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## Coping with Stress among Criminal Prevention Police Officers and Their Sense of Coherence

**Abstract:** Police work is associated with a high psychophysical burden due to the nature of the tasks performed and the strong influence of stress-inducing factors, which, when acting persistently over a long period, can lead to occupational burnout. Personal resources for coping with problems, particularly challenging ones – such as deprivation, overload, obstacles, conflicts, and threats – play a key role in mitigating the negative effects of these stressors. The empirical study presented in this paper was therefore designed and conducted to examine the relationship between coping strategies and the sense of coherence among criminal prevention police officers.

**Keywords:** police officers, criminal prevention, stress coping, sense of coherence.

### Introduction to the Research

Police service is characterized by a high level of psychological and physical stress resulting from the nature of the duties performed and constant exposure to the loss of fundamental assets such as health and life. An additional risk factor is the possibility of a decline in professional prestige in the event of operational failure and a loss of public trust. For this reason, particularly high requirements are imposed on candidates for police service, and officers are required to undergo regular professional training. The police service acts in the public interest, based

on the provisions of the law and within its limits. The basic tasks of this force include protecting the lives, health, and property of citizens against unlawful acts, as well as ensuring public safety and order in public spaces, public transport, and road traffic. The police are also responsible for preventing crimes and offenses, counteracting crime-generating phenomena, cooperating with state and local government authorities and social organizations, as well as detecting crimes and offenses and prosecuting their perpetrators (cf. Dziedzic, 2013; Klonowska, 2018).

Within the structure of the Police, crime prevention units play a particularly important role. They are responsible for preventing crime, reducing offenses and crime-generating phenomena, and maintaining public order. Beat police officers play an important role in carrying out these tasks, maintaining direct contact with residents in their assigned areas. Preventive services also include officers from patrol and intervention units, traffic units, convoy units, as well as handlers for police dogs, who perform tasks related to patrolling, scent detection, and searching for missing persons (Wolniak, 2028).

The specific nature of police work involves the occurrence of numerous professional problems and difficult situations that generate excessive workloads, require considerable commitment, and are a source of emotional stress. This results in the deprivation of essential needs, including a sense of security and social acceptance, and sometimes leads to conflicts of values and moral dilemmas. As research indicates, the long-term stress characteristic of this profession can contribute to chronic fatigue, a decline in the quality of service, and, consequently, to burnout (cf. Dziewa, 1996; Ogińska-Bulik, 2003a, 2003b; Zbyrad, 2009; Czechowska, Pobłocka, 2014; Ostrowska, Woźniak, 2018; Bera, 2021; Nowosad, 2021; Turek, Zgodziński, 2024). Given the seriousness of the identified threats, it is necessary to conduct systematic research and analysis that can serve as a basis for developing effective preventive and intervention measures.

The professional problems experienced by police officers, as well as the difficult situations they have to face, generate a subjective feeling of work overload, often reinforced by perceived stress and symptoms of burnout. At times this burden can act as a personal resource to mobilize action, in other cases it becomes a factor that needs to be overcome by activating coping mechanisms. The process of coping with stress is a natural reaction of the body to danger and is aimed at restoring psychophysical balance (cf. Wierzejska, 2023). The coping strategies of police officers may be situational – adapted to the specific circumstances – or constitute a relatively stable personality trait that determines how they respond to stress regardless of its source. This disposition, as an attribute of the individual, is responsible for a typical pattern of behavior in difficult situations, aimed at reducing or eliminating emotional tension (cf. Wrześniewski, 2000, p. 46; Strelau et al., 2013, p. 9). Styles of coping with stress have been operationalized in this study based on the classification proposed by N.S. Endler and J.D.A. Parker (1992, 1994). This concept has its origins in the interactive model of stress developed by

R. Lazarus, according to which a stressful situation is understood as the result of a dynamic relationship between environmental demands and individual resources (Lazarus, 1986). According to this view, a person's behavior under certain stressful conditions is the result of the interaction of situational factors and the individual's preferred coping style, with these actions being conscious and intentional. Lazarus (1993) distinguished between two basic modes of coping: the first – task-focused, or problem-focused, and the second emotion-focused, oriented on regulating emotions and reducing emotional tension. Endler and Parker (1992) supplemented this typology with a third style, referred to as avoidance, which involves distancing oneself from a stressful situation or minimizing its significance. This research project aimed to identify the style characterizing the police officers studied, which determines how they act in stressful situations and their choice of a specific strategy.

