



Research Paper

Designing a Self-Care Model for Employees of the Islamic Republic of Iran Police Command (Qualitative Research)



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Abstract

This research aimed to design a self-care model for the personnel of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The research is applied in terms of its objective, qualitative in terms of data nature, and descriptive in terms of its execution method. To collect information, semi-structured interviews and grounded theory were utilized. The study population consisted of law enforcement commanders from various provinces, with 15 participants selected through purposeful theoretical sampling based on the principle of data saturation. The collected data were systematically organized through an ongoing process of open, axial, and selective coding, resulting in 122 open codes, 105 concepts, 15 categories, and 6 classes.

The findings of the study indicate that the self-care model for the personnel of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran is categorized under the themes of self-confidence and organizational trust, self-awareness, personal and professional goals, adaptive intelligence and emotion regulation, independence in decision-making, self-care, reward and incentive systems, organizational support, learning and development opportunities, employability and responsibility, organizational culture, effective leadership, creating a safe space and acceptance of mistakes, attention to health, tranquility and stress management, and constructive communication.

Finally, it is recommended that the findings of this research be used as a guide and general framework for self-care among the personnel in the law enforcement command offices of various provinces.

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Introduction

Given that military forces in any country are the guardians of its independence, security, and territorial integrity, a nation's authority cannot be achieved without the strength and capability of its military personnel. Therefore, the optimal utilization of these valuable forces and attention to factors that influence their optimal performance are essential (Hamedi & Jafari Roshan, 2022). Police officers are citizens whose job responsibilities involve enforcing the law, detecting crimes, and apprehending offenders to help maintain order. The stress and trauma regularly experienced by police officers can negatively impact their health and well-being. The unique type of stress that police face is associated with the development of negative attitudes towards people, life, and work. This can be understood when police officers encounter psychologically and emotionally challenging situations, where they are expected to maintain the highest levels of performance and control, performing well even under extreme stress (Wooller, 2022). In military personnel, excessive responsibilities, unrealistic expectations and deadlines, insufficient time to complete tasks, lack of adequate resources, and poor working conditions (such as inadequate lighting, noise, and ventilation) can lead to job dissatisfaction and a lack of positive feelings towards their work, ultimately resulting in occupational stress (Lotfian, Asadzandi, Javadi, & Sepandi, 2020). As a result, extensive research has been conducted on mental health in police forces, highlighting a high prevalence of mental health issues, elevated

stress levels, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and emotional exhaustion. However, the policing profession encompasses a variety of roles. Personnel in different roles may experience diverse events, threats, and potential risks (Burnett, Sheard, & St Clair-Thompson, 2020). Although exposure to job-related stressors is an inherent aspect of policing and is consistently associated with increased levels of burnout, burnout can be reduced or even reversed by introducing activities that address its causes or effects. Therefore, one potential way to combat burnout is through self-care. It engages in deliberate activities to enhance physical, mental, or emotional well-being. Common self-care activities include practicing mindfulness, seeking social support, exercising, engaging in professional development activities, and maintaining a healthy diet (Lathan, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Stefurak, & Duncan, 2021). Self-care refers to intentional, acquired, and purposeful activities that individuals undertake to sustain, maintain, and enhance their health and well-being (Maftoon, Sharifan, & Naghizadeh, 2018). Self-care is a voluntary behavior that is driven by an individual's own will and intention. Through acquiring sufficient knowledge and skills, a person becomes capable of taking care of themselves independently. The willingness to engage in self-care, which acts as the driving force behind self-care behaviors, requires the emergence of necessary motivations within individuals. Motivations serve as the reasons behind behaviors and are crucial for initiating

and sustaining activities (Ghanbari & Bahadorimonfared, 2020). The developmental needs of self-care are designed based on the individual's growth stages, the environment in which they live, and the impact of that environment on the individual. These needs also relate to life changes and the stages of the life cycle. According to Orem's theory, the development of self-care behaviors in an individual is influenced by two factors: the demand for self-care and self-care agency. An individual with self-care agency can perform necessary self-care actions. This ability will lead to self-care behavior if it is accompanied by a demand for self-care and if the contextual factors facilitate it or do not present obstacles. Contextual factors are those internal and external to the individual that affect their ability to engage in self-care activities and the type or extent of self-care behaviors. These factors include age, gender, education, conditions, developmental patterns, family system factors, environmental factors, and the adequacy and availability of self-care resources (Shovaichi, 2020). Ondrejková and Halamová (2022) described in their study that various self-care strategies include seeking support from others and having a supportive work environment. Police officers also make efforts to expand their knowledge and engage in different self-care practices related to physical well-being, such as exercise or healthy eating. Other self-care strategies involve efforts to manage emotions and experiences, behavioral approaches like focusing on personal growth or hobbies, maintaining personal relationships, and ultimately working on improving work

