



Supporting the Families of Veterans: Understanding the Impact of Veterans' Mental Health on their Families, Partners and Children (part 2)

This document highlights some additional resources related to this topic.

Support for veterans and families

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling

Open Arms is a nationally accredited mental health service that provides 24-hour free and confidential counselling and support. Any Australian Defence Force (ADF) member with on day full-time service can access support through Open Arms, as can their partners and children. Open Arms services include:

- counselling for individuals, couples and families
- case management for clients with more complex needs
- group programs to develop skills and enhance support
- Community and Peer Advisors
- after-hours telephone counselling
- suicide prevention training
- mental health literacy and awareness training
- information, education and self-help resources, and
- referrals to other services or specialist treatment programs, as needed.

Support for:

- Partners - www.openarms.gov.au/who-we-help/partners
- Children of veterans - www.openarms.gov.au/who-we-help/children-veterans
- Parents of veterans - www.openarms.gov.au/who-we-help/parents-veterans

Further information is available by calling 1800 011 046 or at: openarms.gov.au/get-support

Open Arms Community and Peer Program

The Open Arms Community and Peer Program involves lived-experience peers working collaboratively with local veterans, family supports, community organisations and mental health clinicians. The Community and Peer Advisors provide an avenue for interpersonal connection, support and early engagement, and a bridge to clinical services for those unlikely to seek help.

Further information is available at: openarms.gov.au/get-support/community-and-peer-program

Kookaburra Kids

The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation supports kids living in families affected by mental illness. It provides recreational, educational camps and other activities. The aim is to give kids a break in a fun, positive and safe environment. Kookaburra Kids provides age-appropriate mental health education focusing on coping skills and resilience. It helps children bond with peers who are facing similar challenges.

www.kookaburrakids.org.au/

Defence Community Organisation

The Defence Community Organisation provides a range of resources for members who are thinking about, planning for, or transitioning from the ADF, and their families.

The *ADF Member and Family Transition Guide – A Practical Manual to Transitioning* contains detailed information on the transition process for ADF members. The Guide includes information on support services and administrative requirements. It includes checklists to help them navigate the transition process.

For further information and resources: www.defence.gov.au/DCO/Transition/Default.asp

Additional Family Support for veterans and their families

Additional family support is available to veterans who have returned from recent conflicts overseas and their families, including certain widowed partners of veterans. To receive this additional support eligibility requirements must be met. Further information can be found at: [Factsheet – Family Support Package for Veterans and their Families](#) or [Family Support for Widow\(er\)s](#).

Ex-Service Organisations

Returned Services League (RSL)

The RSL helps veterans and their families by offering care, financial assistance and advocacy, along with commemorative services. RSLs are available in each state and territory. Further information is available at: <http://rslnational.org/>

Mates4Mates

Mates4Mates supports current and ex-serving ADF members, and their families, who are wounded, injured or ill as a result of their service.

Mates4Mates is a national organisation with Family Recovery Centres in Brisbane, Townsville and Hobart, and outreach services in regional areas across Australia.

Mates4Mates provides support to our Mates and their immediate family members through five core service streams:

- Physical Rehabilitation and Wellbeing Services
- Psychological Services
- Employment and Education Support Services
- Rehabilitation Adventure Challenges
- Social Connection Activities

Phone: 1800 838 777

Further information is available at: <https://mates4mates.org/>

Soldier On Australia

Soldier On services assists:

- Those who have been adversely impacted as a result of service to their nation in a national security capacity
- Those with a family member who has been adversely impacted as a result of service to their nation in a national security capacity.

NB: Impact may be on mental health, wellbeing, physical health, family bonds, and is not limited to a diagnosed mental illness such as PTSD.

- And who fall into one of the below categories:
 - Those who have served in the ADF for any time period since 1990
 - Those who have served in a national security capacity for any time period since 1990. This includes, but is not limited to, those in the Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 - Regional or State Based emergency service personnel who were seconded in a national security capacity
 - Immediate family members of the above including spouses, children, stepchildren and parents who are, or were, living as a family unit including those in same-sex relationships
 - Ex-spouses of a serving or ex-serving member within 5 years of relationship breakdown, or with dependent children from the relationship

Soldier On staff work side by side with individuals and families, to strengthen resilience and develop meaningful connections with family members, mates, and the local community through a diverse range of health and wellbeing services, employment opportunities, learning and education programs, and participation in community, social, and sporting activities.

Soldier On has centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, as well as offices in Adelaide, Albury, Brisbane, Newcastle and Perth.

Phone: 1300 620 380

Further information is available at: <https://soldieron.org.au/>

Young Diggers

Young Diggers provides a variety of free support services and programs to help serving and ex-serving personnel of the ADF, their dependents and direct family members.

Young Diggers can assist veterans with accessing counselling services, tools and information on overcoming the difficulties of serving in the ADF, including military to civilian transition, sexual harassment and disorders like PTSD.

Phone: 07 3881 3748

Further information is available at: <https://youngdiggers.com.au/>

Group Programs

Open Arms Group Programs

Open Arms offers a variety of evidence based group treatment programs and educational workshops. These groups are free to Open Arms clients and are delivered nationally to small groups face-to-face, led by highly skilled facilitators with military awareness. The Open Arms treatment group programs are designed to be effectively incorporated into one-on-one counselling treatment plans.

