

Counselling Interventions and the Use of Counselling Skills in Police Services in Kenya

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Abstract: Employees in Kenya including police officers are increasingly showing acute signs of burnout. It is widely acknowledged the world over that policing is one of the most stressful of professions. Cases of death through shooting or suicide have been reported, and have lately been on the increase. Frontline police officers often have to confront traumatising incidents almost on a daily basis which can lead to psychological and emotional disturbance. Officers and the public they serve need to be wary of high levels of anxiety, which can be handled through expanded, effective coping strategies such as workplace counselling. This paper advances a multidisciplinary approach to the provision of counselling psychological services for the police service in Kenya using the hermeneutic phenomenology approach.

Keywords: workplace counselling, police services, trauma, coping strategies.

Date of Submission: 02-07-2018

Date of acceptance: 19-07-2018

I. Counselling Psychology Services And Workplace Counselling In Kenya

The provision of counselling psychological services has steadily expanded in the world and in Kenya (McLeod, 2012; Wango, 2015). This includes counselling at the workplace (McLeod, 2010; McLeod & McLeod, 2001; Republic of Kenya, 2008a). Counselling services represent a major organisational response to psychological and mental health problems reported by employees (Carroll, 1996; Coles, 2003; McLeod, 2010). Workplace counselling is the provision of brief psychological therapy for employees of an organization. A qualified counsellor can be employed 'in house' as a member of the organization on a full time basis, or the service outsourced with a visiting counsellor holding sessions with employees.

Workplace counselling offers employees an opportunity to discuss their issues and adopt a constructive means of coping with difficult situations (Carroll, 1996; Coles, 2003; McLeod, 2010). Employees who receive counselling tend to be highly satisfied, and are often convinced that this helped them resolve their problem. Counselling psychology is associated with significant improvement in levels of anxiety and depression. In addition, therapy that involves problem-solving will extend to systematically identifying, generating, selecting and evaluating solutions, including treatment of depression (Cuijpers, Van Straten & Warmerdam, 2007). Wango (2015) argues that skills training in counselling psychology in Kenya and in the developing world may help clients including police services in identifying how maladaptive problem-focused coping styles may contribute to experiences of psychological distress and personal difficulty. Counselling is also associated with reduction in increased work absenteeism due to sickness, and improvement in other organisational outcomes such as more positive work attitudes, fewer accidents and enhanced work performance (McLeod, 2012). More specific information is being investigated on how people cope with distress and how this coping develops over time (Braunschneider, 2013; Gottlieb & Coyne, 1996).

In Kenya, counselling services have been extended to the public service, education, health, home based care and community-based -- interventions especially -- as a result of HIV and AIDS and other terminal ailments (Republic of Kenya, 2008a, 2008b; Wango, 2015). It could be assumed that counselling services have in turn been rationalized if not readily available for armed and police officers (Republic of Kenya, 2008a). By recommending counselling in the police service, the paper takes cognisance of a need to reflect on other processes such as recruitment and selection processes, counselling policy and services as well as the implementation process. These are aspects that require further investigation and research, including the extent to which the therapeutic services are aligned and meet the needs of the clients.

II. Rationale And Significance

This paper advances the literature on counselling psychology and argues that developing countries such as Kenya must identify and assist - through counselling - different client groups experiencing a diversity of challenges and crisis situations. This is done with a view to determine what is significant to clients regarding their therapeutic experience for holistic growth and development. In addition, practitioners will be able to identify not only components of psychotherapy experience but also principles that can be used to guide the process of therapy. In order to achieve this aim, the paper singles out police officers as clients and rationalizes the significance of counselling services using a grounded theory hierarchy. Using a hermeneutic process of analysis, various principles are identified to encompass police officers as clients of therapy.

There is a distinction between formal counselling and use of counselling skills (McLeod, 2003). Counselling is a process in which a practitioner with knowledge and skills is involved in a formal relationship of assisting a client who is in situational difficulty, while counselling skills are a collection of techniques and strategies used to enhance communication in the counselling process and relationship. Counselling skills can be greatly extended in other contexts besides professional counselling, for example, a senior police officer assisting a junior officer to resolve an issue. Police officers in particular are likely to share their concerns including fears, frustrations, disappointments, anxieties and worries -- with a person they can identify with including their seniors or a helping professional (counsellor, psychologist or chaplain). A senior officer may also need to find out why an officer appears disturbed or provide emotional support. Admittedly, a counsellor and police officer at the same time pose potential conflict due to the dual relationship as well as confidentiality and autonomy (American Counselling Association, 2014; Bond, 2000; Wango, 2013, 2015). This is a professional matter that can be addressed as a matter of course since counselling particularly in Kenya is not as developed (Wango, 2015). In addition, other sectors such as education and health make use of teachers and nurses respectively as helping providers.