management, colleague relationships, or taking breaks from work (Ondrejková & Halamová, 2022). Correia, Romão, Almeida, and Ramos (2023) explained in their study that their findings underscore the importance of developing theoretical models and planning interventions to prevent burnout among police officers, with a primary focus on the variables mentioned (Correia, Romão, Almeida, & Ramos, 2023). Beer, Beaujolais, Wolf, Ibrahim and Letson (2023) concluded in their research that future studies should examine the impacts of work-related stress, coping strategies, and the development of effective stress reduction approaches for this population (Beer, Beaujolais, Wolf, Ibrahim, & Letson, 2023). Masson (2019) concluded in a study that as part of self-care practices, social workers should strengthen their resilience and build upon it. Both individuals and organizations have a responsibility to help mitigate the effects of secondary trauma (Masson, 2019). Hector, Khey, Hector and Khey (2018) found in their research that in most cases, when police officers are involved in an incident, it tends to be a negative one. Police patrols often involve stopping vehicles for traffic violations or speeding on highways, responding to emergency calls, and escorting prisoners during transfers or court appearances. Traffic stops and speeding violations frequently result in tickets, and emergency calls often lead to arrests and/or the involvement of medical personnel. All these situations are negative, yet they are a significant part of police duty. Now, imagine the repetition of this scenario over the years—tough thoughts, right? This reality affects most of those who serve on the "front lines,"

but these feelings can also permeate the entire system, particularly among those who frequently interact with individuals with mental illness (Hector, Khey, Hector, & Khey, 2018). Therefore, considering the above points, the present study aims to design a self-care model for the Employees of the police command of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Methodology

The present study aims to design a self-care model for the personnel of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Given that the findings of this research can be directly applied, the study is classified as applied research. Since the researcher did not engage with numerical data, the research is qualitative. Additionally, the study is descriptive in its execution. The research methodology involved semi-structured interviews and the implementation of grounded theory. The study population consisted of law enforcement commanders from various provinces. A purposive sampling method, a type of non-probability sampling, was used to select participants. In qualitative research, purposive sampling involves selecting individuals and locations that are expected to contribute significantly to understanding the research problem and the central phenomenon being studied (Klassen, Creswell, Plano Clark, Smith, & Meissner, 2012). Sample adequacy in conducting interviews was achieved based on data saturation and replicability. Consequently, the qualitative sample size consisted of 15 law enforcement commanders from various provinces across Iran. Semi-structured

interviews were employed for data collection. To ensure a smooth execution of the research, the study's title and objectives were explained to the participants a week before the interviews. Ethical considerations in this research included ensuring informed consent from participants to partake in the study and to record the interview content, as well as upholding the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process. For data analysis, structural codes were gathered using three methods: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Research Findings

After conducting a qualitative analysis that led to the identification of initial codes, these codes were categorized based on data similarities and relevance. Ultimately, the categories were further organized into specific classifications. Following continuous analysis and the processes of open, axial, and selective coding, the data were structured into 122 open codes, 105 concepts, 15 categories, and 6 classifications (causal conditions, central phenomenon, strategies, intervening conditions, contextual conditions, and outcomes). These data revealed the criteria for the self-care model for the personnel of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran, resulting in the emergence of a new model.

Stage 1: Open Coding

The results of the data examination and concept identification are presented in Table 1. This table provides a summary of all the initial codes observed in the research, with an effort made to avoid including redundant

codes or codes that share very similar concepts. During the coding process, an effort was made to use the concepts directly expressed by the interviewees whenever

possible. However, in cases where this was not feasible based on the concepts provided, technical terms from the literature and previous research were used.

