

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND STRATEGY TO COUNTER PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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Abstract. The psychological health of law enforcement officers has always been of primary importance. During the performance of official duties, law enforcement officers often face long-term trauma, stress and emotional overload, which can impair their psychological well-being and lead to professional burnout. The purpose of the study is to analyze the psychological well-being and strategies for combating professional burnout of law enforcement officers in order to develop recommendations for improving their mental state and improving the quality of work. The research was conducted by surveying employees of law enforcement agencies during a week (July 2023) using a Google form. The 111 people took part in the survey, including 66.7% of men (74 people) and 33.3% of women (37 people). The article deals with psychological training developed specifically for employees of law enforcement agencies with the aim of ensuring their psychological health and providing self-help tools. This training is aimed at helping employees in solving their psychological needs in the conditions of long-term traumatization and stressful service environment. The effectiveness of training on the psychological well-being of employees of law enforcement agencies is being investigated. According to the results of the survey after the training, more than 80% of the participants noted an improvement in their psychological state and a decrease in the level of stress. Analysis of the results provides important recommendations for supporting law enforcement officers and improving their psychological well-being. Ensuring psychological well-being and combating professional burnout is becoming an urgent task that requires attention and action from both the employees and the management and state bodies to ensure the quality and efficiency of the work of law enforcement agencies. The survey found that workers face significant levels of stress and burnout due to the complexity of their jobs. The need for psychological support and stress management tools is essential. Building psychological well-being includes developing strategies that include self-esteem, psychological support, and other ways to manage stress. Summing up, the conducted survey and training indicate the need to overcome the problem of professional burnout and improve the psychological well-being of law enforcement officers through the development and implementation of special strategies and psychological support programs.

Keywords: psychological well-being; professional burnout; law enforcement officer; psychological health; mental support; countermeasure strategies.

JEL Classification: I14, K32, Z19

Formulas: 0; **fig.** 6; **tabl.** 1; **bibl.** 10

Introduction. Professional burnout becomes a serious threat to the psychological well-being of law enforcement officers, affecting the quality of service delivery and threatening their physical and emotional state.

One of the key problems is the lack of proper attention to the psychological health and stress state of law enforcement personnel, which leads to a deterioration in the quality of work and a decrease in professional efficiency. The second problem is the limited psychological resources and self-help strategies available to law enforcement officers to prevent and overcome professional burnout.

The issues that require immediate solutions are the development and implementation of effective strategies to combat burnout, as well as increased attention to psychological well-being. Eliminating the above-mentioned problems will contribute to the preservation of psychological health and increase the efficiency of the work of law enforcement officers.

It is important to investigate psychological factors that affect the state of mental health of law enforcement officers, and to determine possible ways to improve this situation.

The creation of effective strategies for combating professional burnout will be a significant contribution to maintaining the psychological well-being of law enforcement officers.

Literature review. Analysis of the latest research on psychological well-being and strategies to combat professional burnout of law enforcement officers shows the relevance of this problem in the context of modern challenges and requirements [4-5]

Research shows that professional stress, traumatic events and demands associated with work in law enforcement agencies have a significant impact on the mental health of law enforcement officers. It is known that such factors as frequent interaction with stressful situations can lead to a high level of burnout among law enforcement officers [2-6].

Researchers have found that providing psychological support and psychological services to law enforcement personnel is becoming an increasingly important task in maintaining their mental well-being. Much of the research focuses on the development and effectiveness of programs and methods of psychological assistance for law enforcement officers. This includes individual consultations, group sessions, stress resistance training and relaxation techniques [1-10].

One of the key strategies to prevent professional burnout is to promote the development of psychological resilience and adaptation of employees to stressful situations. Research points to the importance of increasing employees' awareness of their own mental health, teaching effective stress management strategies, and developing social support networks [2-5].

In particular, some researchers emphasize the importance of working with stress resistance and increasing awareness of stressors in the work environment. Current research is also examining the impact of new technologies, such as virtual reality, on reducing stress and improving psychological well-being [6].

The conclusion is that psychological well-being and strategies to combat professional burnout of law enforcement officers are relevant and important aspects

Aims. The purpose of the study is to analyze the psychological well-being and strategies for combating professional burnout of law enforcement officers in order to develop recommendations for improving their mental state and improving the quality of work.

Methodology. The research was conducted by surveying (we formulated 5 questions) law enforcement officers during a week (July 2023) using a Google form. The 111 people took part in the survey, including 66.7% of men (74 people) and 33.3% of women (37 people). The age structure of the respondents is presented in Figure 1.

