Police Wellbeing During Times of COVID-19: The RCMP

Submitted to the National Police Federation

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August 5, 2021

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Putting this study into context

The COVID-19 pandemic is an on-going health crisis which is having a dramatic impact on how people in Canada and around the world live their lives. Daily, the numbers are rising of people infected with, and killed by, the novel coronavirus. In response to the rapid spread of the virus, provincial and federal governments have enacted a number of 'physical distancing' measures, including closures of publicly funded schools and all non-essential businesses. This has resulted in unprecedented work/life situations for thousands of Canadians. Police, as an essential frontline service, face several unique challenges during this pandemic. They must continue their work on the frontline and risk exposure for themselves and their family to the novel coronavirus. They must balance the requirements of a stressful job (demands which have themselves changed or are unclear because of the pandemic) with the needs of their children (who are now at home), their partner (who may now be unemployed or working from home) and worries about their elderly family members.

To best support their members, the National Police Federation (NPF) elected to disseminate the "Employee Wellbeing in Times of COVID" survey to RCMP officers across Canada. This survey has been answered by 22,000 Canadian employees working in a multitude of sectors across Canada and more responses are expected in the next several months.

This report presents the key findings from a survey of RCMP officers that was done in the midst of the second wave of the pandemic (October to December, 2020). The main goal of this study was to provide objective data on how RCMP officers are coping with work, family, and life during the pandemic. The report provides data that speaks to the following two critical questions: (1) "How are RCMP officers faring in times of COVID-19?", and (2) "How does the officer's gender and the presence of children in the home impact key findings regarding employee wellbeing?" The NPF can use the data collected from their participation to gain a better understanding of how changes in work and family demands brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted officer wellbeing. These data can also be used in future negotiations with key stakeholders regarding the strategies that need to be put in place to deal with issues associated with officer wellbeing.

Background

Research has shown that the demands of caregiving and employment compete and interfere with each other (Calvano, 2013). Research has also examined how people cope with, and try to manage, these competing demands (Duxbury and Higgins, 2017). But what about during exceptional times, such as those created by the COVID pandemic? All the strategies that families develop, the carefully planned routines (routines that allow for parents to balance the care and recreational needs of their children with their own professional demands) are suddenly changed. With children across the country suddenly unable to attend daycares or school, parents are suddenly faced with responsibility to entertain and occupy younger children. Those with adolescents and teens may also feel obligated to provide home-schooling and make up for the lost classroom time, so they scramble to identify and navigate school curricula, posted resources, and online classrooms. Those whose elderly family members are nearby or in nursing homes must determine how best to 'care from a distance.'

It is not only the competing demands of caregiving and work that is straining police officers during this pandemic. "The loss of normalcy; the fear of economic toll; the loss of connection. This is hitting us and we're grieving," David Kessler, grief expert, said in an interview posted in the *Harvard Business Review*. "We are not used to this kind of collective grief in the air" (Berinato, 2020). Kessler notes how the uncertainty and loss of safety people experience during a crisis like this can take a profound emotional toll. Just as the ways of managing work and childcare have been removed, ways of coping with stress that people may have developed or relied on in the past, such as getting together with friends, working out in a gym, or attending religious services, are also unavailable. This lack of resources further strains people's ability to cope.

The rapidly evolving nature of this crisis, and its unprecedented impacts on daily life, the complexities of individual and interpersonal responses warrant a more detailed exploration than can be provided in news and magazine articles. This research will provide an in-depth exploration of how RCMP officers are coping with the multiple, complex, and evolving challenges posed by living and policing in a pandemic.

Work-life Balance in Policing: An Extreme Case

This report investigates the phenomena of interest (work-life balance and employee wellbeing during a pandemic) in a group that can be considered an outlier or an extreme case when it comes to work stress and work-life balance: police officers and their families. As Charmaz (2014) explains, extreme or deviant case sampling means selecting cases that are unusual or special in some way. The extreme cases approach is employed when the purpose is to try to highlight the most unusual variation in the phenomena under investigation, rather than trying to tell something typical or average about the population in question. Researchers use this approach when they want to develop a richer, more in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and lend credibility to one's research account. In the section below we outline why we believe police officers and their families can be considered an extreme case worthy of study at this time (i.e., during the COVID 19 pandemic) – which we note, can also be considered to be an extreme case.

Police officers must deal with a myriad of work stressors: Our review of the literature indicates that at the best of times, police officers are exposed to a fairly unique set of stressors at work and face a different set of work-life challenges than most employees. Duxbury and Higgins (2012), for example, report that police officers found the following aspects of their job stressful: dealing with multiple competing ever changing demands; pressure to take on work that falls outside their mandate (i.e., dealing with mental health issues in the community); understaffing; dealing with the court system; and managing the expectations of the public. Pre-COVID, many of the police officers in Duxbury and Higgins's sample (2500+ police officers working for 28 services across Canada) found the sheer volume of the work (assigned files, phone calls, walk-ins, e-mails) to be overwhelming. Duxbury and Higgins (2012) note that police officer stress was exacerbated by other people's sense of urgency, unrealistic deadlines, pressures to do a high-quality job (often self-imposed), the increased complexity of the cases that police officers are dealing with today, a culture that makes it unacceptable to say no, emotionally taxing work, and worry that they will put others in jeopardy if they cannot get the task done quickly and perfectly.

Duxbury and Higgins (2012) also found that police officer stress is intensified by understaffing. Almost half of the officers in their sample reported that there are unfilled positions in their unit, that they do not have enough staff coverage to allow people to take breaks during work hours (i.e., lunch, coffee) or to backfill maternity leave, secondments, absenteeism. The costs of "doing more with less" include increased stress levels and a decline in wellbeing for police officers who must deal with higher and more complex workloads with either the same (or worse, reduced) staffing complements. This issue is likely to become more pronounced during the COVID pandemic as officers are required to self-isolate themselves for 14+ days if they are exposed to the virus when working. This is also likely to increase stress levels at home as well as work-life conflict.

Finally, we note that policing is a 24/7 operation and most officers, particularly those working in frontline positions, are required to work shift arrangements. Most of the research in the area links shift work to higher levels of work-life conflict and to poorer mental health outcomes (Williams, 2008). This study will examine how officers balance the need to work shift work with the demands they face at home because of COVID 19.

Control over Work and Family Domains: A significant body of research around employee wellbeing is theoretically framed around Karasek's (1979) demand-control theory, which posits that employees with higher levels of control will be better able to cope with demands and will, thereby, report lower levels of strain. There is extensive empirical support for Karasek's (1979) model and higher levels of control have been shown to be associated with lower levels of strain (Luchman & Gonzalez-Morales, 2013).

Research by Johnson et al. (2005) has determined that police officers, in general, have very little control over their work environment (i.e., low control over work) as their job is highly unpredictable. This is unfortunate, given the link between higher control over work and an increase in an employee's ability to engage in home and family activities and to balance competing work and family demands.

Also relevant to our research is work by Lapierre and Allen (2012) which argues that employees with more control at home should be able to manage family/home-related demands in a way that makes them more able to meet work obligations. Much of the research links the presence of children in the home (particularly younger children) with a decrease in control at home (Schober & Scott, 2010). We would expect that employees' perceived levels of control at home will have declined dramatically because of COVID as family members of all ages who are not essential workers are expected to physically distance at home. This could be particularly problematic for police officers seeking to cope with demands at home while also fulfilling their work obligations.

Research in the area suggests that the expectations placed on the police by the public, their senior officers and themselves to "put work first" are likely to exacerbate the challenges police officers are likely to face during the pandemic balancing work and family demands. The fact that policing is a 24/7 operation that often involves a combination of long work hours and changing shift arrangements makes it challenging for police officers of both genders to meet demands outside of work during the best of times (Duxbury & Higgins, 2012) – and the current situation can certainly not be described in this fashion. Silvestri (2007), in fact, claims that policing is one of the most difficult jobs to combine with having a family.

Organizational culture: Organizational culture refers to a deep level of shared beliefs and assumptions within a group. Many of these operate below the conscious level of those who are members of the culture (Lewis & Dyer, 2002). Organizations can have a culture that supports work and family or that makes balance between these two domains more problematic. Perhaps the most widely cited definition of work-family culture is that put forward by Thompson and colleagues (1999), who defined such a culture as "the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees' work and family lives" (p. 394).

The available research suggests that the organizational culture within policing is male-dominant, emphasizes both mental and physical strength, is unfriendly towards women and non-supportive of work-life and wellness issues (Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Chan et al., 2010). Acker (1992) describes the masculine work culture typifying many police services:

> "*The gendered substructure lies in the spatial and temporal arrangements of work, in the rules prescribing workplace behaviour and in the relations linking work places to living places. These*

practices and relations, encoded in arrangements and rules, are supported by assumptions that work is separate from the rest of life and that it has the first claim on the worker" (p. 255).

In such a culture, the normative expectations are that work and family demands are to be kept separate and that work demands should take priority over family demands. A number of studies support the idea that this type of culture will have a disproportionately negative impact on the behaviour of officers who put family ahead of work, regardless of their gender.

The masculine organizational culture that dominates in police organizations should, we argue, make it harder for police officers, regardless of their gender, to balance work and family demands during the pandemic. The pressures that police feel to work longer hours (a major predictor of role overload, work interferes with family and stress) stem not only from increased workloads and reduced staffing levels but also from an organizational culture that places a high premium on doing so. As Silvestri (2007, p. 274) points out "visibly working long hours has come to be an indicator of commitment and stamina and a core constituent of the 'smart macho' management culture that characterizes police leadership...". Moreover, while many police organizations do have family-friendly policies in place, the research evidence suggests that the organizational culture means many officers are reluctant to use them for fear of being singled out or perceived to be receiving preferential treatment (Duxbury & Higgins, 2012). Jenkins (2000), points out that officers of both genders who reduce their work hours or take advantage of family-friendly policies are viewed by their colleagues as "part-committed.' Silvestri (2007, p. 275) concurs, arguing that male and police officers who "choose to limit their working hours or opt to undertake them in an alternative configuration... do so in the knowledge that they may also be limiting their career opportunities." The fact that many police leaders remain unconvinced that work-life balance is an issue that they need to address, are very comfortable with the "work first" culture that characterizes many police services and, point with pride to their "progressive" family friendly policies (Duxbury & Higgins, 2012) also present significant barriers to change.

Policing During the Pandemic: Police, as an essential frontline service, face particular challenges during this pandemic. While other Canadians work from home (or not at all), police must continue to respond to 911 calls, including those involving suspected coronavirus patients. For police, arresting suspects, patting them down, giving them a ride to jail, and providing emergency medical treatment involves hands-on contact and possible exposure to blood and saliva. Such experiences may impact officer wellbeing. The Government of Ontario recently highlighted the impact that COVID-19 is likely to have on police officer wellbeing and work-life balance. As noted by Premier Ford on April 4th, 2020: "Dealing with an evolving crisis like COVID-19 puts a lot of stress on everyone, including people who are self-isolating, families with kids out of school, and the frontline health care workers and first responders who are keeping us safe each and every day... Clearly protecting our health and well-being is everything, and that includes our mental health."

During the same press conference, Sylvia Jones, Ontario's Solicitor General reinforced this message: "The current COVID-19 outbreak reinforces how much we rely on frontlines workers and why it is so important to look after their mental health and wellbeing." Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, echoed this, saying, "Many Ontarians, including our dedicated first responders, are experiencing increased anxiety because of COVID-19 and are worried about their health, the health of their family and friends, and the future of their livelihoods."

A recent Google search using the terms "COVID-19 impact on police" uncovered 405,000,000 results. A quick scan of the results of the articles uncovered by this search provides us with an idea of the topics being covered by the media including: (1) the financial impact of COVID-19 on police budgets, (2) the requirement to change police officers' duties, (3) the need for police personnel to take new precautions when going about their work to ensure that they do not become infected on the job, (4) changes in crime patterns that can be attributed to physical

distancing policies (e.g., increases in family violence, internet scams, fraud, break and enters, fines, and emergency orders), and (5) the impact of COVID on the policing services available to the public (e.g., police are taking reports over the phone where possible and closing stations to the public). Other articles discuss the challenges the public will face if officers get infected (staffing shortages) and provide advice from a variety of government agencies outlining the policies and procedures that police agencies need to be aware of when dealing with the public. An article published March 17th, 2020, identified the following unique challenges facing police officers because of COVID-19:

- The job may require police officers to come to the aid of someone with the virus which, in turn, requires that the officer self-isolate for 14 days. They cannot attend to their work at this time. Nor can they deal with family issues.
- Services can become overwhelmed as more first responders are taken out of commission, creating staffing nightmares and workload issues for officers.
- Governments are trying to reduce the number of people in jails, where the virus could spread quickly, which means more criminals are on the street. With normal routines upended many police agencies have assigned more officers to street patrol, including detectives who normally investigate crimes.
- Police officers are often required to wear protective gear as they must assume that all members of the public that they interact with could be coronavirus-positive and that all crime scenes are compromised. Police officers need proper equipment, so they feel protected from the virus — something that the shortage of protective masks has thrown into doubt. If they don't feel safe, they might pull back on making arrests or getting physically close to people who need help.

Objectives of this report

This report uses data from the Police Wellbeing During Times of COVID-19 survey to:
- Identify the key sources of work and non-work stress facing RCMP officers at this time.
- Examine the ability of RCMP officers to balance competing work and family demands during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Assess the wellbeing of RCMP officers who are providing an essential service to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Determine how RCMP officers are "coping" with changing work and family demands in times of COVID-19.
- Articulate the costs to the employer (i.e., federal and provincial governments, the RCMP executive team) of not providing needed support to officers during the COVID-19 pandemic and once the pandemic is over.
- Identify factors that contribute to an increased ability to manage the challenges posed by the pandemic as well as factors that test RCMP officers' welfare and wellbeing.
- Examine how gender and parental status impact each of the above issues.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework shown in Figure 1 is described in more detail in the section below. This model is based on the role conflict and role ambiguity research of Robert L. Kahn and colleagues (1964) and the research of Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984) into the relationship between stress and coping. It is also informed by our prior research on the health and wellbeing of RCMP officers.

The model in Figure 1 shows the relationship between four types of constructs:
- **Stressors** (something that contributes to a state of strain or tension);
- **Strain outcomes** (difficulties that cause worry or emotional tension);

- **Wellbeing outcomes** which are indicators of stress (psychological perception of pressure and the body's response to it that occurs when the demands from external situations, i.e., stressors and strain, are beyond the individual's capacity to cope); and
- **Moderators** (a construct or variable that affects the strength of the relation between predictor and outcome variables).

The following stressors are included in the model:
- **Stressors in the work environment:** Research has implicated many features of the police work environment that can contribute to officer stress and strain by placing undue stress on an officer. Many of these work stressors are associated with the internal workings of a police department: issues with equipment, problems with other officers or civilian staff, quality of supervision, shift work, court, serving the public, enforcing the law, threats to officers' health and safety, and the fragmented nature of police work.
- **Objective Work Demands:** In this study we operationalized objective work demands as the number of hours an employee spends in work per week. Time at work is the single largest block of time which most people owe to others outside their family. Consequently, it is often the cornerstone around which the other daily activities must be made to fit. As a fixed commodity, time allocated to employment is necessarily unavailable for other activities, including time with the family, time for leisure and time for oneself. Thus, time spent at work offers an important and concrete measure of one dimension of employment that affects employees and their families.

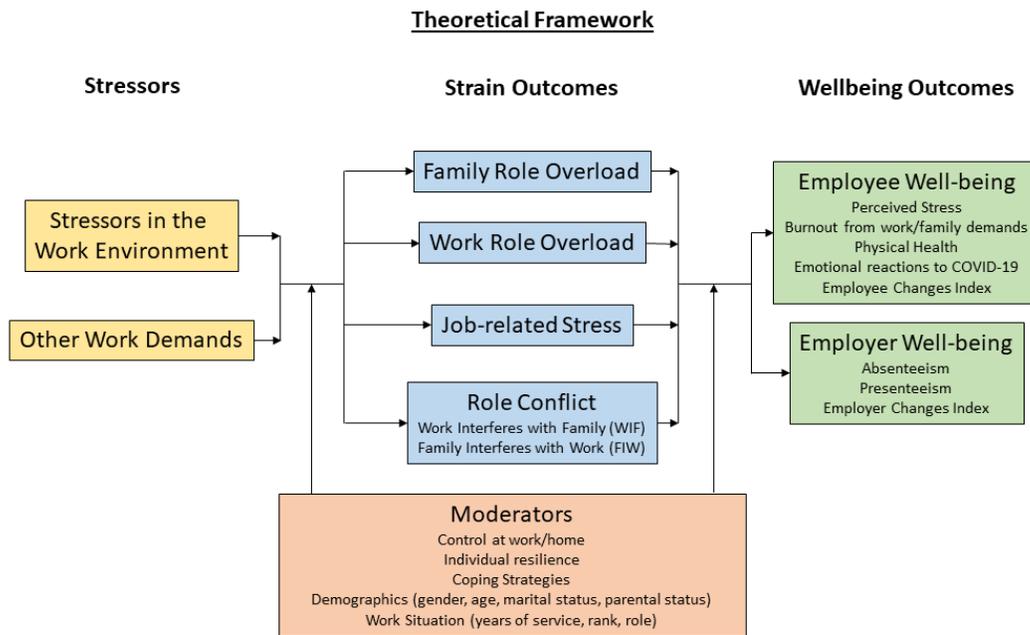Figure 1. Theoretical framework of wellbeing

These different stressors are hypothesized to result in strain of various types. The following strain outcomes are included in the model:
- **Role overload**: operationalized as work role overload and family role overload. Role overload is defined as a "a type of role conflict that results from excessive demands on the time and energy supply of an individual

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such that satisfactory performance is improbable" (Duxbury & Higgins, 2012). Two types of overload are examined in this study: work role overload (defined as feeling rushed, time crunched and physically and emotionally exhausted and drained by all the demands one faces at work) and family role overload (defined as feeling rushed, time crunched and physically and emotionally exhausted and drained by all the demands one faces at home). High levels of both of these forms of role overload are problematic for organizations and employees alike as overload is strongly linked to increased absenteeism, poorer physical and mental health, greater intent to turnover and increased benefits costs. Employees who are overloaded are also less likely to agree to a promotion, to attend career relevant training, and often cut corners at work.

- **Job-related stress**: defined as the collection of harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.
- **Work-life Conflict**: operationalized as Work interferes with family (WIF) and Family interferes with work (FIW): Work-life conflict occurs when the pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible. This incompatibility results in the work domain interfering with the family domain and vice versa. Work interferes with family occurs when participation in the family role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the work role. Family interferes with work occurs when participation in the work role is made more difficult by virtue of the family role.

As shown in Figure 1, the stressors and strains presented above are expected to impact employee and organizational wellbeing. In this study we operationalize wellbeing as follows:
- **Perceived stress:** the extent to which a person perceives (appraises) that their demands exceed their ability to cope. Individuals who report high levels of perceived stress are generally manifesting the symptoms we associate with "distress", including nervousness, frustration, irritability, and generalized anxiety.
- **Burnout:** a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when one feels overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. We include two measures of burnout as officers can experience burnout differently at home and at work.
- **Physical health:** stress symptoms can affect your body, your thoughts and feelings, and your behaviour. Being able to recognize common stress symptoms can help you manage them. Stress that is left unchecked can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.
- **Emotional reactions to COVID-19:** Oxford Dictionary defines emotion as "A strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others." Emotions are responses to significant internal and external events such as COVID-19 which may trigger a wide range of emotions including anger, frustration and grief in the police officers in the sample.
- **Employee/Employer Changes Index:** work-life conflict can have negative consequences for the employee as well as the employer. Increases in work-life conflict brought about by the pandemic may be observed in changes at the individual level including reduced sleep, reduced energy, and less time spend on self-care. Changes may also be observed at work in the form of increased absenteeism, increased use of benefits like the EAP, and decisions not to seek advancement in the form of transfers or promotion.
- **Absenteeism:** many organizations use absence from work as a measure of productivity (if workers are not on the job, the work is certainly not being done). While companies expect a certain amount of absenteeism and recognize that some absenteeism is even beneficial to the employee, too much absenteeism can be costly in terms of productivity and is often symptomatic of problems within the workplace.
- **Presenteeism** refers to workers coming in to work while sick, overly fatigued, or otherwise unproductive. It is an important workforce management issue that has been linked to diminished performance and worsening health and general wellbeing.

In statistics, moderation occurs when the relationship between two variables depends on a third variable which is typically referred to as a moderator variable or more simply - a moderator. We include several possible moderators of the relationships shown in our model:

- **Demographic variables:** We expect that the employees' gender, parental status, rank, and years of service may moderate the relationships in our model.
- **Coping mechanisms:** Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing". Coping mechanisms are ways in which external or internal stress is managed, adapted to, or acted upon. Coping mechanisms can be categorized as adaptive or constructive (positive), or maladaptive (negative).
- **Resilience:** Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as those imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are high in individual resilience may be more able to adapt to the circumstances imposed by COVID-19 than those who are less able to adapt to stress.
- **Control over work and Control over family:** One of the most well-known and influential models of occupational stress is that proposed by Karasek in 1979. This theory, which is referred to as the "job strain" model states that the greatest risk to physical and mental health from stress occurs when workers face high psychological workload demands or pressures combined with low control in meeting those demands. In this study we look at two forms of control as possible moderators of the relationship between the demands employees face at work and at home and employee wellbeing: control over work (i.e., an employee's ability to influence what happens in his or her work environment) and control over family (i.e., an individual's ability to control the use of their time at home).

Organization of this report

The report is divided into eight chapters. The second chapter provides a description of the methodology used in this study. This is followed by the presentation of the key results obtained from this study. Results are provided over five chapters: demographics and work profile (Chapter 3), stressors (i.e., predictors of stress) (Chapter 4), indicators of strain (Chapter 5), employee and organizational wellbeing (Chapter 6), and moderators (Chapter 7). The final chapter of the report presents a summary and discussion of the key findings.

The results chapters are all structured in a similar manner. Key findings for the total sample are presented first followed by analysis of between-group differences by gender and parental status: male parents, male non-parents, female parents, and female non-parents. The decision to focus our analysis on these four groups is supported by early research showing that the effects of the pandemic have been most felt by women and parents.

Chapter 2: Methodology

As a first step we developed a survey instrument that included measures for each of the constructs in our Theoretical Framework (Figure 1). The survey questionnaire consisted primarily of multiple-choice or fill-in-the-response closed-ended questions, but also included several open-ended questions. A detailed description of the methodology followed in the design of the web survey and the approach to data analysis used in this report are included at the end of the report in Appendix A. The final questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

The survey was programmed into a web-based survey tool (Qualtrics). A link to the survey along with a letter from the National Police Federation (NPF) encouraging participation was sent to all members. The web survey was opened on 9 November 2020 and closed on 10 January 2021 (2 months). Just over 1000 officers completed the survey. We cannot calculate response rate as we do not know which services were sent the request to participate and which were not. Who answered the survey? The answer to this question can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample size and statistics

	N	% of sample
Total sample	1080	
Volunteered to participate in future research	300	28%
By Gender and Parental Status		
Male parents	643	60%
Male non-parents	211	20%
Female parents	111	10%
Female non-parents	86	8%
Responses to open-ended questions[1]		
What COVID initiatives has your police service implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic designed to ensure the safety and wellness of police officers? Of the families of police officers?	840	78%
What do COVID-19 related activities at work entail?	413	38%
What one thing could your employer do to help you cope with the challenges you face due to COVID-19?	695	64%
Additional comments	212	20%

How is the report structured?

Results of our analysis of the data are presented in tables that are included in each section of the report. Each table includes a column describing the construct that is being measured, a column which presents the findings for the total sample, and four additional columns which include the results when the sample was divided into four subsamples based on the officer's gender and parental status. We begin each section of this report by discussing the results obtained for the total sample. This is followed by a comparison of the results obtained when the sample is divided into four groups based on the respondent's gender and whether they had children at home. In all cases, we focus our discussion of gender and parental status on key (significant and substantive) between-group differences in the data. If a finding is not highlighted in this comparison section, the reader can assume that the findings reported for the total sample apply in all cases.

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[1] We hope to analyze the responses to these questions later (if we can secure funding to get a student to code the data)

Chapter 3: Who responded to the survey?

Research around employee stress and wellbeing has shown that an individual's wellbeing can be influenced by factors such as their marital status, their gender, and their age as well as several features of their work. They can also vary based on the policies and programs put in place by their employer to protect the officer's health as well as the health of their officer's family. The Employee Wellbeing in Times of COVID Survey (i.e., "Wellbeing Survey") included several questions that allowed us to develop demographic, work, and employer support in times of COVID profiles describing our respondents. These profiles, which are provided in the sections below, provide key information to help us interpret the results from the rest of the survey.

Demographic profile: the total sample

Demographic data on the sample are shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4. These data support the following observations with respect to who is in our sample: (1) the age distribution of the sample is fairly evenly distributed with approximately equal numbers of officers reporting that they are between 30 and 40 years of age (35%) or between 40 and 50 years of age (38%) while one in ten are under the age of 30 and 18% are 50 or older, (2) the mean age of an officer in the survey sample is 41.2 years of age, (3) the sample is male dominated - 80% of the respondents identify as male, (4) the vast majority of the respondents (85%) are married or living with a partner, (5) three-quarters of the police officers in the sample (72%) are parents, (6) one in four officers (25%) care for an elderly dependent who either lives with them in their home (4%), lives in their own home which is nearby (17%) or lives in their own home which is located elsewhere (27%), (7) half (52%) of the officers in the sample are part of dual-income families with children at home, and (8) one in five of the married officers with children also have eldercare responsibilities and can be considered to be part of the "sandwich generation" (i.e. have to balance work, childcare and eldercare).

Table 2. Sample demographics

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Age (mean)	41.2	43.0	36.1	43.3	38.2
Age					
Under 30	9%	3%	27%	1%	19%
30 to 40	35%	32%	43%	34%	44%
40 to 50	38%	45%	23%	45%	18%
50 and over	18%	20%	8%	20%	19%
Married/Living with a partner	85%	94%	71%	85%	52%
Family Type					
No dependents (no children or eldercare)	23%	-	80%	-	83%
Eldercare only	5%	-	20%	-	17%
Childcare only	52%	74%	-	61%	-
Sandwich	20%	26%	-	39%	-

Additional data on the dependent care responsibilities of the police officers who completed in the survey are provided in Table 3 (childcare) and Table 4 (eldercare).

Many of the officers in the sample can be considered in the "full-nest" stage of the life cycle: 25% have children at home who are under 5 years of age, 35% have adolescent children (i.e., between 6 and 12 years of age) and 21% are parents to teenagers. These officers are at higher risk of experiencing work life conflict, a conclusion that is supported by the data showing that the officers who responded to the survey reported that, on average, they assumed 38% of the responsibilities for childcare in their home.

Table 3: Childcare responsibilities

	Total sample (N=1080)		Male parents (N=643)		Female parents (N=111)	
% with children	%	Mean number	%	Mean number	%	Mean number
Who are under 5 years of age	25%	1.4	37%	1.4	26%	1.3
Who are 6 to 12 years of age	35%	1.5	49%	1.6	50%	1.3
Who are 13 to 18 years of age	21%	1.4	28%	1.4	41%	1.4
Who are over 18 and living at home	9%	1.3	12%	1.3	18%	1.3
Who are over 18 and living away from home	14%	1.7	18%	1.7	24%	1.6
% of day-to-day responsibilities for childcare they assume in their family	38%		39%		61%	

One in six (17%) respondents have responsibility for an elderly dependent who lives in their own home nearby (i.e., within an hour's drive) and 21% care for someone who lives in their own home that is more than an hours drive from where the officer lives. Relatively few of the officers in the sample care for an elderly dependent who lives in their home with them (4%), in an assisted care facility nearby (3%) or in a nursing home that is more than an hour's drive away from where the officer lives (3%). The officers who responded to the survey reported that they took on approximately 8% of the day-to-day responsibilities for eldercare in their home. The pandemic as well as the fact that older Canadians are at increased risk during these times means that officers who have responsibilities for eldercare are likely to experience stress associated with worry over the wellbeing of their elderly relatives.

Table 4: Eldercare responsibilities

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Living in your home	4%	4%	3%	10%	1%
Living in their home which is nearby	17%	17%	14%	26%	15%
Living in their home which is elsewhere (more than 1 hour drive)	21%	22%	18%	22%	15%
Living in an assisted living facility or in institutional care (nursing home) nearby	3%	3%	2%	0%	0%
Living in an assisted living facility or in institutional care (nursing home) elsewhere	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
% Who say they have eldercare	25%	16%	21%	39%	17%
% of day-to-day responsibilities for eldercare they assume in their family	(N=273) 8%	(N=170) 8%	(N=45) 7%	(N=43) 11%	(N=15) 7%

To help us better understand the demands officers faced at home, we included several questions in the survey for officers who were married/ living with a partner regarding their partner's work situation. Responses to these questions are shown in Table 5. Please note that these questions were only answered by the subset of respondents who said that they were married or living with a partner (n = 894). The following observations can be drawn from these data. First, virtually all the married/partnered officers in the sample (88%) indicated that their partners had paid employment prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and were still employed during the pandemic (82%). These officers can be considered to live in dual-income families. Second, only one in four of the partnered officers indicated that their partners worked at home during the pandemic. The rest (59%) worked outside the home and may be considered some type of essential worker. Third, approximately one in five officers (19%) indicated that their partners were also police officers. Finally, we note that the sample was fairly evenly divided when it came to identifying who was the "primary breadwinner in their family with 44% indicating that they considered their partner to be an equal partner when it came to contributions to the family's finances while 53% stated that they were the primary breadwinner in their household. Families of financial "equals" are more likely to experience work-life conflict associated with whose work should take priority than are families where one partner contributes more to the family's financial security than the other partner. These findings are important as we expect stress to be particularly high in dual-police couples with children and in families with younger children where both partners work outside the home.