Open Arms has recently redeveloped four group programs: Recovering from Trauma, Doing Anger Differently, Managing Pain and Understanding Anxiety (described below). These programs now include access to online information that supports participants to practice skills at their own pace and allows them to show their partners and family members what they have learnt in the comfort of their own home.

For further information please visit: [Open Arms/Group Programs](#)

Stepping Out

The *Stepping Out group program* through Open Arms is a 2-day program developed for ADF members and their partners who are about to, or have recently transitioned from the military. *Stepping Out* helps participants to examine their transition process and what it means to go from military life to civilian life as an individual and as a family – both in practical and emotional terms.

Building Better Relationships

The *Building Better Relationships* program can help participants rediscover what's important in their relationship, and rebuild a relationship with their partner. Topics include:

- Creating shared meaning through values and rituals of connection
- Understanding emotions behind your partner's life dreams
- Managing conflict positively, and
- Adopting a positive perspective.

Parenting Programs

Parenting Programs are tailored to the needs of attending veteran families. These programs help to build strong and positive relationships between parents and their children.

Relaxation and Stress Management

Relaxation and stress management programs provide practical skills that can be used in everyday life to de-stress. The program is designed to introduce participants to mindfulness, which is a practice to shift focus from 'what has happened in the past' and 'what may happen in the future' to 'what is happening right now'.

Recovering from Trauma

The *Recovering from Trauma* program helps participants to understand trauma, and teaches them strategies and skills to help manage its impact on them and their family. The program will help participants understand:

- Trauma and impacts on them and their loved ones

- The link between heightened physical responses and trauma, and develop skills to identify and reduce physical responses
- The role of avoidance in maintaining traumatic stress, and develop a strategy to safely confront feared and avoided situations
- Where thoughts, values and beliefs originate, how they are influenced by trauma, and develop strategies for modifying unhelpful thinking, and

The impact of trauma on relationships and lifestyle, and develop skills to improve relationships and meet healthy lifestyle goals.

Doing Anger Differently

Doing Anger Differently is an education and skills-based group program to help participants understand anger and aggression. It provides strategies to manage thoughts and feelings which may contribute to anger and to prevent aggressive behaviors. This program will help participants understand:

- How problematic anger develops and is maintained
- The particular warning signs of anger
- The link between heightened physical responses and anger, and develop skills to reduce physical responses
- Where thoughts, values and beliefs originate, and how they influence anger, and how to deal with unhelpful thinking
- The impact of anger on relationships and develop skills to communicate more effectively and improve relationships, and
- Situations that provoke anger and how to prevent aggressive behaviours.

Managing Pain

The *Managing Pain* program is designed to help participants learn about effective pain management strategies. The program will help participants learn about:

- Chronic pain and understand that they are not alone in their struggle with pain
- The link between the physical and psychological aspects of pain
- The relationship between thoughts and pain and introduce them to strategies to challenge/change their thoughts
- The relationship between their behaviour and pain, and introduce them to strategies to change what, and how, they are doing things
- The importance of lifestyle factors in their pain management, and introduce strategies for managing these lifestyle factors, and
- Managing their pain beyond the program, with the help of a personally developed Pain Plan.

Understanding Anxiety

The *Understanding Anxiety* program teaches strategies and skills for managing anxiety. The program will help participants understand:

- That they are not alone in their struggle with anxiety

- The impact of military training and experiences on anxiety
- The impact of their thoughts on anxiety, and introduce them to strategies that challenge/change their thoughts
- Their behaviour on anxiety, and introduce them to strategies to change what, and how they are doing things
- A range of lifestyle factors for managing their anxiety, and introduce strategies for managing these lifestyle factors, and
- That they are equipped to manage anxiety beyond the program, with the help of a personally developed Relapse Prevention Plan.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

MHFA training courses teach people simple, practical first aid skills for helping a family member, friend, co-worker or other person who is experiencing mental health problems. *MHFA* is free for anyone who is concerned about family, friends or colleagues in the veteran community.

Operation Life: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

ASIST workshops raise awareness of suicide prevention and prepare individuals to work with people at risk of suicide to increase their immediate safety and to get further help. ASIST workshops are free for anyone who is concerned about family, friends or colleagues in the veteran community. The Operation Life suite of services also includes the safeTALK half-day awareness training, the Operation Life website, and associated mobile App (refer to 'Other related online resources').

Online resources and support for veterans and families

At Ease

At Ease can help veterans, ADF personnel and family members identify the symptoms of poor mental health, find self-help tools and advice, access professional support and learn about treatment options. Families can find advice on how to keep their family healthy while caring for someone with a mental health condition.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/

Coping with Trauma series

- *Supporting your parent: Coping with trauma in a military family*
www.openarms.gov.au/sites/default/files/supporting_your_partner.pdf
- *Helping your children: Coping with trauma in a military family*
www.openarms.gov.au/sites/default/files/helping_your_children.pdf
- *When your parent is having problems: Coping with trauma in a military family* (For young people aged 13–17 years)
www.openarms.gov.au/sites/default/files/when_your_parent_is_having_problems.pdf

- *What's happening to my family? Coping with trauma in a military family* (For children aged 9–12 years)
www.openarms.gov.au/sites/default/files/whats_happening_to_my_family.pdf
- *Supporting your son or daughter: Coping with trauma in a military family*
www.openarms.gov.au/sites/default/files/supporting_your_son_or_daughter.pdf

Beyond the Call

Sayer-Jones, Moya (2009). *Beyond the Call: Stories from Veterans and their families*. Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra. Australia.

