Introduction

In most countries, public safety depends largely on individuals who are willing to put their lives in danger on a daily basis: law enforcement officers. Many choose this profession for the potential to do good in society by helping those in need. Additionally, officers help obtain and assist with prosecution of criminals, which may provide gratification to the officer and those involved in such incidents (bls.gov).

In the United States, there are approximately 800,000 sworn officers of the law (Kirschman, 2007; Anderson, 2002). In the process of doing their public service jobs, these officers are faced with strong emotional and physical demands that result in unique stressors simply due to the nature of the job (Sewell, 1994). In addition to stress that accompanies the job, officers may experience a type of grief that is unique to individuals whose responsibility it is to respond to the most horrific of scenes; likewise they face dangers that most other professions do not face (Kirschman, 2007; Anderson, 2002).

In 2004, 132 officers were killed in the line of duty; 50 of these officers were murdered and 82 died accidentally (Kirschman, 2007). Annually, there are a reported 70,000 officers who are assaulted in the line of duty, but the actual number is believed to be substantially higher since most assaults on officers go unreported (Anderson, 2002). Seemingly linked to the stress and grief of the job, law enforcement officers tend to have one of the highest suicide rates in the nation and are twice as likely to die by suicide than by on-the-job accidents or murders (Boyce, 2006). Additionally, while the national divorce rate is approximately 50 percent, that of law enforcement officers is 60 to 75 percent (Boyce, 2006). Members of the law enforcement profession also tend to have higher rates of substance abuse, specifically alcoholism, than do most other professions (Beutler, Nussbaum, & Meredith, 1988; Constant, n. d.). These statistics and

other research demonstrate that law enforcement officers face unique types of stress specific to their profession.

The stresses experienced by the law enforcement officer are not exclusive to the individual himself or herself. Much research has demonstrated that the stress that law enforcement officers face affects their relationships and family life as well (Burke, 1993; Alexander & Walker, 1996; Bartol & Bartol, 2008; Anderson, 2002; heavybadge.com; Finn & Tomz, 1997; Kirschman, 2007; Long & Voges, 1987; Maynard, Maynard, McCubbin, & Shao, 1980). Stressors for family members include the absence of their officer loved one, fearing for the safety of the officer, and secondary post-traumatic stress disorder (Kirschman, 2007; Anderson, 2002; Burke, 1993). Additionally, it is observed by families that the traits that help officers do well on the job, such as suspiciousness, aloofness, and cynicism, tend to cause rifts in homelife and separation between the officer and his or her partner or spouse and family members (Anderson, 2002; Graves, 1996).

Much research has been done on the types of stress that officers face as well as the coping techniques utilized by officers to combat this stress (Pienaar, Rothmann, & van de Vijver, 2007; Evans, Coman, Stanley, & Burrows, 1993; Anderson, 2002). One study of law enforcement officers (Evans et al., 1993) administered the Revised Ways of Coping Questionnaire, authored by Folkman and Lazarus (1985a), to officers and found that officers tended to use coping mechanisms in two categories: emotion-focused coping or problem-focused coping. Emotion-focused coping is directed at regulating the emotional response to stressors experienced. Problem-focused coping is aimed at managing or altering the problem causing the stress (Evans et al., 1993). Most of the coping that officers tend to use, however, tended to fall in the problem-focused category.

There is limited research on the stressors and coping techniques of spouses and partners of officers. The first study to examine the coping techniques utilized by officers' wives, however, was done by Maynard et al. (1980). They found that the primary means of coping for spouses of officers included attending to themselves, developing social supports, accepting the demands of the profession of their husbands, and keeping their families intact. Applying Evans et al.'s framework (1993), when wives used the coping strategies of attending to themselves, developing social supports and accepting the demands of the profession, they were using emotion-focused coping techniques. By keeping their families intact, wives were using problem-focused forms of coping.

While the role of social work has not been specifically addressed in the literature found for this study, the style and types of interventions and research recommended are clearly within the scope of clinical social work practice. For example, authors have pointed out that offering services such as stress management and critical incident stress debriefing can address the sense of resistance of officers toward "therapy" and mental health services (Miller, 1995; Finn & Tomz, 1997). Research and programs related to the information and support needed by partners and families of law enforcement officers are likewise congruent with clinical social work practice (Miller, 1995; Finn & Tomz, 1997; Sewell, 1994).

Another role for social workers when working with the population of law enforcement officers and their families is to advocate beyond the individual officer or family (the micro-level) to meso- and macro- levels of intervention. This may be done through advocacy within departments and through lobbying for mental health services for officers and their families (Sewell, 1994).

Sewell (1994) suggested that because society is characterized by violence and a structured system of criminal justice, there will always be the need for people to enforce this

structure, hence the need for law enforcement officers. However, resulting from the “job” of police officers are strong emotional and physical demands. Therefore, Sewell suggested that further research on the subject of police culture, stress, grief, and interventions should be sought, as well as to better inform and educate departments on how to effectively care for this group of people who risk much for society as a whole, as well as their families.

As noted, little research has been conducted regarding spouses’ stressors and coping mechanisms. Thus, this study aimed to gather information on stressors of and coping techniques utilized by spouses and partners of officers. In patterning after Evans et al.’s study (1993), this study sought to identify how coping techniques utilized by the spouses and partners of officers fit the framework of emotion-focused or problem- focused coping techniques.

Literature Review

This review of literature defines and demonstrates the uniqueness of "police culture" as a whole as and examines the stressors faced by both officers and their families in response to the vocation of law enforcement. In addition, the coping techniques of both officers and spouses are detailed as they pertain to the stressors faced by law enforcement professionals.

Police culture

The job of a law enforcement officer is unique in many ways from that of other professions. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for many, law enforcement is a vocation of interest because the nature of the job provides the potential to catch criminals, collect evidence, assist with prosecuting crimes, and serve society (bls.gov; Graves, 1996). Perhaps the main reason that people become officers is the potential to help and advocate for people in need. Officers, however, are often the ones who are left to deal with issues that the regular public does not wish to deal with. Thus, there are many events that take place on the job that make police work very different in culture from other professions (Miller, n. d.).

Law enforcement officers and their families are often intertwined in a cohesive work culture and many law enforcement officers mistrust individuals who are not officers themselves (Violanti, 1999; Finister, 1994; Constant, n. d.). Violanti noted that as a result of this mistrust, officers have a tendency to socialize exclusively with other officers and, as a whole, believe that only other officers truly understand the nature of the job and them as individuals. Further bolstering the sense of group cohesion among law enforcement officers are the adverse reactions of the community, media, and criminal justice system regarding the officer's line of work (Violanti, 1999; Constant, n. d.).

Law enforcement officers as a whole have been called a "psychosocial" group because both officers and their families exist in a culture in which the members interact with one another,

are aware of one another, and perceive themselves- officers and families alike- to be a "whole" (Finister, 1994). Violanti (1999) further addressed this view that, because police culture is one that exists as a psychosocial group, psychological trauma and distress may be reduced when these group members are interactive and cohesive following a traumatic event. Conversely, when officers do not have these group ties following such events, psychological distress can increase exponentially (Violanti, 1999). It should be noted, however, that while the cohesive nature of officers can be used as a positive source of support pertaining to the stressors of the profession, one theory regarding police families' relationships suggested that "incestuous" police culture may confine police families to relationships with only other police families, isolating them from those who are not part of "police culture" (Alexander & Walker, 1996; p. 239). Isolation of this sort can result in behavioral changes and an "us versus them" mentality (Constant, n. d.; p. 3).

Stressors Related to the Role of Law Enforcement Officer

While many jobs may present opportunities for stress, the job of a law enforcement officer tends to be particularly grueling psychologically. Sewell (1994), in fact, described police stress as its own phenomenon entirely. Pienaar et al. (2007) have identified that there tend to be two categories of occupational stress that officers face: the first involves organizational aspects of police work, and the second involves the nature of the police work. They suggested that the mental wellness of law enforcement officers is more closely-related to the organizational experiences of officers than the operational, task-related ones (p. 248).

Organizational stressors that officers may face include lack of supervisory management, excessive paperwork, shift work, and the bureaucratic structure of police work (Koortzen, 1996; Burke, 1993; Kirschman, 2007). Additionally, court verdicts with which an officer disagrees (such as the acquittal of a criminal) and stressful working conditions are examples of organizational stress that officers face on a day-to-day basis (Koortzen, 1996; Kirschman, 2007).

Stressors that are related to *the nature of police work* are broad. Violanti (1996) and Kirschman (2007) reported that officers tend to list the line-of-duty death of another officer as the most stressful situation that one can experience. Other high-stress situations that officers face as part of the nature of police work include officer-involved shootings and injuries (Kirschman, 2007; Boyce, 2006; Miller, 1995). Miller (1995) and Boyce (2006) suggest that of officers who are involved in shooting injuries or deaths of others, two-thirds suffer from moderate to severe post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, under such circumstances, officers tend to leave the force within seven years after such instances and have higher rates of hospitalizations and premature deaths than do the regular public (Miller, 1995; Boyce, 2006). Situations in which officers respond to scenes of violence, accidents, or death tend to be particularly stressful, especially when the scene is gory or involves children (Miller,1995; Kirschman, 2007; Sewell, 1994). Law enforcement officers tend to face violent situations on a day-to-day basis that add to stress, including brushes with death, large-scale crime, employee suicide, and knowing the victim of a crime (Miller, 1995; Kirschman, 2007).

A unique part of officers' jobs is giving death notifications to family members. In this role, officers often experience conflict between the need for sensitivity for the victim's family as well as an "emotional hardening" that is required for the officer's own mental preservation (Sewell, 1994; p. 594). Bune (2009) remarked that "historically, it has not been uncommon for police departments to possess a culture that conveys the message that officers are not allowed to feel, coupled with a 'get over it' mentality" (p. 2) that is often projected after responding to a critical incident. Despite this reported department-projected mentality, officers may feel the urge to cry or express such emotion in response to such incidents. However, because of the culture of police work that implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) tells them that they are unable to express such emotions, these feelings begin to become ignored or "stuffed" (Bune, 2009, p. 1).

While officers experience stress as a result of death notifications, similar stress results from responding to and investigating homicides. Officers are often ill-prepared for the violence and dehumanization associated with such crimes, creating a sense of distress among those who respond to these crimes (Sewell, 1994).

Other aspects regarding the nature of police work that provide stressors for officers involve interactions with the public. Burke (1993) described that negative confrontations with and lack of respect from the public add to the stress of officers. Law enforcement officers also may experience stress surrounding the adverse reactions of the community, media, and criminal justice system regarding their line of work (Violanti, 1999).

Finally, law enforcement officers face unique and unexpected stressors involving environmental factors such as exposure to toxic contamination and bioterrorism and environmental destruction (Kirschman, 2007).

Impacts of Officers' Stress

Stressors for law enforcement officers have effects in many areas of their lives. The impact of these stressors are further explored in the areas of mental health, work productivity, relationships, and substance abuse.

Mental health symptoms such as feelings of depression, anxiety, paranoia, fear, anger, and panic are effects exhibited by officers who have experienced stress (Boyce, 2006). Evans et al. (1993) described that one of the long-term results of prolonged stress is personality changes that negatively impact an officer's stress appraisal and coping behaviors. Such personality changes include addictive behaviors, decline in psychological stability, and increased somatic complaints. Evans et al. also noted that the traumatic stress of the job increases based on the type of calls to which officers respond. Sewell (1994) noted that homicide investigators, specifically,

are at-risk for increased mental health issues because of the visual and emotional stress that is magnified by these events.

One of the most serious results of the continual stress of law enforcement officers is suicide, however there is inconclusive data regarding suicide among officers. Miller (1995) reported that officers are twice as likely to die by their own hand as they are by homicide, at a rate of about 300 annually. However, Kirschman (2007) reported that in the years between 2002 and 2005, an average of 151 officers died in the line of duty, yet the average number of officers that died as a result of suicide between those same years was 122. A point that Kirschman makes, however, is that for police officers who have lost their jobs as a result of injury incurred while in the line of duty, suicidal ideation tends to be higher. This tends to be the case because there exists not only a loss of physical functioning, but a sense of loss of identity as well because officers, in particular, tend to find their sense of self in the work that they do. When this is no longer a source of identity for them, suicide rates tend to increase (p. 198).

Pertaining to impacts on *work productivity* of officers, Sewell (1994) and Graves (1996) reported that prolonged stress of law enforcement officers can result in fatigue and reduced job performance because such fatigue may lead to “case errors, shortcuts, difficulty in working relationships, and severe domestic problems” (p. 572). Additionally, Bartol and Bartol (2008) reported that excessive shift work contributes to more errors in judgment and greater increases in stress than most other factors within the law enforcement environment.

Relationships of officers often tend to be impacted by the stressors of the officer’s job. One such impact is failed marriages. Some estimates suggest that rates of divorce among officers are as high as 75 percent compared with the national average of about 50 percent (heavybadge.com; Boyce, 2006). Perhaps contributing to factors influencing failure of marriages between officers and their spouses is the belief that up to three quarters of spouses have in

common: that police work is more important to their officer spouses than are their homes and families (Alexander & Walker, 1996).

Additional relationships, such as those between the officer and his or her children, are impacted by the stressors of the officer's job. As officers develop in their careers, traits such as suspiciousness, paranoia, and privacy develop as well and are essential to survival on the job (Evans et al., 1993; Anderson, 2002). Such traits, however, tend to cause rifts between officers and their families.

Substance abuse is highly prevalent among law enforcement officers (Kirschman, 2007; Miller, 1995; Evans et al., 1993). The rate of alcoholism in officers is unusually high and it is estimated that officers are twice as likely to become 'problem drinkers' as are the rest of the population (Boyce, 2006). Additionally, the instance of abuse of prescription drugs is reported to be higher within law enforcement than other professions (Boyce, 2006). Little data related to the use of illegal drugs within law enforcement was identified, perhaps because officers are tested regularly as a standard practice within most agencies. However, as such testing is required under most circumstances following a critical incident in which an officer may have used force such as with a gun or taser in the line of duty, other theories are that drug use within the profession is not high (Page, 2008).

