Re-evaluating Policy Chaplaincy: Assessing the Case for Reimplementing the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) Chaplaincy Program

Includes:

Final Report

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Summary of Key Findings:

- Existing research suggests that officers have little trust in external parties, especially mental health professionals, believing they lack understanding of the unique stresses and stigmas officers face. These stigmas include concerns over judgement and the expectation to appear as strong and fearless, despite frequent exposure to traumatic events and an increased risk of mental health disorders.

- Police chaplains have been known to play a crucial role in police officers' mental health. Some of the services they provide are emotional and spiritual care, adaptive spiritual guidance and coping strategies, improvement of morale and resilience, trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, and family counselling. These services are provided in a safe judgement-free space and are confidential conversations police officers and other members of the department can have.

- The success of any chaplaincy program depends on its visibility and active engagement.

- There are several challenges to chaplaincy programs, including a lack of diversity among chaplains themselves. Ensuring that chaplains are culturally competent, inclusive, and representative of numerous faith traditions is essential – especially given the history of prejudice and discrimination experienced by members of marginalized communities at the hands of chaplains. Department costs are another challenge. While there are volunteer chaplains available, offering a broad range of services can increase the cost of the program itself.

Recommendations:

- Expand chaplains' presence and visibility through the integration of post-critical incident responses to provide immediate emotional and spiritual support.

- Highlight that all conversations will be confidential and free of judgement, as well as normalize conversations around mental wellness and have informal check-ins.

- Reduce barriers through the incorporation of chaplains in everyday aspects of policing, i.e. ride-along.

- Enhance trust between DRPS and marginalized groups - use of chaplains as neutral mediators in communication and cultural exchange.

- Standardization through the implementation of a policy system similar to that of peer support programs or health wellness and reintegration.

- Use of supervisors and other superiors to promote and endorse the use of chaplain services and the need to seek support for mental health.

- Engage religious leaders in community policing initiatives, i.e. participate in outreach programs.

Introduction

In the modern world, a chaplain is a person who provides spiritual care outside of the religious context, typically facilitated by a leader or religion, and sometimes by non-religious persons (Lawton et al., 2023). Chaplains are found in a variety of professions, including policing. Police chaplaincy programs are designed to provide spiritual and emotional support to law enforcement officers to maintain and enhance their mental health, and subsequently enhance job performance (Maxwell, 2023). While chaplaincy programs have a long history around the world, they are relatively new to Canada, with the Canadian Police Chaplain Association established in 1983, and becoming a national organization in 1992 (Canadian Police Chaplain Association). Early police chaplaincy programs were largely focused and centred on Christianity but have since adapted to fit the needs of multireligious and pluralist societies such as Canada (Lawton et al., 2023).

Many law enforcement officers experience varying degrees of trauma in their line of work such as suicides and other forms of trauma (Koch, 2010). Chaplaincy programs have been documented as effective ways for law enforcement officers to deal and cope with traumas incurred on the job (Koch, 2010), as well as combat diagnosed mental health issues that are related to their experiences while performing their duties, such as post-traumatic-stress-disorder (PTSD) (Maxwell, 2023). Some police chaplaincy programs have also implemented an aspect that provides similar spiritual and emotional care/support to members of the public who are in crisis, such as during police calls (Gouse, 2016).

The exact services that are offered by each chaplaincy program will vary, however there are some common themes in the services that are offered. Many

chaplaincy programs offer peer support programs, where officers can confide in their peers and seek support from one another (Levenson & Dwyer, 2003). Chaplains can also act as peers to officers. Most Chaplaincy programs offer guidance and support to officers following traumatic incidents (Phelps et al., 2023). Guidance and support can be for a wide range of incidents that may directly or indirectly involve the officer. These services usually must be sought out by officers themselves, like in the former DRPS program. Some organizations may offer stress relief/wellness programs as either a part of their chaplaincy program or independently (some organizations do not have chaplaincy programs). Stress relief/wellness programs use concepts such as resiliency building/training, coupled with regular checks with officers to maintain high mental well-being and coping abilities (Bonner & Crowe, 2022).

The former DRPS Chaplaincy Program

Many law enforcement agencies across Canada employ some version of a chaplaincy program. The Durham Regional Police Service was one of those services that employed a chaplaincy program, however, the program has been on hiatus.