Table 5. Partner demographics for total sample and by gender and parental status

	Married/ Partnered (N=894)	Male parents (N=607)	Male non-parents (N=149)	Female parents (N=93)	Female non-parents (N=45)
Prior to COVID did your partner have paid employment?	88%	85%	92%	96%	98%
Still employed	82%	79%	83%	95%	96%
Still employed – working from home	23%	25%	22%	22%	7%
Still employed – working outside the home	59%	54%	61%	73%	89%
Is your partner a police officer?	19%	13%	13%	53%	51%
Who is the breadwinner in your household?					
I am	53%	61%	48%	20%	27%
Both of us	44%	36%	47%	75%	71%
My spouse/partner	3%	2%	5%	4%	2%

Demographics: Between-group differences of note

The four groups vary in a variety of important ways. We note several gender differences in the demographic characteristics of our sample of officers in both the parent and non-parent samples:
- Male officers were more likely to be married/partnered than female officers.
- Male officers were more likely to have children than female officers.
- Male officers more likely to say that their partner had left their job (lost their job) during the pandemic and was no longer employed.
- Female officers were more likely to say that their partner was employed outside the home (i.e., an essential worker) during the pandemic.
- Female officers were four times more likely to be married to another police officer (50%) than were their male counterparts (13%).

- Female officers were more likely to say that breadwinning responsibilities were shared in their home (75% gave this response) than were their male counterparts (48% of male officers without children and 61% of male officers with children stated that they were the main breadwinner in their family).

Several additional gender differences were apparent when we compared our sample of officers who were fathers to our sample of officers who were mothers:
- Female officers with children were more likely to have multi-generational caregiving responsibilities (39% were in the sandwich situation) than were their male counterparts (26% in sandwich situation).
- Male officers with children were more likely to be dual-income parents (74%) than were their female counterparts (61%).
- Male officers with children were more likely to be parents of children under the age of five (37%) than were their female counterparts (26%)
- Female officers with children were more likely to be parents of teenagers (41%) than were their male counterparts (28%).
- Female officers with children assume a greater percent of the day-to-day responsibilities for childcare in their families (61%) than their male counterparts (39%)

Finally, we noted one difference that was associated with parental status and three differences that were linked to both gender and parental status. Specifically:
- Officers who were parents were older than officers without children.
- Male officers without children were younger (mean age of 36.1) than female officers without children (mean age of 38.2). No age difference was observed for the parents in the sample.
- Female parents (39%) are approximately two times more likely to say that they are responsible for the care of an elderly dependent than any other group in the sample. It is also important to note that one in ten of these officers say that their elderly dependent lives with them.
- Male officers with children (61%) were more likely than their male counterparts without children (48%) to say that they were the main breadwinner tin their family. No such difference was observed for the female officers in the sample.

Work profile: the total sample

In the survey we also asked respondents for information that could be used to develop work profiles for those in our sample. In all cases, we focused on collecting information (rank, years of service) that is likely to be linked to officer wellbeing. Responses to the questions that were used to create the work profile for the officers in our sample are included in Table 6.

The typical officer in the sample has, on average, 14.0 years of service. Approximately three-quarters (77%) of the officers in the sample hold the rank of constable. The rest hold the rank of sergeant (10%) or staff sergeants (3%). The distribution by rank is consistent with the pyramidal structure of police services and the NPF's membership.

Table 6. Work profile

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Mean years of service	14.0	15.4	9.5	16.5	10.8
Years of Service					
Under 10 years	29%	19%	57%	16%	49%
10 to 20 years	48%	56%	33%	44%	37%
Over 20 years	23%	25%	10%	40%	15%
Rank					
Corporal/Constable/Special constable	77%	73%	88%	76%	86%
Sergeant	14%	16%	7%	22%	10%
Staff sergeant or higher	7%	9%	5%	3%	3%
Prefer not to answer	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Work Profile: Between-group differences of note

We note two differences in rank/years of service associated with the parental status of the officer. More specifically, the parents in the sample:
- have more years of service on average than non-parents,
- were two times more likely than non-parents to hold the rank of Sergeant/Staff Sergeant.

The difference in rank is consistent with the data showing that those without children are younger and have fewer years of service than are officers with children.

Profile: Satisfaction with response to COVID-19 from the organization

We asked two sets of questions to help us understand the level of support employees perceive that they have received from their employers during the pandemic. We began by asking if the RCMP had implemented any initiatives internally in response to the COVID-19 pandemic designed to ensure safety and wellness of: (1) police officers, and (2) the families of police officers. Responses to these two questions are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. COVID-19 Initiatives

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
In the past 12 months, has your police service implemented any initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic					
Of police officers	94%	95%	93%	94%	94%
Of the families of police officers	24%	26%	21%	23%	26%

The data in this table support two conclusions. First, almost all the police officers in the sample (94%) agree that the RCMP had developed initiatives to ensure the safety and wellness of RCMP officers who are working in the community during the pandemic. Second, only one in four of the respondents to this survey (24%) feel that the

RCMP has taken any action to protect the wellbeing of the families of RCMP officers who are also at risk because their parent or parents are engaged in high-risk work outside the home.

So, most officers agree that the RCMP has introduced policies and programs to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The question then becomes, how satisfied are these officers with what The RCMP has put in place? To find out the answer to this question we asked officers to think back over the past six months and tell us, all things considered, how satisfied have you been (from Very Dissatisfied, to Neutral, to Very Satisfied) with: (1) the amount of support you have received from your employer during COVID-19, (2) the policies and procedures your employer has implemented during the pandemic to keep you safe, (3) the policies and procedures your employer has implemented during the pandemic to keep your family safe, (4) the amount of flexibility your employer has provided you with respect to when you do your work, and (5) the clarity of the communications you have received from your employer laying out what they expect from their employees. Responses to this question are provided in Table 8. In all cases, we would expect that the greater the perception of support from one's employer the higher the employee's wellbeing.

Table 8. Satisfaction with response to COVID-19 from the organization

Think back over the past six months. All things considered, how satisfied are you with:	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
The amount of support you have received from the RCMP during COVID-19					
Mean	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.6
Low	45%	44%	51%	40%	47%
Moderate	31%	32%	27%	32%	28%
High	24%	24%	22%	28%	26%
The policies and procedures the RCMP has implemented during the pandemic to keep you safe					
Mean	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.8
Low	43%	42%	46%	38%	43%
Moderate	29%	30%	27%	28%	28%
High	29%	28%	27%	34%	29%
The policies and procedures the RCMP has implemented during the pandemic to keep your family safe					
Mean	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6
Low	49%	49%	51%	49%	40%
Moderate	36%	36%	32%	35%	43%
High	15%	14%	17%	16%	17%
The amount of flexibility the RCMP has provided you with respect to when you do your work					
Mean	2.8	2.9	2.6	3.0	2.8
Low	40%	38%	46%	37%	47%
Moderate	26%	26%	27%	25%	22%
High	34%	36%	28%	38%	31%
The clarity of the communications you have received from the RCMP laying out what they expect from their employees					
Mean	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.7
Low	46%	46%	50%	39%	42%
Moderate	26%	26%	26%	33%	23%
High	28%	28%	24%	28%	35%

Examination of the responses to these five questions show remarkable similarity. More specifically we note that:

- Almost half of the officers in the sample report low levels of satisfaction with each of the following forms of support: (1) the amount of support they have received from the RCMP during COVID-19 (45% low), (2) the policies and procedures the RCMP has put in place to keep officers safe (43% low) and officer's families safe (49% low), and (3) the clarity of the communications they have received from the RCMP laying out what they expect from their employees (46% low).
- Approximately one in four reported high levels of satisfaction with each of the following forms of support: (1) the amount of support they have received from the RCMP during COVID-19 (24% high), (2) the policies and procedures the RCMP put in place to keep officers safe (29% high), and (3) the clarity of the communications they have received from the RCMP laying out what they expect from their employees (28% high).
- One in three were very satisfied with the amount of flexibility the RCMP had provided them with respect to when and where they do their work while 40% were dissatisfied.
- Twice as many officers report high levels of satisfaction with the policies and procedures the RCMP has implemented during the pandemic **to keep officers safe** (29% satisfied) as report high levels of satisfaction with the policies and procedures the RCMP has implemented during the pandemic to keep **their family safe** (15% satisfied).
- Half of the officers in the sample report low levels of satisfaction with the policies and procedures the RCMP has implemented during the pandemic to keep **their family safe** (49% dissatisfied).

The variation in the responses to these questions are likely due to the fact that the officers in the sample work in different parts of the country/in different divisions and report to senior officer teams that may vary with respect to the amount of support they offer. These findings imply that:

- approximately one in four of the RCMP officers perceive that the service "has their backs" while almost half perceive that the RCMP is not supportive of officer wellbeing, and
- the RCMP is less likely to have recognized the need to put programs in place to support the wellbeing of the officers' families than to have dealt effectively with officer health and safety.

Analysis of the comments officers provided in response to these question should give us a better understand of what officers want from their employer at this time.

Satisfaction with Service's Response to COVID: Between-group differences of note

Perceptions of the amount of support officers in the sample feel that they have received from the RCMP during the pandemic is not associated with gender or parental status.

Summary: Who Responded to the Survey?

The typical officer in our sample is a male police officer in his thirties to early forties who lives in a dual-income household and more than likely has children. The typical respondent is an experienced constable with between one and two decades of experience as a police officer. Approximately one fifth of our respondents hold the rank of sergeant or staff sergeant and one in five officers are female.

Many of the officers in the sample are likely to have challenges balancing work and family. Almost all are married, almost all are parents and one in four have responsibility for the care of one or more elderly dependents. The typical married officer in this sample has a partner who is also employed outside the home (i.e., dual-essential couples). The male police officers tend to be the main breadwinner in their families while the female officers are more likely to consider their partner to be an equal partner when it comes to contributions to the family's finances. One in five of the officers in our sample is married to another police officer. Officers who have children at home

are in the "full-nest" stage of the life cycle (25% have children at home who are under 5 years of age, 35% have adolescent children and 21% are parents to teenagers). The typical officer in the sample claims that they take on 38% of the responsibilities for childcare in their family.

Most officers who responded to this survey (95%) felt that the RCMP had acted during the pandemic to protect the safety and wellbeing of the police officers in their employ. Their reactions to the types of supports offered were, however, mixed with approximately one quarter reporting high levels of satisfaction with the types of support they have received from the RCMP during COVID-19 while just under half (between 40% and 50%) reporting low levels of satisfaction.

Three-quarters of the sample were unaware of any initiatives taken by the RCMP to protect members of their families and of the officers in the sample reported low levels of satisfaction with the policies and procedures put in place by the RCMP during the pandemic to keep their family safe. These findings are unfortunate given that most officers in the sample are married and have children at home who are also at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 because of the work done by their mother/father.

Analysis of the data presented in this section revealed various between-group differences associated with gender, parental status, or both gender and parental status. Parents differed from non-parents in a few important ways. The parents in the sample were approximately 5 (female) to 7 (male) years older on average than the non-parents, and have more years of service on average than non-parents. Parents were also two times more likely than non-parents to hold the rank of Sergeant/Staff Sergeant.

We also observed some gender differences in our findings. More specifically, we noted that:
- Male officers were more likely to be married/partnered, to have children, and to say that their partner had lost their job during the pandemic.
- Female officers were more likely to be married to someone who was an essential worker, to say that breadwinner responsibilities were shared in their home, and to have a partner who is a police officer (half were married to another police officer) than were their male counterparts.
- Female officers with children were more likely to have responsibility for both childcare and eldercare (39% were in sandwich situation), to be parents of teenage children (41%), and to take on a greater percentage of the day-to-day responsibilities for childcare in their families (61%) than did their male counterparts (39%).
- Male officers with children were more likely to be parents of children under the age of 5.

We also identified three important gender differences that can only be observed if we take parental status into account. More specifically, we note that the female officers with children in our sample were two times more likely than their female counterparts without children to say they were responsible for the care of at least one elderly family member. No such difference was observed for the male officers in the sample. We also note that male officers without children were younger (mean age of 36.1) than female officers without children (mean age of 38.2). No such difference was observed for the parents in the sample. Finally, the male officers with children in the sample (61%) were more likely than their male counterparts without children (48%) to say that they were the main breadwinner in their family. No such difference was observed for the female officers in the sample.

Chapter 4: Stressors in the Work Environment

This chapter summarizes the key findings of our analysis of data related to the stressors faced by the RCMP officers in our sample (stressors in the police work environment and other work demands). Data on the work-related stressors are presented and discussed first. This is followed by analysis related to work demands. In all cases we start by presenting our findings for the total sample. We then highlight any statistically significant and substantive differences associated with gender and parental status.

Table 9. Stressors in the work environment

Stressor	Mean (N=1080)
Negative images of the police in the news	4.0
The amount of time spent in administrative work (forms, telephone calls, e-mail, typing, rekeying)	4.0
Not enough officers and/or staff to do the work required	3.9
I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my family's health	3.7
The culture makes it unacceptable to say no to more work	3.5
Managing the expectations of the public	3.5
Dealing with multiple competing demands simultaneously	3.5
The cases I deal with are more complex than in the past and require greater effort	3.4
I am responsible for too many different things/roles	3.4
Public discussions on defunding the police	3.4
Meeting work demands when people are away from work (no one available to backfill maternity leave, secondments, events, absenteeism)	3.4
The sheer volume of the work (call volume, reports, e-mails)	3.4
The shortage of experienced staff in my area	3.3
I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my physical health	3.3
Not enough officers on duty to allow people to take breaks during work hours	3.2
Too many competing ever-changing number one priorities	3.2
Managing other people's sense of urgency	3.2
Lack of resources (equipment/supplies) to do the work	3.2
Ineffective communication makes it harder for me to do my job (lack of timely feedback, unclear expectations)	3.0
Pressures to do a high-quality job while meeting an unrealistic deadline	3.0
I can't get everything done and I worry about cases falling through the cracks	3.0
Constant changes in policy/legislation without adequate support/training	3.0
The culture makes it difficult to seek help from others when you are overloaded	2.9
Taking on work that is outside my core role (e.g., custody duties)	2.9
Lack of control over my work	2.8
Public protests against the police in Canada	2.7
The demands placed on me by the court system	2.7
Verbal assault from a member of the public	2.6
Managing relationships with the media/public (social media, being "on camera")	2.3
Physical assault from a member of the public	1.6

Stressors in the Work Environment

In the survey we presented our respondents with a list of 30 possible work stressors and asked them to rate how often each of these issues were sources of stress for them at work. The scale used to measure stressors in the work environment was originally developed and tested by Dr. Duxbury in a variety of police services across Canada. To ensure that each of the items included in this measure were relevant to this study (which focused on stressors facing RCMP officers during the COVID-19 pandemic) each item in the scale was reviewed carefully during the "Wellbeing Survey" design process. Based on this review, we removed several items from the original measure and added several new items (e.g., Negative images of the police in the news; I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my family's health; Public protests against the police in Canada). We began our analysis by calculating the means for each of the items in the measure for the total sample. We present our findings for this step of the analysis in Table 9. For ease of reference the items are listed in descending order (i.e., from most stressful to least stressful). The reader should consider any item with a mean score of 3.5 or greater (shaded in red in Table 9) to be a substantive source of work stress for RCMP officers who are working during the pandemic. Items with scores of > 2.5 but < 3.5 (shaded yellow in Table 9) are also worthy of note as they are also key sources of stress for a subset of officers.

Examination of the data in Table 9 support several important observations. First, 7 of the stressors we examined (23% of the stressors included in the scale) can be considered a significant source of stress for the officers in the sample. Second, many of the key stressors facing RCMP officers at this time are not related to the job itself but instead have more to do with how the police are being portrayed in the media (i.e., negative images of the police in the news; managing the expectations of the public; public discussions on defunding the police), resourcing decisions (i.e., not enough officers to do the work required; the amount of time spent in administrative work; the sheer volume of the work) and the culture of policing (i.e., dealing with multiple competing demands simultaneously, the culture makes it unacceptable to say no to more work). Third, understaffing and the burden of administrative work are a significant source of stress for many of the frontline RCMP officers in this sample. Fourth, we note that one of the two stressors with a score in the "high" range, "I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my family's health" speaks to the perception held by most of the officers in the sample that the RCMP has not implemented any policies or practices to protect the wellbeing of their families during these times of pandemic. Finally, only two of the stressors included in the scale were not identified as a moderate to significant source of stress for this group of RCMP officers. The other 28 stressors can all be considered problematic for RCMP officers at this time.

Grouping of the stressors

We used a statistical method called principal component analysis (see Appendix A) to identify how the work environment stressors grouped together. This analysis identified four groups of work environment stressors or factors as shown in Table 10. Each group of stressors was reviewed and given a name that reflects the items clustered within it. The groups of work environment stressors identified through this analysis along with the stressors that were included in each of the four groups are as follows:

- Multiple competing every changing number one priorities teamed with culture that makes it hard to seek help
    - The sheer volume of the work (call volume, reports, e-mails)
    - I can't get everything done and I worry about cases falling through the cracks
    - Dealing with multiple competing demands simultaneously
    - I am responsible for too many different things/roles
    - The culture makes it difficult to seek help from others when you are overloaded

- o The culture makes it unacceptable to say no to more work
  - o Lack of control over my work
  - o Meeting work demands when people are away from work (no one available to backfill maternity leave, secondments, events, absenteeism)
  - o Not enough officers and/or staff to do the work required
  - o The shortage of experienced staff in my area
  - o The amount of time spent in administrative work (forms, telephone calls, e-mail, typing, rekeying)
  - o Too many competing ever-changing number one priorities
  - o Ineffective communication makes it harder for me to do my job (lack of timely feedback, unclear expectations)
  - o The cases I deal with are more complex than in the past and require greater effort
  - o Constant changes in policy/legislation without adequate support/training
- Public image of the police
  - o Public discussions on defunding the police
  - o Public protests against the police in Canada
  - o Negative images of the police in the news
- Worried about COVID-19
  - o I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my physical health
  - o I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my family's health
- Being assaulted by the public
  - o Verbal assault from a member of the public
  - o Physical assault from a member of the public

We then created what is called a factor score for each group of stressors – calculated as the summed average of the scores of the various items that were in each group. These scores were then used to identify the extent to which each of these work environment stress factors were problematic (i.e., resulted in high levels of stress) for the different groups of police officers in the sample. Results for this analysis are as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Work environment stressor factors (% high)

% reporting this aspect of their work "often" caused them stress	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Worried about COVID-19	59%	62%	51%	58%	55%
Public image of the police	48%	47%	56%	40%	40%
Multiple competing priorities	45%	46%	43%	46%	41%
Being assaulted by the public	16%	16%	19%	14%	12%

The following observations can be made about the prevalence of the various work stressors by looking at the data in this table. First, a substantive number of RCMP officers often experience stress because they are afraid of contracting COVID-19 and transmitting the disease to their family (60%). Second, approximately half of the officers in the sample often find the public discourse regarding defunding the police and public protests against the police in Canada stressful (48%). In this case officer stress can be linked to the negative public image the public has of police officers and the concomitant fear that they will be verbally and or physically assaulted by a member of the public when on the job (16%). Finally, almost half of the officers in the sample (45%) often experience high levels of workplace stress because of a combination of toxic conditions that the analysis showed were highly interrelated and grouped together in a factor we labelled multiple competing ever-changing number one work

priorities. More specifically, our data imply that the amount of stress RCMP officers face because of the unpredictability and uncertainty of their work demands is exacerbated: (1) by their perception that the culture of the RCMP makes it hard for them to seek help and to say no to more work, even when overloaded, and (2) by the fact that the area in which they work is understaffed (there are not enough officers to do the work required and to allow for breaks during work hours, it is hard to meet work demands when people are away), and (3) by their perception that the cases they need to deal with now are more complex than in the past and they worry what will happen if things slip through the cracks.

Work Environment Stressors: Between-group differences of note

Neither job type nor gender were related to how stressful the officers in the sample found the majority (70%) of the stressors included in this analysis. We did, however, identify 9 cases where the amount of stress caused by a particular stressor varied according to the gender/parental status of the officer[2]. Table 11 lists all the items with substantive between-group differences sorted in descending order by the mean score of male parents (the largest group in the sample). The same data are shown visually in Figure 2.

Table 11. Stressor items with between-group differences sorted by % high male-parents

Stressor Item	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Negative images of the police in the news	66%	74%	66%	58%
I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my family's health	63%	55%	63%	57%
Public discussions on defunding the police	51%	60%	48%	46%
The cases I deal with are more complex than in the past and require greater effort	51%	51%	55%	39%
Not enough officers on duty to allow people to take breaks during work hours	48%	58%	46%	45%
Lack of resources (equipment/supplies) to do the work	46%	51%	50%	35%
The demands placed on me by the court system	30%	37%	25%	24%
Public protests against the police in Canada	28%	41%	30%	28%
Managing relationships with the media/public (social media, being "on camera")	23%	32%	21%	25%

Two-thirds of the between group differences observed in our analysis can be attributed to the fact that the male officers without children in the sample were more likely than any other group to report that they often experience stress because: (1) of negative images of the police in the news, (2) of public discussions on defunding the police, (3) there are not enough officers on duty to allow people to take breaks during work hours, (4) of the demands placed on them by the court system, (5) of public protests against the police in Canada, and (6) of social media/being on camera all the time. It will be recalled that the officers in this group are younger and work in frontline positions within the RCMP. The stressors data suggest that this group of officers are more likely to work in frontline positions and interact with the public on a regular basis. The data from this study is clear – the more a police officer is required to work closely with the public, the greater their exposure to a myriad of work-related

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[2] Statistical analysis available from the authors upon request.

stressors. The data also suggest that the RCMP will have problems recruiting and retaining young men if they do not take action to try and change the public discourse surrounding the police at this time.
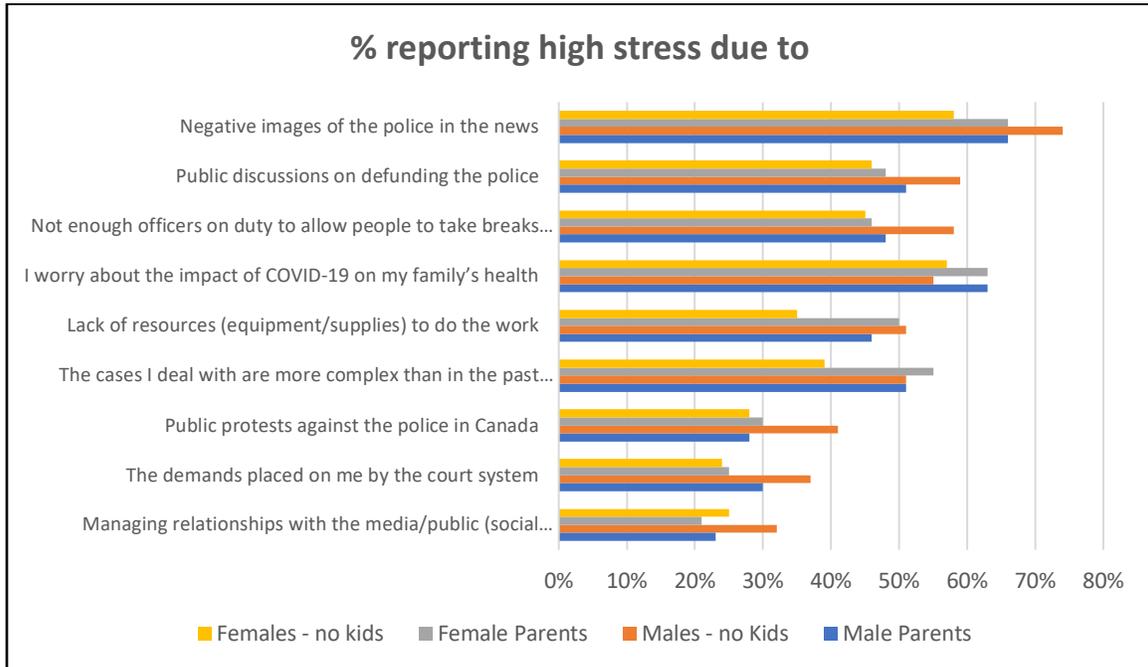

Figure 2: Between-group differences in stressor scores

We also note, not surprisingly, that regardless of their gender, officers with children at home were more likely to experience stress because they were worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their family's health.

Finally, we note that female officers without children were <u>less likely</u> than officers in the other three groups in the sample to find three of the stressors highly problematic: (1) negative images of the police in the news, (2) the cases they deal with are more complex now than in the past, and (3) they lack the equipment and resources they need to do the job. While it is hard to ascertain why this group of officers is less likely to find these three work factors stressful, we speculate that these women are deployed in very different types of jobs than are the officers in the other three groups.

Time spent in activities at work

One way to measure the demands placed on the police officer at work is to measure the amount of time spent in the most common and most important work activities. Discussions with the NPF resulted in the identification of ten different activities that can be used to examine how RCMP spend their time. This list was included in the "Wellbeing Survey" and officers were asked to indicate how many hours they had spent in each of these tasks. We analysed these data in two ways. We began by calculating the percent of officers engaged in each of these 10 activities (see Figure 3). We then calculated the average number of hours spent in each activity for those officers who said they engaged in each of these undertakings. These data are as shown in Figure 4.

Results from these two sets of analyses help us understand which activities our sample of police officers spend the most time in and are the most demanding. Although the list of activities is not exhaustive, viewing the list of activities in this way sheds light on the shared experience of police officers.

On average, the officers in the sample spend 47.9 hours per week in work-related activities. Male officers without children spend almost 50 hours in work-related activities per week (average 49.6 hours in work per week) - significantly more time in work per week than is reported by the other three groups in the sample (male officers with children - 47.5 hours in work per week; female officers with children – 47.1 hours in work per week; female officers without children - 47.6 hours in work per week.

Where do RCMP officers spend their time? Examination of the data in Figure 3 show that (aside from work-related travel) most officers spend time writing reports (88%) and reading and reviewing reports (64%). Approximately half the sample spent time in activities related to traditional frontline policing operations (i.e., frontline policing in enforcement activities (63%), frontline policing in crime prevention activities (47%), engaging with the community (47%), and dealing with mental health in the community (45%). Relatively few officers spend time each week engaged in custody issues (31%) and waiting for court (20%). Finally, we note that a plurality of the officers in the sample (41%) spend time each week dealing with COVID-19 related matters and engage in work at home outside of regular work hours (39%).

Figure 3. Work activities by percentage of officers

Which activities consume the most of the officers' time? Examination of the data in Figure 4 implicate the following activities: enforcement activities (19.8 hours/week), frontline policing in crime prevention activities (15.1 hours/week), dealing with mental health in the community (9.6 hours/week), and engaging with the community (9.0 hours/week). Report writing (14.2 hours per week) and the reviewing and approval of reports (12.6 hours per week) also consume a substantive amount of RCMP officers' time. In fact, almost sixty percent of RCMP's work week is spend in attending to paperwork. During the pandemic, officers are also spending 5.5 hours on average per week dealing with COVID-19 related activities. Those who are working from home spend about a day a week (7.1 hours per week) in this type of work.

Mean hours spent in each activity

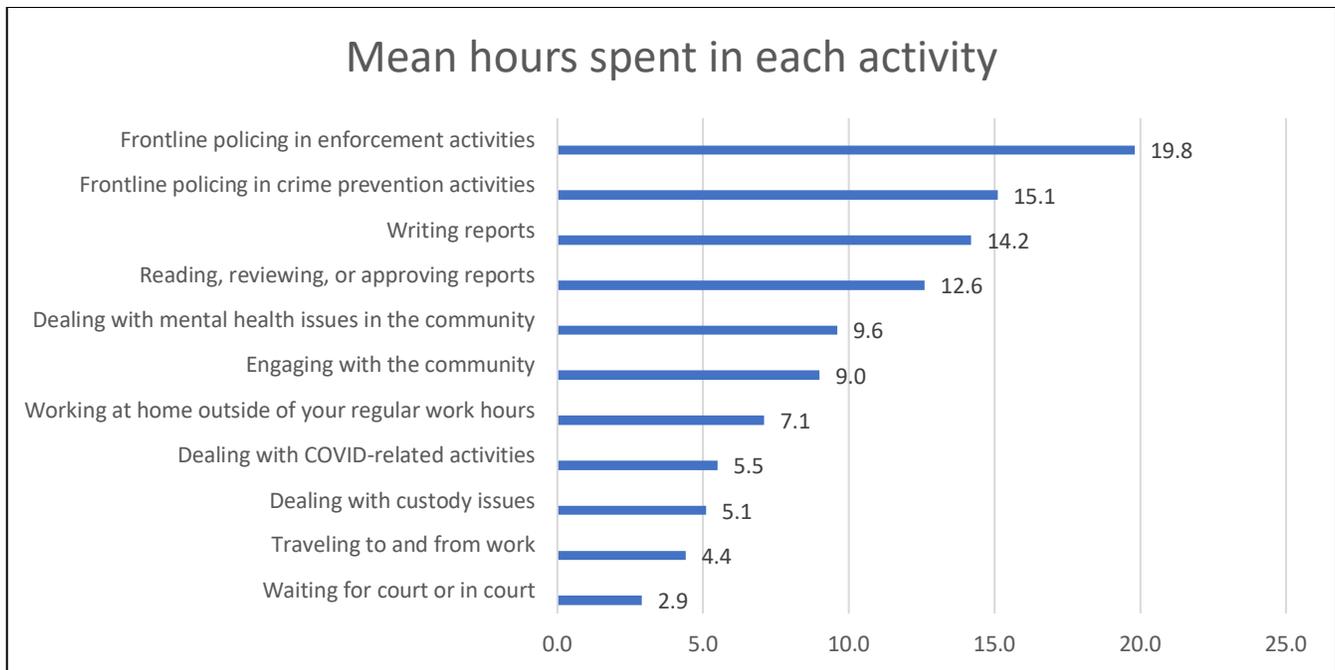| Activity	Hours
Frontline policing in enforcement activities	19.8
Frontline policing in crime prevention activities	15.1
Writing reports	14.2
Reading, reviewing, or approving reports	12.6
Dealing with mental health issues in the community	9.6
Engaging with the community	9.0
Working at home outside of your regular work hours	7.1
Dealing with COVID-related activities	5.5
Dealing with custody issues	5.1
Traveling to and from work	4.4
Waiting for court or in court	2.9

Figure 4. Mean hours spent in each activity (for those engaged in the activity)

Work Activities: Between-group differences of note

Follow-up analysis (see Table 12 and Figure 5) determined that the likelihood that an officer would engage in all but three of the activities examined in this study depends on gender and/or job type. The likelihood that an officer spent time each week writing reports, reading, reviewing, or approving reports or dealing with COVID-19 related issues is not associated with either gender or parental status.