Coping Techniques of Officers

As a result of a career saturated in grief, distress, and stress, officers often adapt to develop coping strategies to deal with the challenges they face as a result of their line of work. Coping has been defined by Evans et al. (1993) as "an individual's constantly-changing cognitive

and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding resources" (p. 237). Evans et al. suggested that the utilization of coping strategies is thought to be a conscious attempt by an individual to reduce his or her stress.

Evans et al. (1993) studied coping behaviors in police officers by administering Folkman and Lazarus's (1985a) Revised Ways of Coping questionnaire. When officers were asked to identify methods that they have used to cope after particularly stressful situations, Evans et al. found that coping mechanisms tended to fall into one of two categories: emotion- focused coping and problem-focused coping. The most prevalent form of coping among these officers, however, was that of problem-focused coping through which an officer tends to manage or alter the problem causing the stress. Emotion-focused coping, which is utilized far less by officers, is coping that is directed at regulating the response to the stressor the officer faces (p. 238).

Kirschman (2007) suggested that law enforcement officers tend to deal with very "abnormal" situations and events in their line of work, but that while the events and situations to which officers respond may be highly unusual or abnormal, coping techniques that officers employ may be very normal, considering the circumstances. Her list of observed coping techniques utilized by officers may be categorized into Folkman and Lazarus's (1985) emotion- and problem-focused coping. Kirschman describes one type of emotion-focused coping in the area of emotional and spiritual lives. Types of problem-focused coping lie in the categories of physical well-being or physiology, behavior, and intellectual functioning (pp. 93-94).

Emotion-Focused Coping

Some of the emotional responses of officers to stress are emotional irritability and loss of spiritual faith. (Kirschman, 2007). Miller (1995; n. d.) reported that officers tend to deal with the emotional stressors of the job by situationally adapting with coping and defense mechanisms such

as repression, displacement, isolation of feelings, humor (usually dark or crass) and "toughing it out" (p. 593).

Problem-Focused Coping

Officers' *physiological adaptations* to stress include problems ranging from stomach or digestive problems to numerous medical problems with no diagnosable medical cause (Kirschman, 2007). Additionally, substance abuse is often a form of coping in response to such stressors (Kirschman, 2007; Miller, 1995; Evans et al., 1993, Beutler, 1988).

Behavioral responses to stressors that officers experience include perpetual rehashing of events and recklessness in their everyday lives (Kirschman, 2007). Additionally, officers often use aggression as a coping mechanism to the stress they experience. Evans et al. (1993) have found that often, officers display authoritarian behaviors outside of work as means to cope with the stress of their jobs.

Often, pertaining to *intellectual functioning*, officers show difficulty with decision-making and complete cognitive shut-down as a response to perpetual stress. Kirschman also describes a sense of "hyperalertness" that officers experience as a result of heightened sensory experiences while working (p. 95). Officers, in general, have been observed to develop traits such as suspiciousness, aloofness, cynicism, and authoritarianism as a means to cope with the stress of their jobs (Evans et al., 1993; Graves, 1996).

While much of officers' coping tends to fall along a continuum as Kirschman (2007) posited, Pienaar et al. (2007) suggested that officers who already bring poor coping techniques to the job tend to have more elevated stress responses than do other officers in general. Evans et al. (1993) reported that many coping strategies of officers may not be effective in relieving stress as most officers suffer both short- and long-term effects that include transient moods, hostility,

anxiety, and depression. Anderson (2002) added to this list projection or blaming others, withdrawal, and detachment as maladaptive forms of coping to which officers tend to defer.

Interventions Used with Officers

When working therapeutically with police officers, the first and most important issue to consider is the sense of resistance that officers often have toward "therapy" (Miller, 1995). This resistance stems from the officers' views of mental health practitioners as "softies" (p. 596). More importantly, there exists the perception that if an officer seeks help for mental health issues that the officer is weak and not able to do his or her job. In law enforcement departments, specifically, there has historically been a great sense of stigmatization surrounding counseling and therapy, as well as surrounding the use of medication to treat the depression that is so prevalent among officers (Miller, 1995). As Miller noted, many law enforcement agencies have begun to encourage the use of mental health resources by renaming interventions "stress management" and "critical incident stress debriefing" in an effort to shed the negative connotations that are associated with seeking professional help. Additionally, many departments have begun to train families about job stressors and potential future familial strains prior to an officer's entrance into the department as a way to assist in family support (Miller, 1995; Finn & Tomz, 1997).

One specific intervention that both law enforcement departments and clinicians alike have used to assist officers in coping with stress and grief is encouraging interaction and cohesion with other officers (Violanti, 1999). This has been especially necessary after a traumatic event for officers. Conversely, if officers do not have close group ties with other officers, psychological distress has tended to increase after such traumatic events. Violanti theorized that when working with officers or their families, a clinician should consider the fact that following a traumatic event faced routinely in an officer's line of work, a person or family may be unable to "get over it" and that this trauma or tragedy is now part of their lives (p. 78). Therefore, it is suggested that

clinicians help officers utilize this experience and integrate it into their lives and introduce healthy responses to grief. Additionally, Violanti suggested that group-level interventions are particularly helpful when working with this population. He suggested, however, that this should be done only after officers are ensured and reassured of their safety and confidence within the group.

Stressors Pertaining to the Families of Officers

The stress of police work also affects the officer's family. Burke (1993) found that when officers were asked to report on the areas of their life that were affected by their job, nine common themes of areas that are affected emerged: relationship with spouse, preoccupation and tiredness, social life, relationship with children, family and home life, weekends and vacations, self-development, health and safety, and exemplary behavior. In Burke's study, officers tended to report that they were unhappy about the idea that their spouses and children were often home alone due to the demands of the officers' job. Additionally, officers reported that their relationships with their children were affected by circumstances such as being made fun of because of the occupation of their officer parent (Burke, 1993). Officers also tended to report that they felt that their spouses had to take on more household responsibilities than were appropriate due to the job of the officer (Burke, 1993; Alexander & Walker, 1996).

Alexander and Walker (1996) conducted a study in which wives of officers were surveyed to gauge the stress of their officer husbands and the degree to which it impacted the wife and/or the family. They noted that family life is adversely affected when officers do not discuss work-related feelings, fears, and needs when they are at home, thus leaving the family with a "shut-out" feeling (p. 239). Additionally, Alexander and Walker have identified that these sentiments of feeling "shut-out" tend to increase the more emotionally distant an officer becomes as he or she appears secretive and suspicious to the family.

Anderson (2002) identified that the traits that make for excellent officers while on duty tend to make unfavorable conditions for family life. Traits such as suspiciousness, paranoia, and privacy become essential to survival on the job, but are believed to drive spouses and children away (Anderson, 2002). Wilson (n. d.) reports that often officers utilize minimal discussion about job-related topics not only as a coping mechanism for themselves, but in attempts to protect their families from details of the job that might be upsetting to them. Wilson makes the point that to families, however, this form of "protection" often is misconstrued as isolation from them (p. 1).

Another way that family life is affected by the officers' job and stress is by the way the family perceives the attitude of the law enforcement officer. Officers tend to have a type of "authoritarian" attitude while working, but family life is often negatively affected when this attitude is brought home. Such behavior and attitudes may threaten the stability of home life and marital relationships (Alexander & Walker, 1996; Kirschman, 2007). The "hero phenomenon" is one that officers also tend to bring home, affecting family life (heavybadge.com). This phenomenon is observed in response to officers having to command respect from the public while at work, but feeling as if that "hero" image is not given at home by family members (p. 2).

Sources of familial stress are brought about by social stigma surrounding the officer's job, changing hours of work, and the family's fear for the safety of the officer (Finn & Tomz, 1997; Maynard et al., 1980). Finn and Tomz (1997) note a cyclical phenomenon that has an impact both on the officer and his or her family members. They report that while the officer's vocation and job stressors such as the aforementioned can negatively impact the family, stress-related difficulties in the family often are sources of job-related stress for the officer. Often times, it is this area of family concern that drives officers to seek help from professionals.

Stressors Pertaining to the Spouses and Partners of Officers

There is much evidence that the job of law enforcement officers affects family life, but unique effects are found to exist on the marriages and partnerships of officers (heavybadge.com; Alexander & Walker, 1996; Bartol & Bartol, 2008; Long & Voges, 1987; Anderson, 2002). There are varying statistics on exact numbers of failed marriages of law enforcement officers, but it is estimated that rates are among the highest in the United States, with numbers being reflected as high as 75 percent (heavybadge.com; Boyce, 2006). Perhaps contributing to factors influencing failure of marriages between officers and their spouses is the belief that up to three quarters of spouses in Alexander and Walker's study (1996) had in common: that police work is more important to their officer spouses than are their homes and families. Additionally, spouses reported a lapse in communication that tends to occur between themselves and their officer spouse when officers maintained emotional distance from their families as a means to separate home- and work-life (Alexander & Walker, 1996; Wilson, n. d.). This emotional distance, coupled with the authoritarian attitudes that officers tended to display that served them well while at work, often was reported to drive a ridge between the officer and his or her spouse, causing further marital strain (Alexander & Walker, 1996).

Spouses and partners are found to have their own sources of stress as a result of the vocation of their spouse or partner. Stressors of spouses of officers tend to fall in three categories: organizational, relational and familial, and pertaining to the nature of police work.

Among *organizational stressors* that spouses experience, overtime and shift work are most prevalent (Bartol & Bartol, 2008).

Spouses experience *relational interruptions* in response to the officer's cynicism and tendency to desire to feel in control while at home (Graves, 1996; Beutler, 1988). Additionally, relationships are affected by the officer's apparent unwillingness or inability to express feelings, and a sense of avoidance that they tend to display (Burke, 1993; Alexander & Walker, 1996).

Familial life is affected when the officer and the public have higher expectations of the officer's children than children of non-officers. Additionally, spouses find stress in the teasing and harassment that their children experience in response to the vocation of their officer parent (Burke, 1993).

Spouses of officers experience stressors such as fearing for the officer's safety while at work and the presence of a gun in the home as being part of the *nature of police work* (Bartol & Bartol, 2008).

Research has shown that spouse stress can often be directly correlated to the level of stress of the officer himself or herself (Long & Voges, 1987). For example, when an officer had high levels of stress, Long and Voges found that the spouse or partner of the officer had high levels of stress as well. Further research by Alexander and Walker (1996) has found that wives of officers, themselves, have significantly higher rates of anxiety and depression when their husbands are patrol officers than those whose husbands are inspectors or in administration. Anderson (2002) has reported that in addition to high levels of anxiety and depression, spouses and families often incur high rates of secondary post-traumatic stress disorder due to the secondary traumatization surrounding the officer's job. One study (Alexander & Walker, 1996) showed that officers' wives were accurately able to perceive the sources of their husbands' on-the-job stress, despite the fact that officers rarely talked about it explicitly, which may link in to the idea of secondary traumatization.

Coping Techniques of Spouses and Partners

Just as officers tend to find coping mechanisms to deal with the stress of police work, spouses and partners do the same. The first study to examine the coping strategies used by law enforcement officers' wives was done in 1980 by Maynard et al. Until that point, research around

stress and the law enforcement profession had centered solely around officers themselves. Maynard et al.'s findings indicated that wives tended to use coping techniques that fell within at least four categories: attending to themselves through strength and self-reliance; developing social supports; accepting the demands of the profession of their husbands while; lastly, functioning together as a family unit. Using Evans et al.'s (1993) framework of problem- and emotion-focused coping, Maynard et al.'s list may be divided into the same types of categories. Problem-focused coping mechanisms would be displayed through functioning together as a family unit. Emotion-focused strategies of coping would include attending to oneself, developing social support networks, and accepting the demands of their husbands' jobs.

While few studies exist to facilitate understanding of the coping strategies of spouses or committed partners of law enforcement officers, many suggestions exist for effective coping. While most suggestions for effective coping surround the idea of finding support networks, especially within the law enforcement profession (Kirschman, 2007; heavybadge.com; Finn & Tomz, 1997), other problem-focused coping techniques focus on increasing flexibility around adjusting schedules and intentionally setting aside time as a family to spend with the officer (heavybadge.com; Stone, 1999; Matsakis, 2005). Additional problem-focused coping techniques for spouses or partners of officers involve keeping busy when the officer is unavailable (heavybadge.com).

The idea of forming social support or cohesive groups for support of law enforcement families is echoed throughout the literature (Violanti, 1996; Kirschman, 2007; Stone, 1999; Matsakis, 2005; Violanti, 1999; Green, 1993). Violanti (1996; 1999) described a "cohesive group" as a "social network of trusted, close persons with similar characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes" (p. 380) and suggested that, specifically after the death of an officer, officers' spouses who relied heavily upon such groups tended to have ameliorated trauma and distress compared with those who did not have such supportive groups.

Emotion-focused coping techniques used by spouses also include keeping lines of communication open while respecting the officer's need for solitude and interacting with others outside the law enforcement community (Kirschman, 2007). Additionally, by giving oneself grace as the partner or spouse of a law enforcement officer, loneliness tends to decrease when changes in mood are recognized as acceptable (Matsakis, 2005). Finally, changing one's own thought patterns to think positively about the officer's work tends to be an effective coping technique (Kirschman, 2007; Finn & Tomz, 1997). This can happen when a spouse or partner participates in training about officers' lines of work and by participating in ride-alongs. Both methods have been found to help family members cope with stress because they have a better understanding of and education surrounding the officer's job and stress (Finn & Tomz, 1997).

Conceptual Framework

The research question "what is the experience of spouses and partners of law enforcement officers as it pertains to the stress of the officer's job?" was answered by looking through two lenses: the stressors that the spouses or partners face and the coping strategies that they implement to deal with such stressors.