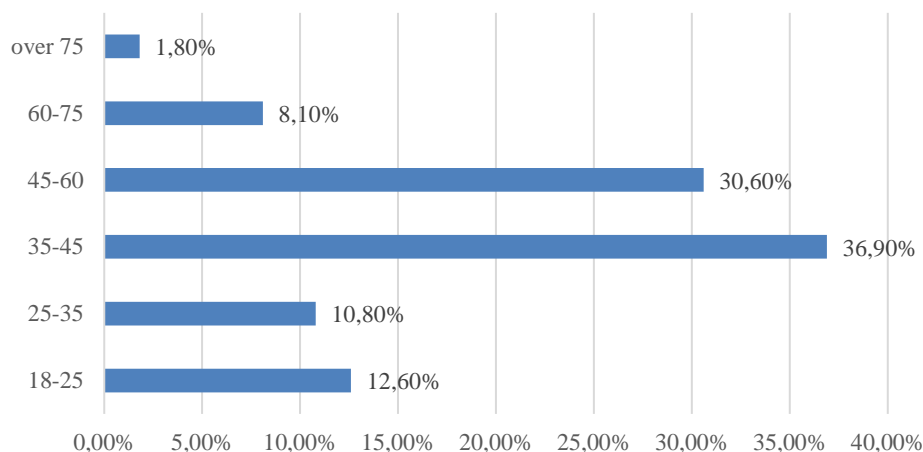


Figure 1. The age structure of the respondents

Results. The psychological well-being of law enforcement officers plays a key role in their professional life and general well-being. This concept includes emotional state, attitude to work and social relations that can affect their general state of mind.

It is important to note that the work of military personnel is extremely difficult and traumatic. They face a heavy workload, a high level of stress, and may witness or participate in events that leave a psychological mark. In such conditions, psychological well-being is especially important.

The psychological well-being of law enforcement officers is affected by various factors, which include stress, traumatic events, working conditions, psychological support, etc.

Factors affecting psychological well-being include:

- *Job specifics*: law enforcement officers often face high levels of stress and traumatic events. They may witness violence, accidents, crimes, etc., which affects their psychological well-being;
- *Workload*: intensive work, long working hours, demands for speed and accuracy can lead to overload and exhaustion;
- *Conflicts*: internal and external conflicts that may arise in the work environment have a negative impact on psychological health;
- *Lack of support*: lack of psychological support and stress management skills can lead to loss of psychological well-being;
- *Injuries and previous experiences*: personal injuries or negative work experiences can leave a mark on the employee's psychological well-being;

- *Combat dimension*: in the case of performing combat tasks, psychological well-being may be impaired due to the impact of combat stress;
- *Tension and fears*: constant readiness for danger and increased tension can affect psychological health.

Ensuring the psychological well-being of law enforcement officers is an important component of their success and health, and also contributes to the quality of their work and the general safety of citizens.

Aspects such as providing access to psychological help and counseling for employees who may encounter traumatic events are important to ensure the psychological well-being of law enforcement personnel; learning stress resistance and stress management techniques that help to resist the negative effects of stress; support from colleagues, family and friends, which helps to solve emotional problems and reduces the impact of psychological stress; learning your own self-care strategies, including eating a balanced diet, being physically active, and getting regular rest.

Countering professional burnout is an important part of ensuring the psychological well-being of law enforcement officers. Various strategies and techniques can be applied to reduce the risk of burnout and increase resistance to stress (table 1).

Table 1. Strategies and techniques to counteract professional burnout and ensure psychological well-being

| Method | Content |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Psychological support | Professional psychological support and counseling helps to manage stress and traumatic events, as well as to develop stress resistance |
| Psychological training | Special training and stress management skills can be included in the preparation of employees before performing important tasks |
| Preservation of work-personal balance | It is important to develop work-life balance skills. Taking time to restore and maintain personal relationships helps prevent burnout |
| Self-esteem | One must consciously treat one's physical and psychological state, take measures to maintain health, including regular physical activity, balanced nutrition and rest |
| Team support | Supporting colleagues and creating a supportive work environment are important for overcoming stress and increasing psychological well-being |
| Everyday self-help practices | Relaxation, meditation, breathing exercises and other practices help reduce stress and increase resistance to burnout |
| Providing access to resources | Providing access to the necessary resources to help employees cope with stress and traumatic events is an important element in combating burnout |
| Support and recognition system | Recognition and support from management and the organization help employees feel the importance of their work and improve psychological well-being |

With the aim of practical implementation of the above-mentioned strategies and methods of combating professional burnout, we have developed a training aimed at providing practical skills and tools to employees of law enforcement agencies to increase their psychological well-being and work efficiency.