Another personal resource that plays a significant role in overcoming professional difficulties is a sense of coherence (Bera, 2025; Netczuk-Gwoździewicz, Gołębiowski, 2016, 2024; Wierzejska, 2023; Ogińska-Bulik, 2003c, 2004,; Maciejczyk, Liszka, 2023; Konaszewski, 2016). This resource is not an immutable personality trait, but rather a disposition of an indicative nature that is subject to development and modification throughout the individual's life. A sense of coherence plays a key role in an individual's social functioning, constituting a superior personal resource that enables them to cope with various stressors. It should be emphasized that stressors are not simple stimuli, but situational demands to which the individual has no ready, automatic adaptive responses, which causes a state of tension (Antonovsky, 2005). With a sense of coherence, an individual is able to maintain health and function effectively in the world around him. As a personality variable, sense of coherence encompasses a system of beliefs about oneself, the environment in which one lives, and one's relationship with that environment. It determines active measures aimed at coping with challenges and problems by adequately matching available resources to situational requirements (Heszen-Celińska, Sęk, 2020). According to Antonovsky (2005), a sense of coherence is a construct consisting of three basic components: a sense of comprehensibility, a sense of manageability, and a sense of meaningfulness. In summary, it can be assumed that the sense of coherence is a complex structure that constitutes the global orientation of prevention officers towards the reality surrounding them. It is a specific emotional and cognitive way of interpreting and evaluating experiences, accompanied by the belief that information coming from both the internal and external environment can be predictable and explained. This makes reality appear more coherent, understandable, and orderly. The resources at their disposal – both endogenous and exogenous – enable officers to effectively deal with difficult situations and professional challenges. These factors are a source of motivation to take action and increase commitment, which in turn translates into higher efficiency and better adaptation to service conditions (cf. Bera, 2025, p. 17).

## Methodological Assumptions of the Conducted Research

In accordance with the adopted assumptions, the subject of the research was the styles of coping with stress among police officers in crime prevention units, considered in the context of their sense of coherence. The following research questions were posed as part of the research project:

1. What styles of coping with stress do the surveyed police officers prefer?
2. What is their sense of coherence?
3. What is the relationship between the stress coping styles of the surveyed police officers of crime prevention units and their sense of coherence?

In order to verify the relationship between the variables under study, a general working hypothesis was adopted. It was assumed that police officers with a high sense of coherence, when faced with occupational stress, focus more on efforts to solve the problem through cognitive transformation or attempts to change the situation than those with a low sense of coherence (Dudek, Koniarek, Szymczak, 2001; Ogińska-Bulik, 2004; Netczuk-Gwoździewicz, Gołębiowski 2016; Netczuk-Gwoździewicz, 2016).

In order to address the first research problem concerning the diagnosis of the sense of coherence of the police officers surveyed (independent variable) a standardized research tool was used – the Orientation to Life Questionnaire (SOC-29) by A. Antonovsky (2005), whose Polish adaptation was developed by J. Koniarka, B. Dudek, and Z. Makowska (1993). SOC-29 consists of 29 test items formulated as questions, rated on a seven-point scale with described extremes. The tool allows you to obtain both the overall sense of coherence score and an assessment of its three dimensions: sense of comprehensibility (SC) – 11 items, sense of manageability (SMan) – 10 items, sense of meaningfulness (SMean) – 8 items. Some of the test items were designed with reverse scoring, and the overall score is determined by the sum of the points obtained in individual questions. The literature emphasizes the validity of using the questionnaire not only to determine the overall score, but also to analyze individual components of the sense of coherence.

