

# Military Veterans Wellness Program

Est 2019.



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Community Partnerships & Engagement Unit

Toronto Police Service

Sept, 2023



## Military Veterans Wellness Program



*Nobody Fights Alone*

*Est. 2019*

The Military Veterans Wellness Program (MVWP) aims to help improve the well-being of Canadian military veterans by providing law enforcement members with a better understanding of the issues veterans may be facing and providing them with the tools to help.

This program was developed in partnership with the Toronto Police Service - Community Partnership & Engagement Unit (CPEU), Department of National Defence (DND), Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), The Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) and many others.

The MVWP training program is available free of charge on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) [www.cpkn.ca/en/course/military-veterans-wellness-program](http://www.cpkn.ca/en/course/military-veterans-wellness-program). It provides an understanding about military culture, challenges transitioning to civilian life and mental and physical barriers. It also addresses how a veteran may begin having suicidal ideations, or living in a situation where they do not have a home and experience crisis. The MVWP is a complete program, which provides de-escalation training specific to a veteran in crisis, information about the national veteran social services and the mechanism to make a timely referral.

The program will better equip law enforcement members to recognize veterans in crisis in their community and help them get access to the support they need. The projected outcomes for the program are to:

- Reduce the number of veterans living without a home and/or in mental health crisis;
- Provide dignity and prosperity for all our Canadian Armed Forces veterans;
- Increase public safety in communities across Canada;
- Provide additional resources for law enforcement members for their own well-being.

For more information, please contact the National Program Coordinators at [TPSMilitaryWellness@TorontoPolice.on.ca](mailto:TPSMilitaryWellness@TorontoPolice.on.ca) or visit <https://www.tps.ca/organizational-chart/communities-neighbourhoods-command/field-services/community-partnerships-engagement-unit/military-veterans-wellness-program/>

Thank You,

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## **Program Design**

The Military Veterans Wellness Program was developed from the experience of two front line police officers who are military veterans. With their unique understanding of the veteran culture, challenges, stigmas, and services available, they identified a gap in service delivery across Canada. Through their policing experiences and their network of veterans across Canada both officers felt too many of their colleagues were experiencing crisis, having suicidal ideations, and living without a home. The officers embarked on a community policing initiative to assist military veterans and improve public safety. Their goal was to protect the protectors. Several leaders within the Toronto Police Service, outside contacts, and organizations mentored the officers so they could create what is known today as the Military Veterans Wellness Program.

Defence Scientist Allyson Dale from Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA), National Defence, is a subject matter expert in organizational performance and assisted the team in guiding the development of the program structure and Performance Measurement Framework (PMF).



The Military Veterans Wellness Program PMF was created using DGMPRA's PMF development process, which is used for various defence organizations and is based on guidance from the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada and best practice in the private sector. The PMF includes a strategic framework, logic model, and key performance indicators, and is used for internal program management, monitoring program performance, and assessing program effectiveness.

The strategic framework is a high-level overview of the program strategy including a mission and vision statement, strategic objectives, and an ultimate outcome. The logic model is a one-page, visual depiction of how the program operates and achieves the intended outcomes. The elements of the logic model include the program inputs (e.g., resources, guiding documents); activities and outputs (i.e., what is produced by the program activities) for each key functional area; and direct, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes (i.e., the impact or results of the program activities and outputs). As you move from direct to ultimate outcomes in the logic model, the program has less influence over the outcomes as they are shared with other key partners and stakeholders. The key performance indicators are performance metrics based on the outcomes in the logic model (some metrics were also based on the outputs in the logic model). These performance metrics indicate whether the program is achieving the intended outcomes or results and are used for assessing program effectiveness.

## Strategic Framework

### Ultimate Outcome

Prosperity for all our Military Veterans  
Increased public safety for all communities across Canada

**Vision:** To be an integrated partner with Veterans Affairs Canada, Royal Canadian Legion, Operational Stress Injury Social Support, and law enforcement agencies across Canada to improve the support to Canadian Armed Forces Veterans while they are in crisis, living without a home and / or having suicidal ideations

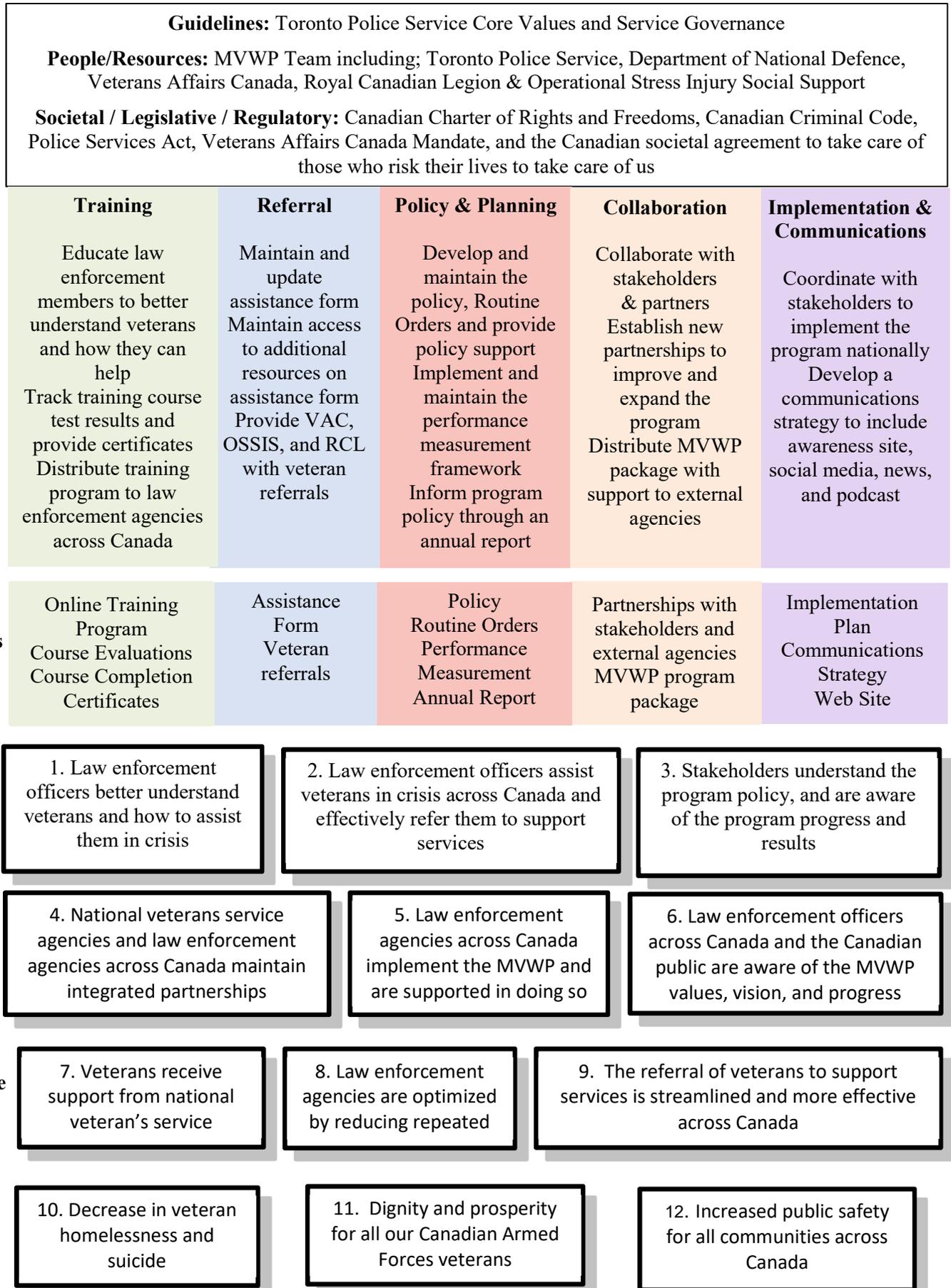
<u>Training</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>Policy &amp; Planning</u>	<u>Collaboration</u>	<u>Implementation &amp; Communications</u>
<p><b>Strategic Effect:</b> <i>Canadian law enforcement officers have the knowledge and skills necessary to de-escalate and help Veterans in crisis</i></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>Educate law enforcement officers to better understand veterans and how they can help</p> <p>Engage stakeholders and participants to evaluate the training program</p> <p>Integrate research with key partners into training material</p>	<p><b>Strategic Effect:</b> <i>Law enforcement officers have the capacity to refer veterans to veteran social service agencies</i></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>Streamline an effective referral process for all law enforcement agencies</p> <p>Optimize law enforcement services and resources by reducing repetitive calls for service involving Veterans</p>	<p><b>Strategic Effect:</b> <i>Effective Military Veterans Wellness Program policy and support system</i></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>Develop and maintain the program's policy, direction and performance measurement framework</p> <p>Inform program policy through an annual report</p> <p>Provide ongoing policy support and resources to external agencies</p>	<p><b>Strategic Effect:</b> <i>Integrated partnerships with national veterans service agencies, law enforcement agencies, and stakeholders</i></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>Collaborate with stakeholders and partners to streamline the referral of Veterans to support services</p> <p>Collaborate with external police agencies to support national program delivery</p> <p>Maintain and establish new partnerships to improve the training and assistance provided to Veterans</p>	<p><b>Strategic Effect:</b> <i>National awareness and implementation of the Military Veterans Wellness Program</i></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>Develop and deliver a national implementation plan with stakeholders</p> <p>Develop and deliver an internal and external communications strategy</p>

**Guidelines:** Toronto Police Service Core Values and Service Governance

**Mission:** To improve the well-being of veterans by providing law enforcement agencies with a better understanding of veterans, de-escalation training, and a streamlined referral process to national support services

**Societal / Legislative/ Regulatory:** Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Criminal Code of Canada, Police Services Act, and the Canadian societal agreement to take care of those who risk their lives for us.

## Logic Model





**MILITARY VETERANS  
WELLNESS PROGRAM**

Nobody Fights Alone

Est. 2019  
By Veterans and for Veterans



**Learning Outcomes:**

This training course is designed for Canadian law enforcement members and aims to provide a basic level of understanding about the Canadian Armed Forces, veteran challenges after military service, how a veteran can end up in crisis, specific de-escalation techniques, national veteran social services, and how to refer a veteran to these services.

*A special thanks to the many people and organizations that made the Military Veterans Wellness Program possible and for continuing to help Veterans. The Toronto Police Military Veterans Association is acknowledged for its shared vision, which helped inspire this program.*




This program was developed with several different partners and has been made available to all police services nation-wide. For a further understanding beyond what is covered in this training course, please follow any links and source material provided.

Law Enforcement members must ensure that they follow their own organization's rules, regulations, procedures and training.

Some of the content in this program may also be emotionally challenging for some viewers. If at any point you find this program difficult, please contact a supervisor, your Wellness Unit, or access the services listed at the end of this program.

Module One

**Life in the  
Canadian  
Armed  
Forces (CAF)**





### Military History

Canada has a proud military history and has been involved in many international operations.

As a law enforcement member, you may come across a Veteran who still has the memories, feelings and experiences from the military dating back as far as the Second World War.



### Military Training

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members serve their country and help make the world a safer place. They endure a taxing training regime and a challenging lifestyle. The military is not just a job it is a lifestyle, a member is fully immersed in the culture and committed to helping.



### Military Operations

Combat is a horrific experience for many, including CAF members. Military training can produce an enduring set of behaviours, mental condition, resiliency and reactions to unique, critical, and stressful situations known as "battle mind." Battle mind is a learned set of responses that may surface in intense environments and may be present with the individual to some degree, for the rest of their life.



### Module Two

## **VETERAN TRANSITION & COMMON STRUGGLES**



### Transitioning From the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

Each year, approximately 10,000 members are released from the CAF and transition into civilian life for a variety of reasons including family or personal issues, retirement, or a career change.

The majority of these individuals will make this adjustment successfully, gain employment, discover a new purpose and foster new relationships.

Not everyone who releases from the CAF does so willingly. Due to the dangerous nature of the military, approximately 1,000 members of the CAF are medically released each year.



### Veteran Challenges

Canada is home to approximately 649,300 CAF Veterans and many international Veterans. Veterans have experienced many things the general public has not. Not all those who serve in the military feel it is appropriate to identify themselves as being a Veteran when they compare their own service to others.

The most common struggles for Veterans and their families, within the first two years of being released from the CAF are:

- Career concerns
- Finding health support services
- Changing their identity
- Financial management burdens
- Relationship with their spouse
- Stress management
- Navigating government systems

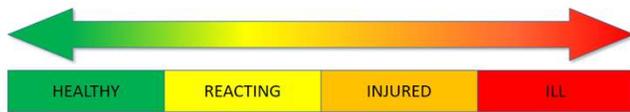


### Mental Health Challenges

The pressures and experiences of a military lifestyle can at times cause mental health challenges.

Approximately 20% of all Veterans report a mental health problem at one point in their life in relation to their military service. According to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the most common mental health challenges for a Veteran is depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder.

Sadly, far too few Veterans get the help they deserve. About half of the men and women who return home from deployments are in need of treatment for mental health conditions, but only about 50% of them actually seek treatment.



### Depression

Depression is a common, but potentially serious, psychiatric disorder which affects a person's feelings, thoughts and actions.