The purpose of the "Psychological health and self-help" training was to prevent emotional burnout, secondary traumatization, fatigue, increase the level of resilience (viability) of law enforcement officers, improve the skills and abilities of self-care and self-help

The following methods were used: informative messages, mini-lectures, demonstration, practical exercises, group work, case studies. The training is based on 6 modules:

1. Mental health of law enforcement officers, main aspects, factors and impact on work and personal life.
2. Techniques of self-regulation and stress management.
3. Resource-oriented model of stress management; internal and external resource processes. Exercises: resource personality, resource environment, resource thinking.
4. Development of resilience: strategies for strengthening psychological stability, adaptation to traumatic situations and preservation of one's own well-being.
5. Psychological self-help techniques at home and at work.
6. Recovery after prolonged traumatic activity: strategies and resources.

The training participants got acquainted with the basic principles of psychological health and learned practical methods for effective self-help. In addition, the training included a module on appropriate response to stressful situations and methods of psychological support for colleagues in difficult situations, consideration of situational cases and discussion of specific situations,

Participants were given the opportunity to participate in practical exercises and scenarios that helped them develop self-regulation and stress-resilience skills. The training also provided an opportunity for the exchange of experience and mutual support between the participants.

Before conducting the training, we conducted a survey among the employees of law enforcement agencies in order to determine their current attitude to psychological well-being and professional burnout. The results of this survey became the basis for further development and improvement of the training, taking into account the needs and expectations of the audience.

According to the results of the survey, the following answers were received.

On the first question "Does your mental health affect your performance at work?" (Figure 2).

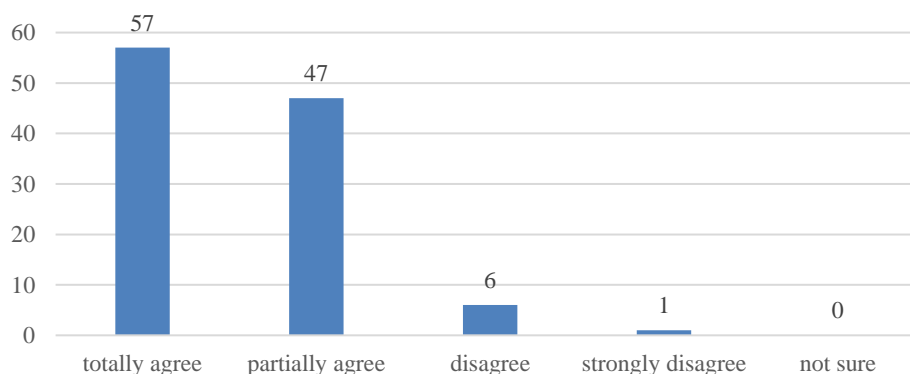


Figure 2. Respondents' answers to questions "Does your mental health affect your performance at work?"

The answers to this question indicate a close connection between the mental health of employees and their productivity at work:

- The majority of respondents (57) strongly agree that mental health has a strong impact on their productivity. This may indicate that most workers recognize the importance of taking care of their mental health in order to be successful at work..
- A significant percentage of respondents partially agree (47), which may mean that they consider mental health as a factor that partially affects their productivity.
- There were fewer respondents who disagreed (6) and strongly disagreed (1), indicating that a minority believe that mental health has no or little effect on their performance.

From this we can conclude that in most cases employees consider their mental health as an important factor affecting their work productivity

On the second question “How often do you perform work-related tasks outside of working hours?” (Figure 3).

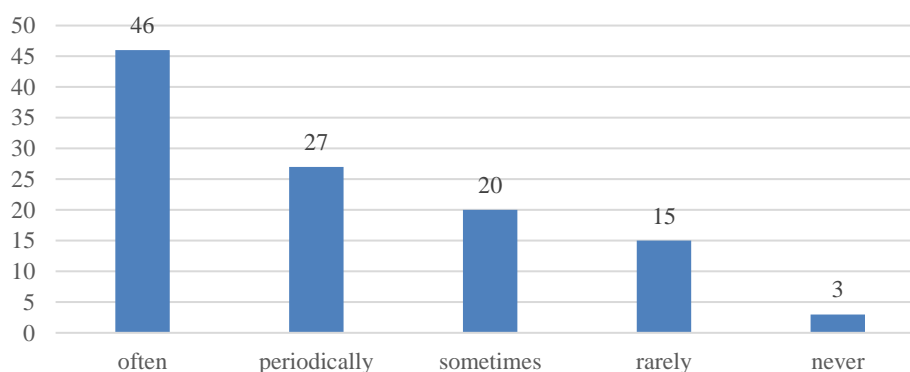


Figure 3. Respondents' answers to questions “How often do you perform work-related tasks outside of working hours?”

