Can Dogs Assist Police Trauma Resilience Training? A Proof-of-Concept Study

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FROM THE AUTHOR

"'Why' is sometimes more important in policing than simple facts. This is not only the case for the nature of the job, but also for how we *respond* to our job. Several years of research has shown us how the #PolicingMind adapts to the work. Here, we explore how and *why* one line of support for officers- canines- is so successful. This inquisitive paper provides us with some basic facts which explain why it is that dogs can kick start body stress regulation, spark peer engagement, open up our language centres in our brain and increase our receptivity to the idea of looking after ourselves. Findings provide a robust explanation for how canines may be well suited for regulating, connecting and engaging disparate individuals in a training environment, allowing engagement with challenging material and concepts. Impact on advocacy for policing as an institution is worth exploring in further research, as is how to support dog handlers with low external recognition for what they do. We welcome more structured canine support in police training environments and very much look forward to incorporating more handlers and their hounds into trauma resilience training over the coming years."

Dr Jess K Miller
October 2024

INTRODUCTION

This proof-of-concept study looks at how some canines (be they police, wellbeing, therapy or assistance dogs) have been -and may be- used to support trauma management. In particular, we evaluate the presence of wellbeing dogs when training police officers and staff to make sense of and manage their own trauma exposure on the job. First, we look at what is already out there; studies from across different countries and disciplines that have considered similar. Secondly, we take an exploratory look at the science behind *why* dogs may be of benefit to the police trauma management training environment. Thirdly, and armed with some basic principles to guide our enquiry, we undertake a brief practical study in how introducing police wellbeing dogs into existing trauma resilience training may be received in the UK. We conclude that the presence of dogs do no harm, are welcomed and contribute much to trainees' openness and engagement with the sessions.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS ALREADY OUT THERE (LITERATURE REVIEW)

Evidence about the value of dogs within a wellbeing or police training environment has yet to be found in wider literature on related subjects, as is any insight into how dogs might support police in learning to manage their own trauma resilience. There are, however, many relatable studies out there, including work on:

- Canines assisting children's trauma-focussed therapy (Dravsnik 2018[1], which demonstrated that for children, dogs as an adjunct to the trauma work increased acceptability of the trauma sessions for the participants);

[1] Dravsnik, Janene, Tania Signal, and Doreen Canoy. (2018) Canine Co-Therapy: The Potential of Dogs to Improve the Acceptability of Trauma-Focused Therapies for Children. *Australian Journal of Psychology* 70.3; 208-216

- Dogs being useful as mediators for children and young victims of crime being interviewed by police officers (Schalke et al., 2009[2], which showed a maximum relaxation effect on the interviewees from the dogs)
- Social disapproval leading to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Swiss search and rescue dog handlers (Kaufman et al., 2020[3], which highlighted the value of peer support in the face low external social recognition); and
- Partnering canines with military and police officers with PTSD (Hansen et al., 2023[4], demonstrating that an assistance dog largely reduces stress, anxiety, and PTSD symptoms, along with potentially improving sleep patterns and having fewer episodes of anger).

These are all reliable pointers towards theorem that dogs have a mitigating effect on managing stress and trauma in the general realm of policing. Perhaps the work which most informs our enquiry into the value of dogs in supporting trauma resilience *training* in policing is a between-group study from the Netherlands. The design compared the wellbeing of those military and police with PTSD with or without service or companion dogs. Van Houtert et al. (2022[5]) found service dogs to be positively associated with fewer symptoms of PTSD and a greater subjective experience of wellbeing than those with companion dogs, suggesting a positive influence of dogs being trained within the context of the occupation.

As Hansen et al. (2023) explains, there is an ever emerging body of international research illustrating benefits of assistance dogs in reducing PTSD symptoms in populations such as military, police and emergency response officers and veterans (see: Leighton et al., 20226).

Yet there is another component to these benefits that rarely accompanies explanations of *why* dogs can support trauma resilience and the training environment; a *scientific* explanation. Working with thousands of officers over the past seven years, the *Policing Trauma project* at The University of Cambridge have ascertained a solid truth about engagement with uncomfortable issues in policing (such as trauma) and that is that the objectivity of rational explanations can offer great relief for some can be very empowering for others (see *The Policing Mind: Trauma Resilience for a New Era* by Miller, 2022). While it is not always the case, for those who are minded to know *why* it is that having dogs in a room might help police officers engage better with that which is being taught, we very briefly turn to the neuropsychological literature: studies that explain how brains and bodies respond to persistent threat.