It is characterized by feeling helpless and hopelessness with a loss of interest in things the individual usually enjoys. Other symptoms include insomnia, fatigue, changes in appetite, weight loss, feelings of guilt, loss of energy, difficulty concentrating and suicidal thoughts.

A Veteran may experience depression because they miss the military community, their contributions and the importance they felt while serving the CAF.



### Anxiety

Anxiety is a common disorder in Veterans and for some, may be based around prior combat experiences, mission planning and the risks associated with international operations.

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by tension, worried thought and physical changes. Anxious people have recurring intrusive thoughts of worry and may avoid situations. The physical symptoms that may be associated with anxiety are sweating, trembling, a rapid heartbeat and dizziness.

The following video shows an American law enforcement officer who struggles with his own mental health challenges. He speaks about battle mind, depression, anxiety and questions if he has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).





### Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may occur after experiencing or witnessing a life threatening traumatic event.

It is characterized by intense, intrusive and disturbing thoughts related to their experience and can last for years.

Some experience nightmares and may feel sad, scared and irritable, or detached from other people including their family.

Military Veterans are more likely to have experienced multiple traumatic events and have higher rates of PTSD when compared to the general population. A person with PTSD may display symptoms in four areas; intrusive symptoms, avoidance symptoms, negative alterations in cognitions and mood and alterations in arousal.



### PTSD – Intrusive Symptoms

Intrusive memories of traumatic events can come back at any time, and can be triggered by everyday sensory cues such as smells, sounds, or sights.

These intrusive memories commonly cause emotional and/or physical reactions in a Veteran. A law enforcement member may feel the Veteran is distracted, defensive, and inattentive, which may occur because they are re-experiencing a traumatic memory involving some aspect of combat.



### PTSD- Avoidance Symptoms

Remembering a traumatic event can be so distressing for a person that they may try to avoid people, places, thoughts, and actions that trigger a reminder of the traumatic experience.

For example, a law enforcement member may observe that a Veteran resists getting into a holding cell or a law enforcement vehicle because it reminds them of the confined space they were in during a vehicle attack. They may also become extremely agitated in a crowded area when surrounded by strangers in close proximity.

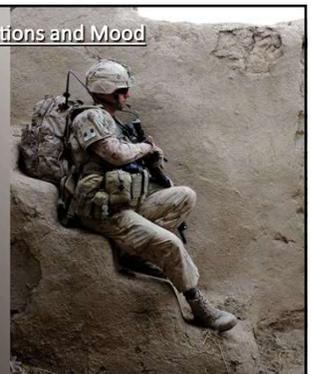


### PTSD – Negative Alterations in Cognitions and Mood

Those living with PTSD may experience emotional numbing, problems with memory, estrangement from others, or negative views of oneself or the world.

A person with these symptoms may not trust a law enforcement member to efficiently cooperate with or respond rationally.

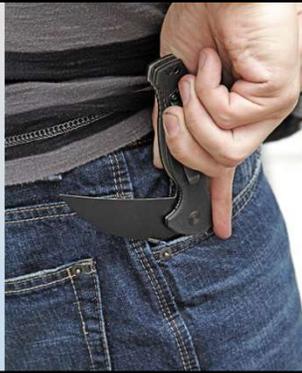
They may also be reluctant to provide you with information or assist with the investigation.



**PTSD – Alteration in Arousal**

A person living with PTSD may be overly alert, hyper-vigilant, and on edge. They may present these symptoms by frequently scanning the environment for potential threats and feel extremely threatened by anyone who approaches them, especially from behind.

A person may become aggressive or violent when a law enforcement member attempts to direct or restrain them. Veterans more commonly carry a weapon because they feel unsafe and may also misinterpret neutral cues as signs of danger.



**PTSD – Occupational Concept**

The PTSD Paradox is unique because the symptoms of PTSD in the home zone are also adaptive reflexes and skills a soldier desires in the war zone.

Home Zone	War Zone
Hyperalert, hypervigilant	Situational awareness
Reliving combat events, guilt, second-guessing	Intense mission preparation, rigorous training, After Action Reviews
Intolerance of mistakes	Attention to detail to minimize mistakes
Anger and drawn towards an adrenaline rush	Calm under fire and the focus required to accomplish the mission
Detached and emotionally numb	Emotional control in combat
Social withdrawal at home	Strong unit cohesion

**Survivor's Guilt**

CAF members who have experienced combat may wonder why they survived when their friends did not.

Survivors often feel that they could have done more to save another person, that another person died saving them, or that they have left others behind.

Survivors' Guilt symptomology is similar to PTSD and includes nightmares, insomnia, flashbacks, violent impulses, emotional numbness, preoccupation with the meaning of life, resentment, and self-loathing.

Survivors' Guilt also has a particularly high correlation with suicidal ideation in military personnel.



**Survivors Guilt**



MY WORST DAY  
2010.05.03

**Substance Abuse Disorder**

Alcohol use is prevalent in most military cultures. Members ritualize drinking as a way to celebrate, handle stress, boredom, loneliness, and to manage negative emotions.

The most salient risk factor for a military member having a substance abuse disorder in the future, is a deployment to a combat zone such as Afghanistan or Iraq.



**Physical Health Challenges**

Veterans have many physical health injuries from their training and experiences in the military.

The most common physical disability claims awarded by Veterans Affairs Canada is hearing, knee and back impairments.

Veterans may require different types of assistance including physical aids to help them in everyday life.

Veterans with "visible" injuries are also at significant risk of developing "invisible" mental health injuries long-term.



### Traumatic Brain Injuries

Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) are distinct features of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. They occur as a result of an external force such as explosions and use of large caliber firearms.

Some effects of TBI include:

- Headaches
- Light and Noise Sensitivity
- Dizziness
- Memory problems
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Impulsivity
- Aggression
- Sleep Problems
- Decreased Concentration

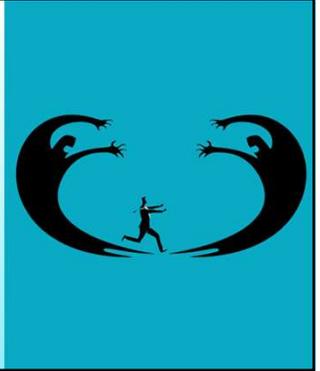


### Co-Morbidity Disorders

Veterans are at risk of being diagnosed with multiple conditions which often need to be treated together.

Some disorders, such as PTSD and Alcoholism, are bi-directional, meaning the worse their PTSD is, the more they will numb their emotions with alcohol and the more alcohol used, the worse their PTSD symptoms will be.

Co-Morbidity is a high concern for Veterans when they are returning from operations.



### Negative Coping Strategies

Veterans may portray negative coping strategies to numb their emotions and attempt to address their mental and/or physical challenges.

Some negative coping mechanisms include:

- Alcohol and/or drug use
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Binge eating
- Unhealthy sexual practices
- Workaholic behaviours
- Video games



### Indigenous Veteran Challenges

The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people of Canada have a long and proud history of military service to Canada. Indigenous military personnel have served in a wide variety of roles, including the Canadian Rangers which maintain a national presence in remote areas of Canada.

More effort is necessary to overcome some of the geographic, political and cultural obstacles that prevent Indigenous Veterans from accessing the benefits they have earned.



### Women Veteran Challenges

Women work in all capacities within the Canadian Armed Forces. Equality and inclusivity remain a high concern for the CAF. In 2015, Operation HONOUR was established to confront inappropriate sexual behaviour, assist victims, and encourage the reporting of misconduct.

After women release from the CAF they report increased difficulties and a lower quality of life when compared to their male counterparts.



### 2SLGBTQ+ Veteran Challenges

Between the 1950s and mid-1990s, members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community were systematically discriminated, harassed or terminated from their jobs. Historically, this was known as the "LGBT Purge". Several organizations, including the CAF have implemented mandatory training and made significant policy changes designed to promote inclusivity and equality.

The Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans was created by Veterans Affairs Canada in July, 2019. The office works collaboratively with community partners to address systemic barriers and inequities.



**Veteran Barriers to Assistance**

Some Veterans and their families find it difficult navigating the various social services and identifying what they are eligible to receive.

The application process is extensive and complicated and can be difficult for Veterans to complete due to administration fatigue.

Veteran assistance organizations traditionally do not proactively reach out to Veterans and offer assistance.

Some aspects of military culture such as selflessness, stoicism and the pursuit of excellence has been indoctrinated, which may prevent a Veteran from seeking and accepting help.



Module Three

**VETERANS  
IN  
CRISIS**



**Veterans in Crisis**

There are many factors that contribute to a Veteran being in crisis, but the three most common are:

- Financial instability
- Lack of social support
- Health concerns

These factors can result in homelessness and/or suicidal ideation.



**Suicide**

Canadian and American Veterans are almost twice as likely to die by suicide than the general population. In 2017, 70% of Veterans who died by suicide had experienced three of the following stressors:

- A failed relationship
- A friend or family suicide
- Personal or family illness
- Debt
- Professional problems and/or legal problems

As a country we are grateful for the hardships our CAF Members have endured for us and we cannot forget them once they return home.



**Homelessness**

Veterans experience homelessness as a result of the lack of housing, family breakdown, transient lifestyle, and financial crisis.

Many of these problems are linked to their experiences within the military and their inability to reintegrate back into civilian life.

In 2018 across Canada, 3,000 to 5,000 homeless people self-identified as Veterans while others may have chosen not to identify as such.



**American Veterans**

Canada is home to many American Veterans who suffer just like Canadian Veterans do. The following video shows the power of peer support both on and off the battle field and that:

***NOBODY FIGHTS ALONE***

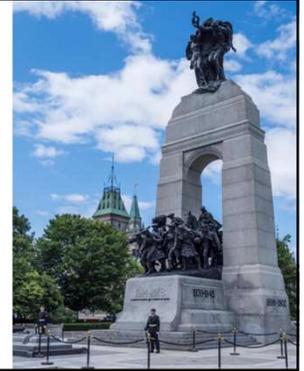
Although all statistics are American, the larger issues remain the same within Canada.



## THE ONES THAT LOVE YOU THE MOST

### Module Four

## Veteran Interaction & De-escalation Techniques



### Military Language / Jargon

Many Veterans have a unique language much like law enforcement members. Veterans use unique terms which can indicate they served in the CAF and are becoming increasingly upset such as:

- Sir or Ma'am - being overly polite
- Ack - acknowledgment of information
- Buds - passive aggressive insult to a person
- Blade - someone who is unreliable



### Symbols and Memorabilia

Veterans have a strong sense of pride toward their unit insignias, qualification symbols, memorials or military memorabilia. These symbols are commonly tattooed on a Veteran, especially their hands.

A Veteran may also wear memorabilia or have items displayed in their home such as camouflage equipment, photographs, challenge coins and military display cases. These are good approaches when generating a conversation and building a rapport.



### Identifying a Veteran

Once you feel that you are speaking to a Military Veteran, the appropriate way to ask them is ....

**"Have you served in the military?"**

Attempt to understand their:

- Branch of Service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Rangers, Special Forces)
- Trade (Infantry, Search and Rescue, Medical, Signals)
- Operational Experience (Bosnia, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Haiti and/or Iraq)

This may help you understand the person's level of training and experiences.



### De-escalation

The goal of every law enforcement interaction with a Veteran who is in crisis, is to offer assistance where required and de-escalate the situation as peacefully as possible.

Zero Harm

Zero Death



**Assess**

Once you identify the person you are involved with is a Veteran, gather as much information as possible or if time allows utilize both internal and external resources (e.g. service based intelligence, Canadian Police Information Centre (CPI), Canadian Firearms Registration Office (CFRO), and their family or friends).

Continually assess the Veteran for indicators of violent behaviour and their own protective factors including age, combat exposure, alcohol/drug use, criminal record, housing stability, social supports, psychological resilience, ability to cover basic needs, employment status, and self-care.

This will help guide you in creating a plan.



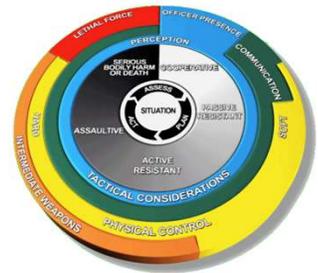
**Considerations**

Veterans should be viewed as equals in terms of tactics, weapons, and training. They may carry a pocket knife or own different firearms and are familiar with how to employ them.

Consider what resources are required such as more officers, a mobile crisis team, negotiator, less lethal force options and specialized units.

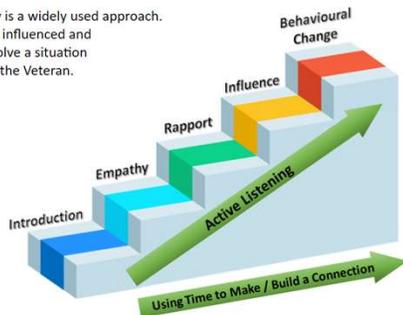
Process all tactical considerations including containment, repositioning, communication, distance, disengagement, time, cover, concealment and teamwork.

To minimize immediate threats, attempt to control the person's means of violence, intent and opportunity to harm you or another person.



**Behavioural Influence Stairway**

The Behavioural Influence Stairway is a widely used approach. It promotes a non-confrontational, influenced and empathetic based approach to resolve a situation safely, providing empowerment to the Veteran.