Table 1: List of Initial Codes Extracted from Data

Row	Initial Codes	Row	Initial Codes
1	Equity Offering	62	Effective Feedback System
2	IT Infrastructure	63	Anticipating Organizational Changes and Developments
3	Ability to Produce and Offer Diverse Products and Services	64	Access to Digital Information and Resources
4	Health and Wellness Care	65	Awareness of Values and Beliefs
5	Informed Evaluation	66	Professional Growth
6	Values-Based Leadership	67	Utilization of Various Communication Methods
7	Performance Valuation	68	Performance Rewards
8	Meeting Operational Needs	69	Respect for Rights and Others
9	Designing a Calm Work Environment	70	Organizational Justice
10	Ethical Conduct in Workplace Relationships	71	Non-Discrimination Based on Race and Ethnicity
11	Mental Care	72	Achievement of Goals
12	Physical Equipment	73	Support from Senior Management for Decision-Making Independence
13	Empowerment in Professional Networks	74	Technical Training Courses
14	Facilitation of Collaboration and Team Building	75	Analytical Power and Negotiation Skills
15	Job Satisfaction	76	Awareness of Personal Limitations
16	Environmental Regulations	77	Process and Technology Improvement
17	Transparency Regarding Financial Status	78	Access to Books and Articles
18	Providing Organizational Reports	79	Flexibility
19	Physical Care	80	Work-Life Balance
20	Clear and Fair Management	81	Having a Vision and Strategy
21	Reduction of Job Pressures	82	Fair Decision-Making Control

22	Salaries and Wages	83	Review of Personal Preferences and Motivations
23	Use of Daily Analytical Methods	84	Accurate and Comprehensive Evaluation of Situations
24	Having a Strategic Plan for Knowledge Transfer	85	Acceptance of Organizational Changes
25	Two-Way Communication	86	Responsible Behavior
26	Participation in Public Meetings	87	Development of Skills for Independent Decision-Making
27	Obtaining Professional Certifications	88	Making Correct Decisions
28	Encouragement for Performance Improvement	89	Participation in Workgroups and Specialized Teams
29	Written and Oral Communications	90	Change Management
30	Motivation for Advancement and Financial Success	91	Adherence to Organizational Ethics
31	Job Level Change	92	Acquisition of Job-Related Skills
32	Honesty in the Organization	93	Intelligent Management and Care of Mental Health
33	Maintaining Security and Privacy	94	Fair Distribution of Resources
34	Empowerment of Assistants	95	Creation of an Ideation Space
35	Overtime Pay	96	Setting Appropriate Priorities
36	Better Time Management	97	Analysis and Assessment of Organizational Needs
37	Organizational Collaboration	98	Active Listening
38	Encouragement to Provide Feedback and Suggestions	99	Constructive Feedback
39	Management Skills	100	Modeling and Inspiration
40	Financial and Tax Regulations	101	Professional Conduct in Transactions
41	Transparency Regarding Policies	102	Development of Analytical and Logical Skills
42	Financial Resources	103	Engaging in Creative Activities
43	Creating a Healthy Work Environment	104	Identification of Individual Skills and Talents
44	Clear Work Plan Design	105	Promotion
45	Setting Achievable Goals	106	Rapid Response to Organizational Changes
46	Non-Discrimination Based on Age	107	Encouragement of a Positive and Constructive Attitude

47	Management and Leadership Training Courses	108	Human Resources
48	Emotional Connection Among Employees	109	Technical and Technological Support
49	Agreed-upon Rewards	110	Distribution of Responsibilities
50	Non-Discrimination Based on Gender	111	Learning from Mistakes
51	Establishing and Maintaining Performance Productivity	112	Access to External Training Resources
52	Awareness of Individual Strengths	113	Participation in Internal and External Projects
53	Information and Knowledge Sharing	114	Encouragement of Error Analysis
54	Continuous Learning	115	Respect in the Organization
55	Delegation of Authority in Specific Areas	116	Organizational Commitment
56	Adherence to Labor Laws	117	Effective Interaction and Collaboration
57	Attendance at Industry Events and Conferences	118	Establishment of Positive Relationships and Cooperation
58	Flexibility	119	Ability to Identify Opportunities
59	Transparency Regarding Rules	120	Mutual Respect and Consideration
60	Maintaining Health and Safety	121	Fair Management of Needs
61	Responsibility for Social Impact	122	Access to Online Courses and Webinars

Stage Two: Axial Coding

This stage aims to determine the relationships between the categories developed in the open coding stage. In this stage, all categories are centered around a

core axis, and the causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, consequences, and strategies are described. The axial coding of the self-care model for the personnel of the Iranian Police Command is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Axial Coding of the Self-Care Model for the Personnel of the Iranian Police Command

Axial Coding	Concepts
Organizational Culture	Respect in the Organization
	Flexibility
	Integrity in the Organization