Table 12. Work activities: between-group differences

Activity	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Writing reports	86%	91%	87%	91%
Traveling to and from work	79%	81%	86%	87%
Frontline policing in enforcement activities	63%	69%	51%	58%
Dealing with mental health issues in the community	40%	61%	43%	44%
Reading, reviewing, or approving reports	65%	60%	67%	57%
Frontline policing in crime prevention activities	45%	55%	39%	47%
Engaging with the community	45%	54%	38%	50%
Dealing with custody issues	28%	40%	26%	30%
Dealing with COVID-19 related activities	42%	38%	41%	40%
Working at home outside of your regular work hours	40%	31%	46%	35%
Waiting for court or in court	18%	26%	19%	21%

The following between-group differences were observed in the data (see Figure 5):
- Male officers without children were more likely than officers in the other groups to engage in five of the activities considered in this analysis: enforcement, dealing with mental health in the community, crime

prevention activities, dealing with custody issues and court-related activities. The fact that this group of officers is more likely to spend time in frontline policing activities is consistent with the data on stressors reported earlier.

- Female officers with children were <u>less</u> likely than the other officers in the sample to spend time each week in frontline police activities associated with enforcement, crime prevention, and engaging with the community; and <u>more</u> likely than the other officers in the sample to spend time each week working from home outside their regular hours. These data suggest that the work roles performed by female RCMP officers with children are quite different from those undertaken by male officers (with and without children) and female officers who do not have children. We cannot tell from the data, however, if these differences are COVID-related (i.e., has the RCMP accommodated officers who are mothers) or part of how the RCMP regularly treats their female officers with children.
- Male officers spent less time commuting to and from work than their female counterparts, regardless of whether they had children.
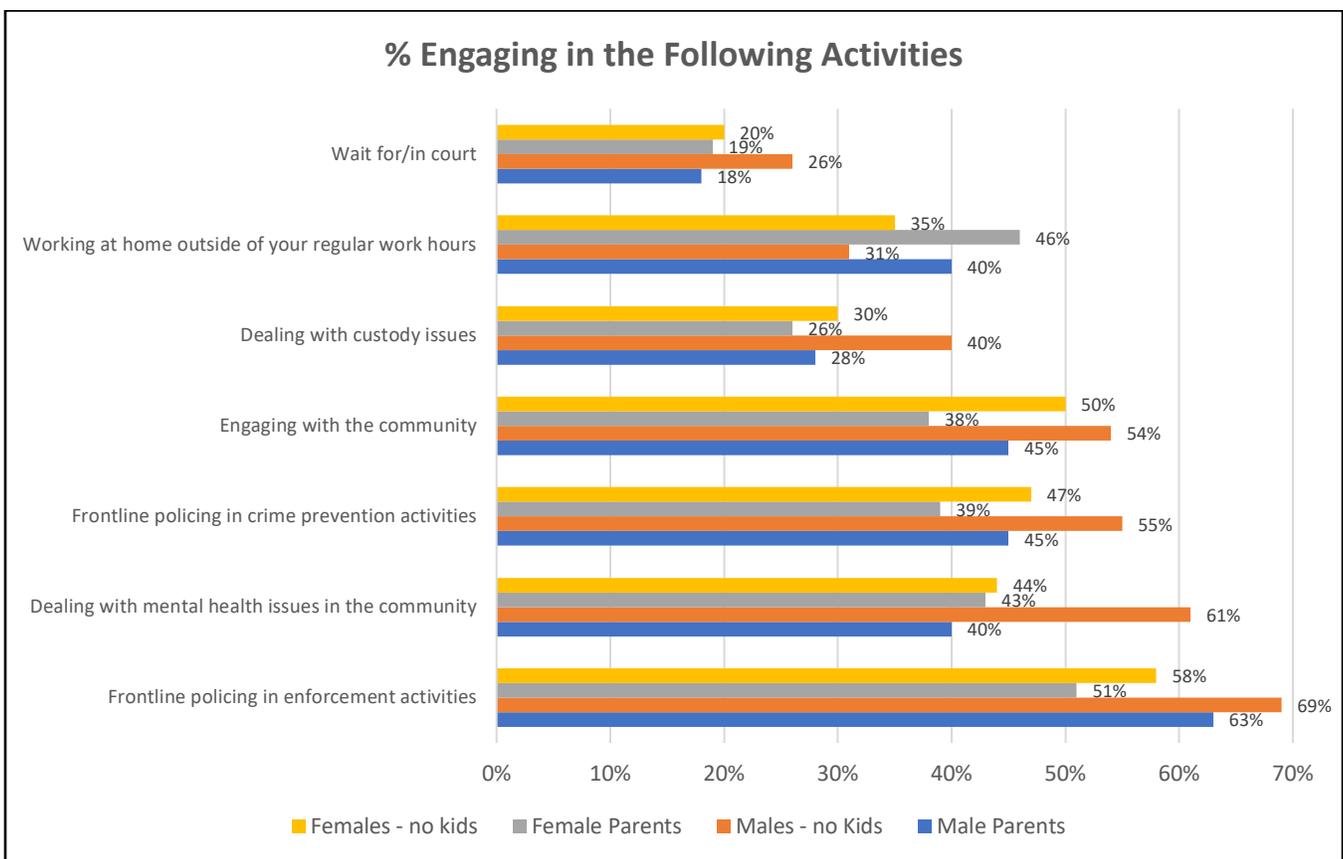

% Engaging in the Following Activities

Activity	Females - no kids	Female Parents	Males - no Kids	Male Parents
Wait for/in court	20%	19%	26%	18%
Working at home outside of your regular work hours	35%	46%	31%	40%
Dealing with custody issues	30%	26%	40%	28%
Engaging with the community	50%	38%	54%	45%
Frontline policing in crime prevention activities	47%	39%	55%	45%
Dealing with mental health issues in the community	44%	43%	61%	40%
Frontline policing in enforcement activities	58%	51%	69%	63%

Figure 5. Between-group differences in the % engaged in different work activities

Other indicators of officers' work demands

Time off work is critically important to employee wellbeing as well as organizational productivity. Research has consistently shown that employees do a better job when they are able to take time off from their work. Not only do they report lower stress and better health, time off work is also associated with higher productivity. Taking time away from work allows employees to spend time doing things they enjoy and to reconnect with their family and friends. To help tap into this issue we asked officers how many hours they spent in work per week in total (reported above), how much time they spent working at home outside of regular work hours (reported above)

and how often they had time to take an uninterrupted break for a meal or a rest during their shift. Responses to these questions are shown in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 13. Uninterrupted break and time in work per week

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Never or rarely	43%	42%	45%	42%	47%
About half the time	24%	22%	25%	29%	21%
Most of the time or always	33%	36%	30%	29%	33%
Total Hours in Work per week	47.9	47.5	49.6	47.1	47.7

The data support the following observations. First, RCMP officers work hard – an average of 47.9 hours per week. Second, we note that a plurality of the officers in our sample (39%) reported doing work at home outside their regular work hours. These officers spent an additional 7.1 hours in work per week. Third, just under a half (44%) of the officers in our sample indicated that they rarely if ever had time for an uninterrupted break at work – a finding that is consistent with the fact that many reported that they were stressed because they did not have the resources needed to get the work done, they did not understand what to focus their work efforts on, and barriers at work made it hard to get things done.

Between-Group Differences: Other indicators of officers' work demands

The likelihood that an officer would have time for an uninterrupted break at work is not associated with either gender or parental status. Two other indicators of work demands were however associated with gender/parental status. More specifically:
- Male officers without children spent more hours in work per week than the officers in the other three groups (just under 50 hours in work per week).
- Female officers with children were more likely than officers in the other three groups to engage in work at home after hours.

Summary: Work Stressors

In this chapter, we reported survey results for two categories of stressors: those found in the work environment and those linked to demands faced at work. The data covered in this section support six conclusions with respect to the stressors Canadian officers typically face at work. First, many of the key stressors facing RCMP officers at this time are not related to the job itself but instead have more to do with how the police are being portrayed in the media (i.e., negative images of the police in the news, managing the expectations of the public, the concomitant fear that they will be verbally and or physically assaulted by a member of the public when on the job, and public discussions on defunding the police); resourcing decisions (i.e., not enough officers to do the work required, the amount of time spent in administrative work, the sheer volume of the work); and the culture of policing (i.e., dealing with multiple competing demands simultaneously). Second, many officers experience high levels of stress that can be attributed to the fact that they are at risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it along to their family. The high level of stress due to COVID-19 reported by the officers in this sample may be due to the fact that most of the officers who participated in this study say that their service has not implemented any policies or practices to protect the wellbeing of their families during these times of pandemic. Finally, we note that the amount of stress these officers face is exacerbated by the need to juggle multiple competing ever-changing priorities conditions within an organization: (1) whose culture makes it hard for them to seek help and to say no

to more work, even when they are overloaded, (2) when the area in which they work is understaffed (there are not enough officers to do the work required and to allow for breaks during work hours; it is hard to meet work demands when people are away), and (3) when the cases they need to deal with are more complex than in the past and they worry what will happen if things slip through the cracks.

We can also draw several conclusions with respect to the work demands handled by the officers in this sample. First, RCMP officers work hard – an average of 47.9 hours per week. Second, most officers in our sample spend their time in activities that are only indirectly related to policing the community (i.e., writing reports, reading and reviewing reports, and dealing with mental health in the community). While two-thirds of the officers in the sample spend time in enforcement-related activities, just under half of the officers in this sample spend time in other activities related to traditional frontline policing operations (i.e., engaging with the community, crime prevention activities). Third, we found that the pandemic has impacted how officers spend their time with 40% of the RCMP officers in our sample reporting that they spend approximately 10% of their time each week dealing with COVID-19 related matters. Fourth, just over 40% of the officers in our sample stated that they rarely if ever had time for an uninterrupted break at work – a finding that is completely consistent with the data presented earlier regarding the work-related stressors faced by RCMP officers (i.e., understaffing, multiple competing priorities, an inability to say no to more work or ask for help). Finally, we note that 40% of the officers in the sample spend an additional day (7.1 hours) working at home outside of their regular hours. While we did not ask what work they were bringing home with them we speculate they catch up on paperwork at home.

While we observed multiple significant between-group differences in our findings regarding work environment stressors and work demands associated with parental status and with gender when parental status was considered, it is also important to acknowledge that there were no between-group differences with respect to:
- The extent to which officers experienced stress that could be attributed to 70% of the stressors examined in this study,
- The likelihood that an officer would spend time each week writing reports, reading, reviewing, or approving reports or dealing with COVID-19 related issues, and
- The likelihood that an officer would say they rarely/never got time for an uninterrupted break at work.

There was only difference in stressors and demands associated with parental status. Regardless of their gender, officers with children at home were more likely than those without children to experience stress because they were worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their family's health. This result, while not surprising, illustrates how the RCMP's inaction with respect to putting programs in place to protect officer's families during the pandemic has on this group of officers.

We also identified several differences in stressors/demands that depended on the parental status of the respondent as well as their gender. In most of these cases male officers without children were found to be exposed to a greater number of stressors and had more demands on their time than the other three groups of officers in the sample. Specifically, the male officers without children in the sample were more likely than any other group to report that they often experience stress that can be attributed to:
- The negative image of the police being portrayed in the news,
- Public discussions on defunding the police,
- The public protests against the police in Canada,
- The fact that there are not enough officers on duty to allow people to take breaks during work hours,
- The demands placed on them by the court system, and
- Social media and their perception that they are "on camera all the time" when doing their job.

Male officers without children were also <u>more likely</u> than officers in the other groups to engage in five of the activities considered in this analysis: enforcement activities, dealing with mental health in the community, crime prevention activities, dealing with custody issues and court related activities. The fact that this group of officers are more likely than the officers in the other three groups to spend time in frontline policing activities is consistent with (and helps explain) the fact that this group of officers are more likely find their jobs stressful. Finally, it is also noteworthy (and not surprising) to note that our analysis determined that male RCMP officers without children spent more hours in work per week (50 hours in work per week) than the officers in the other three groups.

Female officers with children, on the other hand, were <u>less likely</u> than the other officers in the sample to spend time each week in frontline police activities associated with enforcement, crime prevention and engaging with the community and <u>more likely</u> than the other officers in the sample to spend time each week working from home outside their regular hours. These data suggest that the work roles performed by female RCMP officers with children are quite different from those undertaken by male officers (with and without children) and female officers who have not yet had children. We cannot tell from the data, however, if these differences are COVID-19 related (i.e., has the RCMP accommodated officers who are mothers) or part of how the RCMP regularly treats their female officers with children.

Finally, we note that female officers without children were <u>less likely</u> than officers in the other three groups in the sample to find three of the stressors included in this study highly problematic: (1) negative images of the police in the news, (2) the cases they deal with are more complex now than in the past, and (3) they lack the equipment and resources they need to do the job. While it is hard to ascertain why this group of officers is less likely to find these three work factors stressful, we speculate that these women are deployed in very different types of jobs than are the officers in the other three groups.

What do these differences tell us? The suggest that female police officers with children are <u>less</u> likely and young male police officers without children are <u>more</u> likely to work in a job that entails a high level of interaction with the public This interpretation of the data is consistent with our results showing that the stressors reported by younger male police officers relate either to their relationship with the public they serve (i.e., negative image in the media, discussions on defunding the police, they are being verbally assaulted by the public, public protests, and being "on camera" when they are working) or workloads (i.e., work 50 hours per week, find it difficult to meet the demands of the court system, understaffing in their area contributes to their stress).   These findings beg the question – how will these issues impact the ability of the RCMP to recruit and retain officers now and in the future?

Chapter 5: Strain outcomes

Strain outcomes are in the middle of our theoretical framework (see Figure 1) -- predicted by the workplace stressors discussed in Chapter 4 and predictors of the wellbeing outcomes featured in Chapter 6. In the sections below we review our findings with respect to the incidence of the following forms of strain in our sample of Canadian officers: work-life conflict and job stress.

Work-life Conflict

Work-life conflict occurs when the pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible. We included four different measures in the "Wellbeing Survey" to help us better understand the levels of work-family conflict in our sample of police officers: work role overload, family role overload, work interferes with family, and family interferes with work. Details on each are given below.

Work role overload and family role overload

Role overload is defined as a "a type of role conflict that results from excessive demands on the time and energy supply of an individual such that satisfactory performance is improbable." (Duxbury & Higgins, 2012). Two types of overload are examined in this study: work role overload (defined as feeling rushed, time-crunched and physically and emotionally exhausted and drained by all the demands one faces at <u>work</u>) and family role overload (defined as feeling rushed, time-crunched and physically and emotionally exhausted and drained by all the demands one faces at <u>home</u>). High levels of each form of role overload are problematic for organizations and employees alike as research has found that overload is strongly linked to increased absenteeism, poorer physical and mental health, greater intent to turnover, and increased benefits costs. Employees who are overloaded are also less likely to agree to a promotion, to attend career relevant training, and often cut corners at work. Work and family role overload data are shown in Table 14.

Analysis of our data determined that work role overload has two components[3] at this time:
- Work role overload – work-related pressures (i.e., their job often requires them to work very fast, very hard; the expectations work often mean that they cannot get everything done; the amount of work they must do often exceeds the amount of time they have to get things done, and they often feel emotionally exhausted/physically exhausted from all they must do at work) and
- Work role overload – pressures from stakeholders (i.e., their colleagues and their supervisor at work often make too many demands on them).

The following observations can be drawn from the data in this table. First, by examining the mean role overload scores calculated using the total sample we note that, on average, RCMP officers are experiencing moderate levels (3.2) of work role overload that can be linked to the pressures of the job, low levels (2.4) of work role overload attributable to pressures from colleagues and their supervisor, and low to moderate (2.5) levels of family overload. Second, more than twice as many officers report high levels of overload at work due to the pressures of the job (45%) than report high levels of work overload because of the pressures placed on them by key stakeholders at work (20% high). Third, officers are three times more likely to report high levels of work role overload from the pressures of the job (45%) than they are to report high levels of family role overload (14%). Taken together, these

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[3] Note: Work role overload typically does not have two components but our analysis of the police data along with other data collected during the pandemic imply that colleagues and supervisors have relaxed their expectations of others at this time.

data imply that for the officers in the sample, role overload is more likely to be a function of all that they have more to do at work and the amount of time they have to do it in rather than the demands imposed on them by their boss and co-workers, or the demands associated with their roles at home.

Table 14. Work and family role overload

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Work role overload – work related pressures					
Mean	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3
Low	22%	25%	19%	17%	21%
Moderate	33%	32%	36%	35%	27%
High	45%	43%	45%	48%	52%
Work role overload – pressures from stakeholders					
Mean	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.3
Low	55%	54%	60%	51%	55%
Moderate	25%	26%	20%	27%	26%
High	20%	20%	19%	22%	19%
Family role overload					
Mean	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.9	2.2
Low	57%	53%	70%	42%	74%
Moderate	29%	32%	23%	31%	20%
High	14%	15%	8%	27%	6%
Work interferes with family					
Mean	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.5
Low	9%	7%	11%	10%	15%
Moderate	19%	18%	18%	20%	29%
High	72%	75%	70%	70%	55%

Work interferes with family and family interferes with work

Two additional indicators of work-life conflict were included in this study - Work interferes with family (WIF) and Family interferes with work (FIW). Work interferes with family occurs when participation in the family role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the work role (e.g., when an officer misses a child's school play because they must work late). Family interferes with work, on the other hand, occurs when participation in the work role is made more difficult by virtue of the family role (e.g., when an officer must turn down a promotion which requires relocation because their family does not want to move). FIW can come from caring for children and/or caring for elderly dependents or because the time and energy required to meet requires at home takes away from time that the officer would spend at work or on their career. Each of these sources of interference was measured by a single item in the survey. Data on the WIF and FIW of the officers in the sample are provided in Table 14 (WIF) and Table 15 (FIW). When examining the data in these two tables the reader needs to keep in mind that while all officers could complete the survey items regarding WIF, only the subset of officers with children and/or elderly dependents could respond to the three FIW items. To help the reader we include the number of people who responded to each of the items in the measure in the first column of Table 15.

Table 15. Family interferes with work

	Sub-group size (N)	Mean	% Low	% Moderate	% High
Making arrangements for children while I work involves a lot of effort	657	3.7	21%	15%	64%
Making arrangements for elderly relatives while I work involves a lot of effort	440	2.9	35%	30%	35%
My family/personal life often keeps me from spending the amount of time I would like on my job/career	1028	2.3	66%	16%	18%

The following conclusions regarding work-life conflict of RCMP officers are supported by the data in these two tables. First, work interferes with family is a substantive problem for the majority of the RCMP officers who responded to this survey. In fact, almost three-quarters (72%) of the officers in our sample report high levels of work interferes with family and the average WIF score for the total sample is 3.8 which is considered high/very high. Second, FIW is problematic for police officers with children at home as evidenced by the high mean score (3.7) officers gave to this FIW item and the fact that two-thirds (64%) of the parents in the sample agreed that making arrangements for children while they work involves a great deal of effort. While fewer officers report that work makes it hard for them to care for their elderly relatives (mean score of 2.9 indicates moderate levels of FIW due to eldercare responsibilities) the fact that approximately one in three of the officers with elderly dependents (35%) experience high family interference with work because of eldercare is cause for concern. Finally, it is interesting to note that most police officers in our sample do not perceive that their family is getting in the way of time spent on the job and in career development (only 18% of the sample report this type of FIW).

Job-related stress

Job-related stress is defined as the collection of harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job-related stress is operationalized in this study as the average score of 6 items in the survey questionnaire. This scale has been used in academic research for several decades and validated multiple times across many organizational contexts (see Appendix A, Table 31, for reference).

Table 16. Job-related stress

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Job-related stress					
Mean	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8
Low	5%	5%	7%	3%	7%
Moderate	19%	19%	15%	22%	21%
High	76%	76%	78%	76%	72%

During the pandemic the vast majority (76%) of the police officers who responded to the "Wellness Survey" reported high levels of job stress. Another one in five (19%) reported moderate levels of job stress (see Table 16). There were no substantive between-group differences in the level of job stress reported, suggesting that the stress

comes with the role itself and where the officer works rather than the gender of the officer or whether they have children.

Between-Group Differences: Strain Outcomes

Follow-up analysis (see Figure 6) determined that the likelihood that an officer would experience work-life conflict is associated with gender and parental status. No differences were observed with respect to the likelihood that an officer would report high levels of work role overload due to pressures from key stakeholders or job stress.
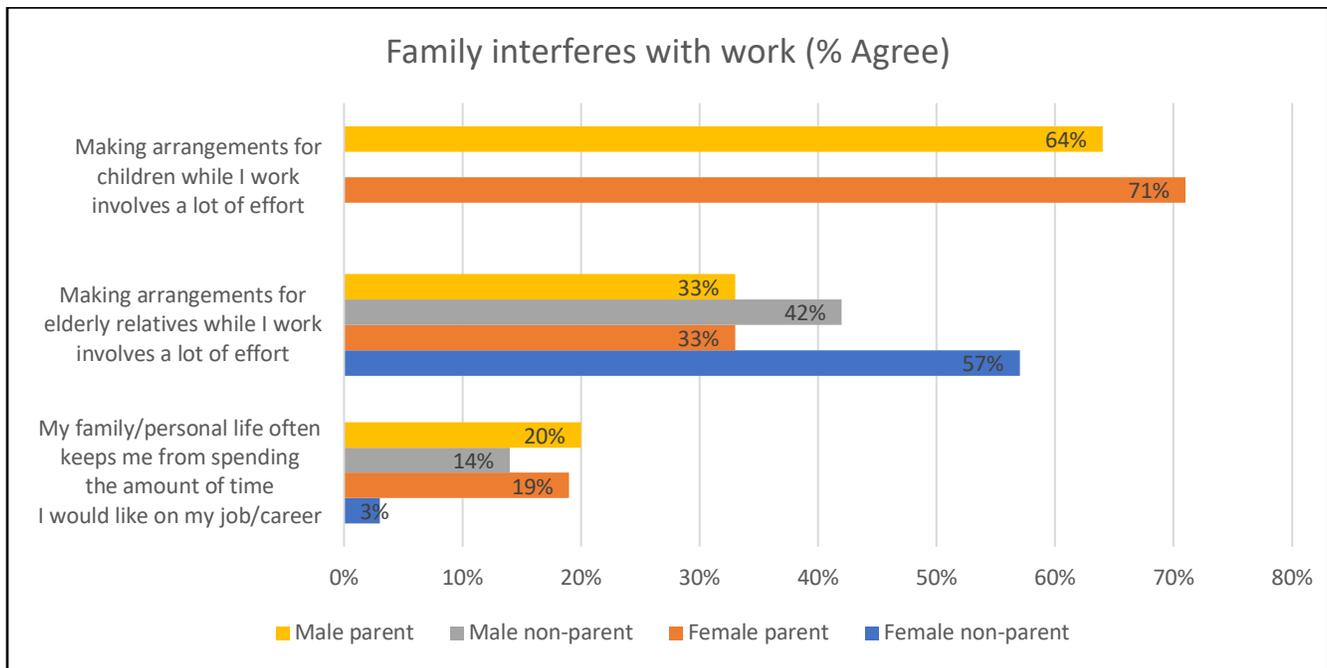

Figure 6. Family interferes with work (% Agree)

Examination of the data in Table 14 and Figure 6 support the following observations:
- Female officers without children were <u>more likely</u> to report high levels of work role overload from the pressures of the job (52% high) than were the officers in the other three groups.
- Female officers without children were <u>less likely</u> to report high levels of work interferes with family (55% high) than were the officers in the other three groups.
- Female officers without children were <u>less likely</u> to report to agree that their family responsibilities were keeping them from spending the amount of time they would like on their job/career (FIW) (only 3% high) than were the officers in the other three groups.
- Female officers with children (27% high) were two times <u>more likely</u> to report high levels of family role overload than were their male counterparts (15% of male officers with children report high levels of family role overload).
- Officers without children report lower levels of family role overload than do their counterparts with children.
- Regardless of their gender, officers without children were more than officers with children to agree that making arrangements for their elderly dependents while they work requires a lot of effort (FIW).
- Female officers with children were more likely than male officers with children to agree (71% of women agree versus 64% of men) that making arrangements for their children while they work requires a lot of effort (FIW).

Summary: Strain Outcomes

The "Wellness Survey" included the following indicators of employee strain: work-life conflict (operationalized as work role overload, family role overload, work interference with family, and family interference with work) and job stress. The results show that the typical officer in this sample reports very high levels of job stress (76% of the police officers in this sample reported high levels of job stress) moderate to high levels of work role overload from the pressures of the job, very high levels of work interferes with family, low to moderate levels of family role overload, and low levels of work role overload that can be attributed to pressures from their colleagues and their supervisor.   The extent to which FIW is a problem for officers depends on their gender and circumstances at home and will be discussed below.

The data from the survey show that the likelihood that an officer will report high levels of work role overload due to pressures from their supervisor or colleague or job stress is approximately the same, regardless of the officer's gender or whether they have children. The extent to which an officer will report all other forms of strain examined in this section (work role overload from the pressures of the job, work interferes with family, family interferes with work, family role overload) depends, however, on whether the officer has children at home and their gender.

We observed five significant between-group differences in work-life conflict and family role overload that depends on both the gender of the officer and whether they have children in the home. In all five of these cases, one group of female officers reported significantly higher/lower levels of strain than did the other three groups of officers in the sample.   More specifically, we note that <u>female officers with children</u> were more likely than their male counterparts to agree that making arrangements for their children while they work requires a lot of effort (FIW) and two times more likely to report high levels of family role overload than were male officers with children. Male and female officers without children, on the other hand, do not seem to have high levels of exposure to this form of strain.

Female officers without children, on the other hand, were <u>more likely</u> to report high levels of work role overload from the pressures of the job and <u>less likely</u> to report high levels of work interferes with family (WIF) and to agree that their family responsibilities were keeping them from spending the amount of time they would like on their job/career (FIW) (only 3% high) than were the officers in the other three groups.

These findings support the following conclusions. First, job stress and, with one exception (female officers without children), work role overload are a function of the job and where the officer works rather than their gender or the pressures they face at home. Second, again with the exception of female officers without children, RCMP officers are more likely to give priority to work demands at the expense of their personal/family life (i.e., report very high levels of WIF). This finding is consistent with research on the culture of police organizations (work is expected to take priority) which might explain why the RCMP officers feel pressured to give preference to the demands of their job rather than their family. Third, parents report higher levels of FIW than non-parents, regardless of their gender – a finding that is consistent with the way that police work is scheduled (employees who work shift arrangements generally have more challenges with respect to childcare). With one exception (female officers without children), the officers in this sample perceive (probably correctly) that their demands at home (childcare, eldercare) are interfering with their ability to progress in their career. Again, we speculate that this is indeed likely to be the case in a service where saying no to work is seen as a career limiting move (see research by Silvestri, 2007, supporting this interpretation).   Fourth, the data supports the idea that children contribute to family interfering with work for parents in general and female officers in particular, while eldercare is more problematic for those without children. These findings reinforce the idea that services should not assume that officers without children do not have family demands that could take them away from work. Finally, we note that female officers

without children seem to be an outlier with respect to many of the measures of strain considered in this study (i.e., more or less likely than other officers in the sample to report the different types of strain). Future research should explore why this is the case.

Chapter 6. Wellbeing outcomes

In this study we consider the impact of the stressors and strains on two sets of wellbeing outcomes: employee wellbeing outcomes and employer wellbeing outcomes (see Figure 1). Employee wellbeing outcomes are operationalized using measures of perceived stress, burnout at work, burnout at home, and physical health. We also included measures to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual officers as well as recognized indicators of employer wellbeing such as absenteeism and presenteeism. While we distinguish between employer and employee wellbeing in our framework the reader should be aware that this distinction is somewhat artificial in nature as all the indicators of employee wellbeing considered in this study are also likely to negatively impact the employer (e.g., an employee who is suffering from high levels of stress and burnout is unlikely to be as productive as one who has a low burnout score).

Employee wellbeing

Stress outcomes

Perceived stress is defined as the extent to which a person perceives (appraises) that the demands they face exceed their ability to cope. Individuals who report high levels of perceived stress are generally manifesting the symptoms we associate with "*dis*tress", including nervousness, frustration, irritability, and generalized anxiety. Burnout refers to a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged (chronic) stress. It occurs when one feels overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. Burnout affects health, leading to physical and mental health problems. Work-related outcomes of higher levels of burnout include job dissatisfaction, professional mistakes, absenteeism, intention to give up the profession, and neglect. We measured burnout in the context of work and in the context of home and family life as early research has shown that many people are feeling increased stress at home because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We asked officers to rate their own physical health by comparing themselves to others their age on a scale of 1=Poor to 5=Excellent. Table 17 shows the results of the survey for the measure of perceived stress, burnout at work and at home, and physical health.

Analysis of these data support the idea that the "typical" police officer in our sample reports moderate levels of perceived stress (mean stress score of 2.8), moderately good health (mean physical health score of 2.9), moderate levels of burnout at work (mean burnout at work score of 2.8), and low levels of burnout at home (mean burnout at home score of 1.7).

