling you how to family plan your plans. And yeah, so those little ways I could find to check peoples' behaviour which just didn't exist before I kind of filled that space.

Marie also spoke of having supportive leadership during some of the most pivotal points of her career, which allowed her to feel emboldened to promote and attempt to make positive change within her organization.

Kathleen's story is the opposite. Despite putting in long hours, being promoted, and attempting to create positive change, she experienced pushback from a few people she supervised and in higher ranks.

I reported up and tried to have these conversations and I got absolutely stonewalled by certain supervisors and felt unsupported and my ideas sabotaged by subordinates. I was told to be careful, not to make too many changes and when a subordinate acted out, I was told by bringing in presenters for respectful workplace, I was backing the member into a corner and causing them to lash out. I was basically blamed for their bad behaviour, but then days later praised for taking action to improve the workplace. I felt gaslit and never knew whether I was sucking or blowing.

She also spoke of checking member's negative behaviour and having to follow the chain of command regarding the discipline process. Despite having reservations about how her supervisor instructed her to handle this individual, the hierarchy was such that she could not deviate. In speaking of the fallout that ensued,

I've just been scapegoated and blamed by the [agency name] *for why he's back [in the workplace] and now there's an unsafe workplace again. My handling of the complaints*

and timelines were used as the excuse for why he did not receive discipline which was completely incorrect. The truth will come out through ATIP requests.

Kathleen said it was her handling of this individual that was scrutinized instead of this member's actual behaviour and the systems that have created it and allowed it to continue.

Another crucial similarity across participants was the withholding of sick pay as a retaliatory tool. This added an additional layer of psychological stress. Effy, Carley, Brenda, Xena, Mary Jane, and Anne each experienced financial retaliation.

oh and of course they don't pay you right away as soon as you're off. They don't pay you at all. I'd have been better off just to punch that Sergeant. At least then I would have, when men are off 'cause they do something stupid they get paid the whole time. Their lawyers get paid, everyone gets paid. It's the psychological stress that I'm not making a salary. I'm paying big money for a lawyer and then you got the husband that's like, you have to go back to work. We can't afford this. But I'm like, I can't go back to work so there's some discord there. Brenda

Participants spoke of the use of provincial legislation governing police officer conduct being used as a retaliatory measure. Police Services Acts allow policing organizations to regulate police officer conduct. When officers are considered to have breached regulations, they can be charged under the Act. It is often professional standards units who conduct the investigations. Mary Jane was charged under her provinces' Police Act in response to her reporting human rights violations, serving as a barrier to her recovery.

I feel like there's been no opportunity for [recovery] *because of the employer interference. They have intentionally sabotaged, they were constantly interfering with my recovery while I was off. That's when they came and charged me in front of my kids. They suspended me. They messed with my disability pay causing it to be cut off for months. I went without pay until everything was sorted out. Everything I've had to do, I've had to do on my own, and do it while I'm sick.*

While others had not been charged under their respective Police Acts, their organizations have threatened to do so if they do not comply with their requests or remain silent. As Brenda articulated, *"for years, PSS has been used as a method of punishment for whistleblowers."*

Other tools of control discussed by the participants included exclusion, frequently being moved between units resulting in an inability to form bonds with team members, labelling, the

use of narratives, non-disclosure agreements, and expensive legal processes. The following are excerpts provided by the participants.

- ◦ *I think that's one of the reasons why they don't hire over 20% women because when your numbers are down, when you're under-represented and you don't have solid support from other women, then they can control and do whatever they want to do with you. And you won't have any woman to stand beside you and fight with you.* Effy

- ◦ *It became a pattern whereby every six months I would get transferred so you could never form a bond with anyone. You're never there long enough. You're there long enough that you can kind of, the reputation as careful about her, careful what you say, you can kind of start to crack that reputation, but as soon as you form bonds you're moved again.* Brenda

- ◦ *When you look at women in policing, they're high achievers, overproducers. Their expectations are needing to be higher because they can't be a lazy dog and do nothing. They need to outperform and outshine and so that's also a psychological thing. Do we really even need to do that or not? Because quite honestly, we're going to get a reputation for being a bitch, or a slut, or a whore, without actual proof of earning those titles or those labels.* Anne

- ◦ *And I was in really rough shape mentally at the time, and it took everything in me to file a human rights complaint with the human rights tribunal. So, I did that, thinking that was an even bigger step, but of course they have lawyers that just bury me in debt, and we didn't really get anywhere. I had to withdraw because it was costing too much money and I wouldn't agree to signing non-disclosure and my lawyer said, if you take this to a hearing it's not going to be worth your while because they're going to give you 60 grand if you win, but it's going to cost you 200. The math just doesn't work out.* Participant name withheld.

- ◦ *It's all about control. They want to control the narrative. They want to control what the public knows, what the public doesn't know, just like they are going to try and force me into a non-disclosure. If they ever pay me out, they're going to want it to be a non-disclosure, and no. A lot of the policewoman that are standing up and speaking out are saying no, we're not signing non-disclosures because you're just trying to keep the narrative like nothing is wrong, like nothing is happening, when it's a huge, huge problem.* Xena

Participants cited the masculine culture as a control tool resulting in asymmetrical power relations. The women described both overt and nuanced methods of control that resulted in a loss of power. For example, in speaking of being supported by a male colleague, Kathleen shared such a nuanced experience.

> *He was counselling me to be careful and watch myself because my reputation could get sewered. He was trying to watch out for me, but also taking my voice away by warning me to not speak up. You lose your voice not just from the people that are attacking you but also from people who are quietly trying to protect you. I never thought about it until now, but that is definitely one of the ways that I lost my voice. I felt safe hiding with him and not dealing with it, just letting it go away. It has served me well until now, when I am expected to use my voice and I have not easily found it.*

Bastarache (2020) spoke of this as well. He noted that even "honourable" and "well-intentioned" members and leaders "have been required to conform to (or at least accept) the underlying culture, which they have, for the most part, had to adopt in order to succeed in their career. Those who do not accept the culture are excluded" (p. 55).

All participants agreed that the organization and culture must change. As well, most agreed that Canadian policing organizations' are failing not only female police officers but also police officers in general. Kelly described policing organizations using a very poignant metaphor:

> *You're standing on the edge of a cliff and all it takes is for someone to reach their hand out and say, here let me help you come back, and instead the organization is poking you on the chest with their index finger. That's how I feel about how this organization treats people, and I know there's quite a few people in the organization have been treated that way and so I think that there is a support group for us because we get that, and we know what it feels like to be poked in the chest when you're on the edge of the cliff.*

Content Analysis

This section begins with a powerful excerpt from Bastarache's report (2020) that encompasses the experiences of not only the women involved in the settlement process but the assessors, as well, and sets the stage for this section:

> *It is impossible to fully convey the depth of the pain that the Assessors witnessed in the 644 interviews that were conducted and 3,086 claims that were assessed. What the women*

told the Assessors shocked them to their core. This process has forever tarnished the image of the RCMP as a Canadian icon. Bright, well-educated women said that they joined the RCMP seeking to help others, sometimes because they themselves had needed help as a young person. They told the Assessors of the brutal treatment they experienced which ground them down, broke their confidence, and shattered their trust in their fellow officers. The full tragedy and suffering of what the RCMP's failure to provide a safe workplace has done to these women is overwhelming. (p. II)

Each participant was asked what she thought about the psychological stress involved in policing. Three main categories of stress were noted including, operational, organizational, and cultural stress (as a subset of organizational stress), although not all the participants used this language to describe the psychological stress endured. All participants spoke of the operational stress they experienced that resulted from bearing witness to the trauma of others. For Effy, it is *"the trauma of seeing people at their worst and going through horrible things, that you feel terrible as a human being."* Most participants indicated that while they expected to see these types of events, they were not prepared for the long-term effects. Several participants said that they had a basic understanding of policing but noted that officers cannot truly understand the magnitude of what they will see until they are performing the role.

Participants identified cumulative or layered stress as a factor, both in the context of the work associated with being a police officer (operational stress), processes related to the organization (organizational stress), as well as the cultural environment (cultural stress). Most indicated that they did not realize the cumulative stress toll until the mid-point of their careers.

Operational Stress

In probing further, all participants identified psychological stress relating to their day-to-day work as police officers. These stressors included call type or work type such as calls involving violence, particularly those involving children.

I think that was one of my first definite moral injuries out on the street was going to a home where there was a lot of intoxicated people, and it was five in the morning with little babies and children and people hadn't slept all night and there was one sober person in the house. The process that [Child and Family Services] *had was as long as there was one sober person in the house we were leaving, and we left those little children. And I couldn't, like I mean after 20 years you're used to it, and it's like you just kind of push it aside, but*

that was one of my first moral injuries. It wasn't right, this was not ok, and I felt we were damaging the children by leaving and not helping them. It damaged us to walk away and leave those children. Kathleen

In speaking further to the damage caused to officers viewing traumatic events, Kelly shared, "*I can tell you that I cannot, I cannot do another investigation of a child that's been murdered by their parents because I know that I don't have what it takes to cope with that.*"

Numerous participants expressed that calls involving victimized children became even more impactful once they had children of their own, particularly when they are reminded of their own family members.

- *I know for a lot of the gals and myself, some of the calls that we go to where we can recognize our family. I went to a suicide where a girl jumped off a bridge and landed in the rocks and I kind of held her while she died. And I remember the feeling haunted me, I dreamt about that kid forever. She had this thick curly coarse hair like my girl, and it was just heartbreaking. It was heartbreaking. So those stories where mothers can actually go to an accident or whatever it is and you go home and you have your little people at home, like that psychological stress of being so acutely aware of the harm that comes to people, the damage that can be done to people. Same too with assaults and rapes and sexual assaults of children, that that's real. That's real and we know it.* Marie

- *They would sit heavier on me because you have been up in the evenings with the baby crying, you've spent intimate time with your baby, it just put a different perspective on it. Like you really, you never could comprehend it, but then you really can't comprehend it and now you overanalyze it, so that had a huge impact on me that way.* Sally

They also identified as psychological stress sources were shiftwork and lack of schedule flexibility. Multiple participants spoke of the implementation of schedule flexibility as a tool to reduce psychological stress and increase mental health within policing, likening it to the nursing profession. Participants discussed proper critical incident debriefing as a mental health support tool, including building and increasing resilience. This tool was viewed as being important from both operational and organizational stress standpoints. Consistency in the offering, timing of, and the content of debriefings were noted as important factors for consideration as well.

Additionally, there was the opinion that time off after critical incidents should be mandatory and yearly comprehensive mental health assessments. Numerous officers expressed

the importance of organizational mental health service provision for operational stress as a critical element of ensuring retiring officers are as healthy as possible. Finally, organizational resource constraints were classified as a psychological stress source relating to an operations standpoint and mental health care. According to one participant, *"We are so under-resourced that we are imploding. I can hear the violins playing on the titanic deck, 'cause we are sinking."*

Participants described psychological stress associated with being physically injured when performing their duties, including broken bones and surgeries. One participant revealed her experience as being the target of a murder plot, of which her colleagues did not inform her for multiple days upon it being discovered, and the psychological damage that resulted.

This guy was crazy and had past convictions for disarming a police officer and assault causing [bodily harm] *and all these horrible things. They didn't tell me that this guy had a plan in place to kill me…I don't even know how long it was before the security division of our organization came and armed my house. So for weeks, every day I came home, I would clear my house with my sidearm out to ensure no one was hiding inside. I slept with my firearm. I was terrified. I was offered a move, but I was so stubborn... I guess programmed to be tough and I refused to move… that went on for quite a while. And it was interesting because Crown counsel suggested they could just do a peace bond, and I said no, this guy is dangerous, he needs to be held accountable and we have to go to court. We did and he was convicted. It bothers me greatly that my colleagues didn't warn me about this credible threat on my life when they first learned of it. I felt so alone and vulnerable.*

Another participant discussed the discrimination she faced because of physical limitations due to being injured in the line of duty, and the psychological stress, trauma, and negative mental health that occurred because of the discrimination. A third participant detailed how her partner left her during the arrest of a combative suspect and later told her he had done so because he was sexually aroused at the sight of two women fighting.

Organizational Stress

While all participants had anticipated experiencing a level of psychological stress related to the performance of their duties, numerous were not expecting the psychological stress that ensued because of their workplaces. All participants endorsed experiencing psychological stress because of their organizations. Causes of organizational stress included issues related to the following:

- lack of organizational, supervisor, and colleague support:
  - ⇒ *And the public has no idea what's going on. A lot of the things that's happening in the communities is because of bad leadership in policing.* Effy
  - ⇒ *You've heard about how it affected my career early on so now I'm already stigmatized, and people don't forget and so whatever management team was there, they become higher in the echelon, and so you're fucked. You're absolutely fucked.* Anne discussing lack of support over time.
  - ⇒ *I think until you know what's going on in somebody's mind every single day, we can't pretend to know and that's what a lot of these managers do. They look at it like we're all on holiday, sitting at home and not coming into work, but meanwhile we're battling hell in our minds, at every single minute of every single waking moment, and the impacts that it has on our families. They don't think about any of that stuff. All they think about is themselves and how it affects their shift scheduling.* Mary Jane discussing a lack of support.
  - ⇒ *I was like, I'm going to have a [section] where people feel safe and included to come to work, where they feel valued, where they're going to work hard and play hard and…they're going to be in a place where I'm going to recognize them for the hard work they do, we're going to take care of each other and where it's going to be healthy. And it was the absolute opposite. I was challenged in every sense of the way on my trying to be that sort of new vagabond change agent.* Kathleen in speaking about her desire to create positive change within the organization.
- change in leadership
  - ⇒ *It's always depending on your boss. Our current chief is amazing, he's super supportive, you know he has your back…he's a good leader and I'm proud to be working for him. The chief before that, you didn't feel that kind of support, so morale kind of took a dip.* Clair
  - ⇒ *And then* [chief] *came in, and I think the way that* [chief] *was brought in by the Commission was to clean up and to make sure people answered the complaints that were outstanding. So, he reopened the complaint and basically said, she'll answer to it and so that's how it sort of came too.* Rebecca in discussing a complaint that had initially been unfounded.

⇒ *Then when it came to an opportunity for career advancement, I was told I was too old. I had too many years on the career and therefore, I was not allowed to apply. I've been in pivotal points in my career that you would think would drive a career forward, and yet always being put back on the lower level of the totem pole, and accepting it, moving forward to try and advance my career…I was approached by* [another higher-ranking superior] *who then put this opportunity out to tenure to all of us to apply. I applied for it, I won it, and I got a position without approval or support from the direct supervisor.* Anne

- lack of/problematic/unclear/improper application of policy, procedures, and processes

  ⇒ *I don't really necessarily care that people are getting promoted. It's the unfairness of it and how some people are held back over others because of race or gender. To me that's unacceptable and that's what bothered me more than anything.* Effy

  ⇒ *On paper there's a formal process. You're supposed to fill out a form and put it in, but if they like you, they will give you whatever you want and you don't have to put anything on paper.* Carley discussing promotion and lateral transfers.

  ⇒ *When I got passed over for this last spot, not only did I beat everyone out, I was the most senior person who'd been, for the longest time, trying to be a part of this team and he's eight years junior and he walks in, basically he got chosen. He did not beat me in the scoring either. It's been interesting. I've watched him get an invitation at more junior years' service to every single group I ever wanted to be a part of, that I could not get an invitation to try out if I lit myself on fire…it is the same as seeing other peers of mine equal to my service and expertise move on into these areas.* Marie in speaking about and competing for specialty teams.

  ⇒ *There were so many lies. The organization was trying to prevent evidence from getting into my* [proceedings] *to exonerate me. They then changed the charges because they would not be able to win if they kept it as is. I was fully exonerated.* Rebecca in discussing being charged under the provincial Police Services Act.

  ⇒ *I reported it, this is after he's been found to be inappropriate at work. I'm away from work and he still inappropriate, and rather than go with the criminal route, they decided to keep it in house and make it just to an employee relations issue again, which is astounding to me because I never, if I had given in to his requests and had*

some sort of a relationship with him, I would be protected by provincial legislation. They would be forced to lay a criminal charge because there would be a domestic of relationship. But because I refused, it doesn't fall under that legislation so they can use their discretion and choose not to lay a criminal charge. So, they've not laid it, a criminal charge. I went to an outside service to have them investigate, a much smaller service and very close knit with [Carley's service name] *and they wouldn't lay a charge either and I know that's because of political influence.* Carley in speaking of reporting continued misconduct of a superior.

⇒ *You're allowed to say what you like, there's casual racism, casual sexism here, that was just accepted. I find that consequences are absolutely not clear and although on the face of it, it looks like you're being allowed to be an adult and conduct yourself how you want, what it really means is that nobody has a grip of anybody and everyone's running their own little kingdom of how they perceive the job should be done, and then conducting themselves in whichever way they see fit and never being held accountable if it's wrong because there are no standards. The organisation apparently wants to change but the leadership don't understand what the root causes are. How can you tackle change without this!? You have plenty of people in the right jobs doing the right things and trying to make things better; however the leadership just comes in like a bull in a china shop and decides they want it done a certain way with no regard for the work already being done to improve procedures. There is no incentive to work hard as you are treated the same as someone who is a problem. In fact the person who causes the problem gets treated better than the hard worker.* Rebecca in speaking about a lack of accountability and discipline standards.

⇒ *I have integrity, I'm empathetic and compassionate and caring towards the people that worked for me. Yet I'm the one who gets pushed out. I'm the one who gets sabotaged. I'm the one who's a problem. I'm a problem because I'm not following your bullshit protocol, your games. They've known he's a problem basically since the day he got hired, and this just continues and continues and continues and they've let it happen. If they had dealt with him appropriately back then, if they had dealt with him appropriately when* [name] *came forward about him 18 years ago, it could never have*

happened to me. It couldn't have happened to the other women. They allowed it to happen. Xena referring to her experience of being sexually assaulted by a superior.

⇒ *It depends on who you are and how liked you are by who happens to be, whoever's making big decisions that day. It's based on an individual basis, but some people will get accommodated, and they can go in a car but not answer any calls or some they'll put in a station, and they will answer the phone and walk-ins and stuff like that.* Victoria speaking about the accommodation process within her organization upon returning from leave.

⇒ *They had to re-examine all of the promotional processes as part of a gender audit. When they did that, this is very interesting, all my scenarios, I'd always barely passed…this promotional process, they made the scenarios blind, and I actually got 100%. And when you look at all the lists of who was promoted, the top 10 people, seven of them are female. And I think it's the perception that when you're telling this scenario, you don't have as much merit. Females, you start at zero and as you say stuff you could add points, whereas men, you start at 100, but if they missed stuff, they'd subtract points. So as soon as it was a blind scenario, it's that whole implied merit, that when you take gender out of it, then you get the true results.* Brenda in speaking of her recent experience with the promotional process.

Organizational Culture and Gendered Stress. All participants identified psychological stress relating to organizational culture and experiencing psychological stress in the workplace associated with being female. Mary Jane provided a detailed snapshot of her experience of being a female officer within policing:

"[W]e're apples and oranges. I'll never be an apple, and they make that very clear the moment that things go bad with another co-worker who happens to be a male. They'll get in their little football team and protect the quarterback despite knowing what he's done or what he is. We'll always come on the bottom of that. We're never going to be able to get out from underneath those clubs. They protect each other and they know that if they don't, then they'll be the outcasts along with us."

The participants described the organizational culture as hierarchical and one of silence, regardless of circumstance, where officers are socialized to conform. One participant told of a culture of spoken and unspoken rules that female officers must follow. Numerous officers

pointed out the importance of being well-liked by colleagues as their lives depended on it. This resulted in some identifying as engaging in morally offensive or complicit behaviours to conform (i.e., sexism, gossiping) and making adaptations to fit in. Adaptations included the altering of physical appearance to present as "*hypermasculine*" and altering behaviour, including using manipulation to *"beat the men at their own game, but still remain not a threat."* Kathleen discussed using a similar approach, stating, *"you tailored your behaviour and the way you conducted yourself to not rock the boat, to always be somebody they could trust and count on, that wouldn't tell on them."* Additionally, participants spoke of altering their behaviour to ensure they were not in a position that could be misconstrued.

There was also a discussion of the connection between gender and psychological trauma: as stated by Marie, *"the gendered-experience being in a male-dominated hypermasculine profession, it's just that psychological, I want to say trauma. It's almost like fatigue, it's just like that, that feeling of that personal attack on almost a daily basis sometimes."* The participants noted that women are often viewed as the weaker sex within the policing world and are judged before they even enter the workplace, whereas men receive automatic acceptance. Additionally, men were seen as having merit based on their gender, while women must prove their worth. Multiple participants said that women must perform and continually prove their capabilities, having to outperform their male peers. Some participants noted a fine line between outperforming their male colleagues to be seen as capable versus becoming the source of resentment for the outperformance.

Additionally, the participants spoke of being assigned gendered tasks such as those working with domestic and sexual abuse victims, children, and administrative duties. Numerous participants also commented on this being a public expectation, revealing that the public often requests female officers for certain calls. One participant spoke of the intersection of gender, becoming physically injured, and the compounding impact on mental health due to the toxic workplace and discrimination. Others commented on the psychological stress associated with the intersection between gender and family planning, and family status.

Family Planning and Family Status. Whether each participant had children not, thirteen participants acknowledged this category as a source of psychological stress for police women with children. Most felt that stereotypical societal roles of women as the caregiver applied to female officers with children. Not only were many full-time officers, but they also fulfilled the

roles of mother and partner/spouse at home, taking care of much of the child-rearing and home duties with little time to decompress at the end of the day. This included taking time off work to care for sick children, causing resentment amongst their peers. Victoria shared, *"In your household, your wife does it; in my household, it's no different, just now you're pissed 'cause you gotta answer my calls 'cause I'm not there tonight."*

Other considerations included organizations promoting mental health to gain public approval and hiring women for *"optics"* rather than their actual value. Brenda stated, *"They speak mental health, but there's no action. It's absolutely lip service, flavor of the day."* Kelly echoed this, stating, "*it's just all about talking, it's like lip service but none of it is actually doing anything to make a difference."* Participants noted the hiring of women for *"optics"* as particularly problematic given the lack of family-friendly policy and accommodation within policing organizations. Kelly shared,

> *The problem, I feel, is that this organization tends to look for those people for optics, not for the real value that they have. And if you're going to bring in, 50% of your police officers are going to be female, who are you attracting you are attracting? 25- to 35-year-old females, and what do 25- to 35-year-old females typically want to do with their life? They want to have children. Well now what you're saying is that we lied to you when you got on, about supporting you while you have children. Suck it up Princess, you know what, I don't care that you have two kids. You're still working night shift. We're not going to accommodate you. We're not going to have job share and those are all wrong. They're all wrong mixed messages.*

Additionally, numerous participants shared that they had wanted to plan for children at certain times in their careers. However, they noted this became problematic due to not reaching milestones like their male counterparts, adding to layers of stress both at work and in their personal lives. Brenda said,

> *The work life balance is hard because it's hard to plan, you wanna plan kids for certain times in your career, but then if you don't get to that point in your career, when you don't know where your career's going, it's hard to properly plan your life and I think that's a lot of stress too. How having kids, and it shouldn't be, it should be you have kids, you take your maternity, it's no big deal, but if I'm applying to this position, do I wait a year until I get this position? All those considerations that I don't think men have.*

Many believed that most of their male colleagues do not experience this stress level, do not understand the female work/life balance stresses, and behave in discriminatory and harassing ways around pregnancy, maternity leave, and family status. Included was the recognition that such discrimination has affected some female officers' decision to have children. Participants with children also described their experiences of stress at home and having feelings of guilt around not being present, whether physically, emotionally, or mentally because of their work as officers.

> *Sometimes you get home, and your family doesn't necessarily get the best of you and as a mom I think you wear that guilt a bit, like you're too tired to read a book, you don't want to do homework, I don't want to decide what's for supper, we're having peanut butter sandwiches again, and can you please just like put yourself to bed tonight. Like those nights you know where I don't know if dad's experience that the same way.* Marie

 Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, and Violence. Discrimination and harassment were everyday experiences that the participants shared. Participants conveyed that while psychological injury in the police workplace is becoming more accepted, it is very much dependent on the cause of the psychological injury.

- ◦ *I think both the public and also in internal policing, the mental health aspects, they only talk about it being acceptable when it's call related. If you have PTSD, you better only report it if it's related to a call on the road. There's just no recognition for the internal toxicity because it's so covered up.* Carley

- ◦ *I think I was always like, oh well, I've never been involved in an officer shooting or anything like that, so my mental health is good, the little stresses that I have, but I think now I'm realizing all those little stresses, they do add up and it is impacting my life…I've heard some people say, oh get used to it and you get some eye rolling as if it's not a shooting or anything like that, as if it needs to be this big, this one big event in order to be justified.* Olivia

Psychological injuries caused by critical incidents such as officer-involved shootings were deemed more acceptable than a psychological injury caused by an accumulation of smaller events or that which is caused by discrimination, harassment, or physical/sexual violence at the hands of colleagues. However, the consensus among the participants was that while this was true for male officers, the same did not apply across the board for female officers, especially if they

had put forth a complaint regarding discrimination or harassment internally (organization) or externally (i.e., labour board, human rights tribunal).

Regardless of the psychological injury source, these women reported being discredited, ostracised, and made to feel weak and broken instead of being supported and rallied around by their colleagues. Mary Jane shared,

> They claim that there's all this help out there and there's not. It's all smoke and mirrors. We're just an inconvenience to our employers for not being well, and we're treated like broken toys, and like fakers. We're all just looking for a doctor for summer off and I mean that's just insane, the way that the employers view mental health in the workplace.

Anne likened the experience to that of the 18th and 19th-century perceptions of female hysteria and the *"optics of mental illness"* and posed questions about why male officers with psychological injuries received promotions, yet she was stripped of her duties while on accommodation for mental health reasons.

The conception of white male officers vocally sharing psychological injury experiences being heralded as heroes while women experiencing the same being portrayed as damaged and weak was common. Sally described a poster she recently saw that endorsed supporting mental health, and the photo displayed the back of a male police officer. She noted it reminded her of a white male colleague with whom she worked that had experienced significant mental health struggles and became the "*champion of mental health.*" She relayed that "*he had people rally around him, it was amazing, you came up,*" whereas she felt that women officers experiencing mental health struggles are not viewed the same way.

> Well, there's a male in that picture and he's a white male, so of course people are going to be like that's amazing, you struggled, you got over it, we all love you. Whereas a woman, oh well she's weak, of course she's going to crumble and fall. We have hormones and we make babies, and our bodies are for other reasons sometimes. It's like, okay sure.

Both participants and the Merlo Davidson report (Bastarache, 2020) highlighted gender-based discrimination, whether for specific work-related assignments, being dismissed early, going out for coffee, not being invited to work and non-work-related events. Gender-based discrimination relating to promotion due to problematic, biased, or a lack of promotional processes and procedures was also a shared experience of the participants and identified as a psychological stress source. For example, Olivia shared that she had been blocked for a lateral

transfer upon returning from maternity leave, being told her *"examples were too dated."* Brenda also reflected in her numerous experiences:

- *What's interesting is, always all my examples were civilian, what I do volunteering at my kid's school or volunteering in my community. I would do it anyway, but why for me to get a competitive example, do I have to do all this extra work on top of the work I already do at home and the work I do at work? All the men, they're giving the examples at work. They don't have to find all these extra examples.*

- *Gender discrimination always has a financial component because if you're stuck on the road, you're not making the eight percent detective pay. If you're not in the cool units like the major crime and that, you're not making the overtime. You're not making the court time. So, 99% of the top 25 or 50 people are men. They get the cushy jobs, they get the good hours, they get the Monday to Friday, they get all the extra pay, they get the promotion. It's a whole cumulative effect, and if you look at all the sunshine lists, all the top salaries are almost always men. They're heavily overrepresented.*

Other psychological stress experiences pertained to sexualized and derogatory language and labels (i.e., *"paper bitches," "off-duty mad," "sluts," "bitches," "whores," "fat sham*[ing]*,"* mocking, stereotyping) and tolerance of the same at all organizational levels, a finding also corroborated by Bastarache (2020). Effy relayed dismay and shock of the behaviour and tolerance that is accepted in her agency:

> *It's that it's okay to sit in front of people and talk about your sexual innuendos and share those details. It's that you can talk about certain members of the community and make fun and laugh and your supervisor just sits there and goes along with it.*

She shared how gender, race, ethnicity, and religion compounded for her, these factors coming together causing her to become an even bigger target within her organization, thus adding additional layers of psychological stress. Identifying as a Persian and Muslim woman, she shared, *"The way officers spoke to me, asking about my vagina, asking how it compared to a black woman."* Effy went on to say, *"Part of the racism that I saw wasn't just targeted towards myself, but also racialized communities – this translated into how the public was treated, which weighed heavily on me."* She believed that the way officers treat each other within the organization transfers into the community and dictates how marginalized communities are

treated by officers, highlighting that the lack of accountability relating to these behaviours *"sets the boundaries for how others behave."*

Carley shared that would distance herself from women who were identified as "*bad PWs, believing in the rumour mill"* and "*accepting a lot of sexual harassment as just a part of the environment, the landscape."*

- ◦ *The sexual comments throughout my entire career, even the way they talk about other women, the way women are over sexualized. We'd have female prisoners in, and I'd have to search them, and I'd come out of the room from searching them, and oh, are her tits real? Are they fake? Is she harry, is she shaved? Does she have a landing strip? Stuff like that, just constant oversexualized, degrading of women, constantly, and you become a part of it. You become a wing man to it because it's only way to survive in the environment, is to just laugh about it and be OK with it. I will never, since being off, I have my morals and my values back, and I won't ever let them take that away from me ever again, never, never.* Xena

- ◦ *I have never experienced a physical sexual assault ever, like anything like that, but discrimination and overtly sexist comments and disparaging comments based on my body parts or my gender or my sex life or reputation or anything like that, I have experience with that countless times for sure.* Marie

Many of the participants reported being privy to and experiencing gender and sexual-based harassment throughout their careers (also corroborated by Bastarache, 2020).

- ◦ *It started very early with rumours that I was having sex with my trainer. I was engaged to a fellow at the time and my trainer was married and I was absolutely not attracted to my trainer in any way, shape, or form at all. I think it was perpetuated by my trainer who wanted to think that he was much more than he was. It started right there, that early, lots of flirtation, lots of weirdness around that stuff, and it just went on, and one of my bosses early on would take me to task on things that he would never take a male member to task on.* Kathleen

- ◦ *I haven't had a lot of workplace harassment, but it's there. I've had it, not to the point where I feel like I need to report it or it's affected my life in a, to the point where I need to leave or anything like that. But it's always there, it's always hidden in there. And it's like I'm definitely more aware of it as I get more senior. I think when I was junior, I just put my*

head down and did my work and just said, well I'm in a male dominated industry, there's
certain things I have to put up with, and then after I got more years under my belt, I was
like, I don't have to put up with that. Clair

Additionally, numerous participants identified being sexually assaulted by their colleagues and superiors. Effy passionately voiced that sexual violence within policing is a significant factor in female police officers' lives.

Major, major is sexual violence. Every police officer I know has been sexually harassed or
sexually assaulted, whether you're attractive, you're unattractive, if you're heavy or light,
doesn't matter. Every police woman faces sexual harassment and that is one of our biggest
contributors in…that is how our careers start, that is the start of our career. We are
categorized. We are groomed, and then we are sending them into a police service where
sexual harassment, sexual violence is rampant, and that dictates our careers. Whether you
want to play ball or flirt or do whatever you need to do to get through it, but that's how it
starts and that's a major factor.

Two participants identified being physically assaulted by a colleague. One reported that her colleague had become upset because she had carried out her police duties, and in doing so, exposed sexually inappropriate behaviour. As a result, he attacked her at work while in uniform and choked her. She was blamed for the attack and experienced *"victim-guilt"* because immediately preceding the assault, she had made a *"vulgar comment"* towards her attacker.

I had made that vulgar comment. And officers told me, well it's your fault for saying that.
And you know, it took me awhile. I'm like, no it's not my fault (laughing). *He did everything*
he could to obstruct a criminal charge. And sure, it was it was a comment I should not
have done, but it certainly doesn't make it my fault for the assault that happened shortly
thereafter.

That incident resulted in charges being laid against the officer under the Police Services Act. The officer was found guilty, yet he remained a police officer.

Bastarache's (2020) findings supported the participants' experiences.

While acknowledging that the Assessors met only with those who had experienced serious
forms of sexual harassment and discrimination based on their gender or sexual
orientation, the accounts were consistent from decade to decade. The level of violence and
sexual assault that was reported was shocking. Indeed, over 130 claimants disclosed

penetrative sexual assaults. Other claimants described a sexualized environment in RCMP workplaces. This was characterized by the frequent use of swear words and highly degrading expressions that reference women's bodies, sexual jokes, innuendos, discriminatory comments with respect to the abilities of women, and unwelcome sexual touching. Of particular concern in the context of policing was the denial, or the threat of the denial, of backup. Similarly, women who identified as LGBTQ2S+ were also subjected to ostracization, pejorative comments, sexual assaults and being outed without their consent. (p. II)

While the participants identified these events as psychological stress sources, most identified their experience reporting these events as causing more psychological stress and damage than the discrimination, harassment, or assaults had caused. All participants who reported experiences of gender or disability-based discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and violence in the workplace experienced additional psychological stress associated with improper handling of complaints and retaliation. Retaliatory behaviours described by the participants included being the subject of gossip and rumours, *"character assassination,"* discrediting, *"workplace mobbing,"* continually being moved to different positions within the service, demotion, being charged under the provincial Police Act, and financial repercussions such as contesting mental health leaves (resulting in suspension of pay).

- *but even after I proved that I was sexually harassed they never reinstated my position. I lost about 10 grand of pay a year since I've been off. So, there's definitely been a lot of retaliation, even as I'm at home and I'm away.* Carley

- *This same* [supervisor]*, so that was the second* [type of] *complaint I made against him, this whole mobbing, and they settled, which I can't talk about, didn't even cover the lawyer fees, but he got recommended for promotion 28 days later, but why do you want this person as an inspector? So then, this was* [late 2010s]*, he gets recommended for promotion. That fall I hear from a bunch of guys that I don't even have a name anymore. I'm that bitch. So, I put in a workplace complaint saying, I'm not that bitch, that's gendered language, just tell him to stop. That was last year. I haven't even got a response yet from the respectful workplace section saying it's closed or whatever.* Brenda

- *They don't believe me. When I went off with work, initially I just had a sick note, and I was the only one that was ordered to do a mental health evaluation. I was ordered to a psych*

eval when they had no idea why I was even requiring to be off at that time. They didn't do it anybody else. At one point there was thirty of us off at one time because of the workplace, and I was the only one and the only woman that was required to sit the psychological. I went through every single person that I know of that was off and not one of them had to sit a psychological to substantiate their medical leave and conveniently, I was the only one with a complaint lodged against [the organization]. Mary Jane

 Interaction Between Systems. The data revealed that system processes produce additional psychological stress. Participants identified the interaction between the court process, media, and organizational processes and how these negatively impact mental health. Other systems identified as significant psychological stress sources included individual police organizations, police unions, outside policing agencies, provincial legislation, the political system, and the justice system. As one participant poignantly stated, *"Everything is intertwined…That's the other thing that, as victims, we have to lookout for because you have so many people that are benefiting from the system."* Participants shared the following experiences:

- *And I thought if I have proof of the sexual harassment, I have proof that I was unfairly targeted and was the victim of systemic abuse, and I can't get justice for myself, how in God's name am I supposed to get justice for a woman who is reporting a sexual assault with no witnesses and no evidence? How am I gonna do that? You can't do that. It's just it's impossible. And you know what, I was sexually assaulted by another officer, but I would rather be dead before reporting it. I would rather be dead because I just, I know how it's going to turn out and nobody needs that.* Carley

- *The fact that we're expected to make split second decisions that are scrutinized through the public and social media and then carries on through what the public perceive is true, as well as the public inquiry. All of those processes doesn't make for a healthy work environment I guess for your mind. You're scrutinized through the media and the review boards, police act, and then other people that weren't working that day gave their two cents that wasn't entirely accurate.* Victoria

- *the court processes for us as officers and so much of court is about what the officer did or didn't do and not what the subject person did. It's not even just the* [police agency] *but the systems that are in place can be very very hard on you and can create these issues.* Kathleen

◦ *And then that's the battle with* [workers' compensation board] *as well. Again, not only are you having to battle your workplace, but you're having to battle your disability providers, whether that's gonna be* [an insurance carrier] *for long term disability, or whether that was* [workers' compensation board]. *And just the disbelief around the medical information that kept being provided. Even when independent medical exams were being provided to* [organization name] *that talked about recommendations, because they were so called recommendations and not restrictions, they disallowed what those recommendations were and did not provide an accommodation for them.* Anne

Additional Stressors

Participants spoke of finances as a psychological stressor, whether having to move locations for work or having their pay reduced or frozen due to taking a mental health leave because of workplace-induced psychological stress. Numerous participants questioned their career choice at various points in their careers due to psychological stress, some earlier in their careers, some later, and some throughout. Some of the participants have been actively planning to set themselves up financially to take early retirement. Others cited being unable to resign due to financial constraints:

I just want a new life. Now I'm trying to balance the importance of my life and getting paid. I feel financially bound, and I can't leave. I also, obviously one of the reasons I joined policing was so I had a secure job, or they couldn't just fire me, and I had a pension and I had benefits and that's all for my future. Walking away from that is, I can't. It's like handcuffs. Xena

Participants discussed contextual factors such as the pandemic, the me-too movement, and the defund the police/anti-police movement as impacting their lives. Kelly shared,

I think right now with black lives matters, with all of this stuff coming out, with defund the police. I think that there is a huge group of people [referring to the public]…*who do not see the mental health effects that are caused by the stuff that we see and do on the job. I think that makes it even harder for us because…it makes us feel like, even if we're not, but it makes us feel like an even more marginalized group, the people that are not the norm, the people who are not…this age range, male, that sort of thing[1].*

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[1] Kelly was referring to the stereotypical image of the police officer as male, athletic, hyper-masculine, tough, and stoic. Officers who do not fit this norm are often marginalized within the policing culture, and face bullying and

Brenda shared the impact that the pandemic had on her decision-making:

> *I turned down a bunch of positions because the risk is too high. I chose* [specialized unit] *because I could control my risk there. It's not as low a risk as working from home, but by the same token, I still want to be able to, there wasn't a position from home at that time, so I still wanted to be a contributing member."*

Kathleen illustrated the intense pressure she felt to remain at work during the pandemic, despite fears of bringing COVID home to her family.

