



Accessing mental health services

Defence Community Organisation

Encouraging your loved one to access mental health services can be a sensitive issue.

Family members are key resources for military personnel as they know, more than anyone else, when something is wrong.

Below are some suggestions for working with someone troubled and experiencing depression, post traumatic stress disorder, or another mental health issues.

Be informed

Gather information and knowledge about post traumatic stress disorder, family reintegration, combat stresses, depression, alcohol and drug use. Some useful resources include:

The [Australian Psychological Society](#) is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia.

The [Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health](#) undertakes world class trauma related research, policy advice, service development and education to help organisations and health professionals who work with people affected by traumatic events

The [Mental Health Association Australia](#) is a non-profit organisation that raises awareness about mental wellbeing and provides support to individuals at risk of developing or who are experiencing mental illness.

The [Australian Government Department of Health](#) provides information and resources to support good mental health.

[healthinsite](#) is a non-commercial, government-funded health information service that provides access to quality health information and services.

[Foundation 49](#) raises awareness of men's health, particularly by encouraging men to get regular health checks.

The [ReachOut.com site](#) provides young people with the information, help, support, advice and connections they need to manage mental health difficulties.

[SANE Australia](#) is a national charity helping all Australians affected by mental illness, by campaigning, educating and researching.

[Alzheimer's Australia](#) is the peak body providing support and advocacy for the more than 321 000 Australians living with dementia.

The [Centre for Military and Veterans' Health](#) is a community and military partnership funded by the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs that works to better understand and address health issues affecting military personnel, veterans, and their families.

The [Mental Health in Multicultural Australia project](#) provides advice and support to health professionals and governments on mental health and suicide prevention for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Have a conversation

Often the best thing for families is to talk openly about their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. These conversations can be





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difficult, so be sure to express your concern, support and desire to help and stay away from accusatory statements like 'You need to do something about your life.'

Recognise the person's choice

Mental health care is helpful only if the individual makes the decision to seek it by him or herself.

Demanding that someone seek help can backfire and typically makes them less likely to deliberately find help. Instead of making threats ('You need to go for help, or else.') discuss choices ('I know it's your call whether you go to see somebody, but if there's something I can do to help, let me know.')

Only the individual can make the choice and commitment to improve their lives, but your support can make this more likely.

Take care of yourself

Taking care of yourself is helpful in several ways: you have the most to give when you are coping well, you make better decisions, and you provide a good example in making good health decisions.

Be sure to get enough sleep, eat well, get help from friends and family, or find professional help from a doctor, counsellor or therapist.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

The Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for the families of ADF members.

The best way to access these services is to call 1800 624 608. The all-hours Defence Family Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