**Verbal Communication**

- Establish a professional, friendly and calm approach based on safety, mutual respect, and a desire to help
- Explain who you are, and why you are there
- Ask for the person's first name and how you can help
- Consider thanking them for their service
- Protect the person from unnecessary onlookers and distressing circumstances by moving to a safe location
- Ask structured and sequential questions about what happened, in a way that helps organize the person's thoughts



**Verbal Communication**

- If talking about the situation increases distress in the person, ask unrelated questions to ease the psychological tension
- Focus on the positive, if possible
- Use reflective, clarifying, or summarizing statements to let the person know that you understand them correctly
- Convey that you are there to help the situation and to keep the Veteran safe
- Avoid a power struggle with the Veteran
- Let the person know that - in these circumstances - stress reactions may be alarming, but understandable



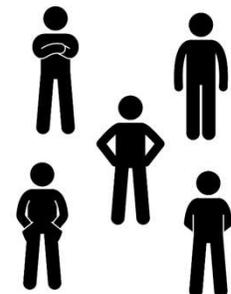
**Non-Verbal Communication**

As a law enforcement member, your non-verbal communication falls into three categories:

- Friendly and helpful
- Aggressive and hostile
- Ambiguous (it is common for a Veteran in crisis to interpret ambiguous behaviours as aggressive)

Hands may easily communicate a willingness to help (through open arms with hands held low, palms open, and facing upward) or that you are closed off and no longer open to helping (arms folded).

An interview stance is an effective option to be considered.



**Tactical Transparency**

Tactical Transparency is when a law enforcement member explains their desired actions before making them, such as "I am coming over here" or "I am going to handcuff you."

This allows the person you are dealing with to know what to expect and conveys a mutual interest of safety for all involved.

Tactical Transparency may be particularly helpful when working with Veterans who are continuously assessing the tactics employed and may be prone to making negative interpretations of things which are ambiguous to them.



**Active Listening**

Individuals in crisis have their own unique story to tell, and need to be understood. Active listening consists of different skills including mirroring, paraphrasing, labeling of emotions, summarizing, effective pauses, open ended questions and minimal encouragers.

Active listening is the first step in developing a relationship which will ultimately lead to behavioural change.

This skill is done continuously while always being aware of certain "hooks" to improve conversation and calm a person while avoiding the "triggers" which emotionally aggravate the individual.



**Empathy for a Veteran**

Having empathy for a Veteran in crisis means putting aside personal judgment and to put yourself in their shoes.

Sometimes their situation is truly difficult (loss of family, loss of jobs, survivor guilt, addiction, or PTSD) and no words can fix that.

However, making them feel seen by listening and saying things such as "I can't imagine how hard it must be for you. I'm so glad you shared that with me," could be - for them - a huge motivation to try to better their situation and accept the help.

"You are not alone, and you deserve to get help"



**Build Rapport**

Active listening and the ability to show empathy will begin to foster a positive rapport with a Veteran and may help to peacefully resolve a situation.

A law enforcement member with military experience may have an advantage in building a rapport because they will have shared experiences and might be able to connect with the difficult part of the Veteran's story easier.

Consider if it's possible to voice out for assistance from a member with military experience if you think it will help you in building a connection and de-escalate the situation.



**Influence and Behaviour Change**

Once you have established a positive rapport, and can influence the Veteran, attempt to connect them to one of the many social services which can assist them in making positive behavioural changes by using the Military Veterans Assistance Form.

Be aware that some Veterans have had negative experiences with these agencies, but with your influence they should be encouraged to seek help.

Module Five

**Veteran Social Services**



**Veteran Social Services**

There are several Veteran social services and resources across Canada doing great work for our Veterans.

As law enforcement members, we have a unique opportunity to refer a Veteran to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) program to assist them.

These organizations have national outreach, and are leaders in Veteran wellness.



OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURY  
SOCIAL SUPPORT  
SOUTIEN SOCIAL  
BLESSURES DE STRESS OPÉRATIONNEL

**Military Verification**

A Veteran's military service is confirmed by the Veteran support agencies prior to a person receiving any benefits. It is not the responsibility of the law enforcement member. The member only helps to facilitate the verification and the Veteran receiving the support by making the referral.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian police officers who deployed on international policing peacekeeping and peace operations are also eligible to receive certain benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada and the Royal Canadian Legion.



**Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)**

Veterans Affairs Canada is the federal department responsible for supporting the well-being of all Veterans and their families in Canada.

Its mission is to provide exemplary, client-centred services, and benefits that respond to the needs of CAF members, Veterans, RCMP, and families in recognition of their services to Canada and to keep the memory of their achievements and sacrifices alive for all Canadians.



**Benefits & Services**

Physical & Mental Health and Wellness

Veterans can receive services, counselling and compensation for mental or physical health problems related to their military service. In 2018-2019 there were 76,829 disability awards recipients.

VAC Assistance Service

VAC Assistance Service is a free and confidential psychological support available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (up to 20 hours of support is available through this service).



**Benefits & Services**

Rehabilitation Program

The Rehabilitation Program is designed to assist Veterans who face barriers in re-establishing their lives after the military. The program establishes and implements medical rehabilitation, psycho-social rehabilitation, and/or vocational rehabilitation interventions to address the specific needs of Veterans.

Veterans Emergency Fund

The Veterans Emergency Fund provides immediate financial relief to Veterans, their families, or their survivors whose well-being is at risk due to an urgent and unexpected situation (up to \$ 2,500 per household per fiscal year).



**Benefits & Services**

Case Management

Veterans Affairs provides one-on-one case management support services to help Veterans. It is a collaborative process of assessment, planning, coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet the needs of Veterans and their families.

Veterans Affairs Canada has several other benefits and services which can assist Veterans and their families. More information is available at [www.Veterans.gc.ca](http://www.Veterans.gc.ca) or by calling 1-866-522-2122 | TDD/TTY 1-833-921-0071.



**The Royal Canadian Legion**

The Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) was founded by Veterans for Veterans. It is the largest not-for-profit Veteran support organization in Canada. There are 1,350 branches spread out across Canada with 248,000 members.

The RCL will assist and advocate for anyone who has served in the Canadian Armed Forces, the commonwealth, wartime allies, the RCMP, or any peace officer deployed to a special duty area or international operation including their families.



**The Royal Canadian Legion**

**Leave the Streets Behind**

Leave the Streets Behind is a national program which provides emergency assistance tailored specifically for a homeless Veteran's needs. Volunteers and service representatives are able to provide "on the ground" support to Veterans which may include advocacy, first and last month's rent, food vouchers, furniture, an apartment kit, a comfort bag, and moving expenses.



**Operation  
Leave the  
Streets Behind**  
Homeless Veterans Assistance

**The Royal Canadian Legion**

The Royal Canadian Legion is able to provide mentorship and a positive community for Veterans. They may assist a Veteran with Veterans Affairs Canada paperwork, and guide them through their transition into civilian life.

The Legion also works alongside several other Veteran social service agencies, contributes to research, and advocates for larger Veteran issues within Canada.

There are several other programs the Legion provides which are detailed at <http://www.legion.ca>, or by speaking with a representative at one of the many Legion locations across Canada 877-534-4666.



**Operational Stress Injury Social Support**

The OSISS Program is a National Peer Support program designed for Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, and their families. It is a joint program between the Department of National Defense and Veterans Affairs Canada. It is designed to help people with operational stress injuries and acts as a complement to other mental health and family support services.



**Peer Support**

The Operational Stress Injury Social Support program has over 130 team members in multiple locations across Canada that can provide mentorship, first hand experiences, and practical knowledge of what life is like with an Operational Stress Injury.

A peer with a similar experience is non-judgmental, and can walk alongside the individual by providing an understanding ear and effective resources to help.



**Module Six**

**Referral  
&  
Assistance**



**Providing Assistance**

Every interaction with a Veteran is an opportunity to give back and improve their quality of life.

That is why it is important to connect with compassion and support Veterans within our communities.

In the following video, "Jocko" Willink, a retired U.S. Navy SEAL Commander empathetically speaks about the emotional confusion from combat and from leaving the military.

He encourages Veterans to embrace their experiences and move towards a positive future. As law enforcement members we can send a similar message to the Veterans in our community and provide them hope through the Military Veterans Assistance Form.



From JOCKO PODCAST 17

**Providing Assistance**

Once you have established a positive rapport with a Veteran and feel you can influence a positive change in their behaviour, ask them for consent in submitting the Military Veterans Assistance Form on their behalf to Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and Operational Stress Injury Social Support.

This referral does not replace a criminal arrest or a mental health apprehension. It is a supplement, and shall be done for any Veteran who consents to receiving help.



**Military Veterans Assistance Form**

The Military Veteran Assistance Form may be used to refer any Canadian Armed Forces Veteran, international military Veteran, Veteran health supporter, family members of CAF Veterans or a Canadian police officer who has served in an international policing peacekeeping and peace operation.

To make a referral, access the Military Veteran Assistance Form through your respective police services.

Toronto Police Service members can access - TPS Form 980.

**Veteran Contact Information**

On the assistance form, include the Veteran's full name and as much information about their military history, so the social services can verify military service and then provide any required supports or services.

Ensure you provide the contact information for the Veteran in need of assistance.

If they do not have a phone number or a home address, provide the Veteran's family, friend, social worker or shelters information so they can be contacted.

**Consent**

Complete the form, and ensure the Veteran understands and agrees with the consent clause at the bottom. Note the response in your memorandum book.

**CONSENT FOR CONTACT**

- The Veteran indicated they wish to receive support from Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.
- I have advised the Veteran of the following:
- The information collected on this form is solely to link Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program to the Veteran and for no other purpose.
  - The provision of any information, together with the Veteran's participation in a program, is strictly voluntary.
  - The consent provided can be withdrawn at any time.
  - The Veteran provided consent to allow the Toronto Police Service to provide the collected information contained on this form to Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

**Submission**

Fill out the referrer information, and click the email button to send the form to the appropriate Military Veteran Coordinator in your respective police service.

After the referral has been sent, delete any copies of the form on your email or hard drive out of respect for the Veteran's privacy.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- If you encounter a Veteran who requires assistance, please submit the form via the link at the bottom.
- In addition, for immediate assistance during regular business hours contact the following and speak to a service agent
  - Veterans Affairs Canada (1-866-522-2122)
  - Royal Canadian Legion (1-888-207-0939), or
  - Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (1-800-883-6094)
- If you are not able to speak to a service agent, attempt to assist the Veteran with any other local services, to ensure the Veteran's well-being until a care provider can contact them within 72 hours.

**CONSENT FOR CONTACT**

The Veteran indicated they wish to receive support from Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

I have advised the Veteran of the following:

The information collected on this form is solely to link Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program to the Veteran and to no other purpose.

The provision of any information, together with the Veteran's participation in a program, is strictly voluntary.

The consent provided can be withdrawn at any time.

The Veteran provided consent to allow the Toronto Police Service to provide the collected information contained on this form to Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

**SUBMITTING OFFICER**

Surname, Given Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Badge / Employee Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Police Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Division / Unit / Department: \_\_\_\_\_

OPERATOR: Page 1 of 1 [submit@veteransaffairs.ca](mailto:submit@veteransaffairs.ca) [submit@legion.ca](mailto:submit@legion.ca) [submit@osiss.ca](mailto:submit@osiss.ca) **Submit by Email** Page 1 of 1

**Assistance**

The Police Service Military Veteran Coordinator will submit the assistance form to VAC, RCL and OSISS. The form will then be retained in internal records for one year and deleted.

A representative from VAC, RCL and OSISS will attempt to contact the Veteran within 72 hours of the first initial contact and may offer a case worker, advocate, and/or peer for support.



**Immediate Assistance**

For immediate assistance, during regular business hours, submit the Military Veterans Assistance Form and as the officer on scene attempt to contact Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and the Operations Stress Injury Social Support Program via the telephone numbers located on the form.

Also attempt to connect the Veteran to any local services such as \*211, shelters or social services available in your geographical area.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- If you encounter a Veteran who requires assistance, please submit the form via the link at the bottom.
- In addition, for immediate assistance during regular business hours contact the following and speak to a service agent
  - Veterans Affairs Canada (1-866-522-2122),
  - Royal Canadian Legion (1-888-207-0939), or
  - Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (1-800-883-6094).
- If you are not able to speak to a service agent, attempt to assist the Veteran with any other local services, to ensure the Veteran's well-being until a care provider can contact them within 72 hours.

**Immediate Assistance**

Prior to leaving, ensure the Veteran is in a place of safety, and has the necessary supports. Provide the Veteran with page two of the Military Veterans Assistance Form which outlines all the agencies' contact information.



**Success Story**

The following story highlights the power of team work and collaboration.

In the summer of 2020, Toronto Police Service Community Response officers responded to a threaten suicide call. Responding officers located a male living in a motor vehicle, with his support dog, between jobs, affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and having suicidal ideations. Officers apprehended the male and transported him to a local hospital. Through communication and rapport building the male identified himself as a Military Veteran.

The Toronto Police Service Military Veteran Coordinator was contacted and with the male's consent, Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and Operational Stress Injury Social Support was notified.



**Success Story**

Within a few hours the agencies confirmed the male's military service, provided him with a hotel room and gift cards.

The Veteran also received medical and mental health assistance, money for rent and peer support. By the end of the month the Veteran had returned to his old job, had the appropriate medication, regular mental health assistance and a permanent place to live.

This Veteran is still in touch with officers and is incredibly grateful for the services he was connected with, especially since he didn't know he was able to receive them.