A book of stories that celebrates the experiences and resilience of veterans with mental health and/or substance abuse issues, and the way in which their partners and families have supported them. This collection of stories seeks to increase awareness of the breadth of experience of Australia's veteran community and to increase understanding of the challenges faced by veterans and their families every day.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/resources/beyond-the-call-stories/

DVA Factsheets

Education Support

The Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS) provide special assistance, student support services, guidance and counselling for eligible children to help them achieve their full potential in full-time education or career training.

www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-mrc47-education-schemes

Support for Carers

Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issues or who are frail aged. Caring may include physical and personal care and assistance such as dressing, lifting, showering, feeding or providing transport. Carers provide emotional, social or financial support.

www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/home-and-care/aged-and-community-care/carers

High Res (High Resilience)

The High Res resilience suite includes a website and app to help serving and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families manage stress and build resilience.

highres.dva.gov.au

The Right Mix

The Right Mix website helps serving and ex-serving ADF members better manage their alcohol consumption with information, strategies and online tools.

therightmix.gov.au

Operation Life

The Operation Life website targets people experiencing suicidal thoughts or people wanting to learn how to mitigate suicide. The website is complemented by a mobile app that provides

safety planning capability and cognitive behavioural therapy to reshape their thoughts. It also supports quick access to services and their clinical support team – see below

at-ease.dva.gov.au/suicideprevention

The Clinician's Guide is available for Android or iOS users.

More information about the app is available at: at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans

ON TRACK with the Right Mix app

The ON TRACK app helps serving and ex-serving ADF members keep track of their alcohol consumption in real time and find out what it is costing them financially and physically.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/on-track-app

PTSD Coach Australia app

The PTSD Coach Australia app can help serving and ex-serving ADF members learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur following exposure to trauma. It is free to download from the App Store and Google Play.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/ptsd-coach

Phoenix Australia – Resources

- Helping children and teenagers
www.phoenixaustralia.org/recovery/helping-children-and-teens/
- Factsheets and Booklets for people affected by trauma, their families and friends
www.phoenixaustralia.org/recovery/fact-sheets-and-booklets/

Treatment services for veterans

DVA Health Cards

DVA issues health cards to veterans, their war widow(er)s and dependants to ensure they have access to health and other care services.

Further information is available at: www.dva.gov.au/providers/dva-health-cards

Non-Liability Health Care

DVA can pay for treatment for mental health conditions without the need for the conditions to be accepted as related to service. This is known as non-liability health care (NLHC) and anyone who has served at least one day in the full-time ADF or reservists with certain service experience can access free treatment for any mental health condition. Veterans only need to call DVA on free call 1800 555 254 or email nlhc@dva.gov.au to apply.

Further information is available at: dva.gov.au/factsheet

Veteran Health Check

Veteran Health Checks can help veterans and their GPs identify ways to optimise their physical and mental health and wellbeing after transition from the ADF to civilian life. One-off Veteran Health Checks are available for all former members of both the permanent and

reserve forces. They are accessible at any time and veterans can access these even if they are not a DVA client, using their Medicare card (there is a Medicare rebate for this). Additionally, if members leave the ADF from 1 July 2019, they can gain access to fully-funded Veteran Health Checks every year for five years after transition. Annual Veteran Health Checks are accessible with a DVA Veteran card.

Further information is available at: at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals

DVA Rehabilitation

Complementary to primary and allied health treatment, DVA provides whole-of-person rehabilitation to eligible veterans. Rehabilitation can assist individuals coordinate their medical treatment, assist individuals maximise their independent functioning and quality of life, and return to work when they are ready. Veterans may be eligible for rehabilitation assistance through DVA if they are incapacitated for service or work, or have an impairment, as a result of a service injury or disease.

Under a rehabilitation plan with psychosocial goals, veterans can access support to help address psychosocial challenges that may be impacting on their family, connections with others, resilience and overall quality of life.

Psychosocial activities under a rehabilitation plan may include:

- intervention counselling or self-management programs to support relationships with others, provide the veteran with strategies to build resilience, or manage and adapt to their health conditions more effectively;
- connecting the veteran with local community supports, services or programs; or
- supporting the veteran to participate in local activities and programs - this could include, undertaking time-limited short course education to assist them to better engage with their community, or where this participation may be a 'first step' achievement in their long term recovery.

The [Psychosocial Rehabilitation section of the CLIK Rehabilitation Policy Library](#) describes more about the assistance available.

Vocational rehabilitation is the managed process that provides an appropriate level of assistance, based on assessed needs, necessary to achieve a meaningful and sustainable employment outcome. The aim of a vocational rehabilitation program is to return a person to the workforce to at least the level of their pre-injury employment. Activities may include vocational assessment and guidance, assessments to determine what their employment options might be, work preparation activities, work trials, job seeking assistance, provision of workplace aids and appliances, and vocational retraining.

The [Vocational Rehabilitation section of the CLIK Rehabilitation Policy Library](#) describes more about the assistance available.

Further information about DVA rehabilitation is available on the DVA website via:

www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-mrc05-rehabilitation.