The distinction between counselling and use of counselling skills is important, because it reserves the profession of 'counselling' (therapy, psychotherapy and psychology) for specific situations where there is a formal counselling contract (Bond, 1989; McLeod, 2003; Wango, 2015). This is also important in the police context, so that both officers and practitioners (counsellors, psychologists, chaplains and social workers) can understand that the counselling role has no other role in relation to the client. For example, the use of counselling skills by a senior officer is not disciplining or admonishing an officer. Nonetheless, it must also be accepted that there are situations where it is difficult to draw a line between counselling and the use of counselling skills. In the police service for instance, a senior officer may also want to induct and mentor the junior officer. This is possible in a society such as Kenya because guidance, counselling and use of counselling skills may not be as distinctive in everyday living unless formally defined. Notwithstanding, the use of counselling skills includes professionalism in counselling ethics such as confidentiality of information received in the context of counselling and the limits to confidentiality. This is why training in counselling is a major component for professional competence and enhanced performance. Subsequently, counselling in the police service must reflect on professionalism.

The extension of using counselling skills among the population increases the number of people in the population receiving necessary help in times of need (Kirkwood, 2000; McLeod, 2003). This includes para-professionals such as health workers, social workers and other professionals (Wango, 2015). Kirkwood (2000) for instance conducted a study on improved counselling services through use of counselling skills in a community where counselling had been recently introduced, making a strong case for counselling and imparting counselling skills in the Kenya Police Service. The paper also takes cognisance of the fact that the Kenya Police Service has been undertaking various reforms on improved services since 2003 (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights & Centre for Human Rights and Peace, 2015; Republic of Kenya, 2008a; 2011, 2015).

III. Conceptual Framework

The paper uses the hermeneutic phenomenological approach and thus adopts metaphysical stance on methodological grounds (Finlay, 2009; Grbich, 2007; Langdridge, 2007; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is an umbrella term encompassing both a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches (Kafle, 2011). Phenomenology when applied to research is the study of phenomena, such as police work in this study, their nature, meanings and implications (Finlay, 2009; Langdridge, 2007). Phenomenology is a way of researching the essence or essential meanings of phenomena (Kafle, 2011) such as police services and their effect on their lives. The purpose is for the phenomenological approach to provide a rich textured description of the systems and perspectives as a lively experience. Langdridge (2007) clarifies that phenomenology as a qualitative method focuses on human experience as a topic in its own right. In the same way, counselling in police services is concerned with meaning and the implications in our world. Hermeneutic phenomenology too is understood when we practically engage in its activities, such as workplace counselling in police service.

The choice of phenomenology is highly significant since this paper also provides immense knowledge of how police officers react to their world as well as a suggestion of an intervention through counselling. This is because as argued by various scholars such as Maykut and Morehouse (1994), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Warthall (2006) the aim of phenomenology is the appropriate description of phenomena. Thus, phenomenology provides essential aspects as follows: (a) a conceptualization (reduction and essences), such as events that are significant in police work; (b) a philosophy including a description of overarching perspectives, and (c) the research method (assumptions and strategies, ontology and epistemology). Thus, this paper is both research and interpretations since these can be experienced together including a pedagogical significance in our world. Phenomenological research has the advantage of being sensitive and has a specific kind of engagement with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van Manen, 2014). This is because as stated by Kafle (2011) phenomenology has the potential to penetrate human experience and trace the essence of a phenomenon such as counselling in police service, and explicate it as experienced by individuals and the community.

Kafle (2011) argues that though there is no prescription on the methodological sets of doing a hermeneutic phenomenological research (van Manen, 1997; 2014), a few methodological guidelines can be suggested. This includes purposive sampling with information rich cases as suggested by Merriam (1998). Multiple tools including newspaper articles and various publications including online information were used to generate data. The purpose is to find out information that resonates with police services and that can be appropriately applied and aligned with the paper. The data was processed to uncovering paramount thematic analysis and existential analysis (Kafle, 2011; van Manen, 1997; 2014). Data analysis was then performed by applying the hermeneutic cycle that constituted reading, reflective writing and interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 1999; Kafle, 2011; Laverty, 2003; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). In the end, hermeneutic phenomenology as a pedagogic practice of text explicates the life world of police officers in this case and is aligned to van Manen (1997; 2014) textually analysis. The purpose of a hermeneutic approach with specific reference to the police as clients, is to bring about a focus on work and personal engagement, suggesting at the same time that police officers need to find meaning both at work where they are actively committed via meaningful engagement in unique services, as well as a search for a meaning in the 'outer' world. This is because law enforcement has been universally recognized as a stressful profession (Moad, 2011). Ultimately, official policing will provide meaning as a by-product of engagement as a police officer as well as engagement in life as a member of the police force, the officer's family and the wider community. Thus, phenomenological hermeneutics is an interpretive research paradigm and thus both a philosophical and methodological strength.