It is long accepted that in policing (and indeed after any regular trauma exposure within a profession), our bodies can, as Bessel Van Der Kolk so eloquently asserts, 'keep the score' (van der Kolk (2014[7]). That is to say, as we pride ourselves in "Keep[ing] Calm and Carry[ing] On" (which is an honourable commitment), this is simply a decision that we make in our minds. The

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[2] Schalke, E., Ott, A., Knipf, A., Thiesen, D., Hackbarth, H. (2010) Evaluation of a Training Program for Police Interview Assistance Dogs., *Journal of Vetinary Behaviour,* 5:1, 27-28

[3] Kaufmann, Milena, Matthias Gelb, and Mareike Augsburger. (2020) Buffering PTSD in Canine Search and Rescue Teams? Associations with Resilience, Sense of Coherence, and Societal Acknowledgment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17.17

[4] Hansen, C., Iannos, M., van Hooff (2023) Assistance dogs help reduce mental health symptoms among Australian Defence Force veterans and emergency services personnel: A pilot study, *Psychiatry Research,* Vol 324, 115212.

[5] van Houtert, Emmy A. E. et al. (2022) The Impact of Service Dogs on Military Veterans and (Ex) First Aid Responders With Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder .*Frontiers in psychiatry 13*

[6] S.C. Leighton, et al. (2022) Assistance dogs for military veterans with PTSD: a systematic review, meta-analysis, and meta-synthesis. PLoS ONE, 17 (9) Article e0274960

[7] van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking.

actual reality of that decision is in how our bodies respond to us 'just carrying on'. The body has little chance to slam the brakes on and say '*Hang on, no I don't think this is a good idea, please can we not do this*' and if it does, we get used to overriding it in the spirit of completing our mission. Sometimes, in professions such as Emergency Response, this can be helpful if we really need to push on, to run towards danger, to push on through. However, when we sustain that general mentality and apply that thinking to pretty much all scenarios we face in life, our default response to stimulus will do us more harm than it would protect us.

What can happen over time is that we lose connection with any messages our bodies give back to us warning us of things with which we are not comfortable. These chemical messages are also referred to as *emotions*. We tend to think of them as intangible attitudes, but they actually start physically in the body first, before we get a sense of them. If we get used to overriding them, we lose out on key information about what is going on around us and eventually start to lose touch with how others feel too. In policing and the realm of Emergency Response, this may impair our optimum skills at managing people under stress- arguably a vital component of much of the work.

So how does this play out? Our bodies hold the tension between what it knows isn't right (feeling something amiss) and what we are focussing on doing. This results in physical manifestations; symptoms such as high blood pressure, muscular skeletal issues, gastrointestinal problems and even heart arrythmia. Psychologist Gabor Mate explains how sometimes we can quite easily adopt personal and cultural coping mechanisms to mask our underlying discomfort, discomfort mainly emanating from unprocessed stress and trauma (2022[8]). In policing, it is not just the culture that can sustain this predicament of masking, but the working conditions themselves. For example, shift work can heavily disrupt circadian rhythms and sleep (which the body needs to maintain stress resilience[9]) and can also cut us off from the very social support we need for our immunity. This is important because it is long known that social isolation can actually predict mortality as much as obesity and cigarette smoking can combined (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010, 2015) [10].

Do we take care of this in policing? We know that talking and reaching out to make sense of difficult experiences is probably valuable, but many officers and staff either do not have the structured time to cultivate these exchanges with others (because of their work rota) or their capacity to instantly engage when the time is right just is not there anymore. Day-to-day policing is not always conducive to striking up deep and meaningful conversations at the drop of a hat. What is more, neuropsychology explains that our brains need *time* to be able to engage verbally after a stressful event. This is because the brain's language centres can either go "offline" when under immediate stress or threat (Hull, 2002)[11] or can revert to catastrophizing (Guha et al, 2020)[12]. Neither of these responses are helpful if we need to reach out to make sense of what we have experienced. If we don't learn to reset our stress response after difficult incidents, our

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[8] Maté, G and Maté, D (2022) *The myth of normal : trauma, illness, & healing in a toxic culture*. New York : Avery.

[9] See the factsheet produced by The Police Federation of England and Wales, '*Nutrition, Shiftwork and Fatigue'* here: Nutrition, Shift Work and Fatigue (polfed.org) (Last accessed 010224)

[10] Holt-Lunstad, Smith, and Layton (2010) 'Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review', *PLoS Medicine 7.7* and Holt-Lunstad, J. et al.(2015) 'Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: a meta-analytic review', *Perspectives on psychological science* 10.2 pp. 227-237

[11] Hull AM (2002) Neuroimaging findings in post-traumatic stress disorder: Systematic review. British Journal of Psychiatry;181(2):102-110. doi:10.1192/bjp.181.2.102

[12] Guha A, Spielberg J, Lake J, Popov T, Heller W, Yee CM, Miller GA. (2020) Effective connectivity between Broca's area and amygdala as a mechanism of top-down control in worry. Clin Psychol Sci.1;8(1):84-98. doi: 10.1177/2167702619867098. Epub 2019 Oct 24. PMID: 32983628; PMCID: PMC7517719.

communication can continue to be inhibited (losing its natural flow), which just exacerbates the sense of isolation as we feel we are just on our own and have to 'get on with it'.