The second research problem was solved by using the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) developed by N.S. Endler and J.D. Parker, whose Polish adaptation was developed by J. Strelau, A. Jaworowska, K. Wrześniewski, and P. Szczepanik (2013). The tool includes 48 statements describing various behaviors adopted in stressful situations. Each statement is rated on a five-point scale (from 1 to 5), indicating the frequency of undertaking a given activity in difficult situations. The respondent marks the number that best reflects their behavior. The questionnaire consists of three main scales, each of which includes 16 items, allowing for a score ranging from 16 to 80 points: 1) Task-focused style (TFS) –

reflects taking action or planning solutions when faced with problems; 2) Emotion-focused style (EFS) – applies to people who, in stressful situations, focus on their own emotions, such as anger, tension, or guilt; 3) Avoidance-focused style (AFS) – characterizes people who avoid confrontation with stressful situations and who may react in two ways: Engaging in distracting activities (EDA), e.g., watching TV, overeating, sleeping, or thinking about pleasant things (8 items, score from 8 to 40 points); Social contact seeking (SCS) – activity involving social interactions (5 items, score from 5 to 25 points). The remaining three items of the questionnaire are part of the SSU scale, but were not included in the separate subscales (2013, pp. 69–72).

The third research problem, concerning the assessment of significant relationships between the variables under study, will be solved using correlation statistics methods. The analysis will use the Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, and Pearson's chi-squared test.

## Characteristics of the Studied Group

As part of this research project, 246 officers from the crime prevention service in garrisons located in central and eastern Poland were surveyed: Warsaw, Lublin, and Podlasie. The sample was selected using a purposive random sampling method, with the main criteria being affiliation with a unit (voivodeship, municipal, or poviati) and the availability of the research area.

The police are the largest internal security institution in Poland. Despite nominal equality, the proportion of women among officers remains lower than that of men. The results of the research conducted on a selected segment of the population confirm this disparity: 77.4% of respondents were men, while women represented less than a quarter of the group (22.6%). Respondents were aged 20–46+, with the largest group being 36–45 years old (51.6%). Most had higher education (65.8%), including 44.3% with master's degrees and 21.5% with bachelor's degrees, while 34.2% had secondary education. In terms of length of service, the largest group consisted of officers with 11–20 years of experience (50.4%), followed by those with up to 10 years (35.4%) and those with over 20 years (14.2%). 15.4% held managerial positions, while 84.6% held executive positions.

## Analysis of the Collected Empirical Material

Professional problems, difficult situations at work, stress, and symptoms of burnout contribute to the subjective perception of work overload among police officers. Sometimes this feeling acts as an internal resource that motivates us to take action, but in other cases it needs to be overcome by activating coping mechanisms. This process is the body's natural response to danger and

is aimed at restoring balance. Coping can take the form of a specific situational strategy or an established personality disposition to respond to stress. It is worth emphasizing that this disposition is independent of the specifics of the stressful situation, as it is a property of the subject (cf. Wrześniewski, 2000, p. 46). Therefore, it is a typical behavior in stressful situations, aimed at reducing or eliminating tension (Strelau et al., 2013, p. 9). This research project attempted to identify the coping style characteristic of the police officers studied, which determines their behavior in stressful situations and their choice of strategies. The Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) in the Polish adaptation by J. Strelau, A. Jaworowska, K. Wrześniewski, and P. Szczepaniak (2013) was used to measure this variable.

Based on the results obtained, styles of coping with stress were identified among the police officers surveyed. An analysis of descriptive statistics indicates that the mean value for the task-focused style was 58.62, with a median of 59.00. The lower quartile stood at 53.00, while the upper quartile stood at 64.00, and the standard deviation reached 9.26.

For the emotion-focused style, the mean value was 39.54, the median was 38.50, the lower quartile was 32.00, and the upper quartile was 48.00. In turn, the avoidance-focused style was characterized by an average of 45.75 and a median of 46.00; the lower quartile was 39.0 and the upper quartile was 52.00.

Table 1. Stress coping styles of the surveyed police officers (mean values)

Variable	Descriptive statistics					
	Valid N	Mean	Median	Lower quartile	Upper quartile	Standard deviation
Task-focused style	246	58.62	59.00	53.00	64.00	9.26
Emotion-focused style	246	39.54	38.50	32.00	48.00	11.62
Avoidance-focused style	246	45.75	46.00	39.00	52.00	9.13
a) Avoidance-focused style – engaging in distracting activities	246	20.77	21.00	16.00	25.00	6.01
b) Avoidance-focused style – seeking social contacts	246	16.63	17.00	15.00	19.00	3.76

An analysis of the results obtained by police officers indicates that they achieved the highest scores in the task-focused style, which involves taking actions aimed at solving a problem through cognitive transformation or attempts to modify the situation ( $M = 58.62$ ). The second most common coping style was avoidance-focused ( $M = 45.75$ ), which more often took the form of engaging in distracting activities ( $M = 20.77$ ) than seeking social contact and support from others ( $M = 16.63$ ). In turn, some respondents ( $M = 39.54$ ) cope with stress by focusing on their own emotional experiences.