Alcohol and Other Substance Use Disorders – Community Based Treatment Services

DVA funds community-based alcohol and other substance use disorder treatment at over 20 locations across the country. These treatment services are available under the NLHC arrangements to anyone who has served at least one day in the full-time ADF or reservists with certain service experience.

Further information on this program can be found at: dva.gov.au/factsheet

A list of community-based treatment providers can be accessed via:

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals

Trauma Recovery Programs: Treatment for veterans and former serving members

DVA funds Trauma Recovery Programs – PTSD in hospitals across Australia. These programs are required to meet DVA's National Accreditation Standards for Trauma Recovery Programs – PTSD (2015). These standards provide a framework for ensuring that hospitals provide high quality evidenced based treatment for veterans and former serving members of the ADF who have PTSD.

The document available from the following web page provides a list of providers delivering Trauma Recovery Programs to veterans.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/client-resources/trauma-recovery-programs

Further information is available at: at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals

Referral pathways

Becoming a DVA service provider

DVA service providers agree to treat [DVA card-holders](#) for a wide range of conditions through a payment arrangement which means the veteran does not pay for those services. Further information on how to become a DVA service provider is available at:

- www.dva.gov.au/providers/becoming-dva-service-provider
- www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hip01-providers-how-become-dva-health-provider

Notes for providers

Notes for providers have been developed to provide information about the provision of services to entitled persons by providers for DVA White and Gold Card holders. Further information is available at: www.dva.gov.au/providers/notes-providers

Prior approval

Prior financial approval is required before providing certain medical and/or allied health services to eligible veterans. The criteria for whether prior approval is required differs for some types of health services. A request must be submitted before administering these services to be able to claim payment for the service. Further information is available at:

www.dva.gov.au/providers/services-requiring-prior-approval

Allied Health Professionals

Information for Allied Health Professionals is available at: www.dva.gov.au/providers/allied-health-professionals

Doctors

Information for Doctors is available at: www.dva.gov.au/providers/doctors

Dentists, dental specialists and dental prosthetists

Information for Dentists and Dental Specialists is available at:

www.dva.gov.au/providers/dentists-dental-specialists-and-dental-prosthetists

Pharmacists

Information for Pharmacists is available at: www.dva.gov.au/providers/pharmacists

Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre

The Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Approvals Centre (VAPAC) 24-hour RPBS prior approval free call number is [1800 552 580](tel:1800552580). More information is also available at:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/pharmacists>

Clinical support for health professionals

Centenary of Anzac Centre – Practitioner Support Service

The Practitioner Support Service aims to ensure better treatments and improved lives for Australia's veterans and military personnel and their families. The Practitioner Support Service includes a free, confidential consultation service for practitioners which can be accessed nationwide via email, telephone or online. Practitioners and organisations can seek expert advice on a range of issues relating to veteran mental health.

anzaccentre.org.au/practitioner-support-service/

- Phone: **1800 838 777**
- Online: anzaccentre.org.au/practitioner-support-service/consultation-and-advice/enquiry/

Online resources for health professionals

Australian PTSD Guidelines

The *Australian Guidelines for the Treatment of Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* provide information about the most effective treatments for PTSD. The Guidelines aim to support high quality treatment of people with PTSD by providing a framework of best practice around which to structure treatment.

www.phoenixaustralia.org/resources/ptsd-guidelines

At Ease Professional website

DVA's platform for mental health professionals, At Ease is a one-stop shop for information, professional development opportunities, clinical resources, referral options, educational resources and the latest in international research.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals

Health professionals can access clinical tools and information for treating veterans with PTSD.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/assessment-and-treatment/ptsd

Health professionals can also access clinical tools and information for treating veterans presenting with comorbid disorders and complex needs.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/assessment-and-treatment/complex-cases

PTSD-Psychological Interventions Program (eLearning)

PTSD – Psychological Interventions Program helps providers better understand the preferred treatments for PTSD, through a combination of case studies, active learning activities and video demonstrations. The full program will take 4-6 hours to complete, but providers have the ability to tailor their experience, focusing on aspects that they are most interested in. Upon successful completion, providers will be able to print a certificate that can be used to claim Professional Development Hours.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/professional-development

Case Formulation (eLearning)

Case Formulation assists front line therapists to make better sense of complex presentations and to design and plan treatment in collaboration with their patient. Clinicians will be able to identify and focus on the presenting problems that are likely to have the most impact on recovery and help set priorities for treatment. The program is free and can be used for continuous professional development.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/professional-development

Understanding the Military Experience

This two-hour program helps providers better understand the context in which their veteran patients are presenting and the long-term effects that military service can have on the mental health and wellbeing of veterans of all ages. Understanding the Military Experience demonstrates that it is not only combat exposure that has the potential to affect veterans for the rest of their lives, but that military training and culture continues to shape their behaviour years after they leave the military.

at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/professional-development

Evidence Compass

The Evidence Compass is a repository for literature reviews on issues of importance to the veteran community. The Evidence Compass is designed to be used by researchers, policy-makers, and the broader community. The literature reviews available on this website use the Rapid Evidence Assessment methodology.

www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/evidence-compass

Australian Society for Psychological Medicine

The Australian Society for Psychological Medicine, offers training in psychological medicine skills for GPs.

aspm.org.au

Centenary of Anzac Centre – Treatment Research Collaboration

The Centenary of Anzac Centre comprises a Treatment Research Collaboration which aims to improve mental health outcomes in veterans by conducting and facilitating innovative clinical intervention research into PTSD and other complex military mental health issues. It will improve understanding of these problems and test innovative psychological, social, and neurobiological treatments and delivery methods. It will include a particular focus on early intervention to reduce the cumulative impact of PTSD and related disorders. The Centenary of Anzac Centre is a Phoenix Australia initiative.

anzaccentre.org.au/treatment-research-collaboration/

Phoenix Australia – Training Programs

[View and register](#) for upcoming training programs offered by Phoenix Australia and delivered by trauma experts.

