

**UTILIZATION OF COUNSELLING ON MANAGING STRESS AMONG
ADMINISTRATION POLICE OFFICERS IN THE RAPID DEPLOYMENT UNIT IN
NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The general performance of police officers ever since the conception has been one of the most challenging. This is due to work related issues, the new era of technology and advancement in criminal activities. The purpose of the study was to examine the utilization of counselling on managing stress among administration police officers in the Rapid Deployment Unit in Kenya. The study sought to: establish the need for counseling to manage stress; examine the implementation of counseling among officers in the unit; identify challenges faced by unit officers seeking counseling services to manage stress; and on ways to improve counseling services to manage stress among Rapid Deployment Unit officers. Related literature was also reviewed and was used to guide the study to make conclusions. The study used a descriptive design and employed stratified sampling technique so as to classify the respondents into three categories; Inspectorate, NCOs and Constables. A total of 124 from the anticipated 150 officers participated in the study representing a return rate of 82.7%.

The study established that there was a male dominance among officers in the RDU of Administration Police. The same male dominance was also reflected across all the ranks in the unit. In addition, majority of officers in RDU (97.4%) were below 39 years. Most of the respondents acknowledged the importance of counseling to their life and that of their families. Majority of the officers had not attended counseling sessions due to lack of counseling services with the few officers seeking counseling in relation to HIV testing. Counseling sessions were noted as less helpful due to the manner in which they were being conducted.

There were no counseling services or programs being implemented for identifying or responding to personal or emotional performance of officers; no toll free telephone consultation for employees who wish to talk about their problems; no retirement or lay off assistance provided to officers; there was no counseling offered for crisis situations undertaken by officers; no coaching of officers by experienced officers to manage occupational stress; no individual, marital and family counseling in the unit; and no alcohol and drug treatment offered in the unit. Contrary to these findings, there was chaplaincy as the only service offering counseling in the unit. From these findings it is apparent that there are no programs that offer counseling services in the Rapid Deployment Unit apart from chaplaincy – a faith based initiative – thus painting a gloomy picture in connection to counseling in the unit

Family problems were identified as the main source of stress among the officers. Witnessing death of an officer during operations was also noted as a cause of stress among the officers. Other sources of stress noted include trauma, and depression. Lack of interest in life, being guilty after abusing alcohol, doing anything to get alcohol and being taken to places where officers had faced a prior negative experience were stated as issues that stress officers in the unit. There were no programs or a policy document for counseling in the unit. Counseling during operation was solely in the hands of the commander. Counseling techniques are therefore not adhered to. Stress management, financial management and family counseling were topics that were identified for counseling. Strategies that could be used in order to manage stress among RDU officers were in three folds; those that can be addressed by an individual officer, the unit and the force and finally the government.