In accordance with the CISS interpretation procedure, it was also possible to determine the “dominant style” of coping with stress. However, the results indicate that for most officers (59.7%), it was not possible to clearly identify a dominant style within a 95% confidence interval. The task-focused style was dominant in almost a quarter of respondents (24.0%), the avoidance-focused style in about one in eight respondents (13.0%), while the emotion-focused style was dominant in only a few cases (3.3%).

Table 2. Dominant styles of coping with stress among the surveyed police officers

Variables	Dominant style	
	Number	Percentage
Task-focused style	59	24.0
Emotion-focused style	8	3.3
Avoidance-focused style	32	13.0
Not possible to determine	147	59.7

The next stage of the research procedure was a detailed characterization of the styles of coping with stress presented by police officers. To this end, the results obtained were evaluated using a sten scale, in which scores ranging from 1 to 4 sten are considered low, 5 to 6 sten are considered average, and 7 to 10 sten are considered high. The application of this procedure enabled comparisons to be made between individual subscales. Below is a table showing the results for all scales.

Table 3. Results obtained by respondents on the CISS scales

Level	TFS	EFS	AFS	EDA	SCS
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Low	23.6	53.7	21.5	20.7	22.8
Moderate	38.2	32.5	34.2	29.7	45.9
High	38.2	13.8	44.3	49.6	31.3

## Task-Focused Style

An analysis of the results obtained on the scale determining task-focused style shows that the officers surveyed were divided into almost equal groups. 38.2% of respondents achieved average and high results. In turn, low scores were recorded in 23.6% of study participants. This means that there is a clear tendency among police officers to prefer this style, which essentially involves taking action to change a difficult situation and reduce stress. Approximately four out of ten officers cope very well in such conditions, a similar number cope at an average

level, while a relatively small percentage are characterized by low effectiveness despite their efforts. Further statistical analyses showed that sociodemographic and organizational factors, such as the gender of the respondents, their age, length of service, and position, did not significantly differentiate the use of this coping style in the face of professional difficulties by the police officers surveyed. Differences were only observed among individuals with different levels of education ( $p < 0.007$ ). Prevention officers with secondary education were more likely than other uniformed officers to have a low level of task-focused style.

## **Emotion-Focused Style**

The analysis of the results indicates that more than half of the police officers surveyed (53.7%) who prefer an emotion-focused style are characterized by a low level of emotional response in difficult situations. The average level of such reactions was observed in 32.5% of respondents, while one in seven police officers (13.8%) experiences high intensity emotional reactions that hinder effective problem solving. In such cases, the focus is on one's own emotional experiences, and feelings of guilt, anger, and a lack of control over the situation often arise. The results of detailed statistical analyses indicate that the emotion-focused style did not show a significant relationship with any of the independent mediating variables.

## **Avoidance-Focused Style**

In particularly stressful situations, police officers also tend to adopt an avoidance-focused coping style. This style manifests itself in avoiding reflection on the problem and limiting emotional experience of the stressful situation. In practice, police officers often respond by seeking social contacts or engaging in distracting activities that allow them to divert attention from difficulties that require direct confrontation. An analysis of the results obtained on the Sorenberg scale indicates that among officers who prefer an avoidance style in stressful situations, a high level of use of this style was recorded in almost half of the respondents (44.3%), which indicates their stronger tendency to avoid problems in difficult situations. Every third respondent (34.2%) achieved an average result. A low score was recorded in approximately one-fifth of the study participants (21.5%), which suggests that some officers, despite their preference for this style, show little determination in applying it. Further statistical analyses did not reveal any significant correlations between AFS levels and sociodemographic and organizational factors.