More information can be obtained by looking at the frequency data which provides a more nuanced view of the wellbeing of the police officers in the sample. Examination of these data support the following conclusions. First, moderate to high levels of officer stress seem to be systemic within RCMP services at this time with approximately half of the officers in our sample reporting either moderate (49%) or high (47%) levels of perceived stress. Only 4% of our respondents reported low levels of perceived stress. Second, we were surprised to note that one in three of the officers in the sample reported that they were in poor/fair physical health. This is unexpected given the age (younger) and gender (mostly male) make-up of the sample and the type of job they perform. We would expect a higher proportion of officers to report that they are in good to excellent physical health than is in fact the case. Third, it is concerning that one in four of the officers in our sample report high levels of burnout at work while another 29% report moderate levels of burnout. Our concern stems from two factors. First, burnout typically manifests itself when chronic stress is not attended to (i.e., it takes time to manifest itself). The high number of RCMP officers with moderate to high levels of stress at this time are at increased risk of exhibiting higher levels of burnout down the road if the work environment stressors identified in this report are not attended

to. Second, our concern stems from research on the consequences of burnout (e.g., fatigue, alcohol consumption, poorer physical health, heart problems, professional mistakes) which demonstrates the consequences to the officers, their families, and the communities they police of having potentially one in five police officers with high levels of burnout. Finally, only 5% of the sample report high levels of burnout from their circumstances at home while one in ten report moderate levels of burnout at home. These data support the idea that the high levels of stress experienced by the RCMP officers in our sample have substantially more to do with their circumstances at work and the job they do than their lives outside of work.

Table 17. Stress outcomes

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Perceived stress					
Mean	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7
Low (1 < Score < 1.6)	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%
Moderate (1.6 < Score < 2.8)	49%	48%	51%	49%	49%
High (2.8 < Score < 5.0)	47%	47%	45%	48%	45%
Burnout at Work					
Mean	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7
Low (1.0 < Score < 2.5)	46%	46%	42%	50%	48%
Moderate (2.5 < Score < 3.5)	29%	27%	35%	25%	33%
High (3.5 < Score < 5.0)	25%	27%	23%	24%	20%
Burnout at Home					
Mean	1.7	1.8	1.5	2.0	1.3
Low (1.0 < Score < 2.5)	84%	81%	93%	74%	99%
Moderate (2.5 < Score < 3.5)	10%	12%	5%	17%	0%
High (3.5 < Score < 5.0)	5%	6%	2%	9%	1%
Physical Health					
Mean	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.1
Poor/Fair	33%	34%	34%	30%	26%
Good	38%	38%	37%	42%	36%
Very good/Excellent	29%	28%	28%	28%	38%

Between-Group Differences: Stress Outcomes

Follow-up analysis (see Table 17 and Figure 7) determined that the likelihood that an officer would experience two of the most important indicators of wellbeing included in the study – perceived stress and burnout from work – was not associated with either gender or parental status. These findings are consistent with our observations relating to job stress and reinforce our contention that high levels of stress and strain are systemic within the RCMP.

The other wellbeing outcomes considered in this study are associated with gender and/or parental status. Examination of the data in Figure 7 supports the following conclusions:

- Officers with children report higher levels of burnout from the demands they face at home than do their counterparts without children.
- Female officers with children report higher levels of burnout at home (26% with moderate to high burnout at home) than their male counterparts with children 18% with moderate to high burnout at home).
- Most of the officers without children in the sample (i.e., over 90%) report low levels of burnout at home.
- Female officers without children are more likely than any other group in the sample to say that their physical health is very good to excellent (38%).
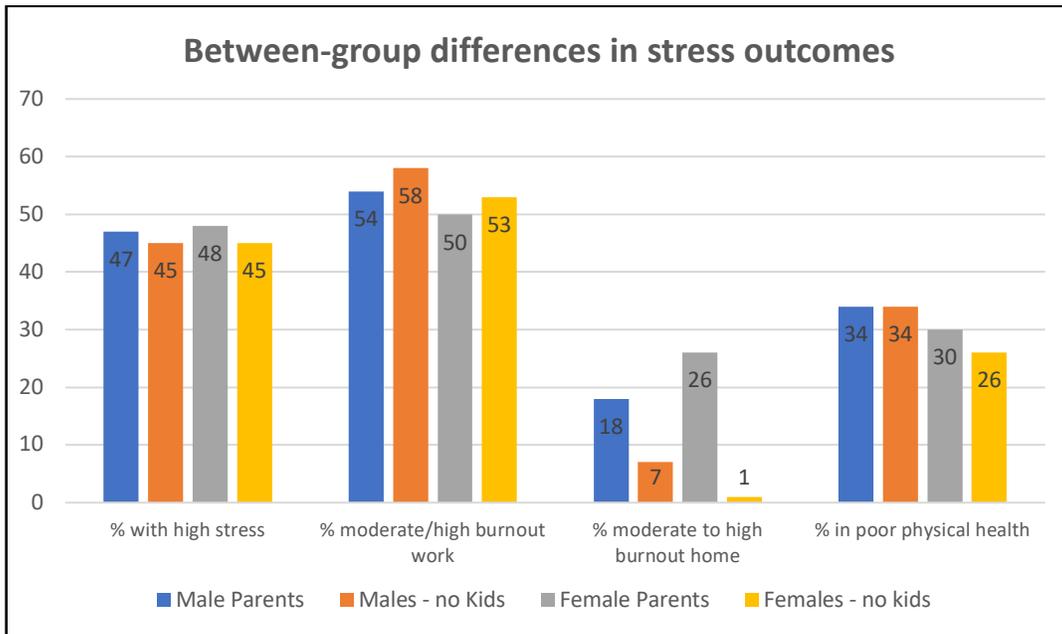

Figure 7. Between-group differences in stress outcomes

Impacts of COVID-19 on wellbeing

Early research in the area shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder for employees to balance work and family. These increased levels of work-life conflict have, in turn, negatively impacted employee wellbeing. To get a better understanding of how changes in their work and personal situations since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted Canadian officers we asked respondents to tell us the extent to which they had experienced a variety of changes that have been linked to individual and organizational wellbeing since the beginning of the pandemic. We divided these impacts into employee outcomes and employer outcomes.

Indicators of employee wellbeing

We used a survey measure from Statistics Canada ("The Employee Changes Index") to evaluate changes to the following indicators of individual wellbeing: (1) reductions in the amount of time they spend on recreational activities, the amount of energy they have, the amount of time they have for themselves, the amount of sleep they get, and (2) increases in their use of leave days to cope with family demands and in the number of hours they work in the evening and on weekends. Responses to these questions are shown in Table 18.

The data shows that in the six months prior to the study being done (i.e., summer and fall of 2020) a substantial number of the officers in the sample said that they had considerably reduced the amount of time they spent in recreational or leisure activities (58%), that their energy levels had declined substantially (32%) as had the amount of sleep they got (22%), and the amount of time they had for themselves (20%). It is also important to note that approximately one in ten officers noted that their use of leave days to cope with family demands (12%) had also increased dramatically over time as had their need to adjust their work hours so that they did more work in the evening and on weekends (9%).

Table 18. Employment Change Index -- Employee

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Reduce the amount of time you spend on recreational or leisure activities					
No reduction	24%	22%	26%	21%	33%
Somewhat reduced	18%	18%	18%	21%	20%
Considerably reduced	58%	60%	56%	58%	48%
Reduce the amount of energy you have					
No reduction	44%	41%	53%	32%	55%
Somewhat reduced	24%	24%	21%	27%	23%
Considerably reduced	32%	34%	25%	41%	22%
Reduce the amount of sleep you get					
No reduction	53%	50%	62%	41%	69%
Somewhat reduced	25%	25%	24%	34%	14%
Considerably reduced	22%	25%	14%	25%	17%
Reduce the amount of time you have for yourself					
No reduction	59%	55%	68%	52%	76%
Somewhat reduced	21%	22%	19%	21%	19%
Considerably reduced	20%	23%	14%	27%	6%
Use your leave days to cope with family demands					
No increase	74%	69%	84%	69%	89%
Somewhat increased	14%	16%	9%	14%	7%
Considerably increased	12%	14%	7%	17%	4%
Adjusted your work hours – now work more in evenings and on the weekend					
No increase	82%	79%	87%	80%	95%
Somewhat increased	9%	10%	6%	9%	2%
Considerably increased	9%	10%	8%	11%	2%

The picture changes slightly if one considers any change in these outcomes over time – not just a considerable change. This analysis was done by combining the number of respondents who reported that things had increased/decreased "somewhat" with those who reported that things had increased/decreased "considerably." Results from this analysis are provided in Figure 8. Examination of the data in this figure shows three-quarters (76%) of the sample reporting that the amount of time that they spend on recreational, or leisure activities had declined over time. Half said that the amount of energy they had (56%) and the amount of sleep they got (47%) had also decreased since the pandemic began. Forty percent reported that they had less time for themselves now than they did pre-pandemic (41%). Finally, officers also reported several changes in how they manage their time

that are likely to impact how the RCMP deploys their officers. For example, one in four of the officers in the sample said that demands at home had resulted in their increased use of personal leave days while one in five (18%) declared that they had adjusted their work hours and now preferred to work in the evening and on weekends.
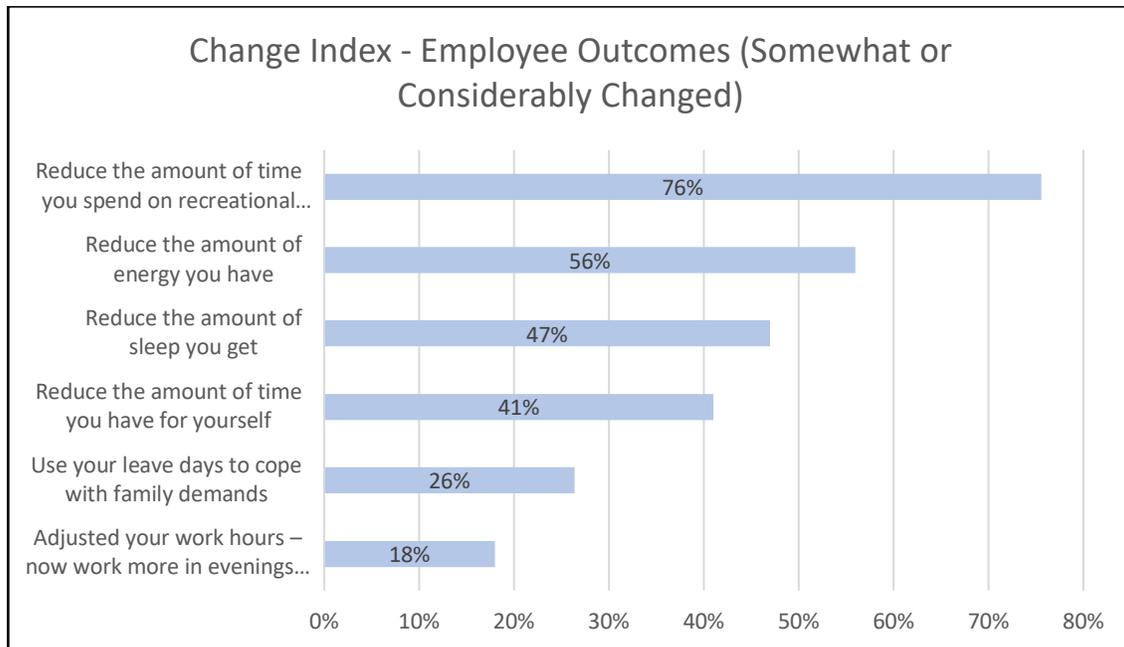

Figure 8. Employment change index – Employee outcomes (somewhat or considerably changed

Indicators of employer wellbeing

We used a survey measure from Statistics Canada ("The Employer Changes Index") to evaluate changes to the following indicators of organizational (i.e., police service) wellbeing: (1) reductions in work productivity, personal income, and work hours, and (2) increases in the likelihood that an officer will decide not to apply for a transfer or promotion and increased absenteeism. Data on the indicators of the impact that COVID-19 has had on the wellbeing of the employer are shown in Table 19 and Figure 9.

Examination of the data in Table 19 and Figure 9 support the following conclusions. First, very few officers (11%) reported that they had reduced their work hours during the pandemic – a result that is not surprising given the data presented earlier in this report regarding the perceptions on the part of these police officers that the service is understaffed and under-resourced. That being said, if the RCMP is as short staffed as the officers who responded to this survey perceive, the fact that one in ten officers were forced by the pandemic to cut back on the amount they could work is likely to have a substantive impact not just one the RCMP's ability to police the communities over which they have jurisdiction, it could also increase the workload on the officers who are able to work (i.e. the young male officers without children)

Also of note are the data showing the half (47%) of the officers in the sample indicated that their use of benefits had increased since the pandemic began, one in officers (33%) said that they had decided not to seek promotion or apply for a transfer during the pandemic, one in four (28%) reported that had experienced reductions in their work productivity and one in five stated that they were absent more often from work now than before the pandemic began. These changes in behaviour are likely to negatively impact the RCMP's bottom line as well as their succession planning processes.

Table 19. Employment Change Index -- Employer

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Increase your use of employee benefits					
No increase	53%	50%	62%	41%	69%
Somewhat increased	25%	25%	24%	34%	14%
Considerably increased	22%	25%	14%	25%	17%
Decide not to apply for transfer or promotion					
No increase	67%	64%	76%	61%	81%
Somewhat increased	12%	13%	9%	12%	10%
Considerably increased	21%	23%	15%	27%	10%
Reduce your work productivity					
No reduction	72%	71%	73%	68%	84%
Somewhat reduced	17%	17%	19%	20%	14%
Considerably reduced	11%	12%	9%	12%	2%
Be absent more often from work					
No increase	82%	80%	85%	74%	95%
Somewhat increased	10%	11%	9%	13%	1%
Considerably increased	8%	9%	7%	14%	4%
Reduce your work hours					
No reduction	88%	86%	94%	81%	97%
Somewhat reduced	7%	9%	2%	12%	2%
Considerably reduced	4%	5%	4%	7%	1%

Change Index - Employer Outcomes (Somewhat or Considerably Changed)

- Increase usage of employee benefits: 47%
- Decide not to apply for transfer or promotion: 33%
- Reduce your work productivity: 28%
- Be absent more often from work: 18%
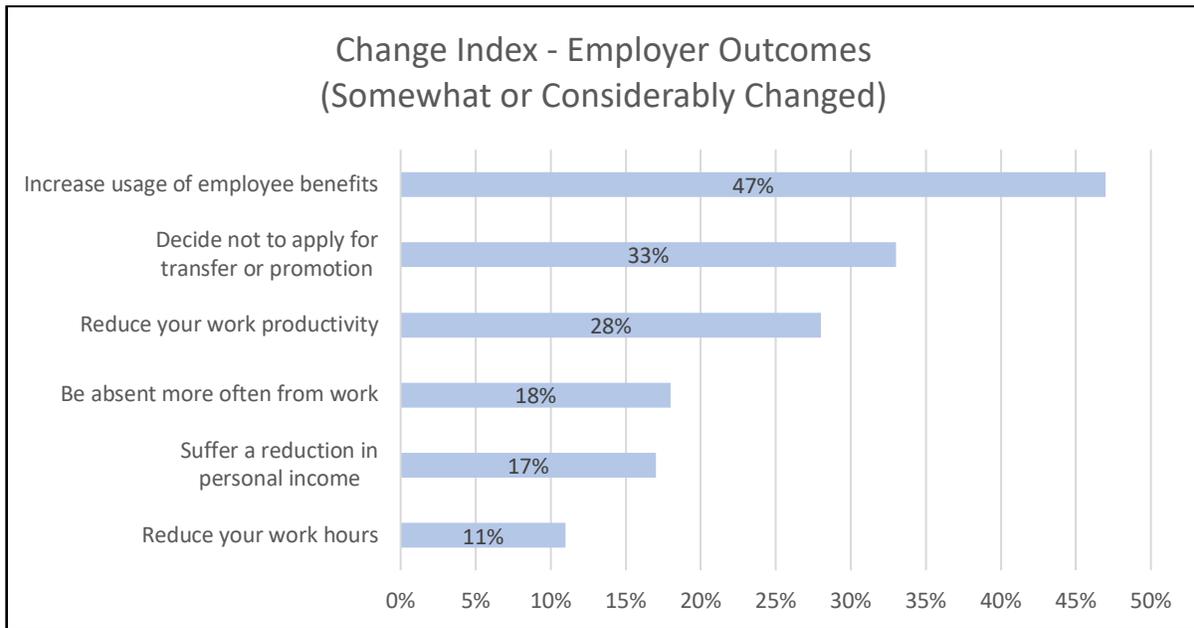- Suffer a reduction in personal income: 17%
- Reduce your work hours: 11%

Figure 9. Employment change index – Employer outcomes (somewhat or considerably changed)

Emotional reactions to COVID-19

A disruptive change like the COVID-19 pandemic can be expected to cause a variety of emotional reactions. In this study we define "emotions" as strong feelings deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. Emotions are human responses to internal events (e.g., thoughts, dreams, etc.) and external events that can emerge suddenly or slowly and change over time. Research has identified common emotions that are felt by most people. We asked respondents about which emotions they have felt since the start of the pandemic. The emotions in the list from the survey can be categorized as passive or active, and as positive or negative.

Table 20 shows the percentage of officers in the total sample that said they had felt each emotion. The most common reaction of the officers in the sample was frustration (83%) – an active negative emotion. Two-thirds of the officers felt uncertain (63%) while approximately half described themselves as experiencing negative emotions such as feeling unmotivated (58%), angry (57%), restless (47%), and/or sad (43%). The most common positive emotions were feeling happy (43%), thankful (38%), and hopeful (23%). This kind of data is often best visualized in a word cloud (see Figure 10).

Table 20. Emotional reactions to COVID-19

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Frustration	88%	89%	84%	90%	91%
Uncertainty	63%	64%	61%	69%	57%
Unmotivated	58%	56%	60%	57%	62%
Anger	57%	59%	57%	55%	45%
Restless	47%	48%	44%	55%	41%
Happiness	43%	43%	40%	50%	47%
Sadness	43%	40%	39%	52%	60%
Thankful	38%	37%	34%	58%	37%
Loneliness	36%	32%	38%	42%	51%
Resentment	35%	35%	34%	42%	26%
Boredom	35%	33%	41%	32%	42%
Outrage	26%	27%	31%	21%	12%
Guilt	24%	23%	18%	41%	26%
Hope	23%	21%	26%	32%	27%
Calm	22%	23%	23%	15%	20%
Apathy	21%	23%	20%	21%	10%
Grief	16%	17%	14%	19%	15%
Disoriented/Dazed	12%	14%	9%	14%	6%

Figure 10. Word Cloud - COVID-19 Emotions

Theoreticians and counselling professionals typically categorize emotions along two continuous dimensions: (1) active vs passive emotions, and (2) positive vs negative emotions. This categorization (referred to as the circumplex model of emotions) allows us to describe four groups of emotions: active negative, active positive, passive negative, and passive positive categories. The officer emotion data reported in Table 19 was used to determine the frequency with which the officers in the sample reported each category of emotion as shown in Figure 11. One in three of the officers in the sample reported that the pandemic had engendered active negative (36%) emotions such as frustration, resentment, outrage, anger, and uncertainty. Just over one in four of our respondents (28%) reported active positive emotions (i.e., calm, hope) while approximately one in five reported that they had experienced passive positive (15%) (i.e., happy, thankful), and passive negative (21%) emotions such as sadness, guilt, loneliness, apathy, grief, and boredom. Active responses (64%) outweighed passive responses (36%); negative emotions (57%) outweighed positive emotions (43%). Finally, we note that while there are a few between-group differences with respect to the specific emotions that officers report, there are no between-group differences when we look at the categories of emotions shown in Figure 11.
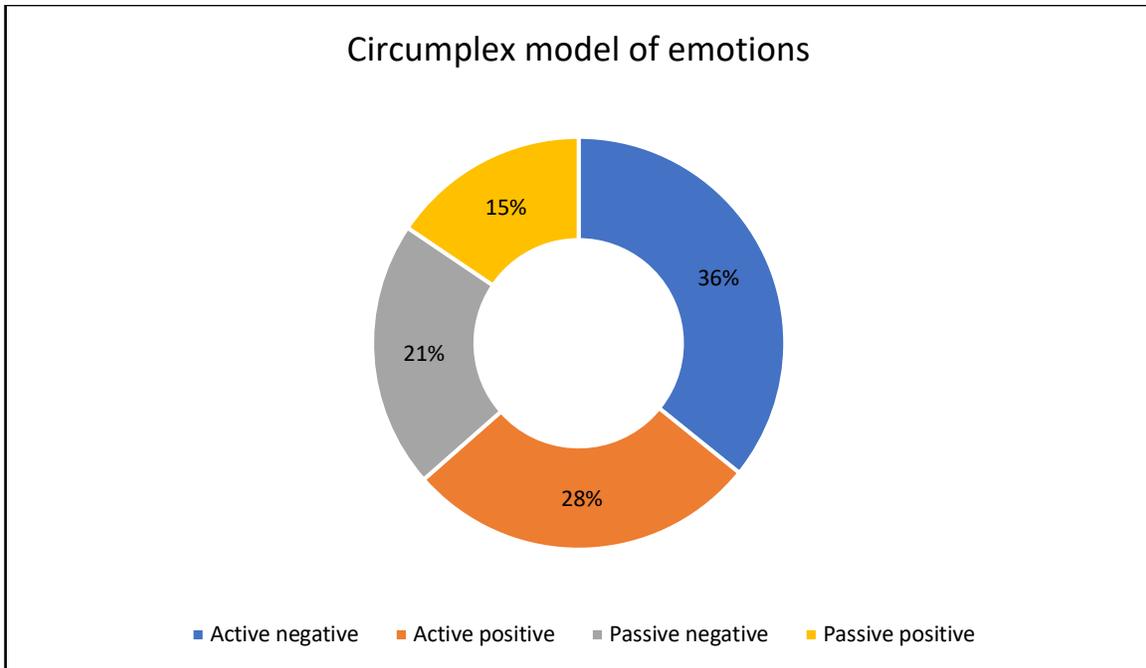
Figure 11. Circumplex model of emotions

Employee and Employer Wellbeing: Between-group differences of note

Research has suggested that the pandemic may impact the amount of time police officers spend in a myriad of activities associated with employer and employee wellbeing. In this section of the report, we identity any substantive between-group differences in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on how the officers in our sample spend their time. Many of the differences that were observed related to the parental status of the officer. Regardless of the officer's gender:

- Officers with children were <u>more likely</u> than those without children to report that they had experienced a reduction in the amount of energy they had, the amount of sleep they got each night and the amount of time they had for themselves.
- Officers with children were <u>more likely</u> than those without children to report that their use of leave days to cope with family demands had increased considerably (15%) in the past six months, that they had adjusted their work hours and now worked somewhat or considerably more often in the evenings and on weekends (20%) and that they were no more likely to miss work (20% of officers who are fathers and 27% of officers who are mothers reported that they were now more likely to be absent from work).

The other three differences related to both the gender of the officer and whether they had children. We note that:

- Female officers with children were <u>more likely</u> than officers in the other three groups (including male officers with children) to say that since the pandemic began they have experienced a considerable reduction in the amount of energy they have (41%).
- Female officers without children were <u>more likely</u> than the other officers in the sample to say that that since the pandemic began they had <u>not</u> reduced the amount of time that they spent in recreational or leisure activities (33% no reduction).

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Finally, we found no appreciable gender or parental status differences with respect to the type of emotions triggered by the pandemic.

Employer wellbeing

Many organizations use absence from work as a measure of productivity (if workers are not on the job, the work is certainly not being done). While companies expect a certain amount of absenteeism and recognize that some absenteeism is even beneficial to the employee, too much absenteeism can be costly in terms of productivity and is often symptomatic of problems within the workplace.

Absenteeism

Although absenteeism is an individual behaviour, it is considered an employer outcome because it is the employer that pays its cost. In this study, we quantified absenteeism by asking respondents to tell us how many days of work they had missed over the last 6 months because of health issues, because of childcare issues, because of emotional and physical fatigue, because of eldercare issues, because they wanted to avoid issues at work or because a leave day was not granted. For <u>each</u> of these questions we calculate and report: (1) the mean number of times people were absent for this reason (total sample), (2) the percentage of officers who reported a value greater than 0 (i.e. were absent from work for this reason), and (3) the mean number of times people were absent from work for this reason amongst the subsample of officers who reported a value greater than 0 (i.e. were away for this reason). All absenteeism results are presented in Table 21.

Table 21. Absenteeism

	Mean number of times people were Absent – total sample (1)	Percentage who reported a value greater than 0 (2)	Mean amongst officers who reported greater than 0 (3)
Been unable to report to work or carry out your usual activities because of health problems	5.8	42%	14.1
Not gone to work because of self-isolation/other COVID related issues	4.1	33%	12.5
Been unable to report to work or carry out your usual activities because of children-related problems	2.7	26%	10.4
Taken a day off work because you were emotionally or mentally fatigued	2.6	34%	7.8
Taken a day off work because you were physically fatigued	1.7	25%	6.8
Taken a day off work to avoid issues at work (abusive colleagues, difficult boss, difficult work environment)	1.2	14%	9.1
Been unable to report to work or carry out your usual activities because of problems concerning elderly relatives	.8	9%	9.1
Taken a sick day off work because a leave day was not granted	.3	5%	5.3

Table 21 is sorted by the mean number of times people were away as calculated using the total sample as this allows the reader to immediately identify the "costliest" forms of absenteeism from the organization's perspective (i.e., highest number of days off work in a six-month period). Why are officers missing work? Examination of the data in Table 21 show that just under half of the officers in the sample are missing work because of health issues (42%), one in three are absent because of issues associated with COVID-19 and/or because they were emotionally or physically fatigued and could not face another day at work (32%). A quarter of the respondents missed work because of childcare issues and/or because they were physically fatigued. Other appreciable sources of absenteeism include avoidance of an issue at work (14%), eldercare concerns (9%), and/or because a leave day was not granted (5%).

These data support the following conclusions: (1) work demands and work stressors are contributing to higher levels of absenteeism due to the physical and emotional exhaustion of RCMP officers, (2) family interferes with work is also contributing to higher levels of absenteeism due to concerns with childcare and eldercare, and (3) COVID-19 is exacerbating the above issues by contributing to a high level of absenteeism (each officer who missed work due to COVID-19 related issues missed 12.5 days of work on average) which is likely to increase the demands placed on other officers who need to work in their place. These data reinforce the need for police officers who are working with the public to be given priority for vaccines and for the RCMP to give a higher priority to implementing policies and programs to protect the health and wellbeing of officers and their families during the pandemic.

What are the costliest forms of absenteeism at the time that the study was done,quantified as the highest number of days off work for the total sample of officers? Our data would implicate absenteeism due to health problems, absenteeism due to COVID-19 related issues, absenteeism due to emotional/mental fatigue (i.e., taking a mental health day off work) absenteeism because of work-life balance issues (i.e., problems with childcare), and absenteeism due to physical fatigue.

Presenteeism

Presenteeism refers to workers coming in to work while sick, overly fatigued, or otherwise unproductive. It is an important workforce management issue that has been linked to diminished performance and worsening both health and general wellbeing. The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States has also shown that presenteeism costs organizations more than absenteeism.

Several questions were included in this survey to give us an idea of the prevalence of presenteeism in RCMP services during the pandemic. More specifically, we asked respondents how many times in the last six months they had gone to work when they were physically and/or mentally unwell. We treated these data in a similar manner to that described in conjunction with absenteeism and calculated: (1) the percentage of officers who reported a value greater than 0 on either of these two forms of presenteeism (i.e., went to work when they were physically/mentally unwell) and, (2) the mean number of times people exhibited either of these two types of presenteeism amongst the subsample of officers who reported a value greater than 0 (i.e., went to work when they were physically/mentally unwell). Results are shown in Table 22.

Table 22. Presenteeism

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Gone to work when you were physically unwell?					
% Greater than 0	39%	38%	39%	45%	41%
Mean times if greater than 0	15.1	16.1	13.2	16.7	10.2
Gone to work when you were mentally unwell?					
% Greater than 0	51%	48%	51%	55%	60%
Mean times if greater than 0	26.8	29.3	24.1	24.2	20.6

The data present very strong support for the idea that the pressures to attend work when physically or mentally unwell (i.e., presenteeism) are very high in the RCMP. The following data support this conclusion. First, we note that over the past six months one in three officers reported going to work when they were physically unwell (39%). We also note that this is not a rare occurrence with those officers who report to work when physically unwell did so on average 15.1 times over the course of the last six months. Second (and in some ways more problematically) we note that approximately half of the officers in our sample said they went to work when they were mentally unwell. This, along with the fact that the subgroup of officers who reported to work when mentally or emotionally fatigued did so on average a staggering 26.8 times over the course of the last six months is consistent with our data on the wellbeing of RCMP officers, particularly the data on burnout at work.