National organization(s) are available and mandated to help Veterans. The amount of support provided is determined by the national organization(s) who are responsible for assessing and evaluating the situation(s).



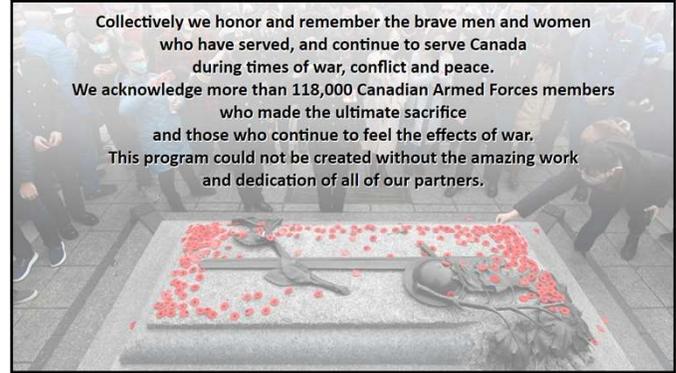
**You are a Priority**

The law enforcement community is particularly vulnerable to mental and physical health issues. For example, police officers face an average of three traumatic experiences for every six months of service, much more than the general public.

If you require assistance please speak to someone immediately.

Canada Beyond the Blue  
 "Police specific mental health assistance"  
[www.CanadaBeyondtheBlue.com](http://www.CanadaBeyondtheBlue.com)

Boots on the Ground "Police peer support"  
[www.BootsOnTheGround.ca/](http://www.BootsOnTheGround.ca/) 1-833-677-BOOT (24/7)  
 Canada Suicide Prevention 1-833-456-4566 (24/7)



Collectively we honor and remember the brave men and women who have served, and continue to serve Canada during times of war, conflict and peace. We acknowledge more than 118,000 Canadian Armed Forces members who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who continue to feel the effects of war. This program could not be created without the amazing work and dedication of all of our partners.

As law enforcement members we have a duty to serve our veterans. We as Canadians have a moral obligation to get veterans the help they may need. Many people don't realize that the effects of military service can carry on long after veterans return home.

The culture of military and law enforcement are synonymous. There may be themes and concepts that we have explored in the training that you can closely relate to. It is important to recognize if you are experiencing similar challenges and acquire the help you may need.

**Authors and Contributors** Click the RESOURCES button for more information. ↑

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*A special thanks for the many people who made the creation of this program possible. We would like to acknowledge that we could not have done this without your steadfast dedication and hard work.*



**Military Veterans Wellness Program**

[www.militaryveteranswellnessprogram.ca](http://www.militaryveteranswellnessprogram.ca)

[tpsmilitarywellness@torontopolice.on.ca](mailto:tpsmilitarywellness@torontopolice.on.ca)

## **Military Veterans Wellness Program**

Nobody Fights Alone - Est. 2019

By Veterans and for Veterans

### **Introduction**

A special thanks to the many people and organizations that made the Military Veterans Wellness Program possible and for continuing to help Veterans. The Toronto Police Military Veterans Association is acknowledged for its shared vision, which helped inspire this program.

### **Video – Chief James Ramer Toronto Police Service – Launches Support Program**

This program aims to have every police officer equipped to connect military veterans to Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support program to improve their wellbeing. The program also provides front line police officers with additional training to understand veteran issues, build rapport and help a veteran who is in crisis. Every veteran deserves honor and respect for their service to Canada,. The Toronto Police Service is a proud supporter of this vital program and Stands in solidarity with our military veterans because nobody fights alone (Ramer, 2020).

### **Disclaimer**

This program was developed with several different partners and has been made available to all police services nationwide. For a further understanding beyond what is covered in this training course, please follow any links and source material provided.

Law Enforcement members must ensure that they follow their own organization's rules, regulations, procedures, and training.

Some of the content in this program may also be emotionally challenging for some viewers. If at any point you find this program difficult, please contact a supervisor, your Wellness Unit, or access the services listed at the end of this program.

## **Module One - Life in the Canadian Armed Forces**

### **Video – Life in the Canadian Armed Forces**

Welcome to the Canadian Forces. More than 90 thousand Canadians service in our army, navy, and air force in more than 100 trades and professions. They are men and women just like you who have accepted the challenge and mastered the skills to prove themselves in one of the world's most elite military forces. Across Canada and around the world, in times of war and national need, the Canadian Forces are always ready to defend to help, and to serve. Members of the Canadian Forces span a wide range of careers and commitments from part time service in the reserve to full occupations in the regular force (Canadian Forces Videos, 2014).

### **Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)**

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members serve their country and help make the world a safer place. They endure a taxing training regime and a challenging lifestyle. The military is not just a job. It is a lifestyle, a member is fully immersed in the culture and committed to helping.

### **Military History**

Canada has a proud military history and has been involved in many international operations. As a law enforcement member, you may come across a Veteran who still has the memories, feelings, and experiences from the military dating back as far as the Second World War.

### **Military Operations**

Combat is a horrific experience for many, including CAF members. Military training can produce an enduring set of behaviours, mental conditions, resiliency, and reactions to unique, critical, and stressful situations known as "battle mind." Battle mind is a learned set of responses that may surface in intense environments, and maybe present with the individual to some degree,

for the rest of their life (Collins, 2021). In the following video, Sebastian Junger explains some aspects of combat endured by an American military platoon after some of the most sustained fighting during the Afghanistan War.

### **Video – Sebastian Junger Ted Talks - Why Veterans Miss War**

At Restrepo, every guy up there was almost killed.

Including me and including my good friend Tim Hetherington who was later killed in Libya, guys were walking around with bullet holes in their uniforms

Rounds that have cut through the fabric and didn't touch their bodies

The boys were up there for a year they got back

Some got out of the army and had tremendous psychological problems when they got home. Some of them stayed in the army and were more or less ok, psychologically.

I was particularly close to a guy Brendan O'Burn.

I'm still very good friends with him.

He came back to the states; he got out of the army.

I had a dinner party one night, I invited him, and he started talking to a woman, one of my friends, and she knew how bad it had been out there and she said, Brendan is there anything at all that you miss about being out in Afghanistan the war?

And he thought about it for quite a long time and finally said, "Ma'am, I miss almost all of it. And he is one of the most traumatized people I have seen from that war.

Ma'am, I miss almost all of it. What is he talking about? He is not a psychopath.

He doesn't miss killing people. He's not crazy.

He doesn't miss getting shot at and seeing his friends get killed.

I think what he missed is brotherhood.

He missed, in some ways, the opposite of killing,

What he missed was connection to the other men he was with,

Brotherhood has nothing to do with how you feel about the other person

It's a mutual agreement, in a group

That you will put the welfare of the group, you will put the safety of everyone in the group above your own. In effect, you are saying I love these other people more than I love myself (Junger, 2014).

## **Additional Resources**

For additional learning, please reference the following full length videos by clicking on the links below.

- A Brief History of Canadian Military History – WW2 to Present (4 min)
- Life in the Canadian Forces (11 min)
- Why Veterans Miss War? (13 min)

## **Module Two - Veteran Transition & Common Struggles**

### **Transitioning From the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)**

Each year, approximately 10,000 members are released from the CAF (Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group, 2018) and transition into civilian life for a variety of reasons, including family or personal issues, retirement, or a career change. The majority of these individuals will make this adjustment successfully, gain employment, discover a new purpose, and foster new relationships (Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group, 2018). Not everyone who releases from the CAF does so willingly. Due to the dangerous nature of the military, approximately 1,000 members of the CAF are medically released each year (Manser, 2015).

### **Veteran Challenges**

Canada is home to approximately 649,300 CAF Veterans and many international Veterans (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2020). Veterans have experienced many things the general public has not. Not all those who serve in the military identify themselves as being a Veteran. The most common struggles for Veterans and their families, within the first two years of being released from the CAF are; career concerns, navigating government systems, finding health support services, stress management, changing their identity, relationship with their spouse and financial management burdens (Military Family Services Program, 2015).

### **Mental Health Challenges**

The pressures and experiences of a military lifestyle can at times cause mental health challenges. Approximately 20% of all Veterans report a mental health problem at one point in their life in relation to their military service. According to Veteran Affairs Canada (VAC), the most common mental health challenges for a Veteran is depression, anxiety, and post traumatic stress disorder (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2020). Sadly, far too few Veterans get the help they

deserve. About half of the men and women who return home from deployments are in need of treatment for mental health conditions, but only about 50% of them actually seek treatment (Galbicsek, 2020).

### **Video – Kelly Scanlan - Bell Let's Talk**

I'd been in the army for, I think at that time, about three years; and when I was nineteen, I deployed to Afghanistan for a seven-and-a-half-month tour of duty; and I was having nightmares, trouble sleeping, and difficulty engaging people.

So finally, I went and saw a doctor and was diagnosed with a post-traumatic stress injury and a major depressive disorder and an anxiety disorder.

When I first came public with my injury, I had a lot of people come up to me, and they would say, "I struggled with mental health injuries" "someone I know struggles," and they would say, "but it's nothing like what you went through" and you kind of just really have to take a step back and realize that mental health is not a competition.

People drown in oceans and people down in pools and people drown in bathtubs, and everyone just has to stop worrying about how much water someone's drowning in, and focus on the fact that someone's drowning. And whether or not it's someone in society, or themselves, they have to worry a lot less about what it is they're drowning in and focus on the fact that they need to be able to breathe again. Bell Let's Talk (Bell Canada, 2018).

### **Depression**

Depression is a common, but potentially serious, psychiatric disorder which affects a person's feelings, thoughts, and actions. It is characterized by feeling helpless and hopelessness; loss of interest in things the individual usually enjoys. Other symptoms include insomnia, fatigue, changes in appetite, weight loss, feelings of guilt, loss of energy, difficulty concentrating and suicidal thoughts (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A veteran may experience depression during their transition to civilian life because they miss the community, their

contributions and the importance they felt while serving in the CAF (Derefinko et al. 2018; Liu et al. 2019).

## **Anxiety**

Anxiety is a common disorder in Veterans and for some, may be based around prior combat experiences, mission planning and the risks associated with international operations. Anxiety is an emotion characterized by tension, worried thought and physical changes. Anxious people have recurring intrusive thoughts of worry and may avoid situations. The physical symptoms that may be associated with anxiety are sweating, trembling, a rapid heartbeat, and dizziness (King et al. 2020).

The following video shows an American law enforcement officer who struggles with his own mental health challenges. He speaks about battle mind, depression, anxiety and questions if he has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

### **Video – Pete DePrez ASM Foundation - What is PTSD?**

I spent eleven years as a first responder, seven of those as a Sheriff's deputy and SWAT operators in the state of Colorado. That's seven years of walking out my door, not knowing if I would take a life or have mine taken. I was warned early on in my career that I had to turn my radio off when I got home at night. I never did.

That same determination didn't work so well at home. I had no concept of how to maintain any emotions and do my job, so I turn them all off. I have no idea how many times I turned the volume up on some sporting event to drown out the sounds of my wife crying. When she later told me that she was leaving, I didn't care I still got to go to work. In March 2019 my close friend max suddenly died, I went to the funeral came back and went back to work but I couldn't shake that sick feeling, so I went to what would make me not feel the bad stuff, I drank a lot.

I developed my own sense of immortality and max dying allowed me to notice a new sheen to my mortality. I started to hesitate, calls that I used to run towards I would stall. I

also started to feel anxiety on an overwhelming level. I'd go to a call and feel angry because I was so anxious

What's hard for most people to understand is the world I lived in was purely focused on defending a threat I didn't go anywhere without a gun. I was paranoid about being without it. The idea of someone doing something and me not being able to react was terrifying.

One day I decided to quit drinking, but then I started again and quit, and started again and quit, and on and on until one day I just had enough. I talked to a buddy who was still active military we talked about PTSD together and this time I just asked What the @!#\$% is it? How do we go from fight or flight to purely flight? I didn't understand what was really broken (DePrez, 2021).

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may occur after experiencing or witnessing a life threatening traumatic event. It is characterized by intense, intrusive, and disturbing thoughts related to their experience and can last for years (Lee and al, 2020). Some experience nightmares and may feel sad, scared and irritable, or detached from other people including their family (Lambert et al. 2012; Taft et al. 2011). Military Veterans are more likely to have experienced multiple traumatic events and have higher rates of PTSD when compared to the general population (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.; Wisco et al, 2014).

A person with PTSD may display symptoms in four areas; intrusive symptoms, avoidance symptoms, negative alterations in cognitions and mood and alterations in arousal (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.).

## **PTSD – Intrusive Symptoms**

Intrusive memories of traumatic events can come back at any time, and can be triggered by everyday sensory cues such as smells, sounds, or sights. These intrusive memories commonly cause emotional and/or physical reactions in a Veteran. A law enforcement member may feel the Veteran is distracted, defensive, and inattentive, which may occur because they are re-experiencing a traumatic memory involving some aspect of combat (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.). The following video by the David Lynch Foundation shows how powerful sound is, and how it can intrusively bring a person with PTSD right back to the traumatic event. (Volume on high).

### **Video – David Lynch Foundation – Sounds of Trauma**

These images are from the battlefield, the sounds are not.  
Listen once again. (Lynch, 2017).

