

Where can I get help?

If you are experiencing ongoing distress please seek help as soon as possible. Contact your local Medical Centre, Chaplain, Psychologist, Social Worker or the Duty Officer/Officer of the Day. You do not have to go through this alone and there is help available.

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 (VVCS) 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



Australian Government
Department of Defence


ADF Mental Health Strategy

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

be
well

work
well

live
well



What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

PTSD is a serious mental disorder that can sometimes occur after exposure to a traumatic event. It is normal for most individuals to experience some form of distress after highly traumatic events. Most will return to normal functioning in a short period of time without intervention. However, for a small number of individuals a long term and incapacitating problem develops. The earlier that assistance is sought in these cases the better the rate of recovery.

What is a traumatic event?

What constitutes a 'trauma' is different for everyone, however there are a number of generic events that have the potential to cause significant distress.

These include but are not limited to:

- threat of death
- serious injury
- viewing or handling of dead bodies
- death or serious injury of a close friend/colleague
- death or serious injury of a family member
- exposure to a potentially contagious disease or toxic agent
- witnessing human degradation on a large scale
- an action or inaction resulting in the serious injury or death of others.

What is a normal reaction?

Most people experience strong reactions after traumatic events. These may include:

- re-experiencing the event (visual images awake or asleep)
- intrusive thoughts about the event
- a desire to avoid anything attached to the event
- feelings of panic or being highly anxious
- feeling sad, tearful, hopeless or depressed
- feeling your personality has changed
- drinking more alcohol, or misusing other substances
- feelings of guilt or anger
- trouble concentrating, disorientation, and memory problems
- sleep disturbance, excessive alertness, or being easily startled
- feeling unable to control your moods, especially when trying to control your anger
- having difficulties with relationships.

When should I seek help?

If the symptoms outlined above persist for more than four weeks and / or are causing you considerable distress and impacting on your ability to work or function socially, you need to seek help.