Based on the results of the survey, it can be concluded that a significant part of employees performs work-related tasks outside of working hours. This can be a sign of being overworked or involved in work outside the working schedule. It is important to consider that such practices can affect the work-personal balance and psychological well-being of employees. Such results also indicate the possibility of stress and burnout among these workers.

Regarding the third question “Do you experience insomnia due to work load?”, the answers were as follows Figure 4.

The answers to this question indicate different levels of impact of workload on insomnia:

- Often (15) and occasionally (32) respondents may experience insomnia due to workload. This means that a significant number of workers periodically experience stress and anxiety, which can affect their sleep quality.
- Sometimes (29) and rarely (28) respondents may also experience insomnia, but to a lesser extent, which may indicate a lower level of impact from work load.
- Never (6) respondents claim that work load does not affect their sleep quality.

Overall, these responses suggest that work load affects the quality of sleep of workers, but that this effect varies and depends on the individual characteristics of each person.

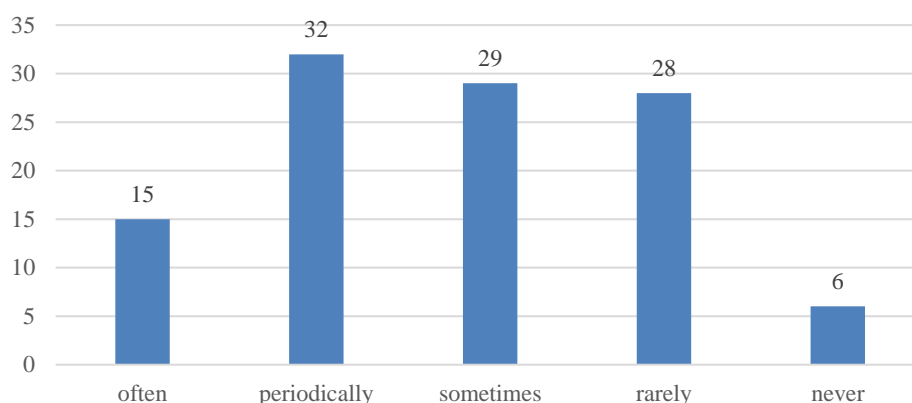


Figure 4. Respondents' answers to questions “Do you experience insomnia due to work load?”

Answers to the fourth question “Do you have access to resources for stress, depression, anxiety and other mental health issues?” (Figure 5).

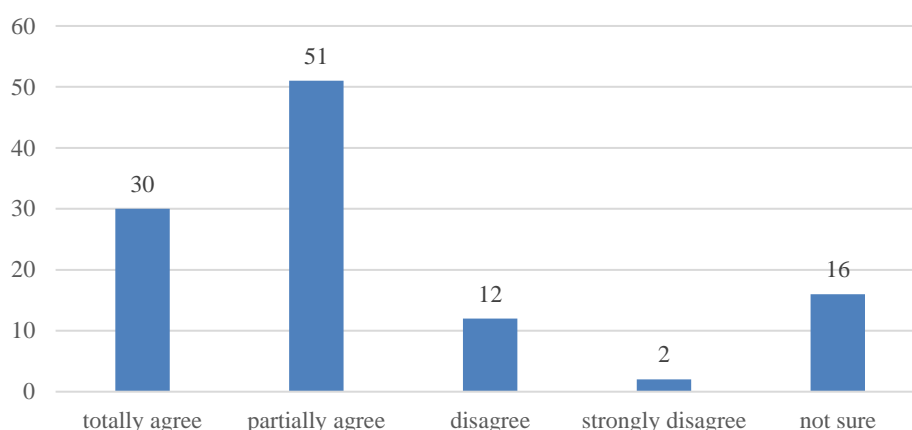


Figure 5. Respondents' answers to questions “Do you have access to resources for stress, depression, anxiety and other mental health issues?”

After analyzing the responses of the survey participants, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 20% of all respondents fully agree with the availability of resources.
- Partially agree with the availability of resources - 34%.
- Disagree with the availability of resources - 8%.
- Strongly disagree with the availability of resources - 1%.
- Not sure - 14%.