## **PTSD - Avoidance Symptoms:**

Remembering a traumatic event can be so distressing for a person that they may try to avoid people, places, thoughts, and actions that trigger a reminder of the traumatic experience (Kashdam et al, 2010). For example, a law enforcement member may observe that a Veteran resists getting into a holding cell or a law enforcement vehicle because it reminds them of the confined space they were in during a vehicle attack. They may also become extremely agitated in a crowded area when surrounded by strangers in close proximity (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.).

## **PTSD – Negative Alterations in Cognitions and Mood**

Those living with PTSD may experience emotional numbing, problems with memory, estrangement from others, or negative views of oneself or the world. A person with these

symptoms may not trust a law enforcement member to efficiently cooperate with or respond rationally. They may also be reluctant to provide you with information or assist with the investigation (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.).

### **PTSD – Alteration in Arousal**

A person living with PTSD may be overly alert, hyper-vigilant, aggressive, and on edge (Begic & Jokic-Begic, 2001). They may present these symptoms by frequently scanning the environment for potential threats and feel extremely threatened by anyone who approaches them, especially from behind. A person may become aggressive or violent when a law enforcement member attempts to direct or restrain them. Veterans more commonly carry a weapon because they feel unsafe and may also misinterpret neutral cues as signs of danger (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.).

### **PTSD – Occupational Concept**

The PTSD Paradox is unique because the symptoms of PTSD in the home zone are also adaptive reflexes and skills a soldier desires in the war zone (Hoge, 2021).

Home Zone	War Zone
Hyperalert, hypervigilant	Situational awareness
Reliving combat events, guilt, second-guessing	Intense mission preparation, rigorous training, After Action Reviews
Intolerance of mistakes	Attention to detail to minimize mistakes
Anger and drawn towards an adrenaline rush	Calm under fire and the focus required to accomplish the mission
Detached and emotionally numb	Emotional control in combat
Social withdrawal at home	Strong unit cohesion(Hoge, 2021)

## **Survivors Guilt**

CAF members who have experienced combat may wonder why they survived when their friends did not. Survivors often feel that they could have done more to save another person that another person died saving them or that they have left others behind. Survivor guilt symptomology is similar to PTSD and includes nightmares, insomnia, flashbacks, violent impulses, and emotional numbness, preoccupation with the meaning of life, resentment, and self-loathing. Survivor's guilt also has a particularly high correlation with suicidal ideation in military personnel (Murray, 2018).

## **Substance Abuse Disorder**

Alcohol use is prevalent in most military cultures. Members ritualize drinking as a way to celebrate, handle stress, boredom, loneliness, and to manage negative emotions (Teeters et al. 2017). The most salient risk factor for a military member having a substance abuse disorder in the future, is a deployment to a combat zone such as Afghanistan or Iraq (Taillieu et al, 2020).

## **Physical Health Challenges**

Veterans have many physical health injuries from their training and experiences in the military. The most common physical disability claims awarded by Veterans Affairs Canada is hearing, knee and back impairments. Veterans may require different types of assistance including physical aids to help them in everyday life. Veterans with "visible" injuries are also at significant risk of developing "invisible" mental health injuries long-term (Cozza et al, 2013).

## **Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)**

Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) are distinct features of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. They occurs as a result of an external force such as explosions and use of large caliber firearms.

Some effects of TBI include; headaches, light and noise sensitivity, dizziness, memory problems and depression (Silver et al, 2019).

### **Co-Morbidity Disorders**

Veterans are at risk of being diagnosed with multiple conditions which often need to be treated together. Some disorders, such as PTSD and Alcoholism, are bi-directional, meaning the worse their PTSD is, the more they will numb their emotions with alcohol and the more alcohol used, the worse their PTSD symptoms will be. Co-Morbidity is a high concern for Veterans when they are returning from operations (Hoge, 2021).

### **Negative Coping Strategies**

Veterans may portray negative coping strategies to numb their emotions and attempt to address their mental and/or physical challenges. Some negative coping mechanisms include; alcohol and/or drug use, taking unnecessary risks, binge eating, unhealthy sexual practices, workaholic behaviours and video games (Sherman et al. 2005).

### **Indigenous Veteran Challenges**

The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people of Canada have a long and proud history of military service to Canada. Indigenous military personnel have served in a wide variety of roles, including the Canadian Rangers which maintain a national presence in remote areas of Canada (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2020). More effort is necessary to overcome some of the geographic, political and cultural obstacles that prevent Indigenous Veterans from accessing the benefits they have earned (Adams, 2019).

### **Women Veteran Challenges**

Women work in all capacities within the Canadian Armed Forces. Equality and inclusivity remain a high concern for the CAF. In 2015, Operation Honour was established to

prevent and address sexual misconduct within its ranks (National Defense, 2021). After women release from the CAF they report increased difficulties and a lower quality of life when compared to their male counterparts (Rolland-Harris, 2018).

## **2SLGBTQ+ Veteran Challenges**

Between the 1950s and mid-1990s, members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community were systematically discriminated, harassed or terminated from their jobs. Historically, known as “LGBT Purge”. Several organizations, including the CAF have implemented mandatory training and made significant policy changes designed to promote inclusivity and equality (LGBT Purge Fund, n.d.). The Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans was created by Veterans Affairs Canada in July, 2019. The office works collaboratively with community partners to address systemic barriers and inequities (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2021).

## **Veteran Barriers to Assistance**

- Some Veterans and their families find it difficult navigating the various social services and identifying what they are eligible to receive.
- The application process is extensive and complicated and can be difficult for Veterans to complete due to administration fatigue.
- Veteran assistance organizations traditionally do not proactively reach out to Veterans and offer assistance.
- Some aspects of military culture such as selflessness, stoicism and the pursuit of excellence has been indoctrinated, which may prevent a Veteran from seeking and accepting help. (Uniformed Services University Center for Development Psychology, n.d.).

**Key Concepts**

- Approximately 1,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces are medically released each year from the military.
- Many Canadian Armed Forces Veterans do not identify themselves as a Veteran.
- The PTSD paradox for a Veteran is that some symptoms of PTSD are adaptive reflexes, or skills desired in a combat situation.

## **Module Three - Veterans in Crisis**

### **Veterans in Crisis**

There are many factors that contribute to a Veteran being in crisis, but the three most common are; financial instability, lack of social support and health concerns (Chair and Co-Founder, VETS Canada, 2018). These factors can result in homelessness and/or suicidal ideation.

### **Suicide**

Canadian and American Veterans are almost twice as likely to die by suicide as the general population (Rolland-Harris, n.d.; Simkus K et al. 2017; U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, n.d.). In 2017, 70% of Veterans who died by suicide had experienced three of the following stressors; a failed relationship, a friend or family suicide, personal or family illness, debt and professional problems and/or legal problems (Rolland-Harris, n.d.). As a country we are grateful for the hardships our CAF Members have endured for us and we cannot forget them once they return home.

### **Homelessness**

Veterans experience homelessness as a result of the lack of housing, family breakdown, transient lifestyle, and financial crisis (Segaert & Bauer, n.d.). Many of these problems are linked to their experiences within the military and their inability to reintegrate back into civilian life. In 2018 across Canada, 3,000 to 5,000 homeless people self-identified as Veterans while others may have chosen not to identify as such (Ellis, 2019).

### **American Veterans**

Canada is home to many American Veterans who suffer just like Canadian Veterans do. The following video shows the power of peer support both on and off the battle field and that:

nobody fights alone. Although all statistics are American, the larger issues remain the same within Canada.

### **Video – Five Finger Death Punch – Wrong Side of Heaven**

I spoke to God today and she said that she's ashamed  
What have I become  
What have I done  
I spoke to the devil today and he swears he's not to blame  
And I understood because I feel the same  
Arms wide open  
I stand alone  
I'm no hero and I'm not made of stone  
Right or wrong  
I can hardly tell  
I'm on the wrong side of heaven and the righteous side of hell  
The wrong side of heaven and the righteous side  
The righteous side of hell  
I heard from God today and she sounded just like me  
what have I done and who have I become  
I saw the devil today and he looked a lot like me  
I looked away, I turned away  
Arms wide open  
I stand alone  
I'm no hero and I'm not made of stone  
Right or wrong  
I can hardly tell  
I'm on the wrong side of heaven and the righteous side of hell  
The wrong side of heaven and the righteous side  
The righteous side of hell  
I'm not defending  
downward descending

falling further and further away  
getting closer every day  
I'm getting closer every day  
to the end, to the end, the end, the end  
I'm getting closer every day  
Arms wide open  
I stand alone  
I'm no hero  
And I'm not made of stone  
Right or wrong  
I can hardly tell  
I'm on the wrong side of heaven and the righteous side of hell  
I'm on the wrong side of heaven and the righteous side of hell  
The wrong side of heaven and the righteous side  
Righteous side of hell (Five Finger Death Punch, 2014).

### **Key Concepts**

- 70% of Veterans who died by suicide, had at least three of the following personal struggles, a failed relationship, a friend or family suicide, personal or family illness, debt, professional problems, or legal problems.
- A lack of housing, family breakdown, a transient lifestyle, and being in a financial crisis may all lead to homelessness.

### Mid Point Knowledge Check

Match the question with the most correct answer:

Veterans with “visible” injuries are also at significant risk of developing “invisible” _____ long-term.	mental health injuries
A lack of housing, family breakdown, a transient lifestyle, and being in a financial crisis may all lead to _____.	homelessness
70% of Veterans who _____, had at least three of the following personal struggles; A failed relationship; a friend or family suicide; personal or family illness; debt; professional problems; or legal problems.	die by suicide
Approximately 1,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces are _____ each year from the military.	medically released
The _____ for a Veteran is that some symptoms of PTSD are adaptive reflexes or skills which is desired in a combat situation.	PTSD paradox

## **Module Four - Police / Veteran Interaction and De-escalation Techniques**

### **Military Language / Jargon**

Many Veterans have a unique language much like law enforcement members. Veterans use unique terms which can indicate they served in the CAF and are becoming increasingly upset such as: Sir or Ma'am - being overly polite, ack - acknowledgment of information, buds – passive aggressive insult to a person and blade – someone who is unreliable (Dimick, 2020).

### **Symbols and Memorabilia**

Veterans have a strong sense of pride toward their unit insignias, qualification symbols, memorials or military memorabilia. These symbols are commonly tattooed on a Veteran, especially their hands. A Veteran may also wear memorabilia or have items displayed in their home such as camouflage equipment, photographs, challenge coins and military display cases. These are good approaches when generating a conversation and building a rapport.

Once you feel that you are speaking to a Military Veteran, the appropriate way to ask them is .... “Have you served in the military?” Attempt to understand their; branch of service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Rangers, Special Forces) Trade (Infantry, Search and Rescue, Medical, Signals) and operational experience (Bosnia, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Haiti and/or Iraq). This may help you understand the person’s level of training and experiences.

### **De - escalation**

The goal of every law enforcement interaction with a Veteran who is in crisis, is to offer assistance where required and de-escalate the situation as peacefully as possible. “Zero harm, zero death” (Stuart, 2021)

## **Assess**

Once you identify the person you are involved with is a Veteran, gather as much information as possible or if time allows utilize both internal and external resources (ie. service based intelligence, Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), Canadian Firearms Registration Office (CFRO), and their family or friends).

Continually assess the Veteran for indicators of violent behavior and their own protective factors including age, combat exposure, alcohol/drug use, criminal record, housing stability, social supports, psychological resilience, and ability to cover basic needs, employment status, and self-care. This will help guide you in creating a plan (Collins, 2021).

## **Considerations**

Veterans should be viewed as equals in terms of tactics, weapons, and training. They may carry a pocket knife or own different firearms and are familiar with how to employ them. Consider what resources are required such as more officers, a mobile crisis team, negotiator, less lethal force options and specialized units. Process all tactical considerations including containment, repositioning, communication, distance, disengagement, time, cover, concealment and teamwork. To minimize immediate threats, attempt to control the person's means of violence, intent and opportunity to harm you or another person (Stuart, 2021).

## **Behavioral Influence Stairway**

The Behavioral Influence Stairway is a widely used approach. It promotes a non-confrontational, influenced and empathetic based approach to resolve a situation safely, providing empowerment to the Veteran (Stuart, 2021).

## **Introduction - Verbal Communication**

- Establish a professional, friendly and calm approach based on safety, mutual respect, and a desire to help
- Explain who you are, and why you are there
- Ask for the persons first name and how you can help
- Consider thanking them for their service
- Protect the person from unnecessary onlookers and distressing circumstances by moving to a safe location
- Ask structured and sequential questions about what happened, in a way that helps organize the person's thoughts
- If talking about the situation increases distress in the person, ask unrelated questions to ease the psychological tension
- Focus on the positive, if possible
- Use reflective, clarifying, or summarizing statements to let the person know that you understand them correctly
- Convey that you are there to help the situation and to keep the Veteran safe
- Avoid a power struggle with the Veteran

Let the person know that - in these circumstances - stress reactions may be alarming, but understandable ((National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.).

## **Non-Verbal Communication**

As a law enforcement member, your non-verbal communication falls into three categories: friendly and helpful, aggressive and hostile and ambiguous (it is common for a Veteran in crisis to interpret ambiguous behaviours as aggressive). Hands may easily

communicate a willingness to help (through open arms with hands held low, palms open, and facing upward) or that you are closed off and no longer open to helping (arms folded) (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.). An interview stance is an effective option to be considered (Stuart, 2021).

