



Where to seek help

In an emergency, call 000.

Your chain of command is a primary resource that can provide advice, referral and support.

Other than in an emergency situation, contact your local ADF Medical Centre or Psychology Section. Navy personnel can seek help through their divisional system, local Alcohol and Drug Program Advisor (ADPA) or can directly contact their local Alcohol and Drug Program Coordinators.

Mental Health Resources

Local Medical Centres Your local medical officer can provide immediate assistance and referrals as required.

Psychology Support Section All Psychology Support Sections offer after-hours, critical incident support through the local Duty Officer/Officer of the Day.

Defence Community Organisation

<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/dco/> or www.defence.gov.au/dco/

The DCO provides services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all year round including public holidays. During normal business hours the first point of call is the Duty Social Worker or Military Support Officer. Outside these core hours and on Public Holidays, calls should be directed to the National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) on 1800 801 026 or if calling from overseas +61 2 93594842.

Chaplains There are Chaplains connected to all units in Australia who can provide support and appropriate referrals.

The Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) (1800 020 031)

FIND is a phone service that provides easy access to personnel information on matters of everyday interest and concern. It is a confidential service that is available to every Service person and family anywhere in Australia.

Lifeline (131 114) If you, or a friend, need to talk to someone about a problem immediately, you can call Lifeline for the cost of a local call.

Veterans and Veteran's Families Counselling Service (VVCSS) This service is available to veterans of all deployments and their families. VETLINE – 24 hour emergency line (1800 011 046).

ADF Mental Health Strategy All-hours Support Line (ASL) The ASL is a confidential telephone triage support service for ADF members and their families that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. (1800 628 036) (FREECALL within Australia) and (61 2 9425 3878) (outside Australia)

Australian Defence Force Mental Health Strategy (ADFMHS)

Defweb Address <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/dsg/sites/dmh/>

Internet Address www.defence.gov.au/health/DMH/i-dmh.htm

Email DMH.mentalhealth@defence.gov.au

Z00 91520-11



Australian Government
Department of Defence

ADF Mental Health Strategy

COMING HOME



be well

work well

live well

FACT SHEET



'Being away' often means that changes have occurred, both in the person coming home and in those who have remained at home. In this age of modern technology, communication back home may have been taking place during separation.

Sometimes however, this communication can be frustrating for all concerned because problems may be shared, but neither person can effectively help in the other location. Therefore, it is important to realise that although you may have been e-mailing, SMS texting or actually phoning each other, the type and quality of the communication is quite different to seeing each other 'face to face'. Furthermore, although coming home is exciting, and obviously something you and your loved ones and friends look forward to, it can also be stressful and will usually involve a period of readjustment. This period of readjustment doesn't have to be viewed as a 'roadblock' or 'stumbling block'; it can actually be used to build stronger relationships.

Expectations and Tips

Some things may have changed at home such as: roles could have changed, children grown, and partners become independent in new or different ways. You also may have changed in your outlook, your beliefs and your priorities. You may be looking forward to the 'perfect reunion', but remember that perfection (just like beauty) is in the eye of the beholder and your partner may have different hopes or expectations.

Two tips to remember are:

'TAKE IT SLOWLY' and 'TALK AND REALLY LISTEN TO EACH OTHER'

These tips are the building blocks for any relationship and they will help you get through. Other tips include:

- remember that people (including you) may have changed
- curb the desire to leap in and take over the reins
- acknowledge the good things your family and friends have done during your absence – limit any criticism
- go easy spending your money – think and plan
- respect each other's personal/emotional space (including the children's); you will need to get to know each other again
- sexual closeness may be awkward at first as your hopes and beliefs may be different to your partner's – talk openly and respectfully about this issue
- be patient with yourself, your family and your friends
- watch the language!
- previous problems may crop up again – do something about them this time
- include your family in any socialising
- be prepared to give and take
- with children, go slowly and adapt to the new rules and routines that are now in place
- things that worked before may not work now – new strategies/techniques may be in place now, so take the time to learn what they are.

For those at home

The returning family member or friend may have changed, and they may now be more sensitive to a lot of things that were pretty 'normal' before. For example:

- they may be anxious or unsettled in crowds, in the rush and throng of a city and amongst the noise of a family
- they may feel threatened by your new friends or supports, and wonder how they can fit back into your life
- they may want to take back all previous responsibilities.

A few extra tips are – avoid scheduling too many things or activities, go slow and be patient. Remind them that they are still needed and are still important to you.

A warning

If you identify readjustment problems talk to someone early so that guidance or assistance can be provided to you and your family as soon as you need or want it. You can talk to your doctor, padre, a social worker or psychologist – you and your family have a wide range of assistance available to you.