> *I couldn't work at home 'cause on the weekends as* a [mid-level management rank] *I was having to work weekends, take phone calls, meet with government partners, yes, was I worried about bringing it home? Yes. Was my duty to go to work and keep the communities going and doing all the things that I needed to do? Yes, I was a workaholic, here we go, new task, new COVID, can't walk away, got to get this done, holy smokes."*

Psychological Stress Impacts

> *I had no idea that, because I'm a very strong person, I had no idea how over the last three years I could become so broken, so broken (quiver in voice).* Xena

The impacts described by participants were varied. General descriptions of the stress impacts included: *"bitter," "crippling,"* and *"broken."* Eight participants identified as taking leave of absences during their careers due to stress impacts. Many of the participants described changes in how they view the world and policing:

- ◦ *Keeping myself in the battle and in the struggle and continuing to fight back has also been really hard on my mental health because I keep thinking there has to be a way for justice to come out and it never happens. It leaves me feeling like, it leaves me the really pessimistic view of the world.* Carley
- ◦ *My love of policing has gone. I have a very high work ethic and I really enjoy work. I feel that's been taken away.* Rebecca
- ◦ *At this point now, I have no love for policing anymore.* Mary Jane
- ◦ *I didn't understand people who are off with mental illness and stuff like that, I'm like come on, just suck it up, come on. And now I'm like, oh my God, I get it. And you really don't get it unless you go through it.* Xena

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harassment. She felt that the public often fails to see that police officers are a diverse group people as well, and not one homogenous group characterized by a stereotypical image of the police officer.

◦ *You have a different lens. Your kids at school, you know their families, and not always necessarily in a positive light, so you always want to bubble your child as to where they go.* Victoria

The women reported experiences and changes to their worldview that were consistent with those described in the Merlo Davidson report (Bastarache, 2020). According to Bastarache (2020),

The full tragedy of what the RCMP's failure to provide a safe workplace has done to these women is overwhelming. Loss of potential, loss of mental health, loss of family and connection, irremediable personality change caused by years of internalized emotion, stress and anxiety. (p. 50)

The following table presents participant stress impacts within the following categories: physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural (American Psychological Association, 2018b; Casarella, 2019; International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc., n.d.; Karnatovskaia et al., 2020).

Table 4.1

Participant Identified Stress Impacts

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioural
• fatigue • exhaustion • decreased/low energy • nausea • stomach aches • vomiting • diarrhea • difficulty breathing • headaches/migraines • visual difficulties • choking • chest tightness • hair loss • body trembling • cold fingers and toes • profuse sweating • sleep disturbance (too much/too little) • insomnia • weight increase/decrease	• suicidal ideation • intrusive thoughts • rumination • worry • racing thoughts • over-analyzing • fixation/obsession • brain fog/brain scramble • confusion • self-blaming/ internalization • negative self-talk • poor decision-making • poor concentration • memory issues • hyper-vigilance • apprehension of surroundings • disturbed thinking	• depression • anxiety • saturation • PTSD • guilt • grief • sadness • denial • unease • nervousness • pessimism • severe panic • fear • uncertainty • emotional shock • feeling overwhelmed • embarrassment • intense anger • irritability • agitation • moodiness	• isolating • loss of appetite • increased appetite • bingeing and purging/disordered eating • obsessive compulsive behaviours • change in sexual functioning • avoidance (both in daily tasks, people, and geographic locations) • numbing activities • change in activity/behaviours • procrastination • inability to get out of bed • snippiness

• jumpy/on edge • loss of muscle mass • miscarriage • autoimmune disorder • compromised immune system resulting in disease • skin conditions • physiological reactions/changes • physical pain • body inflammation • auditory exclusion • tunnel vision	• nightmares • disassociation/loss of time or personal orientation • lack of abstract thinking • lack of clarity • inability to process information • paranoia • loss of identity • loss of trust • lowered self-esteem • lowered self-worth • poor self-image • lowered confidence • increased self-doubt • decreased feelings of safety • altered worldview • negative thinking • catastrophizing • minimizing • decreased motivation	• withdrawal • impatience • helplessness • hopelessness • loss of control • powerlessness • loss of intimacy • lowered resiliency • loss of pleasure or joy • increased sensitivity • moral injury • inappropriate emotional responses	• crying • disconnection • inability to complete daily tasks such as self-care and life tasks • work absences • increased alcohol use • increased cannabis use • increased tobacco use (cigarettes)

Note. Stress impacts as identified by the participants.

The following is an excerpt provided by Anne succinctly describing her stress response, which encompasses each of the stress categories detailed in Table 4.1.

> *Short version, the impact, my own personal mental health, the family aspect in being irritated and fighting, the sleep hygiene impact where the anxiety and the rumination at night became a problem which then impacted physical health the next day. Nutrition, so not eating healthy and well and making poor choices perhaps because a croissant with chocolate in it is so good with coffee, and not fully becoming energized, not knowing where to go for the help for that. Asking for the help for that for a period of time and not*

receiving it. Clarity of the brain and decision making, I think we had talked about that, and making poor decisions. And not being able to look at a cheque and calculate what a tip is, and quite honestly, in [province]*, it's pretty darn easy. Things that were easy became less easy to compute in the brain. It was like a brain fog, a brain scramble. The exhaustion piece. Again, being isolated because of my disability was one aspect, but then the self-fulfilling prophecy. I've asked you for coffee, you've said your busy, and yet we don't ever go for coffee ever again and therefore, it's me. So again, taking the hit for the self-esteem, lowering the self-confidence. I started to have blurred vision with the high anxiety. It got to the point where it became so bad that I was choking and vomiting. I couldn't eat, lost my hair.*

While the following are not exhaustive of the stress symptoms identified above, they provide a snapshot of the participants' experiences relating to physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural stress symptoms.

    Physical Stress Symptoms. All participants noted experiencing physical stress symptoms. Kathleen and Marie discussed acute stress responses in attending work-related calls.

but the baby was getting beaten, and I had a new son around the same age, and I could feel myself physically responding, like I could feel my body changing physiologically. Kathleen

Marie described her experience both during and following a high-risk fire-arms incident:

There were the immediate kind of physical ones that were like the auditory exclusion, tunnel vision, this adrenaline dump where my body was just like spastic an hour after, to periods of hypervigilance and not sleeping for several days and then that sort of turned into a downward slope of a bit of depression, anxiety, weight gain, all kinds of weird stuff kind of happened after that.

    Participants also discussed physical manifestations related to ongoing stress.

- *The geneticists said the only explanation we really have for when you have* [disease name] *like this is stress or exposure.* Xena

- *It felt like all of my bones in my feet were broken, the top of my feet and it hurt to walk. I was limping around and experiencing a lot of pain and I knew my body was breaking down. My family doctor sent me for bloodwork and said I had inflammation and it was stress-induced.* Kathleen

◦ *The connection is any time I'm super stressed, I don't feel it in my body, like nobody would know, I mask, I numb, I do all the things. I'm doing not so much of that now, so I ride out the wave of the stress and then I will throw up sometimes (chuckle). So that's how my body reacts to prolonged periods of stress.* Sally

Stomach issues and diarrhea were also common symptoms among the participants, and two participants recounted having miscarriages due to workplace-related stress. Numerous participants identified increased sweating. Brenda shared, *"It's the sweaty palms when you pass the police station or even, you see a police car in your rear-view mirror, you're like, oh shit, and then I'm like, no wait I'm in a police car. I'm OK right?"* She also spoke of waking *"with the sweats."* All participants spoke of experiencing sleep difficulties. Clair and Xena spoke of using excessive sleep as an avoidance mechanism. Others reported insomnia due to experiencing racing or ruminating thoughts. Several participants recounted having nightmares (a cognitive stress symptom), resulting in disturbed sleep.

Cognitive Stress Symptoms. All participants reported experiencing cognitive stress symptoms, although they were varied. The following excerpts represent a few of the women's experiences:

◦ *It was very difficult to see how often children were being sexually and physically abused. That took a toll on me mentally. I became hyper-vigilant with my own [child]. I wasn't even really paying attention to my [child] sometimes because I was so hyper-vigilant about everybody else at the park or at the pool.* Xena sharing trauma endured as part of her work.

◦ *I remember being alone in the office and all of a sudden, I was just very, it just came to me one day, I thought no wonder all these cops just blow their brains out, this is unbelieva…no wonder they do. If they go through even a fraction of this stuff, no wonder. The answer is right there on their hip. And then I just started to, for the first time in all the years of being an officer, I was very aware of my gun all of a sudden and I could feel it on my hip. I never noticed it before, but all of the sudden I was constantly aware of that weight on my hip. And I had these unhealthy thoughts of being alone in the office and just blowing my brains out all over the office and it was a scenario that played over and over in my head in the last few days and weeks at work.* Carley discussed experiencing suicidal ideation resulting from the harassment and lack of she endured from her colleagues, superiors, and organization.

◦ *In the beginning, you stay for your kids and your family and at the end you leave because of them, because you can't, nobody anticipates they're going to be a burden for this long. Nobody anticipates that you're going to be sick for this long, and that you're going to be off for this long, and it's going to be all encompassing on everyone in your home for this long.* Mary Jane spoke of having a suicide plan at one point and seeking help at an emergency department.

Those participants who endorsed varying degrees of suicidality shared that it was not about ending their lives but instead, they no longer wanted to feel the way they were feeling. Kelly shared, *"It was always just a, please make this shit stop, please make it stop."* A common cognitive stress symptom among the participants was feelings of worry.

> *Worrying a lot all the time, specifically because you see so many car crashes or so many serious incidents. Every time we travel as a family, I think, oh my gosh how bad would this be in the news, the family that's going on vacation, they all died in a car accident. So, every time my family's traveling, I always think of the worst, and I know that's not normal.* Olivia

Emotional Stress Symptoms. All participants spoke of experiencing emotional stress symptoms. Examples include the following:

◦ *My depression didn't present as sadness, it presented as anger, frustration, rage.* Mary Jane

◦ *I wasn't that aware that so much of the trauma and frustration and anger and anxiety that I was feeling was gender-based.* Marie

◦ *My brain doesn't work the same and anger has been a huge part of my life. Not anger like I'm going to punch the wall or hurt somebody, I'm not like that at all. But the manifestation of all this toxicity over the years that's been building up in me is starting to come out slowly.* Effy

Behavioural Stress Symptoms. Almost all participants spoke of engaging in isolating behaviours and becoming withdrawn from family and friends. Kelly shared, "*I think it's a case of isolation in many ways, especially like, I will give a certain amount of myself, but then I put the wall up, and that's, and it's a protection mechanism for me.*" Mary Jane spoke of the detrimental impact the psychological stress has had on her and impacted her behaviour: "*most*

days I don't get out of bed. My daily tasks are minimal. It's impacted me to the point where I'm very low functioning as far as what I would normally be."

Other behaviours included binging behaviours and engaging in obsessive or numbing behaviours. Many participants spoke of zoning out on electronics. Sally discussed online shopping as a numbing mechanism while others spoke of using food as a coping tool.

- *...eating and sometimes not the healthiest choices. The flipside to that is then when I did get into ramping up the health and wellness piece, I did, I started to self-limit with food and so, almost to the point of an eating disorder. Well, you can't have a fat woman in a uniform.* Anne

- *I guess it's part of losing control. I was bingeing and purging. I've been doing that for years and it was getting really bad in the last few months. I've stopped doing that, but I'm having a difficult time because I'm still not eating the food I should be eating. So, I want to purge it because I'm bingeing, but I'm not 'cause I know how unhealthy it is to do that.* Xena

For Carley, it was the use of alcohol and the connection to a pet:

For a while I used that as a coping mechanism, as a way to check out. It was a way of slowing my mind down, making me stop thinking, and also putting me into a good mood, 'cause I was a happy drunk. I saw it as a positive escape. Absolutely nothing gave me any kind of good feelings at all. Nothing did except for alcohol, planning when I'm going to drink alcohol. And we didn't have a dog at the time, but I would go travel out of town to my mom's house when she was at work and going to visit her dog. And taking her dog out for a walk was the only thing that gave me any kind of happiness and in any small resemblance of happiness.

Additional Stress Impacts. Numerous participants indicated that they had experienced financial impacts (as reviewed in the previous section), resulting in additional psychological stress for themselves and their partners and spouses. All participants shared that their personal relationships were negatively impacted in various ways (partner/spouse, friends, and family). Marie shared an example of the impact of her job on her children.

they just talked about how they felt stress and sometimes it was like that stress of my personal safety, 'cause after I was involved in that high-risk fire-arms incident, they stressed about me being killed at work and they were pretty young at the time, so they

would like literally grab onto my pants as I'm leaving for work, don't go, don't go. And as a mom like you deal with that like kind of that mom guilt shit you know like working nights and not tucking your kids in and then the stress 'cause they think you might get injured at work and you're trying to balance this, oh I got to go to work. And then the older kids said that there was always just this bit of chronic stress that they felt in the way that the community and society has kind of shifted from cop hero to cop villain, and they very much felt that and were aware of that and the need to defend what my mom does or the type of cop my mom is, and not all police do that, and police don't just go around kicking peoples' asses. As a mom and as a police officer, the stress of the police world I guess, and our culture on that, on my kids gave me stress too 'cause you sometimes feel responsible that you bring that to them a little bit.

The above findings are consistent with those of Bastarache (2020).

Many women that the Assessors interviewed had been diagnosed with serious psychological injuries including Major Depressive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, panic attacks and substance dependence. Claimants also reported a lack of trust in the RCMP, a lack of trust in men, feelings of isolation, withdrawal from social activities, friendships and sexual relations, humiliation, lack of self-esteem and lack of confidence. Many women experienced eating disorders, alcohol abuse, panic attacks, vomiting on the way to work, inability to maintain a positive relationship with their spouse and children. Some reported intentionally injuring themselves repeatedly. Self-blame is common, even after blatant sexual assaults. We heard stories of women who sat with their service revolvers in their mouths and were only stopped from killing themselves when they thought of their children or their pets. Heartbreaking stories of despair. One claimant committed suicide during the claims process. (p. II)

Interestingly, one participant indicated that her negative experiences and resulting stress had allowed her to prioritize her children rather than the job, a response not repeated in the data. The participant stated *"had my career not come to a grinding halt, my children would not have been put first. So, in hindsight, I probably wouldn't want it as bad as it was, but I would want a little bit to realize that."*

Themes

Based on the content analysis, I identified the following themes: moral toll (including moral distress and moral injury); procedural (in)justice; mental health impacts; mental health support/promotion (including help-seeking, recovery, and narratives); and mentorship, interpersonal relationships, and shared experience. Table 4.2 provides the normative meaning of each theme, its connection to psychological stress and mental health, and barriers to fulfilment.

Table 4.2

Main Themes

Common Theme	Normative Meaning	Barriers to Fulfillment
Moral Toll includes moral injury and moral distress. Moral distress's relationship to psychological stress and mental health –experiences of both being constrained by the internal police culture, and external mechanisms (such as internal and external procedural, legal mechanisms), which prevent one from acting in a what they consider to be a moral manner. Additionally, the burden of having to live with the actions of others in the context of their police duties (i.e., witnessing child abuse), organizational context (i.e., witnessing discrimination or unethical behaviour at various structural levels), in the context of institutional systems (i.e., legal, justice, worker's compensation and benefits). Moral injury's relationship to psychological stress and mental health – Personal experiences of institutional betrayal as well as engaging in behaviors contrary to one's deeply entrenched beliefs and values that can result in psychological, existential,	Meaning: includes moral injury and moral distress. *"Moral injury and distress are the result of the disconnect between what the [public safety personnel] is asked to do or witness and what is a core personal value–the essence of the individual."* (Lentz et al., 2021, p. 12). Moral Distress: The inability for one to act according to his or her moral beliefs and values due to internal and external constraints (ethical dilemma). Moral Injury: *"Moral injury has more recently been defined as a "... particular trauma syndrome including psychological, existential, behavioral, and interpersonal issues that emerge following perceived violations of deep moral beliefs by oneself or trusted individuals" (Jinkerson, 2016)"* (Lentz et al., 2021, p. 2). While the underlying	Barriers to absence of moral toll (moral injury and distress) include organizational culture, lack of education and support, lack of accountability, procedural injustice, oppression, fiscal constraints, social injustice, various system constraints.

behavioural, and interpersonal issues (Jinkerson, 2016; Lentz et al., 2021).	mechanisms for moral injury remain largely unknown, experiences involving at least one potentially morally injurious event (PMIE) are considered to be a precondition (Griffin et al., 2019; Lentz et al., 2021).	
Procedural (In)Justice - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – unfair processes and policies (procedural injustice) can lead to increased psychological stress and languishing mental health and moral injury.	Procedural justice is the concept of fairness and equity in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources. The four pillars of procedural justice are neutrality, respect, trustworthiness, and voice.	Lack of neutrality in decision-making, lack of respect and dignity, lack of voice, lack of trustworthiness in decision-making, lack of effective accountability for decision-makers, masculine culture.
Mental Health Impacts – relationship to psychological stress and mental health – exposure to traumatic and unfair and problematic processes, particularly in instances of discrimination and sexual harassment (and violence) can lead to increased psychological stress and incomplete or languishing mental health. Those *"with incomplete mental health are languishing in life with low well-being. Thus, languishing may be conceived of as an emptiness and stagnation"* (Keyes, 2002, p. 210). Measures of psychological and social well-being (subjective) have been found to correlate negatively with mental illness symptoms (Keyes, 2002).	Meaning of mental health: According to Keyes (2002), mental health can be operationalized as *"a syndrome of symptoms of positive feelings and positive functioning in life. It summarizes the scales and dimensions of subjective well-being, which are symptoms of mental health"* (p. 208). Mental health can be viewed on a continuum which can range from flourishing to languishing, with moderate mental health in the middle. This continuum accounts for a wide range of subjective mental health experiences. *"Like mental illness…, mental health is more than the presence and absence of emotional states. In addition, subjective well-being includes measures of the presence and absence of positive functioning in life"*	Barriers to flourishing mental health (resulting in languishing or incomplete mental health) Dimensions of emotional and psychological well-being - a lack of *"self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy"* (Keyes, 2002, p. 208). Dimensions of social well-being – lack of *"social coherence, social actualization, social integration, social acceptance, and social contribution"* (Keyes, 2002, p. 209).

	(p. 208). Those who view themselves as flourishing in life are considered to have complete mental health: *"to be flourishing...is to be filled with positive emotion and to be functioning well psychologically and socially"* (p. 210). Dimensions of emotional and psychological well-being include *"self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy"* (Keyes, 2002, p. 208). Dimensions of social well-being include "*social coherence, social actualization, social integration, social acceptance, and social contribution"* (Keyes, 2002, p. 209).	
Mental Health Support/Promotion - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – essential in the mitigation, prevention, and treatment of psychological stress and flourishing mental health (including help-seeking, recovery, narratives). **Help-seeking** - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – the act of help-seeking can help to mitigate psychological stress, prevent and treat mental health issues, and be used as a tool of recovery.	As an extension of the World Health Organization's (1986) definition of health promotion, mental health promotion is defined as "the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their [mental] health" (WHO, 2002, p. 8). A coping behaviour during periods of increased psychological stress, recovery, or as a preventative mechanism for languishing mental health.	Stigma/lack of support, education, and buy-in, problematic bureaucratic processes, capitalism, continued discrimination, stereotyping and harassment, stigmatizing language, gendered narratives, and gendered expectations.

Recovery - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – mental health promotion and support can serve as a protective factor and aid in the mental health recovery process.	The process of overcoming a real or perceived problem.	
Narratives – relationship to psychological stress and mental health – the way that we construct psychological stress and mental health through language, and the stories we tell, can serve as a positive or negative tool in the (de)stigmatization and promotion/demotion of mental health and serve as a factor in increasing or decreasing psychological stress levels.	Narratives and discourses shape ones' worldview (i.e., view of mental health, acceptable experiences of psychological stress and mental health outcomes, gendered narratives) and influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. This can influence the uptake of mental health promotional strategies, help-seeking behaviours, and recovery.	
Mentorship, Interpersonal Relationships, and Shared Experience – relationship to psychological stress and mental health – mentorship, interpersonal relationships, and shared experience have been found to be a mitigating factor in the experience of psychological stress and poor mental health (Dombo & Blome, 2016; Kanno & Giddings, 2017; Lee 2017; Pierce, 2018; Sansbury et al., 2015; Strand, 2018).	Mentorship – the provision of guidance, emotional support, motivation, and role modelling. Interpersonal Relationships – an association between two or more people (i.e., family, romantic, friendship, professional). Shared Experience – any experience that causes individuals to identify with one another. The shared experience of groups is the foundation for various levels of culture.	Silencing/Isolating tools (non-disclosure agreements, retaliatory use of police act, isolation via continuous movement between working locations, low numbers of female officers)

Note. Moral Toll; Mental Health Impacts; Mentorship, Interpersonal Relationships, and Shared Experience; (Empirical) ; Mental Health Support/Promotion and, Procedural Justice (Actual).

Moral Toll including Moral Injury and Moral Distress

While not explicitly verbalized by participants, psychological stress experiences were primarily connected to moral toll and procedural injustice. There were two ways that moral toll was experienced, often intertwining. The first involved the experience of moral distress and the

participants' inability to act in a congruent way with their values and beliefs due to internal and external constraints. Kathleen and Xena shared the following stories:

- ◦ *I think that was one of my first definite moral injuries out on the street was going to a home where there was a lot of intoxicated people, and it was five in the morning with little babies and children and people hadn't slept all night and there was one sober person in the house. The process that* [Child and Family Services] *had was as long as there was one sober person in the house we were leaving, and we left those little children. And I couldn't, like I mean after 20 years you're used to it, and it's like you just kind of push it aside, but that was one of my first moral injuries. It wasn't right, this was not ok, and I felt we were damaging the children by leaving and not helping them. It damaged us to walk away and leave those children.* Kathleen

- ◦ *It was the most important work I've ever done, but it was very difficult to see how often children were being sexually and physically abused. There's just so many stories so many stories, and for me I think it's not like domestic abuse, I mean it is but, they're adults, and although I know that most of them can't get out of the domestic abusive situation because of how it is, but I'm like with children, they really can't. They really are the most innocent and their innocence is destroyed and watching that was really really terrible, and seeing that it happened, and people don't even know that. Children are constantly abused and sexually assaulted by every race, religion, it has no colour, it has no, and then I look men, like you're disgusting. How is it that so many men do this, that women and these children, we're all just objects sometimes to them, like a means to an end.* Xena

The second way that the participants experienced moral toll involved moral injury or a combination of moral injury and moral distress involving being the subject of or having to bear witness to and live with the actions and decisions of others that were incongruent with the participants' values and beliefs. From an operational standpoint, Effy described the following: "*One part of it is the trauma of seeing people at their worst and going through horrible things that you feel terrible as a human being, so that's one part of it.*" From an organizational standpoint, Carley spoke of the organizational response she received when reporting sexual harassment, extortion of members of the public, coercion, the illegal actions of her supervisor: "*I reported that, and nothing happened with it. Absolutely nothing. You gotta cover it up.*" In

discussing being threatened by two supervisors who had accused her of lying, Brenda shared the following:

> I did my best to effect an arrest and then it all dropped, but what would have happened if she had not come forward with proof that I wasn't lying. I would have been done with deceit, but it's that whole sense that you can't control your destiny. It's a moral injury that they can lie, they can gossip, and there's no consequences to that.

Carley also shared her experience:

> I have tried everything, thinking that there would be justice for me and for women because I had witnesses. I had evidence. I had text messages. I had all the things that would exonerate me and prove how horribly I'd been treated, but it didn't seem, it doesn't seem to matter. Every system that I have gone through has downplayed or ignored my experience and has done the best to just cover up and minimize the behavior of the aggressor or make excuses or find some way to make it acceptable and not so bad.

Procedural (In)justice

According to the Justice Collaboratory (n.d.), Donner and colleagues (2015), and Roberts and Herrington (2013), procedural justice is the notion of fairness and equity in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources. Procedural justice has also been referred to as organizational justice (Donner et al., 2015; Roberts & Herrington, 2013). While similar concepts, Roberts and Harrington (2013) elucidated that procedural justice focuses on police interactions with the public, while organizational justice is concerned with decision-making within the organization and subsequent impacts on employees. Other studies have differentiated between distributive and procedural justice and explored the connection of each to psychological stress experiences and mental health (Rousseau et al., 2009; Spell & Arnold, 2010), and have found that when employees perceive distributive justice within the workplace, they are more likely to perceive procedural justice as well. Rousseau and colleagues (2009) found that perceived work autonomy is inversely correlated with psychological stress. Furthermore, multiple studies found that organizational risk factors in the development of trauma responses include work environment, unsafe or dangerous workplace, harmful or toxic work culture and climate including low morale and a lack of peer support, lack of supportive and consistent supervision, and a lack of autonomy (Caringi et al., 2017; Dombo & Blome, 2016; Kanno & Giddings, 2017; Knight, 2013; Sprang, 2018; Strand, 2018).

For this thesis, the term procedural justice will be used to describe interactions within the organization. The four pillars of procedural justice are neutrality, respect, trustworthiness, and voice (Justice Collaborative, n.d.) and overlap often occurs between these pillars. Procedural injustice happens when there is unfairness and inequity in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources. All participants spoke of experiencing procedural injustice, and the following excerpts represent some of their experiences.

- ◦ *I got demoted and nothing happened to him. I think he got moved, but that was after my sexual harassment complaint. He's still a Sergeant. They asked me, so what do you want to see happen? They said, oh but by the way, don't even bother asking for him to be fired 'cause that's just not gonna happen. And I said, well, I don't think he should be a Sergeant. Why should he have any authority over women if this is how he conducts himself? And he's never, he's still a Sergeant. He's never been demoted.* Carley

- ◦ *I think if you actually look at policy, it's so subjective. It's just a joke. I think one of the more recent things was, you can't gossip about people because it's bullying. It's like, how are you even managing that? How did that even happen? I mean, it's just ridiculous. It's like someone's putting something on paper because once they do, they can put a tick in the box and , "we are making changes." But they don't understand what they're asking of people. The organization doesn't understand how to deal with someone. If someone does something wrong, there is no clear path of accountability or punishment. There is no consistency or training in this regard. Supervisors should be given training and have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable and how to deal with someone if they fall short of this standard. Unfortunately, it seems it is left for each supervisor to make their own judgement of right and wrong. Put simply there is no consistency, there are no consistent standards and until that is addressed, the organization will continue down this vortex of unrest and low morale.* Rebecca

In discussing the difficulty she experienced trying to get an entry-level course that was the stepping stone for all other courses and required for promotional application, Brenda shared,

I say can I have this [basic investigative course] *course? And I get a response from the Staff Sergeant saying, no you're going on maternity so you can't use it, so we'll give it to someone else. So, I come back from maternity, hey can I now have, and this is just a basic introductory course. I'm not asking for a frickin' homicide course. I'm asking for a basic*

introductory, very first step of your career, everyone should have this when they're five

years on, GIT course, and I get a response back when I get back from maternity and the

Staff Sergeant says no, now because you were gone, you're at the bottom of the list.

Brenda went on to describe the years' long struggle she endured to receive the introductory course, all while watching peers junior to her be offered the same course without applying.

Marie described her experience in lobbying her organization to create new policy and processes regarding specialized team:

I argued with HR and said this has to be measured based on skill, not just on who you

know on the team, or we'll never see, not only women, but the uncool club kids are never

going to get a fair shot at getting in here. It needs to be based on your skills and expertise

so that we're building the best team for teaching also.

She described how she was told to create the new policy, and even in doing so and scoring with top marks, the specialized team disregarded the policy and selected members they desired (not based on skill but by a *"secret vote")*.

Xena shared many experiences, including one in which she described how her organization handled her sexual assault complaint against a superior:

Sir, if you're telling me that not serving a senior member of this organization with a notice

of police service act investigation when they sexually assaulted one of your members is an

oversight, we have a problem. And then the next month was, oh your spot was only a

temporary transfer, we have to post it. They ultimately pushed me out.

Effy reported the following regarding the aftermath of coming forward with two colleagues about sexual misconduct and assault:

Seeing so many women being silenced and losing their careers for reporting and speaking

up about systemic sexual violence in the workplace is one of the hardest things I've come

to witness and learn in policing. The cost of being truthful and seeking help costs so many

of us our lives and livelihoods. That's what makes me want to never give up fighting.

Kathleen also shared her experience with the conduct process:

We were given no right to know anything around the process. It's all secretive, it's all

about protecting the accused and his rights, his privacy. They would not allow me to speak

about the process to the members, so they were in the dark the whole time. And so

basically the offender created the narrative 'cause I'm not allowed, and the victims were

all told they were not allowed to talk about it, therefore the offender told his friends who then told as many people as they wanted, who was named on the allegations, what the allegations were. The complete statements including all details were provided to the offender and then he was able to take from it and spread his version and those victims were treated poorly by many ill-informed employees. The agency should have been more transparent. Right until the end, the victims has to reach out themselves to the conduct authority to ask for an explanation and the encouraged to ATIP the files to get more information.

Anne shared her experience with the accommodation process: *"It blows my mind when we talk about accommodation and looking at what is best for the person versus what is best for the chief, we'll use that term loosely, for the service."* Brenda also spoke of her experience with the accommodation process:

when I was on stress leave for that three years, they denied my long-term disability despite my doctors note saying I had PTSD. And not one person from the service called me, but every month HR would send me a letter, and they'd say if I didn't return to work by the end of that month, I would lose my job. That was the only communication they had with me for three years.

Additional themes emerged from the data; however, they were not prominent. These included social injustice, power and control, and the need for police reform. Social injustice was discussed in that if the organization fails to hold those male officers who behave in egregious ways towards female officers accountable for their actions, this behaviour transcends into the communities, and the sexualizing of women continues unabated. According to one participant, *"there's no consequences, and then you see the result of this out in the community. So, officers that are assaulting women in policing, how can they ensure protection for women outside of policing? They can't. They don't have moral integrity."*

Corruption and coercion were also discussed in this regard. Xena provided her perception of police organizations:

I've learned that it is the biggest gang in the world, that's all police is. We are no better than the other gangs. We are no better than the criminals because they're all criminals just getting away with it because they carry a badge, but there's a lot of bad ones.

Many participants believed that there are more good officers than bad; however, they noted that unchecked behaviour sets the expectation of how members are expected to behave due to police culture. When left unchecked, procedural injustice behind closed police doors not only bleeds into the organization and impacts morale but further hemorrhages into the community with grave consequences for all.

Mental Health Support and Promotion

Mental health support and promotion were discussed in multiple ways by the participants. Firstly, they discussed how the organization treats its members and the overall impact of such treatment on their mental health. Kelly shared the following:

> *How the organization is treating you once you are old or injured or whatever. Recently they've sent out, if you have had any kind of a note from your doctor saying that shift work, those deep dark nights, are not healthy for my patient, which being me. So, now the organization has said, we need your doctor to elaborate on why. Well, if you're a medical professional, your opinion should…I spoke to my doctor about it, and she said, yeah, they are sending out emails saying, these people signed up for shift work. That is a threat in my mind. They're basically saying, if your doctor is saying you can't work nights, then you better go find a job somewhere else.*

Not only was Kelly's organization trying to circumvent her doctor, but it was also increasing the amount of psychological stress she was experiencing by failing to consider her needs. She said that the psychological services unit was trying its best, but organizational interference undermines it. Other participants shared similar experiences.

Many participants noted that the mental health supports offered by their organizations are *"lip service,"* appearing ingenuine, is about legally covering themselves and performing for the public. Brenda said, *"They speak mental health, but there's no action. It's absolutely lip service yea, flavor of the day."* Xena relayed,

> *It's lip service. They just talk a lot about it. They talk a lot about it, but they're not reaching out to the people who need it. It looks to our public that they are taking care of us when it's the complete opposite.*

Kelly also shared,

> *With almost every memo and email that comes out to us that addresses some sort of a tough topic, like police officers been charged or a police officer's been killed or police*

officer whatever, it all comes with the last paragraph being a caveat. If you are stressed out, contact psych services, here's the number, or peer support. It almost comes out as a slap in the face. It's like, if you're so weak that you need this, then here, here's the options for you. It doesn't come across as really genuine.

Additionally, Mary Jane relayed that her organization does not take mental health seriously:

They claim that there's all this helps out there and there's not. It's all smoke and mirrors. We're just an inconvenience to our employers for not being well, and we're treated like broken toys, and like fakers. We're all just looking for a doctor for summer off and I mean that's just insane, the way that the employers view mental health in the workplace.

Kathleen said that it is even challenging to reach professionals within her organization, citing a lack of professional supports due to fiscal constraints as the barrier to accessing help.

And you can't talk to a human, and you email, and you don't know if you'll get an answer. Can't talk to a human. It's so bad. And so, if somebody was suicidal and they were going, help me, like what do I do? The [agency name] *puts, call our EAP number, 1-800-go fuck yourself on the line.*

Rebecca, Clair, Marie, and Sally were exceptions to this and reported that their organizations were working very hard to make cultural change and support their members, including proactive planning and offering unique services. Services included fitness programming, diet counselling plus offering pre-made meals for purchase, sleep clinics, therapy access, critical incident debriefing and peer support, and in-house doctors, psychologists, and counsellors. Rebecca did not feel mental health was stigmatized within her organization and spoke positively about the services offered: *"I think it's good that they have these departments, peer support, psych services and what have you, they're available to us, but I think what's more important is understanding the behaviour that causes those stresses in the first place."* Her identification of the need for more education about stress causes, including those caused by the organization, was echoed by numerous participants. Marie proposed awareness as an inoculant to stress symptoms and ensuring balance, suggesting the importance of members' understanding the impact that the police officer role can have on an individual and ensure they maintain outside hobbies and relationships:

in policing you can tend to start to take away these layers of support and networks that were part of your life prior to and then all of a sudden, you're just left with you and

policing, and you over-identify in the role, and it becomes who you are instead of what you do.

While Clair, Marie, Sally, and Kathleen endorsed having *"wrap-around care"* (Kathleen, 2021), calling on the need for governments to invest in these services, others felt this is problematic. Effy remarked, *"I can tell you having your own doctors at the police headquarters is not a good idea. There're so many things that need to be done from a different perspective because when it comes to employment, you don't want your medical information and your employment mixed up."*

Additional discussions of mental health support and promotion included the impact on help-seeking, recovery, and organizational and cultural narratives about mental health. Most of the participants had accessed help through a professional such as their family doctor or a therapist. Mary Jane cited a lack of access to a psychologist or therapist as a barrier to recovery as the organizational benefits only include four sessions. Additionally, a therapist's lack of knowledge and understanding of police culture was identified as a barrier to recovery. Most participants highlighted the therapeutic alliance as a critical factor in their recovery, of which a key component was therapist knowledge and understanding of police culture and organizations. Xena shared,

She used to work for a police service, so she knows the culture, the toxic toxic culture, she knows it. She has a lot of police clients, so she really knows her way around helping me make decisions or not making decisions and waiting and just, hold off hold off, one step at a time, when I'm feeling overwhelmed.

Kelly also spoke of this,

My psychologist is a forensic psychologist, but her dad was a police officer, so she inherently gets it right from the very beginning, inherently gets it, and I think that's probably a huge part. Other mental health professionals I've dealt with, some of them are good, some of them not so good but when it becomes that almost they're patronizing you, oh mmhmmm, and how did you feel about this and what about your dad and your mom? No, when you can get someone who's got that inherent knowledge and is strong enough to not be afraid to call you on your crap, it cuts all of that excess away and you get down to those mental health issues a lot faster.

Effy noted that while one can seek help,

the thing about seeking help when you're in a situation, like we are as policewomen, is that some of the things you can seek help for, but the other stuff you can't. Other stuff is just the circumstance of the situation you're in. I have no power over what my employer does to me, all I can control is how I carry myself. A lot of it you can get help for, but the other half is really what happens.

Several participants spoke of their experience with medication use as a tool in their recovery. Carley and Kelly both spoke of the stigma around mental health within their organizations as an initial barrier.

It was a barrier for me to access proper supports because of the police culture. I had built up such a stigma in my mind that mental health was really seen as a weakness, taking or needing medication as a weakness, going to therapy is a weakness. Carley

Despite their reluctance, they experienced positive impacts from the medication and chose to continue taking it.

I was determined I was not going to take any medication, but it came down to a psychiatrist and a psychologist saying sometimes your body chemically cannot reset from this and you have to do that. And so, at that point in time, I did start taking a low dose antidepressant and I could see a significant response to that. And now for me, it's still the same low dose, but my determination to get off of it at six months went away because I saw the benefit to it. Kelly

Anne spoke of using medication to help regulate her sleep but chose other natural tools to help with PTSD, depression, and anxiety.

Olivia, Victoria, Kelly, Anne, Kathleen, Clair spoke of the importance of exercise in maintaining mental health. Proper nutrition, maintaining supportive relationships, and approaching mental health with a holistic lens were also cited as an essential mitigating factor in developing mental health issues and promoting the recovery journey.

Participants on leave at the time of the interview or who previously taken a work leave identified time away and physical distance from the environment as vital components in their recovery. Effy disclosed,

Once you separate yourself from any abusive environment, you recover a little bit, but a lot of it has to do with how much you're willing to work on yourself and how you're going to take time to really dig deep and recover.