Absenteeism and Presenteeism: Between-group differences of note

Between-group differences in absenteeism and presentism data are shown graphically in Figure 12 (Absenteeism) and Figure 13 (Presenteeism).
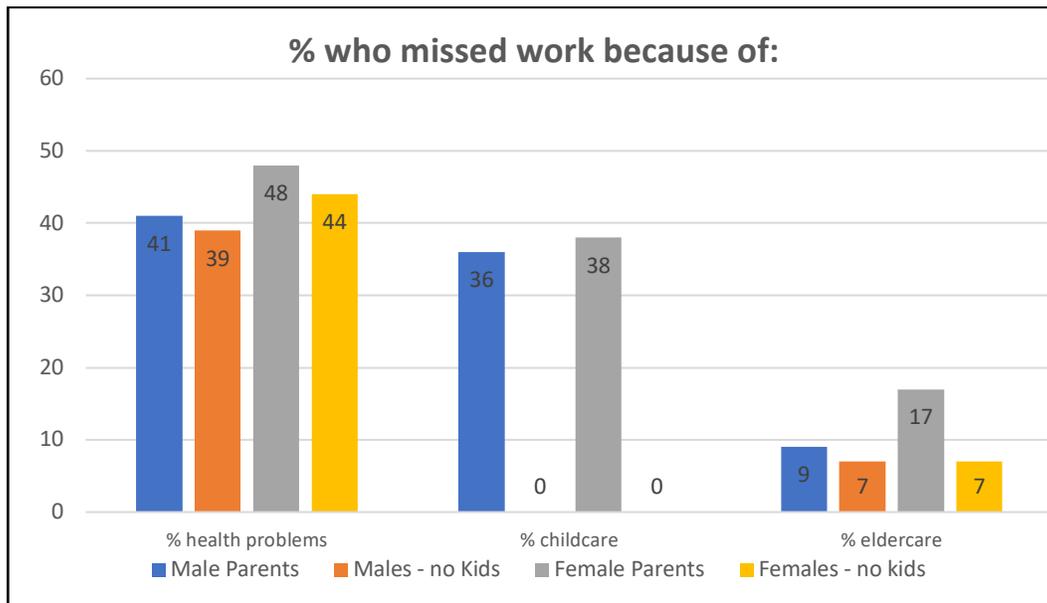

Figure 12. Between-group differences in absenteeism

Examination of the data in Figure 12 support the following observations with respect to absenteeism:

- Female officers were more likely than male officers to miss work because of physical health when the comparison was done taking parental status into account.
- Officers with children were more likely to miss work because of challenges with childcare than were officers without children, regardless of the gender of the officer.
- Female officers with children were more likely than their counterparts in the other three groups to miss work because of eldercare issues.

Finally, of note, the likelihood an officer would miss work due to mental and emotional fatigue, physical fatigue, COVID-19 related issues, to avoid difficult issues at work or because a sick day was not granted was not associated with either gender of parental status.
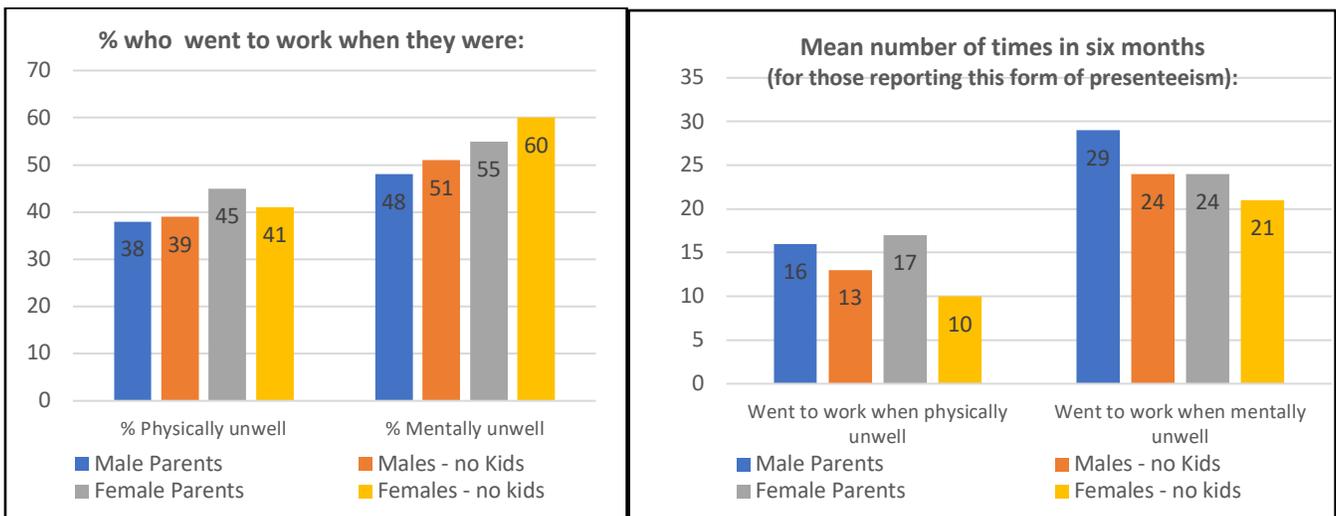

Figure 13. Between-group differences in presenteeism

The data in Figure 13 support the following observations with respect to presenteeism:

- Female officers with children were more likely than officers in the other three groups to go to work when they were physically unwell
- Female officers were more likely than male officers to go to work when they were mentally unwell (when the comparison is done taking parental status into account).
- Male officers with children went to work when they were mentally unwell 29 times in a six-month period. This was a significantly higher level of presenteeism than was reported by the officers in the other three groups.

Finally, we note that neither gender nor parental status is related to the number of times an officer attended work when they were physically unwell in the six months prior to the study being done.

Summary: Wellbeing outcomes

We examine two different sets of indicators of wellbeing in this study: indicators of employee wellbeing (i.e., mental, and physical health) and indicators of employer wellbeing (i.e., employer change index, presenteeism and absenteeism). The data support several important conclusions regarding the mental health and physical health of the officers in this sample and what this could mean for the employer.

First, we would argue that the majority of RCMP police officers in our sample can be classified as being "at risk" when it comes to their mental health and wellbeing. This conclusion is supported by multiple pieces of data from this study. First, we note that half of the officers in the sample (49%) reported moderate levels of perceived stress – approximately the same percent (47%) reported high levels of perceived stress. In fact, only 4% of the RCMP officers in our sample reported low levels of perceived stress. Second, one in four of our respondents report high levels of burnout at work while another 29% report moderate levels of burnout. These findings are consistent with the fact reported earlier in this report that three-quarters (76%) of the officers in the sample report high levels of job stress.

Several issues make the findings with respect to officer burnout within the RCMP particularly concerning. First, burnout typically manifests itself when chronic stress is not attended to and will not go away on its own. The pandemic is likely to exacerbate issues associated with chronic stress rather than alleviate them. Second, police officer burnout is a function of their experiences at work not at home (only 5% of the officers in this sample report high burnout from demands they face at home). This means that the employer (i.e., the RCMP) must take actions to address many of the chronic stressors that officers experience at work (see the third section of this report). Third, the consequences of high levels of burnout (i.e., fatigue, alcohol consumption, poorer physical health, heart problems, professional mistakes) on the officers themselves, their families, and the communities they work in are potentially profound. Finally, it appears that the officers who are experiencing higher levels of stress or burnout are either not encouraged and/or unable to take time off work to recover from the demands they face on the job. This last assertion is supported by the fact that half of the officers in our sample said they went to work when they were mentally unwell and did so on average a staggering 27 times over the course of the last six months. These data are also in line with our findings regarding the work demands placed on RCMP officers, the fact that they feel that they cannot say no at work, and the work environment stressors they encounter on the job (multiple competing job priorities, physical and verbal harassment, calls for defunding, the risks associated with exposure to COVID-19, and the threat of being "on camera" at any time). Efforts must be made to improve the mental health of RCMP officers as the stress and burnout levels exhibited by this group are not sustainable over time.

Second, we note that many officers are reacting emotionally to the changes at work and at home imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic The most common reactions of the officers in the sample were the active negative feelings of frustration (88%) uncertainty (63%), a lack of motivation (58%), anger (57%), restlessness (47%) and sadness (43%). The most common positive emotions expressed by the officers in the sample were feelings of happiness (43%) and being thankful (38%).

Third, given the age (younger) and gender (mostly male) make-up of the sample and the type of job performed (police officer) we were surprised to find that a quarter of officers in the RCMP officers in the sample reported that they were in poor physical health. These findings suggest that the mental strain many officers are under along with the demands they face at work and an organizational culture that encourages officers to put work first, regardless of the costs to them are taking their toll. This interpretation of the data is consistent with the data showing that just under half (42%) of the officers in our sample are missing work because of health issues, while 33% are missing work because of issues associated with COVID-19 and because they are emotionally and mentally fatigued (34%) and because they are physically exhausted (25%). The impact of COVID-19 on absenteeism is particularly troubling as our data show that each officer who missed work due to COVID-19 related issues missed 12.5 days of work on average over the past six months. The question then becomes, given issues with respect to understaffing, how can the RCMP manage these higher levels of absenteeism without negatively impacting the wellbeing of the officers who need to work on their days off or attend work when they themselves are unwell to meet service delivery expectations?

Fourth, we note that the pandemic has negatively impacted how the officers in our sample spend their time at work and at home. Three-quarters (76%) of the officers in the sample reported that the amount of time they spend on recreational, or leisure activities had declined over time. Half reported a decline in the amount of energy they had (56%) as well as the amount of sleep they got (47%). Forty percent reported that they had less time for themselves now than pre-pandemic (41%). The majority have not however, reduced their work productivity (72%) or their work hours (89%) reinforcing the idea that RCMP officers prioritize work over family/time for themselves.

The data collected for this study reveals a number of challenges that the RCMP are likely to face that can be connected to changes in the behaviour of their officers because of the pandemic. For example, one in three of the officers in the sample stated that they have decided not to seek promotion or transfer during the pandemic. This is likely to have ramifications on the RCMP's succession planning efforts. We also note that one in four officers reported that they had experienced reductions in their work productivity (28%) because of the pandemic, 18% reported an increase in absenteeism, one in four (26%) reported that an increase in the demands they face at home had resulted in an increase in their use of personal leave days and 18% stated that to cope with increased demands at home they had adjusted their work hours and now preferred to work in the evening and on weekends. These changes are all likely to impact the RCMP's ability to deploy officers to meet service demands. Finally, the data showing that half of the RCMP officers in the sample (47%) reported that their use of employee benefits had increased since the pandemic began suggests that the service's lack of support for the families of their officers during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as inattention to workload issues and understaffing of the frontline will have a negative impact of the service's bottom line.

Why are officers missing work? According to our data half of the officers in the sample are missing work because of health issues (42%), one in three are absent because of issues associated with COVID-19 and/or because they were emotionally or physically fatigued and could not face another day at work (32%). A quarter of the respondents missed work because of childcare issues and/or because they were physically fatigued. These data support the following conclusions: (1) work demands and work stressors are contributing to higher levels of absenteeism due to the physical and emotional exhaustion of RCMP officers, (2) family interferes with work is also contributing to higher levels of absenteeism due to concerns with childcare and eldercare, and (3) COVID-19 is exacerbating the above issues by contributing to a high level of absenteeism (each officer who missed work due to COVID-19 related issues missed 12.5 days of work on average) which is likely to increase the demands placed on other officers who need to work in their place. These data reinforce the need for police officers who are working with the public to be given priority for vaccines and for the RCMP to give a higher priority to implementing policies and programs to protect the health and wellbeing of officers and their families during the pandemic.

What are the costliest forms of absenteeism for the RCMP at the time that the study was done (quantified as the highest number of days off work for the total sample of officers? Our data would implicate absenteeism due to health problems, absenteeism due to COVID-19 related issues, absenteeism due to emotional/mental fatigue (i.e., taking a mental health day off work) absenteeism because of work-life balance issues (i.e., problems with childcare), and absenteeism due to physical fatigue.

Finally, while we did note several areas where wellbeing varies according to the gender and/or parental status of the employee, we also feel it is important to highlight those areas where no such differences occurred. We note, for example, that the likelihood that an officer would experience two of the most important indicators of wellbeing included in the study – perceived stress and burnout from work – was not associated with either gender or parental status. The impact the organizational culture has on the behaviour of the officers in the sample is apparent in the data showing that the likelihood a RCMP officer would miss work due to mental and emotional fatigue, physical fatigue, COVID related issues, to avoid difficult issues at work or because a sick day was not granted was not associated with either gender of parental status. We also note that neither gender nor parental

status is related to the number of times an officer attended work when they were physically unwell in the six months prior to the study being done. Lastly, we found no appreciable gender or parental status differences with respect to the type of emotions triggered by the pandemic.

We observed two **gender differences** in the wellbeing indicators included in this study. Regardless of parental status the female officers in the sample were more likely than their male counterparts: (1) to miss work because of physical health challenges, and (2) to go to work when they were mentally unwell. Female officers with children also reported higher levels of burnout at home (26% with moderate to high burnout at home) than their male counterparts with children (18% with moderate to high burnout at home).

Regardless of their gender, the **officers in the sample with children** were <u>more likely</u> than those without children to report that their use of leave days to cope with family demands had increased considerably (15%) in the past six months and that they had adjusted their work hours and now worked somewhat or considerably more often in the evenings and on weekends (20%). They were also more likely to miss work because of challenges with childcare than were officers without children.

Finally, there were differences in wellbeing associated with some combination of gender and parental status. All these differences involved the female officers in the sample.

We note three instances where **female officers with children** report significantly different wellbeing outcomes than do the officers in the other three groups considered in this study. More specifically, female officers with children were <u>more likely</u> than officers in the other three groups (including male officers with children) to say that since the pandemic began they have experienced a considerable reduction in the amount of energy they have, to miss work because of eldercare issues, and to go to work when they were physically unwell

We also note three instances where **female officers without children** report significantly different wellbeing outcomes than do the officers in the other three groups considered in this study. More specifically, female officers without children were <u>less likely</u> to agree that their family responsibilities were keeping them from spending the amount of time they would like on their job/career but more <u>more likely</u> to say that that since the pandemic began they had <u>not</u> reduced the amount of time that they spent in recreational or leisure activities and to say that their physical health is very good to excellent (38%).

Chapter 7. Moderators

Based on theory and previous research in the area we expect that the stressors officers experience at work will predict officer strain (i.e., work-life conflict) and that strain will, in turn, predict employee and employer wellbeing (see our theoretical framework shown in Figure 1**Error! Reference source not found.**). We also expect that these relationships will be moderated by factors such as how the officers cope with stress, the amount of control they have over their work and family domains, their level of resilience, their gender, age and parental status and their situation at work (e.g., rank, years of service, role). The term moderating variable refers to a variable that can strengthen, diminish, negate, or otherwise alter the association between stressor and strain or between strain and wellbeing.

Findings with respect to sample demographics and the officer's work profile were reported in Chapter 3 to provide the reader with important contextual information to help with the interpretation of the other survey results. Results relating to the other moderators included in our analysis (e.g., coping strategies, resilience, control over work and control over family) are reported in the following sections of this chapter.

Coping Strategies

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing". Coping mechanisms are ways in which external or internal stress is managed, adapted to, or acted upon. Researchers have classified coping mechanisms in a myriad of different ways. In this study we follow the lead of Lazarus, Folkman and Pearlin and divide coping strategies into two broad categories:
- **Adaptive Coping Strategies**: Strategies that contribute to the resolution of the stress response, and
- **Maladaptive Coping Strategies**: Strategies that that are designed to push the stressor out of awareness and that often result in an increase in the number of challenges faced over time.

Adaptive coping strategies can be further classified into two groups: (1) problem-focused, and (2) emotion-focused).

Problem-Focused Coping Strategies: Individuals who use problem-focused coping actively seek to resolve the situation that is causing them stress; they try to figure out what the problem is and deal with it (i.e., to apply situational control). Problem-focused coping strategies are directed at taking care of the problem and thereby overcoming the stress. Adaptive problem-focused coping strategies included in the measure of coping used in this study are colour-coded "Green" in Figure 14 and include:
- Prioritise and do what is important first,
- Try and be very organized so that I can be on top of things,
- Make a conscious effort to separate my work life from my family life,
- Schedule, organize and plan my time more carefully,
- Recognise that I cannot do it all and set limits (say no),
- Request help from people who have the power to help me,
- Make sure that I take time off from work (breaks, lunch),
- Delegate work to others,
- Seek help from family and friends,
- Seek help from colleagues at work, and
- Seek counselling from a mental health professional

Emotion-Focused Strategies are designed to reduce the emotional distress that accompanies the problem and are designed to give someone "peace of mind" by reducing their sense of arousal. Emotion-focused strategies emphasize emotion regulation, cognitive restructuring, and reappraisal of the stressful situation. Seeking social support from others is a common adaptive form of emotion-focused coping. Adaptive forms of emotion-focused coping included in the measure used in this study are colour-coded yellow in Figure 14 and include:

- Watch TV,
- Read,
- Get some exercise,
- Talk to family and friends, and
- Talk to a colleague at work.

Maladaptive Coping Strategies are used by people who wish to push the stressor out of their awareness. Maladaptive coping strategies include avoidance, withdrawal, rumination, resignation, substance abuse and isolation from friends and support groups. The use of maladaptive strategies can, over time, negatively impact the individual who uses such tactics and often exacerbates their mental health issues. Maladaptive forms of coping included in the measure used in this study are colour-coded red in Figure 14 and include:

- Work harder and try and do it all,
- Get by on less sleep than I would like,
- Eat,
- Drink alcohol,
- Reduce the quality of the work I do,
- Smoke,
- Take medication to calm myself down, and
- Spend time alone.

In the survey we asked the officers about how often they use each of these 24 strategies to cope with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses ranged from never (1), to sometimes/occasionally (3) to frequently/all the time (5). We began our analysis of these data by calculating the average use made of each of these 24 strategies. Results from this analysis are shown in Figure 14. When examining this figure, we want to see our officers making high use of adaptive problem-focused (green) and emotion-focused (yellow) coping strategies and low use of maladaptive coping methods (red). We do not want to see high use of maladaptive strategies and low use of problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies.

What did we find? On the good news/bad news front, we observed that none of the coping strategies (adaptive or maladaptive) are used regularly (score of 3/5 or greater) by the officers in the total sample to cope with stress. How do officers cope? According to the data the officers in the sample make moderate use (score of 2.5 to 3.5) of the following nine coping mechanisms: prioritize and do what is important first (3.2), get by on less sleep than I would like (3.2), try to be organized (3.1), watch TV/streaming service (3.1), make a conscious effort to separate my work life from my family life (2.8), eat comfort food (2.6), get some exercise (2.7), schedule, organize and plan my time more carefully (2.5) and just work harder and try and do it all (2.5)

Five of the strategies that are more commonly used (i.e., prioritizing, trying to be organized, separating work from life, scheduling/ planning, and recognizing that one cannot do it all) fall into the adaptive problem-focused grouping, two (getting exercise, watching TV) are considered adaptive emotion-focused strategies while two (getting by on less sleep, eating to cope with stress) are maladaptive and likely to contribute to increased stress over the long term.
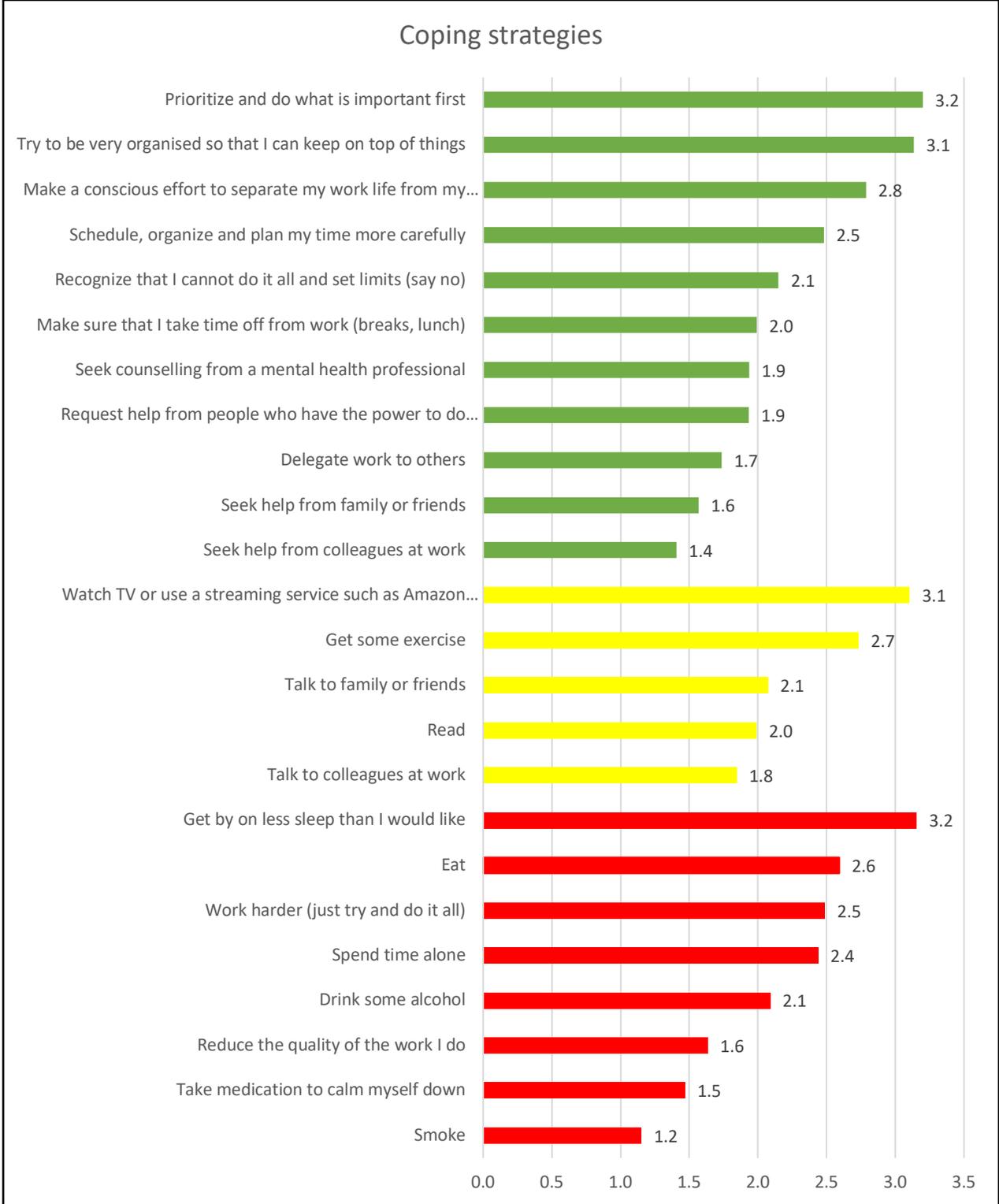
Coping strategies

Strategy	Value
Prioritize and do what is important first	3.2
Try to be very organised so that I can keep on top of things	3.1
Make a conscious effort to separate my work life from my…	2.8
Schedule, organize and plan my time more carefully	2.5
Recognize that I cannot do it all and set limits (say no)	2.1
Make sure that I take time off from work (breaks, lunch)	2.0
Seek counselling from a mental health professional	1.9
Request help from people who have the power to do…	1.9
Delegate work to others	1.7
Seek help from family or friends	1.6
Seek help from colleagues at work	1.4
Watch TV or use a streaming service such as Amazon…	3.1
Get some exercise	2.7
Talk to family or friends	2.1
Read	2.0
Talk to colleagues at work	1.8
Get by on less sleep than I would like	3.2
Eat	2.6
Work harder (just try and do it all)	2.5
Spend time alone	2.4
Drink some alcohol	2.1
Reduce the quality of the work I do	1.6
Take medication to calm myself down	1.5
Smoke	1.2

Figure 14. Coping strategies

The second step in our analysis of the coping strategies data involved using the same principal component analysis method that we used to analyze the work environment stressors in Chapter 4 to group our 24 coping strategies to reflect how the officers in our sample cope with stress. Using this method, we observe that the officers in the sample use six different approaches to cope with stress[4]. The six groups of coping strategies along with the items that are included in each group and the type of coping they represent are listed below:

- **Set priorities**
    - Schedule, organize and plan my time more carefully
    - Try to be very organized so that I can keep on top of things
    - Prioritize and do what is important first
- **Seek social support**
    - Seek help from colleagues at work
    - Seek help from family or friends
    - Talk to colleagues at work
    - Talk to family or friends
- **Set limits**
    - Make a conscious effort to separate my work life from my family life
    - Make sure that I take time off from work (breaks, lunch)
    - Recognize that I cannot do it all and set limits (say no)
- **Seek professional help**
    - Take medication to calm myself down
    - Seek counselling from a mental health professional
- **Eat and watch TV**
    - Eat
    - Watch TV
- **Read and exercise**
    - Read
    - Get some exercise

How do the RCMP police officers in our sample cope? Examination of the factor scores in Table 23 support the following observations.

The coping strategy used most often by the officers in the sample (used moderately often - mean score of 2.9) was to **Set priorities** (which includes prioritizing, being organized and planning their time). This grouping includes three adaptive problem-focused strategies which have been proven to be highly effective ways to deal with stressors that are contributing to mental health issues. On a positive note, almost a quarter of the RCMP officers in the sample make high use of this coping strategy. Unfortunately, one in three (34%) of the officers in the sample say they rarely cope with stress by setting priorities and getting organized (30%).

The second commonly used strategy to cope involves **eating and watching** TV (31% of the officers in the sample make high use of this strategy; 28% rarely cope in this manner). Both activities take the officer's mind off what is bothering them (i.e., the stressor) but it is unlikely to do anything towards reducing the source of stress over the long term. Overeating can also contribute to weight gain and a decline in physical health over time – as such we

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[4] Please note: the other eight coping strategies (most of which are maladaptive approaches to coping) did not group together and will be discussed after we report the results for the six main groups of coping strategies.

feel that this strategy can be maladaptive in the long run. On a positive note, 28% of the officers in the sample say they rarely use this maladaptive strategy to cope with stress.

Table 23. How do the officers in our sample cope with stress? (Factor scores)

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Set priorities (mean)	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.0
Low	34%	34%	41%	28%	29%
Moderate	40%	42%	34%	33%	47%
High	26%	24%	25%	39%	24%
Eat and watch TV (mean)	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.1
Low	28%	32%	23%	29%	19%
Moderate	41%	41%	38%	46%	38%
High	31%	28%	39%	25%	43%
Read and exercise (mean)	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.7
Low	48%	51%	44%	49%	29%
Moderate	39%	38%	41%	39%	48%
High	13%	11%	15%	13%	23%
Set limits (mean)	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4
Low	63%	63%	64%	62%	58%
Moderate	29%	29%	26%	29%	33%
High	9%	8%	10%	9%	9%
Seek professional help (mean)	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.6
Low	78%	78%	81%	70%	81%
Moderate	13%	13%	13%	18%	14%
High	9%	10%	6%	12%	5%
Seek social support (mean)	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9
Low	87%	89%	83%	90%	81%
Moderate	11%	10%	15%	10%	16%
High	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%

Read and exercise can be considered an adaptive emotion-focused strategy as engaging in these types of activities provides individuals with an opportunity for emotion regulation (exercise) and/or a pleasurable distraction from the stressors that can preoccupy one's thoughts. Thirteen percent of the sample regularly cope in this manner – a score that may be due to the higher use of exercise to cope. Unfortunately, approximately half (48%) of the officers in the sample rarely cope by exercising and/or reading.

Just under one in ten (9%) of the RCMP officers in the sample make high use of the other key adaptive problem-focused coping strategy included in this analysis: *set limits*. Individuals who use this strategy recognize that they cannot do it all and set limits/say no, make sure that they take the time off from work (have lunch, take their breaks) and make a conscious effort to separate their work and family lives (i.e., they compartmentalize) Unfortunately, almost two-thirds (63%) of the RCMP officers in the sample do not use what has been found to be an effective set of strategies to cope with stress – probably because the demands on their time and the culture of

the service make it hard to use this strategy at work. This interpretation is consistent with the data reported earlier regarding how often officers can take an uninterrupted break at work.

On a positive note, one in ten (9%) of the RCMP officers in this sample are seeking **professional help** to cope with the stressors they are exposed to at work. More challenging, particularly considering the high incidence of burnout at work, perceived stress, job stress. and insomnia reported by the officers in this sample, are the data showing that three-quarters of the officers in this sample are not reaching out and getting professional assistance to help them cope with the demands of their job (78% rarely use this strategy). These findings, while consistent with research showing that many law enforcement officers perceive stigma around mental health issues and hence avoid seeking professional counselling for work-related stress, are both unfortunate and alarming given our findings with respect to officer wellbeing within the RCMP. This suggests that more needs to be done within the RCMP to reduce the stigma attached to seeking counselling from a mental health professional when needed.

Finally, we note that the police officers in the sample do not seek *social support* – from friends, family, or colleagues at work (87% rarely use this strategy).   In fact, examination of the data in Table 23 shows that only 1% of our respondents make high use this coping strategy. This is unfortunate given the proven utility of using social support to cope effectively with stress.

Statistically speaking not all the coping items included in the survey fell into any of the coping factors identified in Table 23. Two out of eight of these "orphan" coping strategies (i.e., request help from people who have the power to do something for me; delegate work to others) represented adaptive problem-focused ways to cope. The rest of the "orphan" strategies (i.e., get by on less sleep, work harder and try and do it all, spend time alone, drink some alcohol, reduce the quality of the work I do, smoke) represent maladaptive ways to cope. In Table 24, we present our analysis of the percent of the sample that make high, moderate, and low use of these five strategies.

On a positive note, we observe that very few officers cope by smoking cigarettes (96% rarely). More concerning are the data showing that 12% of the officers in the sample drink alcohol several times a week or more as a way of coping with stress (73% of the officers rarely cope in this manner). Also noteworthy are the data showing that 20% of the officers in the sample cope by seeking to spend time alone several times a week or more (62% rarely cope in this manner). Most research in the area suggests that too much social isolation can take a serious toll on an individual's physical and mental health. Research has also found that spending time on one's own can be beneficial if the individual balances time alone with time spent maintaining strong and supportive social connections. The fact that the officers in this sample rarely cope by seeking social support suggests that time alone may be maladaptive over the long run for the officers who pursue this approach.

Two of the other maladaptive orphan coping strategies, "work harder and try and do it all" and "get by on less sleep that I would like" tend to have the same etiology. While it is reassuring to note that almost two-thirds (60%) of the officers in the sample rarely cope by just working harder and trying to do it all, more problematic are the data showing that for a quarter of the officers in the sample (24%) this is one of their "go to" coping strategies that they use regularly. Employees who use this strategy to cope tend not to prioritize their work or say no when the amount of work assigned exceeds their capacity to deliver.