These data show that more than half of the survey participants feel at least partially supported and have access to mental health resources. However, there are also groups that have different perspectives on the availability of these resources. The findings

indicate a diversity of opinions and beliefs among respondents and can inform further research and initiatives to improve access to resources for mental well-being.

Survey results for the fifth question “Please rate your degree of professional burnout on a scale from 1 to 10” (Figure 6).

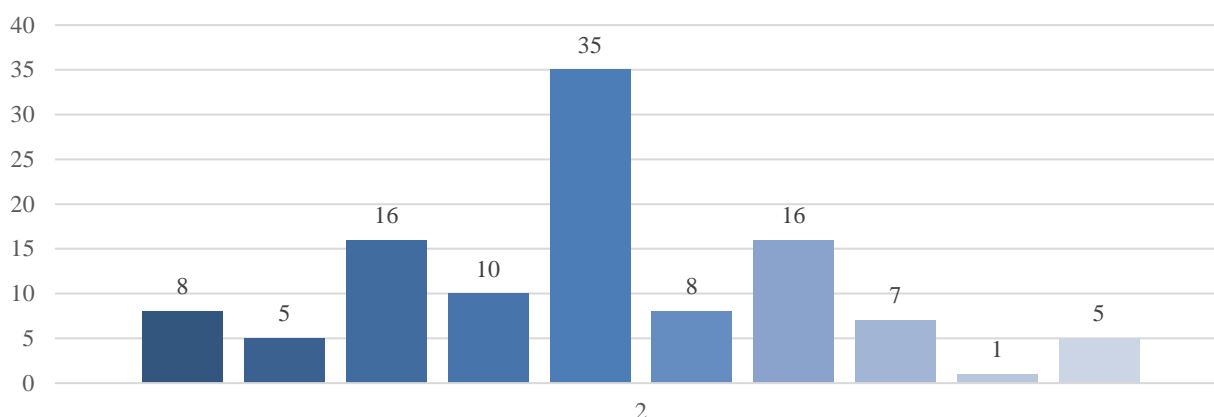


Figure 6. Respondents' answers to questions “Please rate your degree of professional burnout on a scale from 1 to 10”

The obtained results indicate a different level of professional burnout:

- A low level of burnout (1-3 points) was noted by 29 employees.
- A moderate level of burnout (4-6 points) was recorded in 53 employees.
- A high level of burnout (7-10 points) is observed in 29 employees.

In general, the results of the survey allow us to identify the problems of professional burnout among law enforcement officers and the need to develop strategies and programs to prevent burnout and increase the psychological well-being of this category of specialists.

Based on the results of the survey and taking into account the needs and expectations of the participants, we developed and conducted a special training. This training was aimed at providing law enforcement officers with the necessary skills and strategies to maintain psychological well-being and combat burnout. During the training, the participants received information about the psychological aspects of work in law enforcement agencies, effective methods of stress management, and also learned to use various self-support techniques. The main goal was to help employees improve their psychological well-being and maintain efficiency in their professional activities.

The choice of priority strategies for combating professional burnout may depend on the individual needs and specific situations of law enforcement officers. However, the main and general strategies they would likely choose include:

1. Ways of self-help and self-regulation, as this allows them to manage stress more effectively and maintain psychological well-being.
2. It is important for many to have trustful communication with colleagues and the possibility of receiving psychological support.
3. Stress management skills are a priority because it helps to resist the negative effects of stress.
4. Regular self-esteem and detection of signs of burnout help to take timely measures to restore mental health.

5. Professional psychological support can be important, especially for those dealing with high levels of stress and traumatic situations.

The choice of priority strategies for combating professional burnout may depend on the individual needs and specific situations of law enforcement officers..

It is important to note that the best strategy may be a combination of several approaches adapted to the specific needs and capabilities of the employee.

These recommendations can help create favorable conditions for the formation of psychological well-being and combating professional burnout among employees of law enforcement agencies.

Conclusions. Ensuring psychological well-being and combating professional burnout is becoming an urgent task that requires attention and action from both the employees and the management and state bodies to ensure the quality and efficiency of the work of law enforcement agencies.

The survey found that workers face significant levels of stress and burnout due to the complexity of their jobs. The need for psychological support and stress management tools is essential. Building psychological well-being includes developing strategies that include self-esteem, psychological support, and other ways to manage stress. Summing up, the conducted survey and training indicate the need to overcome the problem of professional burnout and improve the psychological well-being of law enforcement officers through the development and implementation of special strategies and psychological support programs.

Author contributions. The authors contributed equally.

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