



PERSONALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG RCMP CADETS

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Why study personality and mental health?

Little is known about how personality traits may be associated with mental health challenges among Royal Mounted Police (RCMP) cadets. Studying the associations between personality and mental health risk and resilience can potentially inform efforts to mitigate posttraumatic stress injuries (PTSI) among cadets and serving RCMP members.

Background

RCMP officers experience frequent exposure to many potentially psychologically traumatic events (PPTE), which are associated with the development of mental health injuries. Approximately 64.7% of serving RCMP officers screen positively for one or more posttraumatic stress injuries (PTSI; Carleton et al., 2024).

The current research draws on data from the larger, 10-year RCMP Study designed to assess the impact of skills taught to help protect members from PTSI, a part of a Federal Framework on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The current study

Efforts to understand risk and resilience profiles for developing PTSI have included research on identifying associations between mental health disorders and specific personality traits. Personality traits may contribute to individual cognitive, emotional, and behavioral differences that increase risk for developing PTSI.

Study participants were 772 RCMP cadets (72% male) beginning the Cadet Training Program (CTP), who completed surveys assessing mental health knowledge, stigma, and service use intentions. Relationships between HEXACO personality traits and facets and positive screens for mental health disorders were also examined.



HEXACO is a robust model of personality structure measuring 6 factors and 25 facets, or subcomponents, of personality.

Results

High Agreeableness, Extraversion, and to some extent Openness to Experience, were each associated with decreased odds of screening positive for mental health disorders, suggesting relationships with resilience.

In contrast, high Emotionality was associated with *increased odds* of screening positive for mental health disorders, a finding that may help inform resources and supports to reduce mental health risks among cadets and serving RCMP.

Risk	Resilience
Emotionality	Agreeableness Extraversion Openness to experience

Gender differences highlighted additional information about relationships between mental health and personality factors, suggesting that men and women cadets may benefit from early access to supports and resources based on differences in personality traits.

Conclusions

The current results suggests that personality traits may be associated with mental health, and suggest that specific personality factors and facets may increase risk or resilience for mental health disorders.

Overall, RCMP cadets already appear to start the CTP with personality profiles indicative of mental health resilience, suggesting a need to maintain and bolster their resilience, rather than more rigorously selecting for such traits.

The current results can be used to inform efforts to mitigate PTSI and maintain and bolster mental health resilience among RCMP cadets, serving RCMP, and other public safety personnel. Early training, interventions, and resources tailored to cadet personality factors and facets might reduce risk and bolster mental health resilience.

The current results assist in advancing Canada's first-ever National Action Plan on Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries, and support ongoing investments in research and evidence-based efforts to support the health and well-being of first responders and other public safety personnel

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References: Carleton, R. N., Jamshidi, L., Nisbet, J., Shields, R. E., & Andrews, K. L. (2024). Mental health disorder symptoms among serving Royal Canadian Mounted Police. *Police Practice and Research*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2024.2318209>



[Read the full study here](#)

Andrews, K.L., Jamshidi, L., Nisbet, J. et al. Associations Between Personality and Mental Health Among Royal Canadian Mounted Police Cadets. *J Police Crim Psych* 39, 213–226 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-023-09639-6>

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