The previous chaplaincy program at the Durham Regional Police Service was made effective in March 2012 and was last reviewed and revised in July 2022. The program has been on hiatus since then. The previous program sought to provide members of the Durham Regional Police Service equitable access to resources in their community that fit within their cultural and religious beliefs and practices. The Durham Regional Police Chaplain was responsible for providing emotional, moral, and spiritual support to members who sought them out. Chaplains were held to a high standard of

training and qualifications, including being with their denomination for 7 years, participating in intense internships, various training in mental health and guidance of traumatic situations (suicide prevention, injury, next of kin notifications), on top of requirements set out by the Canadian Police Chaplain Association. Chaplains were held to strict and professional confidentiality under the previous directive. All of these tenets are common across many police chaplaincy programs. See Appendix A for the full directive of the former program at the DRPS.

Research Questions and Objectives

The purpose of this project was to assess the value of restoring the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) Chaplaincy Program, as the service had expressed interest in reviving the program. The former program offered emotional, moral, and spiritual support to DRPS members and their families to foster a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture. The current project will explore the potential benefits, challenges, and unintended consequences of reimplementing the program. It will explore four broad research questions.

1. What is the value of reimplementing the chaplaincy program for Durham Regional Police Services?

2. What are the barriers and unintended consequences that are expected with the application of the chaplaincy program?

3. How should the effectiveness of the chaplaincy program be measured and evaluated?

4. What faith/support organizations can be incorporated into the chaplaincy

program? How will they be identified and engaged?

Throughout the report, there will be proposals and recommendations about how

the program can be run in collaboration with local faith and support organizations, and

how the program's effectiveness can be measured. By re-establishing the chaplaincy

program, this project aimed to improve the quality of service provided to the community,

resulting in increased community and safety well-being, as well as aligning with the

goals and values of the Durham Regional Police Service.

This project is based on the principles of community-based research. It involved

close collaboration with the DRPS to address their specific needs regarding the

reimplementation of the chaplaincy program, ensuring that the findings are relevant and

applicable to program development.

Methodology

Community-Based Research

Community-based research (CBR) is a research approach that focuses on the

collaboration and participation of the community in academic research (Flicker et al.,

2007; Tremblay, 2009). CBR involves partnering with non-academic stakeholders to

develop and execute a project based on a community-identified problem, highlighting

the strengths that each partner brings to the project (Leavy, 2017; Tremblay, 2009).

These projects are developed from the ground up and are highly individualized.

Collaboration and power sharing are key principles in CBR (Leavy, 2017). CBR has

been recognized as important in guiding policies and programs to reduce social disparities by improving communication between stakeholders (Tremblay, 2009).

The main objectives of CBR are to conduct reciprocal research that provides mutual benefits, design culturally competent and contextually appropriate methods, define the expectations and roles of community members and researchers, and value the research process as much as the end product (Tremblay, 2009). CBR was chosen for this project because it enabled collaboration with DRPS explore whether reimplementing their chaplaincy program would benefit the organization and what the realities of implementing it would be. Throughout this project, we were in constant contact with DRPS to ensure we were on the right track and that our research remained aligned with their needs and goals. Working directly with DRPS in designing the study helped to ensure the research would be directly useful in practice. This collaborative approach reflects the principle of praxis, where theory and practice are integrated to facilitate real-world change. Because DRPS was involved in designing the project, they are more likely to use the findings to implement changes, increasing the relevance and long-term value of the project. Finally, CBR aligns with the goals of police chaplaincy programs of providing support for police officers and other community members. Using CBR allowed us to inform the research with evidence-based practices and strategies that will directly benefit officers and their communities.

Methods

This research study included a literature review of academic and grey literature pertaining to key areas of the potential benefits, the barriers and unintended

consequences of a Chaplaincy Program for DRPS and determining which faith/support organizations can be incorporated. A literature review is a summary of ideas, issues, approaches and research findings that have been published (Stogdon & Kiteley, 2013). There are two types of literature reviews. The first is a preparation for empirical research and the second is a stand-alone piece of work (Stogdon & Kiteley, 2013). For the purposes of this project, the literature review is a stand-alone piece. Being a stand-alone piece, the purpose of this literature review is to bring together what is known about police chaplain programs to inform policy and practice development based on the evidence (Stogdon & Kiteley, 2013). Literature reviews require a critical approach, examining how the literature does and does not inform the research questions (Savin-Baden, 2002). Grey literature has been defined as any type of document that has not been published through the conventional routes, examples include newsletters, policy documents, and social media postings (Stogdon & Kiteley, 2013).