## **AFS – Social Contact Seeking (SCS)**

In the group of respondents who prefer the avoidance style, a high level of this behavior was observed in almost one-third of the respondents (31.3%). This

style is moderately manifested by nearly every second participant in the study (45.9%), while about one-fifth of respondents (22.8%) show a slight tendency to avoid problems by seeking social contacts. Subsequent statistical analyses did not reveal any significant correlations between the SCS subscale scores and the sociodemographic and organizational factors examined.

### **AFS – Engaging in Distracting Activities (EDA)**

In the group of respondents who showed a preference for the avoidance style characterized by engagement in various activities unrelated to solving the problem, a high level of this behavior was observed in almost half of the respondents (49.6%). This style was moderately evident in about one-third of participants (29.7%), while a slight tendency to avoid problems by performing activities unrelated to the stressful situation was shown by one-fifth of the police officers surveyed (20.7%). No significant correlations were found between the EDA scale and the mediating independent variables.

Based on the above considerations, it can be concluded that in stressful situations, the officers surveyed most often use a task-focused style, focused on solving problems and changing situations, which is the dominant tendency among every fourth respondent. Some of them prefer avoidance strategies, which involve suppressing the problem through distracting activities or seeking support in social contacts – this style is dominant in one in nine respondents. The least frequently used coping style was the emotional style, focused on negative experiences, which appeared as dominant in only a few officers. It is worth noting that more than half of the respondents did not identify a clear dominant style, which may indicate diverse, situation-dependent coping strategies, forming a mosaic dependent on individual preferences and circumstances.

The sense of coherence is a theoretical construct that is a personality variable constituting a person's global orientation toward the surrounding reality, their place in it, and their relationships with the world. It is a rallying sense that the perceived reality is comprehensible, orderly, and that the available resources can be used in difficult, stressful, challenging situations. Therefore, it is a motivating factor for actively dealing with problems (cf. Pasikowski, 2000; Heszen, Sęk, 2007).

In order to diagnose the sense of coherence of the police officers surveyed, the Orientation to Life Questionnaire (SOC-29) by A. Antonovsky (2005) was used to diagnose the sense of coherence of the police officers surveyed, allowing for the determination of both the overall score for the sense of coherence and the level of its three components: the sense of comprehensibility, the sense of manageability, and the sense of meaningfulness. The results obtained for the overall level of coherence among the police officers surveyed are presented on a sten scale in the table below.

Table 4. Level of the sense of coherence among the police officers surveyed

Level of the sense of coherence among respondents	Number	Percentage
Low (sten score of 1–4)	77	31.3
Average (sten score of 5–6)	82	33.3
High (sten score of 7–10)	87	35.4

Analysis of the data obtained indicates the formation of two almost equal groups among the officers surveyed – those with high resilience resources accounted for 35.4% of the sample, while officers with average levels of these resources accounted for 33.3%. This means that more than two-thirds of respondents (68.7%) have, to a greater or lesser extent, the resources to effectively cope with new, unpredictable, and demanding stressful situations and achieve their goals. In turn, nearly one-third of respondents (31.3%) do not have the necessary resources, which limits their effectiveness in solving problems. Such officers often abandon their efforts, able to blame their surroundings in unpredictable and unstable situations, being aware of the lack of sufficient resources to meet the demands (cf. Kirenko, Zubrzycka-Maciąg, 2011; Bera, 2019; 2025).

The overall sense of coherence among the officers surveyed comprises three components: a sense of comprehensibility, a sense of manageability, and a sense of meaningfulness. Their structure is presented in the table.

Table 5. The structure of the components of the sense of coherence among the police officers surveyed

Variable	Descriptive statistics					
	Valid N	Mean	Median	Lower quartile	Upper quartile	Deviation Standard
Sense of comprehensibility	246	50.08	50.00	43.00	57.00	9.56
Sense of manageability	246	50.48	51.00	43.00	58.00	9.08
Sense of meaningfulness	246	42.17	43.00	37.00	48.00	7.71
Overall sense of coherence score	246	142.74	142.00	123.00	160.00	23.73

The analysis of the results indicates that the highest level among the components of coherence in the studied group of police officers was recorded in the area of manageability ( $M = 50.48$ ). Respondents perceive their own resources, as well as the support of others with whom they interact professionally, as sufficient to cope with the tasks they face and the difficulties they encounter (cf. Antonovsky, 2005). The respondents achieved a slightly lower but similar

level in terms of comprehensibility and predictability ( $M = 50.08$ ). This means that officers perceive their work environment as orderly and structured, without generating information chaos, which allows them to predict events, explain them, and give them cognitive meaning. Consequently, they believe that the resources at their disposal enable them to cope with adverse circumstances and the demands of specific professional situations (cf. Antonovsky, 2005). The lowest score was recorded in the meaningfulness component ( $M = 42.17$ ). This indicates that officers are relatively less motivated to become emotionally involved in situations perceived as professional challenges. Police officers with a high sense of meaningfulness are more willing to get involved and take vigorous action to solve important problems at work.