Brenda spoke to this as well sharing, "*I think it's time and distance, away from work, time off, and cognitive therapy.*"

For others, even with time and physical distance away from the environment, recovery was still not possible due to different barriers. Mary Jane said,

> *I don't think there's been a part, long term, where it's been better because everything is an open wound at this point. There's no light at the end of the tunnel. There's no date of conclusion. There's no closure. Throughout my sick leave, I've been focused on how my employer is going to destroy what remains of my career versus focusing on getting better. And they've refused to participate in return to work even when it was suggested, they're not allowing me to come back regardless. How do you get better knowing that there's nowhere for you to go back to?*

There was also discussion of the use of narratives within policing organizations to control perceptions. The first was the narrative about mental health. Numerous participants noted that members still refer to mental health and mental health leaves in a stigmatizing manner. Participant provided the following examples:

- *We got all these cops, all men. There's an inspector that always posts his gym and how that helps with his mental health, and we got the bearded cop and all these ones that talk about it on social media, but does anyone talk about it at work? No, and they still call it snap leave.* Brenda

- *There're definitely people who will make fun of you for seeking the mental health because it's just that, oh yeah, like I said, she's crazy…so that sort of thing.* Kelly

- *When somebody is off, you're marked on the schedule as ODS, off duty sick. So, a lot of times the term off duty sad or off duty mad comes up, and that's often what's used if there's members that are off for a couple of weeks, oh he's off duty mad, he's off duty sad. And unfortunately, and every time I need to take time off for whatever reason, then you always think, oh they're going to say that she's off duty sad or off duty mad.* Olivia

In discussing PTSD, Kelly noted that that how an organization frames this can either encourage or discourage members from seeking help:

> *I think the words that you choose will affect whether or not people are willing to get help ever right. If you're calling it an injury, I think way more people would say, okay cool, I think I have that, because I know I can get help for it.*

The discussion of narratives also included gendered and derogatory language within policing organizations, often used to demean, discredit, or exclude the participants. As described by Clair,

The way men can talk about women. Just in terms of language used or their obsession with boobs (chuckle). It's locker room talk all the time. And they don't care that you're there and I think that they should. They need to know who their audience is. If they want to have their locker room talk, keep it in the locker room. You used to think you had to try and fit in by trying locker room talk as well. But you'll never be as good as a guy (chuckle) for that.

The use of retaliation and reprisal as a control tactic to silence the victim and allow the perpetrator or organization to control the narrative around events was explored.

They want to control the narrative. They want to control what the public knows, what the public doesn't know, just like they are going to try and force me into a non-disclosure. If they ever pay me out, they're going to want it to be a non-disclosure, and no. A lot of the policewoman in [province] *that are standing up and speaking out are saying no, we're not signing non-disclosures because you're just trying to keep the narrative like nothing is wrong, like nothing is happening, when it's a huge, huge problem.* Xena

Carley highlighted that legal processes can also serve to silence victims, allowing the media to control the narrative around events: "*the lawyers always advised me to be quiet, not to say anything, which hurt me because I would read in the newspaper all these lies, and how they're misrepresenting the environment there, and I couldn't say anything or clarify anything.*"

Anne noted that even when officers speak up, it can have little impact:

There are people that have sued and brought human rights complaints forward, thinking that their voice was going to help and change the generations, the responses to the generations that are coming up. I just, I don't see what legacy we're leaving by speaking up. Now it's just survival. If you can't see that what you're saying is affecting change, then how is it that you're truly viewed as a change agent.

Carley spoke of the benefits of using social media as a means of change.

Out of all the things that I did, it made the biggest impact because it hit the news. It put [police agency] *under a bad spotlight, whereas none of the other things that I had done before had any kind of consequence at all.*

For Effy, the use social media has been a way to have her voice heard and forms part of her recovery.

I've learned to use my anger towards fighting and I've turned a lot of my internalising to public speech. I do a lot of ranting on social media, and that helps a lot. As part of recovery, I think for me is being able to speak about it. I can get it out and hope that somebody else can benefit from it.

Mary Jane also mentioned the importance of using her voice to help other women, despite facing organizational reprisal of being charged under the police act for discreditable conduct and insubordination:

I just think if I make enough ruckus, they'll at least give it a second thought before they do it to the next girl. Maybe they'll sit there and go, well we're not going to do that again 'cause she outed us to the public and everybody's watching us now, so we have to be careful. I'm hoping that's at least where they're at, that they have some sort of fear of how they're treating that the next round of people, whether it be mental health or female officers because nobody else is saying anything. I've got no problem outing them for all of it.

This concept of helping other women was apparent across all participants.

Mentorship, Interpersonal Relationships, and Shared Experience

All participants spoke of mentorship, interpersonal relationships, and shared experience as a critical component for women in policing. Given that many participants identified lack of support, gender discrimination, and harassment as factors that negatively impacted their mental health, female mentorship and shared experience could help mitigate against these in providing space for women to access support and feel heard. Xena felt this is an essential factor in holding her organization accountable and creating change.

We can only make that shift happen if we keep holding them accountable. Part of it is the leadership, like myself. I'm a mentor to a bunch of female constables and they're like, oh I can't do that because or I applied for this and they had the most experience, but they gave it to all the six white hockey boys. I'm like you grieve it. Complain? Really? Yes. Yes. I'm not telling them what we used to be told to me, shut up, don't say anything, you'll ruin your career. No no no. Everybody needs to start calling them out. Call them out. Hold them accountable. Hold them accountable. And that's what the leaders need to be now. That's

what we need to be teaching them, teaching these young officers that are coming up. That's the only way you can change it, if they're held accountable 'cause they've never been held accountable.

Carley spoke of a larger association that has served to connect women in her province.

But being a part of the [name] *Association now, we have a small little network, and we all realize our stories are all the same so there's that. I recognize that we all have the same struggles in this group, but I definitely didn't while I was at* [police agency] *and going through what I was going through. I legitimately thought I was the first person who ever tried to report sexual harassment 'cause I had never heard of it before in my life.*

Clair also spoke to this in terms of the promotion of women in policing.

we developed an informal mentorship program. So again, more helping women understand that we can be promoted, and we should be promoted so. And not because of our gender but because we're capable. 'Cause that was always a drawback for us, some of us would be like, well I don't want to go for, if I get promoted people are going to think it's just because I'm a female and not because I have the capabilities.

Marie echoed this and also spoke of the importance of male allies in providing mentorship. She shared the following example:

I sent him that message and I said you don't always know what legacy you leave behind, but I just want you to know that your support and words of encouragement are what helped me build the courage I have now to go forward with a plan and a vision for how women belong in leadership in the police agencies across the province. That all grew under his mentorship for sure. I think that he was the most vocal and influential I guess because he saw the issue and he was vocal in supporting me and he was the head of all, so that was a pretty big one.

Shared mental health experience was voiced as essential in normalizing mental health and promoting cultural change within policing.

- ◦ *I think through age in the career and people coming out and speaking out about it a little bit more, it becomes more prevalent and more of a safe place to be able to say something.* Anne

- ◦ *I try to not be ashamed in saying that I see a therapist. I try to be open about it so other people are comfortable with it.* Clair

◦ *I think that it's such a slow evolving process. I would love for it to move faster than it does. I see that there needs to be resource groups that can reach out and support people in a different way than peer support because I think peer support is trained just to listen to you rant for a period of time. I think that it would be good to have people who say, yeah, I've been there, and this is the route I took and these, there are these good psychologists out there, that here's why I liked these people and helping them that way.*

In normalizing the need for care after critical incidents, Victoria disclosed,

I send them the EAP number. I was, like guys you can roll your eyes, call me mom for the day, I'm checking in on you, this is what I got for you. Delete it, don't delete it, 'cause if you ask them if they want the number, they are not going to accept it.

While participants acknowledged normalization as a critical component of cultural change, Anne shared that one's reputation and how one is viewed within the organization and amongst one's peers are a determining factors in the uptake of mental health normalization.

Numerous participants also commented on the need for police reform, including complete institutional restructuring. Several participants felt that movements such as Black Lives Matter, Defund the Police, and MeToo could help to serve as catalysts for this change; however, they noted that change is still a prolonged process.
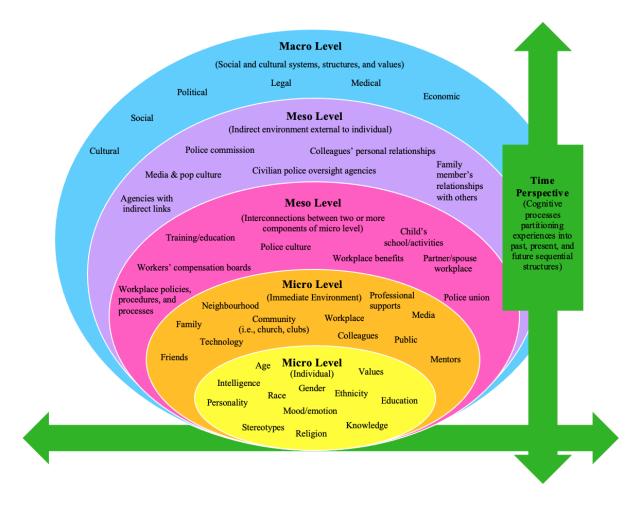
Critical Realist Analysis of the Themes

Critical realism theorizes that reality is categorized into three domains: the empirical, the real, and the actual (Danermark et al., 2005; Edwards et al., 2014; Wynn & Williams, 2012). In this study, the empirical domain consisted of the participants' experiences of psychological stress and mental health. I obtained thick, rich descriptions of each case and identified the structural entities and contextual conditions (mechanisms in the actual domain) that had the power to activate the empirical events as described by the participants. Through abductive reasoning, I explored possible theoretical explanations that could describe the empirical and actual domains (mechanisms in the real domain). I then used retroduction to elaborate on the powers of the various structures and entities that may have combined to produce the events (Wynn & Williams, 2012).

According to Blom and Morén (2011), in the field of social work, it is critical to highlight social mechanisms, occurring at the micro (individuals, small groups), meso (groups and organizations, cultural symbols, regulatory bodies), and macro (societal) levels. Figure 4.9

presents a visual depiction of the interaction between the macro, meso, and individual levels. Micro social "mechanisms consist of powers in terms of causes, motives, considerations, choices, and social interaction at an individual level," the foundation of which is intentionality (Blom & Morén, 2011, p. 64). Previous experiences can affect intentionality. The powers are facilitated and occur through various "micro social interactions (oral, written and/or sign language, gestures, sound symbols, bodily contact etc)" (p, 64). The powers are also mediated by social and material structures (i.e., societal and cultural role expectations relating to numerous factors and communication technology [see figure 4.9]).

Figure 4.9

Social Mechanisms Occurring at the Macro, Meso, and Micro Levels

Note. Compiled from Blom and Morén (2011) and Zombardi & Boyd (1999).

Blom and Morén (2011) described meso social mechanisms as the intersection between powers and meso social interaction and structure. Power relates to "causes, motives,

considerations, choices, and *collective social actions* at *group and organizational levels*" (p. 64). The powers are facilitated and occur through the interaction "within and between groups, networks and organizations" and structures including symbols, regulatory bodies and association, and media and culture (p. 64). Macro social mechanisms consist of powers intersecting with macro social interaction and structure. Power relates to "causes, motives, considerations, choices, and *collective social actions at a societal level*" (Blom & Morén, 2011, p. 64). The powers are facilitated and occur through the interaction "within and between societies" and structures such as political, economic, legal, educational, medical, and social and cultural systems.

Time perspective also impacts the micro, meso, and macro levels. Time is defined as "the measured or measurable period during which an action, process, or condition exists or continues"; "a nonspatial continuum that is measured in terms of events which succeed one another from past through present to future" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) developed the concept of time perspective (TP). They proposed that TP, "a fundamental dimension in the construction of psychological time, emerges from cognitive processes partitioning human experience into past, present, and future temporal frames" (p. 1271). Experiences and changes in perception resulting from experiences change over time, thus impacting "motives, considerations, choices, and social interaction at an individual level" (Blom & Morén, 2011, p. 64) in the present, as well as perceptions and behaviours in the future.

The following table (table 4.3) provides a critical realist conceptualization relating to each theme.

Table 4.3

Critical Realist Conceptualization

Theme	Empirical	Real	Actual
Moral Toll Meaning: includes moral injury and moral distress. "*Moral injury and distress are the result of the disconnect between what the PSP* [public safety personnel] *is asked to do or witness and*	The following quotations have been taken from the interviews and represent examples of the participants' experiences of moral toll. Kathleen described the moral distress and resulting moral	The following are examples of mechanisms capable of producing or not producing actions or experiences that occur in the empirical and actual domains. Politicians create and enact legislation (meso) based on	These are events or non-events that are supported or restrained by the real domain and may or may not influence the empirical and real domains. Police officers must follow provincial legislation and

what is a core personal value–the essence of the individual." (Lentz et al., 2021, p. 12). Moral Distress: The inability for one to act according to his or her moral beliefs and values due to internal and external constraints (ethical dilemma). Moral Injury: *"Moral injury has more recently been defined as a "... particular trauma syndrome including psychological, existential, behavioral, and interpersonal issues that emerge following perceived violations of deep moral beliefs by oneself or trusted individuals" (Jinkerson, 2016)"* (Lentz et al., 2021, p. 2). While the underlying mechanisms for moral injury remain largely unknown, experiences involving at least one potentially morally injurious event	injury of having to abide by provincial legislation, causing her an inability to act according to her values, as well as having to live with the actions of others (both those who enacted the legislation and the individuals at the home): *"one of my first definite moral injuries out on the street was going to a home where there was a lot of intoxicated people, and it was five in the morning with little babies and children and people hadn't slept all night and there was one sober person in the house. The process that* [Child and Family Services] *had was as long as there was one sober person in the house we were leaving, and we left those little children. And I couldn't, like I mean after 20 years you're used to it and it's like you just kind of push it aside, but that was one of my first moral injuries. It wasn't right, this was*	Neoliberal ideological positions (macro) that can negatively impact not only the lives of those it is intended to protect (i.e., the children), but others as well (i.e., police officers and other professionals). Neoliberalism embraces small government, devolution of social services and privatization (McBride & Mcnutt, 2007), and centralized decentralization[2] (Bezanson, 2018), placing profits and savings above people. Internal police policies (meso) may impact one's ability to carry out one's duty and require one to act in a manner contrary to one's beliefs. Police culture (meso) may dictate how one responds, whether there is provincial or internal policy in place surrounding protective measures involving children. Due to the hierarchical nature of police institutions, subordinates look to	internal policy (meso) relating to child protection measures. Such legislation/policy can increase or decrease autonomy and discretion in ethical decision-making for police officers (micro). A decrease in autonomy and discretion can result in moral distress and moral injury (moral toll).

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[2] According to Bezanson (2018), "control and decision-making power over programs and services is often centralized to one level of government, but the day-to-day delivery is increasingly delegated to other [government levels], third-sector/not-for profit agencies," or privatized (p. 15).

(PMIE) is a precondition (Griffin et al., 2019; Lentz et al., 2021). Moral distress's relationship to psychological stress and mental health – participants indicated they experienced both being constrained by the internal police culture, and external mechanisms (such as internal and external procedural, legal mechanisms), which prevented them from acting in a way they considered to be a moral manner (moral distress). Additionally, they spoke of the burden of having to live with the actions of others in the context of their police duties (i.e., witnessing child abuse), factors in the organizational context (i.e., witnessing discrimination or unethical behaviours at various structural levels), in the context of institutional systems (i.e., legal, justice, workers' compensation and long-term benefits provided through	*not ok, and I felt we were damaging the children by leaving and not helping them. It damaged us to walk away and leave those children.* Brenda described the moral injury of experiencing a lack of care from those within the policing institution: "I think the greater psychological stress than going to calls is the internal stress because like any family, you can face the bullying outside if you have a supportive family at home, but if you are facing stresses outside, like in the job, and then you come back to your station or whatever, and it's not a safe place, I think that's a psychological stress, but a lot of that is due to moral injury. These are the people that supposed to be taking care of you and they're not."* Brenda described the moral injury resulting from a lack of accountability relating to a supervisor that had	their supervisors regarding how to behave and the culture is one of obedience in which subordinates are not to question superiors (McCartney & Parent, 2015). Police culture (values, beliefs - meso): What it means to be a man (macro) is deeply entrenched with what it means to be a police officer (meso), and the "cult of masculinity" (Silvestri, 2017, p. 289) is promoted and perpetuated, remaining unquestioned and difficult to change (Carpenter, 2018). This "cult of masculinity" can lead to the oppression of those who do not conform to the dominant masculine way. Mechanisms of oppression and control of power include stereotyping, labelling, prejudice, discrediting (or mobbing), scapegoating, marginalization, bullying, harassment (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015; Mullaly & West, 2018), and gaslighting.	Meso - *"organizational betrayal is a description of individual experiences of violations of trust and dependency perpetrated against any member of an institution, or when an institution causes harm to an individual who trusts or depends upon that institution (Smith and Freyd, 2014)"* (Lentz et al., 2021, p. 9). Effy explained the impact of organizational betrayal on her identity and mental health: "*It's a sense of who we are as a person and our dignity. When you lose that part of yourself, you face institutional betrayal, and you lose the family that they tell you all along that you're a part of, that sends you in some dark places.*"

employer insurance programs). Moral injury's relationship to psychological stress and mental health – Participants spoke of experiencing moral injury relating to personal experiences of institutional betrayal as well as engaging in behaviors that were contrary to their beliefs and values (moral distress as part of the moral injury).	targeted her (micro) : "*I did my best to effect an arrest and then it all dropped, but what would have happened if she had not come forward with proof that I wasn't lying. I would have been done with deceit, but it's that whole sense that you can't control your destiny. It's a moral injury that they can lie, they can gossip, and there's no consequences to that.*" Brenda described how a female supervisor in a specialty unit brought forward a recording of her attempt to reach the unit for direction. Mary Jane shared her experience as a female in a male dominated workplace. "*[W]e're apples and oranges. I'll never be an apple and they make that very clear the moment that things go bad with another co-worker who happens to be a male, they'll get in*	Kathleen described trying to implement change: "*I reported up and tried to have these conversations and I got absolutely stonewalled by certain supervisors and felt unsupported and my ideas sabotaged by subordinates. I was told to be careful, not to make too many changes and when a subordinate acted out, I was told by bringing in presenters for respectful workplace, I was backing the member into a corner and causing them to lash out. I was basically blamed for their bad behaviour, but then days later praised for taking action to improve the workplace. I felt gaslit and never knew whether I was sucking or blowing.*" Procedural injustice - Lack of neutrality in decision-making, lack of respect and dignity, lack of voice, lack of trustworthiness in decision-making, lack of effective accountability for decision-makers (micro/meso) → used as a mechanism to support masculine culture (meso) and	Anne discussed police culture as a mechanism to maintain silence and perpetuate discriminatory behaviour. "*Again, that culture of silence, well I'm not gonna stand up for you because then I'm gonna look bad. It's so perpetuating.*" This finding was confirmed by Bastarache (2020). Lack of accountability, lack of trustworthiness in decision-making, lack of personal power and control. Brenda relayed: "*I think that's a huge moral injury and it even changes your worldview because you like to think, especially in North America, that we can control our futures, and if you work hard, you'll get results. And all of a sudden, it's not the case. It doesn't matter what you do. It's almost a fatalistic attitude. It doesn't matter what you do, you're not going to have the outcome you want. And I think that that loss of control, you can't control that the*

	their little football team and protect the quarterback despite knowing what he's done or what he is. We'll always come on the bottom of that. We're never going to be able to get out from underneath those clubs. They protect each other and they know that if they don't, then they'll be the outcasts along with us" (meso).	uphold and reproduce patriarchal ideology (macro) and asymmetrical power relations. Patriarchal ideology refers to attitudes and beliefs that rationalize, validate, and justify men's control over women based on a power imbalance (Ajzen, 2019c; Tonsing & Tonsing, 2019), and influences intentions, beliefs, and behaviours (or lack of) of both males and females (Ajzen, 2019c).	*trajectory of your career, you can't control your work life balance 'cause you can't control your work, I think is a really added psychological stress that I think is, you know you got the odd guy, but I think it's predominantly held by women"* (macro level views of power interact with the meso/micro levels to produce asymmetrical power relations).
	Carley's experience of moral toll (moral distress and moral injury): *"In fact, you have women who are participating in the harassment, and you know what, I was one of them. You're not unknowing at the time, but I fit in with the guys. I got along with the guys. They accepted me and I found myself, unintentionally, putting down other women and fueling, not fueling, but spreading gossip that I had heard and just believing, you know when I got on the job, they said women basically suck at this.*	Carley discussed her experience as a female police officer over time: *"And I think that now I can see, I couldn't see it before, but now I can see how sexual harassment, misogyny is a real foundation of police work. White patriarchy is a foundation of police culture and rape culture is just repeated and reinforced over and over again in police culture. And I couldn't see that before because I was in it"* (micro/meso/macro). This finding was corroborated by Bastarache (2020).	Carley: *"I remember having a meeting with some friends that I kept in touch with just after the class action was launched, and I remember them saying, well I believe you* [Carley], *but I don't believe this other girl because that happened 20 years ago, and she didn't report it. I'm like this is, and that really stuck in my mind because that's what rape culture is all about…when you can turn women into the foot soldiers for rape culture you've got it made"* (micro/meso). The

It's very few and far between that there's actually a good woman that can do the job, so don't be a bad PW because there's so many bad PW's who's just going to give all PW's a bad name. So, there was big pressure too not be a bad PW and that meant distancing myself from people who are identified as bad PWs, believing in the rumor mill you know?" (micro/meso).

Carley described *"accepting a lot of sexual harassment as just a part of the environment, the landscape."*

"I did experience a fair amount of harassment, like sexual harassment, even sexual assault at the beginning in my career and I think part of that is when you get on the job, as you know, the first few years it's like, shut your mouth and do what you're told. So, you don't wanna complain about anything and if you do, your teammate says forget that

Rape culture is rooted in patriarchal ideology (macro). It *"is an environment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture. Rape culture is perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language, the objectification of women's bodies, and the glamorization of sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women's rights and safety"* and includes victim-blaming (Inside Southern, 2020, para 1). Masculine police culture perpetuates and reinforces rape culture.

"And I thought if I have proof of the sexual harassment, I have proof that I was unfairly targeted and was the victim of systemic abuse, and I can't get justice for myself, how in God's name am I supposed to get justice for a woman who is reporting a sexual assault with no witnesses and no evidence? How am I gonna do that? You can't do that. It's just

police culture (meso) can influence the behaviour of even women (micro) in that those who do not conform to the dominant masculine way can become targets within the organization, facing repercussions such as bullying, harassment, and even a failure to be backed up at calls. Effy in describing a culturally determined set of sanction (unwritten rewards and punishment) that influence behaviour: *"But again when you're at work, you have to be very careful how you come across because you have to, your life depends on your colleagues, so you need to be liked."*

Carley discussed the sexual assault complaint she made, and the resulting lack of accountability and neutrality based on unequal power distribution within the organization: *"When I first went off, I thought the right thing to do would be to file a complaint with human resources. I thought, oh human*

	happened or whatever. I think that that it affected me, and I think probably still is the case, but maybe not to the same degree." Kelly	*it's impossible. I have, and you know what, I was sexually assaulted by another officer, but I would rather be dead before reporting it. I would rather be dead because I just, I know how it's going to turn out and nobody needs that. Yeah, it's just such a, it's a, you can't live with that kind of conflict or that kind of, that dichotomy. I'm not sure if that's the right word or not, but just that it's so so unfair and one-sided. If I can't navigate the system and get justice, I would never, I would never advise a woman to do the same thing and that's hard because I spent so many years of my life saying report it, report it, report it, we'll lay charges, we'll do this. No no no they won't. They won't lay charges, not unless they absolutely have to, but no. So, it's really pain and trauma for no reason."* (micro/meso/macro) Carley	*resources is, they're going to straighten him out. No, I had no idea at the time, but they are just as bad and are completely in cahoots with the chief and his political agenda, so they shunned me after that and they wouldn't even, they didn't even keep in touch with me to tell me what the results of the investigation was."*
	Brenda described how she came forward about a colleague's sexually inappropriate	Victim-blaming and internalized victim-blaming as part of rape culture (micro as impacted by the macro	Brenda described how she came forward about a colleague's sexually inappropriate

| | behaviour in the performance of his duties and was subsequently physically attacked by him as a result. *"They charged him. I didn't want assault charges. I didn't want it in the public. There's still a little bit of that victim guilt stuff."* | and meso). This finding was substantiated by Bastarache (2020).

Masculine culture that tolerates, supports, and perpetuated the sexualization of and sexual violence against women → rooted in patriarchy and rape culture (macro). This finding was corroborated by Bastarache (2020) who found that the RCMP is a toxic culture tolerant of misogynistic behaviors and attitudes throughout all ranks. He further noted, *" This culture has resulted in incalculable damage to female members of the RCMP as well as those working for the public service"* (p. II). | behaviour in the performance of his duties and was subsequently attacked by him as a result. She was blamed for the attack by colleagues (victim-blaming) and experienced *"victim-guilt"* because immediately preceding the assault, she had made a *"vulgar comment"* towards her attacker. *"I had made that vulgar comment. And officers told me, well it's your fault for saying that. And you know, it took me awhile. I'm like, no it's not my fault (laughing). He did everything he could to obstruct a criminal charge. And sure, it was it was a comment I should not have done, but it certainly doesn't make it my fault for the assault that happened shortly thereafter"* (meso/micro). That incident resulted in charges being laid against the officer under the Police Services Act. The officer was found guilty, yet he remained a police officer thus |

			demonstrating a lack of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision-making. Hierarchal structure and militaristic mentality in policing is one that endorses the silence of victims and the protection of perpetrators. The protection of perpetrators and silencing of victims leads to a lack of trustworthiness in decision-making and a lack of dignity and respect for the victims. The masculine police structure and subculture are reinforced and preserved by hiring specific applicants management believes will support and endorse the moral code created within the organization. They have also been selected because they possess traits that most directly align with the organizational culture's attitudes, values, and beliefs (CAMH, 2018; Films for the Humanities et al., 2006; Magnus, 2017; Paoline, 2003). McCartney and Parent (2015) found that socialization is a

			significant factor in maintaining and propagating police organizations' moral codes and values. Socialization can lead to the silencing of the individual (lack of voice) to maintain the culture, and a decrease in respect and dignity. Those who do not embrace the hierarchy and rules (written and unwritten) face ostracization and bullying (CAMH, 2018, McCartney & Parent, 2015) and do not last in the policing profession (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010).
Procedural (In)Justice - The four pillars of procedural justice are neutrality, respect, trustworthiness, and voice (Donner et al., 2015; Roberts & Harrington, 2013; The Justice Collaboratory, n.d.). **Procedural (In)Justice** - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – unfair processes and policies (procedural injustice) can lead to	Marie detailed her experience of being questioned about and passed over when looking to join specialty teams: "*When I got passed over for this last spot, not only did I beat everyone out, I was the most senior person who'd been, for the longest time, trying to be a part of this team and he's eight years junior and he walks in, basically he got chosen. He did not beat me in the*	Discriminatory decisions made at all levels throughout the organization (meso) that serve to exclude women (micro) → uphold stereotypes of gendered work, gendered expectations, and performance within police culture (meso/macro), ultimately rooted in patriarchal ideology (macro).	Lack of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision making related to the member awarded the spot. Marie discussed her male colleagues questioning her motives for applying for particular units: *"That was something I got often asked actually, is what are you trying to prove, 'cause I would apply for the [tactical] team all the time. And I said like prove*

increased psychological stress and decreased mental health, moral distress, and moral injury. Coworker support and work autonomy have been found to be mitigating factors in experiences of procedural justice and psychological distress (Rousseau et al., 2009) and serve as a protective factor for mental health (Spell & Arnold, 2007).	*scoring either. It's been interesting. I've watched him get an invitation at more junior years' service to every single group I ever wanted to be a part of, that I could not get an invitation to try out if I lit myself on fire"* (micro). The pillars of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision-making were violated. Respect and dignity are also violated due to bias and discrimination. Marie's skills and abilities were not being acknowledged as being worthy.		*what, like do you ask so and so that or so and so that. And they're like, well what's the all of a sudden interest…and I think in part, it's just that bias"* (micro, meso). This suggests that gender discrimination may be part of the attribution of motivation for joining specialty units.
	Xena shared her experience relating to lodging a sexual assault complaint against her superior (micro): "*Never any action taken towards his bad behavior. He gets to retire with his… fully retired badge, and he gets to go out in the community and continue this abusive behavior towards women. No accountability, and it just constantly re-victimizes."* The pillars of trustworthiness and	Patriarchal ideology and rape culture (macro) as upheld by police culture (meso) that allows for perpetrators to remain unscathed (Griffin, 2021).	Intersectionality of gender, police culture, and mental health – tolerance/lack of accountability for oppressive behaviours – patriarchy and misogyny. Image of masculinity versus femininity – gendered expectations, roles including victim image (hysteria). Those with mental health issues are viewed as weak or deficient. When combined with

neutrality in decision-making, and respect and dignity are violated.		gender, this has a compounding effect, particularly within policing organizations.
Kathleen described coming forward as part of a lawsuit: "*I'll never forget this woman, you know you obviously haven't been affected too badly because look at you, you're a* [mid-level management rank] *and you've got still so much to, you've got a great career ahead, you're gonna go to the stars or something and I thought, holy fuck lady, like I'm barely hanging on, but okay. You should look a certain way if you've got PTSD too right. Like you should be a certain way, you should be a certain mess.*" This is related to the trustworthiness of the quasi-judicial decision – the panel's decision was based on stereotypical images of victims, and this impacted the compensation Kathleen received as compared to other members of the lawsuit. As such, she was not treated with	Rape culture (macro) – stereotyping regarding how victims should present.	Lack of trustworthiness of decision - the investigative justice panel as part of a class action lawsuit (meso) making the decisions based their decision on their evaluation of Kathleen's presentation rather than the facts of the case – perpetuated rape culture stereotypes (macro). Stereotyping is a form of oppression used to control marginalized groups, justify decisions, and serve to perpetuate dominant narratives (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015). Kathleen's characterization of experience (micro) based on victim stereotyping served to minimize her experience and influenced the quasi-judicial panel's final decision. Ultimately, stereotyping victims of sexual violence and harassment does a disservice to victims because it assumes that there is

respect and dignity in that her experience was minimized based on stereotypical victim image.

One participant described her organization's decision to transfer a male subordinate who had expressed that he would not work with a woman, thus actively enabling, supporting, and perpetuating gender discrimination within the organization. *"Even had one person refused to work on my shift 'cause I was a woman, and they accommodated him and then they gave him back to me later on that year."* The pillars of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision-making, and respect and dignity were violated. | Tolerance of discrimination as supported by the organization perpetuates attitudes and beliefs about women in policing (and society at large) and excuses discriminatory behaviour → rooted in patriarchal ideology (macro). | only one valid response if the incident was truly detrimental to the victim. This can lead to diminished mental health and self-identity issues (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015).

Lack of neutrality and trustworthiness in decision-making within the organization based on patriarchal culture and imbalanced power relations (meso) → tolerance and reward for misogynistic and discriminatory behaviour, thus enabling and supporting the violation of respect and dignity.

Clair discussed how her organization dealt with male colleagues who were inappropriate towards female officers: *"The only thing is we have male officers like that too, but it's a little more hush hush in the sense that we have guys that aren't allowed to work with women because they're inappropriate all the time. And I'm* |

			like really, that's your best way to deal with it, just not have them work with women, how about you deal with the whole problem right?" The organization accommodated these individuals in failing to hold them accountable, thus protecting discriminatory behaviours and actions.
	Carley described how her organization withheld her pay for six months, despite violating the collective agreement by which she was protected under ensuring she received pay (that has since been amended for new police members): *"I knew that I was part of the old collective agreement where I was protected from that, but that insurance company actually doesn't have anything to do with my paid sick time. It's only people who are basically hired after me. But they tried. But, yeah, I was I was ready to, I was in the frame of mind*	Lukes' three dimensions of power as found in Dumbrill & Yin Yee (2019) - These include coercion (first dimension of power), controlling agendas (second dimension of power), and controlling the way others see the world (third dimension of power). Officers are socialized to conform to a particular set of cultural norms, often not even aware that the third dimension of power is at play. Officers who do not embody these traits are often seen as non-conforming, and often face bullying, harassment, and discrimination (Bullock & Garland,	Mary Jane spoke of her organization's use of internal and external processes (meso) as a form of punishment and to interfere with her recovery (micro): *"I feel like there's been no opportunity for that because of the employer interference. They have intentionally sabotaged, they were constantly interfering with my recovery while I was off. That's when they came and charged me in front of my kids. They suspended me. They messed with my disability pay causing it to be cut off for months. I went without pay* [for months] *until*

	to go back to work and they never, they just never replied, never responded to. The only response that I got back was the chief is not going to meet with you. They never responded, they never said anything about my return-to-work plan. And now that the pandemic has happened, everybody's working from home. Everybody has a laptop. They can't say, we don't do that." Because she was hired under a previous collective agreement, her organization was prevented from withholding her pay. She requested to return to work through her human resources department; however, the department failed to respond to her requests and ignored her. She requested a meeting with her chief as well and was told he would not meet with her. All four pillars were violated (meso).	2018; Magnus, 2017), which are all forms of the first dimension of power, coercion (Lukes, 2005 in Dumbrill & Ying Yee, 2019). The dominant group does this in an attempt to cause a negative outcome for the officers in question, and then "use this to force others into compliance" (Lukes, 2005 in Dumbrill & Ying Yee, 2019, p. 60). The officers targeted are often marginalized and left feeling powerless (Mullaly & West, 2018), which can lead to an increase in mental health issues and mental illness (Bullock & Garland, 2018). This allows the oppressor to maintain power and control the narrative (macro/meso). The problematic treatment of whistleblowers is upheld and perpetuated at the macro level in that Canada's whistleblower law has been found to be weak and problematic (Raj, 2021).	*everything was sorted out. Everything I've had to do, I've had to do on my own, and do it while I'm sick."* These were strategies used to discredit, marginalize, and discriminate against Mary Jane. Brenda described the use of the professional services section as a means of punishment for whistleblowers (police professional services sections are responsible for investigating employee conduct and ensuring the accountability and responsibility of member actions through the laying of charges under the Police Act) → lack of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision-making, lack of respect and dignity: *"for years PSS has been used as a method of punishment for whistleblowers."* This method of punishment also serves as a mechanism of coercion to silence members and control the narrative.

| | | Eurocentric view of disability (macro) – the individual is intrinsically flawed and othered, resulting in labelling and stereotyping, and a lack of accommodation if one is not able-bodied specifically relating to mental health injury (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015). Mental health problems and mental illness can be seen as feminine traits and as internal flaws, particularly within the masculine police culture (macro/meso), representing weakness. There is a societal stigma attached to those who experience mental illness (Baines, 2017; Bullock & Garland, 2018; Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015). Within the police culture, those who experience mental illness, regardless of its origin, are deemed as falling outside of the status quo of what is an acceptable ailment and deemed to be of weak character (Bell & Eski, 2016; Bullock & Garland, 2018; CAMH, 2018). Recovery from mental health issues is not | Carley spoke of her organizations failure to accommodate her return-to-work as a mechanism to silence her and maintain systemic oppression →lack of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision making, voice, and respect and dignity. *"So, she* [doctor] *approved me to go back to work. I had a back to work plan, but I never heard back from them* [organization]. *They never responded to it. They just kind of like, left it. So, they don't want me back 'cause they know that the minute I get my hands on their internal policies, procedures, all of the standing directives and Chief's announcements, and transfers and promotion lists, like all of that is evidence of systemic oppression, and that will be, that's all I need"* (micro/meso). |
| | Anne discussed her medical diagnosis and return to work, and subsequent threats she received | | Collusion between professions Workers' Compensation Board, police occupational health nurse, and human resources |

	should she not return to work. *"when I talked to the occupational health nurse, she said that these are only recommendations and they're not restrictions; and therefore, you still need to go back to this position that's making you sick. So, I flat-out refused. I didn't show up for work. I then got the backlash of not showing up for work. They didn't pay me. When you talk about the issues when you can't afford your bills, 'cause you're not getting paid, so now that became a financial issue and added stress."* This event demonstrated a lack in trustworthiness and neutrality in decision-making, and a lack of respect and dignity. Xena spoke of requiring an accommodation to work from home due to mental health and medical reasons (micro): *"They have a duty to accommodate, but because my doctor wrote…because I*	viewed as a possible outcome. By consciously creating (or failing to create) policy relating to mental health accommodation, an unspoken message is sent regarding what is important and valued within the organization (meso) (Mullaly & West, 2018). Dominant cultural norms (macro/meso) regarding mental health and mental health issues as weakness (macro/meso) served as a mechanism to block Xena from working from home, resulting in the use of long-term sick leave benefits (at a reduced rate of pay) to cover the absence, thus punishing her and placing her at a clear disadvantage personally, professionally, and financially (Jorm & Griffiths, 2008).	department (meso) that resulted in additional harm to Anne. This is especially serious for a nurse meant to be acting in her patient's best interest - lack of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision-making, lack of respect and dignity. This can have potential further consequences including pay disruptions and legal system involvement (Marchitelli, 2021).

	can't afford to be off, they were asked to accommodate me working from home. If they don't have anything for you to do from home because it's a police service, they don't have a lot of stuff like that, then they don't [have to accommodate]. *It's not in the collective agreement. But here's what's interesting, is because of Covid 19, they recently sent all of the pregnant women home. All the pregnant women were sent home to work, most of they didn't even ask to be sent home, they didn't ask to be accommodated. They are taking precedent over me. And my lawyer is just like, this is insane, it's discrimination. He's like, you actually need accommodation."*		
	"When I first got my job when I was leaving one [section] *going to another, I wasn't pregnant. We were trying and so I got pregnant and then my* [supervisor] *came to me and he says, oh I can't wait,*	These types of comments perpetuate patriarchal ideology (macro) and gendered stereotypes.	Lack of respect and dignity - militaristic hierarchy prevented Sally from using her voice to stand up against discrimination and her supervisor's disrespectful and demeaning

I wish I could be a fly on the wall when you tell your new [supervisor] *that you're pregnant and you're showing up pregnant. I'm like pardon me, like a) I've already talked to her and she's very progressive, she just had a paternity leave, she just came back from paternity leave, she has a wife, she gets this. I did say, she knows was kind of how I left it 'cause of course, there's the whole rank and structure and file, you say what you will say, and you will respect them, that wasn't a respectful comment. And then when I had transferred a girlfriend of mine had forwarded me an email from the same* [supervisor] *that went out to everybody in the* [section]*, saying what an impact there is on the organization when somebody either goes on long-term sick leave, paternity, or maternity leave or an LWA* [leave without pay] *where you leave without pay."* Sally	The supervisor's email perpetuated societal stereotypes about mental health, gendered norms, childrearing as being a detriment to the workplace thus perpetuating both patriarchal and capitalist ideals in which individuals are defined by their contribution to the workplace and gendered norms (macro). Motherhood myths are used to justify discriminatory behaviours (Verniers & Vala, 2018). Stigmatizing views of mental health and capitalist ideology combine to support discrimination against those who do not conform to what is considered normal and place capitalist principles of business first (macro).	comments (meso/micro). This finding was echoed by Bastarache (2020). Pregnancy discrimination (meso/micro) has been found to have a negative impact on both the baby's and mother's health (micro), including increased postpartum depression symptoms in mothers (Hackley et al., 2020). Lack of respect: Attempt to demean and control others' actions through the use of technology and language (micro/meso). Mary Jane spoke of her employer's stigmatizing view of individuals requiring leave for mental health issues resulting in poor treatment. *"We're just an inconvenience to our employers for not being well, and we're treated like*

			broken toys, and like fakers. We're all just looking for a doctor for summer off and I mean that's just insane, the way that the employers view mental health in the workplace. I think until you know what's going on in somebody's mind every single day, we can't pretend to know and that's what a lot of these managers do. They look at it like we're all on holiday, sitting at home and not coming into work, but meanwhile we're battling hell in our minds, at every single minute of every single waking moment, and the impacts that it has on our families. They don't think about any of that stuff. All they think about is themselves and how it affects their shift scheduling" (Meso/micro). Such stigmatization of mental health issues serves to marginalize those individuals who do not conform to the status quo and is also used as a self-serving mechanism for the organization's exploitive behaviour.