So, what has this got to do with pups and hounds? Having a dog around can help us step out of the trap of experiencing a stress response but not being able to do anything about it. Amenable canines offer many of us the opportunity to sense the benefits of connection (seemingly through the release of oxytocin (Quick and Piza, 2021[13]) which renders us more open to the social support around us. As a result, our stress responses lower in response to a calm, happy canine (Petersonn et al, 2017[14]), enabling our language centres to reactivate, helping to improve and smoothe out communication with those around us, releasing energy to the front part of our brain (our prefrontal cortex) which activates more open-minded thinking, logic and even self-compassion (Miller, 2022[15]) and which renders us more receptive to learning.

What is more, OK9 dogs are known in the fraternity to form different relationships with each other -as well as relationships with their owner or handler. Their connection to a human being distinct from their relationships to other dogs. (This is supported in theory by one behavioural canine study which showed that "*the more attached a dog to its owner, the more distinct the dog's emotional response to the difference between the self-video stimulus and the video stimulus of another dog*", see Matsushita et al., 2022[16]). This could be important for dogs supporting trauma trainees in a room because this means that there is a potential for a human connection taking priority for the dog over their connection to (or distraction by) other dogs. This can also be very reassuring for trainers at the front of the training room, as well as for those being trained. Many of those exposed to extensive trauma (who may have become socially less extrovert) might well experience more confidence in session if they sense that that they may not need to compete with other OK9 dogs in order to connect to a dog themselves. While this is speculative, it is encouraging to know the value of the connection between human and canine is not one-sided!

All of these factors come together to suggest that having a canine in the trauma resilience training room could be conducive to improved engagement with trainees and therefore potentially stronger outcomes and training effects.

RESEARCH QUESTION

About the trauma resilience training environment

Specific forms of trauma resilience training was established in 2017 after a Randomised Controlled Trial [17]with Greater Manchester Police after the Arena attack and the findings of the

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[13] Quick, K. M., & Piza, E. L. (2022). Police Officers' Best Friend?: An Exploratory Analysis of the Effect of Service Dogs on Perceived Organizational Support in Policing. *The Police Journal*, 95(1), 127-151. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X211044711

[14] Petersson M, Uvnäs-Moberg K, Nilsson A, Gustafson LL, Hydbring-Sandberg E, Handlin L. (2017) Oxytocin and Cortisol Levels in Dog Owners and Their Dogs Are Associated with Behavioral Patterns: An Exploratory Study. *Front Psychol*. 2017 Oct 13;8:1796. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01796. PMID: 29081760; PMCID: PMC5645535.

[15] Miller, J.(2022) The Policing Mind: Trauma Resilience for a New Era, Bristol: Policy Press.

[16] Matsushita, Shohei, Miho Nagasawa, and Takefumi Kikusui.(2022) Autonomic Nervous System Responses of Dogs to Human-Dog Interaction Videos. PloS one 17.11. e0257788. Print.

[17] Miller, J. K., Peart, A., & Soffia, M. (2020). Can police be trained in trauma processing to minimise PTSD symptoms? Feasibility and proof of concept with a newly recruited UK police population. *The Police Journal*, *93*(4), 310-331. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X19864852

near 17k strong *Policing: The Job and The Life* [18]survey in 2018. Both feature in other literature[19] that explains how the brain adapts to the world of policing and the trauma exposure that comes with it. The techniques that emanate from the controlled trial and decades of other neuropsychological research are based on how the human brain makes sense of traumatic incidents and reached an estimated 15000 officers and staff in the UK between 2019 and 2024.

Andy Rhodes OBE QPM is Director of the National Police Wellbeing Service,

> *"As we see more forces adopting the processes which follow on from gaining these data insights we see many starting to use [these techniques] as a training option"* (January 2024).

A second component of the training was to use The Police Traumatic Events Checklist (PTEC) collates a statistically robust checklist of the top 10 worst reported traumatic incidents experienced by 1531 UK officers and staff, taken from the 2018 survey. Introducing PTEC to trauma resilience trainees provides a sound basis to empower officers and staff to be able to manage their exposure to everyday trauma exposure in their work. PTEC shows them that their worst experiences are both real and shared as common ground: terrain that can be navigated skilfully.

> *"The National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) are currently working with four forces to develop a consistent approach to collecting and surfacing data on trauma exposure using the PTEC categories"* (Andy Rhodes, January 2024)

Trauma resilience training is inherently sensitive, dealing with the more challenging aspects of police work where personal sensitivity and peer support meet in a learning environment. The specific training that was trialled in Greater Manchester has undergone seven years of evaluation and risk management to produce a model that is proven to be both safe and effective. Yet, there is always more to learn and this paper explores the possibility for introducing wellbeing dogs into the training room to see how, why and if this can be beneficial to trainee engagement.