The foundation of the hermeneutics approach is also intensified by existential theory as proposed by Frankl (1959) and Yalom (1980). Frankl (1959) developed logotherapy, a therapy aimed at searching for meaning. It is possible that police officers need to consider a purpose of meaning amidst the paramount existential crises they face. According to Frankl, the goal of life is not to seek pleasure or power, but rather meaning. Frankl argued that people can discover meaning, achievement and accomplishment in doing something creative. Regarding the Police Service, perhaps it needs investigation using the hermeneutics approach whether officers experience something worthwhile (for example, virtues of serving the society). Relating to finding meaning in life, Yalom (1980) proposes several ways of working with clients in therapy. This includes challenging the meaning of life outside oneself, and this would be essential for clients such as police officers who need to be assisted to locate meaning (suicidal clients) and others who may be giving up (in distress, depressed). Subsequently, therapists and persons trained in basic counselling skills can include short-term and long-term goals, including family and personal pursuits, in working with diverse clients. This makes a case for each client as unique, and the therapist must help the police officer client explore what gives the individual (self) and the force (us-ness) meaning. In the end, client achieves self-actualization by pursuing own goal.

IV. Benefits Of Counselling: Dealing With Stress, Anxiety And Depression In Police Services

Many people have a significant degree of emotional distress, which may include anxiety, depression, anger or burnout. Work stress in particular has adverse effects on the person and organisation, including poor health, absence from work and attendant costs to the organisation (Cooper, Sloan, & William, 1988; Wainwright & Calnan, 2002). Work stress has a wide range of pressures experienced by workers that include work overload, lack of control over tasks, poor working environment, difficulties in relationships with colleagues and managers and in turn family, differences in career development and career achievement, and the dilemmas in balancing between the home-work interface (Carroll, 1996; Cooper, Sloan & William, 1988; Wainwright & Calnan, 2002). Policing is a highly specialized type of work unlike many other professions. Although it is not specifically easy to measure and conceptualise problem coping (Heppner, 2008), police work in particular can be very stressful (Moad, 2011) for various reasons, including the fact that police officers have irregular and long working schedules. Besides, front line police officers often tackle traumatising incidents in their day-to-day activities. In the developing world, Kenya included, there is the additional stress associated with poor working conditions,

long periods of separation from immediate family members due to far-flung postings, and the exigencies of duties (Moad, 2011; Wango, 2015). Police officers with stress-related symptoms and depression require help, and in good time. Counselling psychology, through an interdisciplinary approach, can provide a range of problem-focused social support services to assist officers in situational difficulty.

There have been various incidents of utmost significance that reflect the need for psychological intervention in the Kenyan police service. Media reports have regularly recorded and reported heart-rending incidents such as a police officer shooting another or others (Associated Press, 7th November, 2010; Daily Nation, 15th July 2016; Munuhe, 2016; Mwaura, 2016), and at times taking their lives (Odula, 2014; 2016). These incidents have continued to rise hence a demand for justice (Capital News, 9th December 2012,). For instance, on November 6, 2010 an administrative police officer killed 10 people in a shooting spree in Siakago, Mbeere County (Daily Nation, 7th November, 2010). In Nairobi a police officer shot and injured his wife (Munuhe, 2016). Despite these and other incidents where police officers have resorted to actions that endanger their own lives and those of others (Daily Nation, 27th May 2013; Daily Nation, 21st June 2013; Daily Nation, 15th February 2016; Sunday Nation Team, 3rd July 2016) it would appear that there hardly exists any helping programmes at their workplaces geared towards helping manage the escalating problem. Yet counselling and other support services can be strengthened towards helping this severe end of the spectrum. This is because a greater part of counselling services must be on client preferences (Cooper & McLeod, 2011).

Counselling psychological services can assist in a range of services including offering help to a vast majority of police officers that present psychological problems (Carroll, 1996; Coles, 2003; McLeod, 2010). Policing empowers officers to maintain law and order with special legal powers resolve and prevent crimes (Cox, McCmey, & Scaramella, 2013). Police service includes but is not limited to attending victims of crime and accidents or dealing with social misfits and perpetrators of crime. Officers have to attend to traumatising violent crime incidents and accident scenes including those involving children, women, persons with disability, internally displaced persons, refugees, the elderly and other vulnerable groups in the society.

The most common traumatic and stressful experiences that a police officer may envisage include the following:

- (1) Being attacked: Police officers are violently attacked even in the line of duty. This may lead to serious injury or even death, exemplified by the killing of 42 police officers who were ambushed as they pursued cattle rustlers in Baragoi in 2012 (Kariuki, 2012) and other violent incidents (Daily Nation, 21st June 2016; Kariuki, 2012; Ombati, 2016; Odula, 2017).
- (2) Taking the life of a person: Police officers have sometimes to take the life of another person, such as outlaws, in carrying out their lawful duties (BBC News, 20th January 2016; Russian Television News, 2nd April 2017).
- (3) Attending to needy persons: Officers have to attend to victims of fatal accidents and disasters. These include victims of traffic accidents, child defilement and rape, fatal accidents as well as victims of crime and disasters. It is police officers who rescue victims trapped in cars, houses and in fires. Some of the victims may be mutilated by the accidents, while others may eventually die. These and other incidents can be horrifying both for the simple and hard-hearted.
- (4) Counselling in line of duty: Officers who are the first to arrive at the scene of a crime or an accident are not only responsible for crowd control, but have to attend to others at the scene as well. These include traumatised victims and significant others affected by the occurrence. Officers may be apprehensive as they are unable to offer help to traumatised victims due to lack of prerequisite skills.
- (5) Challenges in personal life: Officers have their own personal lives and have to contend with daily issues such as relationship, marriage, separation and divorce, financial obligations, retirement and exit from formal employment.
- (6) Life beyond official service: There are also unique and hazardous stressors found in the law-enforcement process that often put divisions between friends and sworn enemies. Many officers live in perpetual fear of would be criminals who may want to infiltrate their private life. This can leave spouses, family members and friends in long-lasting fear of attack.