Carley spoke of being forced to remain silent about her experiences on numerous occasions despite possessing evidence that her supervisor had sexually harassed her and that the organization protected the harasser: *"I have all this evidence that exonerates me and really shows accurately how I was targeted and how they sided with the Sergeant at all times and made every move to protect him and not me. I have all of that evidence, but they tell me that I can't use it because it's supposed to stay confidential. It's called the deemed undertaking rule."* According to Malik (2009), "The deemed undertaking rule states that information or evidence that is obtained by a party by means of compelled disclosure by the opposing party, that is, by documentary discovery or examinations for discovery…cannot be used for any	Legal mechanisms in place (i.e., publication bans, non-disclosure agreements, use of the Police Act to lay charges against victims for insubordination, conduct unbecoming, unfair rules) prevent victims from speaking out – serves as a vehicle for gender-based oppression and allows the dominant discourse to be maintained and controlled by those in power and systems that support this mechanism of control (macro). Asymmetric formal and informal power relations are supported by these practices. This is a form of oppression used to control and maintain the status quo within the organization (meso) and uphold patriarchal principles (macro).	Lawyer's advised Carley she had to remain quiet resulting in a loss of voice (micro/meso). Unfair legal processes serve to silence victims allowing the perpetrators to control the narrative. Xena spoke of the consequences of speaking out against her employer and telling her story: *"I've been fighting loudly on social media, on everything. I had the organization contact me, and oh, you gotta be careful with what you post. I'm like, no, you need to be careful about what you do 'cause I'm gonna say it, 'cause they can, and that's what they do, they charge you under the Police Services Act when you talk about the chief or the organization in a negative way."* The Police Services Act is used to punish those who speak negatively about the organization, its members, or the chief is a form of self-serving censorship with the intent of

	purpose other than in the proceeding in which that evidence was obtained" (p. 699). This rule prevented Carley from using the evidence in any other forum. *"also, by participating in a class action and* [legal process] *thing…the lawyers always advised me to be quiet, not to say anything, which hurt me because I would read in the newspaper all these lies, and how they're misrepresenting the environment there, and I couldn't say anything or clarify anything"* (micro).		preserving and upholding the image of policing organizations, thus allowing them to function with little accountability for their actions.
	Victoria spoke about being denied the opportunity to attend a course: *"I was on a* [name] *team before and they told me that I couldn't go away 'cause I was a female."* The pillars of trustworthiness and neutrality in decision making and respect were violated. She was not provided a reason for being unable to attend other than that		Gender discrimination through exclusion (meso).

	she was female, despite being a full member of the team. This event provides a clear example of gender discrimination in which Victoria was not treated with respect and dignity.		
	Olivia discussed her experience of applying for a position upon returning from maternity leave. *"You don't just forget how to do police work just because you've been on maternity leave. And then of course there's, I don't know, I've struggled with this, and I told my husband like the discrimination, like there's a couple jobs that became open, shortly after I came back from mat leave, wrote a resume, this is a very junior* [area], *people have tops five years' service. So I put in for the job, I didn't get it being told that my examples were too dated, but…my examples are just as dated as the last time I was in uniform"* (micro).	Discriminatory processes, that punish women for taking maternity or family leave (meso) → patriarchal ideology (macro). Despite legal protections against discrimination based on family status that are afforded through the Human Rights Code, the complaint process can be extremely lengthy and costly (Payne & Rotham, 2005), resulting in increased psychological stress.

Gender discrimination and harassment in the workplace was made clear by another participant: "*And I was in really rough shape mentally at the time, and it took everything in me to file a human rights complaint with the human rights tribunal. So, I did that, thinking that was an even bigger step, but of* | Lack of neutrality and trustworthiness in decision-making resulting in procedural injustice (meso) that impacted Olivia (micro). | |

		course they have lawyers that just bury me in debt, and we didn't really get anywhere. I had to withdraw because it was costing too much money and I wouldn't agree to signing non-disclosure and my lawyer said, if you take this to a hearing it's not going to be worth your while because they're going to give you 60 grand if you win, but it's going to cost you 200. The math just doesn't work out."	
Mental Health Impacts – relationship to psychological stress and mental health – exposure to traumatic events and indirect trauma, and unfair and problematic processes, particularly in instances of discrimination and sexual harassment (and violence) can lead to increased psychological stress and incomplete or languishing mental health Those *"with incomplete mental health are languishing in life with low well-being. Thus, languishing*	Olivia described cognitive stress symptoms associated with operational experiences and the impacts on daily functioning: *"Worrying a lot all the time, specifically because you see so many car crashes or so many serious incidents. Every time we travel as a family, I think, oh my gosh how bad would this be in the news, the family that's going on vacation, they all died in a car accident. So, every time my family's traveling, I always think of the worst,*	Operational stress resulted in vicarious trauma - According to Evces (2015), Kanno & Giddings (2017), Russell & Cowan (2018) Sansbury et al. (2015), and Strand (2017), vicarious trauma is defined as a disruption in cognitive schemas that shape the self and the world as a result of exposure to the traumatic experiences of others. Cognitive schemata include safety, dependency or trust, power or control, esteem, and intimacy. Disruptions in these schemata can have negative psychological and	

may be conceived of as an emptiness and stagnation" (Keyes, 2002, p. 210). Measures of psychological well-being (subjective) have been found to correlate negatively with mental illness symptoms (Keyes, 2002).	*and I know that's not normal."* Xena described physical manifestations of the stress she endured in the context of procedural injustice relating to the improper handling of her sexual assault complaint: "*The geneticists said the only explanation we really have for when you have* [disease name] *like this is stress or exposure."* Carley described the interaction between psychological stress and her experience of languishing mental health and mental illness: "*I was diagnosed with a major depressive disorder, PTSD, and alcohol abuse disorder. For a while I used that as a coping mechanism, as a way to check out, and it's really, when you have those kinds of disorders, there isn't an area of your life that it doesn't affect. It's not only impacted work, but also my social life, my family life, my personal life, even as far as not*	behavioural impacts (Cummings et al., 2018; Evces, 2015) and changes typically occur over time (Guitar & Molinaro, 2017). Organizational stress via procedural injustice as a mechanism capable of producing a cascade of events including symptoms. The participants identified experiencing a myriad of physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural symptoms (identified in table 4.1) as a result of their psychological stress experiences. More often than not, the psychological stress experiences were linked to how they were treated within and by their organizations and peers. These symptoms were exacerbated by the complex web of interactions at the various system levels as depicted in figure 4.9 (micro, meso and macro), whether recognized or not. Additionally, the experiences of ongoing discrimination and retaliation due to self-	Xena described the organizational reprisal she faced when she came forward about being sexually assaulted by a superior: "*the reprisal for coming forward about a* [superior] *sexually assaulting me, has been the biggest assault I've ever had to deal with."* Rebecca and Brenda described the interaction between the treatment they experienced at the hands of their employers and experiences of trauma "*I fully understood that I might be subjected to trauma being a police officer. What I didn't expect was that trauma to come from within and to be essentially like COVID, the invisible virus or the invisible attacker that comes up."* Rebecca

	getting my taxes done on time, and just administrative things like that are affected. There isn't an area of my life that hasn't been impacted by it."	advocating, even when on leave, were found to lead to increased and compounding psychological stress and were cited as negatively impacting the recovery process. In some cases, these compounding experiences negatively impacted relationships with significant others and children, and the mental health of family members as well.	*The greater psychological stress than going to calls is the internal stress because, like any family, you can face the bullying outside if you have a supportive family at home, but if you are facing stresses outside, like in the job, and then you come back to your station or whatever, and it's not a safe place, I think that's a psychological stress. But a lot of that is due to moral injury. These are the people that are supposed to be taking care of you and they're not."* Brenda
Lack of Mental Health Support/Promotion (Impacting help-seeking, recovery, and narratives) Mental Health Support/Promotion - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – essential in the mitigation, prevention, and treatment of psychological stress and flourishing mental health (including help-seeking, recovery,	Effy discussed barriers to help-seeking and recovery, and the stereotyping of those experiencing mental health issues: *"When officers come and report that they have PTSD or they're having a hard time dealing with the stuff, right away they will tell everybody, so there is no confidentiality. They'll make you feel like you're broken, that you're criminal in a way. They make*	Stereotypes and cultural beliefs about those experiencing mental illness persist. Those individuals who fall outside of the social norm of what is considered acceptable often face oppression in the forms of prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and labelling (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2015), and further stigmatization and stress (American Psychological Association, 2018). They are othered and	Much stigma and shame remain for those police officers who experience mental health issues or mental illness (micro), and this stigma and shame is intensified due to the existing masculine organizational culture (meso) within policing (Bell and Eski, 2016; CAMH, 2018; Marin, 2012). The characteristics of the organizational structure and culture have been found to serve not only as a

narratives). As an extension of the World Health Organization's (1986) definition of health promotion, mental health promotion is defined as "the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their [mental] health" (WHO, 2002, p. 8). A lack of mental health support and promotion serves to reinforce stereotyping and cultural beliefs about those experiencing mental health issues.

Help-seeking - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – the act of help-seeking can help to mitigate psychological stress, prevent and treat mental health issues, and be used as a tool of recovery. The stigmatization of mental health within policing organizations serves as a toll that can prevent individuals from seeking help and ultimately impede the recovery process.

you feel like you're not strong enough to be there. They won't give you the necessary time you need. They'll bring you to work and they'll put you at the front desk, or they'll put you somewhere, and people will talk about you and people will whisper about you."

Effy shared her experience of help-seeking: *"But the thing about seeking help when you're in a situation, like we are as police women, is that some of the things you can seek help for but the other stuff you can't. Other stuff is just the circumstance of the situation you're in. I have no power over what my employer does to me, all I can control is how I carry myself. A lot of it you can get help for, but the other half is really what happens."* Effy described how the organizational cultural and procedural injustice that persists is not something that one can seek help for given that she has no

the mental health issue is pathologized within the biomedical model (Lee, 2013).

Historically, those experiencing mental health issues were considered deviant, criminal and confined to asylums as the belief was that recovery could only occur in controlled environments such as psychiatric institutions (St. Amand & LeBlanc, 2013). St. Amand and LeBlanc (2013) discussed how insanity and hysteria were associated with femininity as determined by the male-dominated psychiatric field. This can be linked to patriarchal ideology and men's use of narratives and discourse to shape and control the lives of women. Rather than viewed as a normal response to oppression, women were viewed as "hysterical," and this served to support paternal authority over women (St. Amand & Leblanc, 2013). Today, *"those who do not on the surface reflect the desired, enlightened vision of*

barrier to supports but also to be contributing factors of psychological stress in police officers (Baines, 2017; Bell & Eski, 2016; Bishopp, Leeper Piquero, Worrall, & Piquero, 2018; CAMH,, 2018).

Anne spoke of being given limited job opportunities with her return-to-work accommodation for PTSD as compared to her male colleagues coming forward with mental health issues. She noted men receive increased accommodation and face less mental health stigmatization based on being male, and questioned why this may be: *"when you start looking at acceptability, I would like to know how many male officers have reported that they suffer with PTSD and how and why I have no job duties, and yet we're promoting these other men. When you're talking about perceptions, it's certainly interesting dynamics when it*

Recovery - relationship to psychological stress and mental health – mental health promotion and support can serve as a protective factor and aid in the mental health recovery process. Narratives – relationship to psychological stress and mental health – the way that we construct psychological stress and mental health through language, and the stories we tell, can serve as a positive or negative tool in the (de)stigmatization and promotion/demotion of mental health and serve as a factor in increasing or decreasing psychological stress levels.	power over what her employer does to her. Anne spoke of the use of discrediting as a means to control perception and influence decision-making regarding who was not only chosen by management to lead a new unit, but discrediting also served as the basis to disqualify her from the position and subsequently remove her from the unit altogether: "*Therefore, you become the idiot, or we need to discredit you. Look at your mental health issues and start blaming that as a piece of why we want to remove you from that unit. So now, the perception is that you just don't get along with the person that management is looking to lead this unit, rather than the leader of this unit possibly is not the person for the job. Management blames you and there is somebody who's better suited for the unit.*"	*mental illness are likely to maintain their status"* of deviant (White & Pike, 246). Such conceptualization of mental health allows symbolic violence to occur and be reproduced (Lee, 2013). According to Lee (2013), the term symbolic violence was developed *"as a way of critiquing domination, [and] refers to "the subtle imposition of systems of meaning that legitimize and thus solidify structures of inequality"* (Wacquant, 2006, p. 3). Symbolic violence is difficult to recognize because its practices are deeply engrained in everyday activities. The benefit of using this concept is that it shows the subtlety of violence, its possibility of occurrence without actors' intention and/or realization (Schubert, 2002), and its systemic nature as an institutionalized form of violence"* (p. 106). An example of this was presented by Kathleen. She spoke of the perpetuation of gendered stereotypes within her section:	*comes back to hysteria and what women and the optics of mental illness, well that's just 'cause they're women. Of course they're gonna have depression and anxiety, which I think is funny because the stats are what they are. So are more women coming out and saying that they need help and assistance and therefore, they're being diagnosed with anxiety and depression? And therefore men, I think, are equally as affected. We still have the same tough skin, but hormonally, there's estrogen versus testosterone. What factor does that play in anxiety and depression. I mean, that's interesting. Or is it because men don't ask for help and therefore, they're diagnosed less. It's a big thing"* (meso). Cultural gendered expectations are reproduced not only within police culture, but also within helping professions as well, as described by Brenda: *"EAP is*

Brenda discussing repeated events in which the same supervisor discredited her on multiple occasions, thus perpetuating her experience of negative events within the organization: *"That he* [the supervisor] *was going around and he was looking for examples, this is workplace mobbing right? That you get everyone else involved in the mobbing"* (micro). These experiences negatively impacted Brenda's mental health, resulting in a leave of absence, and ultimately prevented her recovery. There was little mental health support offered.

Olivia spoke of the language (labelling) that is used within her organization to describe individuals who are off on sick leave: *"it's interesting 'cause at work on our schedule when somebody is off, you're marked on the schedule as ODS, off duty sick, so a lot of times the term off duty sad or off duty*

"especially in this last few years I've seen and especially women, described as emotional, men are passionate, women are emotional, heard it first-hand. The way the sergeant described himself during one of our meetings, was that he was passionate, and he described me as emotional. His yelling and his behaviour was passionate. And guess what, so many people in that office continued that and said, oh he's just really passionate, he's just really passionate" (micro). The conceptualization of women police offers as emotional serves to diminish and nullify their experiences based on gendered stereotypes. This impacts the support women receive relating to their mental health in that when women are viewed as inherently at fault, they receive little to no support. This allows the perpetrator to justify discriminatory and violent actions against women by shifting the "blame" onto the victim who is seen as

terrible. I tried that, the employment whatever. They're terrible. I just got lucky. I think this is the 4th one I tried. It was acknowledging, for me it's putting words on what happened. Saying it's a boundary issue or saying it's this kind of personality, whereas before one of the other therapist's had said, well you know just trying to be nicer. Bring in snacks or this, I'm like, this is a female therapist. This is the one that's paid for by EAP, female therapist telling me to be nicer. I'm like, yeah, this is not a good. There was that EAP one, and then we had a wellness thing at work, that had a therapist as well. I went there and he's like, yeah, you've got too much stress in your life, you should divorce your husband. I'm like, so I'm stressed at work and you're counseling me to divorce my husband with little kids at home. Are you nuts? So yeah, that didn't work well either" (meso).

	mad comes up, and that's often what's used if there's members that are off for a couple of weeks, oh he's off duty mad, he's off duty sad. And unfortunately, and every time I need to take time off for whatever reason, then you always think, oh they're going to say that she's off duty sad or off duty mad, there's definitely that, those comments that are made" (micro).	emotional, hysterical, and overreacting, thus blaming the victim. This can lead to internalized victim-blaming, self-doubt, and a host of mental health problems. The intersection of gender and mental health issues compound resulting in multiple disadvantages, including differences in treatment and pay, and exponential stress (Woodhams, Lupton, & Cowling, 2015).	
	Mary Jane spoke of her experience of organizational misconceptions and stereotypes related to mental health issues: "*I think until you know what's going on in somebody's mind every single day, we can't pretend to know and that's what a lot of these managers do. They look at it like we're all on holiday, sitting at home and not coming into work, but meanwhile we're battling hell in our minds, at every single minute of every single waking moment, and the impacts that it has on*	*"Essentializing both MAD discourse and psychiatric discourse has the potential to obscure how processes of racialization, gender, class, disability, sexuality, and other processes shape and redefine madness. The experiences and narratives of many marginalized Mad people demonstrate how madness is shaped by a complex system of power relations, and narratives that fail to address this reality can alienate individuals whose identities are shaped by this very*	*"awareness about marginality within community spaces varies a great deal among people and sometimes a general lack of awareness allows for the reproduction of hegemonic power dynamics, even within spaces that are constructed to challenge the dominant social order. As such, it is important to recognize, acknowledge, and change the ways in which dominant cultural values are left unquestioned or unchallenged within spaces that strive to*

	our families. They don't think about any of that stuff. All they think about is themselves and how it affects their shift scheduling" (micro).	*understanding"* (macro; Diamond, 2013, p. 71). The way in which organizations and the stakeholders within them conceptualize mental health directly impacts the culture and polices created therein. These either serve to support mental health issues and promote interventions aimed at bolstering mental health, or stigmatize mental health problems, with the potential to add additional psychological stress. The narratives created by the organization serve to define the experiences of its members. Neoliberalist stance of business above people and stereotypes about mental health combine to produce the philosophy that the needs of the police service trump the needs of the individual (macro).	*be anti-oppressive and inclusive"* (Diamond, 2013, p. 71). Effy described how her organization recently developed a section to address inclusion and equity and did so as a response to public movements such as Black Lives Matter and the MeToo movement. She felt that this unit is illusory and was created as a diversion to mask the lack of accountability, awareness, and change that occurs within the organization: *"But right now you have an organization where nobody is held accountable. When there is no accountability, when the buck doesn't stop anywhere, it's just a revolving door. And they keep bringing these new facade like inclusion and human rights, and I'm like, what the hell is that? What does that even do? You know, these things are fake. Unless they really want to fix this and face the issues that they have, then*
	Sally described a poster she recently saw that endorsed supporting mental health every day and the photo displayed the back of a male police officer	The marketing of mental health and the adoption of business models in the administration and implementation of interventions and programs that are	

standing with his hands on his hips in a superhero type pose. She noted it reminded her of a white male colleague with whom she worked that had experienced significant mental health struggles and became the "*champion of mental health.*" She relayed that "*he had people rally around him, it was amazing, you came up,*" whereas she felt that women officers experiencing mental health struggles are not viewed the same way. *"Well, there's a male in that picture and he's a white male, so of course people are going to be like that's amazing, you struggled, you got over it, we all love you. Whereas a woman, oh well she's weak, of course she's going to crumble and fall. We have hormones and we make babies, and our bodies are for other reasons sometimes. It's like, okay sure"* (micro/meso). Mental health promotion and support for those who are experiencing

aimed at "fixing" the individual for the purpose of "recover[y] into fully functioning, productive citizens" (White & Pike, 2013, p. 246) rather than considering contextual factors that have caused the distress and "illness" (White & Pike, 2013). Within policing, there is a distinction between acceptable and unacceptable causes of mental health issues. Carley spoke of the lack of acknowledgement and acceptance of mental health problems resulting from the toxic work environment including gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

The production, translation, and dissemination of knowledge as determined by those with power and privilege helps to control and perpetuate narratives around mental health. Sally's description of the promotional poster supporting mental health being associated with the image of the strong white male suggests

there's nothing anybody can do to change it. It has to come from internal and it has to come from the top."

Carley discussed the interaction between public and internal police views as to what is considered an acceptable cause of mental health problems, as well as the illusory organizational supports offered: *"I think both the public and also in internal policing, the mental health aspects, they only talk about it being acceptable when it's call related. If you have PTSD, you better only report it if it's related to a call on the road. There's just no recognition for the internal toxicity because it's so covered up." "It's all lip service and it's all fake and it's all about numbers. They don't care that they subject you to all this psychological trauma because you can be replaced. There are hundreds and hundreds of people who want to get into policing who'd be*

negative mental health is tied to gender and race. Gender (male) and skin color (white) are viewed as precursors for positive support from within policing organizations whereas women are viewed as weak due to stereotypical images of the role of women. This leads to a lack of supportive policies relating to women's needs that can negatively impact women's mental health. Olivia in discussing her cumulative experience of stress and minimizing the same based on cultural perception of what is considered as a legitimate stress experience. The police culture promotes and supports those experiencing mental health problems when those problems are associated with specific traumatic events (such as an officer involved shooting): *"I think I was always like, oh well, I've never been involved in an officer shooting or anything like that, so my*	that white males' experiences of poor mental health and their recovery are to be heralded whereas other groups who do not meet this image are further marginalized and their negative experiences of mental health are diminished. Gender (male) and skin color (white) are viewed as precursors for positive support from within policing organizations. Maintaining gendered stereotypes via verbal and non-verbal narratives (such as the mental health promotional poster) demonstrates continued support of patriarchal ideology and endorsement for the preservation and maintenance of asymmetrical power relations.	*happy to take your shoes so they say see you later and they couldn't care less because You're disposable."* Both internal and external stereotypes of acceptable causes of mental health problems can serve not only as a barrier to help-seeking, but also diminish and exacerbate female officers' experiences of non-call related mental health impacts and function as the cause of mental health problems through oppressive actions. These stereotypes can be seen as perpetuating police cultural views of mental illness and causing mental health issues (meso/macro). Anne shared the following regarding attending treatment for PTSD: *"I approached the head person, the doctor who was overseeing the clinic, and expressed my concerns about my individual healing and the progress that I was making in recovery, and the fact that I wanted to talk about the workplace*

	mental health is good, the little stresses that I have, but I think now I'm realizing all those little stresses, they do add up and it is impacting my life…I've heard some people say, oh get used to it and you get some eye rolling as if it's not a shooting or anything like that, as if it needs to be this big, this one big event in order to be justified." (meso impacting the micro).		*harassment and bullying, and I was being denied, flat out denied the opportunity to speak to that based on the fact that I needed to speak to the other trauma that* [provincial workers compensation board] *considered compensable, which was a physical injury and PTSD."* The worker's compensation board does not recognize workplace harassment and bullying as a cause of PTSD; therefore, the board's stance as detailed by the doctor overseeing the clinic (meso) served as a barrier in Anne's recovery (micro) because she was denied the opportunity to speak to and address these factors that she identified as the partial cause of her negative mental health. Kelly in describing post-traumatic stress as a disorder versus and injury: *"I think there's definitely a huge difference and I think the words that you choose will affect*

| | | | *whether or not people are willing to get help ever right. If you're calling it an injury, I think way more people would say, okay cool, I think I have that, because I know I can get help for it"* (micro/meso). The language used to describe mental health issues can help or hinder one's help-seeking behaviour. Kelly detailed that she was able to access the supports offered to her as well as promote the importance of seeking help (therapist) because she had not received a PTSD diagnosis. She elaborated that mental health disorders are still stigmatized within her organization. The way in which organizations frame mental health issues serves to either promote mental health or stigmatize it, ultimately impacting individuals beliefs and behaviours relating to the same. |
| | | The organizational agenda relating to mental health support | Sally spoke of her organization's current initiative |

| | | and promotion through policies occurs by chance and this process can be described using the multiple streams approach (MSA). The MSA can be used in the analysis of agenda-setting (Birkland, 2020; Lipson, 2007), decision making, and the policy process (Birkland, 2020; Lipson, 2007; Morris & Rawat, 2016) within day-to-day organization and government operations (McKenzie & Wharf, 2016). The MSA consists of three streams of the problems, policies, politics (Birkland, 2020; Lipson, 2007; McKenzie & Wharf, 2016; Morris & Rawat, 2016). In the problems stream, problems represent perceived issues that require attention and their attributes (Birkland, 2020; Birkland & Warnement, 2013; Lipson, 2007). The policies stream refers to the ideas or solutions put forth to address problems (Birkland, 2020; Birkland & Warnement, 2013). | (policy stream) to destigmatize mental health (problem stream) and change perception using language. She attributed such initiatives and focus on mental health as part of a larger cultural shift (opening of a policy window) as seen in the media (unofficial actor). She (an official actor and SLPE) has capitalized on this cultural shift by bringing forth suggestions for improvement (the agenda) based on her own knowledge about mental health promotion and support (intellectual capital): *"Right now, internally, agency wide I'm working on an initiative to just try to change…and make sure that our language and the communication that we put out, so holding people to their language within the building, when people say, 'oh that's crazy, we would never say that', 'well we shouldn't do that, that's crazy,' so changing those words. So that's a* |

		Choice opportunities and participants combine within the politics stream (Lipson, 2007), coming together to incorporate "the state of politics and public opinion" (Birkland, 2020, p. 384) as well as various actors who hold particular values and attitudes (Kingdon, 2003). Lipson (2007) noted the addition of the policy entrepreneur and policy windows to clarify the policy-making process. In the MSA, there is an assumption of stream independence in which each stream operates independently from the others (Kingdon, 2003; Lipson, 2007; McKenzie & Wharf, 2016; Morris & Rawat, 2016; Sager & Rielle, 2013). Policy windows occur "when the streams come together at a moment in time where problems are matched with solutions, and where politics aligns in such a way to make this matching more	*goal I have, changing the language to be more inclusive, because somebody walking by and hearing that or the R-word which I won't even say, the words we tend to use sometimes that can be attributed to mental health or associated with mental health. I'm looking to change that internally"* (micro/meso). As a result of Sally acting as a SLPE and the media attention/societal shift around destigmatizing mental health (politics stream), she has been able to leverage her social and political capital with her colleagues throughout all ranks. Marie spoke of redefining language and perceptions associated with words: *And you're familiar with Brené Brown[3]? We all love her because in so many ways, her work took something that we were experiencing*

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[3] "Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston where she holds the Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair at The Graduate College of Social Work…She has spent the past two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy, is the author of five #1 *New York Times* bestsellers, and is the host of the weekly Spotify Original podcasts *Unlocking Us* and *Dare to Lead*" (Brown, 2021, Official Bio section, para 1-2).

| | | likely" (Birkland & Warnement, 2013, p. 41), thus coming together by chance as opposed to a well thought out plan. It is during these policy windows that advocates (the political stream) of particular solutions (the policy stream) to specific problems (the problems stream) are able to push their agendas forward onto the agenda table for consideration (Birkland, 2020; Kingdon, 2003; Lipson, 2007; McKenzie & Wharf, 2016). Relating to policy windows, Lipson (2007) identified ""[p]olicy entrepreneurs" [as] play[ing] a critical role in "coupling" problems and solutions during such windows of opportunity" (p. 83), a sentiment that is echoed by Kingdon (2003) and Solecki and Michaels (1994) as well. Policy entrepreneurs are a particular type of actor, including individuals, groups, or organizations (Arnold, 2015; Kingdon, 2003), who "advocate a specific position" | *and she made it like, she articulated in ways like redefining courage because it starts to highlight some of the…more typically, female essence. And like strengths that we bring and it's like this is what courage looks like too. Not just punching somebody in the face."* This relates to changing narratives around mental health, and vulnerability and courage within policing environments. Expanding discourse around mental health can serve to destigmatize mental health issues and produce a supportive environment that embraces mental health and promotes help-seeking and recovery through positive narratives. Marie (official actor/ SLPE) shared how her experiences and internal policing relationships (social and political capital) and the media coverage (unofficial actor) of the negative experiences of police women (problem stream + politics |

| | | (Morris & Rawat, 2016, p. 610), at times "appear[ing] to sway policy outcomes" (Arnold, 2015, p. 308). Policy entrepreneurs can be found in both formal and informal positions (Kingdon, 2003; Morris & Rawat, 2016) in the political stream (Lipson, 2007). Arnold (2015) and Kingdon (2003) suggested that, in addition to policy entrepreneurs being found among elitist individuals, groups, or organizations, they can be found in many other locations. Arnold (2015) specifically discussed the role of street-level policy entrepreneurs (SLPE) in agenda-setting. She differentiated between SLPE and street-level bureaucrats (SLB) in that SLB make decisions based on avoiding disruptions to the status quo, whereas the SLPE innovations tend to seek transformation, thus being "inherently disruptive" (p. 311). Arnold also argued that SLPE must "possess…intellectual, social, and political capital in relative | stream = policy window) have provided her a platform to advocate for change in her service, resulting in comprehensive health and wellness policy change (policy stream) within her organization: *"it's kind of funny but it's like I had to get beaten up along the way to like I think gain the position from where I stand now, but also its become a bit on trend to be inclusive and gender diverse aware kind of and also in the policing world with the recent like Merlo Davidson report and I think Toronto Police Service just had a CBC article done on someone there. I think at minimum my service recognizes that building in these safety nets is important for an organization to say that they are doing in, in making sure that they can reduce harm or prevent harm that might come by having formal networks in place where women have a space to be heard and supported* |

| | | abundance" (p. 310) to be successful in pushing their agenda forward. SLPE must be able to demonstrate that they have a solid understanding of the particular problem and solution they wish to employ to solve the same. Relating to social capital, SLPE must exhibit a capacity for strong relational skills at all levels. SLPE must be able to connect deeply with the right actors and build strong relationships to achieve their innovations. The SLPE must also forge "collegial ties with the bureaucratic peers whose buy-in is necessary to entrench her preferred innovation into practice" (p. 310). Last, SLPE must be able to negotiate politics to cultivate alliances and capitalize on them when opportunities arise, not only within their organization but between organizations and institutions as well. According to Solecki and Michaels (1994), well-placed and effective policy entrepreneurs play a critical role in | *and be. I've become cooler now, so I got more fans"* (interaction of the micro and meso). She also spoke of the role education played in recognizing systemic issues (stigmatization of mental health and holistic approaches) that needed addressing and increased her intellectual capital in advocating for change.

Victoria spoke of the use of television and print media to perpetuates false narratives of police officers' experiences incongruent with actual experiences: *"If somebody breaks down and they're new, they're like, well they're not cut out for the job, like what did you expect you're going to deal with? Of course you're going to deal with rude ignorant belligerent people. Of course you're going to see dead bodies, of course you're going to see fatalities, of course with a knock- on doors and tell people their loved ones are dead, like what did* |

		increasing the chance of policy change during the policy window. Other elements identified in increasing the chance of policy change during the policy window include institutional strength and flexibility and as well as the policy entrepreneur having a comprehensive institutional conceptualization of the proposed policy, which Arnold (2015) would refer to as intellectual capital. Kingdon (2003) and Lipson (2007) liken the policy stream to a "policy primeval soup" in the MSA, within which various policy options develop by chance, transform, and conjoin providing alternative policy options. The choice of any given alternative is determined by particular actors whose selection is made based on pragmatics, value consistency within that community, and overall societal norms.	*you expect when you said I'm going to be a police officer? But you can't really grasp the role until you fulfill it. What you see on TV or once in the brochure is not exactly what we do on a daily basis. Until you live it, you don't really know, don't probably get it."*
Mentorship, Interpersonal Relationships, and Shared Experience – relationship to	Kelly spoke of changing narratives around mental health within policing and the need for informal	Akchurin and Lee (2013) argued that there is a gender gap between men and women when we look	Effy discussed the lack of representation of female officers and the impacts of hiring low numbers

psychological stress and mental health – positive mentorship, interpersonal relationships, and shared experience have been found to be mitigating factors in the experience of psychological stress and poor mental health (Dombo & Blome, 2016; Kanno & Giddings, 2017; Lee 2017; Pierce, 2018; Sansbury et al., 2015; Strand, 2018). Mentorship – the provision of guidance, emotional support, motivation, and role modelling. Interpersonal Relationships – an association between two or more people (i.e., family, romantic, friendship, professional). Shared Experience – any experience that causes individuals to identify with one another. The shared experience of groups is the foundation for various levels of culture.	mentorship groups: *I think that it's such a slow evolving process* [changing attitudes towards women and mental health within policing] *that I really hope that, I would love for it to move faster than it does. I see myself, I see that there needs to be resource groups that can reach out and support people in a different way than peer support because I think peer support is trained just to listen to you rant for a period of time. I think that it would be good to have people who say, yeah, I've been there, and this is the route I took and these, there are these good psychologists out there, that here's why I liked these people and helping them that way"* (micro). Carley shared stories and being part of an association for women in policing that is external to policing agencies[4]: *"But being a part of*	at those who are represented in positions of power in society. The lack of women in positions of power allows for the continuation and perpetuation of discrimination against women and serves uphold the status quo of imbalanced power dynamics are maintained through patriarchal mechanisms (macro). The authors suggested that professionalized women's activist groups have the potential to impact gender income inequality and overall gender inequality through several mechanisms, including *"professional associations to promote professional women's interests at the national and local levels, create networks of women committed to women's empowerment in the workplace, and offer opportunities for skills development and information sharing"* (p. 682). Advocacy groups can be formal	of female police officers as a mechanism of control allowing for the maintenance of male dominated policing organizations (meso): *"I think that's one of the reasons why they don't hire over 20% women because when your numbers are down, when you're under represented and you don't have solid support from other women, then they can control and do whatever they want to do with you. And you won't have any woman to stand beside you and fight with you"* (choices made at the meso level directly impact at the micro level) (Fantz & Tolan, 2020). Xena discussed mentorship and support as a mechanism of accountability: *"Part of it is the leadership, like myself. I'm a mentor to a bunch of female constables and they're like, oh I can't do that because or I applied for this*

[4] Such associations (both provincial and national) were created as a result of recognizing that many police services do not employ significant numbers of females or are too small to form individual organizations. Such forums provide opportunities for members to network and access professional development opportunities.

the [name] *Association now, we have a small little network, and we all realize our stories are all the same so there's that. I recognize that we all have the same struggles in this group, but I definitely didn't while I was at [police agency] and going through what I was going through. I legitimately thought I was the first person who ever tried to report sexual harassment 'cause I had never heard of it before in my life"* (micro).

Kelly spoke of the importance of being open with colleagues about regular check-in with her psychologist – serves as a means of normalization: *"I've always every two to three months, just to check in to make sure I'm okay. And sometimes I end up canceling those appointments 'cause I'm absolutely fine, but I keep those check-up points and I tell people that so that other people don't feel like it's a tough thing"* (micro).

(i.e., provincial and national associations such as the National Women in Policing Association (NWLEA) in Canada, BC Women in Law Enforcement (BCWLE), Ontario Women in Law Enforcement), as well as informal such as Facebook groups, Twitter (meso).

Women's activism can potentially capitalize on popular movements of the time in an attempt to effect change (Akchurin & Lee, 2013). This can be seen in current trends such as the MeToo movement (Mallett, 2021) and the recent media spotlight on sexual violence and harassment in the Canadian Military (Brewster, 2021; Burke, 2021; Stephenson, Cossette, & Connolly, 2021) and policing (Adam, 2021; CBC, 2020; Corbella, 2020; Daya & Boynton, 2019; DiManno, 2021; Gillis, 2021; Howell, 2020; Kula, 2021a; Kula, 2021b; Kula, 2021c; Leger, 2020; Malone, 2019; Meyers, 2020;

and they had the most experience, but they gave it to all the six white hockey boys. I'm like you grieve it. Complain? Really? Yes. Yes. I'm not telling them what we used to be told to me, shut up, don't say anything, you'll ruin your career. No no no. Everybody needs to start calling them out. Call them out. Hold them accountable. Hold them accountable. And that's what the leaders need to be now. That's what we need to be teaching them, teaching these young officers that are coming up. That's the only way you can change it, if they're held accountable 'cause they've never been held accountable" (meso).