About Oscar Kilo Nine[20]

The Oscar Kilo wellbeing and trauma support dogs service aims to build on local police wellbeing dog services and make wellbeing dogs available to all forces who wish to introduce a dog as part of their wellbeing provision. Police officers and staff do a demanding and sometimes dangerous job, and in many roles are frequently exposed to trauma. Over recent years, police forces around the country have recognised the value of dogs in helping officers and staff with their wellbeing. When a dog is introduced to the workplace, the atmosphere immediately changes and people want to interact with the dog. During this time together, they share oxytocin, a hormone that engenders affection, trust, and a sense of security. It helps naturally lower cortisone levels and in doing so reduces feelings of stress and anxiety. These interactive sessions provide light relief from the rigors of the job and the dogs help get people talking, and create expressions of genuine feeling just by being friendly and non-judgemental. Wellbeing dog handlers are also mental health first aiders or trained peer supporters who are ideally placed to listen, enable difficult conversations and provide sign-posting to support if required.

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[18] Brewin CR, Miller JK, Soffia M, Peart A, Burchell B. Posttraumatic stress disorder and complex posttraumatic stress disorder in UK police officers. Psychol Med. 2022 May;52(7):1287-1295. doi: 10.1017/S0033291720003025. Epub 2020 Sep 7. PMID: 32892759.

[19] Miller, J.(2022) The Policing Mind: Trauma Resilience for a New Era, Bristol: Policy Press.

[20] Oscar Kilo 9: Wellbeing and trauma support dogs | Oscar Kilo

Typically, OK9 dogs have been deployed for: morale or a general visit, defusing[21], TRiM (Trauma Risk Management[22]), team building, incident support and events.

HYPOTHESES

Why would trauma resilience training environment be enhanced by the presence of a wellbeing dog? This small proof-of-concept study aims to test the hypothesis that, given the known positive effect of animals on the human nervous system, the general familiarity that many officers and staff have with dogs in the field of policing, and the demands that the trauma resilience training has for stability, emotional regulation and peer support, that having a wellbeing dog present in the room may enhance how trauma resilience training is received by trainees.

There may be variables which may condition the impact of the dogs' presence, including: trainees' sense of preparedness for the session, trainees personal affiliation with dogs or animals, trainees sensitivity to nuances such as a change in their own feelings or approach to the session and observing those in others. Latterly, neurodiversity and trainees' own personal characteristics was recognised as a potential source of variance in how the dogs were received in the training room. Only some of these variables were controlled for in this design due to its small scale and limited resources.

METHODOLOGY

Oscar Kilo Nine conducted preliminary checks with the host force for the trauma resilience training, as is standard for introducing OK9 dogs to an event. These checks included[23]:

- Any aversion, phobias, religious considerations or allergies to canines among the trainees, trainers or support staff
- That all attendees have confirmed they are happy for the dog visit to go ahead (and if not, that there is an alternative suitable room to conduct the visit which is safe and comfortable for both dog and handler)
- Provision of further information on Health and Safety Risk Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment.

Following OK9 supported trauma resilience events (in November 2023), participants were sent an email link to an anonymous survey hosted by The University of Cambridge to complete after their attendance at the event. Responses were collected between 13th-30th November 2023, comprising 15 trauma resilience techniques trainees and one PTEC attendee.

The survey asked trainees basic feedback about their anticipation of the event, their overall affiliation with dogs, how they felt the dogs may or may not have affected their and others' experience in the session, when trainees thought the dogs might be most useful for the session

[21] For example, see: Demobilising and defusing training | Oscar Kilo

[22] See: Watson, L., & Andrews, L. (2018). The effect of a Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) program on stigma and barriers to help-seeking in the police. International Journal of Stress Management, 25(4), 348–356. https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000071

[23] As outlined in the OK9 Wellbeing and Trauma Support Dogs Booking form (2023)

(such as before, during or after), how they reflected on their own resonance with the dog in the particular and if there was anything they would like to see changed about the session[24].

RESULTS

The small sample size (*n*= 16) lent itself to a more qualitative than quantitative analysis. Results are reported as main frequencies per question (using the statistical package SPSS[25]) plus an illustrative representation of the comments offered (using the Word Art Wordle image program[26]).

No participants selected the options that represented that they had an idea of what the session was about and *wasn't looking forward to it*, and only one training participant stated that [they] didn't know what to expect and was a little nervous (which is often typical of the sessions with or without dogs, given that the subject matter is trauma). The majority confirmed that they knew what to expect and nearly all (94%) expressed positive anticipation of the sessions.