Medication in PTSD

[View this video](#) produced by Phoenix Australia about medication recommendations for PTSD.

PTSD checklist

[This PTSD checklist](#) is produced by the US Department of Veterans Affairs - National Centre for PTSD.

Life Events Checklist

[The Life Events Checklist](#) for DSM-5 (LEC-5) is a self-report measure designed to screen for potentially traumatic events in a respondent's lifetime. It has been produced by the US Department of Veterans Affairs - National Centre for PTSD.

Patient Health Questionnaire Screeners

[The Patient Health Questionnaire](#) (PHQ) and GAD-7 offer clinicians concise, self-administered screening and diagnostic tools for mental health disorders, which have been field-tested in office practice.

DVA Provider News

Subscribe to [DVA Provider News](#) to receive the latest updates and information for working with DVA patients and clients.

Veteran specific research

LASER-Resilience Study

The Longitudinal ADF Study Evaluating Resilience (LASER-Resilience) is investigating psychological and behavioural attributes that contribute to psychological resilience in the ADF by studying new members as they adjust and progress in their military career. The results of this study will inform resilience training programs, such as BattleSMART, and assist in building a stronger and more resilient ADF.

<http://www.defence.gov.au/health/dmh/researchsurveillanceplan.asp>

Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme

The Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme is the most comprehensive study undertaken in Australia that examines the impact of military service on the mental, physical and social health of:

- serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members including those who have been deployed in contemporary conflicts; and
- their families.

The research builds on the findings of the world-leading research conducted with current serving members of the ADF in the 2010 Military Health Outcomes Program. The Programme comprises three studies: the Mental Health and Wellbeing Transition Study (five reports and two papers), Impact of Combat Study and the Family Wellbeing Study, each comprising one publication. The following reports are available on the DVA and Defence website:

[*Mental Health Prevalence*](#), which explores the prevalence of mental disorders among ADF members who have transitioned from Regular ADF service between 2010 and 2014; and examines self-reported mental health status of Transitioned ADF and the 2015 Regular ADF.

[*Pathways to Care*](#), which assesses pathways to care for Transitioned ADF and the 2015 Regular ADF, including those with a probable 30-day mental disorder.

[*Physical Health Status*](#), which examines the physical health status of Transitioned ADF and the 2015 Regular ADF.

[*Family Wellbeing Study*](#), which investigates the impact of ADF service on the health and wellbeing of the families of Transitioned ADF and the 2015 Regular ADF.

[*Technology Use and Wellbeing*](#), which investigates technology and its utility for health and mental health programmes including implications for future health service delivery.

[*Mental Health Changes Over Time: a Longitudinal Perspective*](#), which conducts predictive modelling of the trajectory of mental health symptoms/disorder of Transitioned ADF and the 2015 Regular ADF, removing the need to rely on estimated rates.

[*Impact of Combat Study*](#), which follows up on the mental, physical and neurocognitive health and wellbeing of participants who deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations between 2010 and 2012.

The report listed below is still to be released:

Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme Key Findings, which summarises the key findings of the Programme.

Further information is available at: dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/ and www.defence.gov.au/health/dmh/researchsurveillanceplan.asp

National suicide monitoring of serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel: 2018 update

The Government has released analysis on the incidence of suicide among serving and ex-serving ADF personnel from 2001–2016. This report can be found on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website. The Government will continue to maintain a record of ex-serving ADF member suicide deaths and will annually update incidence rates of suicide among serving and ex-serving ADF members as new cause of death data becomes available.

www.aihw.gov.au/reports/veterans

The previous report *Incidence of suicide in serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel: detailed analysis 2001-2015* is available at:

www.aihw.gov.au/reports/veterans/incidence-of-suicide-in-adf-personnel-2001-2015/

Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation

www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/research/veteranhealth/

Veteran Reintegration Study: Transition from Service to Civilian Life

www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/project/service-to-civilian/

The purpose of the Veteran Mental Health Initiative is to build a strong foundation of mental health research among the contemporary veteran cohort which will generate evidence to guide developments in procedures and practices to improve the wellbeing of the veteran and ex-serving community. This research project, supported by RSL Queensland, is focused on the transition process from service to civilian life. The Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation are specifically investigating cultural reintegration in terms of moving from military system and culture to a civilian culture and the psychological adjustment process that goes with that.