For this literature review, academic and grey literature were used. To help determine keyword searches a meeting with a library technician was set up. During this meeting, the library technician explained efficient ways of conducting research and how to determine which articles were the most relevant. Most notably what came out of this meeting was the keywords that would be used for the research itself. Keyword searches included the following: 'cop*', 'police*', 'policing', 'officer*', 'chaplain*', 'police chaplain', 'law enforcement', and 'law enforcement officer*'. These keywords directly link to the research topic, and it ensure that results are focused on the scope of the project. Search engines that were utilized were the Trent Omni search portal, Google, and Google Scholar. For each study, the abstracts were read and analyzed to determine

whether they were relevant to our study. There were also no geographic limitations, this is because all relevant research needed to be included regardless of countries of origin but also because other places may have methods of treating officer mental health in ways that have yet to be tried in Canada. DRPS also supplied some of their own directives and resource lists to help. These directives were kept in mind when research was conducted and primarily the previous Chaplain Program Directive (located in Appendix A) was read and reread for a better understanding of what it entailed for DRPS while it was running.

Monthly meetings were set up with DRPS to discuss the progress of the research to ensure that everything was on track and according to what DRPS wanted. These monthly meetings helped guide the research to DRPS standards and also the use of sub-questions. The purpose of these questions was to help clarify and guide research into smaller more manageable parts. In total there were eight sub-questions, roughly two for each main question, they are as follows; is there a reasonable and tangible outcome; how does this impact member well-being/performance; what barriers do police officers encounter in accessing or utilizing chaplaincy programs; how might these barriers or unintended consequences impact the effective reimplementation of the chaplaincy program; what is the appropriate timeframe for measuring for success; how can the chaplaincy program establish strategic partnerships in the community; how can faith/support organizations be effectively partnered with DRPS; and, how have other programs engaged in these strategic partnerships? These questions were approved by DRPS, and other questions came up as the research was conducted.

Key Findings

Quality of Mental Health for Police Officers

On a day-to-day basis, Canadian police officers are exposed to various potentially traumatic events, such as murders, physical assaults, fatal accidents, and other violent incidents. This constant exposure to high-stress and traumatic situations can lead to a significantly higher prevalence of mental health disorders, including but not limited to anxiety, depression, and PTSD, as well as suicidal behaviours. To be more specific, the University of Regina (2024) found that Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers are six times more likely to screen positive for any mental health disorder than the general population. Furthermore, RCMP officers are almost twice as likely to screen positive for generalized anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and panic disorder. This study underscores the mental health crisis within law enforcement and highlights the unique pressures that officers face daily.

Recognizing that police officers can also experience mental health challenges is an essential first step in understanding how best to support them. Creating a supportive environment where officers feel safe to seek help without fear of stigma is crucial for ensuring that they receive the care and resources they need to maintain their well-being.

Overview of Mental Health Programs in Law Enforcement

Bonner & Crowe's (2022) research examined the availability and perceived effectiveness of mental wellness programs across agencies in the United States. Their findings revealed that resiliency building/training and annual mental wellness checks were among the least commonly offered resources. Peer counselling/support was more prevalent within police departments, while sheriff's offices were more likely to offer external event response, chaplain support, and mentoring programs. Despite these variations, respondents generally viewed chaplain support, psychological services, external event response, and resiliency building/training as effective mental wellness programs. In contrast, annual mental wellness checks, mental wellness resources, and mentoring programs were often considered less effective.

Further supporting this view, Levenson and Dwyer (2003) emphasized the value of the peer-to-peer model in mental wellness programming, which helps reduce the stigma associated with mental health. This model operates on the premise that officers trust their peers more than external mental health professionals and believe their peers are better equipped to understand the unique challenges of law enforcement work.