Marie shared her experience regarding having a supportive supervisor, which allowed her implement change within her organization relating to mental health: *"I'm really fortunate right now my direct supervisor is in charge of* [unit]...

	Victoria spoke of the importance of reaching out to new recruits: *"And that's the important time to reach out to them. And I had one girl,* [lists numerous personal issues she had dealt with]*, and it's just all those things collectively. I'm like, that's what sick time's for, so if you need to take the day, take the day, you need take the week, take the week, but then depending on where you sit* [relating to other supervisors]*"* (micro).	Molina, 2020; Pringle, 2021; Rosen, 2019; Rubinoff, 2021; Shantz, 2021; Trinh, 2021; Trinh & Baksh, 2021; Tunney, 2020a; Tunney, 2020b; Wakefield, 2021; Yogaretnam, 2020a; Yogaretnam, 2020b; Yogaretnam, 2021) as well as the recent Merlo-Davidson class-action lawsuit and subsequent report, *Broken dreams, broken lives: The devastating effects of sexual harassment on women in the RCMP* (Bastarache, 2020). Additionally, Cunningham and Ramshaw (2020) found that certain times of socio-political unrest can present opportunities for women in policing. also provide opportunity for police reform.	*And he is just an amazing ally and he's amazing, he just is amazing and I'm really grateful and he sees what I bring to the table, he values what I bring to the table, and he just is, its super great. I feel really emboldened and empowered working for him for sure."*
The opposite is true as well, including receiving mentorship and guidance from others who believe they are helping, but in doing so are perpetuating a culture of silence which may exacerbate stress symptoms and languishing mental health.	Anne shared her experience with a supervisor whom she went to for advice regarding sexual harassment by a superior early in her career. *"Even when I did seek out* [name of high-ranking female officer]. S*he said, if you come forward with what it is that you're talking about at this particular time, your career is over. You really need to think about what's important to you"* (micro).		Marie discussed how she can effect positive change as well as the need for nurturing in leaders to effect positive change: "*I think that's a lot of what gives me the enthusiasm I guess to continue and to continue to deliver the amount of energy that I do to the career is, and I by no means this in a cocky way, I've worked so hard to garner with followership that I have a huge followership. It's really quite great. I've earned it for sure through blood, sweat and tears and going back to nights, like for the last +5 years in my careers in my forties, it wasn't easy, there's not many people*

| | Kathleen shared her experience with a male colleague who supported her: *"he never wanted me to get in trouble, even though he knew that I got treated differently because I was a woman. The way our boss yelled at me in front of others and the different things that would go because I was a woman. And he knew it wasn't fair. He felt I would be safer if I didn't say anything. He definitely influenced me not to say anything. He was counseling me to be careful and to watch myself because my reputation would get sewered* [metaphor being flushed down the toilet]. *So he was trying to watch out for me, but also taking my voice away because he knew, he wanted to care for me. So you lose your voice not just from the people that are assertive… those guys who treat you poorly, but you also lose your power and your voice from the people that quietly try to protect you. I never thought about it until now that that* | | *doing it 'cause we're frickin' tired and it's hard, it's hard work, it's fast-paced, it's dangerous, it's tiring, it's exhausting and you're taking care of so many personalities, but I feel like mother hen with all these chicks and I just give, give, give, and I knew at the time that my mastermind plan was create these relationships and create this trust and show them that I am here to serve them and that I genuinely want to leave them an organization that is so much better than when I got here and that they feel cared for and seen and empowered, because when they feel that, they take that work to the community and they are the most exceptional police officers…. I think nurtures like a great, a great word, I think that's been missing in leadership in policing and I think that's something that we can do better, and I think it will make us better service."* (micro/meso) |

	is definitely one of the ways that I lost my voice but, I felt safe, the hiding with him." (micro). Effy discussed her supervisor's response to her experience of sexual violence in the workplace: *"And at that point, I went at spoke with my Staff Sergeant, and I said, and he even had noticed that I didn't look good. He said to me, are you okay Effy? here and there. So, when I sat and talked with him, and seeing that he didn't even want to acknowledge the problem, made me even sicker. That's when I knew that this environment is just toxic, and you can't get well in the same environment that you got sick in"* (micro).		Clair shared her experience of attending an international women in policing conference with a female colleague: *"So we go there, and the energy was amazing. You felt like you were in a safe place and so empowered by listening to these stories from other women and what they've accomplished and the both of us came out of there just like, man I think we can, I think we can do stuff (chuckle)."* She also shared how this experience served as the catalyst for the creation of a provincial women in policing association: *"it's all about making the other women realize that they're capable of doing this." "I think that's the key is when you see people that you respect or in even senior positions be vulnerable, I think that gives other people permission to be vulnerable as well."* Within the association, the members developed an informal mentorship program:

			"And then in our association we developed an informal mentorship program that we just launched in [month], so again more helping women understand that we can be promoted, and we should be promoted so. And not because of our gender but because we're capable. 'Cause that was always a drawback for us, some of us would be like, well I don't want to go for, if I get promoted people are going to think it's just because I'm a female and not because I have the capabilities."

Note. Abduction and retroduction of the empirical, real, and actual domains.

Through the retroduction process, the data suggests that while the participants experienced both operational stressors and organizational stressors, the psychological stress due to organizational and cultural factors was more impactful. The driving force behind this stress is best explained by the reproduction of patriarchal ideology (macro) within the masculine culture (meso). As Carley aptly described, *"White patriarchy is a foundation of police culture and rape culture is just repeated and reinforced over and over again in police culture."* Upholding the patriarchal foundation (macro) in masculine police culture (meso) allows the status quo to be maintained and unquestioned. This occurs through socialization (McCartney & Parent, 2015), discriminatory procedures and processes (both internal and external), and the use of retaliatory measures against those who do not conform and speak out.

External mechanisms such as discriminatory statutes and legislation protect perpetrators and allow for generational abuse to continue within policing organizations. Effy provided such an example. She was told that under the Police Services Act of Ontario (Police Services Act of

Ontario, 1990), the only individual who can be considered a victim is the police chief. When female officers come forward with complaints of sexual harassment, violence, and discrimination, both the victim and the perpetrator are referred to as "complainants." She shared that the union will then choose between the two complainants as to who will receive support. Typically, perpetrators remain protected and receive emotional, mental, physical, and financial support. When the ultimate power is given to policing unions through the Police Services Act, nepotism and favouritism flourish to protect the perpetrators and fail victims. Effy noted that "this is a billion-dollar organization" that is designed to protect the perpetrators and allowed to continue because of a lack of external oversight. She shared that those politicians (considered entities) who currently sit on police boards "turn a blind eye" to systemic discrimination and violence within policing due to complex relations between various entities that serve to support a multitude of agendas. Such relationships encourage non-disclosure agreements aimed at burying the truth and maintaining control by the dominant group.

Such mechanisms function to muzzle victims and prevent them from speaking out, serving as a vehicle for gender-based oppression, allowing the dominant discourse to be maintained and controlled by those in power and the systems that support this mechanism of control (macro). As described above, those who do speak out face retaliatory measures (i.e., demotion, pay impacts, harassment, bullying, exclusion and segregation) by their policing organizations and colleagues in an attempt to silence victims, control the narrative and maintain power.

Participants who had attempted to get justice through civil lawsuits and Human Rights Tribunals experienced financial hardship due to personally shouldering the financial burden of these expensive and lengthy processes, rather than the police union stepping in and covering the costs (as they would for male members charged with offences). Brenda provided an example of this.

> I'd have been better off just to punch that Sergeant. At least then I would have, when men are off 'cause they do something stupid they get paid the whole time. Their lawyers get paid; everyone gets paid. It's the psychological stress that I'm not making a salary.

Another participant described her experience.

> I don't even have a hearing date for human rights yet, and it's already been three years and I'm out financially because my union won't pay my legal fees. And my union has been very unhelpful. It's like a lot of people just don't want to get involved despite knowing that this

stuff is true, and that it happened. It's like they don't want to be me so they're going to be very careful how much they subject themselves to and that type of reprisal.

As detailed in table 4.1, the stress impacts on the participants as generated at the macro, meso, and micro levels were varied and detrimental. Furthermore, the psychological stressors identified did not only impact the participants but their families and friends as well (supported by Bastarache, 2020). As Carley stated,

I was diagnosed with a major depressive disorder, PTSD, and alcohol abuse disorder. For a while I used that as a coping mechanism, as a way to check out, and it's really, when you have those kinds of disorders, there isn't an area of your life that it doesn't affect. It's not only impacted work, but also my social life, my family life, my personal life, even as far as not getting my taxes done on time, and just administrative things like that are affected. There isn't an area of my life that hasn't been impacted by it.

Verification and Refutation of Findings

This section reviews the analysis of additional data sources used to triangulate the findings obtained from the interviews. The primary additional data source that was analyzed was the Merlo-Davidson Settlement Report, *Broken lives, broken dreams* (2020). Similarities and differences between the interviews and the Report are highlighted in table 4.4, along with data from a selection of recent newspaper articles, the Ottawa Police Service Gender Audit Report (2016-2017), and the audio-visual documentary titled, *The tarnished badge* (2021). This is followed by a brief summation of all data findings.

The Merlo Davidson Settlement Report: Broken Lives, Broken Dreams

The final report for the Merlo Davidson Settlement Agreement (Bastarache, 2020) titled, *Broken dreams broken lives: The devastating effects of sexual harassment on women in the RCMP* [herein after referred to as the Report] was analyzed as a data source. Janet Merlo and Linda Davidson were the representative plaintiffs in a class action lawsuit against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) that was filed on the grounds of sexual harassment and gender and sexual orientation-based discrimination and granted certification by Federal Court Judge Ann Marie McDonald on January 16, 2017 (Perkel, 2017) and the formal approval for the settlement was granted on May 30, 2017 (Bastarache, 2020).

Hon. Michael Bastarache was commissioned to implement the criteria set out in the Settlement Agreement. He released the final report on November 11, 2020. The report was

mandated under the Merlo-Davidson Settlement Agreement to *"assess claims for compensation made by women who had experienced sexual harassment and gender or sexual orientation based discrimination while working for the RCMP"* (Bastarache, 2020, p. I). The Report intricately detailed all steps taken in the implementation process.

The Settlement Agreement contained specific criteria that served to guide the assessment team. A process map (based on the Settlement Agreement requirements) was developed to ensure consistent and efficient treatment across claims. This document evolved throughout the process. Standardized templates were also developed and used by assessors, lawyers, and administrative staff in communicating with the claimants. Internal policies were developed to address "information management, privacy and confidentiality, conflict of interest, requests for information from third parties, file verification, file intake, processing secondary claims and communications materials" (p. 11). Relevant material (case law, tribunal decisions, information relating to psychological conditions) was reviewed, and once evaluated, documents were created and distributed to the assessment team. A psychiatrist was also consulted and presented information to the team to increase its awareness and understanding of the psychological injuries.

Initial claims were submitted through a website which opened August 17, 2017. Claimants were asked to complete an online form, providing their names, the details of the event(s) including any resulting injury, and any supporting documents. Minimal numbers of claims were received over the first five months. It was not until the end of 2017 that an increase in the numbers of claimants could be seen. Bastarache attributed this increase to the increasing publicity about the #MeToo movement. The majority of the claims were submitted in January (n=672) and February (n=1,147) of 2018. The deadline for filing was February 8, 2018; however, late filing was extended to May 22, 2018.

The assessment included the claims of 3,086 women and included both sworn members (SM; n=1,957) and civilian members (n=1,269; including civilian members [CM] and public service employees [PSE]). Some of the claimants were categorized as multiple status (MS) due to holding more than one title over the course of their careers. Individuals holding multiple status (combination of SM, CM, or PSE) accounted for 140 of the initial complaints. During the assessment, 644 interviews were conducted by three assessors, and in total, 2304 claimants were awarded monetary compensation. The compensation amounts were awarded based on six levels of injury as agreed to in the original settlement agreement. These included:

- Level one: minimal injury, awarded $10,000
- Level two: mild injury, awarded $35,000
- Level three: low moderate injury, awarded $70,000
- Level four: upper moderate injury, awarded $100,000
- Level five: significant injury, awarded $150,000
- Level six: severe injury, awarded $220,000

Claims evaluated at level three or higher advanced to interviews with the claimants, the majority of which took place in person with one of three assessors, a staff lawyer, and the claimant. The claimant was also provided the opportunity to bring a support person if she wished. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remaining interviews were conducted using a video platform or telephone.

Level one. Level one claims represented 24.21% of all claims (747 of 3,086) and 32.42% of the compensated claims (747 of 2,304 compensated claims). Of the 747 claimants, 448 were SM, 332 were CM and PSE, and 33 were considered MS. Conduct associated with level one was considered minor and included broad-based pejorative remarks related to gender or sexual orientation by male co-workers. Impacts identified were considered minimal and included *"anxiety, anger, loss of self-esteem, malaise"* (p. 28), loss of confidence, increased stress levels in returning to work after being away, and feelings of humiliation. The expectation of recovery was a factor in that current or expected recovery was considered (both current state of the claimant as recovered or expected future recovery). The length of time endured was deemed as a potentially intensifying factor.

Level two. Level two claims represented 29.75% of all claims (918 of 3,086) and 39.85% of compensated claims (918 of 2,304). Of the 918 claims, 687 were SM, 269 were CM and PSE, and 38 were considered to hold MS. Conduct associated with level two included the same types of questionable behaviour as level one but to an increased degree. Level two also included problematic conduct on the part of supervisors or those in positions of power. The following is an example provided in the report:

> *a claimant's supervisor might exclude her from detachment activities*
> *or training or retaliate against a claimant following her advising she was pregnant and*
> *would be taking maternity leave. In other cases, superiors made inappropriate comments*
> *regarding a claimant's physical appearance, pursued sexual or romantic relationships*
> *with claimants, or made inappropriate inquiries about, or commentary on, a claimant's sex*

life. There were also more serious incidents from colleagues, such as unwanted kissing or
more minor touching with a sexual purpose or intention. (p. 29)

Level two impacts were similar to those described in level one, although tended to occur over a longer duration of time and some work disturbance was found to have occurred. There continued to be the expectation of recovery (both current state of the claimant as recovered or expected future recovery) at level two. Additionally, "the presence or absence of a psychiatric diagnosis was not a determinative of a claim falling at Level 2 or above" (p. 29).

Claims categorized as a level one or two were determined by paper record and no interviews were conducted; however, claimants at level two could request reconsideration of the level decision if they were able to present new information not initially available (typically due to circumstances out of their control) at the time the decision was made. If the information was deemed reasonable, an interview was granted to determine the level of the claim. There were 156 reconsideration requests, of which eight interviews were granted.

Level three. Level three claims represented 5.83% of all claims (180 of 3,086) and 7.81% of compensated claims (180 of 2,304). Of the 180 claims, 139 were SM, 52 were CM and PSE, and 11 were considered to hold MS. Conduct associated with level three included,

sexual assaults involving kissing and groping or more serious examples of bullying in
which the claimant was ostracized from her colleagues or made to feel unsafe in the
workplace due to constant negative conduct from colleagues and superiors. In some cases,
claimants were intentionally put in harm's way by colleagues or superiors who failed
to provide backup. Level 3 culpable conduct also included more graphic acts, such as male
officers exposing their genitals to female members or persistently displaying graphic
pornographic material in the workplace. (p. 30)

The claimants experienced more incapacitating impacts and longer-term health, career, and personal life consequences. Psychiatric diagnoses, prescription medication use, and long-term counselling were common among the claimants. Recovery for level three claimants was indicated.

Level four. Level four claims represented 6.42% of all claims (198 of 3,086) and 8.59% of compensated claims (198 of 2,304). Of the 198 claims, 167 were SM, 36 were CM and PSE, and five were considered to hold MS. Conduct associated with level four included,

a heightened degree of severity. For instance, sexual assaults involving the use of force or intimidation, attempts to undress the claimant, exposure of genitals to the claimant including situations in which…male colleagues and superiors rubbed his erect penis against the claimant or attempted to force her to touch it. Level 4 culpable conduct also involved bullying conduct leading to a toxic workplace, or physical aggression or other acts or omissions resulting in bodily harm to the claimant. (p. 30)

Level four impacts were more serious then level three; however recovery and the ability to function professionally was indicated.

Level 5. Level five claims represented 3.60% of all claims (111 of 3,086) and 4.82% of compensated claims (111 of 2,304). Of the 111 claims, 92 were SM, 26 were CM and PSE, and seven were considered to hold MS. Level five claimant's children and current spouses were permitted to make a secondary claim after a level five assessment as well. Conduct associated with level five "included sexual assaults involving non-penetrative genital sex acts, and serious workplace incidents aiming to destroy a claimant's career or cause grievous bodily harm" (p. 31). Impacts were considered significantly more serious and included problematic substance abuse, suicidality, and substantial disruptions in intimate and family relationships.

Level 6. The highest compensatory claims level was six. Level six claims represented 4.86% of all claims (150 of 3,086) and 6.51% of compensated claims (150 of 2,304). Of the 150 claims, 124 were SM, 35 were CM and PSE, and nine were considered to hold MS. As with level five, claimant's children and current spouses were able to file a secondary claim after the claimant received a level six assessment. Conduct at level six often "involved a serious, penetrative sexual assault. Level six…also cover[ed] bullying and constructive dismissal of vulnerable claimants resulting in resignation, or, leaving a claimant in a dangerous situation without backup in which she was seriously injured resulting in permanent disability" (p. 31). Suicidality including attempts were common impacts, as well as claimants presenting with "severe PTSD or other forms of psychological injury" (p. 31). Reports of sexual violence and horrendous internal investigation left claimants feeling "broken and without a career" (p. 31). Claimants reported accessing therapy and using medication as coping and recovery tools. Others coping strategies included engaging in problematic substance use (alcohol and prescription drugs) and isolation behaviours.

Secondary class claims. Claimants were entitled to submit secondary claims for all eligible secondary class members. Eligible secondary class members included biological or adopted children, or those of whom the claimant "has demonstrated a settled intention to treat as a child of her family" (p. 32). Current spouses or co-habiting partners (for a period of not less than three years) were included, and those who were "in a relationship of some permanence, if they [were] the natural or adoptive parents of a child" (p. 32). A total of 220 claimants submitted secondary class claims, resulting in the approval of 488 secondary class awards totalling $3,616,500.

Claimants who received no compensation. Those claimants who were not awarded compensation accounted for 782 of the initial 3,086 claims, representing 25.34% of the total. Of the 782 claims, 300 were SM, 519 were CM and PSE, and 37 were considered to hold MS. These claimants did not meet the compensatory injury thresholds.

Similarities and Differences Between Interviews and the Report Findings

Overall, Bastarache (2020) determined that sexual harassment and gender and sexual orientation-based discrimination were pervasive and were "found at every level of the RCMP and in every geographic area of Canada" (p. 105). As a whole, the RCMP have continually failed to protect women and effectively address and solve an insidious problem. Gender and sexual discrimination is engrained in the fabric of the RCMP and is pervasive across all ranks. This was suggested by participants during the interviews as well relating to their policing organizations. Carley stated, *"I can see how sexual harassment, misogyny is a real foundation of police work. White patriarchy is a foundation of police culture and rape culture is just repeated and reinforced over and over again in police culture."*

The Report detailed seven key findings that indicated the RCMP environment and culture is toxic. These included:

1. Offensive language
2. Sexual misconduct
3. Exclusion from job opportunities
4. Other misconduct (e.g. threat of denial of backup, denial of backup, inflexible scheduling to create undue hardship, denial of appropriate psychological care after traumatic events, questioning approved medical leaves, family and pregnancy discrimination, the use of discrediting female members and laying of charges under the Police Act).

5. Harmful impact of culpable behaviour on women

6. Continuous harassment despite RCMP's updated policies

7. RCMP's culture as an obstacle to change

The Report findings are compared and contrasted with the interview findings, as well as with data from a selection of recent newspaper articles, the Ottawa Police Service Gender Audit Report (2016-2017), and the audio-visual documentary titled, *The tarnished badge* (2021). Given the extensive content analysis of data obtained from interviews above, I have only included a few quotations that are representative of their respective category.

Table 4.4

Data Source Compare and Contrast

Category	Interview data	The Report data	Notable discrepancies between the interviews and Report data	Other data sources (The Tarnished Badge (Meyers, 2021) and newspaper articles)
Offensive language	*"paper bitches," "off-duty mad," "sluts," "bitches," "whores," "fat sham[ing]"* and the tolerance of the same at all organizational levels. *It's that it's okay to sit in front of people and talk about your sexual innuendos and share those details. It's that you can talk about certain members of the community and make fun and laugh and your supervisor just sits there and goes*	*Claimants told the Assessors that male RCMP members would call women sickening and humiliating names like "split-tail, "cunt, "canoe-licker, "bitch", "ball-breaker", "fresh meat", "beaver tails", "WREN (wasted regimental number)". If a woman happened to also be Indigenous she was called a "squaw", "smoked meat", etc.* p. 46	None of the interview participants reported experiencing pranks.	Human rights tribunal finds Toronto police officer endured 'significant' sexual harassment on the job (CBC, 2020). This article provided details relating to Cst. Heather McWilliam's negative experiences with the Toronto Police Service. *"McWilliam also recounted being called "degrading names" such as "c--t, bitch and dyke" by colleagues in her submission to the tribunal. "The*

	along with it." Effy		*evidence in this case demonstrates how the cumulative effect on someone of a series of comments and actions may be very significant,"* Pickel wrote, *adding that many of the accused harassers "had a significant degree of power over* [McWilliam's] *day-to-day work as well as her career prospects."* Pickel goes on to say that inappropriate sexual comments and harassment were so routine that they became *"a condition of her employment" during McWilliam's time at the division"* (para. 8 - 10).
	Differential treatment due to a lack of acceptance was common, including a lack of back up and gendered work assignments	The distribution of menial tasks to women, being told such tasks were "women's work." p. 46	
		Claimants endorsed being made to endure pranks as a means to signal a lack of women's belonging (e.g. the use of ketchup on a tampon, dildoes, and used condoms placed in women's desk drawers). Some claimants reported being permanently injured as the result of the pranks. p. 46	Ottawa police officer fears losing 'dream job' after alleged sexual assault (Molina, 2020). *"In other cases, the woman says she was called belittling names such as "chick" and "young lady" by senior*

| | | | | *officers. She said she repeatedly faced comments about her appearance, questions about her sex life and relationships, and jokes about sexual assault"* (para. 4). *"My first day on the job I was asked if I was a bitch, a slut, or a lesbian by a senior officer"* Retired Cst. Jen Magnus on *The tarnished badge* (Meyers, 2021). Because she spoke out about her experiences, *"In fact, instead of a black sheep, I was actually called by the Inspector of HR a lone wolf. And nobody trusted me, and no one wanted to work with me, and I was devastated. I thought I was trying to make the organization better and throughout that entire time they were doing nothing but pushing me down."* Jen's complaints resulted in the completion of a |

				workplace audit, the findings of which were kept hidden until Jen filed a Freedom of Information request. Findings included a "level of fear and intimidation", worry about the "Old Boys' network," and "feelings of being devalued and abandoned by HR." Despite speaking out publicly, Jen shared she remains friends with women who are officers with the Calgary Police Service and continue to experience sexual harassment and discrimination. She stated, *"I don't feel the service is at a point where you can safely speak out. Your career will likely be ruined because there's not enough leaders within the organization to bring forward that change and support."* She remained hopeful that the new police chief who

				started in 2019 would be able to initiate change.
Sexual misconduct	Six participants reported being sexual assaulted by either male colleagues or male superiors (details provided included unwanted touching, kissing, and sexual assault with no specific details provided). One participant spoke about being sexually assaulted by a male colleague in her hotel room while attending a work course out of town. She detailed how the individual continued to harass her for a significant period of time after. Many of the participants reported being privy to and experiencing sexual-based harassment throughout their careers. *Major, major is sexual violence. Every police officer I know has been sexually*	Sexual misconduct was reported frequently (no numerical details provided), as well as sexual assaults when staying out of town while attending courses. Both penetrative and non-penetrative sexual assaults were found to have occurred. More often than not, the perpetrators were not held accountable for their actions, thus allowing and enabling them to continue to offend against other women. "*One claimant pithily stated that the RCMP is the Catholic Church of policing*" (p. 47). Many perpetrators were moved or promoted as a means to deal with sexual harassment complaints.	The Report described instances of sexual assault perpetrated by RCMP employed doctors. A total of 131 cases of rape were reported and assessed as having taken place, including reports of sodomy and multiple perpetrators. Rapes resulting from the suspected use of the date rape drug and inability to consent due to intoxication were also reported.	Justice system must stop letting bad cops off the hook (Adam, 2021). The article was about Cst. Eric Post, a member of the Ottawa Police Service. It detailed the experiences of a woman who dated him. "*She was one of seven women who made serious criminal allegations against Const. Eric Post, including sexual assault, to the Ottawa police. After a long fight to get the police to take the allegations seriously, Post was eventually charged with 32 criminal offences, including two counts of sexual assault, pointing a firearm, criminal harassment, uttering threats and assault. The charges relate to seven different women, but in a plea deal, he*

harassed or sexually assaulted, whether you're attractive, you're unattractive, if you're heavy or light, doesn't matter. Every police woman faces sexual harassment and that is one of our biggest contributors in…that is how our careers start, that is the start of our career. We are categorized. We are groomed, and then we are sending them into a police service where sexual harassment, sexual violence is rampant, and that dictates our careers. Whether you want to play ball or flirt or do whatever you need to do to get through it, but that's how it starts and that's a major factor. Effy Two participants reported being physically assaulted by male colleagues while at work. One participant	Male colleagues propositioning female claimants for sex and sexual acts and engaging in sexually inappropriate behaviours such as distributing pornography (including violent) were identified. Women identifying as Indigenous, particularly those abused as children, often reported being the targets of male colleagues seeking sexual favors.		*admitted to five counts, with no jail time. The woman who is now speaking out related how, on their second date while driving across a bridge, he warned that "if she ever cheated on him, he would throw her body in the river," and "get away with it because he is a police officer," according to the agreed-upon facts of Post's plea. One time, he deployed his Taser inches from her face. Another time, while she was out of town, the woman told police Post threatened "to snap her neck, gouge" her eyeballs and kill her family. She said Post threatened harm if she revealed what was happening."* (para. 2-3) Human rights tribunal finds Toronto police officer endured 'significant' sexual harassment on the job (CBC, 2020).

reported that her colleague had become upset because she had carried out her police duties, and in doing so, exposed sexually inappropriate behaviour. As a result, he attacked her at work, while in uniform, and choked her.			This article provided details relating to Cst. Heather McWilliam's negative experiences with the Toronto Police Service. *"McWilliam, in her initial complaint filed in 2014, said a superior officer once made a sexual joke about wanting her to "ride his horse." She said another superior, Sgt. Angelo Costa, tried to force his tongue into her mouth at an after-work function. Costa is the only officer named as a respondent in the case. He has since retired from the service."* (para. 6-7)
[T]hey spend their whole career just bouncing back and forth between all of these specialized units, never having to, all just based on word of mouth and who they play hockey with and the boys club. And I remember…I wanted to go to Detectives, and they said…you have to fill out a form…I said, why do I have to fill out a form? All these guys didn't…all these decisions are made in the hockey change room or in the Golf Club or fishing or whatever else it is these guys get together to do. So,	*The term "old boys' club" was very frequently used by women in the interviews to describe how the harassment and discrimination are perpetuated. The Old Boys Club refers to a network that they say exists between men (and now like-minded women) that asserts control over the RCMP and how it approaches change, who it promotes and who it holds back. Those who belong to the Club have a vested interest in the status quo which gives them preferential treatment.* p. 47		Calgary police woman alleges horrific sexual harassment (Cordella, 2020). The article detailed Cst. Kim Prodaniuk's experiences as a Constable with the Calgary Police Service. *"Prodaniuk, 40,*

what's on paper, what the process is and what actually happens are two completely… different things. Carley elaborated on promotion and lateral transfer processes.			*has been on stress leave from the Calgary Police Service since March 17, 2017 after she made repeated complaints of sexual harassment and intimidation over the years against members of the CPS and allegedly faced disguised discipline as a result while those who sexually harassed her, in some cases, were promoted."* (para. 1)
I say can I have this GIT course? And I get a response from the Staff Sergeant saying, no you're going on maternity so you can't use it…we'll give it to someone else…I come back from maternity… and this is just a basic introductory course. I'm not asking for a frickin' homicide course. I'm asking for a basic introductory, very first step of your career, everyone should have this when they're five years on, GIT course…I get a response back when I get back from maternity and the staff Sergeant says no, now because you were gone, you're at the bottom of	The report elucidated that claimants told stories of being denied training. The same training was offered to junior male members, and sometimes to male members who had not requested it, thus making it more difficult to receive a promotion.		*"'I believed I was participating in a course to train me how to perform undercover . . . but in reality it was a one-week-long course dedicated to entertaining male CPS officers at the expense of female officers' sexual dignity,' she says in the document"* (sub-headline) 'Major league stupid:' Toronto cop accused of harassing female cadets while awaiting

the list… Then for a while he said if you go rural…you can have this course 'cause you're doing some of your own investigations. So, then I went rural and I'm like…can I have it? OK no no, you're at the bottom of the list because we have to give it to the investigator. It was always an excuse. Then I'm at the [specialized unit]*, and I asked for this course. This is my* [+10th] *time I think, I'm asking for a basic course, and I find out that one of the guys I work with at the* [specialized department] *didn't want the course and he was ordered to take it, and he's a junior male officer. I'm like, really? He's being ordered to take a course I've been trying to get for* [+10] *years. So, I went in and talked to the staff Sergeant. I got the whole speech about you have to be patient blah blah blah, but I'm*			discipline for forcing himself on a woman in a McDonald's bathroom (DiManno, 2021). After having been found to have sexually assaulted a women in a bathroom (while off-duty), charges were not laid. Instead, the incident information was sent to the Toronto Police Service Professional Standards Section, where Fernandes was a Constable. *"Fernandes was charged with discreditable conduct under the Police Act. He pleaded guilty in December and last month was reduced in rank from first class constable to second class constable — for six months. "In fairness to him, he wasn't going to put the young woman through anything,'' says his top-drawer lawyer Gary Clewley, of the*

like, really? I said, I know an officer that went from constable to Superintendent and I'm waiting for one course. Brenda described her +10-year journey to receive an introductory course.				*decision to plead. "She was completely innocent. Intoxicated but innocent.''* *But between then and now, between that incident and his sentencing by the tribunal, this happened: Fernandes was charged with four counts of misconduct for allegedly hitting on a bunch of female police cadets"* (para. 13-15). He had been placed on a training course while awaiting his sentencing which gave him access to female training cadets. His lawyer said the following, *"In the original incident, Clewley characterized Fernandes as "goofy and stupid.'' And he didn't take the counselling to which he submitted seriously. "It was kind of a lark, like, he didn't understand why it was such a big deal. Then he*

				went off and got semi-lit and went on the prowl"… If Fernandes, on paid suspension, will have any career left when this is over. "My concern is that they'll go too far,'' frets Clewley. "I don't think it's worthy of the guillotine. He should get a kick in the head and be given one last chance to prove himself." (para. 35-36). Clewley stated that Fernandes *"would have been confused with Bill Cosby"* (para. 31). Eight B.C. police officers ordered dismissed in one year (Howell, 2020). *"Eight officers from municipal police departments in B.C. were ordered dismissed over a recent 12-month period following investigations into their conduct under the Police Act, according to the 2019-2020 annual report released this week by the Office of*

				the Police Complaint Commissioner" (para. 1). *"A Delta police inspector engaged in inappropriate sexual communications (text messages) with a woman interested in employment as a police officer. Discipline ordered: Dismissal"* (para. 14).
				Councillor files complaint against police chief, alleges abuse of power (Kula, 2021c). *"Insp. Dwayne Whelpley, the officer accused of assaulting McCabe-Wyville in 2013, continued to work for the department, given Windsor police had found grounds for charges. Colquhoun also asked why a police board press release about the harassment investigation did not share that information. Another of the*

				councillor's questions asked what steps had been taken to protect McCabe-Wyville from reprisal" (para. 9). *"McCabe-Wyville has said she's been threatened by police brass for speaking out and was later offered money to withdraw her complaints"* (para. 20). Similar articles include Kula (2021a) and Kula (2021b).
				Arbitration hearing against former Kennebecasis officer unable to proceed (Leger, 2020). *"An arbitration hearing into a complaint against a senior officer with the Kennebecasis Regional Police Force was unable to proceed Thursday after the officer's retirement was confirmed. Porter, who was an inspector with the force, was accused of 81*

				breaches of the Police Act, including alleged sexual harassment and other Police Act offences involving a female civilian employee he supervised.
				He was suspended for four years with pay over sexual harassment allegations and was scheduled for an arbitration hearing in October.
				A week before that hearing, Porter formally indicated that he planned to retire at the end of the year, and the hearing was adjourned to Dec. 31. The hearing resumed over a private call Thursday, but did not move forward when Porter's retirement was confirmed.
				The New Brunswick Police Commission only has the authority to discipline active police officers" (para. 1-6). *"An inspector's annual salary ranges from about $104,000 to*

				$115,000. Municipal and regional forces in New Brunswick cannot suspend an officer without pay unless the officer has been convicted of an offence under provincial or federal legislation" (para. 19-20). Ottawa police officer fears losing 'dream job' after alleged sexual assault (Molina, 2020). *"An Ottawa police officer says she was sexually assaulted by a fellow officer when she was a rookie, and has "experienced an ongoing pattern of sex-based discrimination and harassment" on the job. In a complaint to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario filed last May, the officer details the years of abuse she's endured as a female member of the Ottawa Police Service for more than a decade.*

				The officer said she faced discrimination while pregnant, including "pressure and intimidation" from another constable to end a pregnancy" (para. 1-3). *""I froze and felt utterly disgusted," she said. When she cried out and asked him to put a condom on, "he became angry and annoyed, and I whimpered. The officer called the sexual assault hotline and told a couple of friends about the incident. Eventually, she also told two male colleagues, but said she was "fearful of formally reporting the assault, as I believed it could ruin my career in policing." In May 2018, she did report the assault to the Ontario Provincial Police. OPP investigators found there were "reasonable and probable grounds" to lay charges against*

				the officer, but closed the file in April 2019, after the Crown determined there was no likely prospect of a conviction because of the amount of time that had passed" (para. 14-16).
				Ottawa police receive 33 complaints about sexual violence, sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace (Pringle, 2021).
				Ex-Edmonton police officer says she was 'pressured' into dropping complaint against co-worker (Wakefield, 2021).
				On *The tarnished badge* (Meyers, 2021), Effy Zarabi detailed being sexually harassed for years, including specific verbal accounts and photos of events. This included fearing she would be raped by two colleagues during

				once such incident. Effy shared a video of her supervisor in which he counselled her to remain silent about her experiences, telling her to think about the consequences, stating, *"you gotta remember this is still a predominantly a male dominated profession."*
				Cst. Angie Rivers described her experiences of sexual harassment and the retaliation she faced in reporting it on *The tarnished badge* (Meyers, 2021): *"One of the Sergeants who I had looked up to as a mentor started sending me flirtatious text messages, dirty jokes, commenting on my appearance, he ended up hitting on me, asking me for naked pictures of myself* [journalist asked *This is your mentor?*] *This is my mentor yes. He*

				wasn't teaching me he was grooming me. [Journalist *Angie says that when she tried to complain about the sexual harassment, she was punished by her colleagues, who started refusing to answer her calls for backup.*] *I remember going home and telling my husband, if anything ever happens to me at work, make sure that it's investigated because I'm not getting back-up.* The documentary reports that the Sergeant was made to take a "sensitivity course" and docked less than one week of pay as punishment. See the section, Harmful impact of culpable behaviour on women, for a description of the impacts Cst. Rivers experienced as a result.

| **Exclusion from job opportuniti-es** | *When I got passed over for this last spot, not only did I beat everyone out, I was the most senior person who'd been, for the longest time, trying to be a part of this team and he's eight years junior and he walks in, basically he got chosen. He did not beat me in the scoring either. It's been interesting. I've watched him get an invitation at more junior years' service to every single group I ever wanted to be a part of, that I could not get an invitation to try out if I lit myself on fire…it is the same as seeing other peers of mine equal to my service and expertise move on into these areas.* Marie spoke about and competing for specialty teams. | Exclusion from the Musical Ride.[5] Women who attended experienced being thrown in horse manure, and having their riding gear intentionally tampered with, increasing the injury risk. Some women felt pressured to engage in sexual acts with their superiors.