	Organizational Justice
	Organizational Commitment
	Employee Emotional Connection
Reward and Recognition System	Performance Valuation
	Salaries and Wages
	Performance Bonuses
	Overtime Pay
	Equity Compensation
	Performance Valuation
Organizational Support	Physical Equipment
	Access to Digital Information and Resources
	Information Technology Infrastructure
	Operational Needs Fulfillment
	Technical and Technological Support
	Physical Equipment
Employability and Accountability	Compliance with Labor Laws
	Financial and Tax Regulations
	Environmental Regulations
	Maintaining Security and Privacy
	Health and Safety Maintenance
	Responsibility for Social Impacts
	Adherence to Ethical Principles in Professional Relationships
	Professional Conduct in Transactions
	Respecting the Rights and Dignity of Others
	Providing Organizational Reports
Attention to Health, Well-being, and Stress Management	Engaging in Creative Activities
	Creating a Healthy Work Environment
	Clear and Fair Management
	Setting Appropriate Priorities
	Improved Time Management
	Clear Design of Work Plans
	Setting Achievable Goals
	Reducing Job Stress
	Work-Life Balance

Influential Leadership	Value-Based Leadership
	Modeling and Inspiration
	Having a Vision and Strategy
	Change Management
	Making Correct Decisions
	Analytical Power and Negotiation Skills
Creation of a Safe Environment and Acceptance of Errors	Learning from Mistakes
	Effective Feedback System
	Encouraging Error Analysis
	Encouraging the Provision of Feedback and Suggestions
	Encouraging Performance Improvements
Constructive Communication	Active Listening
	Mutual Respect and Consideration
	Flexibility
	Written and Verbal Communication
	Utilizing Various Communication Methods
Self-confidence and Organizational Trust	Transparency Regarding Policies
	Transparency Regarding Regulations
	Transparency Regarding Financial Status
	Fair Distribution of Resources
	Fair Decision-Making Control
	Fair Management of Needs
	Non-Discrimination Based on Gender
	Non-Discrimination Based on Age
	Non-Discrimination Based on Race and Ethnicity
Self-Awareness	Awareness of Personal Strengths
	Awareness of Personal Limitations
	Identification of Personal Skills and Talents
	Awareness of Values and Beliefs
	Assessment of Personal Preferences and Motivations
	Acceptance of Organizational Changes
Personal and Professional Goals	Continuous Learning
	Promotion
	Participation in Industry Events and Conferences

	Adherence to Organizational Ethical Standards
	Motivation for Advancement and Financial Success
	Responsible Behavior
Adaptive Intelligence and Emotion Regulation	Analysis and Assessment of Organizational Needs
	Anticipation of Organizational Changes and Developments
	Use of Daily Analytical Methods
	Rapid Response to Organizational Changes
	Facilitation of Collaboration and Team Building
	Ability to Produce and Offer Diverse Products and Services
	Ability to Identify Opportunities
	Process and Technology Improvement
	Creation of an Ideation Space
	Design of a Calm Work Environment
	Encouragement of a Positive and Constructive Attitude
Independence in Decision-Making	Distribution of Responsibilities
	Assignment of Authority in Specific Areas
	Development of Skills for Independent Decision-Making
	Development of Analytical and Logical Skills
	Support from Senior Management for Decision-Making Autonomy
Learning and Development Opportunities	Technical Training Courses
	Management and Leadership Training Courses
	Having a Program and Strategy for Knowledge Transfer
	Participation in Workgroups and Specialized Teams
	Engagement in Internal and External Organizational Projects
	Attendance at Public Meetings
	Access to External Training Resources
	Access to Books and Articles
	Access to Online Courses and Webinars
Self-Care	Health and Wellness Care
	Intelligent Management and Care of Mental Health
	Professional Growth
	Job Satisfaction
	Conscious Evaluation

	Creation and Maintenance of Performance Productivity
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Stage Three: Selective Coding

In the final stage of selective coding, the main category was chosen based on the results of the previous coding steps and systematically linked to other categories. To integrate and present the model of self-care for personnel in the Iranian Police Command,

after identifying the core category and relating other categories within the framework of a grounded theory paradigm, the designed model was refined. The final research model is presented in Figure 1.