Stressors were conceptualized by addressing existing literature that has researched reported stressors of wives of law enforcement officers (Burke, 1993; Alexander & Walker, 1996; Bartol & Bartol, 2008; Anderson, 2002; heavybadge.com; Finn & Tomz, 1997; Kirschman, 2007; Long & Voges, 1987; Maynard, Maynard et al., 1980).

Coping techniques were conceptualized through the lens of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping based on a study conducted by Evans et al. (1993). Evans et al. examined the coping strategies of law enforcement officers by using Folkman and Lazarus's Revised Ways of Coping Questionnaire (1985a) to distinguish between emotion-focused and problem-focused patterns of coping in officers. Emotion-focused coping refers to coping that is directed at

regulating the emotional response to the stressor that someone is facing, whereas problem-focused coping is directed at managing or altering the problem causing the stress (Evans et al., 1993). This same framework was utilized in the current study to determine the degree to which the coping techniques of spouses and partners of law enforcement officers tend to fall within the categories of emotion-focused or problem-focused.

The instrument for this study was designed using the above conceptual framework. One section of the survey instrument included questions about the stressors that the spouses or partners of law enforcement officers experience. Questions were patterned after those used in a study conducted by Alexander and Walker (1996) in which wives of officers were surveyed to gauge stress of their officer husbands and the degree to which it impacted the wife and/or the family about their own stressors. The last section of the survey instrument included a list of coping techniques pulled from Folkman and Lazarus's Revised Ways of Coping questionnaire (1985a). Their survey categorized responses into emotion-focused or problem-focused coping strategies. The current study utilized this same framework to assess the coping techniques of spouses and partners of officers.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized online surveys to gather data to examine the stressors for and coping techniques used by law enforcement officers' spouses or partners in response to the stress of the officers' job.

Population

This study gathered information from the spouses and committed partners of law enforcement officers through three venues: a spouse support group for the Los Angeles Police Department, the Law Enforcement Family Support Network, and a nationwide online support group for the families of officers. These populations were chosen because they are among the few publicly-advertised support groups for spouses and families of law enforcement officers. Permission to include these groups was obtained through email communication with the administrators of each group (see appendix A).

Protection of Human Subjects

To protect those who took part in this study, the project proposal was approved by the MSW Clinical Research Paper Committee and the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board. Participants were recruited based on their membership in either the Los Angeles Police Department spouse support group or a nationwide online support group wivesbehindthebadge.org. (appendix A). Administrators for both groups agreed to post an online invitation and link for subjects to access through email (Los Angeles Police Department) and via a link on the Wives Behind the Badge website that members of Wives Behind the Badge may choose to access if they wished to participate. Participants were gathered in the state of Minnesota through the Law Enforcement Family Support Network via magazine and newsletter publication,

online advertisement at www.lawenforcementfamilysupport.org, and advertisement at local law enforcement agencies. Additionally, the administrator for the LEFSN agreed to partner with the researcher for the purpose of instrument dissemination by leveraging state relationships through direct contact with chiefs, deputies, and state patrol administrators to post the survey in such departments. No compensation for participation was provided to any participants through any forum.

To insure informed consent of participants, a cover letter was posted before entering the survey site (see appendix B). The letter explained in detail that participation was voluntary and would not result in compensation of any kind. Additionally, the letter explained that all participants would remain anonymous to the researcher, and that minimal demographic information would be collected only for the purpose of providing a context for interpreting and understanding whose voices are being heard. To enter the survey, participants read an abbreviated consent statement and checked a box indicating that they agreed to the terms outlined in the cover letter, and that completion implies consent.

Data Collection

Instrument Development

The construction of the instrument (see appendix C) that was used in this study was based on previous studies and research surrounding "police culture". The first eight questions of the survey included demographic questions including 1) confirmation that the respondent is the spouse or committed partner of a law enforcement officer (as an extra layer of consent), 2) agreement that the respondent is not currently and has never been a law enforcement officer, 3) gender of respondent, 4) gender of the respondent's officer spouse/partner, 5) location of the agency for which the officer works (rural, suburban, or urban), 6) type of law enforcement agency for which the officer works, 7) rank of officer within the law enforcement agency, 8) total length

of service of the officer, and 8) the state in which the respondent resides. Items 2 and 8 of the survey were added after consultation with a local therapist and retired police officer (D. Conroy, personal communication, September 30, 2009). Item 5 was added after discussion with an administrator of a family support network who suggested that types and availability of support may be different depending on the geographic location of the agency (S. Dion, personal communication, October 22, 2009). Question 7 was added after examining Alexander and Walker's study (1996) in which they found that the rank of the officer impacted the perceived stress of the officer by the spouse (i.e.: the lower the rank, the higher the perceived stress).

The second part of the survey included questions that aimed to gather information about the stress of the spouse/partner as influenced by the officer's vocation through utilization of a 4-point Likert scale. The first question was a combined list of stressors as found in various sources of literature or studies on law enforcement relational dynamics (Kirschman, 2007; Bartol & Bartol, 2008; Anderson, 2002; Maynard et al., 1980; Matsakis, 2005; Stone, 1999). Questions 2 through 4 were revised from Alexander and Walker's (1996) study in which wives of officers were surveyed to gauge stress of their officer husbands and the degree to which it impacted the wife and/or the family.

The third section of the study survey was adapted from Folkman and Lazarus's (1985a) Revised Ways of Coping questionnaire (see appendix D). This questionnaire was obtained through a public domain with an attached letter from the author (Folkman) providing consent to use the instrument. There exists a newer version, published by Mind Garden (1988) as cited in Folkman and Lazarus (1985b); however since Folkman and Lazarus's version (1985a) is free and easily-accessible, theirs is the version that was revised for this study. Folkman and Lazarus's 66-item questionnaire contains an array of options that people might use to cope with stressful situations. In general, when utilizing this questionnaire, the participant would take it in conjunction with therapy of some sort and describe a stressful incident to the therapist. The

questionnaire would then be taken with that specific incident in mind. As the stressors of law enforcement families tend to be more prolonged than incident-specific, questions were modified to fit such prolonged criteria about stress in general. Questions 5, 7, 8, 23, 27, 38, and 62 of the original Revised Ways of Coping questionnaire (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985a) were omitted for the current study as there was not an appropriate translation from incident-specific circumstances to prolonged stress (see appendix E). For example, #5: "bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation".

In Folkman and Lazarus's (1985a) original 66-item Revised Ways of Coping questionnaire, eight subscales emerged. These scales were developed after nine items were eliminated because they showed high skewness and restricted variance (Folkman & Lazarus, 198b). The remaining 57 items were submitted to a common factor analysis and produced the eight scales. Fifteen items, however, did not fit neatly onto any one scale, and were thus eliminated (see appendix E) from subscale categories.

One subscale consisted of problem-focused coping mechanisms, and six consisted of examples of emotion-focused coping mechanisms. These emotion-focused subscales included wishful thinking, detachment, seeking social support, focusing on the positive, self-blame, and tension reduction. The eighth subscale of keeping to self is considered both an emotion- and problem-focused way of coping.

Though nine items were removed from the original study due to lack of categorization into any subscale, they were kept for the current study if they were able to be translated to "overall stress" versus incident-specific stress. The intended purpose behind keeping such items was to gain the widest scope of information possible regarding the coping techniques that the spouses and partners of law enforcement officers and for the purpose of possible future research.

As items from Folkman and Lazarus's (1985a) scale were translated and are not exact, the geometric properties of the current study's instrument are unknown at this point.

Folkman and Lazarus's (1985a) questionnaire requires participants to gauge on a scale how often they use the specific type of coping strategy listed : 0 (*not used*), 1 (*used somewhat*), 2 (*used quite a bit*), 3 (*used a great deal*). The current study converted Folkman and Lazarus's question 1, for example, from "Just concentrated on what I had to do next- the next step" to "concentrate on what I have to do next to alleviate my stress" (see appendix E). Other examples include converting "I did something which I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something" to "Try to do something even if I don't think it will help my stress- at least I am doing something" and "Slept more than usual" to "Sleep more than usual".

Data Collection Process

Data were collected through use of Survey Monkey, an online survey website. Three groups were invited to participate in the survey: the Los Angeles Police Department Wives' Support Group, the nationwide online support group Wives Behind the Badge, and the Law Enforcement Family Support Network (LEFSN). An administrator of the Los Angeles Police Department Wives' Group sent out an email to all members of the support group inviting participation, which included a link to the survey on surveymonkey.com (see appendix A). Similarly, the administrator of wivesbehindthebadge.org posted a link to the surveymonkey website on the host's webpage. The administrator of the LEFSN advertised the survey through multiple forums: St. Paul and Minneapolis magazine and newsletter publications, online advertisement at www.lawenforcementfamilysupport.org, and advertisement at local law enforcement agencies via flyers with pull-off tabs (see appendix F). Participants of all groups were invited to participate in taking the survey, which was posted from January 4, 2010 until March 15, 2010. Throughout this time period, 376 valid responses were collected (containing

both demographic information and information from at least one of the two following sections about stressors or coping techniques). Of those 376 valid responses, 354 (94.1%) had completed all three sections of demographic information, stressors, and coping techniques. All 376 responses were used in the data analysis process for sections pertaining to demographic information and stressors. Of the 22 responses that had only two sections completed, all responses were collected in the first two sections: demographic information and stressors. As such, only 354 responses were analyzed pertaining to coping techniques, in comparison with 376 for the rest of the survey sections.

Data Analysis

Demographic Information

The data collected in this study were analyzed using Minitab. In particular, associations between variables were examined by using Chi-Square. Such variables included demographic variables (gender of respondent, gender of officer, geographic location of the law enforcement agency, type of law enforcement agency, rank of officer, and length of service), which were analyzed for associations with stressors and coping techniques identified by respondents.

For the purposes of data analysis, the categories of respondent age and officer age were recoded to create larger categories. Ages 18-25 were combined with 26-30 into a new recoded category. Likewise, ages 31-35 and 36-40; 41-45 and 46-50; and 50-55, 56-60, 61-65, and 66+ were recoded to create three more separate categories.

Stressors

The second section of the survey, which addressed stressors, included 14 items in question 1 that may present as stressors for spouses or partners of law enforcement officers (appendix C). Items were scored as individual variables, independent of one another. These

variables, however, were examined for associations with the information provided in section one regarding demographic information. Of specific interest were the associations between variables such as the officer's rank within an agency or length of service and the perceived level of stress experienced by the officer from the perspective of his or her spouse/partner. This particular association was examined because of the hypothesis that stress becomes more tolerable the longer the officer is in service. Additionally, because the officer's rank or length of service might have an effect on his or her own levels of stress, it was possible that as the officer's stress levels increase or decrease, so might the stress levels of the officer's spouse or partner. Associations between rank and length of service were also examined against the spouse/partner's belief that the officer's job has added to their own level of stress (question 11, Stressors Scale, appendix E). Additionally, the researcher examined the association between if the respondent was himself or herself an officer at one time (question 2 of the demographic information section, appendix E) and questions11 and 12 from the stressors section: "In your opinion, to what extent has your spouse/partner's job added to your own level of stress?" and "In your opinion, to what degree do you believe your spouse/partner has been stressed at work in the past 4 weeks?"

During the data analysis process, all of the stressors were recoded from ranking answers based on the degree to which each was a stressor ("not a source of stress at all", "a slight source of stress", "a moderate source of stress", and "a great source of stress") to "no" and "yes" if the stressor was present or not. All answers in the "not a source of stress at all" category remained as a "no", and all three answers indicating some presence of stress were recoded to "yes". Likewise, the last four questions of the stressors section which measured the extent to which certain aspects of life were affected negatively by the officer's job pertaining to stress ("not at all", "slightly", "moderately", and "greatly") were recoded. In a similar fashion to the list of stressors, all responses of "not at all" were recoded to "no", and all other answers indicating some extent of negative effects were recoded to "yes".

Coping Techniques

Coping techniques were analyzed both as individual variables and as scale scores once re-categorized (see appendix E). The individual coping technique variables were analyzed against if the respondent has been an officer himself/herself; the geographic location of the officer's agency; the rank of the officer; and the length of service of the officer. Additionally, individual coping techniques items were examined against the recoded stressors.

All coping technique subscale scores were recoded into "no", "low", and "high" amount of use for the purpose of seeking associations with other variables. The respondent answer "not used" was recoded as "no"; "used somewhat" was recoded as "low"; and "used quite a bit" and "used a great deal" were recoded to "high" degree of use. After recoding, these recoded subscales were cross-tabulated with demographic information and stressors using chi-square.

Strengths and Limitations

This study presents with both strengths and weaknesses. One strength is that interest in this study appeared high based on the willingness of the administrators of wivesbehindthebadge.org, the Los Angeles Police Department wives' support group, and the Law Enforcement Family Support Network to make it available to members. Further strengthening this study was the input from committee and community members knowledgeable about the topic related to instrument development and implementation to ensure that relevant variables were accounted for (such as length of time in a law enforcement career rather than just rank). Other strengths included the fact that the survey was online and readily available to those with internet access and would increase the likelihood of anonymity of the respondent. Furthermore, since the survey was advertised through multiple forums such as support groups, online websites, magazine advertisements, and flyers, there was an opportunity to participate for a variety of people and was not limited to only people already seeking help.

A limitation of the study included the fact that not everyone who may have been interested in participating may own a computer and thus might be without internet access to participate in taking the online survey. Another limitation of the current study was the fact that there was no way to account for critical incidents that may have taken place within any respondent's spouse or partner's department within the timeframe for the survey. As such, it is unclear if those factors may have influenced the participants' responses.