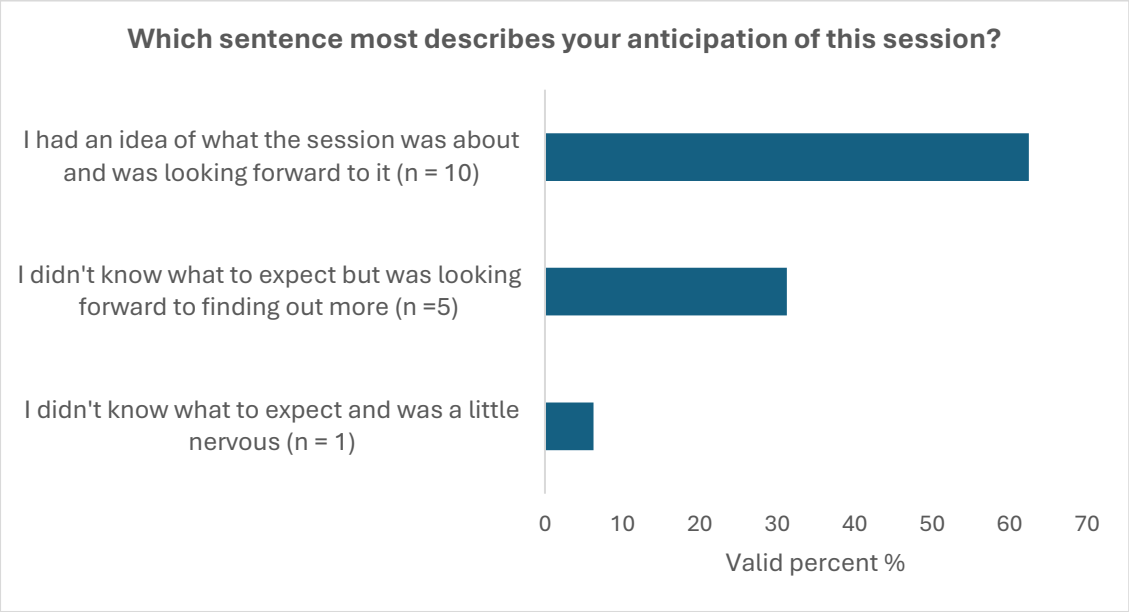

Figure 1: Q4 Which of these sentences most describes your anticipation of the session? (*n* = 16)

[24] Further questions about neurodiversity and diversity were added to the survey in preparation for the next session which had to be cancelled due to limited resources, so no data is available for those questions.

[25] Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

[26] Untitled - Edit - WordArt.com

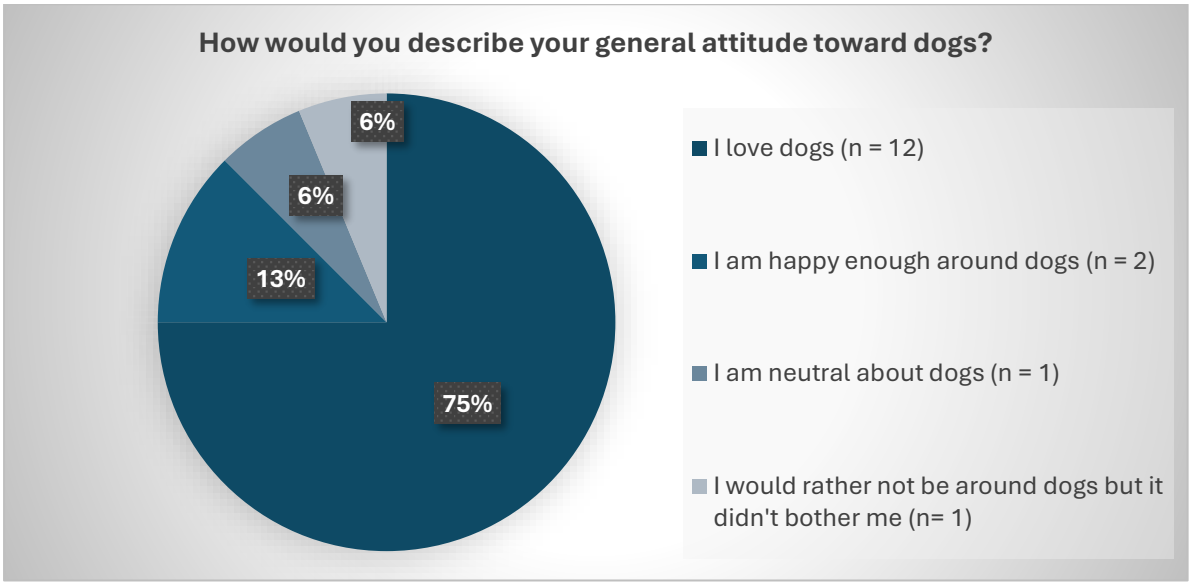

Figure 2: Q5 How would you describe your general attitude toward dogs? (*n* = 16)

No respondents selected that they disliked dogs. This may be due to the screening process by which Oscar Kilo provided to ensure consent with all trainees to have dogs in attendance prior to the session. There was a slight positive bias towards dogs, with 75% purporting to "love" them.