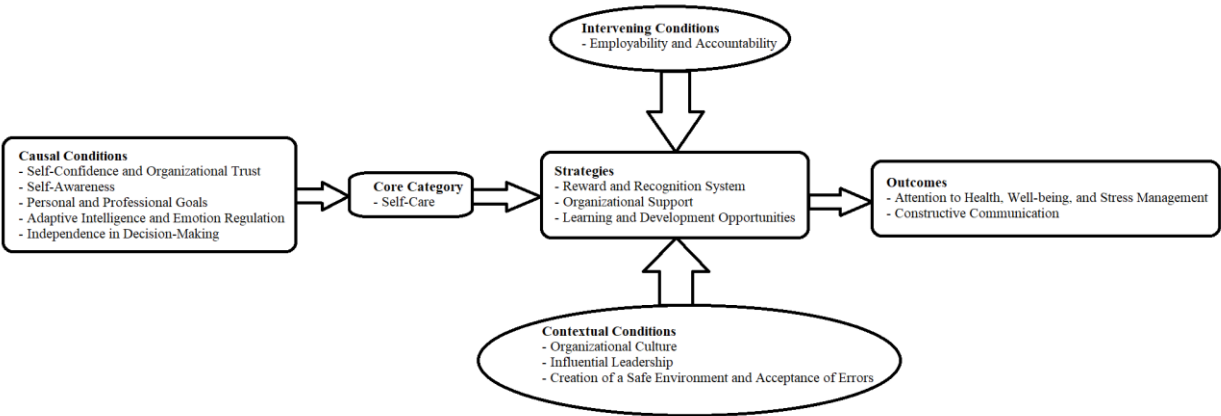


Figure 1 - Paradigmatic Model of Self-Care for Personnel of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the self-care model for the personnel of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran within a unified framework and to outline these relationships within a structured model. The results from the coding indicate that the factors involved in this model can be categorized into six main classes: 1) Core Category, 2) Intervening Conditions, 3) Causal Conditions, 4) Contextual Conditions, 5) Strategies, and 6) Outcomes.

The causal conditions identified in this study included self-confidence and organizational trust, self-awareness, personal and professional goals, adaptive intelligence and emotional regulation, and independence in decision-making. These findings align with the studies by Beer et al. (2023).

Self-Confidence and Organizational Trust: Both self-confidence and organizational trust are significant in the workplace and have a substantial impact on employees' self-care. Self-confidence refers to an individual's trust and assurance in their abilities to perform various tasks. Organizational trust involves

confidence in the organization itself. When employees have organizational trust, they believe in the organization's strength and objectives and are confident that the organization can effectively address their needs and situations. These factors contribute to employees' motivation and commitment to the organization, encouraging them to engage in greater self-care. In a trusted environment, employees who care about meeting their own needs are more likely to pay attention to comprehensive self-care.

Self-Awareness and Self-Care: Self-awareness and self-care are crucial concepts in personal growth and performance enhancement. The relationship between self-awareness and self-care implies that self-awareness is the root of self-care actions. Self-awareness helps individuals focus on and prioritize their self-care efforts. When individuals are aware of their status and needs, they strive to improve and address these needs. Conversely, without self-awareness, individuals might lack sufficient understanding of their needs and status, thereby neglecting self-care.

Personal and Professional Goals: Having personal and professional goals creates a goal-oriented environment for employees. When individuals have aspirations and objectives for their lives and work, it fosters their motivation and commitment to improve performance and achieve progress. Personal and professional goals provide a solid foundation for employees' self-care. Those who pursue their goals possess the competence and energy needed to care for and attend to themselves. They strive for a balance

between their personal and professional lives and create effective plans to manage work-life balance.

Adaptive Intelligence and Emotional Regulation: Adaptive intelligence and emotional regulation are important psychological factors related to employees' self-care. Adaptive intelligence refers to an individual's ability to interact effectively with their environment, adapt to situations, and understand others. Individuals with high adaptive intelligence are adaptable in various situations, capable of problem-solving, and successful in communication and collaboration. These skills are essential for self-care as individuals with high adaptive intelligence can manage environmental changes and job-related challenges effectively. Emotional regulation involves the ability to recognize, regulate, and manage one's own emotions and those of others. Individuals with strong emotional regulation skills can cope with daily pressures and discomforts and maintain positive, constructive relationships with others.

Independence in Decision-Making: Independence in decision-making refers to the ability of employees to make decisions and act independently, without relying on others. It encompasses self-motivation, awareness of personal needs and desires, and the ability to make decisions in various situations. In the workplace, independence in decision-making can directly impact employees' self-care. When employees have more autonomy in choosing solutions and making job-related decisions, they experience a sense of empowerment and control, which

further enhances their self-confidence and organizational trust.