It is not that police in Kenya are singled out as an entity, but police forces in general face similar circumstances (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 1999, 2001; Moad, 2011). The extent of distress is best summarised by the Daily Nation of February 15th 2016 that blamed deaths on frustration at work:

Studies done elsewhere have shown that police officers are significantly at higher risk for a host of long-term physical and mental ailments than the general population due to the daily stress they face at work.

Police officers are primary or secondary victims of trauma owing to the nature of their work (Ladwig, 2009; Moad, 2011). This is because of overt exposure to critical incidents (Moad, 2011; Violanti, 1996) such as murders, road crashes and various types of homicides.

A critical incident can be described as a situation faced by service personnel such as police officers that causes them to experience an unusually strong emotional reaction that has the potential to interfere with their ability to effectively function at the moment or later, or to affect them at a later time (Moad, 2011). Time and again the characteristics of conscientious police officers may tend to yield negative influence on other relationships including family, children and significant others. Subsequently, reactive and suppressive styles are associated with reports of depression and trait anxiety, as well as severe psychological symptoms and stress (Heppner, Cook, Wright & Johnson, 1995; Ranta, 2009; Ranta & Sud, 2008). In addition, stressed police officers pose a threat to themselves, their colleagues, offenders and/or to public safety and thus it is a matter of urgent concern (Ranta, 2009; Ranta & Sud, 2008). Like any other professionals, police officers may tend to show increased rates of psychiatric morbidity as compared to the general population leading to low job satisfaction, anxiety, cynicism, depression and at worst suicidal tendencies. For instance, domestic quarrels as a result of strained relationships may lead to fatal incidents as the officer may use a gun (Munuhe, 2016). This may be manifested in the pressures of police work, including fatigue (Mathieu, 2007; Moad, 2011). Summarised in the table below are examples of critical incidents involving police officers.

Table 1 Incidents Of Police Officers Loss And Bereavement

Occurrence	Actual incidents
Officers killed in Police Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - July 2016, seven police officers killed in Kapenguria - June 2016, five police officers killed in Mandera - June 2016, police officer shot dead in carjacking incident in Nairobi - May, 2017, Eight police officers killed in Bomb blasts
Officer involvement in shooting incidents including family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June 2016, Officer shot dead by junior officer in Murang'a County. - June 2016, Officer shoots and injures wife in Nairobi following an altercation. - May 2016, Officer kills girlfriend and alleged lover in Meru. - Police Constable transferred from Sultan Hamud to Itabua Police Station, shoots wife and then kills self.
Suicide Cases (self inflicted injury)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - January 2016, officer kills self by hanging in Nyeri. - Police Constable kills himself in full view of several officers. - Police Constable attached to Bulemia Police Post in Busia County commits suicide. - Police throws self out of the window of a car between Lodwar and Kapenguria.
Mass killing of officers (multiple officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police Officers, estimated at over 45, killed in Baragoi (November 2012)
Erroneous killing of citizen by errant police officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - March, 2010, Six police officers kill seven taxi operators in Kawangrere Nairobi. Officers. - November, 2010, Administration police officer kills 10 civilians in Siakago - June, 2016 Lawyer, client and taxi driver alleged to have been murdered by police officers.
Errant officer killing another police officer or officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officer shoot Senior officer and officer girl friend then shooting self. - June 201, Administrative Police officer kills colleague - July, 2016, Officer kills seven colleagues
Officer assault on civilians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - March, 2016, Officer beats and injures a man along King'ara - Riara Road in Nairobi. - October, 2015: Officer defiles a 12 year old girl in Kajiado
Other incidents (this includes near fatal incidents, family bereaved by death of officer, professional exhaustion (burn out) and cases of domestic violence among Police officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - September, 2011, Administration Police Officer kills two civilians in Dagoretti (Nairobi). - Allegations of police brutality <p>NB These and other incidents would form the basis of future investigation.</p>

These and other incidents have led to compelling evidence that the police commit acts of violence against the citizens (Apollo, 23rd February, 2017; Associated Press, 7th November 2010; Chinwe, 5th December 2014; Daily Nation, 15th February 2016; Kenya Transitional Justice Network, 2013; Odula, 5th December, 2014; Otieno, 2016) The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission provided a historical perspective arguing that the police have perpetuated violence or failed to protect citizens (Kenya Transitional Justice Network, 2013:6):

The Kenya Police and Military forces have been at the center of the country's history of violations of human rights. Both have either committed the violations themselves, or have failed to protect Kenyan citizens. These violations of human rights include massacres, unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, as well as rape and sexual violence. The Police and Military forces have been the main perpetrators of these violations.

