

Reviewer -2

The manuscript addresses an important and underexplored topic for the scientific community. Rural first responders remain an understudied population, and the manuscript contributes meaningful insight into how intergenerational transmission, family culture, and community norms shape service-oriented identity. By integrating social learning theory, family systems perspectives, and cultural frameworks with qualitative evidence, the study advances understanding of motivation and resilience in rural emergency personnel. This work has relevance for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to strengthen recruitment, retention, and well-being in rural first responder populations.

The title accurately reflects the study's focus on intergenerational transmission, service-oriented identity, and rural first responder families. It is clear, informative, and aligned with the manuscript's theoretical and empirical content. "Family Legacy and the Making of Rural First Responders: Intergenerational Transmission of Service-Oriented Identity" "Giving Is Healing': How Family and Community Shape Service Identity in Rural First Responders" "From Generation to Generation: Cultivating Service Identity in Rural First Responder Families"

Yes, the abstract is generally comprehensive and clearly summarizes the study's purpose, methods, key themes, and significance. However, it could be improved for clarity and completeness. Suggestions for improvement: Include a brief statement on the methodological approach (e.g., qualitative thematic analysis) to enhance transparency. Add the number of participants and their roles to strengthen context. Provide a clearer concluding statement highlighting the primary contribution or implication of the study for research or practice.

Overall, the manuscript's English is clear, readable, and generally appropriate for scholarly communication. However, several sections would benefit from refinement for conciseness, reduced repetition, and smoother transitions. Suggestions: Streamline sentences that are overly long or contain repeated ideas, particularly in the introduction and discussion. Reduce redundancy across theoretical sections, where similar concepts (e.g., family legacy, cultural norms) appear multiple times. Ensure consistent tense and terminology, especially when referring to "service-oriented identity," "helping identity," and "giving is healing." Improve paragraph cohesion by adding clearer topic sentences and transitional phrases.

Title and Abstract: Appropriate and aligned with the content, though the abstract would benefit from a clearer methodological statement and a stronger concluding sentence.

Introduction: Well-developed and theoretically grounded, but slightly lengthy. Some ideas are repeated across subsections (e.g., family values, cultural norms). Streamlining would

improve focus. Literature Review/Theoretical Framework: Relevant theories—Social Learning Theory, Family Systems, and cultural norms—are well-chosen and appropriately integrated. However, the sections overlap in places and could be more concise to avoid conceptual redundancy. Methods: Clear and detailed. The description of participants, recruitment procedures, and interview protocol is appropriate and transparent. One suggestion is to condense procedural details to improve readability. Data Analysis: Appropriate for qualitative research. The explanation of thematic coding and inter-rater reliability is strong, though adding a brief rationale for thematic analysis would enhance rigor. Results: Rich and well-organized around thematic domains. Quotations effectively illustrate themes. The section is appropriate but could be shortened by removing repetitive narrative descriptions. Discussion: Appropriate and well-connected to the theoretical framework and existing literature. Some parts are lengthy and repeat earlier sections. Streamlining the discussion and emphasizing the unique contributions of this study would strengthen impact. Implications and Future Directions: Relevant and useful. The section appropriately links findings to practice, policy, and research. A more concise structure would improve clarity. Limitations: Acknowledged appropriately, though the limitations section could be more explicit and separated visually or structurally for emphasis. References: Current and relevant. Ensure consistent formatting and verify that all cited works appear in the list.

The references are generally appropriate, relevant, and include a mix of foundational theorists (e.g., Bandura, Bowen) and recent studies from 2021–2025. They sufficiently support the theoretical framework and findings. Suggestions: Consider adding more recent empirical studies specifically on rural first responders, trauma exposure, and identity formation to further strengthen the literature base. Ensure consistency in citation formatting (e.g., alphabetical order, missing initials). Verify that all in-text citations have a matching reference entry and that no references are missing publication details.

Specific Comments:

The manuscript is well-organized and grounded in relevant theory, offering meaningful insight into how intergenerational and cultural processes shape service-oriented identity in rural first responders. However, several sections—particularly the introduction, theoretical framework, and discussion—contain repetitive ideas that could be streamlined for clarity and conciseness. Strengthening the abstract, clarifying key terms, and tightening the results narrative would further enhance readability and scholarly impact. Overall, the study is strong but would benefit from minor refinements to improve focus and flow.