The strategies identified in the self-care model for law enforcement personnel included reward and recognition systems, organizational support, and opportunities for learning and development. These findings align with Masson's (2019) research.

Reward and Recognition Systems: Organizational reward and recognition systems are closely related to employees' self-care. These systems involve providing rewards, encouragement, and special benefits to employees who achieve goals, demonstrate superior performance, or show additional commitment and effort. Reward and recognition systems enhance employee motivation through financial incentives, promotions, praise, and acknowledgment, as well as providing time off and special facilities. This increased motivation encourages employees to focus on self-care and performance improvement rather than disengagement or lack of effort. By recognizing and rewarding employees, organizations foster a culture that promotes self-care and ongoing improvement.

Organizational Support: Organizational support instills confidence in employees that the organization values their development and growth. This trust makes employees more likely to prioritize their occupational and personal self-care. Organizational support encompasses providing necessary resources and tools for job performance, including technology, systems, and educational resources. Access to academic support and

training also strengthens employees' self-care practices and performance. When employees feel supported, they are more motivated to engage in self-care practices and enhance their performance.

Opportunities for Learning and Development: Providing opportunities for learning and development boosts employees' self-confidence by allowing them to improve their skills and gain new knowledge in various areas. This increased confidence encourages employees to invest more in their occupational self-care and to focus on improving their performance and productivity. Learning and development opportunities contribute to self-care by enhancing self-awareness, promoting career advancement, and motivating employees. They enable employees to pursue personal and professional growth, ultimately improving their overall performance.

In summary, reward and recognition systems, organizational support, and opportunities for learning and development are critical strategies that influence employees' self-care. By implementing these strategies, organizations can enhance employees' motivation, confidence, and commitment to their personal and professional well-being, thereby improving overall performance and productivity.

Among the effective intervening factors in the strategies, employability and responsibility were identified, consistent with the study by Hector et al. (2018).

Employability refers to employees' ability to accept and adapt to job changes and

requirements. When employees possess the flexibility and adaptability needed, they can effectively manage and respond to job-related changes. Employability is closely linked to self-care practices among employees. When employees can accurately identify changes and find the necessary resources and strategies to address them, they can optimally navigate work conditions and implement effective job self-care.

Contextual Conditions for Advancing Strategies are Organizational Culture, Influential Leadership, and Creating a Safe and Accepting Environment for Errors.

Organizational Culture: A healthy organizational culture promotes values and principles that support employee self-care. It can significantly impact the behaviors of both colleagues and managers. Constructive relationships and collaboration within an organization, which are part of its culture, help employees feel supported and encouraged in their self-care efforts.

Influential Leadership: Effective leadership can set goals and motivate employees. When leaders are adept at communicating goals and opportunities for learning to their employees, they enhance the importance of self-care and personal improvement. An influential leader can encourage self-care by providing appropriate support and inspiration. Through building trust and establishing strong connections with employees, such leaders can increase employees' sense of security and confidence, which, in turn, fosters their continued

engagement in self-care and personal development.

Creating a Safe Environment for Errors: Establishing a safe environment gives employees the confidence to voice their concerns, share their mistakes, and focus on personal growth. When the work environment fosters trust and accepts errors as learning opportunities, employees are motivated to engage in self-care and enhance their performance. A safe and accepting environment promotes individual learning and development opportunities. Employees can more confidently address their needs and improve their performance and job effectiveness through participation in personal growth and learning processes.

The outcomes derived from the self-care model for police command staff include attention to health, tranquility, and stress management, which align with the studies of Mason (2019) and Beer et al. (2023). This finding suggests that self-care helps employees gain greater awareness of their personal needs. They may pay more attention to behaviors such as getting sufficient sleep, proper nutrition, daily exercise, and mental health care. This focus on personal health leads to increased energy levels and readiness for stress management. Self-care among employees involves preventive measures to maintain health, including proper nutrition, exercise, stress management techniques, and restorative practices. When employees prioritize their health and take necessary actions to preserve it, they perform better in handling daily stressors and enhance their mental and physical well-being. Additionally,

self-care results in higher morale and energy levels. When employees take optimal care of themselves, their stress levels decrease, and their mood and motivation improve. This state of calm and self-care aids employees in performing better in their interactions with others, such as colleagues, supervisors, and clients, fostering constructive relationships. Finally, based on the self-care model for police command staff and its validation, it is recommended that the developed model be utilized and implemented in police departments across all provinces as a self-care model for employees.

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