The Network report is similar to the Amnesty report that concluded Kenya ranked top in Africa in cases of police shootings and killing of civilians (Apollo, 23rd February 2017). The report indicated that by October 2016, a total of 122 extrajudicial killings had been reported in Kenya, out of 177 cases in Africa. This put the country ahead of fourteen African nations which also recorded cases of police harassment and deaths. These were Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia. The Amnesty findings appears to collaborate similar reports (Chinwe, 5th December 2014; menya, 2016; Mukinda, 2016; Nation Correspondent, 18th September 2011; Nation Nesplex, 1st October 2016; Otieno, 2016). The provision of counselling and psychotherapy (Conte, 2009) can greatly enhance their own personality and work ethics (Oslon & Hergenbahn, 2007).

In other instances, officers may suffer from compassion fatigue, an occupational hazard that affects many people in the helping professions (Braunschneider, 2013; Mathieu, 2007). Compassion fatigue is an inability to react sympathetically to a crisis or disaster as a result of overexposure to previous crisis, disasters and other exceedingly traumatic events (Figley, 1982; Mathieu, 2007). The condition occurs after prolonged exposure to distressing and horrible situations that evoke negative feelings, depression and misery. A police officer may be physically and emotionally exhausted to the extent that they may appear unable to empathize with the persons they serve, their loved ones and co-workers (Mathieu, 2007). The officer can appear 'hard to reach' and seemingly difficult to connect with. But in some instances, the officer is indeed hurting from within. The potential toughening is a mechanism to fortify an already infuriated spirit. The officer therefore attempts to move towards a comfort zone by avoiding emotional involvement in their life. This does not hide the fact that some officers become intrinsically affected by the random adrenaline in response to their work. The interspersed adrenaline has highs and lows and can wreak havoc on an officer, emotionally and physiologically. In certain cases, such officers may demonstrate loss of interest in their work or career, become aggressive, cruel and sadistic. This can lead to aggression against fellow officers (horizontal violence), family members, or resentment of the public.

Officers may show symptoms of distress and burnout, as illustrated by Braunschneider (2013), Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach & Jackson (1986). Emotional reactions to stress and burnout are often accompanied by muscle aches and pains, headaches, diarrhoea, irregular heartbeats, feelings of panic and fear, depression, alcohol and drug abuse. A brief summary of stressful reactions is contained in the table below:

Table 2 Reaction to Stress

Symptoms	Possible reactions
Emotional symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of humour (or excessive use of black humour) - Irritability/resentment / bitterness - Persistent mood of depression - Feelings of failure / guilt / blame - Apathy, low energy
Cognitive symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor or lack of concentration - Rigidity /resistance to change - Suspicion / mistrust - Stereotyping - Objectification/distancing - Ruminations (of leaving, revenge)
Behavioural symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work avoidance (absenteeism, clock-watching) - Diminished personal contact with clients/colleagues - Stereotyped/inflexible behaviour - Habitual lateness - Acting out (alcohol/drugs/affairs/shoplifting)
Physical symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tiredness, lethargy - Sleep disorders - Increased minor illnesses (such as headache, backache)

The high level of stress among law enforcement officers (Moad, 2011; Violanti, 1996) is likely to lead to poor relationships and thus inevitably result in lower marital satisfaction due to work demands. In addition, officers may not also be able to share the trauma (Violanti, 1996) experienced at work. It is possible that officers will avoid contaminating family life with the secrets of their work. Thus, the police service, law enforcement and the armed forces community creates a unique 'family' unto itself.

Therapists working with law enforcement officers and their families require a special understanding of the officers and the environment in which they work. In addition, there is need to maintain an understanding of what is required for personality, relationship and career advancement. It is imperative that police officers receive assistance from someone experienced in helping such as a counsellor, psychologist, clinical psychologist, chaplain or social worker. Professional help will be aligned to counselling (American Counselling Association, 2014).

Helping practitioners working with police officers and their families too require to be acquainted with this unique environment. The practitioners offering assistance to both the officer and their family also require enhanced counselling skills to deal with the distress, personal convictions and conflicts in relationships. In addition, a multi-pronged, holistic response to the challenges confronting the police is commendable. While counsellors, psychologists and chaplains address the psychological and spiritual perspectives of the problems and issues affecting the police officers, social workers are instrumental in addressing the social dimensions of the presenting problems and issues, while at the same time playing the social advocacy role for improved working conditions with better welfare resources for enhanced productivity (Wairire, 2014). Wairire asserts that social work in Kenya is practised in the criminal justice systems which include: the prison, the judiciary, the police service, correctional institutions for child offenders, juvenile courts, probation service and community policing.