Findings

Demographic Information

Data were collected from January 1, 2010 until March 15, 2010 via an online survey. During the designated time period, 376 responses were collected in which the respondent had answered demographic data and at least one of the other two sections (stressors and/or coping techniques). The following are the reported demographic data:

Table 1: *Demographic Information about Respondents*

Respondent Characteristics	n (%)
Gender	
Female	373 (99.2%)
Male	3 (0.8%)
Respondent is/was Officer	
Yes	24 (6.4%)
No	352 (93.6%)
Age	
18-25	52 (13.8%)
26-30	91 (24.2%)
31-35	98 (26.1%)
36-40	72 (19.1%)
41-45	30 (8.0%)
46-50	22 (5.9%)
51-55	6 (1.6%)
56-60	4 (1.1%)
61-65	1 (0.3%)
State of Residence	
Minnesota	65 (17.3%)
California	54 (14.4%)
Other (see appendix G)	257 (68.4%)

Respondents in the current study were almost entirely female, and most had never been officers. The age range with the largest number of respondents was 31-35, with ages 26-30 having the second most respondents. Minnesota had the largest number of respondents from any one state, however California had nearly as many respondents at Minnesota. In the “other” category, Washington had the third largest respondent group (see appendix G), and Texas had the fourth largest.

Table 2: *Demographic Information about Officers*

Officer Characteristics	n (%)
Gender	
Female	5 (1.3%)
Male	370 (98.4%)
Age	
18-25	25 (6.6%)
26-30	81 (21.5%)
31-35	102 (27.1%)
36-40	82 (21.8%)
41-45	42 (11.2%)
46-50	25 (6.6%)
51-55	12 (3.2%)
56-60	5 (1.3%)
61-65	1 (0.3%)
Geographic Location of Agency	
Suburban	151 (40.2%)
Urban	134 (35.6%)
Rural	68 (18.1%)
Other	16 (4.3%)
Type of Agency	
City	244 (64.9%)
County	70 (18.6%)
State	42 (11.2%)
Federal	5 (1.3%)
Other	14 (3.7%)
Officer Rank	
Patrol officer/ deputy	252 (67.0%)
Sergeant	41 (10.9%)
Inspector/ detective	29 (7.7%)
Administration	12 (3.2%)
Other	40 (10.6%)
Length of Service	
0-5 years	123 (32.7%)
6-10 years	100 (26.6%)
11-15 years	78 (20.7%)
16-20 years	32 (8.5%)
20+ years	45 (12.0%)
Retired	4 (1.1%)

Respondents reported the gender of their officer spouse/partner as primarily male. The largest percentage of officers were ages 31 to 35, worked for suburban city departments, and were patrol officers in their first five years of service.

Table 3: *"Other" Category Descriptions*

Themes	n (%)
Geographic Location of Agency	
"Combination of rural and suburban"	3 (18.75%)
"Combination of suburban, urban, and rural"	3 (18.75%)
"City"	3 (18.75%)
"Combination of rural and urban"	2 (12.5%)
"Combination of urban and suburban"	1 (6.25%)
"Rural/small city-midwest"	1 (6.25%)
"Population 86,000"	1 (6.25%)
"City department and rural township"	1 (6.25%)
"Small city (+/- 8-9000)"	1 (6.25%)
Type of Agency	
"Town(ship)"	5 (35.71%)
"Municipal(ity)"	2 (14.29%)
"Borough"	1 (7.14%)
"Federal DEA task force"	1 (7.14%)
"Parish"	1 (7.14%)
"Transit"	1 (7.14%)
"Tribal"	1 (7.14%)
"University"	1 (7.14%)
"City, but works takes [officer] county-wide"	1 (7.14%)
Officer Rank	
Corporal/deputy	8 (20.0%)
Lieutenant	4 (10.0%)
Chief/ director of police	3 (7.5%)
K9	3 (7.5%)
Master sergeant	3 (7.5%)
Captain	2 (5.0%)
Sergeant/detective	2 (5.0%)
(Narcotic) Vice	2 (5.0%)
Constable	1 (2.5%)
Corporal/SWAT	1 (2.5%)
Corrections	1 (2.5%)
Criminal investigator	1 (2.5%)
Immigrations/Customs Enforcement (ICE)	1 (2.5%)
Patrol/ special unit	1 (2.5%)
Problem-oriented policing	1 (2.5%)
Special operations	1 (2.5%)
Town marshal	1 (2.5%)
Trooper	1 (2.5%)
"Master patrol man/ DRE/ motorcycle officer"	1 (2.5%)

Stressors

Table 4: *Stressors*

Stressor categories	Not a source of stress at all n (%)	A slight source of stress n(%)	A moderate source of stress n (%)	A great source of stress n (%)	Did not disclose n (%)
Relational					
Believing that my spouse/partner views his or her job as more important than our relationship	**190 (50.7%)**	77 (20.5%)	65 (17.3%)	42 (11.2%)	1 (0.3%)
Lapses in communication between my spouse/partner and myself	67 (17.9%)	**127 (34.0%)**	84 (22.5%)	96 (25.7%)	0
Feeling emotionally distant from my spouse/partner	96 (25.5%)	**112 (29.8%)**	81 (21.5%)	87 (23.1%)	0
Authoritarian attitudes that my spouse/partner brings home from the job	**127 (33.9%)**	112 (29.9%)	70 (18.7%)	63 (16.8%)	3 (0.8%)
My spouse/partner's cynicism	97 (25.9%)	**119 (31.8%)**	83 (22.2%)	73 (19.5%)	2 (0.5%)
My spouse/partner's inability/unwillingness to express feelings	**105 (27.9%)**	97 (25.8%)	86 (22.9%)	86 (22.9%)	2 (0.5%)
Feeling as if my spouse/partner no longer invests in our relationship	**219 (58.4%)**	65 (17.3%)	40 (10.7%)	49 (13.1%)	2 (0.5%)
Familial					
My spouse/partner's high expectations of me and/or our children	**163 (43.5%)**	103 (27.5%)	63 (16.8%)	43 (11.5%)	3 (0.8%)
Feeling as if my spouse/partner is over-protective of our family	**212 (56.5%)**	102 (27.2%)	40 (10.7%)	18 (4.8%)	3 (0.8%)
Social					
Lack of a support network	**123 (32.7%)**	110 (29.3%)	69 (18.4%)	67 (17.8%)	7 (1.9%)
Feelings of isolation from others whose spouses/partners are not officers	**141 (37.5%)**	80 (21.3%)	88 (23.4%)	65 (17.3%)	2 (0.5%)
Nature of the job					
Fearing for the safety of my spouse/partner while they are at work	23 (6.2%)	117 (31.4%)	**125 (33.5%)**	101 (27.1%)	7 (1.9%)
Knowing there is a gun in our home	**256 (68.4%)**	89 (23.8%)	14 (3.7%)	12 (3.2%)	3 (0.8%)
My spouse/partner's own level of stress	23 (6.2%)	**118 (31.8%)**	126 (34.0%)	100 (27.0%)	4 (1.1%)
Other *					

*Other responses included themes of shift work, schedules, and shift changes; preoccupations about future infidelity and female partners of male officers; isolation from non-law enforcement families or community members; lack of acknowledgement/support from law enforcement administration regarding effects of officer's career on family life; [officer's] unwillingness to mix with other law enforcement families; financial instability; and officers' lack of trust of others.

Of the stressors listed, only one had the largest percentage of respondents answer in the "moderate source of stress" category: "fearing for the safety of my spouse/partner while they are at work". None of the stressors were indicated as "a great source of stress" by the largest percentage of respondents.

Table 5: *Impact of Officer's Job on Relationships*

Degree of stress/ effect on relationships

Area of Stressor	**Not at all n (%)**	**Slightly n (%)**	**Moderately n(%)**	**Greatly n (%)**	**Did not disclose n (%)**
Relational					
Extent to which the officer's stress has added to the respondent's level of stress	9 (2.4%)	116 (30.9%)	**160 (42.6%)**	90 (23.9%)	1 (0.3%)
Familial					
Extent to which the officer's stress has adversely affected family relationships	66 (17.6%)	**143 (38.0%)**	109 (29.0%)	56 (14.9%)	2 (0.5%)
Social					
Extent to which the officer's stress had adversely affected social relationships	99 (26.3%)	**132 (35.1%)**	84 (22.3%)	60 (16.0%)	1 (0.3%)
Nature of the job					
Degree to which the respondent believes the officer has been stressed at work in the past four weeks	18 (4.8%)	94 (25.0%)	**160 (42.6%)**	103 (27.1%)	2 (0.5%)

None of the above stressors had the largest percentage of respondents answer either the "not at all" or "greatly" categories, however pertaining to family and social relationships, respondents reported that these relationships were affected "slightly". Respondents, however, reported that their partner's own stress had added to their own to a "moderate" extent, and that the degree to which they believed the officer had been stressed at work in the previous four weeks was "moderately" as well.

When demographic variables were analyzed for associations with variables identified as stressors, the following associations were found: respondent age and "my spouse/partner's high expectations of me and/or our children" ($X^{2=}$ 14.158, DF=, p=0.003); officer age and "my spouse/partner's high expectations of me and/or our children" (X^2= 8.715, DF= 3, p=0.033); if the respondent was himself/herself an officer and "extent to which the officer's stress has adversely affected family relationships" (X^2= 3.779, DF=1, p =0.052); and agency type and "feelings of isolation from people whose spouses/partners are not officers" (X^2= 11.972, DF= 4, p= 0.018). The following had p-values of 0.13 or less and might be examined in the future for associations: officer age and "lapses in communication between my spouse/partner and myself" (p=0.07); agency type and "feeling emotionally distant from my spouse/partner" (p= 0.13); agency type and "my spouse/partner's cynicism" (p=0.07); agency type and " my spouse/partner's inability/unwillingness to express feelings" (p=0.09); officer rank and "my spouse/partner's cynicism" (p= 0.10); and officer rank and "lack of a support network" (p= 0.07).

Coping Techniques

Because the current study is an exploratory study, an item analysis was conducted as were calculations of the total mean and subscale scores.

Table 6: *Problem- Focused Coping Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	Not used	Used somewhat	Used quite a bit	Used a great deal	Did not disclose
Try to analyze the source(s) of my stress in order to better understand it/them	41 (11.6%)	**137 (38.8%)**	100 (28.3%)	75 (21.2%)	0
Make a plan of action and follow it to alleviate my stress	106 (30.3%)	**131 (37.4%)**	81 (23.1%)	31 (8.9%)	1 (0.3%)
Try not to act impulsively according to my first hunches	99 (28.2%)	**142 (40.5%)**	62 (17.7%)	45 (12.8%)	3 (0.9%)
Change something in my life so things will turn out better	78 (22.5%)	**158 (45.5%)**	83 (23.9%)	26 (7.5%)	2 (0.6%)
Stand my ground when fighting for aspects of life that I want	25 (7.2%)	118 (33.9%)	**132 (37.9%)**	71 (20.4%)	2 (0.6%)
Stand my ground when fighting for aspects of life that I want	25 (7.2%)	118 (33.9%)	**132 (37.9%)**	71 (20.4%)	2 (0.6%)
Increase efforts toward alleviating stressful situations in my life	47 (13.6%)	**163 (47.1%)**	107 (30.9%)	28 (8.0%)	1 (0.3%)
Think of different solutions to alleviate my stress	42 (12.2%)	**151 (43.8%)**	116 (33.6%)	36 (10.4%)	0
Try to keep my feelings from interfering too much with other aspects of my life	38 (11.0%)	**148 (42.8%)**	100 (28.9%)	59 (17.1%)	1 (0.3%)
Try to empathize with my spouse/partner's own stress	18 (5.2%)	72 (20.8%)	**129 (37.3%)**	122 (35.3%)	5 (1.4%)

Table 7: *Detachment Subscale(Emotion- Focused Coping)Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Feel that time will make a difference in lessening my stress-the only thing to do is wait	**124 (35.1%)**	121 (34.3%)	67 (19.0%)	41 (11.6%)	0
Acknowledge that sometimes I just have bad luck and that is why I feel stress	**205 (58.2%)**	94 (26.7%)	33 (9.4%)	19 (5.4%)	1 (0.3%)
Continue with life as if I do not feel stress	95 (27.0%)	**123 (34.9%)**	79 (22.4%)	55 (15.6%)	0
Try to forget about my stress completely	**115 (32.5%)**	145 (41.0%)	66 (18.6%)	28 (7.9%)	0
Wait and assess stressful situations before taking any action in response	73 (20.8%)	**138 (39.3%)**	98 (27.9%)	39 (11.1%)	3 (0.9%)
Accept my stress, believing that nothing can be done to alleviate it	**167 (48.1%)**	117 (33.7%)	42 (12.1%)	21 (6.1%)	0

Table 8: *Self-Blame Subscale (Emotion- Focused)Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Criticize or lecture myself	**165 (46.5%)**	111 (31.4%)	37 (10.5%)	38 (10.7%)	3 (0.8%)
Realize that I bring my own stress upon myself	96 (27.3%)	**156 (44.3%)**	68 (19.3%)	32 (9.1%)	0
Promise myself that things are going to be different in the future	108 (31.0%)	**126 (36.2%)**	66 (19.0%)	48 (13.8%)	0

Table 9: *Wishful Thinking Subscale (Emotion-Focused Coping)Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Hope that a miracle will happen to alleviate my stress	**208 (58.8%)**	55 (15.5%)	34 (9.6%)	55 (15.5%)	2 (0.6%)
Wish that I could change my life	**135 (39.0%)**	92 (26.6%)	57 (16.5%)	61 (17.6%)	1 (0.3%)
Daydream or imagine a better time or place than the one that I am in when I feel stressed	**115 (33.1%)**	110 (31.7%)	64 (18.4%)	55 (15.9%)	3 (0.9%)
Wish that the stress would change or be gone from my life	54 (15.6%)	**119 (34.4%)**	77 (22.3%)	94 (27.2%)	2 (0.6%)
Fantasize about how life might turn out after my stress is lessened	**114 (32.9%)**	81 (23.3%)	78 (22.5%)	71 (20.5%)	3 (0.9%)