To add, while a considerable number of first responders have access to both professional and non-professional mental health support, there is significant variation in their willingness to utilize these resources. A notable trend is that many first responders reported being more inclined to seek support from spouses or friends rather than formal channels. This reluctance to engage with Employee Assistance Programs and leadership for mental health support is concerning. However, Carleton et al. (2020) found that mental health training slightly improved perceptions of access and the

willingness to seek support. Furthermore, training was linked to a lower incidence of some mental health disorders among first responders.

Chaplaincy programs are a unique and specialized form of support within the broader framework of mental health programs. Designed to provide spiritual and emotional support, these programs help maintain officers' mental well-being and enhance job performance (Maxwell, 2023). The following sections will explore the role of chaplaincy programs within law enforcement, focusing on both the benefits and potential challenges of such programs.

Perceptions of Chaplaincy Programs in Law Enforcement

Research indicates that police chaplains provide crucial emotional and spiritual care, particularly in response to morally transgressive encounters. Phelps et al. (2023) found that 73% of police officers in Australia and New Zealand reported chaplains played a significant role in offering listening support, adaptive spiritual guidance, and coping strategies. These officers noted high satisfaction with chaplaincy services, with all reporting that they received the assistance they needed. In contrast, those who did not access chaplaincy services often cite a reliance on informal support and a lack of recognition of moral injury. Nevertheless, many expressed interest in accessing chaplaincy in the future. The key drivers for increased utilization were confidentiality, trustworthiness, and the chaplain's active engagement (Phelps et al., 2023).

In a broader context, chaplains in both first responder and military settings are known to provide spiritual, emotional, and pastoral care before, during, and after critical

incidents. Leach et al. (2020) reviewed staff perceptions of chaplaincy and found that their roles, including counselling and on-scene support, were highly valued. Chaplains' ability to maintain confidentiality, establish trust, and provide professional guidance was central to their success in fostering staff well-being and retention. However, the review also highlighted the need for further empirical studies to understand chaplains' impact on first responder care teams.

Benefits of Chaplaincy Programs in Law Enforcement

Chaplaincy programs in law enforcement provide critical support for officers' mental and emotional well-being. The Government of Canada's review of the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service (2021) highlighted that chaplaincy services contribute to stress reduction by offering psychological and mental health support through emotional and spiritual care in a non-judgmental space. Chaplains play a significant role in improving morale and resilience, particularly by helping officers maintain a sense of purpose during challenging assignments or traumatic events. This support also enhances resilience by providing officers with coping mechanisms and spiritual guidance during stressful situations. The study also found that chaplaincy services contribute to job satisfaction by fostering long-term retention and offering officers a trusted source of support for emotional, personal, or spiritual issues (Government of Canada, 2021).

Additionally, police chaplains help bridge the gap between the community and law enforcement. Wibowo et al. (2022) emphasized the value of chaplains in law

enforcement, noting that their role extends beyond traditional employee benefits by providing counselling and emotional support. This service is often not available through other resources. Walpole (2006) found that 66% of responding agencies had a chaplaincy program in place, with most officers considering these programs beneficial. However, the effectiveness of chaplaincy programs was closely tied to chaplains' visibility and engagement within the department; a lack of active presence or recognition could diminish the program's perceived value. In relation to the importance of engagement, Ouellet et al. (2025) found that chaplains described their role as uniquely dual serving both as spiritual caregivers and as informal mediators. This dual responsibility enables them to ease tensions, foster institutional stability, and provide for others in multiple ways.

Moreover, Millard (2020) explored the positive impacts of peer support in law enforcement, noting that discussing shared experiences among officers served as a valuable coping mechanism. His study underlined the importance of standardized procedures in peer support programs, such as mandatory training and clear policies, to enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives. In a similar vein, Whittington and Basham (2024) highlighted that chaplains provide a range of services, including trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, and family counselling, which are vital to supporting officers' mental health.

Challenges of Chaplaincy Programs in Law Enforcement

While chaplaincy programs offer significant benefits, their implementation in law enforcement is not without challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the persistent stressors within police work, especially when trust, connectivity, and respect are lacking, officers experience heightened stress, leading to reduced job satisfaction (Dent, 2022). Trust is particularly vital for fostering collaboration and achieving success in the workplace.