Exclusion from specialty units such as the Canine and Undercover units. | Analyzed data from the participants relating to exclusion from job opportunities not only included exclusion from specialty units, but also training courses and promotion. The Report included exclusion from training courses and promotion in the Sexual Misconduct section. Regardless of the section within which these were categorized, the findings were consistent between the participants and the Report data. | Human Resource Rights Project (Fiedeldey-Van Dijk, 2016). This project and final report were completed as part of the settlement agreement of a case that was *"filed with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) by a sworn female* OPS [Ottawa Police Service] *officer against the OPS Board. The complainant alleged discrimination in employment on the basis of gender and family status in accordance with compliance guidelines and standards as described in the Human Rights Code of Ontario… the OPS Board committed to undertake a series of actions to address the problems related to gender within the OPS"* and |

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[5] The Musical Ride is "[a] symbol of [RCMP] tradition…at home and abroad…that supports front-line police operations by building positive relationships, supporting recruiting efforts and promoting the RCMP's image in communities in Canada and around the world. The troop of up to 32 riders, who are all police officers, and their horses perform intricate formations and drills set to music" (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2021).

				present these actions *"to the Ottawa Police Association (OPA) and the complainant, and to the OHRC"* as a part of the settlement (Fiedeldey-Van Dijk, 2016a, p.1). This project occurred in four phases. Phase one focused on the demographic data of OPS members relating to gender and family status, across all ranks (Fiedeldey-Van Dijk, 2016a). A gender audit was completed in phase two in which *"all written and unwritten promotion and job placement policies, procedures, and practices* [were reviewed] *to ensure they* [did not] *discriminate on the basis of gender and/or family status at all levels and ranks"* (Fiedeldey-Van Dijk, 2016b, p. 2). Phase three involved the creation of new or

				revision of existing policies and procedures. This was completed using the Equality Framework© and the Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) tool (author unknown, released May 3, 2017). The phase three report presented all new and updated policies and procedures among other details. Phase four was to involve implementation and training relating to the new policies and procedures. The phase four report was submitted to the Ottawa Police Services Board by the Ottawa Police Chief. The following is an excerpt from the report, *"Addressing gender issues within the OPS is a long-term proposition. The kind of cultural shift required will not happen overnight. We have already experienced some*

				resistance within the OPS as we move forward in applying some of the new approaches developed as a result of this important work…. It's early days yet and many OPS employees – men and women alike – remain skeptical, both about whether the new policies will make a difference and, if so, what they will mean for their careers. Many male officers are concerned that their careers will now be stalled as the OPS looks to right the gender balance. Meanwhile, female officers worry that they will be perceived as having been chosen for an opportunity based on their gender, rather than on merit" (submitted by the Ottawa Police chief, 2017, November 27, p. 11).

Other misconduct	*That's always a stress too, that you're not going to get back up.* Brenda	Threat of denial of backup or denial of backup.		Justice system must stop letting bad cops off the hook (Adam, 2021).
	If you look at the fraud unit, you look at statistics, working shift work takes decades off your life, working swing shift takes even more. Then you go to the fraud unit and, no banks are open at night so why would you need a fraud unit that works shift work. All you're doing is writing warrants for banks. Someone make a command decision, and say no, you can have two people work a shift to cover [evening]. *Everyone else work your Monday to Friday, your family hours. You want to work Tuesday to Thursday, 10 hours, who cares, but..the people in charge are the people that have hardly worked any shift work, and they don't realise. They are out of touch….it's just that personality that tries to always*	Inflexible scheduling to create undue hardship. Denial of appropriate psychological care after traumatic events.	While no participants spoke of being denied psychological care, some did speak of help-seeking for mental health issues as continuing to be stigmatized. Additionally, one participant spoke of the inadequacy the benefits package that allowed coverage of only four therapy sessions. Another participant spoke of the inability to access qualified therapists in remote locations, which proved	*"Remember Const. Nermin Mesic? He was the Ottawa police officer and Gatineau landlord who threatened to kill his former tenant, sell the man's child and "spill blood" because the rent was overdue. "People for money, they kill right," he said to the tenant. A judge gave Mesic an absolute discharge, sparing him a criminal record, and the police service gave him a slap on the wrist, demoting him for a year."* (para. 8) Calgary police woman alleges horrific sexual harassment (Cordella, 2020). The article detailed Cst. Kim Prodaniuk's experiences as a Constable with the Calgary Police Service. *"Earlier, while*

	fit the square peg in the round hole. I don't know why you can't accommodate, to the point of undue hardship. I think people, I don't think it's clear where the point of undue hardship is. Brenda		problematic in addressing cumulative trauma.	*working in Calgary's southwest, Prodaniuk says she worked with an officer who was senior to her and confided in her that he was having visions of killing his girlfriend… Prodaniuk, concerned not just for her safety but that of the public, told her sergeant about the officer's conduct and as a result she "was branded a 'rat' by other employees . . . and was forced to execute her duties without a partner," which compromised her safety, she says. Sometime in 2011 or 2012, while Prodaniuk was working a night shift in another district, a priority one domestic-related 911 call arrived.*
	Olivia shared her experience of applying for a position upon returning from maternity leave. *"You don't just forget how to do police work just because you've been on maternity leave. And then of course there's, I've struggled with this…the discrimination…there's a couple jobs that became open, shortly after I came back from mat leave, wrote a resume, this is a very junior* [area], *people have tops five years' service. I put in for the job, I didn't get it being told that my examples were too dated, but…my examples are just as dated as the last*	Family and pregnancy discrimination.		*"The police dispatcher aired on police radios that a female had locked herself inside a room to escape a violent male and the*

	time I was in uniform"		*dispatcher could hear the boyfriend attempting to kick in the door."*
	Retaliatory behaviours described by the participants included being the subject of gossip and rumors, *"character assassination,"* discrediting, *"workplace mobbing"* (described above), continually being moved to different positions within the service, demotion, being charged under her provincial Police Act, and financial repercussions such as contesting mental health leaves (resulting in suspension of pay). An example of the use of the Police Act as a retaliatory measure was described by Mary Jane. *[W]e're not supposed to speak out, we're specifically not allowed to speak to the media, we're not allowed to, there's a whole bunch of rules around policing that they tie us to*	The use of discrediting female members and/or laying of charges under the Police Act.		*She alleges that it became known that the enraged man was her former co-worker. "No cautionary information on the call screen indicated that (he) had a history of complaints about becoming violent toward other CPS police officers while under the influence of alcohol off-duty, that he had a history of domestic issues, that he had previously stated he had visions of killing his girlfriend years earlier," explains Prodaniuk in the affidavit."* (para. 22-26) Canadian police officers fear stigma of reporting mental health issues: survey (Gillis, 2021). *"A suicidal cop is denied help by a police chief who*

'cause they'll charge. I really don't care, charge away. What's another 20 charges? You already charged me with 19 bullshit ones, what so I care if you charge me another 20?			*"didn't like this officer."* *A male supervisor tells another manager she'll turn officers into "pussies" when she suggests taking an active approach to workplace mental health.*
They don't believe me. When I went off with work, initially I just had a sick note, and I was the only one that was ordered to do a mental health evaluation. I was ordered to a psych eval when they had no idea why I was even requiring to be off at that time. They didn't do it anybody else. At one point there was thirty of us off at one time because of the workplace, and I was the only one and the only woman that was required to sit the psychological….I was the only one with a complaint lodged against [the organization]. Mary Jane *There was so many lies, and they were trying to prevent evidence from*	Questioning approved medical leaves.		*An inspector says cops who responded to a "horrible suicide" must be offered mental health support "so we can say we did it."* *A cross-Canada survey of more than 800 officers has found that despite beefed-up officer wellness programs and growing awareness about the psychological toll of the job, stigma still surrounds mental illness in policing.* *Most cops polled, especially women and junior officers, believe reporting mental health issues could have negative repercussions on their career"*

	getting into my trial to exonerate me and they changed the charges because they didn't get it to fit...I was fully exonerated. Rebecca discussed being charged under the provincial Police Services Act.			*Eight B.C. police officers ordered dismissed in one year (Howell, 2020). "Eight officers from municipal police departments in B.C. were ordered dismissed over a recent 12-month period following investigations into their conduct under the Police Act, according to the 2019-2020 annual report released this week by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner"* (para. 1). *"An off-duty Oak Bay police reserve constable was intoxicated and urinating on a building in downtown Victoria. Same constable was found unconscious due to severe intoxication a few weeks later outside a Victoria nightclub. Discipline ordered: Written reprimand, but constable*

				resigned prior to conclusion of investigation. An internal investigation was initiated after four Abbotsford constables submitted complaints against their supervisor regarding ongoing incidents which included harassing and bullying behaviour. The supervisor was alleged to have made remarks that could be considered derogatory and degrading, and to have screamed and sworn at his members, all contrary to departmental policy. Discipline ordered: Reduction in rank, training and re-assignment" (para. 15-16). Former Winnipeg police officer guilty of pointing gun at colleague (Malone, 2019). *"Prefontaine, a 14-year member of the force, testified she was*

				in a room at police headquarters writing up a report about items recovered in a break-and-enter investigation. She said she was leaning back in her chair to stretch when Gold came into the room, put a shotgun to her rib cage and said, "I know what you need" (para. 4). Cobourg police officer charged with multiple code-of-conduct violations (Davis, 2018). *"On Friday, Const. Amy Matthijsse made an appearance at a Police Services Act hearing where she was charged with 19 counts of discreditable conduct after "willfully or negligently making any false complaint or statement against any member of a police force.""* (para. 2). *"The statement of*

				particulars noted Matthijsse made a number of allegations of incidents of "harassing conduct" and "sexually-charged comments" from fellow officers. She also made allegations that police Chief Kai Liu engaged in harassing conduct and often "targeted her."…[T]he alleged incidents include him refusing to allow her to work on the road three months into a pregnancy, and introducing her as "Amy and she has six kids."" (para. 5-6). Suspended Cobourg cop speaks out about allegations against soon-to-be chief (Rosen, 2019). After filing a formal harassment complaint with the Ontario Civilian Police Commission (OCPC) which was deemed

| | | | | unfounded, Cst. Amy Matthijjse was charged under the Police Act and suspended. *"As a result, the service said Matthijsse made false complaints. It led to her being charged with 19 counts of discreditable conduct. In April 2019, Matthijsse was suspended from the force"* (para. 8-9)…*However, the OCPC has since dropped all of the charges against Matthijsse after saying they may have been retaliatory"* (para. 11). Charging victims after they have complained serves to silence all victims and allow discriminatory and harassing behaviour to continue. |
| **Harmful impact of culpable behaviour on women** | *I had no idea that, because I'm a very strong person, I had no idea how over the last three years I could become so broken,* | *The full tragedy of what the RCMP's failure to provide a safe workplace has done to these women is* | Suicidal ideation was found to occur in both; however, detailed planning and described suicidal behaviours were | Calgary police woman alleges horrific sexual harassment (Cordella, 2020). The article detailed Cst. Kim |

	so broken (quiver in voice). Xena *Short version, the impact, my own personal mental health, the family aspect in being irritated and fighting, the sleep hygiene impact where the anxiety and the rumination at night became a problem which then impacted physical health the next day. Nutrition, so not eating healthy and well and making poor choices perhaps because a croissant with chocolate in it is so good with coffee, and not fully becoming energized, not knowing where to go for the help for that. Asking for the help for that for a period of time and not receiving it. Clarity of the brain and decision making, I think we had talked about that, and making poor decisions. And not being able to look at a cheque and calculate what a tip is, and quite honestly, in* [province]*, it's*	*overwhelming. Loss of potential, loss of mental health, loss of family and connection, irremediable personality change caused by years of internalized emotion, stress and anxiety.* p. 50 *Many women that the Assessors interviewed had been diagnosed with serious psychological injuries including Major Depressive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, panic attacks and substance dependence. Claimants also reported a lack of trust in the RCMP, a lack of trust in men, feelings of isolation, withdrawal from social activities, friendships and sexual relations, humiliation, lack of self-esteem and lack of confidence. Many*	not discussed in this study as they were in the report (frequency not provided). Also, none of the participants of this study had died by suicide at the time of this writing, whereas one of the claimants of the report had died by suicide at the time of writing and release. None of the participants identified as engaging in self-harm behaviours such as cutting as a means of coping, whereas these types of behaviours were identified in the Report (frequency of behaviour not provided). Participant identified self-harm behaviours included problematic eating/overeating and excessive exercising.	Prodaniuk's experiences as a Constable with the Calgary Police Service. *"Last May, Prodaniuk filed a 12-page statement of claim suing the City of Calgary, the CPS, the police chief and the Calgary Police Association for harassment, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and intimidation that damaged her reputation, caused her trauma and led to a major depressive disorder making it impossible for her to return to work, leading to loss of income. The CPS and the other entities served have not yet filed a statement of defence. Instead, they filed a motion to strike, saying that the Police Officers Collective Bargaining Act requires that grievances be*

	pretty darn easy. Things that were easy became less easy to compute in the brain. It was like a brain fog, a brain scramble. The exhaustion piece. Again, being isolated because of my disability was one aspect, but then the self-fulfilling prophecy. I've asked you for coffee, you've said your busy, and yet we don't ever go for coffee ever again and therefore, it's me. So again, taking the hit for the self-esteem, lowering the self-confidence. I started to have blurred vision with the high anxiety. It got to the point where it became so bad that I was choking and vomiting. I couldn't eat, lost my hair. Anne	*women experienced eating disorders, alcohol abuse, panic attacks, vomiting on the way to work, inability to maintain a positive relationship with their spouse and children. Some reported intentionally injuring themselves repeatedly. Self-blame is common, even after blatant sexual assaults. We heard stories of women who sat with their service revolvers in their mouths and were only stopped from killing themselves when they thought of their children or their pets. Heartbreaking stories of despair. One claimant committed suicide during the claims process.* (p. II) All of these impacts were described by the participants with the exception of engaging in self-injurious behaviors and		*filed within 60 days and her complaint was not. Prodaniuk's lawyer, Brendan Miller, has filed a Constitutional challenge in response, and her affidavit alleges, in detail, that she did in fact complain to superiors within 60 days and also to the police union, where she was told "we don't do blue on blue" complaints, only complaints about police executives."* (para. 5-7) Vancouver police chief confirms investigation into allegations from VPD officer who later died by suicide (Daya & Boynton, 2019). *"Const. Nicole Chan came forward in 2017 with accusations of inappropriate relationships with two senior officers, at a time when Chan's sister said she was struggling with anxiety and depression.*

| | | details of engaging in suicidal behaviours (e.g. service revolver in their mouth). | | *After being put on stress leave for the second time following her speaking out, the nine-year veteran of the Vancouver Police Department took her own life in January."* (para. 2-3). The article revealed that one of the two officers was given a "15 day suspension" for his behaviour of being in a relationship with Chan when she was in a vulnerable state (he later resigned). The outcome for the other officer had not been made public at the time of publication.

Former Winnipeg police officer guilty of pointing gun at colleague (Malone, 2019). Gold's lawyer argued that the event did not occur, and that Gold had made a joke that had angered Prefontaine (the victim). The judge responded, |

				"Prefontaine's testimony was emotional and showed signs of trauma, said the judge, who added it did not make sense that she would respond in such a way to a joke" (para. 8). This was the second time Prefontaine alleged that Gold pointed a shotgun at her. She felt she had handled it herself after the first incident and did not report it until after the second incident had occurred. Gold was fired in 2017. Ottawa police officer fears losing 'dream job' after alleged sexual assault (Molina, 2020). *"The officer said she suffered anxiety, difficulty sleeping and nightmares after the assault. She said her mental health further deteriorated after learning about another sexual assault claim involving a senior officer who was*

				never named, demoted or suspended pending the investigation. "I wondered how any woman could feel safe working for the OPS when the organization does not appear to take these significant allegations of against its officers seriously," she wrote in her complaint to the human rights tribunal" (para. 18-19). Cst. Angie Rivers discussed the impacts of being sexually harassed, ostracized, and labelled at work. *"I didn't want to die but for some reason I couldn't stop imagining blowing my brains out in the office and it was like a movie reel, the blood all over the walls , and that was my mind's way of saying, you need to get out, now."* Retired Cst. Jen Magnus's public

				resignation to the Calgary Police Commission as shared on *The tarnished badge* (Meyers, 2021): *"I have been bullied, sexually harassed, degraded, and chastised. The stresses of all this have had a tremendous impact on not only me and my mental and physical health, but also my family."*
Continuous harassment despite updated policies	*I reported it, this is after he's been found to be inappropriate at work. I'm away from work and he still inappropriate, and rather than go with the criminal route, they decided to keep it in house and make it just to an employee relations issue again, which is astounding to me because I never, if I had given in to his requests and had some sort of a relationship with him, I would be protected by provincial legislation. They*	Based on the interviews, Bastarache wrote, *"All three Assessors were surprised by the prevalence of sexual harassment and discrimination as well as by its level of violence. What the other Assessors and I heard confirmed the RCMP Commissioner's admission that there is a systemic problem with harassment and discrimination in the RCMP, one which remains unaddressed*	No discrepancies were noted.	Canadian police officers fear stigma of reporting mental health issues: survey (Gillis, 2021). *"The belief that those who experience mental illness are labelled weak, incompetent, and lazy largely remained, despite senior management messaging and programs/resources,"* Bikos writes in the study, published in *Policing: An International Journal.*

	would be forced to lay a criminal charge because there would be a domestic of relationship. But because I refused, it doesn't fall under that legislation so they can use their discretion and choose not to lay a criminal charge. So, they've not laid it, a criminal charge. I went to an outside service to have them investigate, a much smaller service and very close knit with [Carley's service name] *and they wouldn't lay a charge either and I know that's because of political influence.* Carley spoke of reporting the continued misconduct of a superior. Despite changes in organizational policy aimed at protecting individuals experiencing bullying and sexual harassment, organizational discretion was used and instead of laying a criminal charge against the perpetrator who	*despite past promises of change and the amendment of policies.* *What is even more concerning is that the events described in these claims are not simply historical, overtaken by time and updated policies. While the claims process did not review conduct that occurred after May 30, 2017, some claimants disclosed that they were still experiencing similar incidents despite the initiatives taken by the RCMP to address gender and sexual orientation-based harassment…I have concluded that harassment remains present in many areas of the organization. Worse still, disrespectful conduct has been perpetuated and condoned at every level of the hierarchy."* p. 54		*"They had the real sense, whether it's perception or reality, that this was all window dressing,"* Bikos told the Star of the mental health supports and messaging."*

	was already found to be guilty within the service of previous harassment, they decided to make it a labour relations issue and he was allowed to remain in his supervisory role with few repercussions (not listed to protect confidentiality).	The Report included the following claimant quotation that succinctly described the problems identified in the assessment: *The RCMP has systemic, pervasive issues related to sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination in the workforce. These issues are ingrained in the culture — they are part of the humour, part of the structural framework of the organization, and because of this, many successful women in the organization have learned to not just tolerate but completely adapt to accommodate and fit in with the male-dominated, sexist, harassing archaic ways of the RCMP.* p. 54		
Policing culture as an obstacle to change	*[W]e're apples and oranges. I'll never be an apple and they make that very clear the moment*	Bastarache asserted that policies and legislative changes have	No discrepancies noted.	Canadian police officers fear stigma of reporting mental health issues:

that things go bad with another co-worker who happens to be a male. They'll get in their little football team and protect the quarterback despite knowing what he's done or what he is. We'll always come on the bottom of that. We're never going to be able to get out from underneath those clubs. They protect each other and they know that if they don't, then they'll be the outcasts along with us. Mary Jane's description of the culture within her organization.	resulted from previous investigations of the RCMP of which the focus was toxic workplace culture. Despite these changes, claimants noted that they were not properly implemented nor was there any evaluation of the new policies and changes to ensure change was occurring (p.54). As a result, the toxic culture is perpetuated and sustained, whether it be through a lack of understanding, willful ignorance of, or refusal to believe in systemic discrimination. Bastarache aptly referred to this familiar saying, Culture eats policy for breakfast.		survey (Gillis, 2021). *"Although half those who participated in the online survey said mental health stigma has reduced in their workplace — generally, Bikos found, police forces now openly acknowledge mental health issues and some have developed more supports — there remains a widespread culture that prioritizes stoicism and toughness* (para. 16)… *Traditional masculinity was often identified as the largest cultural barrier to reducing stigma for both male and female officers, according to the study. But men had "deeply internalized" the idea that mental illness equated weakness and incompetence"* (para. 19). Lesley Bikos[6] on Twitter (May 4,

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[6] Lesley J. Bikos is a Ph.D. candidate and former police officer whose research focuses on the intersection of gender and workplace culture, including policing.

| | | | | 2021). *"Pay attention to this case. It just gets deeper and deeper. Imagine the cultural and structural elements required to uphold this behaviour for so long, across two police services. A lot of people had to have known. But still, he made it allll the way up."* She was responding to the article titled; *Deputy police chief accused of soliciting info about alleged misconduct* by Yogaretnam (2021b). Also reviewed in Trinh and Baksh's (2021) article, *Exposed: Sexism within Ottawa police.*

Effy Zarabi spoke of the problems within policing organizations as being more than a few bad individuals on *The tarnished badge* (Meyers, 2021): *"It's the guys fault, the bad apples. But what's the chief* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

				doing about it. Nothing. So it's a bad tree, not just an apple."

Note. Summative table of data collected from interviews, the Report, and other print and visual data sources.

Summary of Findings

It was evident across all data sources that psychological stress as experienced by female police officers within Canadian policing agencies is a rule rather than an exception and more so due to internal workplace factors than the role of police officer itself. The majority of the data sources detailed the women as experiencing mental health issues in the context of internal workplace stressors, suggesting there is likely a relationship between these two factors. All of the data sources painted a picture of policing environments (federal, provincial, and municipal levels) as toxic and a significant source of stress for police women. Organizational stressors that were identified in the data included a lack of organizational, supervisor, and colleague support, changes in leadership, a lack of and/or problematic, and/or unclear, and/or improper application of policy, procedures, and processes (e.g. promotional policies and processes), and gendered stress relating to being female in a male-dominated hierarchical organization.

Specific stressors related to gendered stress involved family planning and family status, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and violence (including sexual harassment and sexual violence). Psychological stressors related to interactions between various systems (at the micro, meso, and macro levels, see figure 4.9) were also found to be impactful. These included interactions between court processes, the media, and organizational processes. Other systems that were identified as significant psychological stress sources included: individual police organizations, police unions, outside policing agencies, provincial legislation, the political system, and the justice system.

Societal and cultural values were also found to be a source of psychological stress for the women, whether they realized this or not. Additional stressors included those related to a disruption in finances, impacts on family members, and contextual stressors relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MeToo movement, and the defund the police/anti-police movement.

The impacts of the psychological stress on police women were varied. Stress impacts were categorized within one of four fields (physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural).

Psychological stressors were found to have short, medium, and long-term impacts depending on the type and duration of the stressor. The use of a leave of absence was a common strategy to escape the stress (frequency not available). The data revealed that organizational and peer behaviours and the organization's failure to provide a safe workplace had negative and often devastating impacts. Bastarache (2020) provided the following summary, which encapsulates findings from the current study, *"Loss of potential, loss of mental health, loss of family and connection, irremediable personality change caused by years of internalized emotion, stress and anxiety"* (p. 50). As noted above, impact commonalities included serious psychological injuries resulting in medical diagnoses (most common were depression, PTSD, and anxiety disorders) and altered worldview/cognitive schemas (including trust, safety, power and control, esteem, and intimacy). Disordered eating, substance use/misuse, and physical stress symptoms were common as well (i.e., panic attacks, vomiting, physical ailments and illnesses).

Many of the psychological stress experiences were connected to moral toll and procedural injustice. There were two ways that moral toll was experienced, often intertwining. The first involved the experience of moral distress and the participants' inability to act in a congruent way with their values and beliefs due to internal and external constraints. The second way involved moral injury or a combination of moral injury and moral distress connected to being the subject of or having to bear witness to and live with the actions and decisions of others that were incongruent with the participants values and beliefs. Moral toll was linked to procedural justice in that the violation of the four pillars (neutrality, respect, trustworthiness, and voice) by colleagues and the organization often resulted in moral distress, moral injury, or moral toll.

The development of policies and programs, and the implementation of the same are direct reflection of an organization's stance relating to mental health. The data revealed that even when policing organizations presented as being supporters of mental health to the public, this was incongruent with what the police women experienced from within. While there have been some advancements towards the promotion of mental health and encouragement of help-seeking within policing organizations, mental health stigma continues to remain a barrier help-seeking and recovery. Given that the data identified a lack of support, gender-discrimination and harassment as factors that negatively impacted mental health, female mentorship and shared

experience can serve to help to mitigate the effects of these barriers in providing space for women to access support and feel heard.

The underlying mechanisms that generated much of the women's noted stress experiences were linked to patriarchy and rape culture. As stated above, patriarchy attempts to devalue, manipulate, oppress, and control women. I hypothesized that this devaluation, manipulation, oppression, and control are included in psychological stress sources for female officers. It is clear in the current study that this is the case. Patriarchal ideology permeates all levels of experiences (micro, meso, and macro) and the interactions between these levels serve to reinforce and sustain beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours not only within policing, but within society as a whole.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter aims to situate the findings within the empirical literature reviewed in chapter two, illuminating similarities and differences. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of the findings for theory, policy, and practice. The limitations of this research and how these limitations may affect the interpretation of the findings are examined. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research based on the research findings.

Situating the Findings within Existing Literature about Female Police Officers

The similarities to and differences from the existing literature about female police officers are described here according to the categories discussed in chapter two. These include overall experiences; gendered institutions, gender identity and gender roles and differences in policing; sexual harassment and discriminatory experiences of police women; organizational relationships between gender and career progression and promotion; police women, parenting, and police organizations; organizational change and police women; and stressors and associated health effects for women police officers

Gendered Institutions, Gender Identity, and Gender Roles in Policing

Similar to the existing research, in the current study women's abilities (physical and emotional/psychological) are called into question within the context of performing police duties (Gosset & Williams, 1998; Morash, Kwak, & Haarr, 2006; Seklecki & Paynich, 2007 in Hartley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; Morash & Haarr, 2012; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011; Shuck, 2014), serving as a stress source (Hartley et al., 2014). Similar to Kringren's (2014) finding, the masculine police culture was identified as a major factor in limiting women's integration and inclusion into policing organizations. Perceptions of female police officers in the literature included the use of language such as "weak" and "criminal," needing to constantly prove themselves in attempts to fit in (Haake, 2018; Hartley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2014) and be accepted (Kingshott, 2013). The concept of defeminization arose as a strategy to conform and gain acceptance (Bikos, 2016). An addition to the existing literature, Bastarache (2020) described police women going so far as to have surgeries such as breast reductions, in an attempt to minimize feminine features. Similar to the literature, this study found that policewomen attempted to align with their male colleagues, remained silent, and engaged in discriminatory practices themselves, to be perceived as not causing trouble (Bikos, 2016; Magnus, 2017). Contrary to the literature, one police woman in the study reported that the only

way she able to advance her career was by filing human rights complaints, thus forcing the hand of her employer and resulting in a change to promotional processes.

Previous literature relating to differential treatment due to a lack of acceptance was confirmed (Hartley et al., 2014; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011), including a lack of back up and gendered work assignments ((Bikos, 2016; Haake, 2018; Hartley et al., 2014; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011; Schuck, 2014). While gendered task assignment was found to decrease opportunities for policewomen in gaining experience and career advancement (Brown & Fielding, 1993; Dick & Jankowicz, 2001 in Hartley et al., 2014; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011) and access to specialty units (Bikos, 2016; Haake, 2018), gendered discrimination relating to the allotment of training and courses was apparent, thus impacting short and long-term career outcomes (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Harley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley, 2011; Swan, 2016). This reinforces and perpetuates gendered stereotypes of women's work and sustains the belief that leadership roles are best filled by men (Haake, 2018), as is supported through problematic policy, procedure, and processes. Furthermore, the unique concept of merit based on gender (a finding not revealed in the articles reviewed) arose in this study in that men are perceived as inherently possessing merit without having to demonstrate it, while women start at "zero" and have to earn the merit that their male colleagues automatically possess due to their gender. The concepts of merit and acceptance in the context of gender and police culture present an opportunity for future research. This study suggests that merit, as linked to privilege and power, is a mechanism that can help to reinforce and sustain the dominant group's power, and further serves to dominate marginalized groups within the police culture who are seen to lack merit.

Contrary to Biko's (2016) findings, the experience of conflicting identities was not mentioned in the current study. That is not to say that participants did not experience this; however, it was not identified in this study. Similar to existing literature, participants experienced labelling, stigmatization, and the devaluing of women within police environments (Bikos, 2016; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011). The research not only produced similar findings, but also highlighted these findings within a larger context considering not only the impacts, but the underlying mechanisms which generate and produce such events (e.g., patriarchal ideology, misogynistic attitudes and beliefs, rape culture as perpetuated and sustained with the masculine police culture, procedural injustice, and so on). Additionally, gender identity as influencing job satisfaction did not arise in the current study (Swan, 2016).

The idea of the "heroic male" (Silvestri, 2018; Silvestri et al., 2012) arose in the context of mental health and the promoted image of mental health in policing. This study found that acceptable visual representations of mental health tended to be associated with the image of white, male police officers. In fact, this study highlighted the differences in cultural response to male versus female officers in being vocal about their mental health struggles. While the male officers tended to be "rallied around" and supported, female officers tended to be ostracized and face discrimination.

Sexual Harassment and Discriminatory Experiences of Policewomen

Sexual harassment and discrimination were cited as common sources of stress in the current study and in the literature (Chaiyavej & Morash, 2008; Deschamps, Paganon-Badinier, Marchand & Merle, 2003; Greene & del Carmen, 2002; Liberman et al., 2002; Morash et al., 2006; Thompson et al., 2006). Sexualized and gendered language, gender discrimination (verbal, processes, policies), unwanted sexual attention (Bastarache, 2020; Hartley et al., 2020), and sexual violence were the norm in the current study. Such experiences were described as negatively impacting mental health, causing irreversible harm in some instances (more so than operational stressors), although this remained largely unrecognized within policing organizations and the police culture as an acceptable stress source. While this was the case, numerous participants spoke of acceptable sources of stress, including operational stressors, particularly being involved in high-risk events. One participant described her actions in a high-risk situation as being minimized by her male peers in that she was just doing her job, whereas her male colleague was heralded as a hero when he experienced a similar event. These experiences were identified as the cause of moral injury and further negative impacts to mental health.

Aligning with existing literature (Bikos, 2016; Brown et al., 2019; Cunningham & Ramshaw, 2020; Hartley et al., 2014; Kingshott, 2013; Lonsway et al., 2013; Magnus, 2017; Silvestri, 2018), experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence, discrimination (both gender and disability), and exclusion directly impacted female officers' career progression, and served as a mechanism to prevent reporting of the same due to fear of reprisal and retaliation (Magnus, 2017).

Gender, Career Progression, Promotion, and Retention

Discriminatory promotional processes and a lack of inclusive maternity leave and family leave policies as a stress source (Bikos, 2016) were described not only by women with children

(as found in the literature), but by those without children as well in the current study. Some women expressed problematic discriminatory processes around candidate selection for training and courses as a barrier for promotion as well as biased promotional processes that favor men over women due to the subjectivity that is built into these processes (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Harley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley, 2011; Swan, 2016). This provides a clear advantage to male officers (O'Connor Shelley, 2011). In fact, one woman noted that when the promotional process was blind (individual not identified) and the promotional scoring was based solely on skills and abilities as identified through described candidate examples, 70% of the applicants who were promoted were female. Overall organizational and cultural perceptions of women, gendered-expectations (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Haake 2017), cultural stereotypes (Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Haake, 2017), and discrimination (Magnus, 2017; Shjarback & Todak, 2019) were presented as promotional barriers. Female mentorship was discussed in this study in a different manner than in existing literature. Past studies noted a lack of mentorship as a barrier to promotion (Murray, 2021), while within this study, some of the participants shared that they were not even aware that promotion was a possibility until they received mentorship from national women in policing conferences. This served as the catalyst for the development of a provincial association for female officers, within which a mentorship program was started. Others spoke of creating provincial associations of women in policing to support, uphold, and empower women in policing roles.

While family commitments (Schulze, 2010a; Schulze, 2010b; Shjarback & Todak, 2019; Swan, 2016) and a lack of family responsive policies (Boag-Munroe, 2017; Schulze, 2010b) including inflexibility in working time (Charlesworth & Robertson, 2012; Magnus, 2017; Shjarback & Todak, 2019) were discussed within the current study, discriminatory promotional policies were also discussed in the context of maternity leave. Numerous women noted that the examples required for promotion needed to occur within a prescribed time period (e.g. within one year of application), thus placing women on or returning from maternity leave at a disadvantage. One woman described using her volunteer experience in the community as part of her promotional package, as this was the only way she could present examples within the proscribed time period. While the retention of female officers did arise, within the current study it occurred in the context of discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence as opposed to

pregnancy, family leave, and scheduling context (Kingshott, 2013; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011).

Policewomen and Parenting

This study identified the interaction of being a police officer and a parent as a stress source. Women described altering their family planning around the needs of their service, and if and when they chose to have children, they identified facing discrimination due to the same (Hartley et al., 2014; Magnus, 2017; O'Connor Shelley, 2011). Numerous women filled both traditional gendered roles within their homes in terms of functioning as the primary caregiver and being responsible for tasks associated with managing a household (e.g., laundry, groceries). None of the participants who identified as mothers spoke of their pregnancy leaves in relation to being viewed as a disability or managed under illness and disability policies, contrary to findings in other studies (Langan et al., 2017; Schulze, 2010).

The findings from this study do, however, correspond to those described by Langan and colleagues (2017) relating to workplace experiences during pregnancy, maternity leave, and returning to work. Women spoke of feeling the need to hide their pregnancies due to bias and discrimination and experiencing adverse reactions to the same once they revealed their pregnancies. They also spoke of having to re-prove themselves upon returning to work. While the women in the current study spoke of the need to retain women, they did so in the context of experiences of sexual harassment and overall gender discrimination (experienced informally within the culture and formally within policies), rather than relating specifically to maternity and family leave policies.

Interestingly and unique to this study, numerous participants spoke of the overall impacts of psychological stress not only in terms of the self-impacts but impacts on their children and their significant others. Two participants questioned their role as a police officer and impacts to self in the development of certain personality traits in their children and the overall impact on their children's mental health. Others shared how their resulting negative mental health impacts as brought on by organizational discriminatory and retaliatory measures impacted the mental health of their children and their financial ability to provide for their families. Additionally, some participants discussed retaliatory organizational repercussions for their significant others who are police members within the same organization, based on their decisions to bring forth complaints

related to discrimination and sexual harassment. Relationship intimacy impacts in addition to general discord with intimate partners were detailed as well.

Organizational Change and Policewomen

Agreeing with Schuck (2014), this study elucidated the possibility of increased gender diversity in promoting and achieving organizational and cultural change. It was noted, though, that the hiring of women will not simply solve the toxic work culture due to the fact that the majority of women hired tend to be in their childbearing years, the majority desiring a family, and discriminatory pregnancy and maternity leave policies, and return to work policies do not support this. As with Silvestri's (2019) findings, the promotion of women into positions, typically represented by men, to appease the public and general perceptions of diversity within policing, were found to exacerbate discriminatory views of women taking men's jobs and perceptions of gendered roles. It was suggested that the discourse around the need for women in particular roles (e.g., surveillance positions) needs to change from that of tokenism and simply strategically moving women into various positions based on "optics" (as a response to public pressure and various contextual events), to providing clear reasons as to the necessity of women's inclusion as essential in successfully carrying out a unit's objectives (e.g., a team of all male surveillance officers cannot follow a female target into a bathroom).

Psychological Health and Policewomen

This study serves to fill a gap in the literature relating to policewomen, psychological stress, and mental health. While Hartley and colleagues (2014) discussed female police officers' mental health broadly as situated within a larger discussion of overall police officer mental health, none of the research studies that these authors cited identified causal factors of stress, but rather highlighted correlations, drawing on samples predominantly comprised of male officers with low female representation.

The women in this study indicated that the majority of their stress occurred as a result of gender-based discrimination, stereotyping, harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, rather than operational stressors. Such identification may account for Yoo and Franke's (2010) findings that women officers reported higher levels of perceived stress and job demand, lower job control, and higher levels of effort-reward imbalance than their male colleagues. This coupled with the women's description of having to balance their intersecting identities of officer, woman, and mother may account for these authors' findings that women experienced higher

levels of fatigue and tiredness, given that they continue to complete the majority of household and child rearing tasks, thus having less time to rest and recuperate. Whether considered separately (oppressive experiences or mothering roles) or combined, these findings suggest that women's languishing mental health and contextual factors (at the micro, meso, and macro levels) are intricately and inextricably linked.

Findings Not Described in the Existing Literature

This study provided a detailed account of how the participants experienced psychological stress, why they experienced psychological stress, and the impacts of the psychological stress on themselves and their personal relationships, as well as how these experiences impacted their decision to seek help or not seek help. For those who did seek help, details around the type of help sought were exposed. While much of the how of female police officers' experiences of psychological stress has been detailed in previous literature, this study posits that the psychological stress and resulting negative consequences not only occur as a result of masculine police culture, but because of the continuation of patriarchal ideology that is perpetuated and re-produced through the police culture. It is suggested that patriarchal principles and misogynistic views of women are the foundation upon which policing institutions are built, and they serve to generate, perpetuate, and sustain toxic work environments and discriminatory and oppressive policies, practices, and behaviours against not only women in policing, but also extending to the treatment of women in the community.

In this study, the participants identified experiencing a myriad of physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural symptoms (identified in table 4.1) as a result of their experiences of psychological stress. More often than not, the experience of psychological stress was linked to how they were treated within and by their organizations and peers. These symptoms were exacerbated by the complex web of interactions at the various system levels as depicted in figure 4.9 (micro, meso and macro), whether recognized or not. Additionally, the experiences of ongoing discrimination and retaliation due to self-advocating, even when on leave, were found to lead to increased and compounding psychological stress and were cited as negatively impacting the recovery process. In some cases, these compounding experiences negatively impacted relationships with significant others and children, and the mental health of family members as well.

While stigma was identified as a factor in help-seeking by some of the women (e.g., accessing therapy, taking a leave of absence, taking medication related to mental health issues), others noted that the bigger issue was not necessarily the stigma associated with seeking help, but rather, a lack of supports and resources altogether (e.g., benefits that only cover four therapy sessions) or the provision of inadequate supports and resources (including qualified therapists with knowledge and awareness of police culture and potential impacts). Some noted that while their organizations offered a number of wellness supports, barriers to access included inaccessibility to shift-workers (based on the time of day they were offered) and the physical location of the services. Physical location as a barrier was found to occur in two ways. The first involved insufficient staffing levels. Some of the women spoke of having a desire to attend various activities related to health and wellness; however, were denied this opportunity (contrary to their male counterparts being cleared to participate in informal sporting activities on worktime) due to the amount of travel time and/or lack of staffing to accommodate such an absence. The second way that physical location was found to act as a barrier to accessing support was related to the services being housed within headquarters, where those accessing services would be unable to remain anonymous.