Another element of the research project was to determine the levels of the components of the sense of coherence among the police officers surveyed. These data are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Level of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness among the police officers surveyed

Level	Sense of comprehensibility	Sense of manageability	Sense of meaningfulness
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Low (sten score of 1–4)	33.3	31.7	30.1
Average (sten score of 5–6)	33.3	27.6	33.3
High (sten score of 7–10)	33.3	40.7	36.6

### Sense of Comprehensibility

The data presented in the table above illustrate the even distribution of the results of the levels of comprehensibility of the surveyed prevention officers. Equal number of respondents characterize its level as low (33.3%), average (33.3%), and high (33.3%). Such data may indicate considerable heterogeneity in the subjective perception of the work environment by officers. This may suggest that interventions aimed at increasing the predictability and clarity of professional situations should be targeted individually or in groups, taking into account the specific characteristics of the individual and their professional experience. Further statistical analyses did not reveal any significant relationships between the independent variable and the mediating independent variables.

### Sense of Manageability

A detailed analysis shows that more than one-third of the police officers surveyed (40.7%) have a high level of sense of manageability. These individuals are confident

that they have the resources necessary to meet new challenges, show initiative in their actions, and are able to effectively manage new situations. In addition, they are aware of who they can count on within the work team. A moderate sense of manageability is observed in 27.6% of respondents, while the remaining 31.7% of officers have a low sense of manageability, doubting their ability to cope with new tasks and professional requirements. Additionally, during statistical analyses, a significant correlation was found between the sense of manageability of the surveyed prevention officers and their education ( $p < 0.002$ ). Police officers who had a master's degree were more likely than other participants in the study to score higher on this scale.

### **Sense of Meaningfulness**

The analysis of the data obtained shows that over one-third of the police officers surveyed (36.6%) have a high sense of meaningfulness. This means that they perceive their professional life, new situations, and problems they encounter as worthy of commitment and effort, giving them deep meaning and believing that one cannot remain indifferent to professional challenges. A similar percentage of respondents (30.1%) hold different beliefs, demonstrating an extreme approach in this regard. On the other hand, every third officer (33.3%) shows a moderate sense of meaningfulness – they believe that not every situation or task requires full commitment. These individuals strive to maintain a balance between actions that they consider meaningful and those that they consider meaningless, making decisions after detailed analysis, which results in moderate motivation to act and carry out difficult tasks. In this case, education is also a variable that significantly differentiates the results of the study ( $p < 0.005$ ). Officers with a master's degree were more likely than their colleagues with lower levels of education to have a high sense of meaningfulness.

In summary, the analysis of the results indicates that approximately one-third of the officers surveyed have a high level of coherence, understood as having the resilience resources to cope with difficult, stressful situations that pose specific challenges. A similar number of respondents have an average or low level of these resources. The sense of manageability is particularly evident in the study group, enabling officers to effectively cope with even the most demanding professional challenges. To a lesser extent, respondents perceive their environment as orderly and predictable, enabling them to explain events and give them cognitive meaning. The weakest aspect, however, is the sense of meaningfulness, which translates into lower motivation to engage in situations perceived as challenges that require full commitment and dedication.

The third research problem was solved by correlating the stress coping styles of the police officers surveyed with their level of coherence. The results revealed both positive and negative correlations between all dimensions of the respondents'

sense of coherence and the Task-Focused Style, Emotion-Focused Style, and both subscales of the Avoidance-Focused Style (Table 7).