Furthermore, the "blue wall" of silence—a metaphor for the insular nature of police culture—remains a significant barrier to accessing mental health support. Nottingham (2009) explained that officers often hesitate to seek help from individuals outside the law enforcement community, believing that those outside may not fully understand the unique stresses they face. Although the "blue wall" is not permanent, it continues to impede officers from seeking help, and perceived stigma from coworkers remains a significant deterrent. To address this, it is essential to promote chaplains' visibility, ensure confidentiality, and actively reduce stigma within the department.

The Government of Canada's review (2021) also identified several challenges in chaplaincy programs. One common suggestion from Canadian Armed Forces members was the need for greater diversity among chaplains and the faith traditions they represent. This is particularly relevant for members of marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ2+ community. Some respondents noted experiences of prejudice and discrimination by chaplains, with a few instances where LGBTQ2+ individuals were turned away for their sexual orientation. This issue emphasizes the need for chaplains

to be culturally competent and inclusive in their practices to ensure that all officers feel supported.

Another challenge faced by chaplaincy programs is the cost of running such initiatives. While utilizing volunteer chaplains can significantly reduce salary and benefit expenses, offering a broad range of services requires additional resources and training, which increases costs. These challenges are especially pronounced for police services in rural regions, where logistical barriers may require additional funding for travel and accessibility. Urban areas, catering to a more diverse population, may also require chaplains with specialized training to address the unique needs of different communities, further escalating costs.

Key Takeaways

While various mental health programs exist within law enforcement agencies, there are notable differences in how they are perceived and utilized by first responders. Chaplaincy programs offer significant benefits, with officers reporting high levels of satisfaction and trust in these services. However, challenges such as stigma, lack of engagement, and cultural barriers continue to impact the effectiveness of mental health programs. To optimize support for officers, departments must ensure the visibility, accessibility, and confidentiality of these services while working to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

Discussion

Re-establishing the DRPS Chaplaincy Program

The reintegration of a chaplaincy program within the DRPS could provide invaluable support to officers, in particular when addressing the moral and emotional challenges that arise from their line of work. Research has consistently shown that chaplains play an important role in offering emotional and spiritual care, especially in post-critical incidences. For example, in Australia and New Zealand, 73% of officers reported that chaplains not only filled the gap by offering emotional and spiritual care but also offered effective coping strategies (Phelps et al., 2023). These same officers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the services provided, in particular with confidentiality and trustworthiness. Those officers who did not access the chaplain services relied on informal support or did not recognize their moral injuries suggesting a gap in formalized care that the chaplaincy program could fill. Officers expressed a desire for chaplaincy support in the future indicating a need for this type of care in police departments.

The existing research provides valuable insights into how the DRPS can improve their chaplaincy program for reintegration. A primary recommendation based on the research is to expand the program's presence and visibility through the integration of chaplains in post-critical incident responses, ensuring that they can provide immediate emotional and spiritual support. The Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) currently have four chaplains available, and these volunteers are on-call 24/7 taking turns each month to be the on-call chaplain while also being available upon the request of a police officer (NRPS, n.d.). To help encourage DRPS officers to use the chaplain program it is

important to highlight that all conversations that they have with a chaplain will be confidential and free of judgement. Chaplains have been seen to be one of the more effective mental wellness resources for officers (Bonner and Crowe, 2022).

While there are all these benefits to reimplementing a chaplain program a major barrier to its success is the mentality that officers have towards 'outsiders'. Even though the majority of the officers in Australia and New Zealand have had positive interactions with chaplains, there is still a decent number of officers who will not use the service due to feelings of distrust towards external professionals. Police chaplains can fill this gap and potentially act as a bridge to more professional mental health services to help reduce the stigmas surrounding seeking professional support (Dent, 2022). A chaplaincy program can also reduce these stigmas by normalizing conversations around mental wellness and having informal check-ins. This can emphasize that seeking support is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. This can also include training on stress management, mindfulness, and coping strategies for trauma and job-related stress.