Sleep deprivation occurs when you do not get the amount of sleep you need. Lack of sleep affects how we think and feel and over the long run can increase the risk of physical and mental health issues. While insomnia often arises because people have trouble sleeping, people with sleep deprivation don't allocate enough time to sleep, often because of lifestyle choices and work obligations. Almost half (46%) of the RCMP officers in this sample make high use of this coping strategy (sleep less so that they have more time to fulfill work and family obligations) while just over one in three (38%) rarely cope in this manner.

Table 24. Other ways that police officers cope with stress

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Get by on less sleep than I would like (mean)	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.9
Low	38%	34%	43%	45%	43%
Moderate	17%	17%	16%	16%	16%
High	46%	49%	42%	39%	41%
Work harder (just try and do it all) (mean)	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.4
Low	60%	60%	66%	50%	62%
Moderate	15%	16%	13%	17%	15%
High	24%	24%	20%	32%	23%
Spend time alone (mean)	2.4	2.2	2.9	2.2	3.2
Low	62%	71%	41%	71%	33%
Moderate	18%	16%	25%	17%	22%
High	20%	13%	34%	12%	45%
Drink some alcohol (mean)	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.0
Low	73%	72%	73%	77%	77%
Moderate	15%	14%	14%	15%	16%
High	12%	14%	12%	7%	7%
Request help from people who have the power to do something for me (mean)	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.9
Low	82%	82%	80%	82%	83%
Moderate	11%	11%	13%	8%	14%
High	7%	7%	7%	10%	3%
Delegate work to others (mean)	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.6
Low	86%	85%	89%	87%	92%
Moderate	10%	11%	8%	10%	7%
High	3%	4%	3%	3%	1%
Reduce the quality of the work I do (mean)	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.3
Low	88%	87%	86%	90%	95%
Moderate	8%	8%	7%	9%	2%
High	5%	5%	7%	1%	2%
Smoke (mean)	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1
Low	96%	96%	95%	97%	99%
Moderate	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%
High	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%

These two coping strategies (just work harder, get by on less sleep) are both considered maladaptive over the long run as they are associated with increased levels of role overload and exhaustion. Exhausted employees tend to make more mistakes (both at work and at home) which increases the need to redo work which, in turn, leads to yet more exhaustion – resulting in a vicious cycle of overwork for those who attempt to cope in this manner. As noted above, sleep deprivation is also linked to physical and mental health issues, something that we see in this sample.

The final two "orphan" coping strategies shown in Table 24, request help from people who have the power to do something for me and delegate work to others are examples of adaptive problem-focused strategy. Unfortunately, the data showing that the vast majority (82%) of the officers in the sample rarely cope by seeking help from someone who has the power to help or delegating work to others (86%). These findings, are consistent with what was observed with respect to seeking social support and data showing that the culture of the RCMP is one that discourages asking for help and saying no. They are also consistent with the data showing that 88% of the officers in the sample rarely cope by reducing the quality of the work that they do as well as the high levels of job stress and role overload reported by the officers in the sample and the perception that the service is understaffed (or over-committed). The data from this study indicate that this situation is not sustainable over the medium to long term and that action needs to be taken either to reduce the demands placed on officers by the RCMP (by perhaps clarifying priorities or dealing with those dimensions of the organizational culture that make it difficult for officers to seek help or say no when they are overwhelmed at work) .

In summary, the above data support the following conclusions: (1) many police officers in the sample are not coping effectively with the stress they face on the job, at home and associated with the pandemic, and (2) between 2% and 50% (frequency varies depending on the strategy being considered) of the officers in the sample are coping in a maladaptive manner that may in fact make things worse over time.

Resilience

Resilience has been defined as an individual's capacity for "positive adaptation in the face of stress or trauma"[5] such as health problems, work stressors, and family problems. We measured officers' resilience using a well-established 10-item scale. Table 25 shows the average scale rating for the total sample as well as the percent of the sample with low, moderate, and high levels of resilience. Not surprisingly, given their choice of profession, the majority (69%) of the officers rated high on the resilience scale; only 2% rated low.

Table 25. Resilience

	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Resilience					
Mean	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
Low	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Moderate	29%	30%	27%	31%	25%
High	69%	68%	70%	68%	73%

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[5] Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. Child Development, 71, 543–562.

Control over work and over family

Research in the area has shown that the more control that a person perceives that they have over a stressful situation, the greater their capacity to cope with it. In the work environment, this relationship between control and demands and its prediction of stress is known as Karasek's Job Strain Model[6] (Figure 15). Karasek`s demand-control model of job strain theorizes that workplace stress is a function of how demanding a person's job is and how much control the person has over their responsibilities at work. According to the model, employees with higher levels of control are better able to cope with demands than those with lower levels of control and thus report lower levels of job strain. There is a large body of empirical work which is supportive of Karasek's model and the idea that higher levels of control are associated with lower levels of strain. Karasek's model of demands and control has also been shown to apply in family life.
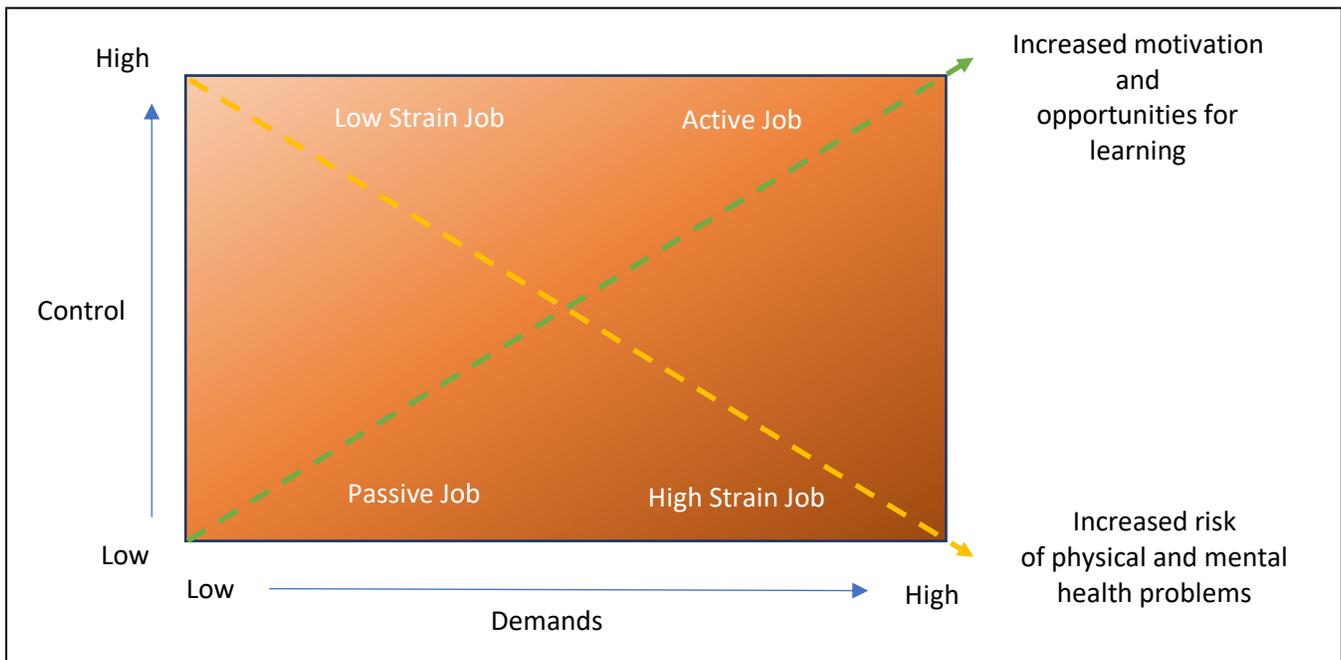

FIGURE 15: JOB STRAIN MODEL

In this study we included two measures that allowed us to classify the job of police officer using Karasek's model: one to quantify the individual's level of perceived control over their work situation, the other to quantify their level of perceived control over their family domain. Results of our analysis of the data collected using these two measures are shown in Table 26 and Figure 16.

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[6] Karasek, R. A. (1979). Job Demands, Job Decision Latitude, and Mental Strain: Implications for Job Redesign. Administrative Science Quarterly, 24(2), 285-308.

Table 26. Control over work and control over family

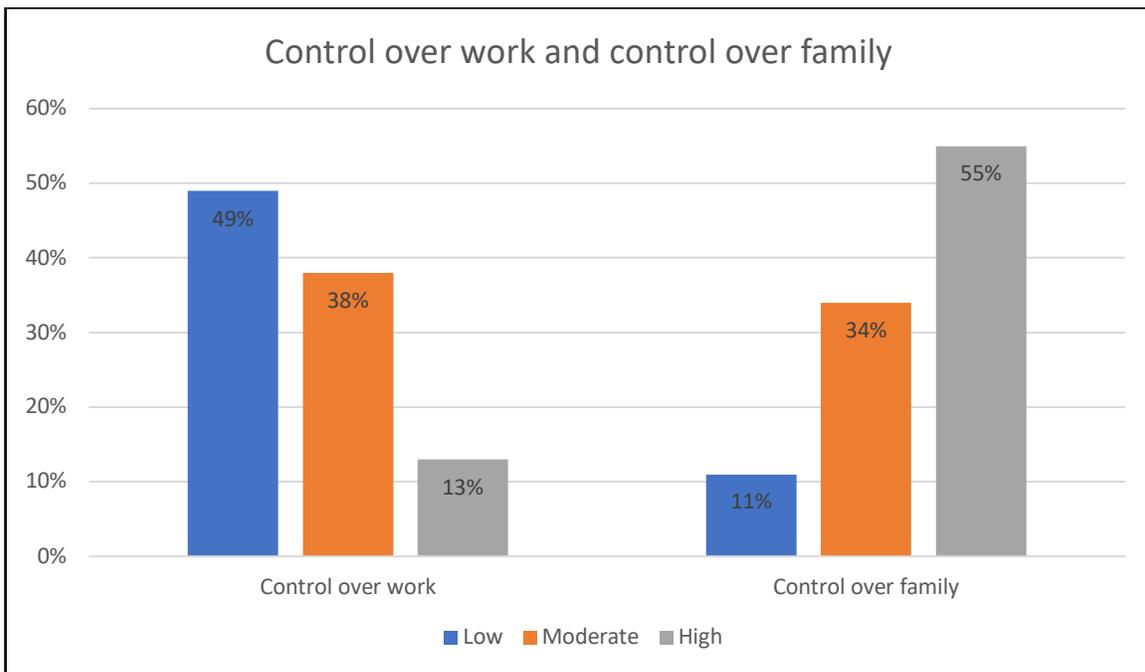|	Total sample (N=1080)	Male parents (N=643)	Male non-parents (N=211)	Female parents (N=111)	Female non-parents (N=86)
Control over work					
Mean	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Low	48%	48%	48%	48%	48%
Moderate	41%	41%	40%	45%	41%
High	11%	11%	12%	7%	12%
Control over family					
Mean	3.6	3.4	3.9	3.6	4.3
Low	13%	16%	9%	10%	2%
Moderate	35%	41%	22%	40%	15%
High	52%	43%	70%	50%	82%

Figure 16. Control over work and control over family

Examination of these data support the following conclusions:

- Officers report very different levels of control over their work lives than their family lives.
- Officers in the sample have, on average, low control over work (mean of 2.5). Half of the officers in the sample (48%) report low levels of control over work while only one in ten (11%) perceive high levels of control. Paired with the high demands faced by the police officers in this sample, this puts police officers squarely in the high strain quadrant of the job strain model. Employees in high strain jobs (i.e., high work demands, low control over work) are at increased risk of physical and mental health issues – a prediction that is borne out by the data in this report.

- Officers in the sample have, on average, high control over family (mean of 3.6). Approximately half (52%) of the officers in the sample report high levels of control over their family while only 13% perceive that they low levels of control in this domain. Further examination of the data show that officers with children are in the active quadrant of Karasek's model while non-parents are in the passive quadrant. In either case, the fact that officers perceive higher levels of control at home than at work suggests that they may adapt better to increased family demands (e.g., children staying home from school, working from home, etc.) that seem to be part and parcel of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coping Strategies, Perceived Control and Resilience: Between-group differences of note

While there are several between-group differences in how the officers in the sample cope with stress, many officers regardless of gender or parental status cope with stress in a very similar manner[7]. For example, we observed no gender or parental status differences in the likelihood an officer would use the following adaptive problem-focused coping strategies: (1) try and set limits or (2) request help from people who have power to do something for me. Nor are gender or parental status associated with the use of two of the maladaptive coping strategies considered in this study – smoking and drinking alcohol. Finally, we note no between-group differences in the tendency to cope by seeking social support – from friends, family, or colleagues at work. The lack of a gender difference in the use of social support is very interesting as typically women are more likely to talk about their problems with others and ask for help than are men.

There is one gender difference of note in how people cope with stress. More specifically we note that female officers were <u>less likely</u> to make use of one of the maladaptive adaptive forms of coping included in this study – reduce the quality of the work they do.

There are three differences of note in how people cope with stress that is associated with parental status. More specifically the data show that the officers without children in our sample were, regardless of their gender, more likely to make high use of two of the maladaptive coping strategies considered in this study: (1) eating and watching TV, and (2) spending time by themselves. The male and female officers in the sample with children rarely use this strategy – perhaps because they just do not have the time. Officers without children were also less likely to cope by delegating work to others in the organization – a finding that may be because these officers are younger, have fewer years of service in the RCMP and are more concerned with impression management.

The other five between-group differences observed in the data depend on both the gender of the officer and whether they have children. Three out of five of these significant between-group differences in coping pertain to our female officers with children who are <u>more likely</u> than officers in the other three groups to say that they cope by setting priorities, seeking professional help (both adaptative problem focused coping strategies) and by just working harder and trying to do it all (a maladaptive coping strategy). In a similar vein we note that the male officers with children in our sample were <u>more likely</u> than the officers in the other three groups to say that they coped by getting by on less sleep than they would like – also a maladaptive coping strategy.

Finally, we note that the female officers without children in the sample were more likely than officers in the other three groups to cope by reading and exercising – a healthy form of coping, particular for individuals who work for an organization where fitness is a valued job requirement.

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[7] IN this case, between group differences are identified by looking for differences in the mean coping score.

In terms of the other moderators included in this study the data shown in Tables 25 and 26 support the following conclusions. First, neither resilience nor control over work are associated with the gender or the parental status of the officer. Second, control over family depends on the gender of the officer being asked as well as their parental status. Not surprisingly, non-parents are more likely than those with children to report high levels of control over their family domain regardless of their gender. More of a surprise, the data show that women report higher levels of control over their family domain than their male counterparts regardless of parental status.

Summary: Moderators

In Figure 1 we identified moderators of the relationships between stressors and strains and between strains and wellbeing indicators included in our analysis. In Chapter 3, we described the officers in our sample in terms of key demographics and aspects of their work profiles. The variables we focused on in Chapter 3 were selected as research has found that they can all act as important moderators of the relationships included in our theoretical framework. In this chapter, we report on our findings with respect to the other four moderators of employee wellbeing included in this study: coping mechanisms, resilience, control over work and control over family. The data support several important conclusions about how officers deal with strains and stress in their work and family lives.

First, we would argue that most police officers in the sample are not coping effectively with the stress they face on the job, at home, and associated with the pandemic. The data also provide support for the idea that many officers are coping in maladaptive (negative) ways that may make things worse over time (i.e., just working harder, trying to do it all, cutting back on sleep).

Individuals who use problem-focused coping strategies actively engage with the problems that are causing their stress and seek to resolve them. Our data show that with one exception (*setting priorities*) relatively few officers in our sample make high use of adaptive problem-focused coping strategies to cope with the high levels of job stress, stress, and burnout they are experiencing. Virtually no one in the sample indicated that they coped by seeking professional help (78% rarely use), delegating work to others (86% rarely use) or requesting help from the people who have the power to do something for them (82% rarely use). Two-thirds rarely coped by setting limits (separating work life and family life, taking breaks from work, and saying no). While one in four (26%) frequently coped by trying to manage their time by setting priorities, scheduling tasks, and organizing what they must do, one in three (34%) rarely used this very effective set of problem focused coping strategies. Our findings relating to the use of problem-focused coping within the RCMP are very unfortunate given the proven utility of using such approaches to cope effectively with stress.

Second, we found that only 1% of the officers in the sample of either gender cope by seeking social support – from friends, family, or colleagues at work. In fact, 87% of the respondents stated that they rarely coped in this manner. This is again unfortunate as research has shown that not only does social support help people feel less stressed, but it can also actually improve their health and decrease their mortality risk. The lack of a gender difference in the use of social support is very interesting as typically women are more likely to talk about their problems with others and ask for help than are men. We speculate that the use of any of the coping behaviours included in this coping factor goes against the cultural norms of police services which is why their use is low regardless of the demographic group being considered. The low use of social support by the female officers in the sample (90% of the female officers with children say they rarely cope by seeking social support) is also consistent with research with police services that shows that women police officers tend to "do police" rather than "do gender."

Third, our analysis determined that a substantive number (i.e., 10% to 40%) of the officers in the sample frequently use emotion-focused strategies to cope with stress. While the use of emotion-focused strategies is likely to

temporarily reduce the emotional distress on the officers caused by heavy work demands and work-related strain, these strategies are unlikely to help over time as they do little to address the source of the stress (i.e., the stressor). The most common forms of adaptive emotion-focused coping used by the police officers in the sample included watching TV (mean of 2.8; 31% of officers use this strategy frequently to cope) and reading/getting exercise (mean of 2.4). Deeper analysis of the data using factor analysis determined, however, that officers who watch TV to cope with stress also tend to cope by eating "comfort food." Eating can contribute to negative outcomes over the long term by contributing to weight gain if abused.

Somewhat positive are the data showing that 13% of officers regularly cope by exercising and reading – a highly effective way to cope for police officers as an officer who is physically fit is more likely to be at a healthy weight, have a strong body, and more able to engage in the bursts of speed and power officers need while on the job. More concerning are the data showing that just under half (48%) of the officers in the sample rarely if ever cope in this manner.

Fourth, on the good news/bad news front, almost all the maladaptive (negative) coping mechanisms included in the survey were used relatively infrequently by most officers. This good news is offset by the data showing that a substantive group of officers in the sample do use maladaptive coping mechanisms that could lead to serious negative outcomes. For example, our analysis showed that half of the officers in the sample indicated that they frequently (several times a week or more) coped by cutting back on their sleep while one in four frequently coped by "just trying to do it all" and 12% indicated they frequently had one or more drinks of alcohol to help them cope.

Fifth, and again on a more positive note, the officers in the sample reported high levels of personal resilience in the face of all the challenges they face at work and at home (69% high; mean of 3.7). These findings imply that officers have the capacity to recover quickly from the challenges they are currently facing at work and at home during the pandemic. High resilience as a personal characteristic has been found to be common among police officers across cultures and can be considered a resource that officers can draw on from within themselves to withstand the strain and stress of policing. All resources, however, are finite. While high resilience will provide resistance to shocks through personal hardiness, it can only delay the onset of bad physical and mental health outcomes (e.g., burnout, illness) in the face of persistent strain and stress. It will not prevent them. This leads us to ask – "is the pandemic the one bridge too far" when it comes to officer wellbeing.

Sixth, the data from this study indicate that many of the officers in our sample have little control over their work (mean work control score of 2.4) but have high control over their family situation (mean family control score of 3.6). According to Karasek's Job Strain Model, the level of control that a person has over their work and family domains predicts how able they are to cope with the demands they face in this domain. Application of the basic tenets of Karasek's model to the data collected in this research provide strong support for the idea that RCMP officers have high strain jobs (high work demands and low control over work). This is an important finding as research using this framework has unequivocally determined that individuals in high strain jobs are more likely to experience negative physical and mental health outcomes. Our research, which shows that many of the RCMP officers who responded to our survey report high strain, high job stress, and moderate to high burnout at work are what we would expect given the nature of the job (i.e., high demands, low control). They are also consistent with our data showing that the officers in the sample make very low use of healthy adaptive coping strategies. Low control over work can also explain why officers do not access more adaptive coping strategies as the high demands of their work reduce their energy and access to coping resources (e.g., working on weekends and holidays keeps officers away from family activities, shifts that run overtime and supplemental work from home consume time and energy needed to go out and exercise, etc.).

High control over family is common among police officers universally, a finding that can be explained by the fact that many officers enter police service at a young age, often before starting a family, and tend to have partners who understand the demands of the job. On a positive note, half the officers in our sample reported high control over family. These high levels of control over the family domain help to explain why many officers in the sample report lower levels of family role overload, family interference with work, and burnout at home. The high control over family reported by the officers in our sample might also help explain why most of these individuals are not experiencing the same spike in stress and burnout at home that are being observed among workers in other professions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The high levels of control at home, when considered in juxtaposition with the data showing low levels of control at work support our conclusion that the high levels of stress and burnout observed within our sample of police officers is mostly due to their job.

While there are several between-group differences in how the officers in the sample cope with stress, most officers regardless of gender or parental status cope with stress in a very similar manner. For example, we observed no gender or parental status differences in the likelihood an officer would use the following adaptive problem-focused coping strategies: (1) try and set limits or (2) request help from people who have power to do something for me. Nor are gender or parental status associated with the use of two of the maladaptive coping strategies considered in this study – smoking and drinking alcohol. Finally, we note no between-group differences in the tendency to cope by seeking social support – from friends, family, or colleagues at work. The lack of a gender difference in the use of social support is very interesting as typically women are more likely to talk about their problems with others and ask for help than are men.

We observed one key gender difference in how people cope with stress: female officers were less likely than their male colleagues to make high use of one of the maladaptive adaptive forms of coping considered in this study - reduce the quality of work they do. Our review of the research in the area suggests that this gender difference may be due to the fact that female officers are in the minority within the RCMP and have to "over-perform" at work to be accepted by their male colleagues and be given opportunities for promotion.

Compared to their counterparts with children, the male and female officers without children in our sample were more likely to make high use of two maladaptive coping strategies: (1) eating and watching TV, and (2) spending time by themselves. Female officers without children in particular make high use of these coping strategies. The male and female officers in the sample with children rarely use this strategy – perhaps because they just do not have the time or the opportunity. While these findings might be because the COVID-19 pandemic might have made it more difficult for this group of officers to socialize with others, they could also signal a problem if these officers use this time on their own to ruminate and dwell on what is bothering them rather than determine how best to deal with the stressors they face on the job and elsewhere. Officers without children were also less likely to cope by delegating work to others in the organization – a finding that may be because these officers are younger, have fewer years of service in the RCMP and are more concerned with impression management.

The other five between-group differences observed in the data depend on both the gender of the officer and whether they have children. Three out of five of these significant between-group differences in coping pertain to our female officers with children who are more likely than officers in the other three groups to say that they cope by setting priorities, seeking professional help (both adaptative problem- focused coping strategies) and by just working harder and trying to do it all (a maladaptive coping strategy). In a similar vein, we note that the male officers with children in our sample were more likely than the officers in the other three groups to say that they coped by getting by on less sleep than they would like – also a maladaptive coping strategy. These differences may be linked to the fact that police officers with children face particularly heavy demands at work and at home.

Finally, we note that the female officers without children in the sample were more likely than officers in the other three groups to cope by reading and exercising – a healthy form of coping, particular for individuals who work for an organization where fitness is a valued job requirement.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

In this report, we used data from the 2020 Employee Wellbeing in Times of COVID survey to identify the key sources of work and non-work stress facing RCMP officers in the second wave of the pandemic (Chapter 4), to examine the officers' ability to balance competing work and family demands in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (Chapter 5), to assess the wellbeing of RCMP officers who were providing an essential service to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chapter 6), and to determine how RCMP officers are "coping" with changing work and family demands in times of COVID-19 (Chapter 7). Throughout the report, we have identified the costs to the employer of not providing needed support to officers during the COVID-19 pandemic, factors that contribute to an increased ability to manage the challenges posed by the pandemic, and factors that test the officers' welfare and wellbeing. In each chapter, we also reported findings by sub-groups to examine how gender and parental status (male officers with children n = 643; male officers without children n = 211; female officers with children n = 111; female officers without children n = 86) impact each of the above issues. In this chapter, we summarize the key findings from this study and point out the implications of not taking action to address concerns regarding employee welfare and wellbeing moving forward. Recommendations are also provided where appropriate.

Report speaks to the experience of frontline police officers

The data used in this report represent a sample of 1000+ frontline RCMP police officers. The typical officer in our sample is a male police officer in his thirties to early forties who lives in a dual-income household and more than likely has children. The typical respondent is an experienced constable with between one and two decades of experience as a police officer. Approximately one fifth of our respondents hold the rank of sergeant or staff sergeant and one in five officers are female.

Findings from this research help us appreciate: (1) the challenges faced by this group of officers as they performed their expected duties during a pandemic, (2) how they coped with these challenges, and (3) the impact these challenges along with other work and family challenges have had on their wellbeing. The size of the sample allowed us to explore the impact of gender and parental status on the above issues.

Stressors faced by officers at work have more to do with where they work than the job itself

There is a high degree of consensus within our sample regarding the factors that make the job of an RCMP constable/sergeant stressful. Of note, many of the key stressors facing RCMP officers at this time are not related to the job itself but rather but have more to do with how the police are being portrayed in the media (i.e., negative images of the police in the news; managing the expectations of the public) and the concomitant fear that they will be verbally and/or physically assaulted by a member of the public when on the job; public discussions on defunding the police; resourcing decisions (i.e., not enough officers to do the work required; the amount of time the officer is required to spend in administrative work; the sheer volume of the work) and the culture of policing (i.e., dealing with multiple competing demands simultaneously). Many officers also experience high levels of stress that can be attributed to the fact that they are at risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it along to their family. The high level of stress experienced because of COVID-19 might be linked to the fact that most of the officers who participated in this study said that the RCMP has not implemented any policies or practices to protect the wellbeing of their families during these times of pandemic. Finally, we note that the amount of stress these officers face is exacerbated by the need to juggle multiple competing ever-changing priorities within an organization: (1) whose culture makes it hard for them to seek help and to say no to more work, even when they are overloaded, (2) when the area in which they work is understaffed (there are not enough officers to do the

work required and to allow for breaks during work hours; it is hard to meet work demands when people are away), and (3) when the cases they need to deal with are more complex than in the past and they worry about what will happen if things slip through the cracks.

Taken as a whole, our analysis indicates that the key workplace stressors experienced by RCMP officers working in frontline positions in Canada at this time have less to do with the job itself and more to do with the organizational culture of the RCMP, with resourcing decisions, and by the political landscape surrounding the job of police officer in North America at this time. These findings imply that any effort to improve officer wellbeing needs to focus on changing those areas of the organizational culture that are negatively impacting officers' ability to do their job and educating the public regarding how RCMP officers differ from their American counterparts. Assuming that it is difficult for any police service in Canada to make the case that they need more resources (particularly more human capital) we suggest that it might be useful to have senior leadership within the RCMP who are responsible for issues around employee wellbeing work with the communities which are policed by the RCMP, the NPF, and the federal and impacted provincial governments to establish a set of agreed upon priorities with respect to where the service should be spending their time and resources.

It has oft been said "When everything is a priority, nothing is." Data from this study suggest that the work expectations placed on RCMP officers are not sustainable over time. We, therefore, recommend that the RCMP place a high priority on identifying a hierarchy of policing priorities for their officers and managing to these priorities.

Overwork is likely to be an issue for many RCMP officers

Overwork is the expression used to describe people who are working too hard, too much, too long, or beyond their strength or capacity to cope. Perceptions of overwork are positively associated with the amount of time spent in activities associated with one's job. Research has shown that the risk of feeling overworked increases for those who work in excess of forty hours a week, those who are forced to work overtime (i.e. called in on their days off, work longer than the agreed upon workday, work through their breaks) and who work for an organization with a culture that makes it difficult to refuse overtime (i.e., those who fear that if they say no to work tasks or overtime they will face reprisals such as demotion or assignment to unattractive tasks or work shifts). Data from this study would suggest that many of these conditions are extant in the RCMP at this time.

Why should the RCMP care about whether their officers are overworked? There is a significant body of research looking at the consequences of overwork on an employee's health and wellbeing which demonstrates a strong link between being overworked and a myriad of health problems including insomnia, depression, stress, and heart disease. Overwork can also result in higher levels of absenteeism, higher turnover, and greater insurance costs – all of which can negatively impact the organization's bottom line without increasing output.

The following data support the idea that many RCMP officers in Canada work hard and are at risk of or are currently feeling overworked: (1) they report that on average they work 47.9 hours per week, and (2) approximately 40% of the officers in our sample indicated that they rarely if ever had time for an uninterrupted break at work.

Which work activities consume most of these officers' time at work? Analysis of the data determined that that most officers in our sample spend their time in activities that are indirectly related to policing the community (i.e., writing reports, reading, and reviewing reports) and in dealing with tasks that might better be undertaken by other stakeholders (i.e., mental health issues in the community). Fewer than half of the officers in our sample regularly

spend time in activities related to traditional frontline policing operations (i.e., engaging with the community, enforcement activities, crime prevention activities, custody issues).

Our findings relating to overwork and time at work are unfortunate given the strong link between having the ability to take time off work and employee wellbeing as well as organizational productivity. These findings are, however, consistent with our data showing that many RCMP officers reported that they were stressed because they did not have the resources needed to get the work done, they did not understand what to focus their work efforts on, and that factors at work such as understaffing and an organizational culture make it hard for an officer to say no to more work or ask for help. It is likely that many if not all these factors are contributing to RCMP officer's being overwork.

These data support the following conclusions. First, it would appear that the RCMP is either under-resourced and/or overcommitted and has an organizational culture that acts as a barrier to workplace efficiency. Second, many frontline RCMP police officers are either overworked at the present time or at high risk of experiencing overwork in the very near future.

