



Australian Government
Department of Defence

Illicit and prohibited substances

Defence Mental Health & Wellbeing





*'Mental health and wellbeing is the state in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stress of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'**

Defence's vision is that our people – military and public servants – experience positive mental health and wellbeing. *They are Fit to Fight – Fit to Work – Fit for Life.*

*World Health Organization

What is a psychoactive drug?

A psychoactive drug is a substance, which is taken to change the way the body and/or mind function. Some drugs such as cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin are illegal, meaning that use or possession of the drug is against the law. Illegal drugs are not subject to quality or price controls and a person can never be sure of the actual content or strength.

Prolonged drug use can lead to tolerance (requiring increased amounts of the drug to get the same effect) and/or dependence. Dependence on a drug can be physical, psychological or both. Drugs can be classed as depressants, stimulants or hallucinogens based on the effect they have on the central nervous system.

Depressants

Depressants affect the central nervous system by slowing down the messages between the brain and the body. They can affect concentration and coordination and may slow down a person's ability to respond to unexpected situations. In small doses they can cause a person to feel more relaxed and less inhibited. In larger doses they can cause drowsiness, vomiting, unconsciousness and death. Depressants do not necessarily make a person feel depressed

Some examples of illicit depressants include gamma hydroxy butyrate (GHB), and heroin.

The effects of using depressants may include:

- sleepiness
- confusion
- loss of coordination
- blurred vision
- nausea and vomiting
- changes in blood pressure and heart rate
- memory loss
- decreased response to pain
- lowered respiratory rate
- unconsciousness.

Stimulants

Illegal stimulants include amphetamines, crystal methamphetamines (e.g. Ice) and cocaine. Stimulant drugs speed up the messages between the brain and the body. They can make a person feel more awake, alert, confident or energetic. Large doses of stimulants can cause over-stimulation, causing anxiety, panic, seizures, headaches, aggression and paranoia.

The effects of using stimulants may include:

- euphoria and a sense of wellbeing
- increased alertness, energy and hyperactivity
- talkativeness
- reduced appetite
- improved concentration
- dry mouth and a metallic taste in the mouth
- increased blood pressure and heart rate
- nausea
- jaw clenching
- heart arrhythmias
- mood swings (anxiety, depression, agitation, paranoia)
- psychosis
- aggression and violence
- damage to brain cells
- brain haemorrhage.

Hallucinogens

These include ketamine, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), datura, psilocybin (magic mushrooms) and mescaline (peyote cactus). Cannabis and ecstasy can also have hallucinogenic qualities. Hallucinogens distort a person's perception of reality. People who have taken them may imagine they see, hear, smell, feel or taste things that aren't really there, or what they see may be distorted. The effects of different hallucinogens vary. In the days following use of hallucinogens, people may experience anxiety, depression or panic attacks.

The effects of using hallucinogens may include:

- feeling happy and relaxed
- seeing and hearing things that are not there
- confusion and trouble concentrating
- dizziness
- blurred vision
- clumsiness
- fast or irregular heart beat
- breathing quickly
- nausea and/or vomiting
- sweating and chills
- numbness
- reduced appetite.

Drugs and the ADF

The ADF has a zero tolerance policy on the use of illicit drugs by its members. This means that any member found to be using illicit drugs will be required to 'show cause' why they should be permitted to remain in the ADF.

The ADF conducts random and targeted drug testing of ADF members. Some of the drugs included within the illicit drugs category remain detectable in urine for some time after use, so a person could return positive test days after they have used a drug.

Where to seek help

If you or someone in your workplace is in crisis and you think immediate action is needed, call **Emergency Services 000**, contact your doctor or local mental health crisis service, or go to your local hospital emergency department.

Emergency contact information – 24 hours

If you or someone you know needs help, call:

- Emergency on **000**
- Lifeline on **13 11 14**
- Suicide Call Back Service on **1300 659 467**.

ADF

Contact your local on base Health Centre, Mental Health Professional or the Duty Officer/Officer of the Day for immediate assistance and referrals.

The ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal is an online health information resource tool for ADF members and their families www.defence.gov.au/health/healthportal/

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

Military Chaplains are connected to all ships/units/bases around Australia and on Operations. They can provide all-hours support and appropriate referral. To access Defence Chaplaincy support, call **1300 333 362** and ask to speak to the Duty Chaplain from your area and service.

The ADF Mental Health All-hours Support Line (ASL) is a confidential telephone service for ADF members and their families available 24/7 on **1800 628 036** or if calling from overseas **+61 2 9425 3878**.

If you are away from base, or for out-of-hours assistance, you can call **1800 IMSICK (1800 467 425)** to locate the nearest support.

Defence Family Helpline (1800 624 608) The Defence Family Helpline is available 24/7 for ADF Members and their families, and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists. Defence Community Organisation website is: www.defence.gov.au/dco

The National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC)

Serving Families of Deployed Australian Defence Personnel.

As part of the Headquarters Joint Operations Command, the National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) provides a 24 hour support, referral and information service for families of Defence personnel deployed on operations and exercises.

1800 801 026 or **+ 61 2 6127 1812**.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO)

SeMPRO offers advice, guidance and support to current and former Defence personnel who have been affected by sexual misconduct, whether the incident is current or historical.

This includes support to ADF cadets, officers and instructors of cadets, APS personnel, commanders, managers, supervisors, support people and families affected by sexual misconduct. **1800 736 776 (1800SeMPRO)**.

Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling (formerly WCS): is a national mental health service that provides 24-hour free and confidential counselling, group programs and suicide prevention training for current and ex-serving ADF members, and their family. To get support or to find out more, call **1800 011 046** or visit **www.OpenArms.gov.au**

APS (and Reservists)

Defence Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (including the Reserve Assistance Program – RAP). The EAP provides short term confidential counselling and support for employees and immediate family members (if eligible). It is easily accessible, voluntary and can provide support on a range of personal and work related issues. The Defence EAP can be accessed by calling **1300 687 327**.