For DRPS, these findings emphasize the need for a chaplaincy program that is visible, accessible, and well-integrated into the department's overall approach to officer wellness. When chaplains are actively involved, they provide a safe space for officers to seek emotional and spiritual support, and maintain a high degree of confidentiality, officers are more likely to use their services. To maximize the effectiveness of the Chaplaincy Program within DRPS, chaplains must be trained in offering emotional and spiritual guidance but also in establishing strong, trusting relationships with officers. To do this, DRPS can employ the help of the Canadian Police Chaplain Association

(CPCA), they are a Canadian organization that help law enforcement and police chaplains. CPCA provides police chaplains with training, online courses are available as well as an annual training seminar. The International Association of Chiefs of Police recommend that chaplains build trust with police departments through an orientation for the chaplain, have them attend citizen police academies, be informed of many mental health resources, include them in officer safety and wellness training and events, and many more.

Building Trust and Reducing Stigma Through Chaplaincy Programs

One of the most significant challenges in police work is the high levels of stress, low morale, and lack of trust within departments, all of which directly impact job satisfaction. According to Dent (2022), these factors create an environment where officers are more susceptible to burnout and mental health crises. When trust is absent, both among officers and between the police and the broader community, collaboration and effectiveness are inevitably compromised. A chaplaincy program within the DRPS could provide an essential space for officers to rebuild trust, not only within their departments but also with an external, confidential support network. The unique position of chaplains—external to the command structure but deeply integrated within police culture—enables them to offer emotional and spiritual support without the stigma typically associated with traditional mental health resources. By providing a safe, confidential outlet, chaplains can help reduce stress levels and assist officers in navigating complex emotional and professional challenges.

Moreover, Nottingham (2009) highlights the concept of the "blue wall," the insular nature of police culture that often discourages officers from seeking help outside their immediate circle. This phenomenon can lead officers to avoid support services due to concerns about judgment or a lack of understanding from those outside law enforcement. However, chaplains are in a unique position to bridge this gap. Their role extends beyond offering religious or spiritual guidance; chaplains serve as trusted listeners, providing support and perspective without the judgment often associated with peers or supervisors. Wibowo et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of chaplains in law enforcement, highlighting their ability to connect the police with the broader community while offering a support network not typically available through traditional employee benefits. This function is particularly vital in addressing the emotional toll that policing takes on officers, helping them feel understood and less isolated in their struggles.

Stigma—both from coworkers and within the broader police culture—remains a significant barrier to seeking support. Whittington and Basham (2024) note that while chaplains offer trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, and family counselling, perceived stigma can deter officers from utilizing their services. However, the study also suggests that stigma from supervisors is less of an issue, indicating that with proper promotion and leadership endorsement, officers may be more likely to seek chaplaincy support. To maximize the effectiveness of a reintroduced chaplaincy program, it will be crucial to actively combat stigma by ensuring the program's confidentiality, enhancing its visibility, and emphasizing its non-stigmatizing nature. Officers are more likely to engage with the chaplaincy service if they feel their privacy is protected and that the

program remains a confidential space, distinct from the traditional hierarchical structure of law enforcement.

Chaplains occupy a unique role within the police environment. While they are consistently present with officers, they perform different functions, which allows them to foster a more inviting and trustworthy atmosphere. Chaplains can leverage their distinctive position to bridge the divide of the "blue wall" mentality, promote confidentiality, and increase the visibility of the program in a way that addresses the barriers discussed. Reducing these barriers could be achieved by incorporating chaplains into officer training, securing leadership endorsement for the program, allowing chaplains to participate in ride-along with officers, and positioning chaplains' offices near those of police officers.

Bridge Gap Between Marginalized & Indigenous Groups

An effective chaplaincy program can enhance trust between DRPS and marginalized groups, including Indigenous peoples, through communication and cultural exchange. Due to the complex tensions between these groups and police in the past, chaplains can serve as neutral mediators who facilitate healing and reconciliation. Through active involvement in outreach initiatives and the delivery of culturally responsive services, chaplains can maintain the department's focus on engagement and foster stronger relationships (Maxwell, 2023).

Recommendations for the DRPS' Chaplaincy Program

To ensure the success of the Durham Regional Police Service chaplaincy program,

several recommendations can be made:

- The chaplains' presence and visibility must be expanded through the integration of post-critical incident responses to provide immediate emotional and spiritual support.