Veteran Mental Health Initiative: The PTSD Initiative

www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/McLeay-et-al-2017.pdf

The Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation in partnership with RSL Queensland conducted innovative medical research into the physical and psychological toll of PTSD on Vietnam veterans. *The PTSD Initiative: Vietnam Veteran Study* has been published in the Medical Journal of Australia and underpins a national GP Education Program for healthcare professionals, free and available 24/7 at www.gallipoliresearch.com.au/project/ptsd-education-for-gps-and-healthcare-professionals/

Australian Gulf War Veterans' Health Study – Follow Up Health Study (2015)

Authors: Sim, M., Clarke, D., Forbes, A., Glass, D., Gwini, S., Ikin, J., Kelsall, H., McKenzie, D., Wright, B., McFarlane, A., Creamer, M., Horsley, K.

The Australian Gulf War Veterans' Health Follow Up Study was a longitudinal cohort study that built upon the findings of the 2003 baseline study. As in the 2003 study, the 2015 Follow Up Study aimed to examine the physical, psychological and social health and military-related

exposures of ADF veterans who served in the Gulf War as compared to ADF personnel who had not served in the Gulf War. All 1,456 participants of the baseline study were eligible to participate, and 715 Gulf War veterans participated in the Follow Up Study.

The Follow Up Study found Gulf War veterans remained at an increased risk for PTSD, 12-month alcohol disorder and general psychological distress when compared to the comparison group. The difference in risk for these factors between Gulf War veterans and the comparison group widened since the baseline study. The risk of major depression was not significantly different between study groups and both groups were found to be equally resilient.

The published study is available from: www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/research-and-development/health-studies/australian-gulf-war-veterans-follow

Mothers in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) Study (2014)

Authors: Lawrence-Wood, E., Jones, L., Hodson, S., Crompvoets, S., McFarlane, A., Neuhaus, S.

The MEAO Study examined the impacts of deployment on female veterans with dependent children. Using a mixed methods design, the study collected standardised self-reported data and qualitative information from participants. The main finding of the study indicated that while the experience of deployment is particularly challenging for female veterans with dependent children, most participants viewed their deployment as a positive and important element of their service. The resilience, creativity and agency of female veterans was key to successfully navigating the demands of motherhood and deployment.

The published study is available from: www.dva.gov.au/about-dva/publications/research-and-studies/health-research-publications/mothers-middle-east-area

Vietnam Veterans' Family Study (2014)

The Vietnam Veterans' Family Study was conducted by a research panel commissioned by DVA. The study comprised a number of complimentary research projects that aimed to determine the effect, if any, that active Vietnam service had on the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the sons and daughters of Australian Vietnam veterans. The study cohort comprised 27,000 participants including Vietnam veterans, their partners and children and a control group of veterans (and their children and partners) who served in the ADF during the Vietnam War era, but were not deployed to Vietnam. The study found the majority of children of Vietnam veterans were in good health. However, children of Vietnam veterans (as compared to children of veterans who were not deployed to Vietnam) were more likely to experience depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidal thoughts and planning, skin conditions, migraines and sleep disturbances.

The published study is available from: www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/vietnam-veterans-family-study

Rwanda Deployment Health Study (2014)

Authors: Runge, C., Kanesarajah, J., Loos, C., Waller, M., Nasveld, P.

The study was commissioned by DVA and conducted by the Centre for Australian Military and Veterans' Health. The aim of the study was to examine the health and compensation history and outcomes of veterans of Rwanda deployments (Operation TAMAR (Troops and Medical Aid

Rwanda)). The study sample included 680 veterans of Operation TAMAR. Major findings included: half of participating veterans had an accepted compensation claim, with 31% having a claim or treatment for PTSD; medical personnel had fewer compensation claims and medical presentations than rifle company and support personnel; claims were mainly lodged around the time of discharge not at incident; the majority accepted 11-15 years after the deployment.

The published study is available from: www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/rwanda-deployment-health-study

Peacekeepers' Health Study (2013)

Authors: Hawthorne, G., Korn, S., Creamer, M.

The Peacekeepers' Health Study examined the long-term effects on mental health status, health service use and quality of life of peacekeeping or peacemaking deployments among Australian veterans. The study involved over 1,000 participants from seven United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions between 1989 and 2002, who had transitioned out of full-time service in the Australian Defence Force. Major findings included: most peacekeepers reported they were in good, very good or excellent health, though 30% of participants had at least one diagnosable mental health condition.

The published study is available from: www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/peacekeepers-health-study

Timor-Leste Family Study (2012)

Authors: McGuire, A., Runge, C., Cosgrove, L., Bredhauer, K., Anderson, R., Waller, M., Kanesarajah, J., Dobson, A., Nasveld, P.

The Timor-Leste Family Study was conducted by The University of Queensland, Centre for Military and Veterans' Health and funded by DVA. The study aimed to determine the physical, mental and social health impacts and associated risk and protective factors of deployment to Timor-Leste on the families of service members. The study involved 4,186 participants comprising veterans deployed to Timor-Leste between 1999 - 2010 and their partners as well as a control group of veterans who were not deployed to Timor-Leste (and their partners).

The study found no statistically significant differences were found between the physical, mental or family health of family members of people deployed to Timor-Leste when compared with comparison group family members.

The published study is available from: www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/timor-leste-family-study

Mental Health in the Australian Defence Force – 2010 ADF Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study (2010)

Authors: McFarlane, A.C., Hodson, S.E., Van Hooff, M., Davies, C.

The ADF Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study was conducted by a collaborative research team comprising representatives from the Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies at the University of Adelaide, the Joint Health Command of the ADF and the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health at the University of Melbourne.