### **Tactical Transparency**

Tactical Transparency is when a law enforcement member explains their desired actions before making them, such as “I am coming over here” or “I am going to handcuff you.” This allows the person you are dealing with to know what to expect and conveys a mutual interest of safety for all involved. Tactical Transparency may be particularly helpful when working with Veterans who are continuously assessing the tactics employed and is prone to making negative interpretations to things which are ambiguous to them (National Center for PTSD Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, n.d.).

### **Active Listening**

Individuals in crisis have their own unique story to tell, and need to be understood. Active listening consists of different skills that include: mirroring; paraphrasing; labelling of emotions; summarizing; effective pauses; open ended questions; and minimal encouragers. Active listening is the first step in developing a relationship which will ultimately lead to behavioural change (Ontario Provincial Police, 2015). This skill is done continuously while always being aware of certain “hooks” to improve conversation and calm a person while avoiding the “triggers” which emotionally aggravate the individual (Collins, 2021).

### **Empathy for a Veteran**

Having empathy for a Veteran in crisis means putting aside personal judgment and to put yourself in their shoes. Sometimes their situation is truly difficult (loss of family, loss of jobs,

survivor guilt, addiction, or PTSD) and no words can fix that. However, making them feel seen by listening and saying things such as “I can’t imagine how hard it must be for you. I’m so glad you shared that with me,” could be - for them - a huge motivation to try to better their situation and accept the help. “You are not alone, and you deserve to get help” (Brown, 2008).

### **Build Rapport**

Active listening and the ability to show empathy will begin to foster a positive rapport with a Veteran and may help to peacefully resolve a situation. A law enforcement member with military experience may have an advantage in building a rapport because they will have shared experiences and might be able to connect with the difficult part of the Veterans story easier. Consider if it’s possible to voice out for assistance from a member with military experience if you think it will help you in building a connection and de-escalate the situation.

Once you have established a positive rapport, and can influence the Veteran, attempt to connect them to one of the many social services which can assist them in making positive behavior changes by using the Military Veterans Assistance Form. Be aware that some Veterans have had negative experiences with these agencies, but with your influence they should be encouraged to seek help.

### **Key Concepts**

- Veterans often hold military memorabilia and symbols as a sense of pride and accomplishment.
- The steps of the Behavioral Influence Staircase include; Active Listening, Empathy, Rapport, Influence, and Behavioural Change.
- The goal of any interaction is to always peacefully de-escalate the situation.

- The behavioral change you may try to influence a Veteran in making is to accept help by giving consent to submit the Military Veterans Assistance Form on their behalf.

## **Module Five - Veteran Social Services**

### **Veteran Social Services**

There are several Veteran social services and resources across Canada doing great work for our Veterans. As law enforcement members, we have a unique opportunity to refer a Veteran to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) program to assist them. These organizations have national outreach, and are leaders in Veteran wellness.

### **Military Verification**

A Veteran's military service is confirmed by the Veteran support agencies prior to a person receiving any benefits. It is not the responsibility of the law enforcement member. The member only helps to facilitate the verification and the Veteran receiving the support by making the referral. Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian police officers who deployed on international policing peacekeeping and peace operations are also eligible to receive certain benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada and the Royal Canadian Legion.

### **Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)**

Veterans Affairs Canada is the federal department responsible for supporting the well-being of all Veterans and their families in Canada. Its mission is to provide exemplary, client-centred services, and benefits that respond to the needs of CAF members, Veterans, RCMP, and families in recognition of their services to Canada and to keep the memory of their achievements and sacrifices alive for all Canadians (Tomljenovic, 2021).

### ***Physical & Mental Health and Wellness***

Veterans can receive services, counselling and compensation for mental or physical health problems related to their military service. In 2018-2019 there were 76,829 disability awards recipients (Tomljenovic, 2021).

### ***VAC Assistance Service***

VAC Assistance Service is a free and confidential psychological support available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (up to 20 hours of support is available through this service) (Tomljenovic, 2021).

### ***Rehabilitation Program***

The Rehabilitation Program is designed to assist Veterans who face barriers in re-establishing their lives after the military. The program establishes and implements medical rehabilitation, psycho-social rehabilitation, and/or vocational rehabilitation interventions to address the specific needs of Veterans (Tomljenovic, 2021).

### ***Veterans Emergency Fund***

Provides immediate financial relief to Veterans, their families, or their survivors whose well-being is at risk due to an urgent and unexpected situation (up to \$ 2,500 per household per fiscal year) (Tomljenovic, 2021).

### ***Case Management***

Veterans Affairs provides one-on-one case management support services to help Veterans. It is a collaborative process of assessment, planning, coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet the needs of Veterans and their families.

Veterans Affairs Canada has several other benefits and services which can assist Veterans and their families. More information is available at [www.Veterans.gc.ca](http://www.Veterans.gc.ca) or by calling 1-866-522-2122 | TDD/TTY 1-833-921-0071 (Tomljenovic, 2021).

### **The Royal Canadian Legion**

The Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) was founded by Veterans for Veterans. It is the largest not-for-profit Veteran support organization in Canada. There are 1,350 branches spread out across Canada with 248,000 members. The RCL will assist and advocate for anyone who has served in the Canadian Armed Forces, the commonwealth, wartime allies, the RCMP, or any peace officer deployed to a special duty area or international operation including their families (Gordon, 2021).

### ***Leave the Streets Behind***

Leave the Streets Behind is a national program which provides emergency assistance tailored specifically for a homeless Veteran's needs. Volunteers and service representatives are able to provide "on the ground" support to Veterans, including advocacy, first and last month's rent, food vouchers, furniture, an apartment kit, a comfort bag, and moving expenses (Gordon, 2021).

### ***The Royal Canadian Legion***

The Royal Canadian Legion is able to provide mentorship and a positive community for Veterans. They will often assist a Veteran with Veterans Affairs Canada paperwork, and guide them through their transition into civilian life. The Legion also works alongside several other Veteran social service agencies, contributes to research, and advocates for larger Veteran issues within Canada. There are several other programs the Legion provides which are detailed at <http://www.legion.ca>, or by speaking with a representative at one of the many Legion locations across Canada 877-534-4666 (Gordon, 2021).

## **Operations Stress Injury Social Support**

The OSISS Program is a National Peer Support Program designed for Canadian Armed Forces members, veterans, and their families. It is a joint program between the Department of National Defense and Veterans Affairs Canada. It is designed to help people with operational stress injuries and acts as a compliment to other mental health and family support services (Voltolina, 2021).

### ***Peer Support***

The OSISS program has over 130 team members in multiple locations across Canada that can provide mentorship, first hand experiences, and practical knowledge of what life is like with an Operational Stress Injury. A peer with a similar experience is non-judgmental, and can walk alongside the individual by providing an understanding ear and effective resources to help (Voltolina, 2021).

### **Key Concepts**

- The Veteran Social Service Agency confirms a Veteran's military service prior to a Veteran receiving any benefits.
- OSISS is a peer support organization.
- The Royal Canadian Legion may provide the Veteran an advocate who can assist them with being part of Veterans Affairs Canada Programs, completing Veterans Affairs Canada disability claims and finding mental health counselling.
- Veterans Affairs Canada is an organization that can provide assistance if the Veteran was injured in relation to their military service.

## Module Six - Referral & Assistance

### Providing Assistance

Every interaction with a Veteran is an opportunity to give back and improve their quality life. That is why it is important to Connect with Compassion and support Veterans within our communities. In the following video, “Jocko” Willink, a retired U.S. Navy SEAL Commander empathetically speaks about the emotional confusion from combat and from leaving the military. He encourages Veterans to embrace their experiences and move towards a positive future. As law enforcement members we can send a similar message to the Veterans in our community and provide them hope through the Military Veterans Assistance Form.

### Video - Jocko Willink Rough Transitions

There is still tragedy and loss and darkness there  
Rough transitions  
And that's ok  
And to you vets out there if you're having one of those dark days  
It's ok  
It's it's ok  
It's ok to feel that darkness  
And it's ok to remember it and miss it and hate it and love it and its ok to wish it never  
happened and at the same time to wish it never stopped  
And it's ok to want to take it all back  
And at the same time to want to do it all again  
And if you got in your mind that you think that people don't understand  
That's ok  
They don't  
But you do  
You know darkness, you know evil,  
But more importantly than that you know good  
You know light

You know laughter and love better than anyone  
So  
Embrace  
Embrace that darkness, own it  
don't look away from it  
don't bury it in booze or pills  
Live your life  
Embrace your life  
With physical activity, and with nature and with jiu jitsu and with sun and with laughter  
and guitar and good memories and creativity and discipline,  
discipline yourself  
So you can free yourself  
Move forward  
Into the future  
Where there is no more darkness and no more war  
But peace (Willink, 2016)

### **Providing Assistance**

Once you have established a positive rapport with a Veteran and feel you can influence a positive change in their behavior, ask them for consent in submitting the Military Veterans Assistance Form on their behalf to Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and Operational Stress Injury Social Support.

This referral does not replace a criminal arrest or a mental health apprehension. It is a supplement, and shall be done for any Veteran who consents to receiving help.

### **Military Veterans Assistance Form**

The Military Veteran Assistance Form may be used to refer any Canadian Armed Forces Veteran, international military Veteran, Veteran health supporter, family members of CAF

Veterans or a Canadian police officer who has served in an international policing peacekeeping and peace operation. To make a referral, access the Military Veteran Assistance Form through your respective police services. (Toronto Police Service members can access - TPS Form 980)

### **Veteran Contact Information**

On the assistance form, include the Veterans full name and as much information about their military history, so the social services can verify military service and then provide any required supports or services. Ensure you provide the contact information for the Veteran in need of assistance. If they do not have a phone number or a home address, provide the Veterans family, friend, social worker or shelters information so they can be contacted.

### **Consent**

Complete the form, and ensure the Veteran understands and agrees with the consent clause at the bottom. Note the response in your memorandum book. Fill out the referrer information, and click the email button to send the form to the appropriate Military Veteran Coordinator in your respective police service. After the referral has been sent, delete any copies of the form on your email or hard drive out of respect for the Veteran's privacy.

### **Assistance**

The Police Service Military Veteran Coordinator will submit the assistance form to VAC, RCL and OSISS. The form will then be retained in internal records for one year and deleted. A representative from each organization will attempt to contact the Veteran within 72-Hours of the first initial contact and may offer a case worker, advocate, and/or peer for support.

### **Immediate Assistance**

For immediate assistance, during regular business hours, submit the Military Veterans Assistance Form and attempt to contact Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion

and the Operations Stress Injury Social Support Program via the telephone numbers located on the form. Also attempt to connect the Veteran to any local services such as \*211, shelters or social services available in your geographical area. Prior to leaving, ensure the Veteran is in a place of safety, and has the necessary supports. Provide the Veteran with page two of the Military Veterans Assistance Form which outlines all the agencies contact information.

### **Success Story**

The following story highlights the power of team work and collaboration. In the summer of 2020, Toronto Police Service Community Response officers responded to a threaten suicide call. Responding officers located a male living in a motor vehicle, with his support dog, between jobs, affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and having suicidal ideations. Officers apprehended the male and transported him to a local hospital, through communication and rapport building the male identified himself as a Military Veteran.

The Toronto Police Service Military Veteran Coordinator was contacted and with the male's consent, Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and Operations Stress Injury Social Support was notified. Within a few hours the agencies confirmed the male's military service, provided him with a hotel room and gift cards. The Veteran also received medical and mental health assistance, money for rent and peer support. By the end of the month the Veteran had returned to his old job, had the appropriate medication, regular mental health assistance and a permanent place to live. This Veteran is still in touch with officers and is incredibly grateful for the services he was connected with, especially since he didn't know he was able to receive them.

National organization(s) are available and mandated to help Veterans. The amount of support provided is determined by the national organization(s) who are responsible for assessing and evaluating the situation(s).

### **Key Concepts**

- The Military Veteran Assistance Form is separate from an arrest of Mental Health Apprehension.
- The Military Veteran Assistance Form can be used for family members of Veterans, international Veterans and police officers who have been part of the RCMP International Policing Peace Keeping and Peace Operations Program.
- Page two of the Military Veteran Assistance Form is provided to the Veteran.
- If you need immediate assistance during working hours, call the support agencies and submit the Military Veteran Assistance Form via email.

### **You are a Priority**

The law enforcement community is particularly vulnerable to mental and physical health issues. For example, police officers face an average of three traumatic experiences for every sixth months of service, much more than the general public.

If you require assistance please speak to someone immediately.

Canada Beyond the Blue “Police specific mental health assistance”

[www.CanadaBeyondtheBlue.com](http://www.CanadaBeyondtheBlue.com)

Boots on the Ground “Police peer support”

[www.BootsOnTheGround.ca/](http://www.BootsOnTheGround.ca/) 1-833-677-BOOT (24/7)

Canada Suicide Prevention 1-833-456-4566 (24/7)

### Final Knowledge Check

1. The Military Veteran Assistance Form is separate and can be done in conjunction to an Arrest or Mental Health Apprehension. (True / False)
2. Page Two of the Military Veteran Assistance form is provided to the Veteran. (True / False)
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ confirms a Veteran's military service prior to a Veteran receiving any benefits? (law enforcement member making the referral, supervisor, Veteran Social Service Agency, The Canada Revenue Agency).
4. What is the order for the Behavioral Influence Staircase in order? (Active Listening, Empathy, Rapport, Influence, and Behavioural Change)
5. The Military Veteran Assistance Form may be submitted for (family members of Veterans, international Veterans and police officers who have deployed as part of the RCMP International Policing Peace Keeping and Peace Operations Program)

Collectively we honor and remember the brave men and women who have served, and continue to serve Canada during times of war, conflict and peace. We acknowledge more than 118,000 Canadian Armed Forces members who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who continue to feel the effects of war. This program could not be created without the amazing work and dedication of all of our partners.