- Officers must be assured that all conversations will be confidential and free of judgement. Conversations around mental wellness must be normalized and there should be regular informal check-ins.

- Chaplains must be incorporated in everyday aspects of policing, participating in ride-a-longs, briefings, and other day-to-day activities to develop working relationships with officers and reduce barriers to the program.

- Chaplains must receive specialized training in police-specific stressors, trauma-informed care, and peer support strategies.

- Attempts must be made to enhance trust between DRPS and marginalized groups. One possible way to do this is through the use of chaplains as neutral mediators in communication and cultural exchange.

- A standardized policy system similar to that of peer support programs or health wellness and reintegration must be implemented. This will make sure that best practices are followed by all those involved in the chaplaincy program.

- Supervisors and other superiors must play a role in promoting and endorsing the use of chaplain services and the need to seek support for mental health.

- Religious leaders must be engaged in community policing initiatives, i.e. participate in outreach programs. O'Brien and Tyler (2019) suggest that sustained collaboration between law enforcement and faith communities can enhance public trust and promote long-term reconciliation efforts.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that we were unable to do in-person interviews with police officers and other members of DRPS to see what kind of support they would like to see. This would further ground our research in CBR approaches as it would allow us to directly communicate with members of the community that we are trying to reach and support.

Another limitation of this study is the inability to gather direct feedback from chaplains previously involved in the DRPS chaplaincy program. Interviews or surveys with these key stakeholders would have provided valuable insights into their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the program's effectiveness. Engaging with chaplains directly would have strengthened our research by incorporating their lived experiences and perspectives, ensuring the findings are more aligned with the needs and realities of those directly involved in delivering chaplaincy services.

A final limitation of this study is the lack of standardized terminology. This study solely focused on the terms 'chaplains' and 'police chaplain'. However, because chaplains tend to work with all faiths, it is possible that studies were not included due to a potential variation in titles as well as those not specifically pertaining to police services.

Conclusion

This report provides an overview and discussion of chaplaincy programs; how they operate, their strengths, and weaknesses. Chaplaincy programs hold a long history

worldwide but are relatively new in an official capacity in Canada. Chaplaincy programs are generally viewed favourably in surveys, however, there are several considerations highlighted by this research.

Chaplaincy programs are viewed as effective instruments to improve the mental health outcomes of law enforcement officers; however, this is only the case if officers employ the services that are available to them. All forms of stigma (self-stigma, coworker stigmatization, and stigmatization within broader police culture) serve to reduce the utilization of chaplaincy programs by officers. Identified ways to combat this issue revolve around ensuring high levels of perceived confidentiality among officers. While the findings of this report pertain to chaplaincy programs in a broad sense, chaplaincy programs should do their best to tailor to the specific needs and values of their police service. This research does not include any data from members of the Durham Regional Police Service, or any primary data collection. Future efforts and research should include consultation within the Durham Regional Police Service community to ensure that the needs and values of officers are adequately addressed and represented in the new chaplaincy program.

Appendix A

Durham Regional Police Directive
DRPS CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM
HR-02-004
Priority: 3
Adequacy Standard:
Related Directive(s):
E-Form(s): Directive Revision Request Form
Attachment(s):
Glossary: A-Z
Effective Date: Mar-16-2012
Last Revision Date: Jul-10-2022
Last Review Date: Jul-10-2022
Person Responsible for Re-Evaluation: Director, People, Development & Learning Unit

DRPS Directive

1. TABLE OF CONTENTS
POLICY

PROCEDURE

Policy

2. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

2.1. Section 2.(a) of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Being Part 1 of the Constitution Act, 1982 under Fundamental Freedoms states: "*Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: freedom of conscience and religion*".

3. PURPOSE

3.1. The Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) models Fundamental Freedoms by not only working proudly with all members of the community, but also actively reaching out to various ethnic and cultural groups and supporting the work of many municipal leaders and other organizations in their quest to break down any barriers of ignorance and misunderstanding. This directive reflects the religious diversity in the community; allowing for DRPS members of all faiths to feel that they can access a resource that compliments their religious and cultural beliefs.