V. Cognitive Perspectives And Distortions In Police Services

Incidents of violence among police officers arising from emotional distress are alarming but not necessarily out of proportion. Many people puzzled by these incidents are quick to inquire: does this mean that police officers are coping less well with stress, that the officers are lack coping strategies or that life has simply become more stressful? This paper argues that several of these factors apply.

Over the years, there have been dramatic changes that require psychological intervention services to handle challenges such as workplace stress and changing lifestyle (Carroll, 1996; Coles, 2003; McLeod, 2010; Wango, 2015). Life changes need to be understood with specific reference to the police force as follows:

- Firstly, life in Kenya and the world is becoming increasingly more challenging and complex in a global perspective (Wango, 2015). For instance;
 - a) The cost of living has gone up tremendously over the years; and,
 - b) Roles have changed over the years while criminal activities and terrorism continue to increase, as exemplified by the killing of five police officers in Mandera in June 2016 (Daily Nation, 21st June, 2016) and in several other incidents (Odula, 2017).
- Secondly, the pressure to succeed in life has grown over the years. People want several things -- a car, house, a good life -- yet these and other items are expensive and in most instances beyond the means of many. This translates into working harder, putting more hours, handling increased bills and increased pressure to succeed in a very competitive environment (Wango, 2015).
- Thirdly, employees are expected to give more at their work place, which demands improved efficiency and effectiveness. People are time-pressured, work over a longer period of time before they can go on leave or off sick. When police officers are overwhelmed by work-related stress, they lack concentration and are likely to make fatal mistakes.
- Fourthly, the ratio of police officers to citizen population has always been way above what is recommended by the United Nations ration, at times one officer serving a thousand people. This translates into increased crime, an increased workload and more paperwork.

All the above factors lead to stress, anxiety and depression (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) depending on the personality (Oslo & Hergenbahn, 2007). Police officers probably have more problems in relationships, including marriage at the home front, because of absence from home due to the demands of work. Additionally, they lack time to take exercises, relaxation or even perform any personal task due to emergencies. Consequently, these challenges are a source of inner conflict, stress and distress. To cope with all the traumatising experiences, police officers resort to various coping mechanisms including smoking, drinking, drug abuse and reckless sexual behaviour that expose them to a high risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Others may easily become irritable and violent, which may spill over into their relationship with spouse, family, friends and the general public. At the extreme, this may lead to suicidal tendencies and hostility including crime.

Of specific importance is how police officers cope with pressure of work on a day-to-day basis. This is because although there are different types of coping mechanisms (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Prati & Pietrantonio, 2009; Smith, 2009), habits of coping can become either helpful or a hindrance to officers' psychological and physical health. In the context of a traumatic situation, the officer and the work environment are mutually interactive and inseparable. Also, people tend to cope differently depending on their personality and the nature or context of the trauma environment (Gottlieb & Coyne, 1996). For instance, there are likely differences among novice vis-à-vis seasoned officers and circumstances in the nature of the traumatic experience. Gottlieb and Coyne (1996) explain that there is likely to be change and fluctuation, rather than stability, in coping. Indeed, Gottlieb and Coyne (1996) are cautious and insist on avoiding drawing broad conclusions when exploring the effectiveness of coping strategies. Instead, coping is more specific in relation to particular persons and contextual circumstances (hence the person centred approach in helping [Thorne, (2002)] to ensure depth and affluence of coping.

Table 3. Commonly reported coping strategies to Trauma

Strategy	Examples
Avoidance strategies at work	- Officer absenteeism from duty without reason. - Officer refusing to take on certain assignments.
Use of black humour	- This includes jokes.
Controlling one's emotions and memories	- Officer may refuse to demonstrate any hurt feelings to appear strong.
Exercise and other physical activities	- Officer engages in activities such as additional and prolonged walks or working in the gym.
Withdrawal, denial and disengagement	- Officer detaches self from event as if event did not happen, or they are unaware of it.
Focusing on the technical aspects, and alcohol and drug abuse	- Officer may be addicted to work to avoid concentrating on disturbing event. - Certain officers may be addicted to alcohol and drugs.

As officers get more and more stressed, they tend to stop going for physical exercises such as swimming, working out in a gymnasium, running or any favourite sport. Yet, it is during the stress moments that they need these activities most. Instead, they often work full time to stay away from the stress at home, and trying to juggle work and money to meet increasing demands of living. The pace of life is so fast that it seems difficult, nay impossible, to do anything, yet there is always much more to undertake. Thus, many officers may be diagnosed with a disturbance (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) as has been noted in other professions such as nursing (Braunschneider, 2013).