Our results indicate that one way to address issues associated with overwork and workplace stress would be to streamline the report writing process by either investing in technology and/or hiring civilian clerks to assist in this task. Outsourcing this task would allow officers to spend more time in community policing activities. Another way to address this issue is to reduce the burden placed on the RCMP that can be linked to the fact that in many communities the RCMP have become the "service of last resort." This could be done by engaging in discussions with key stakeholders regarding the role of police in Canadian society. Over the past several decades shifts in funding have meant that municipalities and provinces have downloaded responsibility to the police for services that were traditionally undertaken by other agencies and stakeholders (mental health in particular). The data from this study suggest that this has made the job of police officer stressful and unsustainable and support the need for the NPF as well as interested communities and government players to work together to define what it means to be a police officer in Canada today and to determine police priorities moving forward.

Frontline RCMP officers experience high levels of job stress and work-life conflict

What impact do these workplace stressors and work demands have on the wellbeing of RCMP officers? To begin answering this question we examined a variety of indicators of officer strain (difficulties that cause worry or emotional tensions) that are likely to be predicted by the stressors included in this study. More specifically, we examined the extent to which the RCMP officers in our sample experienced high levels of job stress (a harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when the demands that the job imposes on the employee overcome their ability to cope), work role overload/family role overload (the perception that one has more to do at work or at home than can be done in the time available; feeling overwhelmed and stressed for time) and work interferes with family/family interferes with work (role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible so that participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in the other role).

During the pandemic, an astounding 76% of the RCMP officers who responded to our survey reported high levels of job stress. Another one in four reported moderate levels of job stress. The fact that there were no substantive between-group differences in the level of job stress reported implies that the stress comes with the role itself and where the officer works rather than with the gender of the officer or whether they have children. Work interferes with family (WIF) is also a problem for this group of officers with 72% of them reporting high levels of this stressor.

Our data show that the typical RCMP officer in this sample reports high levels of job stress, moderate to high levels of work role overload from the pressures of the job, very high levels of work interferes with family, and low levels

of work role overload that can be attributed to pressures from their work colleagues and their supervisor. These findings contrast sharply with what we found when we looked at challenges stemming from the family domain. Of note, RCMP officers in this sample are three times more likely to report high levels of work role overload from the pressures of the job (45% high) than they are to report high levels of family role overload (14% high).

Taken together these data lead us to conclude that the wellbeing of frontline RCMP Canada at this time is a function of the stressors and demands that they face at work rather than their circumstances at home. This means that any efforts to improve officer wellbeing needs to focus on the reduction of work demands and the key work-environmental stressors that lead to strain (e.g., organizational culture, the bureaucracy, multiple competing priorities, how RCMP officers are treated by the Canadian public and the media).

Many frontline RCMP officers are at risk when it comes to their mental health and wellbeing

We would argue that a substantive number of the police officers in our sample are at risk when it comes to their mental health and wellbeing. This conclusion is supported by multiple pieces of data from this study showing that the majority of RCMP police officers in our sample can be classified as being "at risk" when it comes to their mental health and wellbeing. Half of the officers in the sample reported either moderate (49%) or high (47%) levels of perceived stress with only 4% reporting low levels of perceived stress. One in four of our respondents reported high levels of burnout at work while another 29% reported moderate levels of burnout. These findings are consistent with the fact reported earlier in this report that three-quarters (76%) of the officers in the sample reported high levels of job stress and are in stark contrast to the data showing only 3% report high levels of burnout from what they must do at home.

The data from this study along with previous survey work we have done with the police leads us to conclude that many frontline RCMP officers are suffering from chronic stress associated with their circumstances at work. This is worrisome given research showing that the pandemic is likely to exacerbate issues associated with chronic stress rather than alleviate them.

Officers who are suffering from chronic stress would benefit from time away from work. Unfortunately, the data from this study suggests that the culture in place in the RCMP and the officers' own work ethic means this is unlikely to happen as officers who are experiencing higher levels of stress or burnout are either not encouraged and/or unable to take time off work to recover from the demands they face on the job. This last assertion is supported by data showing that half of the RCMP officers in our sample said they went to work when they were mentally unwell and did so on average a staggering 27 times over the course of the last six months. These data are also in line with our findings regarding the work demands placed on RCMP officers, the fact that they feel that they cannot say no at work and the work environment stressors they encounter on the job (multiple competing job priorities, physical and verbal harassment, calls for defunding, the risks associated with exposure to COVID-19, and the threat of being "on camera" at any time).

Efforts must be made to improve the mental health RCMP officers as the stress and burnout levels they exhibit are not sustainable over time. We recommend that senior officers within the RCMP and the NPF work together to determine how best to address many of the chronic stressors that officers experience at work and focus on both short-term and long-term solutions. We consider this issue to be urgent given that the consequences of high levels of burnout (i.e., fatigue, alcohol consumption, poorer physical health, heart problems, professional mistakes) on the officers themselves, their families, and the communities they work in are potentially profound.

The stresses and strains of the job are negatively impacting the physical health of many officers

A quarter of the RCMP officers in this sample reported that they were in poor physical health – a surprising finding given that most of our respondents are younger men who work in jobs that require a high level of physical fitness and stamina. These findings suggest that the mental strain many are under along with the demands they face at work are taking a toll on the physical health of these young men and women. This interpretation of the data is consistent with the data showing that just under half of the officers in our sample are missing work because of health issues, while one in three are missing work because of issues associated with COVID-19 and because they are emotionally and mentally fatigued. An additional one in four report that they have missed work because of physical exhaustion.

The impact of COVID-19 on absenteeism is particularly troubling as our data show that each officer who missed work due to COVID-19 related issues missed 12.5 days of work on average over the past six months. The question then becomes, given issues with respect to understaffing, how can the RCMP manage these higher levels of absenteeism without negatively impacting the wellbeing of the officers, who need to work on their days off or attend work when they themselves are unwell, to meet service delivery expectations?

Inattention to the wellbeing of frontline officers is negatively impacting the RCMP's bottom line

Although absenteeism is an individual behaviour, it is considered an employer outcome because there is a direct cost to the employer when someone does not show up to work. This connection allows us to draw a link between employee wellbeing and the employer's bottom line. Why are officers missing work? Examination of the data collected as part of this study show that just under half of the RCMP officers in our sample missed work because of health issues and issues associated with COVID-19. One in three are missing work because they were emotionally or physically fatigued and could not face another day at work, because of childcare issues and because they were physically fatigued. Other appreciable sources of absenteeism include eldercare concerns, avoidance of an issue at work and because a leave day was not granted.

Data from this study support the following conclusions. First, work demands, and work stressors are contributing to higher levels of absenteeism attributable to physical and emotional exhaustion. Second, an inability to balance work and family demands is also contributing to higher levels of absenteeism in the RCMP as officers miss work to deal with childcare and eldercare. Third, COVID-19 is exacerbating the above issues by contributing to higher levels of absenteeism within the RCMP. COVID-19 may also result in a further increase in absenteeism down the road if it results in an additional increase in the work and family demands placed on other officers who need to work in the place of those who are forced to socially distance at home.

What are the costliest forms of absenteeism at the time that the study was done? Our data would implicate absenteeism due to health problems, to COVID related issues, and to emotional/mental fatigue (i.e., taking a "mental health" day off work). Also of relevance to the discussion on the costs that the RCMP is likely to incur if they do not deal with the issues identified in this study are data showing that half of the RCMP officers in this sample reported that their use of employee benefits had increased since the pandemic began.

These findings provide additional support for the idea that the RCMP's lack of support for the families of their officers during COVID-19 as well as inattention to workload issues and understaffing of the frontline is negatively impacting their bottom line. They also speak to our recommendation that the RCMP take action to implement strategies and programs designed to improve officer wellbeing. The consequences of leaving things the way they are and "hoping for the best" are likely to be ever-increasing levels of absenteeism, increased benefits costs, increasing costs associated with policing communities in Canada and reduced productivity for the RCMP. These

data also reinforce the need for police officers who are working with the public to be given priority for vaccines and for RCMP services to give a higher priority to implementing policies and programs to protect the health and wellbeing of officers and their families during the pandemic.

Officers have less time away from work to decompress from chronic stressors they face on the job

Time is a finite commodity and time spent in one set of activities must, by necessity, take away from the amount of time available for other undertakings. In our survey we asked respondents to tell us how the amount of time they spent in a variety of activities linked to their personal life, their family life or their work had changed since the pandemic had begun – had the amount of time increased, stayed the same or decreased. We found that three-quarters of the officers in our sample reported that the amount of time that they spend on recreational, or leisure activities had declined over time. Half reported a considerable decline over time in the amount of energy they had and the amount of sleep that they got each night. Forty percent reported that they had less time for themselves now than pre-pandemic. The data showing that most officers in this sample did not, however, reduce their work productivity or their work hours reinforces the idea that RCMP officers prioritize work over family/time for themselves.

The pandemic may negatively impact the RCMP's ability to deploy officers to meet service demands

The data collected for this study reveal several challenges for the RCMP that can be connected to changes in the behaviour of their officers because of the pandemic. Specifically, our data show that one in three of the constables in the sample stated that they have decided not to seek promotion or transfer during the pandemic. This would have substantive ramifications on the RCMP's succession planning efforts if these results can be generalized to the population of RCMP officers. We also note approximately one in four of the constables in our sample stated that they had experienced reductions in their work productivity and an increase in absenteeism because of the pandemic. One in five also acknowledged that to cope with the increase in demands they faced at home because of the pandemic, they had either increased their use of personal leave days, and/or adjusted their work hours and now worked more evening and on weekends. These changes are all likely to impact the RCMP's ability to deploy officers to meet service demands.

The pandemic is likely to have a negative impact on officer wellbeing and how officers view the service

Early research in the area shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder for employees to balance work and family and has negatively impacted employee wellbeing. We included several measures in the survey to get a better understanding of how frontline RCMP officers feel about the level of the support they have received from their employer to help them manage during the pandemic. Examination of the responses to these questions leads us to conclude that the way in which the RCMP has managed their workforce during the pandemic is likely to exacerbate issues with respect to employee wellbeing and damage their reputation as a supportive employer.

These conclusions are supported by the following data. First, although most officers who responded to this survey felt that the RCMP had acted during the pandemic to protect the safety and wellbeing of the police officers in their employ, their reactions to the types of supports offered was mixed with approximately one quarter reporting high levels of satisfaction with the types of support they have received from the RCMP during the pandemic while just under half reported low levels of satisfaction.

Second, three-quarters of the officers in the sample were unaware of any initiatives taken by the RCMP to protect members of their families. These findings are unfortunate given that most officers in the sample are married and

have children at home who are also at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 because of the work done by their mother/father.

Finally, it should be noted that the pandemic has added to RCMP officers' workloads as they face the additional pressures of work dealing with COVID-19 protocols and calls related to COVID-19 issues (40% of the RCMP officers in our sample reporting that they spend approximately 10% of their time each week dealing with COVID-19 related matters) and work extra hours to replace colleagues who are absent from work for approximately 12 days because they were either exposed to/or caught COVID-19.

Employees (especially those whose jobs require them to interact with the community) expect their employer to take action to protect their health and the health of their family. The fact that most of the officers in the sample felt this had not happened is likely to have a negative impact on the reputation of the employer as well as employee morale. This conclusion is supported by the fact that almost all the officers in the sample agreed with the following statement: "I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my family's health."

Most officers are reacting emotionally to the changes at work and at home imposed by COVID-19

A disruptive change like the COVID-19 pandemic can also be expected to cause a variety of emotional reactions (i.e., strong feelings deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others) in people. Data collected in this study show that most of the officers we consulted are reacting emotionally to the changes at work and at home imposed by COVID-19. The most common reactions of the officers in the sample were the active negative feelings of frustration (88%) uncertainty (63%), a lack of motivation (58%), anger (57%), restlessness (47%) and sadness (43%). The most common positive emotions expressed by the officers in the sample were feelings of happiness (43%) and being thankful (38%). More disruptive change is to be expected when society and work life "return to normal" and we do not foresee improvements in these indicators of wellbeing at that time without some form of intervention.

Many officers are not coping effectively with the stress they face on the job

Our data show that many police officers in the sample are not coping effectively with the stress they face on the job/stress associated with the pandemic. In fact, a worrisome number are coping in maladaptive (negative) ways that may make things worse over time (i.e., working harder, trying to do it all, cutting back on sleep, having a drink or two, eating "comfort" food). These conclusions are supported by the following findings from this study.

First, very few officers in the sample use either adaptive problem-focused coping strategies such as *set limits and compartmentalize* or emotion-focused coping strategies such as *seek social support from friends* to cope with the stress they are experiencing. Nor do they cope by trying to separate work from family or making sure that they take the time off from work (have lunch, take their breaks). Almost none of the officers in the sample *seek professional help* to cope with the high levels of job stress, stress, and burnout they are experiencing. These findings are very unfortunate given the proven utility of using such approaches to cope effectively with stress.

While the use of emotion-focused strategies is likely to temporarily reduce the emotional distress on the officers caused by heavy work demands and work-related strain, these strategies are unlikely to help over time as they do little to address the source of the stress (i.e., the stressor). The most common forms of adaptive emotion-focused coping used by officers included watching TV and getting exercise. Deeper analysis of the data showed, however, that officers who watch TV to cope with stress often also cope by eating "comfort food" which again can contribute to negative outcomes in the long term by contributing to weight gain if abused.

Somewhat positive are the data showing that one in ten officers regularly cope by exercising and reading – a highly effective way to cope for police officers as an officer who is physically fit is more likely to be at a healthy weight, have a strong body, and more able to engage in the bursts of speed and power officers need while on the job. More concerning are the data showing that half of the officers in the sample rarely if ever cope in this manner.

Finally, on the good news/bad news front, almost all the maladaptive (negative) coping mechanisms included in the survey were used relatively infrequently by most officers. This good news is offset by the bad news that an appreciable number of the officers in the sample do engage in maladaptive coping mechanisms that could lead to serious negative outcomes: our analysis showed that that half of the officers in the sample indicated that they frequently (several times a week or more) coped by cutting back on their sleep while one in four frequently coped by "just trying to do it all" and 12% indicated they frequently drank alcohol to help them cope.

Officers report high levels of resilience

We also collected information about several important moderators that are likely to influence the relationships examined in this study. We determined that most police officers have high levels of personal resilience. High resilience is a personal characteristic has been found to be common among police officers across cultures and can be considered a resource that officers can draw on from within themselves to withstand the strain and stress of policing. All resources, however, are finite. While high resilience will provide resistance to shocks through personal hardiness, it can only delay the onset of bad physical and mental health outcomes (e.g., burnout, illness) in the face of persistent strain and stress. It will not prevent them. We worry that these high levels of resilience will diminish over time if RCMP officers do not cope more effectively with the stress they are experiencing at work and/or the service does not take action with regard to the stressors these officers face. This leads us to ask – "is the pandemic the one bridge too far" when it comes to officer wellbeing.

RCMP constables, sergeants, and staff sergeants work in high strain jobs

The data from this survey provide strong support for the idea that RCMP officers have high strain jobs (high work demands and low control over work). This is an important finding as research has unequivocally determined that individuals in high strain jobs are more likely to experience negative physical and mental health outcomes. Findings from this study, which determined that many of the officers in this sample report high strain, stress, and burnout at work, are what we would expect given the nature of the job. They are also consistent with our data showing that the officers in the sample make very low use of healthy adaptive coping strategies. The fact that most officers perceive that they have little control over their work can also explain why officers do not access more adaptive coping strategies as the high demands of their work reduce their energy and ability to access healthy coping resources (working on weekends and holidays keeps officers away from family activities, shifts that run overtime, and supplemental work from home consume time and energy needed to go out and exercise, etc.).

We conclude from these findings that individual officers will not be able to undertake the types of changes needed to improve their wellbeing. Change to the work culture, changing the public image of the police, and the introduction of more adaptive problem-focused coping resources will need to come from collective action and a partnership between the NPF and police services across Canada.

It is all about work

On a positive note, the officers in our sample reported high levels of control over their family domain – a finding that is consistent with the data showing that most officers in the sample report lower levels of family role overload,

family interference with work and burnout at home. The data also support our earlier conclusion – that the high levels of stress and burnout observed within our sample of frontline police officers is mostly due to factors associated with their job and their work environment rather than their gender or family circumstances.

It's not just about the officer's gender

We noted relatively few differences in the different indicators considered in this study that could be attributed to just the gender of the officer. The few significant gender differences observed in the data (i.e., men different from women regardless of whether they have children) are summarized in Table 27. With two exceptions (the female officers in the sample were four times more likely than their male counterparts to have a partner who was also a police officer; male police officers were more likely than female officers to have children) the male and female officers had very similar demographic profiles.

Table 27: Significant gender differences in the findings

Men	Women
• <u>More</u> likely to be married/partners • <u>More</u> likely to be parents • <u>More</u> likely to say that their partner left their job/lost their job during the pandemic and is no longer employed	• <u>More</u> likely to say that their partner was employed outside the home during the pandemic (i.e., an essential worker) • <u>More </u>likely to have a partner who is a police officer (i.e., 50% of the female officers in the sample live in dual-police couple) • <u>More</u> likely to say that breadwinning responsibilities were shared in their family • <u>More likely </u>to miss work because of physical health concerns • <u>Less likely </u>to cope by reducing the quality of the work they do

We noted very few substantive gender differences in how officers cope with stress (women were less likely than men to cope by reducing quality) and no substantive differences in their personal resilience. The lack of gender differences in how officers cope is surprising as research in the area has shown that women are typically more likely than men to cope by seeking social support from others. Instead, we found that very few officers of either gender cope using by seeking support from others. These results suggest that: (1) the organizational culture of the RCMP deters people from seeking help from others, and (2) female police officers who wish to be accepted by their male counterparts often choose to "do police" rather than "do gender" and try and manage on their own.

Mothers have different challenges than fathers

Several additional gender differences in our data can be observed if we compare the mothers in the sample to the fathers. These differences are shown in Table 28. This comparison provides support for the idea that female RCMP officers with children face more demands at home (take a greater share of responsibility for childcare and also have eldercare) and challenges because of these demands (higher levels of burnout from demands at home) than their male counterparts. Also of interest are data showing that female officers with children in our sample perceive that they have more control over their family domain than their male counterparts. We speculate that this difference may be due in part to the fact that more fathers in the sample are parents to children under the age of 5.

Table 28: Significant differences in the findings associated with parental status

Officers who are fathers	Officers who are mothers
• <u>More likely</u> to be married • <u>More likely</u> to be parents of children under the age of five • <u>Less likely</u> to report high levels of control over their family domain	• <u>More likely</u> to be in the sandwich generation (i.e., spend time each week in childcare and eldercare) • <u>More likely</u> to be a single parent • Assume a <u>greater</u> percent of the day-to-day responsibilities for childcare in their families • <u>More likely</u> to agree that making arrangements for their children while they work requires a lot of effort (FIW) • <u>More likely</u> to be parents of teenagers • <u>More likely</u> to report moderate to high levels of burnout at home • <u>More likely</u> to report high levels of control over their family domain

Officers who are parents have been impacted differently by the pandemic than officers without children

What is the relationship between officer wellbeing and being a parent? To answer this question, we compared the responses the officers with children gave to the various indicators of wellbeing included in this study to those provided by the officers without children. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 29.

Some of the differences between these two groups are not surprising (parents are older, are more likely to be married/partners, have more years of experience on the job, and are more likely to hold the rank of sergeant or staff sergeant) and reflect the fact that officers with children tend to be at different life cycle and career cycle stages than those without children. It is also not surprising to see that the parents in the sample were more likely than those without children to report higher levels of stress because they worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their family.

Examination of the data shown in Table 29 implies that the COVID-19 pandemic has had more of an impact on how officers with children spend their time than it has had on their counterparts without children. More specifically, we note that regardless of their gender, officers with children were more likely than those without to say that since the start of the pandemic they have seen a considerable decline in the amount of personal time they have, a reduction in their energy levels, and the amount of time they have for sleep each night. We also note that the officers in our sample with children were more likely than their childless counterparts to say that in the six months prior to the survey being done they have needed: (1) to change their work schedules to accommodate both work and family, (2) to spend more time working at home in the evening and on weekends, (3) to take considerably more leave days to cope with family demands, and (4) to miss considerably more work due to childcare. Similar findings have been observed in other work sectors that we have studied and can be attributed to the fact that children are now at home and often require home schooling.

Table 29: Significant differences in the findings associated with parental status

Parents	Officers without Children
• Older (5 years on average) • More likely to be married/partnered • Have more years of service with the police • More likely to hold the rank of Sergeant/Staff Sergeant • More likely to report higher levels of stress because they worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their family • More likely to report higher levels of burnout from the demands they face at home • More likely to report that since the COVID-19 pandemic began they had experienced a reduction in the amount of energy they had, the amount of sleep they got each night and the amount of time they had for themselves • More likely to say that since the pandemic began, they had increased their use of leave days to cope with family demands and that they had adjusted their work hours and now did more of their work in the evenings and on weekends • More likely to miss work because of challenges due to childcare • Less likely to report high levels of control at home	• Report lower levels of family role overload and burnout from the demands faced at home • More likely to make high use of two maladaptive coping strategies: (1) eating and watching TV, and (2) spending time by themselves • Less likely to cope by delegating work to others • More likely to report high levels of control at work

We observed three differences of note in how parents cope with stress compared to officers without children. More specifically, we found that officers with children are less likely to cope by eating and watching TV and spending time by themselves – findings that likely have more to do with the fact that they do not have time for such activities than anything else. Alternatively, officers without children are less likely than parents to cope by delegating work to others – a finding that we speculate may be because these officers are more junior than their counterparts with children and more concerned with impression management (the stressors data suggest that within the RCMP the organizational culture may not view those who delegate work to others in a favourable light).

Finally, the data indicate that within the RCMP, parents' wellbeing may be negatively impacted by the need to satisfy conflicting and sometimes time-consuming role demands at home with substantive role demands at work. Our analysis determined that regardless of gender or family circumstances RCMP officers work roles place them in the high strain quadrant of Karasek's job strain model (see Figure 15) with respect to workplace health. Our analysis similarly implies that many RCMP officers with children also occupy high strain jobs at home (high demands, low control) while their counterparts without children are in low strain positions at home (high control, low demands). The consequences of this balancing act on officer wellbeing can be seen by examining the summary of differences in Table 29. These findings, when considered together, suggest that the dual-demands officers with children face at work and at home,which are likely to have increased because of the pandemic, are depleting their resources, challenging their ability to cope, and hurting their mental and physical wellbeing.

BUT there are many differences that depend on both the officer's gender and whether they have children

Our analysis identified multiple differences in the various aspect of employee wellbeing included in this study associated with <u>both</u> gender and parental status (i.e., the results observed with one group of officers is different from those observed for the officers in the other three groups). These differences are presented in Table 30.

Table 30: Significant between group differences associated with <u>both</u> gender and parental status

	Male officers	Female officers
Parents	• <u>More likely</u> to go to work when they were mentally unwell (did so 29 times in a six-month period) • <u>More likely</u> to cope by getting by on less sleep than they would like	• <u>Less likely</u> to spend time each week in frontline police activities associated with enforcement, crime prevention and engaging with the community • <u>More likely</u> to spend time each week working from home outside their regular hours. • Two times <u>more likely</u> to say that they are responsible for the care of an elderly dependent; 10% of these officers have their elderly dependent living with them • <u>More likely</u> to miss work because of eldercare issues • <u>More likely</u> to report high levels of family role overload • <u>More likely</u> to say that since the COVID-19 pandemic began they have experienced a considerable reduction in the amount of energy they have • <u>More likely</u> to go to work when they were physically unwell • <u>More likely</u> to cope by using two adaptive problem-focused coping strategies: they set priorities and they seek professional help • <u>More likely</u> to cope by using one maladaptive coping strategy: they just work harder and just trying to do it all
Non-parents	• <u>More likely</u> to report that they often experience stress because: (1) of negative images of the police in the news, (2) of public discussions on defunding the police, (3) there are not enough officers on duty to allow people to take breaks during work hours, (4) the demands placed on them by the court system, (5) public protests against the police in Canada, and (6) social media/being on camera all the time. • Spend <u>more </u>hours in work per week (49.6)	• <u>Less likely</u> to find three of the stressors highly problematic: (1) negative images of the police in the news, (2) the cases they deal with are more complex now than in the past, and (3) they lack the equipment and resources they need to do the job. • <u>More likely</u> to report high levels of work interferes with family • <u>More likely</u> to report high levels of work role overload from the pressures of the job • <u>Less likely</u> to agree that their family responsibilities were keeping them from spending the amount of time they would like on their job/career (family interferes with work) • <u>More likely</u> to say that that since the pandemic began, they had <u>not</u> reduced the amount of time that they spent in recreational or leisure activities • <u>More likely</u> to say that their physical health is very good to excellent • <u>More likely</u> to cope by reading and exercising • <u>More likely</u> to report that they have very high control over their family domain

Several observations can be made by looking at the key between-group differences shown in Table 30. First, we speculate that many of these disparities may be because the work roles performed by female RCMP officers (with and without children) are quite different from those undertaken by male officers (with and without children). More specifically, it appears that female police officers with children are <u>less</u> likely and young male police officers without children are <u>more </u>likely to work in a job that entails a high level of interaction with the public. This interpretation of our results is supported by the data showing that the degree to which the officers in the sample report that they are stressed by (and we would assume exposed to) the various stressors associated with their job varies by gender and parental status. For female police officers with children, on the other hand, stressors include high levels of family role overload, family interferes with work, family-related burnout and the need to "do police" (i.e., go into work when they are unwell) rather than do gender (i.e., seek social support and help from others). We cannot tell from the data if these job role differences are pandemic-related (i.e., has the RCMP accommodated officers who are mothers in a different manner than they have accommodated other officers) or reflect how the RCMP regularly treats female officers with children. Further research is needed to help explain these results.

Second, the female officers without children in the sample seem to be coping more effectively with the stresses associated with the pandemic than other officers. They are the most likely to perceive that they are in good physical health and more likely to spend time in recreational and leisure activities and cope by reading and exercising. They also have the highest level of control over their family domain. They also seem to place a high priority on meeting expectations at work (i.e., high work role overload, high work interferences with family and do not let family demands stop them from spending time on their career) a finding that is likely attributable to their career stage and the need (if one wants to fit in and progress in one's career) to be seen to be "doing police" rather than "doing gender" (Silvestri, 2007).

In many ways wellbeing is not associated with the officer's gender or parental status

While we observed many areas where wellbeing varies according to the gender and/or parental status of the employee, we also feel it is important to highlight those areas where no such differences occurred. More specifically we note no appreciable differences associated with either gender or parental status with respect to:
- the likelihood that an officer would spend time each week writing reports, reading, reviewing, or approving reports or dealing with COVID-19 related issues (indicators of work demands).
- the likelihood that an officer would find time for an uninterrupted break during their work shift (indicator of work demands).
- the likelihood that an officer will report high levels of work role overload (of either type) or job stress (indicators of strain).
- the likelihood that an officer will report high levels of perceived stress and burnout from circumstances at work (indicators of wellbeing).
- the likelihood that an officer would miss work due to mental and emotional fatigue, physical fatigue, COVID-19 related issues, to avoid difficult issues at work or because a sick day was not granted (indicators of the organizational culture within the RCMP).
- the number of times an officer attended work when they were physically unwell in the six months prior to the study being done (indicator of presenteeism).
- officer resilience.
- the type of emotions triggered by the pandemic (indicator of employee wellbeing).

We also found that most officers regardless of gender or parental status cope with stress in a very similar manner. Specifically, we found that very few officers in the sample, regardless of their gender or parental status, use the following adaptive problem-focused coping strategies: (1) try and set limits, (2) request help from people who

have power to do something for me, (3) seek professional help (4) make a conscious effort to separate work and family, and (5) do less and cut back. Nor are gender or parental status associated with the use of two of the maladaptive coping strategies considered in this study – smoking and drinking alcohol. Finally, we observed no between-group differences in the tendency to cope by seeking social support – from friends, family, or colleagues at work. The lack of a gender difference in the use of social support is very interesting as typically women are more likely to talk about their problems with others and ask for help than are men.

Final Words

Regardless of their gender or whether they have children, police officers holding the rank of constable and sergeant/staff sergeant work in high strain jobs (i.e., they report high work demands and high levels of job stress and low levels of control over their work). Officers with children also hold high strain roles at home (high demands, low control) Even though the police officers in this sample report high levels of individual resilience, a number of factors relating to the organizational culture within the RCMP make us worried about the wellbeing of these officers once the pandemic runs its course. The levels of job stress, work role overload, work interferes with family, perceived stress, and work-related burnout observed in this sample are not, in our opinion, sustainable over time – particularly when one considers that many police officers lack the appropriate coping resources to deal with this strain in healthy ways. From the organization's perspective, this will amount to rising costs and lower productivity due to rising absenteeism and presenteeism, rising costs of benefits, and possibly lower retention. The data showing that a high number of the officers in this sample (male officers with children stand out in this regard) regularly show up to work when they are mentally unwell is particularly worrisome and must be addressed.

Male police officers without children face a greater number of challenges with respect to the work environment stressors included in our analysis – a finding that we attributed to the fact that half of the officers in this group work have a high level of interaction with the communities they serve. Female officers do not seem to be exposed to the same types of stressors or demands as the other officers in the sample – a finding we suspect is because many of these women are not engaging in the same set of work activities as the male officers without children. The data also imply that female police officers (who report higher demands outside of work than their male counterparts) have been exposed to (and have bought into) the same pressures to show up for work and never say no as their male colleagues. These demographic differences should be considered in any interventions that are planned to address stress during the pandemic.

Finally, we also found that while RCMP officers with children may have high resilience to the stresses of COVID-19, their resources are finite. They do not have additional coping resources to deal with the work and family stress imposed by COVID-19. In time, despite high control over their family situation, officers with children may find their situation unsustainable which could create a crisis of burnout both at work and at home post-pandemic.

We do not know how generalizable the results from this study of 1000+ RCMP constables, sergeants, and staff sergeants is to the RCMP population of officers at this rank is. If it is considered generalizable, then the RCMP and the NPF must immediately put policies and programs in place to address the issues identified in this study.