Table 10: *Keeping to Self Subscale (Problem- and Emotion-Focused Coping)Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Try to keep my feelings about my stress to myself	66 (18.8%)	**132 (37.5%)**	78 (22.2%)	76 (21.6%)	0
Avoid being with others	**184 (52.7%)**	101 (28.9%)	40 (11.5%)	24 (6.9%)	0
Keep others from knowing how bad things are for me at the time of my stress	83 (23.7%)	**129 (36.9%)**	71 (20.3%)	67 (19.1%)	0

Table 11: *Focusing on the Positive Subscale (Emotion-Focused Coping)Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Try to look for positive circumstances of my life amidst my stress	13 (3.7%)	87 (24.6%)	118 (33.3%)	**134 (37.9%)**	2 (0.6%)
Participate in activities that allow me to be creative	93 (26.3%)	**105 (29.7%)**	97 (27.4%)	59 (16.7%)	0

Table 12: *Seeking Social Support Subscale (Emotion-Focused Coping)Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Express my feelings of stress somehow, through any venue	70 (19.8%)	**164 (46.5%)**	86 (24.4%)	31 (8.8%)	2 (0.6%)
Talk to someone who can help me alleviate my stress	69 (19.6%)	**129 (36.6%)**	97 (27.6%)	52 (14.8%)	5 (1.4%)
Ask a friend or relative whom I respect for advice	76 (21.7%)	**116 (33.1%)**	90 (25.7%)	65 (18.6%)	3 (0.9%)
Talk to someone about how I am feeling	51 (14.6%)	**134 (38.4%)**	95 (27.2%)	67 (19.2%)	2 (0.6%)
Engage in prayer	75 (21.7%)	86 (24.9%)	68 (19.7%)	**106 (30.6%)**	11 (3.2%)

Table 13: *Tension- Reduction Subscale (Emotion-Focused Coping)Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Take a vacation or a rest to escape my stress temporarily	122 (34.8%)	**140 (39.9%)**	58 (16.5%)	31 (8.8%)	0
Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, or taking medication	**198 (56.1%)**	76 (21.5%)	35 (9.9%)	40 (11.3%)	4 (1.1%)
Engage in exercise	57 (16.6%)	**130 (37.8%)**	80 (23.3%)	75 (21.8%)	2 (0.6%)

Table 14: *Other Coping Techniques not Categorized into Subscales Item Analysis*

Coping Technique	**Not used**	**Used somewhat**	**Used quite a bit**	**Used a great deal**	**Did not disclose**
Concentrate on what I have to do to alleviate my stress	37 (10.5%)	**137 (38.8%)**	99 (28.0%)	78 (22.1%)	2 (0.6%)
Turn to work or substitute activity to take my mind off my stress	38 (10.8%)	107 (30.4%)	**115 (32.7%)**	90 (25.6%)	2 (0.6%)
Try to do something even if I don't think it will help my stress- at least I am doing something	79 (22.3%)	**128 (36.2%)**	98 (27.7%)	48 (13.6%)	1 (0.3%)
Try not to "burn bridges" between myself and others so that I still have open communication despite my stress	62 (17.6%)	**132 (37.5%)**	96 (27.3%)	61 (17.3%)	1 (0.3%)
Sleep more than usual	**178 (50.6%)**	84 (23.9%)	49 (13.9%)	40 (11.4%)	1 (0.3%)
Express anger to my spouse/partner because their profession has contributed to my stress	**176 (49.7%)**	105 (29.7%)	42 (11.9%)	30 (8.5%)	1 (0.3%)
Accept sympathy and understanding from others about my stress	120 (34.1%)	**158 (44.9%)**	62 (17.6%)	10 (2.8%)	2 (0.6%)
Tell myself things that make me feel better	82 (23.2%)	**157 (44.4%)**	83 (23.4%)	29 (8.2%)	3 (0.8%)
Seek professional help	**246 (69.5%)**	65 (18.4%)	31 (8.8%)	12 (3.4%)	0
Apologize or make amends if I hurt others as a response to my stress	38 (10.8%)	**104 (29.5%)**	122 (34.6%)	84 (23.8%)	5 (1.4%)
Remind myself that experiences such as these help me grow into a better person	44 (12.5%)	**123 (34.8%)**	107 (30.3%)	78 (22.1%)	1 (0.3%)
Take chances or engage in risky behavior/activities	**309 (87.5%)**	30 (8.5%)	8 (2.3%)	5 (1.4%)	1 (0.3%)
Explore my faith	91 (25.7%)	91 (25.7%)	70 (19.8%)	**94 (26.6%)**	8 (2.3%)
Maintain pride and privacy by keeping my stress to myself	99 (28.1%)	**140 (39.8%)**	64 (18.2%)	47(13.4%)	2 (0.6%)
Do not let problems and stress get to me by not thinking about them	139 (39.8%)	**160 (45.8%)**	36 (10.3%)	13 (3.7%)	1 (0.3%)
Make light of stressful circumstances, refusing to get too serious about them	81 (23.2%)	**159 (45.6%)**	74 (21.2%)	34 (9.7%)	1 (0.3%)
Take my stress out on other people	107 (30.7%)	**172 (49.3%)**	52 (14.9%)	18 (5.2%)	0
Refuse to acknowledge stress that is happening or has happened	**221 (63.7%)**	92 (26.5%)	25 (7.2%)	8 (2.3%)	1 (0.3%)
Change something about myself when I feel stressed	118 (34.1%)	**149 (43.1%)**	50 (14.5%)	28 (8.1%)	1 (0.3%)
Prepare myself for the worst regarding my stress	96 (27.7%)	**124 (35.8%)**	63 (18.2%)	59 (17.1%)	4 (1.2%)
Think about how someone who I admire would handle my stress and use that as a model	**169 (48.6%)**	100 (28.7%)	58 (16.7%)	19 (5.5%)	2 (0.6%)
Remind myself that my stress could be worse	25 (7.2%)	86 (24.9%)	**116 (33.5%)**	115 (33.2%)	4 (1.2%)
Other*					

*Other responses included themes of respondents' own efforts to make the home a peaceful environment for the officer; maintain positive personality qualities; seek support through online forums; doing and teaching yoga.

The current study utilized the eight subscales of coping techniques that emerged in Evans et al.'s study (1993). They were problem-focused coping (PFC); six subscales of emotion-focused coping (EFC): detachment, self-blame, wishful thinking, focusing on the positive, seeking social support, and tension-reduction; and a combination of problem- and emotion-focused coping in keeping to self. The following are the results of tabulated scale scores:

Table 15: *Coping Technique Subscale Analysis*

Coping technique scale	**N (%)**	**Possible range**	**Mean**	**Standard deviation**	**Range of scores**
Wishful thinking (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	1- 20	17.22	6.16	3-32 (29)
Focusing on the positive (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	1- 8	5.35	1.53	2-8 (6)
Seeking social support (EFC)	352 (93.6%)	1- 24	13.63	4.13	2-24 (22)
Keeping to self (PFC and EFC)	354 (94.1%)	1- 12	6.46	2.35	2-12 (10)
Problem-focused coping	352 (93.6%)	1- 40	21.22	5.18	2-34 (32)
Tension-reduction (EFC)	350 (93.1%)	1- 12	6.17	1.87	2-12 (10)
Self-blame (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	1- 12	6.05	2.15	1-12 (11)
Detachment (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	1- 24	11.97	3.16	5-20 (15)

All subscales were recoded into 1="no", 2="low", and 3="high" amount of use. After such recoding, data were analyzed to examine which type of coping technique was used the most by respondents.

Table 16: *Coping Technique Subscale Recoded Analysis*

Coping technique scale	N (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Median
Wishful thinking (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	2.34	0.68	2
Focusing on the positive (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	2.68	0.51	3
Seeking social support (EFC)	352 (93.6%)	2.54	0.58	3
Keeping to self (PFC and EFC)	354 (94.1%)	2.33	0.66	2
Problem-focused coping	352 (93.6%)	2.70	0.50	3
Tension-reduction (EFC)	350 (93.1%)	2.33	0.60	2
Self-blame (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	2.25	0.64	2
Detachment (EFC)	351 (93.4%)	2.36	0.54	2

Data indicates that respondents in this group used problem-focused styles of coping more than any other technique. However, focusing on the positive produced similar statistics regarding use of the coping techniques that fell within that category.

After recoding, these recoded subscales were cross-tabulated with demographic information and stressors using chi-square. When associations were examined between coping techniques and demographic information, only one association was found between respondent age (recoded) and self-blame (recoded) ($X^2 = 12.623$, DF = 6, P-Value = 0.049) .

When associations were examined between coping techniques and stressors, several were found:

Table 17: *Problem-Focused Coping Technique Associations with Stressors (Recoded)*

Stressor	X^2	DF	P-Value
Family relationships*	19.511	2	0.000
Social relationships	18.617	2	0.000

*Abbreviated stressors. See appendix I for abbreviation translations.

Table 18: *Detachment (Emotion- Focused Coping) Associations with Stressors (Recoded)*

Stressor	X^2	DF	P-Value
Priority	23.964	2	0.000
Communication	43.136	2	0.000
Distance	44.370	2	0.000
Attitude	15.322	2	0.000
Cynicism	7.433	2	0.024
Expression	13.405	2	0.001
Isolation	13.365	2	0.001
Support	30.357	2	0.000
Investment	21.290	2	0.000
Protection	6.224	2	0.045
Family relationships	12.847	2	0.002
Social relationships	32.258	2	0.000

Table 19: *Self-Blame (Emotion-Focused Coping) Associations with Stressors (Recoded)*

Stressor	X^2	DF	P-Value
Priority	26.719	2	0.000
Communication	17.263	2	0.000
Distance	26.421	2	0.000
Attitude	12.587	2	0.002
Cynicism	8.404	2	0.015
Expression	6.148	2	0.046
Expectations	15.307	2	0.000
Gun	7.850	2	0.020
Stress	6.350	2	0.042
Isolation	9.742	2	0.008
Support	33.889	2	0.000
Investment	12.873	2	0.002
Officer stress	8.510	2	0.014
Family relationships	23.483	2	0.000
Social relationships	14.991	2	0.001

Table 20: *Wishful Thinking (Emotion-Focused Coping) Associations with Stressors (Recoded)*

Stressor	X^2	DF	P-Value
Priority	25.622	2	0.000
Communication	26.028	2	0.000
Distance	26.709	2	0.000
Attitude	23.812	2	0.000
Cynicism	10.363	2	0.006
Expression	26.363	2	0.000
Expectations	19.086	2	0.000
Stress	7.079	2	0.029
Isolation	14.921	2	0.001
Support	37.740	2	0.000
Investment	40.816	2	0.000
Protection	8.860	2	0.012
Family relationships	20.984	2	0.000
Social relationships	13.993	2	0.001

Table 21: *Focusing on the Positive (Emotion-Focused Coping) Associations with Stressors (Recoded)*

Stressor	X^2	DF	P-Value
Communication	14.117	2	0.001
Distance	21.273	2	0.000
Attitude	7.939	2	0.019
Expression	18.263	2	0.000
Expectations	6.815	2	0.033
Support	8.574	2	0.014
Protection	6.034	2	0.049
Family relationships	24.339	2	0.000
Social relationships	14.303	2	0.001

Table 22: *Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused Coping) Associations with Stressors (Recoded)*

Stressor	X^2	DF	P-Value
Communication	8.342	2	0.015
Distance	6.746	2	0.034

Table 23: *Keeping to Self (Problem- and Emotion-Focused Coping) Associations with Stressors (Recoded)*

Stressor	X^2	DF	P-Value
Priority	24.389	2	0.000
Communication	15.372	2	0.000
Distance	17.240	2	0.000
Attitude	17.100	2	0.000
Cynicism	17.349	2	0.000
Expression	20.648	2	0.000
Expectations	26.232	2	0.000
Gun	9.751	2	0.008
Stress	8.930	2	0.012
Isolation	33.482	2	0.000
Support	33.390	2	0.000
Investment	23.318	2	0.000
Protection	12.112	2	0.002
Family relationships	11.501	2	0.003
Social relationships	41.047	2	0.000

Discussion

Demographic Information

Upon analysis of the findings, some demographic information provided points of interest to the researcher. The majority (n=252; 67.0%) of the respondents' officer spouses/partners were ranked as patrol officers and the largest percentage (n=123; 32.7%) were within their first five years of service. The largest percentage of officers, however, were aged 31-35 (n=102; 27.1%). As such, when examining these sets of information together, it appears as if many officers started their careers in their late 20's or early 30's. Due to this analysis, it might be inferred that this is at least a second career for many of the officers whose spouses were surveyed.

When examining the state of the respondents, there were no patterns to be noted as far as geographic region of the United States from which the most responses came. The highest rate of response (n=65; 17.3%) came from Minnesota, with California being second most in responses (n=54; 14.4%).This is likely due to two of the three sources of dissemination being located in these two states. However, Washington produced the third most responses (n=27; 7.2%), and Texas produced the fourth most responses (n=21; 5.6%). Pennsylvania produced the fifth largest group of respondents (n=15; 4.0%), and Florida produced the sixth largest group with 13 respondents (3.5%). These six groups produced 52% of the total responses, yet all were from different regions of the country. As such, this piece of information may serve to inform that online support groups are utilized rather equally throughout different areas of the country.

Stressors

The first stressor listed in the stressors section was phrased "believing that my spouse/partner views his or her job as more important than our relationship. The majority of respondents (n=190; 50.7%) reported that they did not view this as a source of stress at all. This finding contrasts greatly with Alexander and Walker's study (1996) that found that up to three

quarters of officers' wives believed that their spouses viewed their job as more important than their relationship or family.

Another stressor that produced noteworthy findings was the stressor statement "my spouse/partner's inability/unwillingness to express feelings". While the largest percentage of respondents (n=105; 27.9%) reported that that particular variable was not a source of stress at all, the rest of the categories' responses ranged within only five percent of the "not a source of stress at all" response. Of the respondents, 97 (25.8%) reported that this was a slight source of stress, while 86 respondents (22.9%) responded to each category as a moderate or great source of stress.