Besides, other support mechanisms may be lacking, for example the extended family which traditionally had a significant supportive role in times of crisis (Wango, 2015). Wairire (2014) further opines that social support mechanisms in Kenya were traditionally embedded in the socio-cultural practices of different communities. Social responsibilities were clearly defined for different community members through traditional socialization. Individuals with different needs requiring social interventions -- including counselling -- were, therefore, helped at the community and individual levels. This, unfortunately is no longer the case today especially for members of the police service. Instead, the officers and/or the families may be in an urban setting with many more demands associated with a high cost of living, or in the remote areas of the country on their own with no one to turn to for genuine help in times of need. Relationship problems between officer and spouse, or among colleagues, friends and acquaintances can only make the situation worse. The rising of tides of mental break up leaves the officer isolated and unsupported. The need for counselling and social support services in such circumstances cannot be gainsaid.

Coping actions that promote adaptiveness and enhance resilience are beneficial to the individual, in this context the police officer (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Littleton, Horsley, John & Nelson, 2007). An individual in need is likely to adopt strategies that directly address the stress causing factors. Counselling and related interventions can help focus on the various steps in the management process, including seeking information about help and emotional support. Social work in turn can focus on policy issues, with a potential to ensure that the gains derived through counselling are not only realized but sustained for more durable impact and quality productivity of the police service.

Religious beliefs and spirituality have also been noted and highlighted as effective adaptive strategies (Prati & Pietrantonio, 2009). On the other hand, maladaptive coping is highly linked with lack of adaptiveness leading to avoidance-type actions and lowered resilience (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Prati & Pietrantonio, 2009; Smith, 2009). Smith (2009) for instance found that the avoidance emotional coping increases the possibility of developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) an eventuality police officers must be wary of. The use of

counselling and counselling skills must be a problem-focused coping strategy to deal with traumatic symptoms and to develop effective coping ability.

VI. Application Of Psychological Services In Police Service

Counselling is concerned with and emphasizes on the initial world of the client. Yalom (1980) suggests that the impetus for searching for meaning in life (MIL) has evolved over time. In the past, it is possible that employees were seeking to meet their basic needs. Health now includes various aspects including physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing (UNESCO, 2016; WHO, 2016). Health and health education in the workplace is increasingly becoming a major concern for many employees and organisations in different settings (McLeod, 2010; McLeod & McLeod, 2001).

There are various ways of assisting employees to manage their physical and mental well-being. This includes: an internal staff counselling service; an external Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs); and, Placement Advocacy and Follow Ups (PAF). These programmes have a variety of services that may include personal and financial information and advice, legal services and family counselling.

In most organisations, there is a likelihood of two types of counsellors: the counsellor who is a full time employee of the organisation; and, the independent counsellor from outside the organisation. In the context of the Kenya Police Service, the counsellor who is a full time employee may be recruited by the police force as a counsellor or as a police officer with prerequisite counselling skills. Persons already employed as police officers who have an inclination to the helping profession could also train in counselling, and in turn be delineated from daily police work and thus become professional counsellor. The independent practitioner does not have to be a police officer, or employed in the force. There are obvious strengths and weaknesses for and against an internal and /or external counselling service and most organisations will incorporate both services in different situations.

Problem-coping effectiveness is related to psychological wellbeing (Nezu & Ronan, 1985) even among adults (Vogel & Wei, 2005). Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) define problem-coping as the regulation of affective, behavioural and cognitive responses. This includes seeking psychological help and counselling (Conte, 2009; Wango, 2013, 2015). Some of the practice associated with police services will include the following:

- (1) The officer as client and counsellor: Police officers can receive help from a counsellor or chaplain. The counsellor could be a police officer who is trained in counselling, a counsellor recruited into the police service, or an independent practitioner. Officers with a spiritual inclination may seek assistance from their pastor, priest or imam. The purpose of counselling could be to provide coping skills or problem-solving strategies on personal issues such as marital relationships, terminal illness, family or other matter. (There are ethical considerations and implications when an officer provides assistance, (American Counselling Association, 2014; Bond, 2000; Wango, 2013, 2015).
- (2) The officer as client and work-related stress: The officer receives assistance as in (1) above, except that the issue is work-related, for example, trauma related to work. There is need to counsel or debrief officers on long-term deployment in potentially stressful and hazardous situations. This includes officers who handle crime cases, officers in peril and those in risk zones. Officers returning from these services require assistance before and after undergoing such traumatic experiences. This is to prepare them for other postings and in the end for reintegration into civilian life upon retirement from police services.
- (3) The officers' use of counselling skills in their work: Police work may involve assisting people in distress, negotiation skills, conflict resolution and dealing with other difficult situations such as crowd control. In that case, part of officer's training should include crisis intervention skills.
- (4) Forensic psychology: Forensic psychology is the intersection between psychology and the justice system (Bartol & Bartol, 2012; Huss, 2008). It involves understanding of the law in the relevant jurisdictions. This relates psychology to collection, examination and presentation of evidence for judicial purposes. A forensic psychologist can be trained in clinical, social, organizational or any other branch of psychology (O'Donohue & Levensky, 2004). This will include personality assessment and offender profiling. In other instances, a counselling psychologist may be asked to evaluate a defendant's sanity or insanity that relates to criminal responsibility at the time of the offense. These are not primarily psychological questions, but rather legal. Thus, a forensic psychologist must be able to translate psychological information -- including assessment -- into a legal framework.