The study examined the prevalence rates of the most common mental disorders, the optimal cut-offs for relevant mental health measures, and the impact of occupational stressors. ADF prevalence rates were compared to an Australian sample matched for age, sex and employment. Nearly 49% of ADF current serving members participated in the study between April 2010 and January 2011.

Prevalence of mental disorders was similar to the Australian community sample, but profiles of specific disorders in the ADF varied. The study identified PTSD as the most prevalent anxiety disorder, with ADF males experiencing PTSD at a significantly higher rate than the general community. ADF males also experienced higher rates of affective disorders than the control sample and both ADF males and females experienced 12-month depressive episodes at higher rates than the general community. Alcohol disorders were significantly lower in ADF personnel than the control sample in the 12 months preceding the study.

The published study is available from: www.defence.gov.au/Health/DMH/Docs/MHPWSReport-FullReport.pdf

Australian Gulf War Veterans' Health Study (2003)

Authors: Sim, M., Abramson, M., Forbes, A., Glass, D., Ikin, J., Ittak, P., Kelsall, H., Leder, K., McKenzie, D., McNeil, J., Creamer, M., Fritschi, L.

The Australian Gulf War Veterans' Health Study investigated whether Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel who served in the Gulf War (1990 – 91) experienced higher rates of adverse physical and psychological health effects than ADF personnel who had not served in the Gulf War. The study was commissioned by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and was conducted by a collaborative medical research team from the Department of Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine at Monash University, Health Services Australia Ltd, the University of Western Australia and The Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health at the University of Melbourne. The study was the first comprehensive health study of a group of Australian war veterans involved in a single theatre of war.

Of the 1,873 Australian Gulf War veterans, 1,456 took part in the study, comprising 80.5% of the target population. The major finding of the study was that Gulf War veterans experienced higher rates of psychological disorders than the control group, in the time since the Gulf War. Gulf War veterans were found to be at significantly increased risk for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) though other anxiety disorders, depression and substance use disorders were also common among the cohort.

The published study is available from: www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/gulf-war-veterans-health-study

Resources

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Forbes D, Van Hooff M, Lawrence-Wood E, et al. Pathways to Care, Mental Health and Wellbeing Transition Study. Canberra: The Department of Defence and The Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2018.

Inquiry into transition from the Australian Defence Force. 2019. Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.
www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/TransitionfromtheADF/Report

Jensen, D. (2017). *The Good News about PTSD*. Ocean Reeve Publishing.

Meyer E and Wynn G. The importance of US military cultural competence. In: Roberts L and Warner C, eds. *Military and Veteran Mental Health*. New York: Springer, 2018.

Reger M, Etherage J, Reger J and Gahm G. Civilian psychologists in an Army culture: the ethical challenge of cultural competence. *Military Psychology*. 2008; 20: 21-35.

Transition Taskforce – *Improving the transition experience* (2018). Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs and Department of Defence. Published by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/transition-taskforce

APPENDIX A

Quick reference: Referral options and programs provided through the DVA for eligible patients

Need	Service/Resource	Self-guided Y/N	Clinician-guided Y/N	Description	Further information
1. General mental health and counselling/therapy	Refer to Open Arms (formerly Veterans and Veterans' Families Counselling Service, VVCS) 24 hour counselling line	N	Y	Free individual counselling, mental health support and group programs for current and former Australian Defence Force personnel and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.openarms.gov.au/ Phone: 1800 011 046 (24 hrs) • www.dva.gov.au/providers • www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing (go to 'medical conditions') • www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hsv109-non-liability-health-care
	Refer to DVA approved psychologists/social workers/OTs or Open Arms. DVA White Card now incorporates treatment of any mental health condition under Non-Liability Health Care arrangements	N	Y	Private counselling (free) for veterans with DVA gold/white cards. Referral from GP or psychiatrist required	
2. In-patient programs	DVA-approved in-patient treatment, including PTSD programs	N	Y	Acute or extended private psychiatric care and outpatient programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.dva.gov.au/providers/hospitals-and-day-procedure-centres • www.at-ease.dva.gov.au ('assessment and treatment')
3. Substance abuse	Referral to provider listed on DVA Alcohol and Drug provider panel matrix	N	Y	Specialist alcohol and other substance treatment and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/client-resources/alcohol-and-other-substance-treatment-providers-panel (follow link from 'professionals' tab) • www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hsv140-alcohol-and-other-substance-treatment-services
	Fact Sheet HSV140 on alcohol and other substance treatment services	Y	N	Information on services and treatment available	
4. In-home care	DVA Community nursing	N	Y	Clinical, personal care interventions for veterans living in their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nursing@dva.gov.au • www.dva.gov.au/providers/community-nursing Phone: 1800 636 428

Quick reference: Referral options and programs provided through the DVA for eligible patients continued . . .