In the last part of the stressors section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the officer's job has added to the respondent's own level of stress, as well as the degree to which the respondent believes that the officer has been stressed at work in the past four weeks. Both questions produced equal majority responses of "moderately" (n=160; 42.6%). Though there was no association found between the two variables when they were cross-tabulated, these findings might support what Long and Voges (1987) found: that when an officer had high levels of stress, the spouse or partner of the officer had high levels of stress as well.

When demographic information was cross-tabulated with stressors using chi-square, an association was found between the law enforcement agency type and "feelings of isolation from people whose spouses/partners are not officers" (X^2= 11.972; DF=4; p=0.018).The majority of officers (n=244; 64.9%) were reported to work for a city department. These data seem to indicate that spouses/partners of officers who work for city departments (versus county, state, or federal) tend to feel more isolated than do those from other types of departments.

Coping Techniques

Pertaining to the scale scores of coping techniques, respondents reported using problem-focused coping the most of all the coping technique styles once data were recoded into categories

of “no”, “low”, and “high” amounts of use (mean=2.70; SD= 0.50). The coping styles used second and third most were also emotion-focused coping styles: focusing on the positive (mean=2.68; SD=.051 and seeking social support (mean=2.54; SD=0.58). While an official hypothesis was not made for the purposes of this study regarding the coping technique styles of the committed partners of law enforcement officers, these findings indicate the idea that officers and their spouses/partners approach coping similarly to one based on Evans et al.’s study (1993) in which officers were found to generally use problem-focused methods of coping. The current study, however, finds that contrary to their officer mates, the respondents tended to use focusing on the positive as a way of coping in an almost equal instance of coping to that of problem-focused coping, which may be a point of examination for future research.

When reporting on coping techniques that they utilized, an overwhelming majority of respondents (n=246; 69.5%) indicated that seeking professional help is not a coping technique that is used at all. This point is of interest because as research shows reported reluctance on the part of officers to receive mental health treatment (Miller, 1995), there perhaps exists a link between the officer’s own reluctance and that of his or her spouse/partner. As such, the stigma that tends to surround officers’ use of mental health services might trickle down from the officer to the family. Additionally, the largest percentages of respondents (129; 36.6% and 134; 38.4% respectively) reported that they only “somewhat” used talking to someone who could help them alleviate their stress and talking to someone about how they are feeling as a way to cope with stress.

When asked about exploring faith as a way to cope with stress, the largest percentage of respondents (n=94; 26.6%) reported that they used this method a great deal. However, the other response categories were nearly equal. 91 respondents (25.7%) equally marked “not used at all” and “used somewhat”, and 70 (19.8%) marked “used quite a bit”. When asked about the use of prayer as a coping technique, the largest percentage (n=106; 30.6%) also marked that using

prayer as a method of coping was used a great deal. However, in contrast to the use of exploring one's faith as a way to cope with stress, other responses were not as close in comparison (not used at all: n=75, 21.7%; used somewhat: n=86, 24.9%; used quite a bit: n=68, 19.7%). There was a statistically significant association between faith and prayer when the two were cross-tabulated (p=0.000). Despite the statistical association, respondents appear to view the two coping techniques as different from one another. Possible explanations for this are that 1) one does not necessarily need to have a particular faith to engage in prayer, or 2) respondents are not necessarily "exploring" their faith as the question was phrased because perhaps they are firm in their beliefs. Either of these theories might provide an explanation for the difference in responses between variables within the same categories (i.e.: extent to which each coping technique is used).

Additionally, seemingly linked to the idea of faith and prayer due to a statistically significant association (p=0.000 when analyzed with both faith and prayer), the largest percentage of respondents (n=134; 37.9%) marked that they used "looking for positive circumstances of [their] life amidst [their] stress" a great deal. While each of the three variables is part of a different scale, there appears to be strong associations among the three and may be a point of further future research or more in-depth data analysis.

Clinical Implications

While many clinical implications emerged from the current study, that of future research is most prominent. In the process of data analysis, the researcher identified differences between the current study's findings and that of existing research when it came to projected levels of stress of respondents. Though no recent studies have examined the stressors reported by the spouses/committed partners of law enforcement officers, several sources of stress have been

identified and were examined in the current study. The largest percentage of the group of respondents, however, reported that they did not view any of the stressors as a “great source of stress”. What is not accounted-for in the current study, however, is that there were trends among individual respondents that did not show up in the group statistics. As such, further qualitative research might be used to examine individual circumstances to gather more information behind the answers given. Additionally, further future research could be gathered if a longitudinal study were to be conducted using the same group of people over time to understand the patters of their stressors and coping techniques.

Based on the information gathered in this and future studies, clinical practice implications exist pertaining to the development of future interventions and programming to support officers and their families. Individual law enforcement departments might consider administering a needs assessment to the families of the officers to better understand how to format programs accordingly.

Finally, policy implications exist regarding the nature of policework as a profession. Though officers were not surveyed in the current study, their own perceptions of stressors and the coping techniques that they use might be useful to inform department policy surrounding shiftwork as well as to encourage a shift in mindset toward addressing mental health concerns of officers and their families.

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Appendix A1

Bethany:
As an administrative member of the Los Angeles Police Department wives' support group, I am agreeing to distribute your survey instrument to the members of our support group. This will be accomplished by sending a mass email to all the members including your cover letter inviting them to participate and explaining the project details and expectations. Additionally, within the cover letter, we will post a link to the Survey Monkey website that contains the actual survey. From this point, members may choose to participate by taking the survey or not, and will remain anonymous to you and other group members.

We have approximately 65 active members in our group to date. Each will have the opportunity to receive the email.

Sincerely,
Alice Sturdy, Director of Events
LAPD Wives

Appendix A2

Hi Bethany,

Of course I'm still interested! Unfortunately there was nothing attached. ☺ Just send it to me along with how you would like me to present it and I'll be happy to post it!

Rose Winick
Founder, President and CEO
Wives Behind the Badge
P.O. Box 5472
Orange, CA 92863
(714) 744-9282 (WBTB)
rose@wivesbehindthebadge.org

Hi, Rose:

I had emailed you about a month ago regarding a research study I am going to conduct surrounding the stressors and coping techniques of officers' spouses. I am attaching a copy of it so that you can see the instrument itself to gauge if you're still interested in posting it for me on your website. (It's in a mostly finalized state, but may require a few changes in the months to come, in which case I will forward those to you.)
Let me know what you think.

Thanks, again!
-Bethany

Appendix A3

Dear Committee Members;
1) agreement to participate,
As the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Law Enforcement Family Support Network, I authorize our agency to support the distribution of Bethany Hanson's survey.
2) how
participation will take place
We agree to do the following:
support distribution of her survey via our network of law enforcement contacts
3) the role that each administrator
(in this case you) will play in the distribution of the instrument, etc.
I will make contact with the following groups to make them aware of the survey and it's open dates.
State Patrol Association (meeting attendance in Jan)
MPPOA - press release in state wide journal
Notification via email with a follow up phone call;
Saint Paul Police Department (innter office email)
Latino Officers Assn
Women in Police
Faternal Order of Police LOdge 1
Hennepin Co. Chief's ASSn
Ramsey County Chief's Assn
St. Anthony Park PD
Fridley PD
St. Cloud PD
Stillwater PD

LEFSN will also update their website to have this survey opportunity pop up for any interested users.
We will suggest that other orgs. do the same.
Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Sue

Sue Dion
LEFSN Coordinator
sue@lawenforcementfamilysupport.org
651.695.1129
www.lawenforcementfamilysupport.org

Appendix B1

Dear spouse or partner of a law enforcement officer:

You are being invited to participate in a nationwide study about the stressors you face and coping techniques you use in response to the stress of your spouse or partner's job in law enforcement. The study is being conducted by the wife of an officer in Minnesota through St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. Results obtained in this study will be used to inform future therapeutic interventions or programming for the families of officers.

Participation includes taking an anonymous survey online, available until March 15, 2010. Please participate by following the following link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=p7ah0n7H4EhJQvqD_2bDAJxg_3d_3d

If you have any questions prior to participation, please contact [group administrators] at [administrator email addresses] or Bethany Hanson at bjrobinson@stthomas.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix B2 (LEFSN magazine/newsletter advertisement)

RECRUITING SPOUSES AND PARTNERS OF OFFICERS

Spouses and partners of law enforcement officers will be invited to participate in a nationwide survey about the stressors they face and coping techniques they use in response to the stress of their spouse or partner's job in law enforcement. The study will be conducted by the wife of a Twin Cities officer and graduate student supervised by a faculty member through St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. Results obtained in this study will be used to inform future therapeutic interventions or programming for the families of officers. Please visit the Law Enforcement Family Support Network website for more details about the upcoming study at www.**lawenforcementfamilysupport**.org.

Appendix B3

CONSENT FORM
ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

The Experience of Spouses/Partners of Law Enforcement Officers as it Pertains to the Stress of their Spouse/Partner's Job

Dear partner or spouse of a law enforcement officer:

My name is Bethany Hanson and I am a graduate student at the School of Social Work at St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. As the wife of a police officer, I have experienced that there are unique stressors surrounding the job of officers. These stressors often affect family members, and for this reason I am conducting a study on the stressors and coping techniques of the spouses or partners or law enforcement officers as they pertain to the job of their spouses/partners.

The purpose of this study, in addition to examining stressors and coping techniques of officers' spouses or partners, aims to gain an understanding to inform for future therapeutic interventions or programming surrounding officers and their families.

You are being invited to participate based on your involvement with the Los Angeles Police Department Spouse Support Group/ Wives Behind the Badge.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to take a 73-item survey that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

There are no known risks involved with this study, but benefits to the participant may include a better understanding of self and stressors, as well as ideas for coping techniques when facing stress. Indirect benefits may include future therapeutic interventions or programs to benefit law enforcement marriages or families of law enforcement officers.

Participation in this study will not result in compensation of any kind.

All study participants will remain anonymous. This anonymity will be achieved by posting the survey online and not requiring name or email address to enter the survey. In the survey there are questions to obtain demographic information for the purpose of seeing how certain demographic variables are associated with stress. Information gathered, however, will be used for only the purpose of collecting data and not for identification purposes.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your decision whether or not to be a participation in this study will not affect any current or future relations with the Los Angeles Police Department Support Group/Wives Behind the Badge or St. Catherine University /University of St. Thomas.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the attached survey by March 15, 2010. The estimated length of time required to complete the survey is about 10-15 minutes, and by taking this survey, you are acknowledging that you consent to use of the information you provide for the purposes of this study as previously outlined.

My name is Bethany Hanson. You may contact me with any questions that you might have via email at bjrobinson@stthomas.edu or by telephone at 763-300-1719. Additionally, you may contact my research advisor, Dr. Carol Kuechler, at cfkuechler@stkate.edu or at 651-690-6719. You may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board at 651-690-7739.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this project.
-Bethany Hanson

Appendix C

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1) I am the spouse or committed partner of a law enforcement officer. [ ] yes [ ]no

2) I am not currently, nor have I ever been, a law enforcement officer. [ ] yes [ ] no

3) My gender is [ ] male [ ]female.

4) The gender of my law enforcement officer spouse/ partner is [ ] male [ ] female.

5) The geographic location of the agency where my spouse/partner works is:

   [ ] rural [ ] suburban [ ] urban [ ]other (please specify)

   ____

6) The type of agency for which my law enforcement officer spouse/partner works:

   [ ] city [ ] county [ ] state [ ] federal [ ] other (please specify)

   ____

7) The rank of my spouse/partner within the law enforcement agency is:

   [ ] patrol officer/ deputy [ ] sergeant [ ]inspector/detective [ ]administration

8) The total length of service of my spouse/partner in the law enforcement profession is/was:

   [ ] 0- 5 years [ ] 6-10 years [ ] 11-15 years [ ] 16-20 years [ ] 20+ years [ ]retired

9) The state in which I reside is: ___________________________.

STRESSORS

10) Using the following scale, please indicate to what degree you view the following list as a source of your own stress.

[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
Not a source of stress at all	a slight source of stress	a moderate source of stress	a great source of stress

a) Believing that my spouse/partner views his or her job as more important than our relationship

[1] [2] [3] [4]

b) Lapses in communication between my spouse/partner and myself

[1] [2] [3] [4]

c) Feeling emotionally distant from my spouse/partner

[1] [2] [3] [4]

d) Authoritarian attitudes that my spouse/partner brings home from the job

[1] [2] [3] [4]

e) My spouse/partner's cynicism

[1] [2] [3] [4]

f) My spouse/partner's inability/unwillingness to express feelings

[1] [2] [3] [4]

g) Fearing for the safety of my spouse/partner while they are at work

[1] [2] [3] [4]

h) My spouse/partner's high expectations of me and/or our children

[1] [2] [3] [4]

i) Knowing there is a gun in our home

[1] [2] [3] [4]

j) My spouse/partner's own stress level

[1] [2] [3] [4]

k) Feelings of isolation from others whose spouses/partners are not officers

[1] [2] [3] [4]

l) Lack of a support network

[1] [2] [3] [4]

m) Feeling as if my spouse/partner no longer invests in our relationship

[1] [2] [3] [4]

n) Feeling as if my spouse/partner is over-protective of our family

[1] [2] [3] [4]

o) Other (please identify) __________________________________

[1] [2] [3] [4]

11) In your opinion, to what extent has your spouse/partner's job added to your own level of stress?

[1] [2] [3] [4]

Not at all Slightly Moderately Greatly

12) In your opinion, to what degree do you believe your officer spouse/partner has been stressed at work in the past 4 weeks?

[1] [2] [3] [4]

Not at all Slightly Moderately Greatly

13) In your opinion, to what extent has your officer spouse/partner's level of stress adversely affected family relationships?

[1] [2] [3] [4]

Not at all Slightly Moderately Greatly

14) In your opinion, to what extent has your officer spouse/partner's level of stress adversely affected social relationships?