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# MILITARY VETERAN ASSISTANCE FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(yyyy/mm/dd)

## VETERAN'S INFORMATION

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (yyyy/mm/dd)

Surname

Maiden Name

Given Name (G1)

Military Branch / Nationality

Military Service Number

Currently  
Serving?

Years of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(yyyy/mm/dd) (yyyy/mm/dd)

Address (Street number and name, Apt. #, City, Province, Postal Code)

Phone Number (10 digits)

Shelter Name

Shelter Phone Number (10 digits)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. If you encounter a Veteran who requires assistance, please submit the form via the link at the bottom.
2. In addition, for immediate assistance during regular business hours contact the following and speak to a service agent
  - Veterans Affairs Canada (1-866-522-2122),
  - Royal Canadian Legion (1-888-207-0939), or
  - Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (1-800-883-6094).
3. If you are not able to speak to a service agent, attempt to assist the Veteran with any other local services, to ensure the Veteran's well-being until a care provider can contact them within 72 hours.

## CONSENT FOR CONTACT

- The Veteran indicated they wish to receive support from Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

I have advised the Veteran of the following:

- The information collected on this form is solely to link Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program to the Veteran and for no other purpose.
- The provision of any information, together with the Veteran's participation in a program, is strictly voluntary.
- The consent provided can be withdrawn at any time.
- The Veteran provided consent to allow the Toronto Police Service to provide the collected information contained on this form to Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

## SUBMITTING OFFICER

Surname, Given Name

Badge / Employee Number

Contact Number

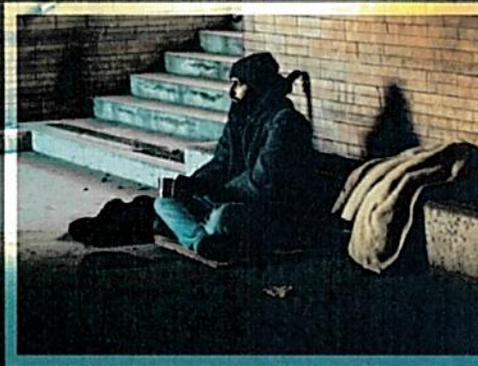
Police Service

Division / Unit / Detachment

**DISTRIBUTION:** Page 1 - email to [tpsmilitarywellness@torontopolice.on.ca](mailto:tpsmilitarywellness@torontopolice.on.ca)  
Page 2 - to the Veteran

Submit by Email

# ONE HOMELESS VETERAN IS ONE TOO MANY



**AVAILABLE RESOURCES ARE:**

- Veterans Emergency Fund
- Health Care
- Financial Support
- Employment
- Vocational Training and Support
- Peer Support
- Veteran & Family Well-Being Fund
- Case Management
- Local Service Providers

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO SERVED IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES OR THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE WHO IS HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS?

**CALL US.**  
**1-866-522-2122**

[veterans.gc.ca/services](http://veterans.gc.ca/services)

**1-800-268-7708**

VAC Assistance Service, to speak to a mental health professional



## Operation Leave the Streets Behind Homeless Veterans Assistance



**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED**

- Medical Needs
- Assistive Devices
- Emergency Transportation
- Emergency Assistance
- Addition Programs
- Rental Payments
- Furnishing Assistance
- Moving Expenses
- Utility Payments
- Shelter
- Food

**For more information, contact:**

The Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command  
89 Industrial Parkway North, Aurora, ON L4G 4C4  
[rclontariocommand@on.legion.ca](mailto:rclontariocommand@on.legion.ca)

TOLL FREE: 1-888-207-0939 • PHONE: 905-841-7999 • FAX: 905-841-9992



OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURY  
SOCIAL SUPPORT  
SOUTIEN SOCIAL  
BLESSURES DE STRESS OPÉRATIONNEL

### Operational Stress Injury Social Support

#### The Power of Peer Support

The OSISS program includes CAF members, veterans and family members in multiple locations across Canada who provide mentorship, firsthand lived experience and practical knowledge of what life is like with an OSI. Our program is for peers, by peers.

- National standardized program
- One on One support as well as group support
- Community engagement
- Confidentiality



1-800-883-6094



[OSISS-SSBSO@forces.gc.ca](mailto:OSISS-SSBSO@forces.gc.ca)



[osiss.ca](http://osiss.ca)

### 24 Hour Assistance Lines

Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Service Line: 1 (800) 268-7708 TDD/TTY: 1 (800) 567-5803

Canadian Forces Family Information Line: 1 (800) 866-4546

## **Military Veterans Assistance Form – User Instructions**

Prior to using the Military Veterans Assistance Form a law enforcement member should have a basic understanding of Veteran Culture, Mental and Physical Issues, Transition Challenges, Stigmas, Veteran Social Services, De-escalation and how to offer assistance. All Canadian law enforcement members are encouraged to complete the Military Veterans Wellness Program on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network.

The following guide provides additional information beyond that of the training program so an officer can use the Military Veterans Assistance Form.

### **Step One**

Identify the individual you are interacting with is a veteran through regular interaction and ask, “Have you ever served in the military?” If you feel the member could use some type assistance, consider offering a referral to Veterans Affairs Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support program through the Military Veteran Assistance Form. The Military Veterans Assistance Form may be submitted on behalf of;

- Canadian Armed Forces Military Veterans and Family,
- Serving Canadian Armed Forces Members and Family,
- Any Foreign Military Veterans and Family,
- Canadian Law Enforcement Members,
- Any Foreign Law Enforcement Members,
- Veteran Care Providers,
- Veteran Direct Family Member

Those who can receive support through the definition of Veteran can vary slightly between organizations.

### **Step Two**

Ensure the Veteran understand they will be contacted by all three agencies and might be offered a Case Worker, Advocate and/or peer for support. Once the Veteran consents to the referral, note it in your memo book and access the form.

### **Step Three**

It is important to fill out as much information on the form as possible so the social services can confirm military service. Ensure you provide a phone number for the Veteran, their shelter, social worker, family or friend so they can be contacted.

### **Step Four**

Print and provide the Veteran with Page 2 of the form so they can contact these services at their own time.

### **Step Five**

Once the form is completed, select the “Submit by Email” button to deliver the form to your services Veterans Wellness Coordinator or the three social services.

### **Step Six**

Prior to the form being emailed to the social services, the file needs to be password protected following the instruction below. Ensure that the email is not encrypted.

## Password Protection Instructions

It is necessary to password protect the Military Veterans Assistance Form in case the email is incorrectly sent to the wrong person. Ensure that the Social Services receive your password in a separate email or use the same running password such as **911Referral**.

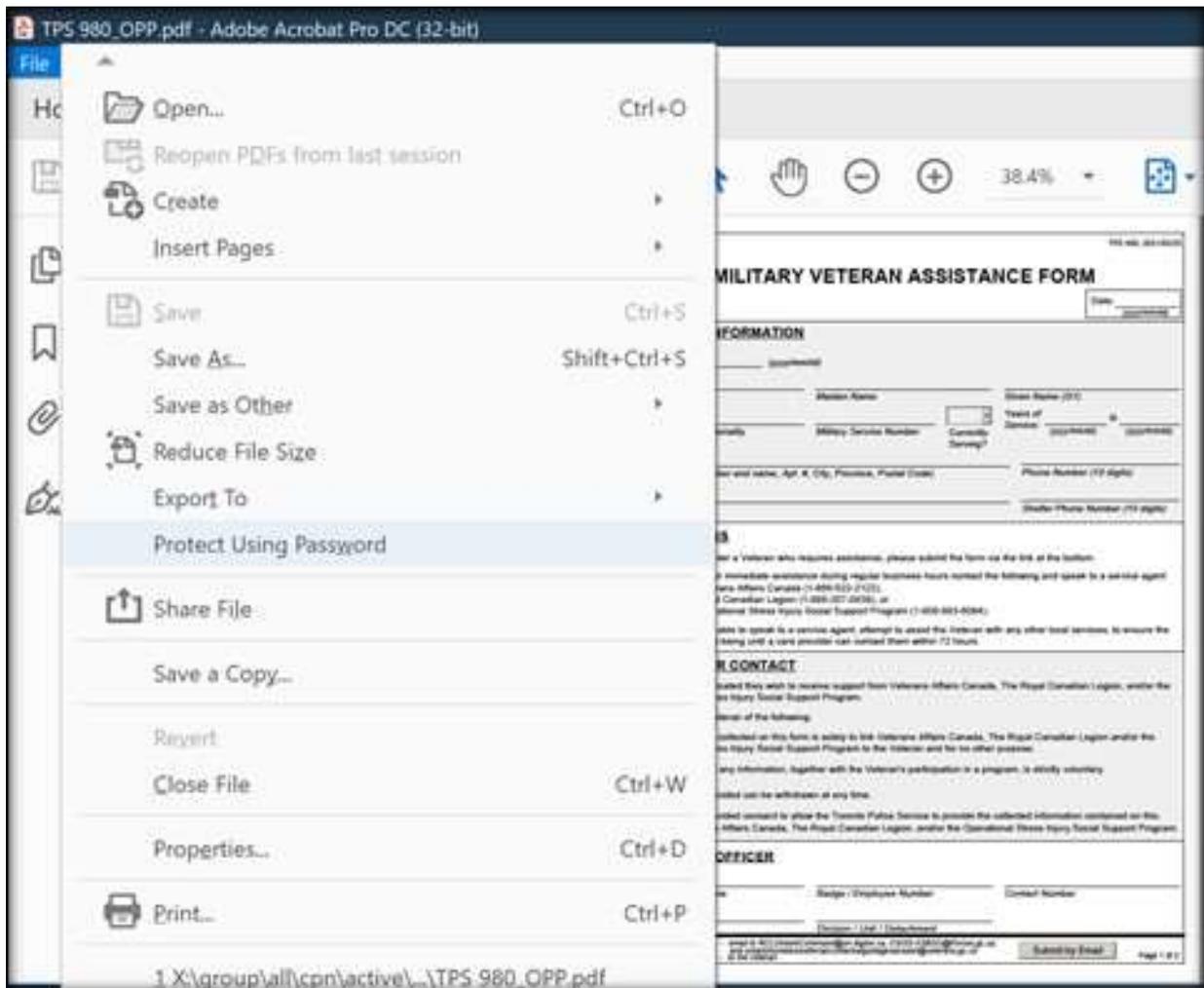
Open the file in Adobe DC

Click on FILE

Click on PROTECT USING PASSWORD

Select VIEWING

Enter Password and Click APPLY



**Protect Using Password**

Requires user to enter a password for:

Viewing  
 Editing

Type Password

Re-type Password

**Advanced Options** ▾  
Encrypt with Password  
Encrypt with Certificate

Cancel Apply

Once the file is protected, email the Military Veterans Assistance Form to Veterans Affairs Canada, Royal Canadian Legion and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support inboxes at the following locations;

1. Veterans Affairs Canada –  
militaryveteransreferrals-aiguillageveteransmilitaires@veterans.gc.ca
2. The Royal Canadian Legion - veteranservices@legion.ca
3. Operational Stress Injury Social Support - OSISS-SSBSO@Forces.gc.ca

### **Step Seven**

Ensure the referral is received by all three agencies by maintaining communication and requesting an email response.

## **Military Veterans Assistance Form - Implementation**

The Military Veterans Assistance Form is the most important part of the Wellness Program. It was developed at a time when law enforcement members found it difficult to connect military veterans to specific social services, which can help them. The assistance form was created in conjunction with Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program and went through many different approvals in all organizations over the course of 2021 - 2022.

Prior to this form, the social services had to navigate veteran consent, complicated intake procedures, and lengthy wait times. A veteran also experiences many social stigmas, which can prevent those in need of help from actually accessing these resources. With the Military Veteran Assistance Form and the Veteran Wellness Training Program, officers now have the ability to break through some of these barriers and ensure veterans receive the support they may need.

The below guide will outline how to implement the Military Veterans Assistance Form in your service.

### **Step One**

On the Military Veterans Assistance Form, change only the highlighted sections of the image below so that it is reflective of your law enforcement service. Any further changes will require a lengthy partnership approval from all services and may affect the security protocols for the form.



# MILITARY VETERAN REFERRAL FORM

PILOT TPS XXX, YYYY/MM/DD

Date: 2021/03/18  
(yyyy/mm/dd)

## VETERAN'S INFORMATION

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (yyyy/mm/dd)

Surname

Maiden Name

Given Name (G1)

Military Branch / Nationality

Military Service Number

Currently Serving?