Further studies would do well to compare responses to all questions within groups that typify loving or 'rather not be around' them to better understand any effect of such bias.

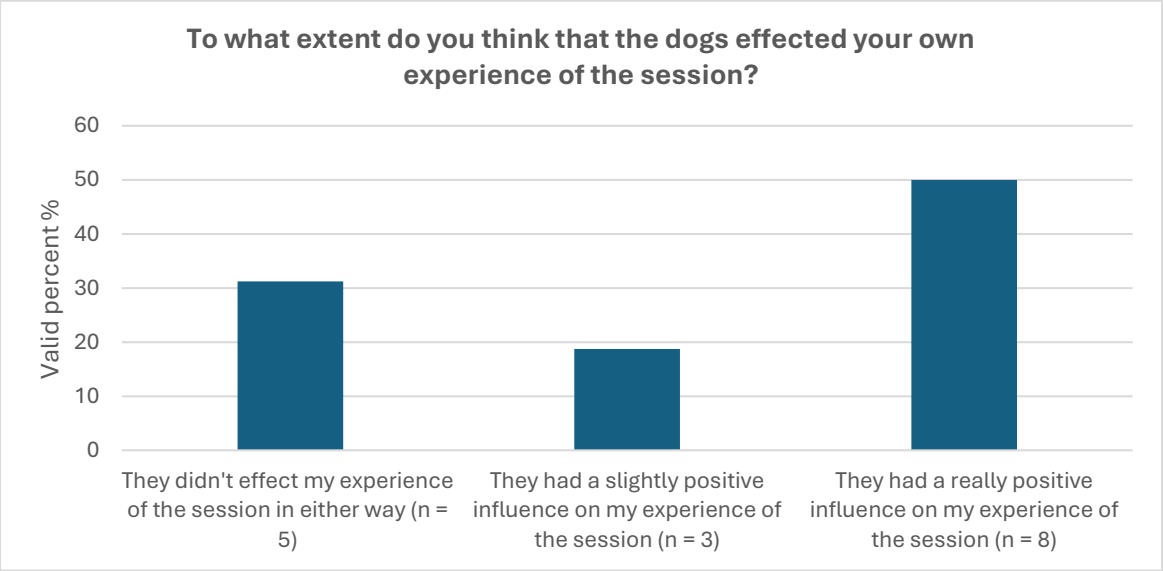

Figure 3: Q6 To what extent do you think that the dogs effected your own experience of the session?

No respondents selected that the dogs had a very negative influence on my experience of the session or even that they had a slightly negative influence on my experience of the session.

There was a positive skew towards the dogs having a positive influence in participants' own experience of the session, with just under one third (31%) being neutral to the dogs' presence.

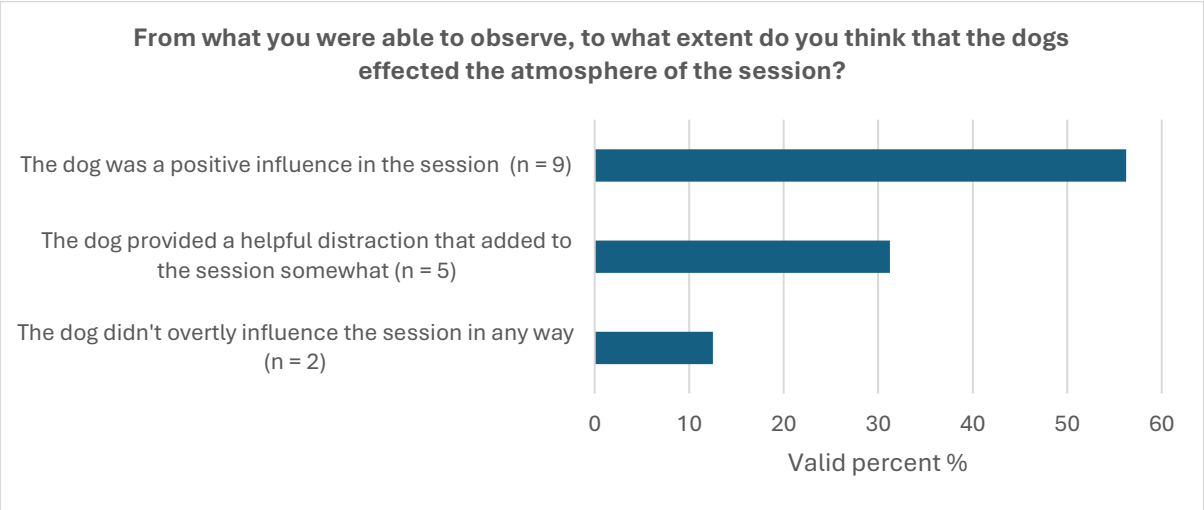

Figure 4: Q7 From what you were able to observe, to what extent do you think that the dogs effected the atmosphere of the session? (*n* = 16)

No respondents expressed that either the dog distracted the session or that the dog was an unhelpful distraction that depleted the session (even a little) and only 13% said they had no particular influence. Over half (56%) considered the dogs to have a positive influence and nearly one third thought them to appear a helpful distraction.