[1] [2] [3] [4]

Not at all Slightly Moderately Greatly

<u>COPING TECHNIQUES-</u> Revised Ways of Coping (Revised)

Using the following scale, please indicate to what extent you use do the following techniques to cope with the stress you face *as a result of your spouse/partner's job*:

[1] [2] [3] [4]

Not Used Used Somewhat Used Quite a Bit Used a great deal

____ 15) Concentrate on what I have to do next to alleviate my stress.

____ 16) Try to analyze the source(s) of my stress in order to better understand it (them).

____ 17) Turn to work or substitute activity to take my mind off of my stress.

____ 18) Feel that time will make a difference in lessening my stress- the only thing to do is wait.

____ 19) Try to do something even if I don't think it will help my stress- at least I am doing something.

____ 20) Criticize or lecture myself.

____ 21) Try not to "burn bridges" between myself and others so that I still have open communication despite my stress.

____ 22) Hope that a miracle will happen to alleviate my stress.

____ 23) Acknowledge that sometimes I just have bad luck and that is why I feel stress.

____ 24) Continue with life as if I do not feel stress.

____ 25) Try to keep my feelings about my stress to myself.

____ 26) Try to look for positive circumstances of my life amidst my stress.

____ 27) Sleep more than usual.

____ 28) Express anger to my officer spouse/partner because their profession contributed to my stress.

____ 29) Accept sympathy and understanding from others about my stress.

____ 30) Tell myself things that make me feel better.

____ 31) Participate in activities that allow me to be creative.

____ 32) Try to forget about my stress completely.

____ 33) Seek professional help.

____ 34) Wait and assess stressful situations before taking any action in response.

____ 35) Apologize or make amends if I hurt others as a response to my stress.

____ 36) Make a plan of action and follow it to alleviate my stress.

____ 37) Express my feelings of stress somehow, through any venue.

____ 38) Realize that I bring my own stress upon myself.

____ 39) Remind myself that experiences such as these help me grow into a better person.

____ 40) Talk to someone who can help me alleviate my stress.

____ 41) Take a vacation or a rest to escape my stress temporarily.

____ 42) Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, or taking medication.

____ 43) Take chances or engage in risky activities/behavior.

____ 44) Try not to act impulsively according to my first hunches.

____ 45) Explore my faith.

____ 46) Maintain pride and privacy by keeping my stress to myself.

____ 47) Change something in my life so things will turn out better.

____ 48) Avoid being with others.

____ 49) Do not let problems and stress get to me by not thinking about them.

____ 50) Ask a friend or relative whom I respect for advice.

____ 51) Keep others from knowing how bad things are for me at the time of my stress.

____ 52) Make light of stressful circumstances, refusing to get too serious about them.

____ 53) Talk to someone about how I am feeling.

____ 54) Stand my ground when fighting for aspects of life that I want.

____ 55) Take my stress out on other people.

____ 56) Draw on past experiences in which I experienced similar stress.

____ 57) Increase efforts toward alleviating stressful situations in my life.

____ 58) Refuse to acknowledge stress that is happening or has happened.

____ 59) Promise myself that things are going to be different in the future.

____ 60) Think of different solutions to alleviate my stress.

____ 61) Accept my stress, believing that nothing can be done to alleviate it.

____ 62) Try to keep my feelings from interfering too much with other aspects of my life.

____ 63) Wish that I could change my life.

____ 64) Change something about myself when I feel stressed.

____ 65) Daydream or imagine a better time or place than the one that I am in when I feel stressed.

____ 66) Wish that the stress would change or be gone from my life.

____ 67) Fantasize about how life might turn out after my stress is lessened.

____ 68) Engage in prayer.

____ 69) Prepare myself for the worst regarding my stress.

____ 70) Think about how someone who I admire would handle my stress and use that as a model.

____ 71) Try to empathize with my spouse/partner's own stress

____ 72) Remind myself that my stress could be worse.

____ 73) Engage in exercise.

Appendix D

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO
BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

Dear Colleague:
The Ways of Coping that was revised in 1985 is in the public domain and you do not need
special permission to use it. In 1988 the Consulting Psychologists Press made minor modifications to a few items. Their version is copyrighted, and has since been purchased by
Mind Garden. If you wish to use their version and/or their scoring service, you’ll need permission from Mind Garden. You can reach them at http://www.mindgarden.com/ or Mind
Garden, Inc., 1690 Woodside Road, Suite 202, Redwood City, CA 94061, USA, (650-261-3500).
You might also want the manual for the Ways of Coping. It is available through the same publisher.
Sincerely,
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Revised 1/85

WAYS OF COPING (Revised)*

Background

The Ways of Coping (Revised) is a 66-item questionnaire containing a wide range of thoughts
and acts that people use to deal with the internal and/or external demands of specific stressful
encounters. Usually the encounter is described by the subject in an interview or in a brief written
description saying who was involved, where it took place and what happened. Sometimes a
particular encounter, such as a medical treatment or an academic examination, is selected by the
investigator as the focus of the questionnaire.

Many investigators have asked if the Ways of Coping can be used to assess coping styles or
traits. The measure is not designed for this purpose; it is designed as a process measure. It is
possible though to look for consistency (style) across occasions by administering the measure
repeatedly and then doing intraindividual analyses. Each administration, however, is focused on
coping processes in a particular stressful encounter and not on coping styles or traits.

The revised Ways of Coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) differs from the original Ways of
Coping Checklist (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) in several ways. The response format in the
original version was Yes/No; on the revised version the subject responds on a 4-point Likert
scale (0 = does not apply and/or not used; 3 = used a great deal). Redundant and unclear items
were deleted or reworded, and several items, such as prayer, were added.

Below we represent (a) two sets of scales derived from factor analysis of separate data sets and
(b) a copy of the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (see p. 9). The first set of scales is from a study
of a wide range of stressful encounters reported by a community sample of middle-aged married
couples (Folkman et al., 1986), and the second is from a study of the ways students coped with a
college examination (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). In general we suggest that investigators use the

scales from the study of middle-aged married couples, because the factor analysis was based on a
broader sampling of subjects and stressful encounters. However, for investigations that involve
college examinations or college students, the scales from the study of examination stress may be
more appropriate.

* SEE PAGE 9 FOR COMPLETE WAYS OF COPING QUESTIONNAIRE.

WAYS OF COPING SCALES

SET #1 (Community Sample)

From: Folkman, S., Lazarus, R. S., Dunkel-Schetter, C., DeLongis, A., & Gruen, R. (1986). The
dynamics of a stressful encounter: Cognitive appraisal, coping and encounter outcomes.
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50, 992-1003.

Seventy-five married couples were interviewed in their homes once a month for five months.
Husbands and wives were interviewed separately by different interviewers. Subjects were asked
to describe the most stressful encounter they had experienced in the previous week and then fill
out the revised Ways of Coping. The instructions were: “Please read each item below and
indicate, by circling the appropriate category, to what extent you used it in the situation you have
just described.

Observations from the five interviews were pooled. The Ways of Coping items were analyzed

using alpha and principal factoring with oblique rotation. Oblique rotation was chosen because,
from a theoretical perspective, we expect people to chose from a vast array of coping strategies
rather than to use one set of strategies to the exclusion of others. Past research on coping supports
this model (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Three separate factor analyses were completed using
different strategies for combining person-occasions, or observations. First, analyses were
conducted on the entire 750 observations, 5 from each 150 subjects, where each of the five
concerned a different stressful encounter. Second, 150 stressful encounters (one per subject) were
randomly selected from the 750, equally representing each of the 5 occasions. An additional
sample of 150 stressful encounters was also randomly selected from the 750 total encounters
without replacement of the prior 150 encounters, again, equally representing each of the five
occasions.

The three factor analyses yielded very similar factor patterns. Thirty-seven items consistently
loaded high on the same factor across all 3 analyses. Twenty-two items loaded on the same factor
fairly consistently; 9 of these were eliminated on the basis of marginal factor loadings or lack of
conceptual coherence with their scale. Seven items did not consistently load on any factor and
were therefore eliminated. Because multiple factorings had been conducted, we had several
estimates of each item's factor loading. A final principle factor analysis, calling for eight factors,
was therefore performed on the 750 observations with the final 50 items in order to get an
estimate of each item's factor loading.

The coping scales derived from the factor analytic procedures described above, their alphas, and
factor loadings for the items are shown in Table 1. The eight scales accounted for 46.2% of the
variance.

4

Table 1

Empirically constructed Scales from the WAYS OF COPING (Revised)
(Community Sample)

To score the scales, sum ratings for each scale. Factor
Loading

Scale 1: Confrontive coping (alpha = .70)

46. Stood my ground and fought for what I wanted. .70

7. Tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind. .62
17. I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem .61
28. I let my feelings out somehow. .58
34. Took a big chance or did something very risky. .32
6. I did something which I didn't think would work, but at least
I was doing something .30
Scale 2: Distancing (alpha = .61)
44. Made light of the situation; refused to get too serious about it. .55
13. Went on as if nothing had happened. .54
41. Didn't let it get to me; refused to think too much about it. .50
21. Tried to forget the whole thing. .49
15. Looked for the silver lining, so to speak; tried to look on the
bright side of things. .34
12. Went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck. .25
Scale 3: Self-controlling (alpha = .70)
14. I tried to keep my feelings to myself. .55
43. Kept others from knowing how bad things were. .46
10. Tried not to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat. .40
35. I tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch. .40
54. I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much. .37
63. I thought about how a person I admire would handle this situation and
used that as a model. .37
64. I tried to see things from the other person's point of view. .28
Scale 4: Seeking social support (alpha = .76)
8. Talked to someone to find out more about the situation. .73
31. Talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem. .68
42. I asked a relative or friend I respected for advice. .58
45. Talked to someone about how I was feeling. .57
18. Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone. .56
22. I got professional help. .45
5
Scale 5: Accepting responsibility (alpha = .66)
9. Criticized or lectured myself. .71
29. Realized I brought the problem on myself. .68
51. I made a promise to myself that things would be different next time. .49
25. I apologized or did something to make up. .39
Scale 6: Escape-Avoidance (alpha = .72)
58. Wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with. .66
11. Hoped a miracle would happen. .55
59. Had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out. .54
33. Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using
drugs or medication, etc. .49
40. Avoided being with people in general. .46
50. Refused to believe that it had happened. .42
47. Took it out on other people. .40
16. Slept more than usual. .36
Scale 7: Planful problem-solving (alpha = .68)

49. I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work. .71
26. I made a plan of action and followed it. .61
1. Just concentrated on what I had to do next – the next step. .45
39. Changed something so things would turn out all right. .44
48. Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before. .40
52. Came up wit a couple of different solutions to the problem. .38
Scale 8: Positive reappraisal (alpha = .79)
23. Changed or grew as a person in a good way. .79
30. I came out of the experience better than when I went in. .67
36. Found new faith. .64
38. Rediscovered what is important in life. .64
60. I prayed. .56
56. I changed something about myself. .55
20. I was inspired to do something creative. .43
The intercorrelations among the coping scales averaged over 5 occasions are shown in
Table 2.
6

Table 2

Eight Coping Scales:
Intercorrelations Averaged Over Five Occasions

Scale 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1. Confrontive coping .01 .36 .27 .26 .27 .28 .26
2. Distancing .36 -.04 .27 .32 .09 .13
3. Self-controlling .24 .30 .36 .37 .39
4. Seeking social support .09 .23 .30 .32
5. Accepting responsibility .39 .13 .18
6. Escape-Avoidance .10 .23
7. Planful problem-solving .39
8. Positive reappraisal ---
7

WAYS OF COPING SCALES

SET #2 (Student Sample)

From: Folkman, S. & Lazarus, R. S. (1985). If it changes it must be a process: Study of
emotion
and coping during three stages of a college examination. Journal of Personality and
Social
Psychology, 48, 150-170.

Data were gathered from 108 undergraduates who completed the Ways of Coping
(Folkman &
Lazarus, 1985) three times as part of a study of examination stress. Observations from the
three
occasions were pooled. Nine items were eliminated from analysis because they showed
high
skewness and restricted variance. The remaining 57 items were submitted to common
factor
analysis with oblique rotation. A six factor solution yielded the most conceptually
interpretable

set of factors. Fifteen items that did not load clearly on any one factor were deleted. One of the
six factors contained three distinguishable groups of items. The three groups were rationally
assigned to three factors to provide greater theoretical clarity. The procedure produced eight
scales, including one problem-focused and six emotion focused scales, and an eighth scale
containing both problem and emotion focused items. The scales and the factor loadings for the
five empirically constructed scales, and alphas for all eight scales, are shown in Table 3. The
intercorrelations among the scales averaged over three occasions are shown in Table 4.

Table 3

Empirically and Rationally Constructed Scales from the WAYS OF COPING (Revised)*
(Student Sample)

Empirically Constructed Scales

To score the scales, sum ratings for each scale. Factor
Loading

Scale 1: Problem-focused coping (alpha = .88)
62. I go over in my mind what I will say or do. .72
46. Stand my ground and fight for what I want. .62
49. I know what has to be done, so I am doubling my efforts to make things work. .67
52. Come up with a couple of different solutions to the problem. .67
35. I try not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch. .66
26. I'm making a plan of action and following it. .64
64. I try to see things from the other person's point of view. .61
54. I try to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much. .60
39. Change something so things will turn out all right. .59
2. I try to analyze the problem in order to understand it better. .54
48. Draw on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before. .52

* NOTE: IN THIS STUDY ITEMS WERE DELIBERATELY PUT IN THE PRESENT TENSE.

