



Mental health issues

There are some common signs that it might be time to encourage your loved one to seek help. As a rule, it is a good idea to encourage your loved one to seek professional help if they would benefit from speaking to a health professional.

Get help early- if your loved one has been displaying any of the following signs for more than a few weeks and/or if you or they feel that they are not coping or their difficulties are getting worse, help them to ask for help from a professional.

Signs to look out for:

Changes in thinking

- » thoughts of suicide or self-harm
- » tiredness and loss of energy
- » difficulty with attention and concentration, confusion, feeling disoriented
- » difficulty making plans
- » intrusive thoughts and images of past events
- » worrying more than usual
- » constant questioning such as 'what if I had done something different?'
- » unwanted memories or bad dreams
- » being constantly on the lookout for danger and planning for the worst

Emotional changes

- » feeling tense, agitated, irritable or angry outbursts over small issues
- » sadness, hopelessness, fear, shame
- » feeling emotionally detached or 'numb'

Body changes

- » feeling keyed up, 'on edge' and jumpy

- » muscular pain, headaches, teeth grinding, digestive issues such as heartburn and irritable bowel
- » blood pressure or blood sugar problems
- » fatigue, including difficulty falling or staying asleep

Behavioural changes

- » unhelpful coping strategies such as taking risks, gambling, drinking and/or taking drugs (self-medicating), increased use of medication (e.g., pain relief) or spending a lot of time on electronic devices
- » constantly doing things to feel like you and everyone else is safe like checking doors and windows or planning exit strategies
- » controlling day-to-day activities or behaviours of family members, becoming frustrated or angry if others don't do as they want them to
- » If you are beginning to feel scared of your loved one, call 1800RESPECT on **1800 737 732** or the Defence Member and Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**. If you feel you or others are in immediate danger call 000.
- » withdrawing from family and friends
- » no longer doing the activities they used to enjoy doing with loved ones
- » change in work patterns like arriving at work late or throwing themselves into work and overworking.

Support options:

Defence Member and Family Support (DMFS) offers a range of programs and services to help ADF members and their families manage military life. To contact DMFS call the Defence Member and Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** or email at: memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

Open Arms provides free and confidential counselling to anyone who has served at least one day in the ADF, and their families. Website: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/>
Phone: **1800 011 046** available 24/7

ADF All hours Support Line. Phone: **1800 628 036**

To access DMFS support services or products:



1800 624 608



MemberAndFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au



www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families



@DefenceMemberandFamilySupport



@dmfs_australia



www.forcenet.gov.au