These answers are vicariously reported – that is, they are based on self-reported observations of the participants and so far is only a gage of the reception to the dogs in the room by those there and is not an accurate, direct measure of their impact.

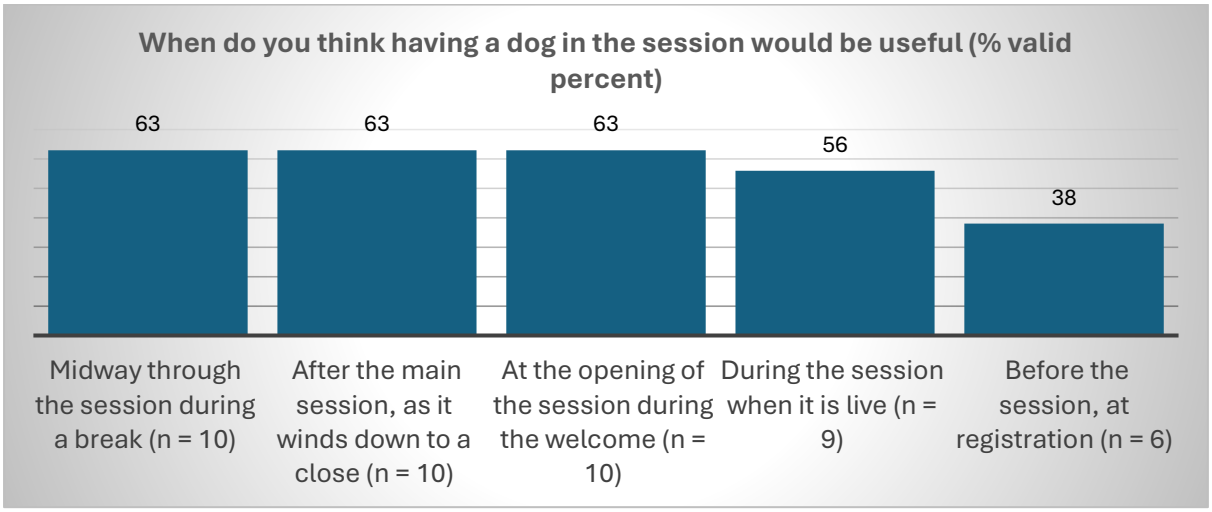

Figure 5: Q8 When in the session do you think having the dog would be useful (respondents could select all that applied)

Trainees were supportive of the dogs being present at multiple times of the day. The most popular responses were during the opening welcome, in break time and after the main session during the close. The least preferred answer was at registration and the second least was during the actual training.

These answers reflect that the trainees would benefit from the dogs when there is active engagement in the delivery but not to the extent of having the dogs present during the actual learning and practical time itself.