Table 7. Stress coping styles of police officers surveyed and their sense of coherence

Variables	SOC							
	Sense of comprehensibility		Sense of manageability		Sense of meaningfulness		Overall sense of coherence score	
CISS	r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p
Task-focused style	0.402	0.000	0.496	0.000	0.521	0.000	0.528	0.000
Emotion-focused style	-0.430	0.000	-0.633	0.000	-0.553	0.000	-0.601	0.000
Avoidance-focused style	-0.035	0.583	-0.086	0.179	0.018	0.781	-0.042	0.512
Avoidance-focused style – engaging in distracting activities	-0.186	0.003	-0.309	0.000	-0.217	0.001	-0.265	0.000
Avoidance-focused style – seeking social contacts	0.281	0.000	0.374	0.000	0.417	0.000	0.393	0.000

The analyses conducted showed that the overall level of coherence among the officers surveyed is strongly linked to a task-focused style and an emotion-focused style. This means that the higher the sense of coherence, the more often officers in difficult situations take action to solve the problem through cognitive transformation or attempts to modify the situation, and less often focus solely on their own emotional experiences.

Slightly weaker correlations were observed in the case of the avoidance-focused style, which includes both performing distracting activities and seeking social contacts. In practice, this means that as their sense of coherence increases, officers are more likely to seek support from others or distance themselves from the problem in difficult situations, and less likely to engage in activities aimed at completely diverting their attention from the difficult situation.

Similar relationships were found when analyzing the correlations between individual components of the sense of coherence – manageability, comprehensibility, and meaningfulness – and preferred styles of coping with stressful situations. Higher levels of these components were more often associated with the use of task-focused strategies or seeking social support, although the strength of these associations was moderate. Similarly, higher scores on the components of sense of coherence correlated with less use of coping strategies in stressful situations that involve focusing on one's own emotional experiences or escaping into distracting activities aimed at suppressing negative experiences.

## Conclusions

An analysis of the conducted research indicates that police officers in difficult and stressful situations most often use a task-focused style, which involves taking actions aimed at solving the problem and modifying the situation. This style is the dominant strategy for about a quarter of the respondents. A significant group of officers, however, use an avoidance-focused style, which involves pushing problems out of their minds by performing distracting activities or seeking social contact, which is dominant among about one-ninth of respondents. The style focused on one's own emotions, negative experiences, and events is used the least frequently, being dominant only in a few respondents. An interesting phenomenon is the lack of a clear dominant style among more than half of the officers, which suggests a high degree of individualization in coping strategies and dependence on the nature of the specific stressful situation.

The diagnosis of the sense of coherence, understood as resilience resources enabling effective coping in demanding professional situations, showed that every third prevention officer surveyed achieved a high level. A similar number of respondents have an average or low level of these resources. The sense of manageability is particularly strong in the studied population, allowing officers to respond effectively even in the face of the most demanding difficulties. To a lesser extent, respondents perceive the environment as orderly and predictable, enabling them to give cognitive meaning to events (a sense of comprehensibility). However, the sense of meaningfulness is the least developed, which translates into lower motivation to fully engage in situations perceived as challenges requiring sacrifice.

An analysis of the correlation between the overall level of sense of coherence and coping styles in stressful situations revealed significant relationships. A higher level of coherence strongly correlates with a task-focused style and an emotion-focused style – the greater the sense of coherence, the more often officers take action to solve the problem and change the situation, and the less often they focus solely on their own emotional experiences. Weaker but noticeable correlations occur in the case of the avoidance-focused style – as their sense of coherence increases, officers more often seek social support and less often engage in distracting activities aimed at pushing the problem out of their consciousness. An analysis of individual components the sense of coherence – resourcefulness, comprehensibility, and meaningfulness – reveals similar relationships: higher values of these components promote the use of task-focused strategies and the search for social support, while reducing the tendency to focus on one's own emotions or escape into distracting activities. In this way, officers with a higher sense of coherence have greater adaptive potential, which enables them to cope more effectively with new and unpredictable situations.

In conclusion, the results of the study indicate that police officers have varied coping strategies to deal with stress and varying levels of sense of coherence. The vast majority have at least some resources that enable them to respond effectively to professional challenges, with resourcefulness being the most strongly developed component. Whereas, a lower sense of meaningfulness may limit motivation to fully engage in demanding situations, which should be taken into account when planning training and programs supporting the development of officers' psychological competencies.

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