Need	Service/Resource	Self-guided Y/N	Clinician-guided Y/N	Description	Further information
5. Men's health	Men's health peer education program	N	N	Raises awareness about men's health issues; encourages shared responsibility for this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/wellbeing/mens-health-peer-education
	Heart Health	N	N	A practical exercise, nutrition, and lifestyle management program offered over 52 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/wellbeing/heart-health-programme
6. Rehabilitation appliances	Rehabilitation Appliances Program	N	N	Provision of aids and appliances to facilitate independence and self-reliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hip72-providers-rehabilitation-appliances-program
7. Peer support	Open Arms Community and Peer Program	Y	N	Lived-experience Community and Peer Advisors provide an avenue for interpersonal connection, support and early engagement, and a bridge to clinical services for veterans unlikely to seek help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/community-and-peer-program Phone: 1800 011 046
	Soldier On Mates4Mates RSL and other ex-service organisations			Community organisations who provide support, social connections, advocacy, and practical assistance to veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.soldieron.org.au/ Phone: 1300 620 380 www.mates4mates.org/ www.rslnational.org/ www.vvfa.org.au/ www.vvaa.org.au/

Note: DVA is able to fund/provide transport for veterans to attend approved medical treatment.

See www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/home-and-care/travel-treatment

APPENDIX B

Quick reference: Guide to resources for DVA providers

Resource	Details	Link/further information
1. Provider Line	Provider enquiry contact email and phone number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au Phone: 1800 550 457 • www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals
2. Veteran Health Check	Screening tool for GPs to help identify physical and mental health issues in former military personnel. MBS items 701, 703, 705, 707	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/assessment-treatment/veteran-health-check
3. Prior financial approval	<p>Approval can be requested for treatment that is not provided through DVA contractual arrangements. Prior approval is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the service being provided has NOT been assigned an item number under the Medicare Schedule of benefits • When the fee to be charged for the service being provided is ABOVE the fee stated in the relevant DVA Schedule of Fees • When the service being claimed is highlighted with shading in the relevant Schedule of Fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.dva.gov.au/providers/services-requiring-prior-approval
4. Veterans' MATES program	Provides information for health professionals to assist their patients in managing their medical conditions and medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.dva.gov.au/providers/provider-programs
5. Pharmaceutical advice: Veterans Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre	24/7 advice from expert pharmacists relating to medications, supplements, wound care, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.dva.gov.au/providers/dva-provider-news/veterans-affairs-pharmaceutical-advisory-centre-vapac Phone: 1800 552 580
6. Professional development resources offered through DVA to improve your understanding of the veteran experience and common mental health issues	<p>eLearning</p> <p>Courses/training programs</p> <p>Webinars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.dva.gov.au/providers/online-training-health-providers • www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/professional-development • www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/professional-development/dva-webinars
7. Professional development resources offered through Phoenix Australia and the Centenary of ANZAC Centre	<p>Resources/training</p> <p>Professional consultation and advice, including <u>free</u> consultations through Phoenix/Anzac Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.phoenixaustralia.org/for-practitioners/ • www.anzaccentre.org.au/practitioner-support-service/

APPENDIX C

Quick reference: Self-help resources for DVA/ex-military patients

(Note that these programs are evidence-based, however not all are designed/funded by DVA or targeted to a veteran population)

Need	Service/Resource	Veteran specific?	Description	Further information
1. General on-line resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Res 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online “tools” to help veterans with issues relating to sleep, relaxation, social connections, anger, and negative thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://highres.dva.gov.au/highres/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health mental health resources 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to apps, websites, forums for a wide variety of mental health and social problems/issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.headtohealth.gov.au
2. Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Res 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above for ‘High Res’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://highres.dva.gov.au/highres/#!/tools/healthy-sleeping
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health mental health resources 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to apps, websites, forums for a wide variety of mental health and social problems/issues. Includes various apps on sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.headtohealth.gov.au/
3. PTSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PTSD Coach 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile app to help monitor and manage PTSD symptoms, in conjunction with psychological therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/resource-library/mobile-apps/ptsd-coach-australia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health mental health resources 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to apps, websites, forums for a wide variety of mental health and social problems/issues. Includes various apps relating to PTSD management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.headtohealth.gov.au
4. Depression/ anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Res ‘At Ease’ website 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Ease website provides information to help recognise the symptoms of poor mental health, provides self-help tools and advice, and helps veterans access professional support and learn about treatment options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://highres.dva.gov.au/highres/ www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health mental health resources 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to apps, websites, forums for a wide variety of mental health and social problems/issues. Includes various apps on depression, anxiety, and stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.headtohealth.gov.au/

Quick reference: Self-help resources for DVA/ex-military patients continued . . .

Need	Service/Resource	Veteran specific?	Description	Further information
5. Substance abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Right Mix 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tips, tools, and strategies to help manage alcohol use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.therightmix.gov.au/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health mental health resources 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to apps, websites, forums for a wide variety of mental health and social problems/issues. Includes various apps on problematic drug and alcohol use, and smoking cessation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.headtohealth.gov.au/
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-patient drug and alcohol treatment 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved community providers who provide treatment and programs for drug and alcohol problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.dva.gov.au/factsheet-hsv140-alcohol-and-other-substance-treatment-services
6. Chronic pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Health mental health resources 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to apps, websites, forums for a wide variety of mental health and social problems/issues. Includes various apps on managing pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.headtohealth.gov.au/
7. Suicide Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation Life 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises awareness about and is designed to help prevent suicide in the veteran community. Along with useful contacts and resources, this site offers learning tools, case study videos, and a quiz to reaffirm learning The app provides access to emergency and professional support and self-help tools to help users regain control, keep calm, and take action to stay safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/suicideprevention www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/resource-library/mobile-apps/op-life-app