



Resources for military personnel experiencing trauma

Defence Community Organisation

Traumatic events while deployed can trigger nightmares, flashbacks, and feelings of panic, anxiety, nervousness, or irritability. Help is available.

Often the ADF member's family first notice that something is wrong. Stress-related symptoms include:

- Excessive alertness, being on the look-out for signs of danger and being easily startled.
- Fatigue and exhaustion, disturbed sleep.
- Intrusive thoughts and memories of the traumatic event, nightmares, poor concentration and memory.
- Social withdrawal and isolation, loss of interest in normal activities.
- Numbness and detachment, depression, anger and irritability, anxiety and panic.
- Self-medicating with drugs or alcohol.

There are a range of reactive and preventative resources that ADF members and their families can access to get help during difficult times.

FIND SOMEONE TO TALK TO

You may wish to discuss things with a close friend or family member who you trust to be supportive. Sometimes it can really help to share a problem and get a different perspective on it by talking it over.

24-HOUR HELPLINES

A range of national mental health helplines are available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. None of these helplines should be used as a substitute for Triple-Zero (000) emergency services.

- The Defence Family Helpline, provided by Defence Community Organisation, is staffed by human services professionals including social workers and psychologists, who can provide you with assessment, assistance or referral.

You can contact the Helpline 24-7 on DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au or 1800 624 608.

- The All Hours Support Line is provided by Defence as part of the ADF Mental Health Strategy, and is a 24-7 service for ADF members and their families to access mental health advice and referral.

1800 628 036

+61 2 9425 3878 outside Australia

- Lifeline is a national 24-hour support line which provides crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health services for the cost of a local call from landlines or free from mobiles.

131 114

lifeline.org.au



- Mensline Australia is a national 24-hour service for men, providing support, information or referral by telephone or online.

1300 789 978

mensline.org.au

- The Veterans and Veterans' Families Counselling Service provides counselling and support programs to Australian veterans or peacekeepers and their families, and operates a freecall all-hours crisis telephone service.

1800 011 046

www.dva.gov.au

- beyondblue is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related disorders in Australia. Their website provides a wealth of information and resources for anyone experiencing depression or who knows someone else who is.

1300 22 4636

www.beyondblue.org.au

- The At Ease website can help veterans, current Defence members, and their families during challenging times by providing tips, treatment options, and resources for identifying, managing or treating symptoms of not coping.

at-ease.dva.gov.au

SMARTPHONE APPS

These apps can help you manage a range of mental health issues, and are free to download. Visit at-ease.dva.gov.au for details.

- The **High Res app** helps you manage stress, build resilience and optimise performance on the go.
- The **PTSD Coach Australia app** can help you learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur after trauma.
- The **On Track with the Right Mix mobile app** helps you to keep track of the number and types of drinks you consume; the amount of money it's costing you and lets you know about the impact the alcohol has on your wellbeing and fitness levels.

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.

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 Defence Family Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

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The information in this handout is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