Additionally, this study provides insight into these women's hope for the future in terms of police agencies and their responses to mental health. All expressed hope that their organizations recognize sexual harassment, sexual violence, and systemic gender discrimination as a significant source of stress for women in policing and educate their members about this. Education, training, and awareness of these issues were believed to be a key component of change and suggested to serve as an inoculant to psychological stress, along with mentorship among female officers at all ranks. Mentorship could serve to help mitigate some of the harmful impacts of the culture in reducing psychological stress and negative mental health through support and shared experience; however, this would be dependent on the buy-in and investment of those involved. If those serving in mentorship roles are not fully invested in supporting and empowering women in policing, their participation could have a detrimental effect or no effect at all.

Furthermore, despite class action lawsuits and media coverage of the struggles of women in policing (Adam, 2021; CBC, 2020; Corbella, 2020; Daya & Boynton, 2019; DiManno, 2021; Gillis, 2021; Howell, 2020; Kula, 2021a; Kula, 2021b; Kula, 2021c; Leger, 2020; Malone, 2019;

Meyers, 2020; Molina, 2020; Pringle, 2021; Rosen, 2019; Rubinoff, 2021; Shantz, 2021; Trinh, 2021; Trinh & Baksh, 2021; Tunney, 2020a; Tunney, 2020b; Wakefield, 2021; Yogaretnam, 2020a; Yogaretnam, 2020b; Yogaretnam, 2021a), it is unclear how substantive change within policing organizations can truly occur. The study produced mixed results relating to this. Some policewomen felt that exposure of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence against women in policing failed to produce any meaningful change. Others believed that calling attention to these issues in the media produced significant changes within their organizations, even if it was just for appearance's sake. Relating to change, two contrary suggestions were described: one being that change needs to occur from the top down as suggested in previous literature (CAMH, 2018), and the other being change through an external civilian governing body.

Financial stress formed part of the psychological stress experience and was noted by many women, particularly around being unable to afford costly legal processes in attempting to obtain justice for themselves when internal measures have failed, including support from their respective unions. According to Guard (personal communication, May 25, 2021),

> *History suggests that workers who endeavour to make positive or progressive change in their workplace are most likely to succeed when they act as union members. It's almost impossible for workers to initiate workplace change as individuals, and almost equally difficult to do so as part of an informal group. Only as union members are workers who are critical of their workplace and, by definition, their employer, protected from retaliation.*

While literature has suggested that collective bargaining agreements negotiated by unions provide many workplace protections and insurance benefits supporting health (Hagedorn et al., 2016; Zoorob, 2018), it remains uncertain how change through police unions is possible due to the interaction of masculine police culture and the perpetuation of patriarchal ideals that extend to most police unions, given police union representatives are elected by the policing membership themselves. Additionally, discriminatory training and promotion selection processes, and leave policies disadvantage women in terms of skill development and pay levels, issues of which may or may not receive union support depending on their union's stance towards such issues. As Yates (2019) argued, "union organizing practices are deeply gender-biased, often reflecting the

segmented and differentiated conditions under which women engage in the labour market" (p. 103).

Women in policing associations present a unique opportunity to explore not only their ability to provide support and mentorship in a safe space, but also make change through non-traditional measures, perhaps through "unionized" associations in which members pay union dues not only to support the association and various educational and mentoring initiatives, but also provide funds to help reduce some of the financial burden of police women seeking justice. The formal organizing of women's policing associations present as a mechanism through which change may or may not be actualized, with many entities (see figure 4.9) serving to help or hinder the process.

Theory, Policy, and Practice Implications

This study has uniquely applied critical realist theory (CR) to the profession of policing, specifically exploring the experiences of female police officers. The use of CR within a qualitative multiple case study design allowed me to obtain rich, thick descriptions of the women's experiences of psychological stress and resulting mental health impacts, and also allowed for exploration of generative mechanisms that may have produced these experiences. Within the CR data analysis, I included power, oppression, and privilege concepts. This study made theoretical contributions in the application of anti-oppressive concepts to a new setting, a police context, and elaborated anti-oppressive concepts to include issues and experiences within in this setting. This inclusion helped to frame the women's experiences, and support and provide a solid rationale for the integration of both anti-oppressive and gendered lenses when designing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programming to ensure that the needs of police women are accurately represented and included. Such an inclusion may help mitigate oppressive aspects and practices and prevent harm from occurring where possible. Policy areas may include workplace mental health policy, respectful workplace policy, disciplinary policies that detail specific and meaningful consequences based on the severity of the behaviour, return to work policy, sick leave and family leave policies, and other family-related policies around child-care and job-sharing opportunities. Several policy content suggestions are described below.

Within each aspect of workplace mental health policy and programming, it should be made clear that mental health issues are a normal reaction to the exposure to psychological stress to create an understanding that those who experience the same are not damaged goods but human

beings with normal reactions. Relating to programming, the findings may help to inform the creation of education and awareness training for police officers regarding psychological stress sources and specifically, how these may differ by gender, as part of a more comprehensive workplace mental health policy. A segment addressing the masculine nature of police organizations and culture could be helpful as well. Such a segment could educate officers on the characteristics of the same, and how they can serve to perpetuate and exacerbate stigma, discrimination, and stereotyping. Role playing scenarios should be incorporated. Such training may also call to attention any personal biases (Mullaly & West, 2018). The Theory of Planned Behavior could be uniquely applied to highlight how programming and personal change can occur within a policing context in future studies, thus contributing to and providing implications for the application of theory, program design, and social work practice.

The findings also suggest the need for policing organizations to assess and interview potential therapist candidates to ensure they possess such knowledge and provide members with a list of qualified options. Doing so may help to shorten the time members spend therapist shopping and enable them to obtain help in a timelier manner. This could form part of a mental health policy as well.

The findings have implications for social work practice as well as other helping professions and service providers, including those social workers who work directly with police members. A critical factor in the quality of the therapeutic alliance was found to be previous therapist experience with and knowledge of the inner workings of policing and the police culture. Such a strategy may form part of a larger more comprehensive workplace mental health policy aimed at increasing psychological safety and wellness in the workplace.

Relating to respectful workplace policies, clear definitions of the types of problematic behavior should be made clear. Furthermore, the policy should set out clear consequences for those found to be engaging in such behaviours. Given the bias, sexual harassment and sexual violence against women, and gender discrimination in policing institutions, outside independent bodies should be created to adjudicate such investigations. There should be confidential reporting processes that are overseen by independent bodies that are external to policing organizations. This should occur not only for internal workplace discrimination and sexual harassment and violence complaints, but external complaints brought forth by the community as well. These bodies should have the ability not only to investigate, but implement penalties as

well. Contrary to Bastarache's (2020) suggestion that mediation and unofficial methods "not be used in the context of sexual harassment accompanied by violence" (p. XI), I suggest that these methods not be used in the context of any sexual harassment. To force a woman who has been sexually harassed and victimized by her peer(s) to attend mediation with the perpetrator may serve to further victimize that woman, as well as minimize her experience. It may also result in reprisal not only by the perpetrator, but other colleagues as well.

In terms of discipline relating to findings of guilt in sexual harassment, harassment, bullying, or discriminatory behaviours, those individuals found guilty of such behaviours more than once should be dismissed. Members under investigation for such behaviours should not be allowed to retire until the conclusion of the investigation.

Recruitment policies and processes require updating to reflect the inclusion of more diversity. Applicants must be carefully screened for and deemed an ineligible applicant based on the finding of any bias or discriminatory beliefs. Additionally, minimal educational requirements should be implemented to include the completion of a diploma in a relevant field, or a minimum number of years of previous policing experience. Unique recruiting strategies such as direct entry (as discussed in the literature review, Silvestri, 2018) should be considered as well. Mentorship programs should also be incorporated. Mentors should be those who have agreed to be mentors and be willing to actively engage with mentees.

Pregnancy, maternity and paternity leave policies must ensure that women who are pregnant are not relegated to completing menial tasks for their pregnancy duration. Policing organizations should adequately fill the spots of members taking maternity or paternity leave not only to ensure the safety of members and the community, but to decrease resentment that can occur from employee shortages and increase workplace morale. The use of floaters (non-gender specific) who have the ability to be deployed to meet the needs of the service and staffing shortages should be considered. Robust job-sharing and part-time opportunities for all genders regardless of family status should be offered. As one participant pointed out, police officers do not forget how to do police work when they are on leave. This idea extends to part-time work as well. Shift considerations that provide flexibility like that of the nursing profession need to be explored and implemented.

A key component of the policies created, and programs offered should be the completion of implementation and outcome evaluations to ensure these are not only being implemented as

intended, but producing the desired outcomes. Outcome evaluations should be conducted more than once, again, to ensure the policies and programs are still producing the intended effects.

While these recommendations represent the ideal basis for developing policies and programming, policing organizations and police culture are highly resistant to change. Change from within will be highly dependent upon the various individuals and groups/entities (including their attitudes and beliefs) that come together at any given time and will also be influenced by contextual factors such as the political climate and political actors (beliefs about what is important translates into support/lack of support), legislative mechanisms (e.g. the Police Act), and various social movements (e.g. MeToo, Black Lives Matter). Significant change is possible but highly nuanced and will only occur if the right conditions exist at and between the various levels (macro, meso, and micro).

Future Research Opportunities

This study represents a starting point for further in-depth exploration of the impacts of psychological stress on policewomen's mental health. Additionally, the voices of female officer's loved ones could be included in future research to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how the loved ones are impacted by the adverse experiences of the women. Furthermore, studies could be expanded to include all groups of police officers that identify as belonging to a marginalized group (Black, Indigenous, people of colour, Gender & Sexual Diversity). The inclusion of existing self-identifying police members (both active duty and on leave) as well as retired members may be helpful in designing policies, programs, and strategies within policing that encourage true inclusion and balanced representation.

Possible research questions include the following:

- How police officers who identify as part of a marginalized group (Black, Indigenous, people of colour, Gender & Sexual Diversity) experience harassment and discrimination? What are the impacts of this discrimination and harassment on mental health? What are the mental health impacts to family members (intimate partners, children, and immediate family members) of police members from marginalized groups who have experienced mental health impacts themselves? Are there differences between gender?

- How do police officers of various ranks define procedural justice? How important is it to them? Do female and male officers define procedural justice differently? Do police officers view their employers as procedurally just? Does this vary by gender?

- What is the prevalence of suicidality in police officers? How do prevalence rates differ between gender, sexual orientation, and race? What are the means used in suicide attempts and completed suicides? Do these differ between genders, sexual orientation, and race?

- What is the prevalence of disordered eating in police officers? Does this vary by gender, sexual orientation, race? What are the behaviours associated with disordered in police officers?

The use of a critical realist paradigm in such studies presents an opportunity to explore both seen and unseen mechanisms that generate these different events and behaviours. The use of case study allows for an in-depth exploration of these research questions and can incorporate both qualitative and quantitative research methods in doing so.

Limitations

As with any study, this one was not without its limitations. The use of a critical realist paradigm recognizes the limitations of solely using a qualitative approach, and while quantitative measures are supported as well, this study did not incorporate quantitative measures. The inclusion of quantitative methods may have increased the breadth and generalizability of the findings. As noted above, some mechanisms and processes as experienced by female police officers may have remained unknown or unseen and they may also have occurred outside of the organizational context at other systemic, institutional, and societal levels, perhaps unidentified. The inability to recognize or identify all variables impacting experience could be considered a critique of the theory and a limitation of this study, although the intent of the study was not to identify all of the variables or focus on causal analysis. Rather, it was to provide an understanding of possible generative mechanisms and the entities involved that combine to the produce events as described by the participants. Additionally, while inferences may be made about the mechanism or event being studied (psychological stress), it has been suggested that causal explanations cannot be discovered using qualitative methods informed by a critical realist framework, nor can all mechanisms impacting an event ever fully be known (Danermark et al., 2005; Edwards, Mahoney, & Vincent, 2014; Kjørstad & Solem, 2018). Contrary to this, Maxwell (2004) and Thiem (2017) asserted that the use of qualitative methods to discover causal relationships is now broadly accepted, although there continues to be much disagreement. Despite these limitations, valuable data and information was obtained in this qualitative studies,

and an in-depth understanding of the participants' experience was gained along with mechanisms capable of producing the experiences reported.

Specifically relating to case and multiple case studies, Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that distinguishing the case and boundaries of the case (timespan, events, and processes) may be difficult. I did not experience this difficulty in the current study. Another consideration is the choice of studying one case or multiple cases. In my choice to use a multiple case study, it was critical "to consider three issues: resource limitations, case selection, and cross-case analysis" (p. 102). The goal of utilizing a case study approach was to achieve depth over breadth, and the more cases that are included, the more "dilute[d] the overall analysis" (p. 102) can become. As such, I completed the data collection after 14 interviews despite receiving requests to participate from 17 women.

This leads to a third limitation, which is generalizability. Within scientific research, the goal is to generalize the findings across context and time (Tsang, 2014). Tsang (2014) concluded that there are two types of generalization: theoretical and empirical. Theoretical generalization is concerned with explaining relationships between observed variables. In empirical generalization, the researcher aims to elucidate "whether certain characteristics of a case or sample are typical of the population from which the case or sample was drawn or of another population" (p. 371).

As suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018), given that the study's goal was to achieve depth over breadth, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other female officers in other contexts outside of those in the study due to the limited sample size and exclusion of some women police officers, thus signifying external validity may be compromised (Ruddin, 2006). This exclusion included those officers who identify as gender non-binary or transgender female. The sample of participants was also limited in the inclusion of diversity of race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, as well as rank due to the small sample size. To enhance the external validity of the study, I used additional data sources to triangulate the findings. The additional data sources included the final report of the implementation of the Merlo Davidson Settlement Agreement, titled *Broken lives, broken dreams: The devastating effects of sexual harassment on women in the RCMP,* and a selection of recent newspaper articles and the audio-visual documentary, *The tarnished badge.* The findings from the additional data sources corroborated many of the findings of the current study.

That being said, the intention was not to generalize across all female police officers and contexts, but to underscore issues that may lead to psychological stress in female officers and mental health issues, and issues of power, privilege, and oppression relating to gender and situate these issues within a larger theoretical context. When applied to multiple case study research, generalizability occurred within the context of broader theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Magnus, 2017; Yin, 2014) in which shared patterns among varied cases were uncovered (Tsang, 2014). Through the analysis of the data, I situated the findings within feminist anti-oppressive theory.

Tsang (2014) suggested that falsification also forms a critical component of science, and it is complementary to generalization. In addition to being able to generalize findings across context and time and building theories, it is equally important to falsify the same. A multiple case study design was well suited to reveal contradictory mechanisms from those discussed in existing literature and allowed for the development of novel concepts. As such, it was imperative to highlight differences between cases.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) noted that the value of qualitative research overall can be found in the rich and particular descriptions and themes. Thus, "particularity rather than generalizability (Greene & Caracelli, 1997) is the hallmark of a good qualitative study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 202). Ruddin (2006) echoed this sentiment, and relating to case study research, noted "[t]he conclusion that Stake drew is that what is required of case study researchers is not that they provide generalizations but rather, that they illustrate the case they have studied properly, in a way that captures its unique features" (p. 804). The author further suggested that the researcher's obligation is to present adequate contextual material to assist the reader's decision as to whether a specific case can be generalized to other contexts or fields. This concept was initially presented by Stake (1982) and is known as naturalistic generalization (Ruddin, 2006). This is also similar to transferability (developed by Lincoln and Guba) as described by Korstiens and Moser (2018). Korstiens and Moser defined transferability as "the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents" (p. 121). The current study provides a thick description of participants and the police organization context to help assist transferability by other stakeholders and researchers.

As suggested previously, researcher bias and subjectivity can serve as a limitation in this study. As I am a former police officer, bias and subjectivity needed to be addressed through self-reflexivity and articulating my role as the researcher, as well as bracketing my experiences. A key component of utilizing a feminist anti-oppressive approach in research is that the researcher is part of the research process and study, and not external to it (Morris, 2006). As Bikos (2016) noted, the researcher's status can serve as both a positive and a negative. Holding a former status of police officer, I found I had a certain amount of credibility with the participants, and this facilitated the participants' recruitment and candour.

Additionally, I had inside insight into the culture at all of the macro, meso, and the micro levels, as discussed above under Ethical and Cultural Considerations in the Methods chapter (Grinnell et al., 2019). Ensuring a solid understanding of the culture at all levels, including traditions and values, aided in intercultural communication necessary for completing the interviews and working with the participants. The opposing side of this is that I had to ensure that I did not project my past experiences onto the participants or in the data analysis, and maintained balance throughout the research process. As such, I was aware of my biases as well as power within the dynamic, complex, and varied interactions I had with the participants. Thus, I took steps towards employing ethical strategies in the research to reduce any bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183), as I elaborated on throughout the Methods chapter.

Other limitations may have occurred during the interviews. Participants may have answered based on social desirability, or fear of reprisal from colleagues, rather than truthfulness and honesty (Bell & Eski, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I detailed how confidentiality would be maintained within the consent form to mitigate this concern. Additionally, I ensured that the participants were aware that they could discontinue their participation and request the removal of their information before the final thesis submission to mitigate participant concerns around confidentiality.

Enhancing Scientific Rigour: Quality Criteria Related to Critical Realist Research

To address these limitations, ensure quality, and enhance the rigour of the study, I applied the TAPUPASM approach as detailed by Ryan and Rutty (2019). This approach considered the following elements in measuring the quality of the research: "transferability, accessibility, propriety, utility, purposivity, accuracy and specificity, with the additional criterion, modified objectivity" (p. 1). Appendix J provides a summary the application of the TAPUPASM approach

that was used in this study as well as a comparison of this approach to traditional positivist and interpretivist measures of quality.

The transparency and accessibility criteria establish reliability. To enhance the transparency, I clearly and explicitly detailed the process I used to generate the knowledge. Peer debriefing occurred throughout the research process as a tool to enhance transparency. Ongoing communication with and the provision of feedback by my advisor facilitated this, as well as communication and meetings with, and feedback from the advisory committee members. This helped to authenticate the data, and verify that the findings, interpretations and explanations, and conclusions were supported by the data. The University of Manitoba Ethics Review Board (ERB) process helped to enhance and confirm that transparency of the research process would be achieved. To achieve accessibility, I completed pilot testing of the interview questions with a former police officer and a colleague to obtain feedback. This allowed me to ensure that the questions were clearly understood and that they would produce data that could be used to enhance and support those participants involved in the study. I provided a final report to those participants who expressed interest on the consent form in receiving the same.

The accuracy, purposivity, and propriety criteria establish internal validity or credibility. This study engaged in many strategies to enhance credibility, including committing a large quantity of time in the field (i.e., formulating research questions, building rapport and trust with the participants, and collaborating with participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences and perspectives). Although this study did not produce numbers, it created a large amount of data that was analyzed in a time-consuming process that included creating and sorting themes to make sense of the data. This included the use of a code book, content analysis within and across cases, and critical realist analysis. Additionally, I sought approval from the ERB to ensure the research was legal and ethical.

I also clarified any bias and bracketed my experiences (see My Role as Researcher section) to enhance the credibility of the study. Researchers must understand that they influence the interview in several ways, including in subconscious non-verbal cues, word choice, the phrasing of questions, and how the data are interpreted, and the knowledge is interpreted (Luo, 2020). Therefore, researchers must be aware of their own biases and power within the dynamic, complex, and varied interactions they have with the participants. Thus, I engaged in steps

towards employing ethical strategies in the research, such as practicing self-reflexivity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 183). This enhanced the trustworthiness of the study's findings.

I used additional validity procedures to enhance the findings' accuracy and the rigour of the study, including triangulation (utilizing different data sources – interviews, public documents, newspaper articles, and a documentary video), member checking, the use of rich, thick description (detailed descriptions, numerous perspectives), presentation of negative or discrepant information contrary to identified themes, and peer debriefing provided by my advisory committee (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Member checking was essential to ensure that the participants were comfortable with the use of quotations that I had selected from the interviews to use in the study. This was also important to ensure that I had interpreted what the participants had said in the way that they had intended. All fourteen participants were emailed a document that contained all of the quotations I wished to use in this study and asked to review. They were offered the opportunity to make changes to, rephrase, or delete any quotations. I asked participants to respond by a set date and indicated that should I not receive a reply, that I would take this as permission to use the included quotations. Nine participants replied to the email, five of which requested minor changes, mostly to delete filler words or to make their point clearer. One participant requested a pseudonym change, which was accommodated. Each of the above noted strategies helped to enhance the credibility (accuracy, purposivity, propriety), transferability (specificity, utility), dependability (transparency, accessibility), and confirmability (modified objectivity) of the study (Morris, 2006; Ryan & Rutty, 2019).

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Appendix A: Comparison Table

Table A.1

Prevalence of mental illness in police officers compared to the general population

	Municipal/Provincial Police	RCMP	General Population
Percentage experiencing current symptoms of mental illness (2018)	36.7%	50.2%	~10%

Note. Compiled from data in CAMH (2018).

Table A.2

Prevalence of mental health problems and illnesses frequently cited by officers compared to the general population

Type of Mental Health Issue or Illness Reported	Police Officers	General Population (one year period)
Moderate to severe stress	52% (11% extremely severe)	unknown
Moderate to severe depression	88% (12% extremely severe)	7.9%-8.6%
Moderate to severe anxiety	87% (13% extremely severe)	12%
Those in the clinical diagnostic range for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	29%	Approximately 9%

Note. Compiled from data in CAMH (2018) and Regehr & Glancy (2014).

Table A.3

Suicidal behavior in police and general population

Past Year Suicidal Behavior	Municipal/Provincial Police[7]	RCMP[8]	General Population[9]
Ideation	8.3%	9.9%	5.8%
Planning	3.4%	4.1%	2.2%
Attempt	0.2%	0.2%	Less than 1%

Note. From "Police mental health: A discussion paper," by CAMH, 2018, p. 2. Reprinted with permission.

[7] Carleton et al., 2018.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Statistics Canada as cited by Carleton et al. 2018.

Appendix B: Summary Table of Literature Review

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Alcocer Guajardo (2016).	Examined the growth in the number of female officers in supervisory and command positions (NYPD, 2000-2013)	n/a	Use of detailed demographic employment data	Durbin-Watson statistic. Disparity index. Ordinary least squares multivariate regression.	Level of disparity among male and female officers in supervisory positions has decreased since 2000. Despite this, female police officers have not made significant gains in obtaining supervisory and command positions btw 2000-2013.	+peer reviewed -lack of generalizability and transferability to sub-groups (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender spectrum) within the organizations studied, other geographical contexts, organizations. -lack of info re: # of officers who passed promotional exams and then put on a promotion wait-list. -lack of info about number of officers who applied for supervisory or command positions. -lack of info re: $ to recruit females and minorities. -findings correlational not causal.
Bikos (2016).	1) What are women's experiences in policing? 2) How does police culture affect policewomen, their relationships with others, and their identities? Use of Standpoint theory by Dorothy Smith (bifurcation of consciousness - separation between the world one experiences and the dominant view one must adopt).	Convenience and snowball sampling - first, several participants known to researcher contacted via email, the women who agreed were asked to forward the recruitment email to policewomen they believed may be interest in taking part.	Qualitative, grounded theory, In-depth interviews with 15 policewomen from 5 police forces in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. 9 neutral open-ended questions	Ongoing process, coding and analyzing for emerging themes. Final stages of data analysis inc. open and focused coding.	Findings reveal that policewomen have a bifurcated consciousness. Results confirm that the hegemonic masculine values perpetuated by the institution of policing influence the way policewomen see themselves, the world, and each other via formal and informal mechanisms – appear to accept the power and dominance of the ruling class. Use of impression management in both their on and off-duty lives. Conformity to masculine performance and expectations of the culture despite criticism of it – out of necessity and not necessarily indoctrination. Little has changed for the women in the 40 years that they have been in policing.	+focus on women police officers' voices and experiences. -No mention of use of software (i.e., NVivo) to enhance credibility. -lack of variation within the sample (race, ethnicity, rank). -lack of generalizability and transferability to sub-groups (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender spectrum) within the organizations studied, other geographical contexts, organizations. + overall transferability to other police settings/contexts given the similarity of findings within other studies. -Personal experience influenced the interpretation of interview findings as discussed +efforts to minimize bias articulated (nine neutral open-ended questions developed). +peer reviewed.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Bikos (2020).	What features of the workplace culture and organizational structure do officers' report as barriers to stigma reduction in their workplace? Does gender, rank, and years of service impact officers' perception of stigma and comfort level reporting, mental illness to their employer?	Qualitative: convenience and snowball sampling. Quantitative: author identifies no sampling strategy – distributed via emails to police unions, police related groups, and promoted on social media.	Mixed methods. Qualitative semi-structured interviews (n = 116 from 31 Canadian agencies). Quantitative online self-report survey (n = 727).	Field notes, Constructivist grounded theory – coding, thematic analysis bivariate descriptive statistics incl. chi-square statistical measurement.	Participants identified that stigma continues to exist within police organizations; however, generational change was noted that there has been progress over time. Men more likely to identify improvements over female respondents. Traditional masculinity found to be the largest cultural barrier to the reduction of stigma (both male and female); self-stigmatization identified (both male and female). Leadership attitudes/behaviours identified as the most common ways that organizational culture and structural combine to create barriers to stigma reduction – disconnect between ranks. Stigmatization by supervisors compounded by policies and procedures to disadvantage them – cultural norms interact to create toxic workplace that increase risk of negative psychological impacts.	+ Mixed methods. +Large Canadian sample. -selection bias due to recruitment methods -Self-report measures, may not be entirely honest. -Participants may differ in ways from those who chose not to take part. -potential researcher bias due to previous experiences as a police officer +peer reviewed. Opportunity for future research – intersection between operational stressors, mental health and stressors related to racial, gender and sexual orientation discrimination and how that impacts mental health.
Bishopp, Leeper Piquero, Worrall, & Piquero (2018).	Negative affective responses to stress among urban police officers using a General Strain Theory approach	Planning, entrée to setting, sampling not specified. Recruitment - Survey sent via email to all sworn members (total 6,260) of 3 large Texas police agencies. Survey was open for 8 weeks with repeated contacts to encourage participation.	Quantitative: web-based survey (n=1400).	Descriptive analysis. Following this, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted. Dependent variables – depression, anger, burnout. Independent variables – environmental strain, organizational strain (cumulative variables). Use of General Strain Theory to explain influence of key demographic variables on deviant outcomes. The next step was to fit a series of regressions models to examine relationships between strain and negative emotions.	Organizational stress (OS) predicted each of the negative affective response (NAR; anger, depression, burnout) in all 3 agencies. Mean differences between OS & environmental stress (ES) across the 3 agencies not significant. Both types of stress were positively associated with higher self-reported anger, with the effects of OS being larger than ES. For self-reported depression and self-reported burnout, only OS emerged as a significant and positive correlate for each.	+Large sample (n=1400). +Organizational and operation strain examined. -Other sources of strain not considered (i.e. financial, marital, racism, sexism, homophobia etc.). -Specific to large urban police agencies in Texas -Results may not be transferable to small, mid-sized or rural agencies. -Self-report measures – answers may not be entirely honest. -Participants may differ in ways from those who chose not to take part. +Peer reviewed.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Boag-Munroe (2017).	Female officers' career progression. Two questions to help better understand female officers' career progression: the extent to which female officers saw hierarchical rank progression, first as realistic and second as desirable.	Data were collected as part of the Police Federation of England and Wales' annual Pay and Morale survey.	Quantitative: survey (n=21,490).	Chi-square analysis, descriptive, multinomial logistic regression controlling for covariates.	Rank expectations – reflect the extent to which participants see hierarchical career progression as realistic and achievable. Among higher ranks, no differences btw male and female officers. Females Constables less likely to expect to reach higher ranks than male counterparts. Rank aspirations – reflect the extent to which participants actually want to achieve hierarchical career progression. Female Inspectors no more or less likely to aspire to reach a higher rank compared with male counterparts. Female Constables less likely to want to reach higher ranks.	+Peer reviewed. +Large sample. -despite large sample, lower response rate – potential bias. -Under-representation of females. -Reveals differences exist but not why. -Focus on aspiration and expectation as separate unrelated constructs. Note: qualitative data may be useful in understanding the link between these 2 constructs. -Only addressed hierarchical progression, not lateral progression to specialist roles. -Lack of generalizability to other contexts - Contextual factors due to individual agency and geographical differences need to be considered in the generalizability and transferability of the findings. Unique to the specific timepoint at which the study was completed.
Brown, Baldwin, Dierenfeldt, & McCain (2020).	Exploratory - Investigates the female officer experience of police subculture in terms of masculinity, gender disparities, and sexualized activities, as well as their effects on our female respondent. Investigates the female officers' perceptions of how the hyper-masculine subculture impacts possible gender disparities in the profession and their own experiences navigating the workplace.	Southeastern U.S. police department – female officers. Non-probability - Chain referral sampling method.	Qualitative in-depth interviews (n = 9).	Thematic analysis guided by constant comparative method. Incident coding to preserve respondents' terms and give meaning to their views. Focused and active coding. Theoretical coding.	Hypermasculine Police Culture and Police as "Crime Fighter". Gender Disparity in Law Enforcement. Sexual Teasing Versus Sexual Harassment. Neutralizations of Sexual Teasing and Harassment.	-sample size. +rich data. -potential sampling bias. Identify collaboration with stakeholders to determine future research topics that matter most to them to develop, implement, and evaluate evidence-based policies.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Brown, Fleming, Silvestri, Linton, & Gouseti (2019).	Perceptions of police occupational culture were measured to explore the occurrence of sexual harassment and sex discrimination. (1) How do senior women in policing characterize the occupational culture in terms of traditional attributes and newer reform attributes)? (2) What is the association between perceptions of police occupational culture and punitive behaviours, operationalized as sexual harassment and discrimination, in terms of a participant's gender, role and seniority?	Participant recruited through Senior Women in Policing conference and a professional development seminar-no specifics of how provided. Non-probability sampling (time location sampling identified).	Mixed method study (n=153) – Online self-report survey developed by researchers (5-point Likert scale) and included open ended questions Social Identity theory examined salience of role, gender and seniority as factors relevant to those experiences.	Descriptive and bivariate analysis reporting the demographics and discriminatory experiences of the sample. Parametric and non-parametric stats employed. Guttman–Lingoes Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) used to determine cultural categorizations. Binary logistic regression.	Negative aspects of 'cop' culture are associated with greater rates of harassing and discriminatory experiences. Relating to discriminatory behaviors, the policewomen had more negative experiences than senior women support staff. Noteworthy findings: 1) respondents characterize the police culture in terms of both orthodox, traditional attributes and more reforming, progressive ones. Coexistence of contesting cop and management cultures. 2) both officers and civilians report exposure to sexual harassment and other discriminatory experiences. 3) exposure to harassment is mostly associated with the presence of 'old' (traditional) police occupational culture in its adverse aspects. 4) there were low levels of informal and due process resolutions indicative of failures in formal grievance procedures to address complaints.	-Specifics of recruitment not specified -participants included men (n=7) and non-police delegates (n=5) which are considered a small portion of the sample in relation to research question 2. +Mixed methods – open ended questions allowed for elaboration on particular survey questions. +Analysis at various stages. -survey answers based on subjective experience rather than objective outcomes. -Sample size considered smaller - lack of generalizability within and across policing contexts. Relatively small numbers limit the inferences that could be drawn from statistical analyses. -Lack of consideration of intersecting factors (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender spectrum, etc.). +peer reviewed.
Brown & Silvestri (2019).	Current trends in policing in England and Wales.	Lit review.	Lit review.	Secondary data analysis.	Current trends in policing in England and Wales to work against feminizing influences - while professionalization and evidence-based policing should be accompanied by increases in women holding a more senior rank, internal drivers are more likely to continue to inhibit rather than progress gender representation. Change more likely to be brought about by external politics.	+Peer reviewed. -Specific to England and Wales – generalizability and transferability limited. +Opportunity for additional research studies in other geographical contexts.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Charlesworth & Robertson (2012).	To explore the resistance to part-time work within policing utilizing the Victoria Police (Australia) as an organizational case study. Aims to contribute to better understandings of the organizational interrelationships between gender and full time and part time work.	Not discussed	Qualitative case study – Victoria police detective who wanted to work part-time.	Not discussed	Resistance to part-time work linked to a more hidden resistance to women in policing. Resistance rooted in institutional and historical context of policing and practices were underpinned by the full-time norm of the work organization. Men's identities as fathers generally valued and those requiring accommodation for childcare due to divorce or separation experienced more support in contrast to p/t women officers. P/t work perceived as a benefit to women and those in p/t roles met with hostility due to the same. Case highlights the use of informal practices that privilege the interests of men by providing increased flexibility (i.e. study leave, playing sports).	-lack of generalizable findings based on focus of the experience of one individual/case; however, produced rich data to support transferability to other policing contexts and times based on existing literature. +rich data which could provide opportunities for future research in the area of part-time work in a larger sample and in diverse contexts. -lack of discussion of methods. +peer reviewed.
CAMH (2018).	Police mental health, sources of police stress, current policies and initiative to address the same, recommendations moving forward (Canadian context).	Literature review	n/a	n/a	Mental illness is widespread (anxiety, depression, PTSD as well as suicidal behaviors). 2 sources of police stress: operational and organizational. Organizational stress is highly impacted by organizational culture. Organizational culture can impact how police agencies respond to signs of stress and mental health problems in their officers. Northern and Indigenous police organizations face additional stressors. Responses to police stress and mental health issues have included federal policies, presumptive legislation in some provinces, specialized treatment through various profit and not-for-profit organizations, and mental health strategies at the organizational level. Six recommendations for moving forward offered.	+overview of police mental health from a Canadian context. -consideration of Northern and Indigenous policing as areas requiring further exploration as experiences may differ due to unique context. +role of policing in colonization discussed. +federal and provincial policies, legislation, strategies and programming re: police mental health briefly explored. -provides a snapshot of various studies which represent a snapshot in time – opportunity for longitudinal study. -lack of consideration or mention of gender or other intersecting factors such as race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Cunningham & Ramshaw (2020).	Feminist analysis to explore the lived experiences of 23 women police officers in England and Wales over 40 years of police practice, seeking to understand how these experiences have changed over time. Research questions: What was it like for women to be police officers and how do they manage their role? Can institutional and cultural changes be seen over time?	Snowball sampling via the researcher's contacts. Contacted via mail.	Qualitative in person one-to-one structured interviews (n=23). Feminist methodology and theory used to develop interview questions.	Discourse analysis to uncover emerging themes, consideration of feminist insights in analyzing data and organizing themes.	Themes included women's police uniform (changes/shifts in the uniform itself over time identified, continues to be designed with men's bodies in mind); socio-political unrest and opportunities for women to more fully engage in policing during these times; sexism, sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination/blocked opportunities (largest section of data examples; changes over time [1970s, 1980/90s; 2000s]. Examples of change over time included decrease in pay gap between men and women, decrease in overt sexism, discrimination, and bullying at the policy level, continued informal sexism, discrimination, and bullying (i.e. banter, discriminatory comments, sexism)	-lack of diversity and intersectionality in sample. -lack of discussion re: phenomenology despite the study exploring lived experiences. +ethical considerations discussed. +consideration of changes over time providing insight into how issues change or do not change over time. -subjective experience of individuals. +female centered. - limitations of study not discussed. +peer reviewed.
Haake (2018).	Conditions of gender equality in police leadership in Sweden. 1) Why are there so few women leaders? 2) What should be done about this issue?	Purposive sampling of police leaders.	Qualitative – one-to-one semi-structured interviews. (n=28, 17 men, 11 women).	Inductive, grounded theory approach. Discourse analysis to identify patterns.	Swedish police leaders - the conditions for gender equality in police leadership in terms of quantity (i.e., more women) & quality (i.e., changes to norms and culture that create inclusion of both male and female leaders). Both women & men in police leadership mostly do gender traditionally through the ways they talk about police work, the police organisation, police leadership & gender equality. This produces different positions for men (greater inclusion) and women (greater exclusion) in relation to the norm. High degree of gendered division of work. Many of the participants did gender using traditional notions of men as the norm and women as deviant, weak, in need of special support or insufficiently skilled.	+Peer reviewed. -Lack of consideration of limitations of the study. -Lack of generalizability within and across policing contexts. Relatively small numbers limit the inferences that could be drawn from statistical analyses; thus limiting transferability. +Rich, in-depth data – presents opportunity for similar research studies in diverse geographical contexts. -Participants may differ from those who chose not to take part.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Hartley, Mnatsakanova, Burchfiel, & Violanti (2014).	Lit review focusing on psychological stress in the police workplace.	n/a	Lit review	n/a	Female officers face unique stressors as a result of working in a male-dominated occupation, including work factors, such as perception of inadequate physical ability, sexual harassment and discrimination, and non-work stressors, such as family responsibilities and pregnancy. The proportion of female officers tends to decrease with decreasing police department size. Smaller police departments - women officers in general and minority women in particular may have less co-worker support and be more affected by these stressors. Prior investigations found significant cross-sectional associations between police stressors and psychological and physiological health incl. associations with burnout, depression, and early cardiovascular disease.	-lack of section re: stress associated with factors that intersect with gender. +identification of research gaps – more research involving females in general, and females employed in smaller police agencies. -Lack of identification of causal factors in studies, rather correlations.
Kingshott (2013).	Continuing police reform and gender issues and how the organizational culture can be moved from misogynist to inclusive. The role of policewomen in the 21st century in relation to the feminist writers' perspective as the police accept that their role has a duty of care and is not strictly about crime fighting.	n/a	Lit review	n/a	Problems encountered by policewomen have not been resolved - hostile work enviro, discrimination, harassment, bullying - not solely related to gender - bias and prejudice based on religion, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation as well. Problem of accepting women into the police service appears to be global with bias, prejudice, misogyny, working environments, shift systems, and a reluctance to allow job sharing for those officers relating to family leave. Police reform must address these issues because women have proved that they are competent in all aspects of and roles in police and they bring a caring and empathetic dynamic to the organization that benefits the organization and the communities' they serve.	+consideration of issues of diversity -mainly focused on U.S. context. +considers literature over a large timespan, noting changes or a lack of changes in the experience of women and gender issues. +inclusion of the exploration of community policing being fundamentally about duty of care rather than predominantly about crime-fighting → presents opportunity for future studies to explore policemen's and women's understanding of and experience of community policing (duty of care vs crime-fighting constructions).