4. RE-EVALUATION

4.1. This directive will be reviewed within three years of the last review date and updated as necessary.**5. REPORTING AND AUDITING**

5.1. There are no reporting requirements associated with this directive.

5.2. There are no auditing requirements associated with this directive.

6. AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy establishes the following responsibilities:

6.1. **Members** are responsible for contacting the DRPS Chaplain directly if they require their services.

a. Under no circumstances shall the services of the DRPS Chaplain be requested or supported in assisting with any DRPS investigations.

6.2. The **DRPS Chaplain** is responsible for:

6.2.1. Fulfilling their mission of serving and supporting all DRPS members by providing:

a. Emotional support.

b. Moral support.

c. Spiritual support

6.2.2. Upholding the confidentiality and trust of all DRPS members.

6.2.3. Familiarizing themselves with the general work and responsibilities of DRPS members by participating in:

a. The Ride-along Program.

b. The Skills Augmentation Program.

c. Job shadowing.

6.2.4. Requesting mileage reimbursements for DRPS related events.

6.2.5. Receiving all appropriate training required for them to perform their duty upon becoming an honorary DRPS Chaplain and signing **Oath of Secrecy** (**DRP 202**).

6.2.6. Diligently completing all duties and responsibilities of a Police Chaplain and employing either or all of their spiritual, psychological, and sociological skills.

7. POLICE CHAPLAIN QUALIFICATIONS

7.1. Qualifications of the DRPS Chaplain are:

a. At minimum, seven years with their denomination.

b. Be ecclesiastically certified.

c. Have clinical pastoral education.

d. Have completed, at minimum, one unit / three 3 month intense internships in a hospital, jail, and mental health centre.

e. Embody a specialized interest in law enforcement.

f. Serve on a 24 hour on-call basis; making appropriate provisions for a certified substitute (when

required).

g. Be involved in selected training programs.h. Have a broadened understanding of the diversity and complexity of the social service context for ministry.

i. Demonstrate familiarity with the symptoms of selected mental / emotional problems.

8. POLICE CHAPLAIN TRAINING

8.1. The DRPS Chaplain training requirements consist of:

8.1.1. Appropriate training provided by the DRPS and Canadian Police Chaplain Association (CPCA) upon becoming an honorary member and signing **Oath of Secrecy** (**DRP 202**).

8.1.2. Training in the following:

a. Role of a Chaplain in law enforcement.

b. Officer injury or death.

c. Responding to a crisis.

d. Notification of a next of kin.

e. Suicide intervention.

f. Critical incident stress management / post-traumatic stress disorder.

g. Liability and confidentiality.

h. The police family.

9. POLICE CHAPLAIN DUTIES

9.1. The duties of a DRPS Chaplain consist of he following:

a. Taking the Oath of Office and Allegiance and Oath of Secrecy upon appointment.

b. Wearing a DRPS uniform bearing a clearly identifiable insignia of the position of Inspector / Chaplain while performing police related duties.

c. Treating all services rendered to DRPS members as confidential.

d. Assisting officers with next of kin notifications.

e. Offering, upon their request, religious or otherwise, support to all DRPS members.

f. Offering non-denominational prayers at ceremonial functions.

g. Visiting personnel on a routine basis.

10. POLICE CHAPLAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1. The DRPS Chaplain, upon having sworn and signed **Oath of Secrecy** (**DRP 202**), shall:

10.1.1. Maintain strict and professional confidentiality such as:

a. Regarding any information they may receive or observe unless otherwise mandated by law due to the nature of the information that may have been received during their tour of duty contracts

b. Should they be a compellable witness and testify at any criminal / civil proceeding.

c. Passing disclosed information relating to criminal wrongdoing or concerns over the safety of a DRPS member and / or any other person on to the appropriate authority.

Procedure

11. REQUESTING POLICE CHAPLAIN SERVICES 11.1. **Members,** requesting the services of the DRPS Chaplain, shall:

11.1.1. Contact the Chaplain directly.

11.1.2. If the services of the DRPS Chaplain are required for a police ceremony, contact the appropriate senior officer in charge of the event.

11.1.3. Be aware of the distinct possibility that the DRPS Chaplain may pass on disclosed information to the appropriate authority should that information relate to criminal wrongdoing or concerns over the safety of a DRPS member or any other person.

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