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Appendix A: Methodology

Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire (see Appendix B) collected demographic and work situation information from police officers and asked questions relating to all constructs shown in Figure 1. The survey instrument was carefully reviewed by police officers from the RCMP Association and National Police Federation to ensure that it focused on issues that matter to police in Canada. With one exception (Work Environment Stressors) the questionnaire represents validated measures that have been previously published in peer-reviewed academic journals (see Table 31 for references).

The demographic, work profile, and stress and wellbeing measurement tools listed in Table 31 are closed-form multiple choice questions. The survey questionnaire also asked three open-ended questions to explore issues related to stress and wellbeing in more depth. More specifically we asked the following:
- What initiatives has your police service implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic designed to ensure the safety and wellness of officers and/or their families?
- What one thing could your employer do to help you cope with the challenges you face due to COVID-19?
- Do you have any comments you would like to add?

Qualitative analysis of responses to open-ended questions will be published in a separate report.

Statistical Analyses

Several approaches to statistical analyses are used in this report including the calculation of frequencies and means, and principal component analysis. In the section below, each of these approaches is described in layman's terms to help the reader interpret the findings. The approach taken in this report with respect to between-group analysis (e.g. our analysis of the impact of rank on the findings) is also described in this section.

Means and Frequencies

Much of the demographic data as well as data on the respondent's work situation and work demands were asked as closed-form questions requiring respondents to fill in a response (e.g. their age, years of service, hours worked per week). Responses were used to calculate the mean answer to each of these questions. In statistics, the term mean is used to refer to the average value of something. For example, in the survey we asked respondents to tell us how many years that they had worked for their police service. The mean number of years working for their service was calculated for the total sample and by gender and parental status by adding all values provided by our respondents and then dividing the total by the number of people in each group who had responded to this question.

All constructs included in our model were quantified using scales that have been fully or partially validated in past research (see Table 31 for references). For example, we have scales measuring stress, work role overload, family role overload, to name a few. Each scale includes multiple items. In all cases respondents were asked to use a 1 to 5 Likert scale to rate either: (1) the extent to which they agree/disagree with each of the statements in the measure, (2) the frequency with which they encounter the condition being described in the scale, or (3) to what extent they had experienced a change in the condition during COVID-19. We then use these responses to calculate the respondent's mean score on this outcome as the summed average of the responses they gave to the various items in the measure. For example, our measure of job-related stress includes 6 items. A respondent's level of

job-related stress was, therefore, obtained by summing the scores representing the responses they gave to each of these 6 questions and then dividing this total by 6.

To help the reader interpret the findings, in this report we use population norms established by expectations set in past research to recode the responses into three categories as follows[8]:
- % low (mean scores from 1.0 to 2.5)
- % moderate (mean score from 2.5 to 3.5)
- % high (mean from 3.5 to 5.0)

In this report we provide frequency distributions for all constructs included in Figure 1 for the total sample and by rank. A frequency distribution is an overview of all values of the variable (i.e. low, moderate, and high) and the number of times they occur.

Principal Component Analysis

Principal component analysis is a technique that researchers use to discover the underlying dimensions of a scale. For example, a scale measuring an organisation's culture may have sub-dimensions such as "supportive management" and "supportive policies". To uncover these underlying dimensions, we use a technique known as principal component analysis (more commonly referred to as factor analysis). Principal component analysis identifies questions that respondents are answering in a similar fashion. In other words, it identifies questions that are highly inter-correlated. Since scales are supposed to have the property of being highly inter-correlated this technique identifies sub-scales in a larger scale.

Factor analysis was performed on two of the measures used in this study. Question 1 on our survey includes 37 items relating to a variety of stressors typically encountered within the police the work environment. Factor analysis of these 37 items revealed 6 dimensions of work stressors as described in Section 4.1 of the report.

Similarly, question 28 on our survey includes 24 items that relate to possible ways that people can cope with stress. Factor analysis of these 24 items revealed that the police officers in our sample used 6 different strategies to cope with stress as described in Section 7.3 in the report.

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[8] Note: In all cases where a different recoding procedure was used than that described in this section, we make a note in the report on how the categorization was done.

Table 31. List of stress and wellbeing measurement tools

Question	Measure	Reference
18	Stressors in work environment	This measure expands on past research undertaken by Drs. Duxbury and Halinski to determine major predictors of work stress and role overload in RCMP services (see Duxbury, L., Higgins, C. & Halinski, M. (2015), "Identifying the Antecedents of Work role overload in Police Organisations", *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 42 (4), 361-381). Input from representatives of the Scottish Police Federation and members of the Research Advisory Board resulted in the addition to the original measure of a number of stressors of relevance to Police Scotland.
Strain outcomes		
19	Job-related stress	House, R. and Rizzo, J. (1972). Toward the measurement of organisational practices: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 56, 388-396
21	Work interferes with family (items 3-8) Family interferes with work (items 1,2,9)	Gutek, B., Searle, S., & Kelpa, L. (1991). Rational versus gender role explanations for work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 76*, 560-568.
22 23	Work role overload Family role overload	Caplan, R.D., Cobb, S., French, J.R.P., Jr., Harrison, R.V., and Pinneau, S.R., Jr. (1980). *Job demands and worker health: Main effects and occupational differences*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research
Wellbeing outcomes		
25 26	Absenteeism Presenteeism	Based on: Moos, R. H., Cronkite, R. C., Billings, A. G., & Finney, J. W. (1988). *Health and daily living form manual*. Stanford, CA: Social Ecology Laboratory, Department of Psychiatry, Stanford University
27 (items 1-8)	Perceived stress	Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., and Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour, 24*, 385-396.
27 (items 9-16)	Burnout	Maslach, C., & Jackson, S.E. (1981). "The measurement of experienced burnout". Journal of Occupational Behavior. 2(2):, 99–113.
28	Physical health	DeSalvo, K., Bloser, N., Reynolds, K., He, J., & Muntner, P. (2006). Mortality prediction with a single general self-rated health question: A meta-analysis. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 21(3), 267–275.
30/31	Employee/Employer Change Index	Pyper, W. (2006). Balancing career and care. (Cat. 75-001-XIE). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. (based on this measure)
32	Emotional reactions to COVID-19	Developed for this study by the authors – from interview data. Based on Russell, JA. A circumplex model of affect.

Question	Measure	Reference
		Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 1980;39:1161–1178.
Moderators		
20	Control over work	Dwyer, D. J., & Ganster, D. C. (1991). The effects of job demands and control on employee attendance and satisfaction. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 12(7), 595-608.
24	Control over family	Walters, V., Lenton, R., French, S., Eyles, J., Mayer, J., and Newbold, B. (1996). Paid work, unpaid work and social support: A study of the health of male and female nurses. *Social Sciences and Medicine*, 43(11) 1627-36.
29	Resilience	Campbell-Sills, L., & Stein, M. B. (2007). Psychometric analysis and refinement of the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC): Validation of a 10-item measure of resilience. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 20(6), 1019–1028.
33	Coping strategies	Higgins, C., Duxbury, L., and Lyons, S. (2010), Coping with Overload and Stress: A Comparison of Professional Men and Women, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 72 (2), 847-859

Tests of statistical significance

We can never be 100% certain that a relationship exists between two variables or constructs (e.g. between work role overload and job stress). Using probability theory and the normal (bell) curve we can, however, estimate the probability of being wrong if we assume that our finding a relationship (e.g. work role overload is positively associated with stress) is true. Tests for statistical significance are used to tell us the probability that the relationship we have observed between two or more variables can be attributed to random chance or not (i.e. the likelihood that we would be making an error if we assumed that the relationship we see in the data actually exists). If the probability of being wrong is small, then we say that our observation of the relationship is a statistically significant finding. Statistical significance means that there is a good chance that we are correct when we claim that a relationship exists between two variables. Typically, a result is considered to have statistical significance if there is less than 5% probability of the result being explained by chance. This is conventionally denoted as "$p < 0.05$". The smaller the p-value, the smaller the likelihood that the result can be explained by chance (i.e. smaller p-values indicate stronger statistical significance).

Statistical significance is not the same as practical significance (i.e. the finding may be statistically significant, but the implications of the finding could have no real practical application). Often times, when differences are small but statistically significant, it is due to a large sample size. If the sample were smaller, the difference would not be enough to be identified as statistically significant. In this study we examine both the statistical and practical significance of all our findings.

Analysis of between-group differences (see below) require the researcher to determine if the findings are statistically significant. In between-group differences, the research is testing the hypothesis that two or more groups are different enough with respect to their score on a particular variable of interest that it is unlikely that the difference can be attributed to chance.

For example, in this analysis we determined that female officers (38.2%) were approximately twice as likely to have a partner who is a police officer than were their male counterparts (16.8%). This large difference is statistically significant. Further examination of the data shows that female officers with children (42.1%) were more likely than female officers without children (33.5%) to be married to a police officer while the difference between male officers with children (16.3%) and without children (18.1%) was too small to be statistically significant.

Approach to the analysis of between-group differences

Although statistical significance is necessary in the interpretation of findings, we do not rely on it alone because it does not always indicate practical significance. Results of statistical analysis may be statistically significant, but their magnitude may be too small to be useful in practice by decision makers. In this report, we have tried to focus only on the most meaningful differences between groups.

As a rule of thumb for the reader, between-group differences which are greater than 8% are typically statistically and practically significant. In some instances, we have elected to highlight some smaller (i.e. differences of less than 8%) statistically significant differences because they are part of an important pattern or trend in the findings (i.e. they are substantive).

Police Wellbeing During Times of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is an on-going health crisis which is having a dramatic impact on how people in Canada and around the world live their lives. Daily, the numbers are rising of people infected with, and killed by, the novel coronavirus. In response to the rapid spread of the virus, provincial and federal governments have enacted a number of 'physical distancing' measures, including closures of publicly funded schools and all non-essential businesses. This has resulted in unprecedent work/life situations for thousands of Canadians.

Police, as an essential frontline service, face particular challenges during this pandemic. They must continue their work on the frontline and risk exposure for themselves and their family to the novel coronavirus. They must balance the requirements of a stressful job (demands which have themselves changed because of the pandemic) with the needs of their children (who are now at home), their partner (who may now be unemployed or working from home) and worries about their elderly family members. Unfortunately, we lack needed information about how COVID-19 is impacting the well-being of police officers and their families at this time. How are officers coping with the multiple, complex, and evolving challenges posed by trying to balance changes at work and at home (e.g., home schooling children, physical distancing from elderly family members, losing social and medical supports) during the pandemic?

We are working with the RCMP Association (NPF) and the National Police Federation (NPF) to help us gather data to answer these questions and more. You could help by completing a survey designed to help us understand the impact of COVID-19 on you and your family. This survey will take **approximately 20-30 minutes** of your time to complete. At the macro-level, our investigation is designed to help NPF, NPF, police services, municipal governments, mental health practitioners, and policy makers better understand how police officers are adapting and managing daily lives that have been radically changed by COVID-19. Results from this study also have relevance to governments who are tasked with making decisions that impact all Canadians during this pandemic and employees who seek information on how best to cope.

The survey is divided into five sections: (1) Demographics; (2) Work environment; (3) Work-life balance; (4) Physical and Mental Health; and (5) Coping with the Pandemic. Please record your answers to each of the survey questions by indicating the response that best represents your views with respect to the question being asked.

The ethics for this project has been reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (project # 112715). There are no professional risks to participants. You are not obligated to participate in the study. Nor will you receive any compensation for completing the survey. The following ethical protocols are followed in this research: (1) all unfinished surveys will be deleted, (2) you may leave questions blank for whatever reason, (3)

your responses are anonymous, and (4) you may withdraw your response at any time before completing the survey by closing your browser window or navigating away from the survey.

The questionnaire will be hosted by the Qualtrics service used by the Sprott School of Business. Qualtrics is SAS 70 certified and meets the rigorous privacy standards imposed on health care records by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Questionnaire data will be stored on a secure website in Canada until it is downloaded by the researchers. Only the researchers can download the data from this server. Researchers will disable the option in Qualtrics to collect IP addresses.

The researchers own the data collected through this survey. Only aggregate information will be shared with the organizations who are participating in this study/ used in any written reports or publications produced using these data. Only the research team will have access to the raw survey information.

At the end of the questionnaire, you are asked to provide your name and an email address if you: (1) wish to receive a copy of a report summarizing key research findings, and/or (2) are interesting in participating in future research initiatives relating to COVID-19 and employee wellbeing. In both cases you are asked to provide your name and email address. Respondents who choose not to leave contact information will remain completely anonymous. To protect your identity the researchers will download email addresses and names to a separate contacts file and then delete this information from the survey prior to any data analysis being undertaken. This will ensure that anonymity is maintained but it also means that your information cannot be removed from the data base once you have submitted the survey. The contact information provided by respondents as well as the anonymized survey data will be stored on a password protected server at Carleton University. The contact information will be kept for one year, the survey data for ten years. The data will not be shared in any way with anyone outside the research team.

If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact the research team by sending an email to Dr. Linda Duxbury (Linda.Duxbury@carleton.ca). If you have concerns you can contact ethics at (613) 520-2517 or ethics@carleton.ca.

We thank you for taking the time to complete this very important survey. We value your response.

To begin the survey, please click on the arrow button.

Please note: by completing the online survey, you are agreeing to participate in the study.

Section A: Demographics

We need some demographic information to help us interpret the findings. Please be assured that all the findings from this survey will be held in confidence by the researchers at Carleton University who are administering and analysing this survey on behalf of the RCMP Association (NPF) and the National Police Federation (NPF). No one other than the researchers will see your responses.

1. What gender do you identify with?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. LGBTQ2S+
    d. Prefer not to say

2. What is your age? _____ Years

3. Are you married or living with a partner?
    a. Yes
    b. No

(Only ask questions 4 and 5 to officers how respond yes to being married or living with a partner)
4. Prior to COVID did your partner have paid employment?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Are they still employed?
    a. Yes
        a. Working from home
        b. Working outside the home
    b. No

5. Is your partner a police officer?
    a. Yes
    b. No

6. Who is considered the primary breadwinner in your household?
    a. I am.
    b. Both of us are.
    c. My spouse/partner.

7. How many children do you have? _____ CHILDREN

If you have children, how many of them are:

    a. Under the age of 5 _____ CHILDREN
    b. Aged 6 to 12   _____ CHILDREN
    c. Aged 13 to 18   _____ CHILDREN
    d. Over the age of 18 and still living at home _____ CHILDREN
    e. Over the age of 18 and not living at home _____ CHILDREN

8. What percentage of the day-to-day responsibilities for children do you undertake in your family?
   _____ % (Up to 100%)

9. Please indicate the number of elder family members in each of the following categories that you provide caregiving for (i.e., you provide ongoing care and assistance without pay to family members in need of support due to physical, cognitive or mental problems due to aging).

Living in your home	
Living in their own home which is nearby (i.e., within a one hour drive).	
Living in their own home which is elsewhere (i.e., more than a one hour drive).	
Living in an assisted living facility or in institutional care (nursing home) nearby	
Living in an assisted living facility or in institutional care (nursing home) elsewhere	

10. What percentage of the day-to-day responsibilities for eldercare do you undertake in your family?
    _____ % (Up to 100%)

11. Where do you work?
    a. The RCMP
    b. A municipal police service (Please specify) _____
    c. A provincial police service (Please specify) _____

12. How many years of service have you had with your police service?_____ Years

13. What is your rank or role? (If acting, please select your acting rank)
    a. Constable
    b. Corporal
    c. Sergeant
    d. Staff Sergeant
    e. Communications (civilian)
    f. Special Constable
    g. Other (Please Specify) _____
    h. Prefer not to answer

14. In the past 12 months, has your police service implemented any initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic designed to ensure the safety and wellness:

Of police officers?
    a. Yes
    b. No

Of the families of police officers?
    a. Yes
    b. No

If yes to either question, please list what they have implemented in the section below.

_____

_____

_____

15. Approximately how many hours in a week do you typically spend in each of the following activities (please leave blank if not applicable):
    a. Frontline policing in crime prevention activities? _____ hours
    b. Frontline policing in enforcement activities? _____ hours
    c. Traveling to and from work? _____ hours
    d. Engaging with the community? _____ hours
    e. Writing reports? _____ hours
    f. Reading, reviewing, or approving reports? _____ hours
    g. Waiting for court or in court? _____ hours
    h. Dealing with custody issues? _____ hours
    i. Dealing with mental health issues in the community? _____ hours
    j. Working at home outside of your regular work hours? _____ hours
    k. Dealing with COVID-19 related activities? _____ hours
    l. In total – including all work activities? _____ hours

    Please specify what these COVID-19 related activities entail_____

16. How often during a typical work week do you have time for an uninterrupted break or meal during your work shift?
    a. Never
    b. Rarely (i.e. once or twice per week)
    c. About half the time
    d. Most of the time (i.e. four or five times per week)
    e. Always

Section B: Work Environment

The following questions are designed to provide us with an indication of the extent to which various work stressors are present within your work environment. These data will allow us to explore the impact each of these stressors have on your ability to do your job as well as your welfare and wellbeing.

Work Environment stressors

17. Please think back over the past **six months** and indicate, for each item, the frequency with which this work stressor is a source of stress for you.

	Rarely	Monthly	Weekly	Several times per week	Very Often/Daily	N/A
Not enough officers and/or staff to do the work required	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not enough officers on duty to allow people to take breaks during work hours	1	2	3	4	5	6
The cases I deal with are more complex than in the past and require greater effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
The culture makes it unacceptable to say no to more work	1	2	3	4	5	6
The culture makes it difficult to seek help from others when you are overloaded	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am responsible for too many different things/roles	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ineffective communication makes it harder for me to do my job (lack of timely feedback, unclear expectations)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Managing the expectations of the public	1	2	3	4	5	6
Managing relationships with the media/public (social media, being "on camera")	1	2	3	4	5	6
Negative images of the police in the news	1	2	3	4	5	6
Public discussions on defunding the police	1	2	3	4	5	6
Public protests against the police in Canada	1	2	3	4	5	6
Too many competing ever-changing number one priorities	1	2	3	4	5	6
Meeting work demands when people are away from work (no one available to backfill maternity leave, secondments, events, absenteeism)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of control over my work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Managing other people's sense of urgency	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pressures to do a high-quality job while meeting an unrealistic deadline	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dealing with multiple competing demands simultaneously	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Rarely	Monthly	Weekly	Several times per week	Very Often/Daily	N/A
Lack of resources (equipment/supplies) to do the work	1	2	3	4	5	6
The demands placed on me by the court system	1	2	3	4	5	6
Taking on work that is outside my core role (e.g. custody duties)	1	2	3	4	5	6
The sheer volume of the work (call volume, reports, e-mails)	1	2	3	4	5	6
The shortage of experienced staff in my area	1	2	3	4	5	6
The amount of time spent in administrative work (forms, telephone calls, e-mail, typing, rekeying)	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can't get everything done and I worry about cases falling through the cracks	1	2	3	4	5	6
Constant changes in policy/legislation without adequate support/training	1	2	3	4	5	6
Verbal assault from a member of the public	1	2	3	4	5	6
Physical assault from a member of the public	1	2	3	4	5	6
I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my physical health	1	2	3	4	5	6
I worry about the impact of COVID-19 on my family's health	1	2	3	4	5	6

Job tension

18. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I work under a great deal of tension	1	2	3	4	5
I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job	1	2	3	4	5
If I had a different job, my health would probably improve	1	2	3	4	5
Problems associated with my job have kept me awake at night	1	2	3	4	5
I often "take my job home with me" in the sense that I think about it when doing other things	1	2	3	4	5
I feel guilty when I take time off from my job	1	2	3	4	5

Control over work

19. Below is a list of statements that could be used to describe a person's job. Please read each statement carefully and indicate the extent to which each of these statements describe your job:

	Very Little	Little	Moderate	Much	Very Much
How able are you to predict the amount of work you will have to do on any given day?	1	2	3	4	5
How much control do you have over how quickly or slowly you have to work?	1	2	3	4	5
How much control do you have over how much work you get done?	1	2	3	4	5
How much are things that affect you at work predictable, even if you can't directly control them?	1	2	3	4	5
In general, how much overall control do you have over work and work-related matters?	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Work-Life Balance

Work interferes with family, family interferes with work

> **The following are ways in which work, family, and personal life can interact. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by selecting the most appropriate answer for each question. Please select N/A if the question does not apply to you.**

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Making arrangements for children while I work involves a lot of effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
Making arrangements for elderly relatives while I work involves a lot of effort	1	2	3	4	5	6
My work schedule often conflicts with my personal/family life	1	2	3	4	5	6
My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with work while at home	1	2	3	4	5	6
The demands of my job make it difficult to be relaxed at home	1	2	3	4	5	6
My work takes time I would like to spend with family or friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
My work makes it hard to be the kind of partner I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6
My work makes it hard to be the kind of parent I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6
My family/personal life often keeps me from spending the amount of time I would like on my job/career	1	2	3	4	5	6

20. Please indicate how often each of the following situations applies to you at work. **Work role overload**

	Never/ Hardly ever	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
How often does your job require you to work very fast?....................	1	2	3	4	5
How often does your job require you to work very hard?....................	1	2	3	4	5
How often do expectations at work mean that you cannot get everything done?..	1	2	3	4	5
How often do you have time to just sit and contemplate when at work?...	1	2	3	4	5
How often do the number of tasks you have to do at work exceed the amount of time you have to do them in?...	1	2	3	4	5
How often do you feel emotionally exhausted from all you have to do at work?..	1	2	3	4	5
How often do you feel physically exhausted from all you have to do at work?..	1	2	3	4	5
How often do your colleagues make too many demands on you?.......	1	2	3	4	5
How often does your supervisor make too many demands on you?....	1	2	3	4	5

21. Please think about your home life and indicate how often the following situations apply to you at home.
    Family role overload

	Never/ Hardly ever	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always	N/A
How often do expectations at home leave little time to get things done?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often do you have time to just sit and contemplate when at home?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often do you run out of time at home to do all the things that need to be done?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often does the number of tasks you have to do at home exceed the amount of time that you have to do them?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often do you feel emotionally exhausted from all you have to do at home?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often do you feel physically exhausted from all you have to do at home?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often do your children make too many demands of you?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often does your partner make too many demands of you?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How often do other family members make too many demands of you?	1	2	3	4	5	6

22. Looking back over the last six months (i.e. since COVID lockdowns began) please indicate the extent to which challenges with respect to balancing work and family/life have caused you to:

	No Reduction	A Little Reduction	Somewhat Reduced	Much Reduced	Considerably Reduced
Reduce your work hours	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce your work productivity	1	2	3	4	5
Suffer a reduction in income	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce the amount of time you have for yourself	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce the amount of sleep you get	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce the amount of energy you have	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce the amount of time you spend on recreational or leisure activities	1	2	3	4	5

23. Looking back over the last six months (i.e. since COVID lockdowns began) please indicate the extent to which challenges with respect to balancing work and family/life have caused you to:

	No Increase	A little Increased	Somewhat Increased	Much Increased	Considerably Increased
Decide not to apply for transfer or promotion	1	2	3	4	5
Be absent more often from work	1	2	3	4	5
Increase your use of employee benefits (i.e., EAP services, prescription drugs)	1	2	3	4	5
Use your vacation days to cope with family demands	1	2	3	4	5
Adjust your work hours – now work more in evenings and on the weekend	1	2	3	4	5

Control over family

24. Below is a list of statements that could be used to describe your situation outside of work. Please read each statement carefully and indicate how much control you have over:

	No Control	Slight Control	Some Control	Moderate Control	A Lot of Control	N/A
Your use of time at home?	1	2	3	4	5	
Your ability to meet competing family demands?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Your use of the family's income?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
What tasks or projects you do when at home?	1	2	3	4	5	
The number of times you are interrupted when at home?	1	2	3	4	5	
Family and family-related matters in general?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Section D: Physical and Mental Health

The following questions will provide us with an indication of your physical and mental health. Please select the answer that best represents your situation or fill in the required information.

25. In the past six months, how many days have you: Absenteeism and Presenteeism

Been unable to report to work or carry out your usual activities because of health problems?................   ____days

Been unable to report to work or carry out your usual activities because of children-related problems   ____days

Been unable to report to work or carry out your usual activities because of problems concerning elderly relatives?.. …...   ____days

Taken a day off work because you were physically fatigued?..........................   ____days

Taken a day off work because you were emotionally or mentally fatigued?..........................   ____days

Taken a sick day off work because a personal leave day/vacation day was not granted?.........................   ____days

Taken a day off work to avoid issues at work (abusive colleagues, difficult boss, difficult work environment)?... ......   ____days

Not gone to work because of self-isolation/other COVID related issues   ____days

Gone to work when you were physically unwell?   **____times**

Gone to work when you were mentally unwell?   ____times

26. How often in the last three months have you: Perceived Stress and Burnout-Work and Burnout-Family

	Never/ Hardly ever	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
Been upset because something happened unexpectedly?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt that you were unable to control important things in your life?….....	1	2	3	4	5
Felt nervous or stressed?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal/family problems?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt that things were going your way?	1	2	3	4	5
Found that you could not cope?	1	2	3	4	5
Been able to control irritations in your life?	1	2	3	4	5

	Never/ Hardly ever	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
Felt you were on top of things?	1	2	3	4	5
Been angered because of things that happened outside of your control?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt that difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt "burned out" from your job?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt "frustrated" by your job?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt "used up" at the end of the work day?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt emotionally drained by your job?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt fatigued when you got up in the morning and had to face another day at work?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt challenged to concentrate at work?	1	2	3	4	5
Experienced insomnia?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt "burned out" because of the demands placed on you at home?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt "frustrated" by all the demands placed on you at home?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt "used up" by your family at the end of the day?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt emotionally drained by your family circumstances?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt fatigued when you got up in the morning and had to face another day with your family?	1	2	3	4	5
Felt challenged to concentrate at home when with your family?	1	2	3	4	5

27. Compared to other people your age, would you say that your health is:
    a. Poor
    b. Fair
    c. Good
    d. Very good
    e. Excellent

Section E: Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic

> **Coping is the process by which people manage difficult circumstances: how they try to master, minimize, reduce, or tolerate stress and conflict. The following questions ask about how you typically cope with the stressors you encounter at work/outside of work.**

Here are some things people do when they are under stress. How often have you used each of the following strategies to cope with your work and life circumstances since COVID lockdown began:

	Never/ Hardly ever	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
Spend time alone	1	2	3	4	5
Eat	1	2	3	4	5
Smoke	1	2	3	4	5
Get some exercise	1	2	3	4	5
Watch TV	1	2	3	4	5
Read	1	2	3	4	5
Take medication to calm myself down	1	2	3	4	5
Drink some alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
Work harder (just try and do it all)	1	2	3	4	5
Seek help from family or friends	1	2	3	4	5
Seek help from colleagues at work	1	2	3	4	5
Talk to family or friends	1	2	3	4	5
Talk to colleagues at work	1	2	3	4	5
Prioritize and do what is important first	1	2	3	4	5
Delegate work to others	1	2	3	4	5
Schedule, organize and plan my time more carefully	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce the quality of the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
Get by on less sleep than I would like	1	2	3	4	5
Make sure that I take time off from work (breaks, lunch)	1	2	3	4	5
Seek counselling from a mental health professional	1	2	3	4	5
Make a conscience effort to separate my work life from my family life	1	2	3	4	5
Recognize that I cannot do it all and set limits (say no)	1	2	3	4	5
Try to be very organised so that I can keep on top of things	1	2	3	4	5
Request help from people who have the power to do something for me	1	2	3	4	5

28. Please indicate the extent to which you find each of the following statements to be true about you:

	Not true at all	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	True nearly all the time
	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to adapt when changes occur					
I can deal with whatever comes my way	1	2	3	4	5
I try to see the humourous side of problems	1	2	3	4	5
Coping with stress can make me stronger	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships	1	2	3	4	5
I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles	1	2	3	4	5
I stay focussed under pressure	1	2	3	4	5
I am not easily discouraged by failure	1	2	3	4	5
I think of myself as a strong person	1	2	3	4	5
I am unable to handle unpleasant or painful feelings	1	2	3	4	5

29. An event like COVID is likely to elicit an emotional response from people. **Emotions** have been defined as strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood or relationships with others. They are responses to significant internal and external events such as anger, fear, happiness, sadness, grief, guilt, hope, loneliness, outrage, resentment, frustration. Emotions can fluctuate over time which is why we hear people talking about being on an "emotional roller coaster". What were the dominant emotions that you experienced over the course of the last several months? (please check all that apply)

___	Frustration	___	Happiness
___	Sadness	___	Grief
___	Guilt	___	Hope
___	Loneliness	___	Outrage
___	Resentment	___	Anger
___	Uncertainty	___	Boredom
___	Apathy	___	Calm
___	Unmotivated	___	Restless
___	Disoriented/Dazed	___	Thankful

Please list any other emotions you have experienced here:

_____

_____

30. Think back over the past six months. All things considered, how satisfied are you with:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
The amount of support you have received from your employer during COVID-19	1	2	3	4	5
The policies and procedures your employer has implemented during the pandemic to keep **you** safe	1	2	3	4	5
The policies and procedures your employer have implemented during the pandemic to keep **your family** safe	1	2	3	4	5
The amount of flexibility your employer has provided you with respect to when you do your work	1	2	3	4	5
The clarity of the communications you have received from your employer laying out what they expect from their employees	1	2	3	4	5

31. What one thing could your employer do to help you cope with the challenges you face due to COVID-19?

_____

_____

32. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to help us better understand how COVID-19 has impacted police officer welfare, wellbeing, and work-life balance issues? If yes, please enter your first name and email address below.

The contact information provided by respondents will be held in confidence by the research team. The data will be stored on Carleton University servers and it will not be shared in any way with anyone outside the research team.
First name: _____
Email address: _____

33. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

_____
_____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will be held in confidence by the researchers. Please e-mail if you have any questions.

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