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Kringen (2014).	Systematic literature review on women and policing (1972-2012) to determine how gender was incorporated into research and how scholarship has changed over time. Research questions: 1. What types of publications features research? 2. To what extent was the research published in specialty journals? 3. How was the research divided between major themes? 4. How much of the research featured gender as the primary focus? 5. How have the outlets and themes of published research on women in policing changed over time?	Systematic lit review (scholarly peer-reviewed journals, trade journals, books, reports, and dissertations). Method detailed.	Systematic lit review n=604	Review and coding according to a fixed set of criteria (type of publication, theme of study, gender consideration (primary focus, highlight gender finding, or inclusion of gender in analysis), change in focus and trends over time.	Majority of research directed at understanding the role of gender in policing. Publications have increased over time. 3 major domains - job performance, job experience, blocked opportunities (majority of growth in job experience domain). Blocked opportunities has important policy implications but only experienced a moderate increase. Majority of research published in specialty academic journals, which potentially limits the transmission of knowledge - mainly read by feminist scholars. This isolation from mainstream journals serves to act as a barrier to greater understanding of women's experiences in policing; thus greatly reducing impacts on policy development. Overall, scholarship on women in policing has increased.	+clearly identified methods and research questions. +identification of future research to include focus on specific ways in which women's position in policing can be improved; thus having policy and programming implications.
Kurtz & Upton (2018).	Examines storytelling and narrative development in police culture related to gendered aspects of policing.	Purposive sampling of department- departments chosen based on size, accessibility, and willingness of admin to allow access to officers. Random sampling of officers from Kiowa PD and Queens - sample emailed to researcher by admin office. Male (n=21) Female (n=7)	Qualitative - Semi-structured interviews officers (n=28) from 3 departments in the Midwest USA. Ethnographic field research/narrative theory. None of the interview questions focused on story telling or narrative development.	Coded by category according to patterns and themes	Storytelling emerged as a theme. Findings indicated that women are frequently viewed through a gendered lens and that police storytelling appears an important context for understanding police culture. The types of stories explored in this paper–flow of action, war stories, and gender narratives–provide a context for understanding the (re)production of masculinity in policing. By paying close attention to police narratives we can gain insight into the maintenance of masculine police culture.	-Few women included in sample, -Participants may differ in ways from those who chose not to take part (several officers "refused" to participate-selection bias). -Interviews conducted with those officers working days/evenings, officers working nights excluded. +Unique approach to the exploration of gender via the narratives and police stories. +Findings build on the growing foundation of narrative inquiry in criminology. -Lack of generalizability. +produced rich data to support transferability -Inductive process can create potential for misinterpretation of response or suppressed evidence. +peer reviewed.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Langan, Sanders, & Agocs (2017).	Explored Canadian police mothers' perceptions of their workplace experiences during pregnancy and maternity leave and returning to work.	Snowball and convenience sampling that extended across the province of Ontario, Canada – Agocs personal contacts.	Qualitative – semi-structured interviews (n=16), Ontario, Canada	Inductive approach, grounded theory methods, feminist lens. Analytic memos: data collection and analysis phases. Team meetings informed direction of interviews, coding of data, emergent analyses, as informed partly by insider perspectives as mothers. NVivo focused coding and sorting, synthesizing, integrating, organizing of theoretical concepts- concept mapping to identify theoretical links among categories.	Policewomen work inordinately hard to prove physical and emotional strength in an attempt to be accepted into policing's boys' club; encounter negative workplace responses to pregnancy; are often demoted or reassigned during maternity leave; and need to re-prove themselves as officers upon returning to work.	-Lack of diversity in sample (all white, similar class). +Rich data. +Peer reviewed. +Detailed methods section. -No discussion of limitations of study. -Small sample – lack of generalizability; however, produced rich data to support transferability to other policing contexts and times given the similarity of findings within other studies.
Lonsway, Paynich, & Hall (2013).	Examination of the incidence, impact, and perception of sexual harassment in law enforcement (USA). To determine whether women and minorities experience different issues than their colleagues.	Single large policing agency Study 1 – used roster of enlisted personnel in policing – specific details not provided. Study 2 – systematic random selection design to identify national sample of female officers.	Mixed-methods Study 1 – survey (n=679) – quantitative only. Study 2 – agencies randomly chosen; survey mailed to all female officers via contact person (n=531) – included qualitative narrative responses.	Quantitative data – descriptive, correlational Qualitative – thematic coding to identify patterns.	Most respondents experienced sexually harassing behaviors to varying degrees. Very few reported or made a formal complaint. Retaliation was common and severe in those instances reported. Negative impact on personal and career-related outcomes.	+peer reviewed. -in study 1, lack of representation of females, and females of color, drawn from single agency -in study 2, lack of diversity in sample (75% white) +large sample – survey 1. +respondents came from large number of agencies – survey 2. +mixed methods approach – qualitative data to complement quantitative data -no outcome measures, subjective perspectives – both studies. - unclear if findings are transferable to other agencies or specific to the contexts in which they were obtained.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Magnus (2017).	To identify and understand the strategies and experiences of female police officers working within the masculine culture of police organizations.	Convenience and snowball sampling.	Qualitative multiple case study (n=7). Secondary data.	Acker's gendered institutions. Cross-case analysis . Thematic coding to identify patterns – Use of Dedoose.	Researcher found the themes that aligned with Acker's gendered institution theory included: (a) experience the need to prove self, (b) experience sexual and gender harassment, (c) positive experience from fellow officers, (d) negative experience from fellow officers, (e) experience of positive behavior from supervisors, (f) experience of negative behavior from supervisors, (g) experience related to work and family, (h) experience bullying and labelling, (i) experience psychological stress, and (j) experience masculine culture.	-Not peer reviewed. +Triangulation (interviews, demographic questionnaire, review of publicly available documentation related to police in Alberta, Canada, including internal audits and surveys constituted secondary data -Small sample size – lack of consideration of race/ethnicity +Rich in-depth data. -Female officers from Alberta, Canada – lack of generalizability to other police women, settings, and contexts. + overall transferability to other police settings/contexts given the similarity of findings within other studies. +Ethical strategies discussed. -Potential researcher bias. +Strategies to reduce researcher bias implemented. +Use of Dedoose to enhance credibility.
McCreary, Fong, & Groll (2017).	The development of norms and cut-off values for the operational and organizational police stress questionnaires for measuring police stress meaningfully.	Planning, entrée to setting, sampling not specified. Recruitment – anonymous, voluntary, online cross-sectional survey of all sworn Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers (6044).	Quantitative: Demographic information collected; work-related stressors captured using the Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSP-Op) & the Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSP-Org). 2840 usable responses (response rate 47%).	SPSS, univariate stats computed to describe both the population and survey scores. Chi-squared tests used to determine how representative the study population was of the overall population.	Proportionately more females responded than males responded to the survey, and respondents were significantly older, and had more year of experience than the overall population (statistical weighting was applied in order to match the overall population). Female officers have lower scores on the PSQ-Op and PSQ-Org than male officers, with the exception of the following: the feeling that different rules apply to different people and dealing with supervisors on the PSQ-Org; and shift work, not enough time to spend with friends and family, and occupation-related health issues on the PSQ-Op. Cut off values for low, moderate, and high stress were established for both questionnaires.	+Peer reviewed +Reliable and valid measures used (PSP-Op, PSP-Org). +Canadian context. -participants may differ in unknown ways from those who chose not to take part. -norms drawn from one police population – may not be generalizable to other contexts, locations, or various units within the organization (may be different stressors). Future studies could explore norms according to unit (i.e., undercover work), and environment (i.e., rural, northern communities). +use of SPSS to enhance credibility.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Morash & Haarr (2012)	Study of policewomen's identities. 3 domains - identity at work, gender and racial/ethnic group solidarity, discrimination in police work.	Snowball sampling through researcher contacts. Participants restricted to women employed >5yrs from different ranks. Race-ethnicity info included. Purposively selected sample. Recruited from 2 urban Southwestern US police agencies.	Qualitative interviews (n=21) Feminist research methods One-to-One interviews (type not specified). -Use of personal stories to understand, empathize with, build rapport and encourage conversation as consistent with feminist methods.	Use of NVivo software to code themes and analyze data. Researchers individually and jointly coded themes, analyzed, and interpreted the findings to enhance credibility. Search for cases that contradicted initial conclusions which were used to qualify and elaborate interpretations.	Analysis revealed a complex picture of whether and how women did gender in relationship to their work. Even those who perceived essential gender differences qualified their description of the degree of difference (women's qualities were of more value and/or men's qualities were a hindrance in doing effective police work; however, some pointed out that at some point during the course of their work, gender did not differentiate police or lost significance to the work. Many women valued the traits they associated with women and devalued those associated with "maleness." Evidence of women resisting stereotypes imposed on them by the department or individuals in it and of women feeling and acting as if gender was irrelevant to their work as police officers.	-unstructured interview data method collection implied but not specified. +use of feminist methods and consideration of other factors such as race and sexual orientation discussed. +considered diversity within the gender of female to identify sub-groups and unique cases. +Use of NVivo to enhance credibility. +peer reviewed.
Murray (2021).	How do officers see gender at their work; and how, if at all, officers challenge gender inequalities in the workplace?	Three different police agencies based in three different regions of the same Canadian province. Non-probability – snowball sampling.	Qualitative semi-structured interviews (n = 20, 10 female, 10 male).	Analysis not discussed in article.	Most male officers engage in gender-blind sexism by failing to acknowledge inequal- ity or difference, while both male and female officers describe a masculine-coded ideal police officer, and that men and women describe the "old police culture" as toxic and outdated. In enacting gender, female officers acknowledge the inequality in their workplaces and use strategic adaptations to benefit themselves at work.	+Canadian context. – not necessarily transferrable to other contexts; however, situating within existing literature indicates similarities. +rich data. -lack of definition of gender. -lack of inclusion of racially diverse participants. +peer reviewed. -lack of inclusion of analysis details. - inability to determine whether male participants who describe police work as gender- neutral are truly unable to see the inequality or if they notice it but failed to acknowledge it in their interviews.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Authors
Noblet, Rodwell, Allisey (2009).	To examine the extent to which breaches in psychological contracts (PC) and perceptions of organizational fairness (OF) account for variations in job stress experienced by operational police officers.	All sworn police officers from a large Australian police service (1877) were invited to participate via a mail-out survey that was mailed directly to the employee's work address. It was accompanied by a cover letter signed by the Chief Commissioner and the Secretary of the police union offering support and encouragement to complete the survey during work hours. The data from the survey were cross referenced with agency records.	Quantitative: self-report survey. 582 responses (response rate 31%). 504 useable cases.	Regression analyses. Statistical analyses using SPSS 15.0 for Windows.	The vast majority of explained variance in psychological distress and extra-role performance is attributed to the additive effects of demand, control, and support. Additionally, only one of the social exchange dimension (interpersonal fairness) is predictive of the target variables (psychological distress and measures of employee performance).	+Peer reviewed. -Self-report surveys used – validity and reliability of the same was not discussed; answers may not be entirely honest - subjective responses. -one region within a large Australian police org – not necessarily transferable to other contexts (i.e., smaller, rural orgs), other contextual differences (i.e., unit). -provides snapshot in time – longitudinal research helpful. -need for more objective measures to enhance and support self-report scales.
O'Connor Shelley, Schaefer Morabito, & Tobin-Gurley (2011).	Article uses Acker's theory of gendered institutions to provide a historical review of women's experiences in law enforcement.	n/a	Analysis of literature.	Not discussed.	Acker's four gendered processes are used to organize the existing literature regarding women's experiences as well as coping and adaptation strategies in the gendered institution of policing.	+Peer reviewed. -Lack of info re: methods (i.e., search strategy). +Use of Acker's four gendered processes present in gendered institutions to analyze existing literature.
Schuck (2014).	To examine emotional labor skills and the acculturation of extreme masculine values as 2 pathways by which gender may influence the behavior of officers in the field. Gender-focused framework utilized for analysis focusing on the police-citizen exchange.	Researchers attended 3 role call shifts to recruit volunteers to participate.	Quantitative – survey, officers from 9 Chicago police districts over 1 week in fall 2010 (n=897 total, 672 males, 192 females).	Missing data analysis, descriptive, bivariate.	Female officers were less likely than male officers to assimilate hypermasculine beliefs into their identity. Female officers were more likely to use caring strategies (emotional labor), whereas males were more likely to use cognitive behavioral strategies. Empathy and concern were negatively related to hypermasculine values. Female officers reported less hypermasculine values.	+Ethics approval received. +peer reviewed. -questions of generalizability to other police women, contexts, time points. +overall transferability to other settings/contexts given the similarity of findings within other studies. -findings may be biased due to missing data. -does not account for intersectionality (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc.). +gender-focused framework.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Schulze (2010).	H(1) Women police officers are more likely than men to perceive sexism in their departments. H(2) Women police officers are more likely than men to perceive sexism in places of work nationally. H(3) Women are more likely than men to perceive inequality in marriages. H(4) Women are more likely than men to perceive higher levels of sexism on television.	Surveys to 200 randomly chosen police departments in the US.	Mixed methods – survey – closed and open-ended questions (n=90 from 22 departments in 9 states).	Quantitative - descriptive, multivariate. Qualitative – not discussed.	Quantitative results H(1) Null hypothesis rejected. H(2) Failure to reject the null hypothesis. H(3) Null hypothesis rejected, H(4) Failure to reject the null hypothesis. Qualitative responses suggest that women's entry into policing, along with shifting societal attitudes about work and family, could transform the institution's ''hegemonic masculinity,'' an enduring characteristic of many police departments.	-Smaller policing organizations (under 100 members) not included. -Lack of diversity in sample (race). +Peer reviewed. -Generalizability limited across individuals, race, ethnicity. +Lack of depth provided by quantitative data enhanced by qualitative data. -Suggestion that women are enacting cultural change around issues surrounding family leave in police agencies – purely speculation, no empirical evidence. -Lack of recommendations for change or suggestions for future research.
Shane (2020).	Overview of police stress and implications (Book chapter)	Not specified in this chapter.	Quantitative – survey data and performance data from 2 large urban US police departments from 2 different cities.	Not specified other than to provide a quantitative assessment.	Not specified in this chapter. More of a literature review.	+Comprehensive overview of police stressors. +Aims to quantify the impact of organizational stressors on performance. -Does not detail if other factors such as gender, race, age, religion, ethnicity, etc. were considered.
Shjarback & Todak (2019)	What is the impact of department-level factors on the existence of women in supervisory and management positions? USA	publicly available data from the 2013 LEMAS survey	Quantitative (n= 2,826) unit of analysis was individual agencies.	Multiple phases: 1. bivariate relationships (Pearson's r) were assessed between the variables of interest. 2. relationships were tested at the multivariate level. Multivariate analyses were run with Huber-White robust standard errors to address heteroskedastic error terms. Missing data were addressed (listwise deletion)	Women's promotion to leadership roles has been stagnant for decades. A department's level of professionalism (degree of community policing initiatives, being CALEA-accredited) appear to increase likelihood of female representation in supervisory/middle management positions. Accreditation was the single most important factor that differentiated agencies with more and less women in these positions.	+ peer reviewed. +unique topic. -lack of inclusion of measures on race and ethnic diversity of sworn officers.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Silvestri (2018).	Critical insight into the position of women within policing. In focusing on women as police leaders, it problematizes taken for granted representations of gender and proposes an alternative reading of their experiences.	n/a	Lit review.		Drawing on theoretical work on gendered organizations (Acker), argues greater attention needs to be paid to the cultural and structural conditions that enable the "heroic male" to emerge as the "ideal" police leader. Considers the recent introduction of Direct Entry for senior officers into leadership ranks in England and Wales as a disruptive tool and transformative intervention strategy to the gendered order within policing to challenge entrenched beliefs about the "ideal" police leader as male and gendered demonstrations of commitment, competence, and credibility.	+peer reviewed. +unique topic of direct entry explored as a disruptive tool and transformative intervention. -specific context (Britain).
Silvestri, Tong, & Brown (2013).	Focuses on recent proposals to reform the way in which senior officers are recruited through a discussion of the appointment of non-sworn/'outsider' officers through the adoption of direct and multiple entry models of recruitment (England and Wales).	n/a	n/a	n/a	Although a multi- point system of entry for specialisation or leadership roles may offer a number of opportunities to a service in crisis, such a reform agenda may ultimately serve to threaten and further undermine women's participation and status in policing as 'outsiders'.	-Limited to England and Wales. +Peer reviewed. +Consideration of a unique topic (direct entry model of recruitment into supervisory positions).
Swan (2016)	R1: In what ways does rejection of the traditional concept of a feminine gender role impact levels of job satisfaction among female police officers? R2: What is the correlation between gender identity and other factors - such as years of service, rank, marital status, or parenting - impacting job satisfaction among female police officers?	Women recruited through the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (USA). - online survey sent to all members.	Quantitative (n=100) Online survey questionnaire.	Descriptive, T-tests, MANOVA. Acker's gendered institutions theory and doing gender concepts guide the study.	Policewomen with masculine gender identity experienced less job satisfaction than those identifying as androgynous. Majority of the sample, overall, reported high levels of job satisfaction. Through behaviors like doing gender, policewomen have found ways to alter/offset their feminine and masculine traits.	+Peer reviewed. -Lack of diversity within sample (89% white). -Lack of policewomen with less experience and lower rank included in the sample - participation of women with less experience may have altered the results. -Size and scope of study to achieve generalizable results was limited.

Author(s)	Primary focus/Research questions	Engagement: planning, sampling, & recruitment	Implementation: data collection	Evaluation: data analysis	Termination & reporting (findings)	Critique
Violanti, Charles, McCanlies, Hartley, Baughman, Burchfiel (2017).	A review on the topic of police stressors and associated health outcomes. Recent empirical research is reviewed in the areas of workplace stress, shift work, traumatic stress, and health.	Literature review	Searches of relevant databases (years 1990-2016) incl. PubMed, Scopus, Embase, ProQuest, PsychINFO, PILOTS, and Google Scholar. Articles that specifically examined associations between police work exposures and health-related outcomes were chosen.	A review of recent empirical research on police stress and psychological and physiological health outcomes in officers.	Police stress enviro – 2 sources – job content (operational) and job context (organizational). Job content includes exposure to traumatic events, work schedules, shift work, long-work hours, overtime and court, and threats to physical and psychological health, negative public image of police. Job context includes organizational culture, bureaucracy, co-worker relations. Impacts of these types of stress include: negative view of life; psychological strain; psychological effects (PTSD, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and behavior and other psychosomatic symptoms and hypervigilance); sleepiness, fatigue, reduced sleep quality and duration, inadequate sleep, sleep disorders which lowers physiological resistance to stress; metabolic syndrome; elevated levels of cortisol; CVD risk factors, subclinical CVD and CVD; neurological disorders; increased levels of burnout and anger; increased injuries; negative disruptions to family life and relationships; absenteeism and increased leave time.	+Peer reviewed. +provides empirical evidence of both mental and physical outcomes associated with police processes and the processes inv with both through extensive lit review. -while females in policing is briefly mentioned, no studies with a gendered focus were included in the review. Race and other factors as mentioned above (race, religion, ethnicity, age, etc.).
Ward & Prenzler (2016).	Study aimed to identify and explain above average achievements in the status of women in policing.	Worldwide search based on 5 criteria, snowball, five cases were identified: one involved female recruits (North Wales), two involved officer numbers (Cumbria and Surrey), and two involved women in senior ranks (Hertfordshire and South Africa).	Case study (n=5), document analysis, secondary data.	Gender equity in policing framework used (recruitment and sworn officer numbers, deployment, pro- motion and retention; and harassment, discrimination and organizational support.	Efforts to identify possible influences were limited by a lack of information about strategies, including in response to requests for information. However, there were indicators that outcomes were related to senior management commitment, explicit targets, monitoring, flexible employment and a range of support mechanisms such as mentoring and leadership programmes. The findings emphasize the need for more research on what works in optimizing women's participation in police work.	+Peer reviewed. +Highlighted challenges in completing studies involving police agencies. -Lack of resources - did not allow for investigation into all the factors that might have accounted for high performance in gender equity, including department demographics, history and leadership. +Highlighted need for sharing of success stories and research regarding successes to identify factors which aid in the equity of women in policing.

Appendix C: PIE Method

PIE method

- ◦ **P**opulation
    - ◦ Cisgender female police officers working within urban police agencies in Canada
- ◦ Phenomenon of **I**nterest/**I**ssue
    - ◦ experience of psychological stress
- ◦ **E**ffect
    - ◦ To understand the how, why, and what of the experience of psychological stress for cisgender female police officers (Stake, 2006)
    - ◦ To explore what factors influence help-seeking behaviors in cisgender female police officers experiencing psychological stress
    - ◦ To explore the impacts of psychological stress on overall mental health

Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. What do you think about the psychological stress involved in police work?

2. In what ways have you been impacted by psychological stress? How has the stress impacted your mental health? How do you cope with the stress? How has this impacted your personal and professional life?

3. How has your experience as a police officer influenced your decision to seek help or not seek help when experiencing psychological stress? Prompt: professional relationship impacts, personal bias towards others experiencing psychological stress, coping strategies.

4. Can you tell me about your experience with recovery and healing relating to your mental health?

5. What is your understanding of psychological stressors that might affect female officers and the impacts of those stressors?

6. Do you feel female and male officers are affected by different causes of stress? How do male and female officers experience stress differently?

7. How is psychological stress and mental health being addressed within your organization? Prompt: What is your opinion of how it's being addressed?

8. What do you hear people saying when they talk about police officers' experiences of psychological stress? Do you find there is a difference between the public versus fellow officers? Prompt: is gender an element that arises?

9. What is your hope for the future in terms of you police organization and how it deals with mental health?

10. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix E: Introduction to Study and Informed Consent

Research Project Title: Qualitative Research Study of Cisgender Female Police Officers' Experiences of Psychological Stress

Principal Investigator: Susan Bourassa Rabichuk

Contact information: email rabichus@myumanitoba.ca, phone (204) 474-9706 or

1-800-432-1960 ext. #9706.

Research Supervisor: Dr. Sid Frankel, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba

Contact information: email sid.frankel@umanitoba.ca, phone (204) 474-9706 or

1-800-432-1960 ext. #9706.

Sponsor: Canadian Institutes for Health Research

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Introduction:

My name is Susan Bourassa-Rabichuk. I am a Masters of Social Work students at the University of Manitoba, and I am completing a thesis that explores cisgender female police officers' experiences of psychological stress. Cisgender female refers to those whose biological sex and gender identity are female. The reason for the study is to bring about an increased understanding and awareness of the experience of female police officers to police organizations and inform the types of services best suited to address the needs of women in policing. Additionally, the findings could assist police organizations in how they are structured and organized, and how management influences organizational culture. I invite you to participate.

Activities:

If you participate in the one-to-one semi-structured interview, you will be

 asked to:

1. Sign this confidentiality and informed consent form.

2. Answer 8 questions about your age, place and years of service, rank within the police, and experiences as an officer.

3. Take part in a one to two-hour interview in which you will talk about your experiences with psychological stress and mental health issues as a result of your role as a police officer.

Eligibility:

You are eligible to participate in this evaluation if you:

1. You are currently employed as a police officer within a police agency in Canada.

2. You identify as cisgender female.

I would like to include 4 to 10 police officers in this study.

Risks

There are minimal risks in this study. Some possible risks include participants feeling uncomfortable or feeling unease answering questions related to their experiences. Please note, all information for this interview will be held in confidence and will not be used in a way that identifies any of the participants. There are some limits of confidentiality; if you disclose intent to harm yourself or harm another, I will have to report the same to a 911 emergency operator. To decrease the impact of these risks, if you feel uncomfortable providing information related to a question, you can skip the question, take a break, or ask to discontinue participation in the interview. Before the data analysis is complete (approximately April 2021), you may also request that your file be removed from the study and these data not be used without question and will promptly be destroyed.

Benefits:

If you decide to participate, you will provide information that may help policing organizations in understanding the unique experiences of female police members and ensuring they are providing effective gender-appropriate services in the area of mental health. The potential benefits may extend to other policing organizations, both nationally and internationally, regarding the same.

Audiotaping:

I would like to use record the interview. and you may be video recorded. You can still participate if you do not wish to be recorded.

Please sign here if I can record our interview:_____

Confidentiality:

The information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent allowable by the law. To ensure the protection of your identity, we will link your rank within the police service with an identifying number. The following are examples of how this will look: Constable #1, Constable # 2, Sergeant #1, Sergeant #2, and so on. The rank and identifying number will be used in the information provided in the report.

The people who will have access to your information include myself, Dr. Sid Frankel (thesis advisor from the Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba), and the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board for quality assurance purposes. I will secure your information with the following steps: all information will be downloaded onto an encrypted fob. The fob will be stored in a locked safe at my home. If information requires to be moved, it will be done so via locked case. I will keep all data for 7 years and then promptly destroy it via deleting the files from the fob.

Summary of Results

A brief summary of the results will be made available to you (approximately 05/2021). Should you wish to receive a copy, please indicate your preferred method along with the contact details.

Email _____ Email address:_____

Mail _____ Address:_____ City, Province:_____

Postal Code:_____

I will disseminate the results of the study to my thesis committee members (Doctors Sid Frankel, Julie Guard, and Stephanie Knaak), as well as digitally via MSpace. A hard copy will be provided to the Dafoe Library at the University of Manitoba. The results will be disseminated to the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, who sponsored this study. I may submit the results to various academic journals for publication, as well as the International Association of Women in Police and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Additionally, I may present the findings at various conferences.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions, Susan can be contacted by email at rabichus@myumanitoba.ca or by telephone at 204-474-9706 or 1-800-432-1960 ext. #9706. Dr. Frankel can be contacted by email at sid.frankel@umanitoba.ca or by telephone (204) 474-9706 or 1-800-432-1960.

Voluntary Participation:

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant Signature   **Date**

_____   _____

Research Member Signature   **Date**

_____   _____

Appendix F: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age? _____(fill in the number)

2. With which police agency are you employed as a police officer? _____

3. How many years have you been employed as a police officer? ____ 0 to 5 ____6 to 10 ____11 to 15 ____16 to 20 ____ 21 to 24 ____ 25+

4. Have you been employed as a police officer with any other police agency? ____Yes____No

5. What is your current rank? ____Constable ____Senior Constable ____Sergeant ____Detective ____Staff Sergeant ____Inspector or higher rank

6. Have you had any negative experiences as a result of working as a police officer?

7. Have you experienced any workplace situation that have impacted your mental health? ____Yes ____No

8. Have you experienced workplace discrimination as a result of mental health issues? ____Yes ____No

Appendix G: Observation Protocol

Descriptive Notes	Reflexive Notes
Participant:_____ **Date:**_____ **Time:**_____ **Location:**_____ **Accounts of Particular Events:**	**Non-verbal body vs verbal language:** **Personal Thoughts (i.e., speculations, feelings, ideas, impressions, self-bias)**

Appendix I: Methodological Principles of Critical Realism and Stepwise Framework

Table J.1

Methodological Principles of Critical Realism

CR Principle	Ontological and Epistemological Basis	Evaluation Criteria
Explication of Events Identify and abstract the events being studied, usually from experiences, as a foundation for understanding what really happened in the underlying phenomena	• Stratified ontology • Mediated knowledge	• Thick description of case "story" including actions and outcomes • An abstracted sequence of events (including the experiences of participants and observers)
Explication of Structure and Context Identify components of social and physical structure, contextual environment, along with relationships among them. (Critically redescribed from actor's viewpoint into theoretical perspective.)	• Stratified ontology • Open-systems perspective • Mediated knowledge • Unobservability of mechanisms	• Description of the structural entities, constituent parts, and contextual conditions existing in the case • Identification of the relationships among the entities • Explication of changes to the structure • Description of the resulting emergent properties
Retroduction Identify and elaborate on powers/ tendencies of structure that may have interacted to generate explicated events.	• Emergence • Focus on explanation • Explanation via mechanisms • Multiple explanations • Unobservability of mechanisms	• Identification of a set of plausible candidate causal mechanisms • Logical and analytical support for the existence of proposed mechanisms linking the structure to events
Empirical Corroboration Ensure that proposed mechanisms have causal power and that they have better explanatory power than alternatives.	• Independent reality • Stratified ontology • Unobservability of mechanisms • Multiple explanations	• Analytical validation of proposed mechanism based on case data • Assessment of explanatory power of each mechanism relative to alternative explanations • Selection of the mechanism(s) that offers the best explanation
Triangulation & Multimethods Employ multiple approaches to support causal analysis based on a variety of data types and sources, analytical methods, investigators, and theories.	• Independent reality • Mediated knowledge • Unobservability of mechanisms • Multiple explanations	• Multiple theoretical perspectives • Multiple analytical and methodological techniques • Variety of data sources and types • Multiple investigators

Note. From "Principles for conducting critical realist case study research in information systems," by W. Wynn, & C. K. William, 2012, *MIS Quarterly*, *36*(3), p. 796. Reprinted with permission (Appendix L).

Table J.2

Stepwise Framework for Critical Realist Data Analysis

Step	Explanation	References
1.Description of events and issues	In a critical realist context events are clusters of observations made by the researcher or by the researcher's informants. The level of granularity depends on the phenomenon of interest.	Sayer, 1992, Volkoff et al., 2007
2. Identification of key entities	The key entities are the objects of the case, for example individuals, organizational units, technology and the relationships between them. Together they constitute structures, i.e. networks of entities, with causal powers. Entities may be identified from data, in a grounded way or they may be embedded in a theoretical framework.	Danermark et al., 2002
3. Theoretical re-description (abduction)	Before identifying mechanisms we need to abstract the case, exploring different theoretical perspectives and explanations. The researcher should identify relevant theories 'to observe, describe, interpret and explain [the events] within the frame of a new context'.	Danermark et al. 2002: 91
4. Retroduction: Identification of candidate affordances:	Retroduction is 'mode of inference in which events are explained by postulating (and identifying) mechanisms which are capable of producing them'.	Sayer, 1992: 107
a) Identification of immediate concrete outcomes	An immediate concrete outcome is something that is directly achieved (or could be achieved) through the use of organizational units, and is related to the realization of the actor's goals.	Volkoff and Strong, 2013
b) Analysis of the interplay of human and organizational entities	Interplay is often between people and organizational objects (identified in step 2), both of which, as stated above, are complex entities in their own right.	Volkoff and Strong, 2013
c) Identification of candidate affordances	An affordance arises from the relation between human/social and organizational entities and reflects the potential for behaviour that may produce the immediate concrete outcome. The affordance exists, is real, and endures as long as the actors and objects exist, while the possible outcome may never be produced (i.e., the affordance may never be actualized).	Volkoff and Strong, 2013
d) Identification of stimulating and releasing conditions	Whether and how completely or appropriately an affordance is actualized, depends on the contextual conditions. Stimulating conditions are typically organizational arrangements that make it easier to act. Releasing conditions are often specific decisions.	Volkoff and Strong, 2013

5. Analysis of the set of affordances and associated mechanisms	First we need to analyse the interaction of affordances, and the dependencies between them. Some have temporal dependencies, while others have structural or complementary dependencies. Next we should try to understand how affordances are parts of higher-level mechanisms: Macro-micro and micro-macro mechanisms.	DeLanda, 2006.
6. Assessment of explanatory power	A proposed mechanism should be treated as a candidate explanation, and the data collection and analysis should be repeated until closure is reached. We search for the mechanisms with the strongest explanatory power related to the empirical evidence, i.e. the causal structure that best explains the events observed.	Sayer, 1992, Wynn and Williams, 2012

Note. Bygstad, Munkvold, and Volkoff (2016, p. 89). Permission to reprint not required (Appendix N).

Appendix J: TAPUPASM Approach

	POSITIVIST	INTERPRETIVIST	POST-POSITIVIST REALISM
QUALITY CRITERIA	**Reliability** Are the results of the study repeatable and replicable?	**Dependability** Can the results be replicated and be relevant in other times/places?	**Transparency** Is the process of generating knowledge explicit and clear? **Accessibility** Does it meet the needs of those seeking the knowledge?
	Internal validity Construct validity Can the conclusions and relationships [causal factors] be trusted? Do measures do what they say they will do?	**Credibility** How believable are the findings?	**Accuracy** Are the claims made based on relevant information? **Purposivity** Do the methods achieve what they claim to achieve? Are they appropriate to achieve the aims and objectives? **Propriety** Is the research legal and ethical?
	External validity Ecological validity Can the findings be generalized more widely, to a community or population? Can the findings be applied to natural social settings?	**Transferability** Can these findings be applied in other contexts?	**Specificity** Does the research generated consider and apply to source specific standards? **Utility** Is the research appropriate to the decision-making setting? Does it provide answers to the practical questions?
	Objectivity Consideration of bias	**Confirmability** To what level has the researcher allowed their own values to influence the process?	**Modified Objectivity** Does the research review a range of evidence and draw the most likely conclusions based on this?

Note. From ". Philosophy & quality? TAPUPASM as an approach to rigour in critical realist research.," by G. Ryan, & J. Rutty, *Nurse Researcher*, 2019, 27(1), p. 4. Reprinted with permission (Appendix M).

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Publisher	Society for Management Information Systems and Management Information Systems Research Center of the University of Minnesota
Portion	Chart/graph/table/figure

LICENSED CONTENT

Publication Title	MIS quarterly
Author/Editor	Society for Information Management (U.S.), University of Minnesota. Management Information Systems Research Center
Date	12/31/1983
Language	English
Country	United States of America
Rightsholder	M I S Quarterly
Publication Type	e-Journal
URL	http://www.misq.org

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NEW WORK DETAILS

Title	Behind Blue Doors: Cisgender Female Police Officers' Experience of Psychological Stress and Mental Health
Instructor name	Sid Frankel
Institution name	University of Manitoba
Expected presentation date	2021-07-15

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Order reference number	N/A
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Title, description or numeric reference of the portion(s)	Stratified Ontology of Critical Realism (adapted from Bhaskar 1975, p. 13)
Editor of portion(s)	N/A
Volume of serial or monograph	N/A
Page or page range of portion	791
Title of the article/chapter the portion is from	Principles for conducting critical realist case study research in information systems.
Author of portion(s)	Wynn, W., & William, C. K. (2012).
Issue, if republishing an article from a serial	N/A
Publication date of portion	2012-09-03

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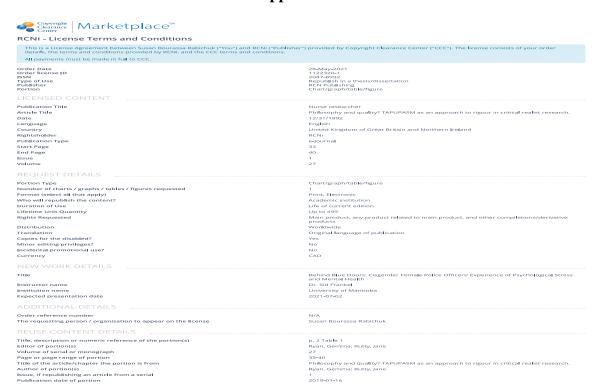
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Portion	Chart/graph/table/figure

LICENSED CONTENT

Publication Title	MIS quarterly
Article Title	Principles for Conducting Critical Realist Case Study Research in Information Systems
Author/Editor	Society for Information Management (U.S.), University of Minnesota. Management Information Systems Research Center
Date	12/31/1983
Language	English
Country	United States of America
Rightsholder	M I S Quarterly
Publication Type	e-Journal
Start Page	787
Issue	3
Volume	36
URL	http://www.misq.org

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Title	Behind Blue Doors: Cisgender Female Police Officers' Experience of Psychological Stress and Mental Health
Instructor name	Dr. Sid Frankel
Institution name	University of Manitoba
Expected presentation date	2021-07-02

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

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The requesting person / organization to appear on the license	Susan Bourassa Rabichuk

REUSE CONTENT DETAILS

Title, description or numeric reference of the portion(s)	p. 796, Table 2
Editor of portion(s)	Wynn, D.; Williams, C.K.
Volume of serial or monograph	36
Page or page range of portion	787
Title of the article/chapter the portion is from	Principles for Conducting Critical Realist Case Study Research in Information Systems
Author of portion(s)	Wynn, D.; Williams, C.K.
Issue, if republishing an article from a serial	3
Publication date of portion	2011-12-31

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Appendix M

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Article Title	Philosophy and quality? TAPUPASM as an approach to rigour in critical realist research.
Date	12/31/1992
Language	English
Country	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Rightsholder	RCNi
Publication Type	e-Journal
Start Page	33
End Page	40
Issue	1
Volume	27

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Currency	CAD

NEW WORK DETAILS

Title	Behind Blue Doors: Cisgender Female Police Officers' Experience of Psychological Stress and Mental Health
Instructor name	Dr. Sid Frankel
Institution name	University of Manitoba
Expected presentation date	2021-07-02

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Title, description or numeric reference of the portion(s)	p. 2 Table 1
Editor of portion(s)	Ryan, Gemma; Rutty, Jane
Volume of serial or monograph	27
Page or page range of portion	33-40
Title of the article/chapter the portion is from	Philosophy and quality? TAPUPASM as an approach to rigour in critical realist research.
Author of portion(s)	Ryan, Gemma; Rutty, Jane
Issue, if republishing an article from a serial	1
Publication date of portion	2019-01-16

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Appendix N

Journal of information technology : JIT

Article Identifying generative mechanisms through affordances: a framework for critical realist data analysis

GENERAL INFORMATION

Request ID	600043545	**Request Date**	28 May 2021
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