8

Scale 2: Wishful thinking (alpha = .86)
55. Wish that I can change what is happening or how I feel. .78
58. Wish that the situation would go away or somehow be over with. .70
57. I daydream or imagine a better time or place than the one I am in. .67
59. Have fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out. .65
11. Hope a miracle will happen. .61

Scale 3: Detachment (alpha = .74)
21. Try to forget the whole thing. .61
13. Go on as if nothing is happening. .58
24. I'm waiting to see what will happen before doing anything. .54
12. Go along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck. .52
4. I feel that time will make a difference – the only thing to do is to wait. .51
53. Accept it, since nothing can be done. .51

Scale 4: Seeking social support (alpha = .82)

45. Talk to someone about how I'm feeling. .71
18. Accept sympathy and understanding from someone. .67
28. I let my feelings out somehow. .62
31. Talk to someone who can do something concrete about the problem. .58
8. Talk to someone to find out more about the situation. .54
42. Ask a relative or friend I respect for advice. .53
60. I pray. .49
Scale 5: Focusing on the positive (alpha = .70)
23. I'm changing or growing as a person in a good way. .72
38. Rediscover what is important in life. .59
20. I am inspired to do something creative. .48
15. Look for the silver lining, so to speak; try to look on the bright side of things. .47
9
Rationally Created Scales
Scale 6: Self blame (alpha = .76)
9. Criticize or lecture myself.
29. Realize I brought the problem on myself.
51. Make a promise to myself that things will be different next time.
Scale 7: Tension reduction (alpha = .59)
32. Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a vacation.
33. Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc.
66. I jog or exercise.
Scale 8: Keep to self (alpha = .65)
14. I try to keep my feelings to myself.
40. Avoid being with people in general.
43. Keep others from knowing how bad things are.

Table 4

Eight Coping Scales:
Intercorrelations Averaged Over Three Occasions
Scale 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1. Problem focused coping .41 .20 .64 .58 .46 .38 .31
2. Wishful thinking .51 .42 .29 .63 .50 .54
3. Distancing .24 .13 .34 .34 .41
4. Seeking social support .54 .39 .42 .18
5. Emphasizing the positive .42 .36 .23
6. Self blame .31 .53
7. Tension reduction .37
8. Self isolation ---
10

WAYS OF COPING (Revised)

Please read each item below and indicate, by using the following rating scale, to what extent you
used it in the situation you have just described.

Not Used Used Used
Used Somewhat Quite A Bit A great deal
0 1 2 3

_____ 1. Just concentrated on what I had to do next – the next step.
_____ 2. I tried to analyze the problem in order to understand it better.
_____ 3. Turned to work or substitute activity to take my mind off things.
_____ 4. I felt that time would make a difference – the only thing to do was to wait.
_____ 5. Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation.
_____ 6. I did something which I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something.
_____ 7. Tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind.
_____ 8. Talked to someone to find out more about the situation.
_____ 9. Criticized or lectured myself.
_____ 10. Tried not to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat.
_____ 11. Hoped a miracle would happen.
_____ 12. Went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck.
_____ 13. Went on as if nothing had happened.
_____ 14. I tried to keep my feelings to myself.
_____ 15. Looked for the silver lining, so to speak; tried to look on the bright side of things.
_____ 16. Slept more than usual.
_____ 17. I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem.
_____ 18. Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.
11
Not Used Used Used
Used Somewhat Quite A Bit A great deal
0 1 2 3
_____ 19. I told myself things that helped me to feel better.
_____ 20. I was inspired to do something creative.
_____ 21. Tried to forget the whole thing.
_____ 22. I got professional help.
_____ 23. Changed or grew as a person in a good way.
_____ 24. I waited to see what would happen before doing anything.
_____ 25. I apologized or did something to make up.
_____ 26. I made a plan of action and followed it.
_____ 27. I accepted the next best thing to what I wanted.
_____ 28. I let my feelings out somehow.
_____ 29. Realized I brought the problem on myself.
_____ 30. I came out of the experience better than when I went in.
_____ 31. Talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.
_____ 32. Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a vacation.
_____ 33. Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc.
_____ 34. Took a big chance or did something very risky.
_____ 35. I tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.
_____ 36. Found new faith.
_____ 37. Maintained my pride and kept a stiff upper lip.
_____ 38. Rediscovered what is important in life.
12
Not Used Used Used

Used Somewhat Quite A Bit A great deal
0 1 2 3
_____ 39. Changed something so things would turn out all right.
_____ 40. Avoided being with people in general.
_____ 41. Didn't let it get to me; refused to think too much about it.
_____ 42. I asked a relative or friend I respected for advice.
_____ 43. Kept others from knowing how bad things were.
_____ 44. Made light of the situation; refused to get too serious about it.
_____ 45. Talked to someone about how I was feeling.
_____ 46. Stood my ground and fought for what I wanted.
_____ 47. Took it out on other people.
_____ 48. Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before.
_____ 49. I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work.
_____ 50. Refused to believe that it had happened.
_____ 51. I made a promise to myself that things would be different next time.
_____ 52. Came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.
_____ 53. Accepted it, since nothing could be done.
_____ 54. I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much.
_____ 55. Wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt.
_____ 56. I changed something about myself.
_____ 57. I daydreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in.
_____ 58. Wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with.
_____ 59. Had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.
13
Not Used Used Used
Used Somewhat Quite A Bit A great deal
0 1 2 3
_____ 60. I prayed.
_____ 61. I prepared myself for the worst.
_____ 62. I went over in my mind what I would say or do.
_____ 63. I thought about how a person I admire would handle this situation and used that
as a model.
_____ 64. I tried to see things from the other person's point of view.
_____ 65. I reminded myself how much worse things could be.
_____ 66. I jogged or exercised.

Appendix E

Revised Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) items.
Revised items for current study's survey.
*Sub-scale in Revised Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985).

______1. Just concentrated on what I had to do next – the next step.
1. Concentrate on what I have to do next to alleviate my stress.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

______ 2. I tried to analyze the problem in order to understand it better.
2. Try to analyze the source(s) of my stress in order to better understand it (them).
*Problem-focused coping

______ 3. Turned to work or substitute activity to take my mind off things.
3. Turn to work or substitute activity to take my mind off my stress.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

______ 4. I felt that time would make a difference – the only thing to do was to wait.
4. Feel that time will make a difference in lessening my stress- the only thing to do is wait.
* Detachment (Emotion-Focused)

______ 5. Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation.
OMITTED
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

______ 6. I did something which I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something.
5. Try to do something even if I don't think it will help my stress-at least I am doing something.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

______ 7. Tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind.
OMITTED
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

______ 8. Talked to someone to find out more about the situation.
OMITTED
* Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused)

______ 9. Criticized or lectured myself.
6. Criticize or lecture myself.
*Self-Blame (Emotion-Focused)

______ 10. Tried not to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat.
7. Try not to "burn bridges" between myself and others so that I still have open communication despite my stress.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

______ 11. Hoped a miracle would happen.
8. Hope that a miracle will happen to alleviate my stress.
* Wishful Thinking (Emotion-Focused)

______ 12. Went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck.
9. Acknowledge that sometimes I just have bad luck and that is why I feel stress.
* Detachment (Emotion-Focused)

______ 13. Went on as if nothing had happened.
10. Continue on with life as if I do not feel stress.
* Detachment (Emotion-Focused)

______ 14. I tried to keep my feelings to myself.
11. Try to keep my feelings about my stress to myself.
*Keep to Self (Emotion-Focused)

______ 15. Looked for the silver lining, so to speak; tried to look on the bright side of things.
12. Try to look for positive circumstances of my life amidst my stress.
* Focusing on the Positive (Emotion-Focused)

______ 16. Slept more than usual.

13. Sleep more than usual.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 17. I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem.
14. Express anger to my officer spouse/partner because their profession contributed to my stress.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 18. Accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.
15. Accept sympathy and understanding from others about my stress.
* Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 19. I told myself things that helped me to feel better.
16. Tell myself things that make me feel better.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 20. I was inspired to do something creative.
17. Participate in activities that allow me to be creative.
* Focusing on the Positive (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 21. Tried to forget the whole thing.
18. Try to forget about my stress completely.
*Detachment (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 22. I got professional help.
19. **Seek professional help.**
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 23. Changed or grew as a person in a good way.
OMITTED
*Focusing on the Positive (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 24. I waited to see what would happen before doing anything.
20. Wait and assess stressful situations before taking any action in response.
* Detachment (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 25. I apologized or did something to make up.
21. Apologize or make amends if I hurt others as a response to my stress.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS
_____ 26. I made a plan of action and followed it.
22. Make a plan of action and follow it to alleviate my stress.
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 27. I accepted the next best thing to what I wanted.
OMITTED
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 28. I let my feelings out somehow.
23. Express my feelings of stress somehow, through any venue.
* Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 29. Realized I brought the problem on myself.
24. Realize that I bring my own stress upon myself.
* Self-Blame (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 30. I came out of the experience better than when I went in.
25. Remind myself that experiences such as these help me grow into a better person.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 31. Talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.
26. Talk to someone who can help me alleviate my stress.
* Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 32. Got away from it for a while; tried to rest or take a vacation.
27. Take a vacation or a rest to escape my stress temporarily.
*Tension Reduction (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 33. Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or

medication, etc.

28. Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, or taking medication.
* Tension Reduction (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 34. Took a big chance or did something very risky.
29. Take chances or engage in risky activities/behavior.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 35. I tried not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch.
30. Try not to act impulsively according to my first hunches.
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 36. Found new faith.
31. Explore my faith.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 37. Maintained my pride and kept a stiff upper lip.
32. Maintain pride and privacy by keeping my stress to myself.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 38. Rediscovered what is important in life.
OMITTED
* Focusing on the Positive (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 39. Changed something so things would turn out all right.
33. Change something in my life so things will turn out better.
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 40. Avoided being with people in general.
34. Avoid being with others.
*Keep to Self (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 41. Didn't let it get to me; refused to think too much about it.
35. Do not let problems and stress get to me by not thinking about them.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 42. I asked a relative or friend I respected for advice.
36. Ask a friend or relative whom I respect for advice.
* Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 43. Kept others from knowing how bad things were.
37. **Keep others from knowing how bad things are for me at the time of my stress.**
* Keep to Self (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 44. Made light of the situation; refused to get too serious about it.
38. Make light of stressful circumstances, refusing to get too serious about them.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 45. Talked to someone about how I was feeling.
39. Talk to someone about how I am feeling.
*Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 46. Stood my ground and fought for what I wanted.
40. Stand my ground when fighting for aspects of life that I want.
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 47. Took it out on other people.
41. **Take my stress out on other people**.
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 48. Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before.
42. Draw on past experiences in which I experienced similar stress.
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 49. I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work.
43. Increase efforts toward alleviating stressful situations in my life.
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 50. Refused to believe that it had happened.

44. **Refuse to acknowledge stress that is happening or has happened.**
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 51. I made a promise to myself that things would be different next time.
45. **Promise myself that things are going to be different in the future.**
* Self-Blame (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 52. Came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.
46. **Think of different solutions to alleviate my stress.**
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 53. Accepted it, since nothing could be done.
47. **Accept my stress, believing that nothing can be done to alleviate it.**
* Detachment (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 54. I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much.
48. **Try to keep my feelings from interfering too much with other aspects of my life.**
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 55. Wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt.
49. **Wish I could change things in my life.**
*Wishful Thinking (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 56. I changed something about myself.
50. **Change something about myself when I feel stressed.**
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 57. I daydreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in.
51. **Daydream of imagine a better time or place than the one that I am in when I feel stressed.**
* Wishful Thinking (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 58. Wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with.
52. **Wish that that the stress would change or be gone from my life.**
*Wishful Thinking (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 59. Had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.
53. **Fantasize about how life might turn out after my stress is lessened.**
* Wishful Thinking (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 60. I prayed.
54. **Engage in prayer.**
* Seeking Social Support (Emotion-Focused)

_____ 61. I prepared myself for the worst.
55. **Prepare myself for the worst regarding my stress.**
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 62. I went over in my mind what I would say or do.
OMITTED
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 63. I thought about how a person I admire would handle this situation and used that as a model.
56. **Think about how a person who I admire would handle my stress and use that as a model.**
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 64. I tried to see things from the other person's point of view.
57. **Try to empathize with my spouse/partner's own stress.**
*Problem-focused coping

_____ 65. I reminded myself how much worse things could be.
58. **Remind myself that my stress could be worse.**
* ITEM ELIMINATED FROM ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS

_____ 66. I jogged or exercised.

59. **Engage in exercise.**
* Tension Reduction (Emotion-Focused)

Appendix F

Appendix G

State of Residence

State	Number/%
Minnesota	65 (17.3%)
California	54 (14.4%)
Washington	27 (7.2%)
Texas	21 (5.6%)
Pennsylvania	15 (4.0%)
Florida	13 (3.5%)
North Carolina	12 (3.2%)
Illinois	11 (2.9%)
Georgia	10 (2.7%)
Indiana	9 (2.4%)
Michigan	9 (2.4%)
New York	8 (2.1%)
Alabama	8 (2.1%)
New Mexico	8 (2.1%)
Missouri	8 (2.1%)
Ohio	7 (1.9%)
Virginia	7 (1.9%)
Wisconsin	5 (1.3%)
Arizona	5 (1.3%)
Colorado	5 (1.3%)
Arkansas	5 (1.3%)
New Jersey	5 (1.3%)
Louisiana	5 (1.3%)
Tennessee	5 (1.3%)
Oregon	4 (1.1%)
Oklahoma	4 (1.1%)
Idaho	3 (0.8%)
Connecticut	3 (0.8%)
Kentucky	3 (0.8%)
West Virginia	3 (0.8%)
Kansas	3 (0.8%)
Massachusetts	3 (0.8%)
Wyoming	2 (0.5%)
Utah	2 (0.5%)
Alaska	2 (0.5%)
Rhode Island	2 (0.5%)
Washington, D.C.	2 (0.5%)
Iowa	1 (0.2%)
South Dakota	1 (0.2%)
Maine	1(0.2%)
Nevada	1 (0.2%)
Delaware	1 (0.2%)
South Carolina	1 (0.2%)
Mississippi	1 (0.2%)
Other	1 (0.2%)
Manitoba, Canada	1 (0.2%)
Ontario, Canada	1 (0.2%)
Montana	1 (0.2%)
Maryland	1 (0.2%)
Leeds, Yorkshire, England	1 (0.2%)
Total:	376 (100%)