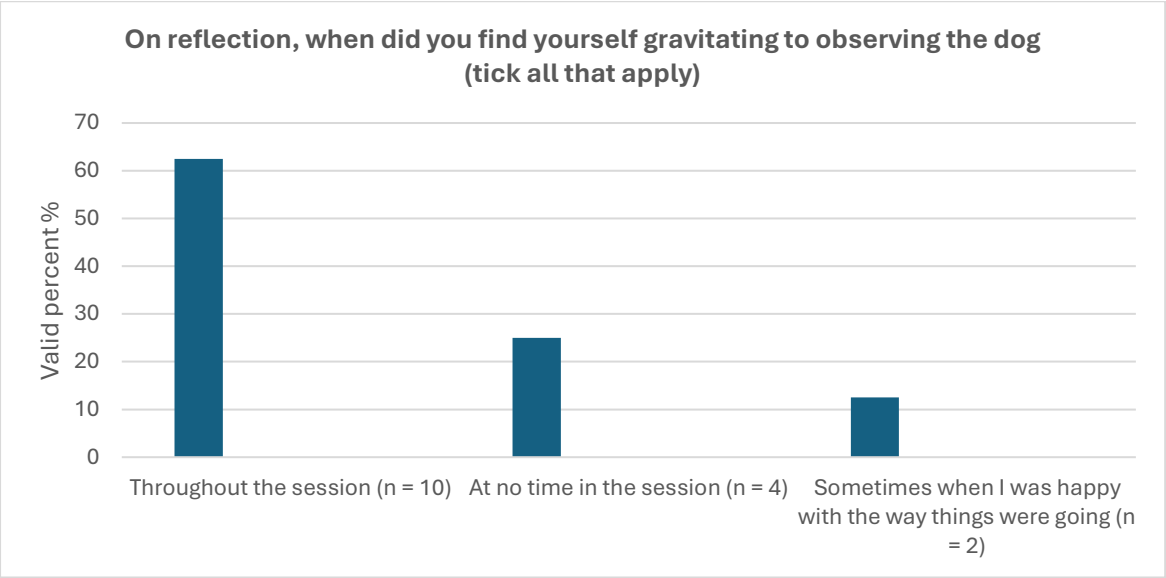

Figure 6: Q9 On reflection, when did you find yourself gravitating to observing the dog (tick all that apply)

Three quarters of participants personally found themselves gravitating to observing the dog.

This may be reflective of the proportion of trainees who simply "love dogs" and may be worth testing in future scenarios to see if observing the dog is an independent effect of the nature of the session (such as for comfort or distraction) or is more related to natural affiliations with canines.

No one reflected that they gravitated to observing the dog when things were tricky for them but two individuals noted that they found themselves engaging with the dog when things were going well.

One could infer from this that having a dog in the session has a generic positive effect on trainees but does not have a specific relationship to helping individuals who have a difficult time during the session delivery. These are very small samples and this is worth investigating in further studies.

Qualitative comments were collected in Q10 in response to trainees being asked if they would change anything about the session. There was constructive feedback on having structured times (to avoid distraction from sensitive topics), placing of dogs so that all had an opportunity to engage should they wish to, understanding aversion for allergic reasons (not that these require exclusion by default), religious diversity, and that the involvement of the canines was not just about the dogs, but the engagement and connection with the *handlers* too.

Perhaps the most bold message was that the mere presence of the dogs signalled to those involved that trainees wellbeing had genuinely been considered. This reiterates the findings of the study from Quick and Piza (2021) that service dogs can increase perceived organisational support.

Table: Q10 If anything, what would you change about having a dog at the session?

To have **structured times** when they come in. ideally **not when discussing/explaining serious/tricky topics.**

They were so quiet and good that they **weren't disruptive** at all
I stroked the dog during lunch time, for me personally I did not find any positive benefit to having them there, though this may be because I sat at the front and the dogs sat at the back so throughout the sessions (not at breaks) **I couldn't see the dogs**. May be more beneficial if they sat at the front/in sight of everyone and I may have found them beneficial to have during the session. That being said at lunch/breaks **they where obviously a nice distraction/talking point.**
I think dogs **should be in all sessions** but I know some people have a dislike. I always ask people if they are ok with mine beforehand.
None
I think the dogs are great, and I'm a dog lover. The man next to me was **allergic** to dogs so the dog handler made sure to stay away from him. My only other concern would be how people of **different faiths would react, for example my Muslim friend** and colleague would not like a dog there due to his faith.
Nothing at all.
I loved the dogs been there - made the session more informal and that **our wellbeing** had been considered
Personally the presence of a dog had no influence of my wellbeing during the input, however I did **engage with the handler** as a result and discussed the role we shared but in different forces.

Figure 7: Wordle Art image representing the qualitative comments collected in Q10

LIMITATIONS

This is a small qualitative study, the sample size for which was compromised due to limited resources in the research team. Many of these findings require more precise investigation at scale to fully explore all neuro/socio/psychological dynamics at play within canine-supported trauma resilience training. Neurodiversity and diversity variables may prove useful areas for further research.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this exploration into the practical benefits of introducing police wellbeing dogs into the police trauma resilience training environment has been educational in several ways. The literature review illustrated that canine support in the realm of policing and trauma is something which has already had demonstrable success in several countries and across different

disciplines. The studies positively indicated that there was a relationship between dogs, stress regulation, social connection and cognitively taxing environments. Our light-touch scientific enquiry into how bodies hold stress responses in some occupations and what dynamics are needed for individuals to release these responses (to regulate themselves and to connect and to learn) complements literature on the impact of support dogs on those who experience trauma. The brief experimental sessions introducing OK9 dogs into the trauma resilience training environment, although at small scale, demonstrated a critical component of any new intervention in this field; that doing so *did no harm*. With the conditions carefully executed by the experienced OK9 team, the deliveries were seen to be constructive and we overwhelmingly well received, with feedback suggesting a good appetite for more such interventions to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks goes to Andy Rhodes and Gary Botterill at Oscar Kilo, Paul Roe at Blue Paw, Prof Brendan Burchell at The University of Cambridge and the trauma resilience and PTEC work was funded by Police Care UK. We would also like to thank all the trauma training participants, trainers, OK9 dog handlers and administrators for their contribution to this study and we look forward to seeing more implementation of this model for trauma resilience training for police, the Emergency Response family and beyond.