Counselling in the police service will involve application of coping strategies and problem-solving activities. The responses may be successful or unsuccessful, conscious or unconscious, and may further involve approaching or avoiding the problem. Counselling in police services must focus majorly on four levels: the interface between the officer as client and the counsellor on personal issues; the officer as client on work-related stress; the officers' use of counselling skills in their work; and, forensic psychology.

Regarding police services, a cluster of categories can be developed to assist a diversity of clients as outlined in Table 4.

Table.4. Clusters and Categories of Clients

Category	Level of Services (National, County, Sub County, Station)	Expertise of Practitioner (referral)	Expected outcome
Depressed officers	√	√ (acute cases)	Wellness
Suicide cases	√	√ (severe cases)	Reduction in cases
Self-injurious behaviours	√	√ (cases of depression)	Greater meaning into life
Bereaved officers	√	√ (acute cases)	Grief bereavement
Education and Psychosocial services (including talks on HIV and AIDS, stress and stress management)	√	√ (continuous, aimed at officer wellness)	Improved officer wellbeing
Chaplaincy	√	√ (assigned chaplain)	Spiritualism (spiritual care)
Family counselling	√	√ (incorporated in health care)	Family counselling and care
Meaning in Life (MIL)	√	√ (psychosocial education)	Higher life ideals and goals

Acknowledging and seeking help for trauma-related issues should not be frowned upon by anyone including persons working in the armed forces. The services of counsellors and chaplaincy that are already available in police and armed services should be sought any time when an officer is in need of help. Any form of distress arising from work or relationship should not be trivialised. It must also be acceptable as proposed by Heppner et al. (1995) that people will have dispositional, stable ways of coping with stressful issues as well as situation-specific strategies. Unfortunately, therapeutic services are only sought after stress levels have reached a critical stage, sometimes bordering on excessive violence, suicide or even murder. The need for counselling should be recognised as a vital component in maintaining the overall well being, morale and performance of police officers. A more preventive approach including detection of symptoms of depression can, and will prompt a more timely intervention. Overall, ineffective problem-coping styles and the experience of stress appear to render police officers vulnerable to experiencing psychological distress. This requires a change of attitude in both the officers and their seniors in these essential services.

VII. Conclusion

Police officers may be overwhelmed by psychological morbidity, including anxiety and depression, leading to various incidents such as increased rates of marital dysfunction, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse (Muthondeki, Sirera, & Mwenje, 2014; Ranta, 2009; Ranta & Sud, 2008). It must be admitted that data on policing is not as comprehensively available at present in Kenya to undertake intensive research as evident in other countries (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 1999; 2001). This would enable wide-ranging studies such as a comparison of law enforcement suicide rate as compared to other professions or to the general population. However, it is imperative that the police service equip officers with the capacity to deal with professional exhaustion and thus resolve personal issues and challenges at the workplace.

Counselling psychological interventions in the police service must be aligned to the needs of the clients, in this case the police officers and in several instances close relatives such as spouse and children. Therapeutic services and workplace assistance for police officers must be client-centred and further aligned to what Levitt, Butler and Hill (2006) refer to as ‘moment-to-moment process of psychotherapy practice’. In addition, all helpers including professional practitioners and police officers who adopt use of counselling skills must be able to form a therapeutic alliance with the client (Bedi & Duff, 2014). This is because policing is unique and counselling among police officers a distinctive service. For example, police officers must find meaning in their work as well as in their lives (Yalom, 1980). The role of counselling psychology practitioners will be to assist officers define a meaning for life, as articulated by Yalom (1980), in which meaning in life (MIL) has purpose, goals and a sense of coherence. Ultimately, all policing services must be aligned to the Constitution (Republic of Kenya, 2010) and linked to professional ethics (American Counselling Association, 2014; Bond, 2000; Republic of Kenya, 2014; Wango, 2011, 2013, 2015).

Many people with anxiety begin to show symptoms as they draw boundaries closer and close themselves in, and this can be detected by colleagues and other acquaintances -- sometimes at the workplace. It is important to note that physical symptoms are usually more readily evident than psychological and emotional disturbance and that they are often produced by emotional distress (Batson, Shaw & Oleson, 1992; Blechman, 1990). Hence there is need for increased services, and the ultimate significance of counselling in the workplace (Mcleod, 2010; Wango, 2015). Observable symptoms of stress are often the presenting complaint, while many other conditions are made worse by low mood anxiety that may include chronic headaches, fatigue syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Practitioners (counsellors, clinical psychologists, psychologists and social workers) supporting police services must therefore be recruited, nominated and appointed based on standard spiritual, academic and professional considerations that would be a prerequisite to offering order to offer the necessary and effective delivery of quality services.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the University of Nairobi for the opportunity as Senior Lecturers in the Departments of Psychology and Sociology and Social Work.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

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Dr. Geoffrey Wango. Counselling Interventions and the Use of Counselling Skills in Police Services in Kenya." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). vol. 23 no. 07, 2018, pp. 39-52.