Years of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(yyyy/mm/dd) (yyyy/mm/dd)

Address (Street number and name, Apt. #, City, Province, Postal Code)

Phone Number (10 digits)

Shelter Name

Shelter Phone Number (10 digits)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. If you encounter a Veteran who requires assistance, please submit the form via the link at the bottom.
2. In addition, for immediate assistance during regular business hours contact the following and speak to a service agent
  - Veterans Affairs Canada (1-866-522-2122),
  - Royal Canadian Legion (1-888-207-0939), or
  - Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (1-800-883-6094).
3. If you are not able to speak to a service agent, attempt to assist the Veteran with any other local services, to ensure the Veteran's well-being until a care provider can contact them within 72 hours.

## CONSENT FOR CONTACT

The Veteran indicated they wish to receive support from Veteran Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

I have advised the Veteran of the following:

- The information collected on this form is solely to link Veteran Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program to the Veteran and for no other purpose.
- The provision of any information, together with the Veteran's participation in a program, is strictly voluntary.
- The consent provided can be withdrawn at any time.
- The Veteran provided consent to allow the Toronto Police Service to provide the collected information contained on this form to Veteran Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

## SUBMITTING OFFICER

Surname, Given Name

Badge / Employee Number

Contact Number

Police Service

Division / Unit / Detachment

DISTRIBUTION: Page 1 - email to TPSVeteranWellness@TorontoPolice.on.ca  
Page 2 - to the Veteran

**SUBMIT BY E-MAIL**

Page 1 of 2

## Step Two

Program the “submit by email” button so when it is clicked; the document will be sent to the appropriate location(s);

### ***Option One***

Program the “submit by email” button for your law enforcement services Veteran Wellness Coordinator. The Coordinator will receive the form; ensure accuracy, compliance, conduct follow up, and categorize the document before sending to the three veteran social services.

### ***Option Two***

Program the “submit by email” button for all three social services so any member who has access to the form can submit it directly to;

1. Veterans Affairs Canada –  
militaryveteransreferrals-aiguillageveteransmilitaires@veterans.gc.ca
2. The Royal Canadian Legion - veteranservices@legion.ca
3. Operational Stress Injury Social Support - OSISS-SSBSO@Forces.gc.ca

### **Step Three**

Ensure the form is available on your internal system and not accessible to the public.

### **Step Four**

Have your members complete the Military Veterans Wellness Program training available on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network prior to using the form.



**Date: June, 2023**

**Corporate Communications  
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN  
Military Veterans Wellness Program Launch**

**Overview**

The Military Veterans Wellness Program (MVWP) aims to help improve the well-being of military veterans by providing Canadian law enforcement members with a better understanding of the issues veterans may be facing and providing them with the tools to help.

This program was developed in partnership with the Toronto Police Service - Community Partnership & Engagement Unit (CPEU), Department of National Defence (DND), Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), The Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) and many others.

The MVWP training program is available for free, and in both official languages, on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) and for all members of Canadian law enforcement services. It provides an understanding of military culture, challenges transitioning to civilian life, and medical barriers. It also addresses how a veteran may find themselves in crisis, having suicidal ideations or living in a situation where they do not have a home. The training goes a step further and provides specific de-escalation training for a veteran, information about the specific national veteran social services and the mechanism to make a timely referral so they can get the help they deserve.

The program was successfully launched in Sept 2022 in the city of Toronto and has been shared with several police services across Canada. The projected aims to:

- Reduce the number of veterans living without a home and/or in a mental health crisis.
- Provide dignity and prosperity for all our Canadian Armed Forces veterans.
- Increase public safety in communities across Canada.
- Provide additional resources for law enforcement members' personal well-being.

**Objectives**

- To bring awareness to the program and promote it across Canada.
- To encourage every law enforcement agency to adopt the program to support better and honour military veterans.

**Audience**

- Canadian law enforcement members and leadership

- Members of the community
- Veteran social service agencies
- Canadian politicians

## **Approach**

### **Internal**

- **eUpdate with introductory video:** To provide information and background about the program and link to the course code
- **Intranet Web Story:** Expanding on the above with quotes from the various partners. Link to the new website <http://militaryveteranswellnessprogram.ca>. Post follow up stories to celebrate successes and good news around the program as it goes forward
- **Routine Order and Parade Note**

### **External**

- **Introductory video:** Aaron Dale and Jeremy Burns will shoot a video introducing the program with TPS Video Services. To be posted on social media and media release
- **Social Media:** Draft posts from the MVWP account and share from all TPS corporate accounts. Encourage partner agencies to re-share on their Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn platforms. Regular posts will continue following the program launch to promote and celebrate successes. Leverage Mediatwist to assist with messaging and outreach via social media.
- **Partner follow-up videos:** All partners are to provide a short video of support promoting the program to be released over social media in the weeks following the launch.

## **Key Messages**

- The MVWP was established in 2019 when officers and veterans from the TPS joined forces with the OPP to develop a training program and referral system to improve veteran well-being and prevent homelessness and suicide among veterans.
- This training will help law enforcement members who interact with veterans in the community understand the mental, physical and social challenges they may be facing. It also includes de-escalation training for those in crisis, social services and support agencies available for veterans and referral processes.

- The MVWP training program is available on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) for all law enforcement members across Canada.
- The program relies on strong partnerships with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) and Operation Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS), who are all industry leaders in veteran wellness and can assist veterans across Canada.
- Law enforcement members will use the Military Veterans Assistance form to refer veterans to VAC, RCL and OSISS if they require assistance and consent to receive help. This level of cooperation between law enforcement and these Veteran Social Service agencies has never been seen before
- The De-escalation training follows the Behavioral Influence Stairway. It is led by Dr. Peter Collins, a member of the Crisis/Hostage Negotiation Team for Toronto ETF for 30 years, an operational forensic psychiatrist with the OPP's Criminal Behaviour Analysis Section and association Professor in the division of Forensic Psychiatry with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto.
- All veteran-specific mental health training was created in collaboration with Dr. Genevieve Boudreault, Psychologist at PHNX PSYCH.
- The Performance Measurement Framework, designed to measure the performance and effectiveness of the program, was created by Dr. Allyson Dale, Defence Scientist, Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis, Department of National Defense.

## Internal Routine Order

The Toronto Police Service (Service) is pleased to announce the commencement of the Military Veterans Wellness Program (MVWP). The MVWP has been developed in collaboration with the Toronto Police Military Veterans Association (TPMVA), Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), and the Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) program - administered by the Canadian Armed Forces.

The MVWP was established to equip frontline officers with raised awareness and training to enhance the recognition and understanding of military veterans' issues, building rapport, and provide a formal mechanism to connect military veterans with essential social services delivered through the RCL, VAC, and OSISS. After a police referral, these national services will make contact with the veteran within 72 hours and may provide a case worker, advocate, and/or peer to offer help and assist them in receiving the many benefits and resources that are available

Every military veteran deserves honour and respect for their service to Canada, and the Service is a proud supporter of the MVWP as it stands in solidarity with our military veterans because "Nobody Fights Alone".

### MVWP Referral Process

When encountering a person that the TPS member believes may be a military veteran, they should ask "**Have you ever served in the military?**" and offer to refer the veteran to the MVWP. The member should offer to refer the veteran to VAC, RCL and OSISS through the TPS 980 Military Veteran Assistance Form. Instructions for submission and distribution are contained within the TPS 980 form.

For the purposes of the MVWP the following definition applies:

**Veteran** means any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who releases with an honourable discharge and who successfully underwent basic training (as defined by VAC).

It is the duty of the veteran social service agency NOT the law enforcement member to confirm the veteran's military service. If the veteran is from another country some services may apply and that individual will be connected to their countries veteran social services through the Canadian services.

### CPKN Police Training – MVWP

The Service, in consultation, TPMVA and many other subject matter experts have created the Military Veterans Wellness Training Program available on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN).

This training program outlines;

- Life in the Canadian Armed Forces
- Veteran Traits, Characteristics and Struggles
- Veterans in Crisis (Unhoused and Suicidal)
- Police / Veteran interaction and de-escalation techniques
- Veteran Social Services (RCL, VAC, OSISS)
- Veteran Referrals and Assistance

This course will take approximately 60 minutes to complete with additional media content available if desired.

For CPKN joining instructions, members can refer to the attachment to this Order.

Any questions or concerns regarding the MVWP can be directed to: PC BURNS #11268 or PC DALE #11267 at local 8-0122 or email at [TPSmilitarywellness@torontopolice.on.ca](mailto:TPSmilitarywellness@torontopolice.on.ca)

Unit Commanders shall ensure that all members under their command are made aware of the contents of this Order.

Community Partners & Engagement Unit

## **Joining Instructions – CPKN “Military Veterans Wellness Training Program”**

The course is available through the TPS eCollege LMS (CPKN), [CLICK HERE](#) to access the portal.

The link to the TPS eCollege is also accessible through 'MY PORTAL' under TRAINING - 'TPS eCollege'.

The MVWP cannot be accessed via CPKN platform.

If a member is logging into the eCollege from a TPS workstation, Single Sign On (SSO) is now available and no user name or password need be entered. Click the top blue button that states “CLICK HERE TO LOG IN”.

If a member is signing in from an external NON-TPS workstation, a correct user name and password must be used to sign in.

Members are reminded that their User Name is their employee number WITHOUT the leading “b”.

Should a member not remember their password, please use the FORGOT YOUR PASSWORD link to reset their password. Reset links are ONLY sent to TPS email addresses.

The course should be loaded into every member's desktop profile.

Should you not see the course in your desktop profile you will have to JOIN the course to access it.

Follow these steps to join the course:

- Select the top menu item REPOSITORY-HOME;
- Select the menu item TORONTO POLICE SERVICE;
- Select MANDATORY TRAINING COURSES;
- Scroll down the list to find the course “Military Veterans Wellness Training Program”;
- Select the course;
- Select the JOIN TAB; and
- Click the JOIN button to join the course.

The course will now be on your desktop.

For technical issues with CPKN, please email [TPS.eCollege@torontopolice.on.ca](mailto:TPS.eCollege@torontopolice.on.ca).

Please allow 24 hours for a response. If you do not receive a response you may, in the alternative, contact CPKN support at 1-888-357-CPKN (2756), or [support@cpkn.ca](mailto:support@cpkn.ca)

## Performance Measurement Framework

<b>Training</b>			
<b>Outputs &amp; Direct Outcomes</b>		<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Output	Online Training Program	# of months/years since the online training program was reviewed  # of law enforcement members who complete the training course	
Output	Course Evaluations	% of law enforcement members who indicated that the course was standard/above standard on the evaluation form	
Output	Completion certificates	# of completion certificates provided to participants	
Outcome	Law enforcement officers better understand veterans and how to assist them in crisis	% of participants who score 70% or above on the MVWP Final Knowledge check  % of participants who agree (agree or strongly agree) with question 2 on the evaluation form:  <i>The information provided in the training package will help me de-escalate a potentially violent situation involving a military veteran.</i>  % of law enforcement members who feel prepared to refer a veteran to support services using the Military Veteran Assistance Form	
<b>Referral</b>			
<b>Outputs &amp; Direct Outcomes</b>		<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Output	Military Veterans Assistance Form	# of months/years since the Military Veterans Assistance form was last reviewed	The form should be reviewed annually

		Annual # of Military Veterans Assistance Forms submitted	
Output	Veteran Referrals	Annual # of veteran referrals from TPS received by Social Service agencies (VAC, RCL, and OSSIS)  Annual # of veteran referrals from TPS received by the RCL  Annual # veteran referrals from TPS received by OSSIS	We may not be able to collect this data from VAC but it will be provided by OSSIS and RCL
Outcome	Law enforcement officers assist veterans in crisis across Canada and effectively refer them to support services	Annual # of veterans assisted across Canada by submitting the assistance form  Annual # of veteran referrals from TPS received by Social Service agencies (VAC, RCL, and OSSIS)  Annual # of veteran referrals from TPS received by the RCL  Annual # veteran referrals from TPS received by OSSIS	We are considering that they received support after the referral has been made
<b>Policy and Planning</b>			
<b>Outputs &amp; Direct Outcomes</b>		<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Output	Policy and Routine Orders	# of months/years since the last review of the Policy and Routine Orders document  # of law enforcement organizations that have received the Policy and Routine Orders document	
Output	Performance Measurement Framework	# of months/years since the last review of the Performance Measurement Framework	
Output	Annual Report	# of months/years since the last annual report was completed  # of law enforcement agencies who have received the Annual Report	

Outcome	Stakeholders understand the program policy, and are aware of the program progress and results	% of stakeholders who agree (agree or strongly agree) that they understand the policy and routine orders (confirmed via email)  % of stakeholders who agree (agree or strongly agree) that they find the Annual report useful (confirmed via email).	I understand the MVWP policy and routine orders*  I find the annual report to be useful*
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**Collaboration**

Outputs & Direct Outcomes		Key Performance Indicators	Comments
Output	Partnerships with stakeholders and external agencies	# of partnerships with the MVWP	
Output	Military Veterans Wellness Program package	# of months/years since the MVWP package was reviewed  # of MVWP packages distributed to external agencies  % of recipients who agree (agree or strongly agree) that they find the MVWP package useful (confirmed via email).	I find the MVWP package as a whole to be useful*
Outcome	National veterans service agencies and law enforcement agencies across Canada maintain integrated partnerships to support veterans	# of stakeholders from national veterans service agencies that are satisfied with their partnership with the TPS in supporting the delivery of the MVWP(confirmed via email)	I am satisfied with my partnership with the TPS in supporting the delivery of the MVWP*

**National Implementation and Communications Plan**

Outputs & Direct Outcomes		Key Performance Indicators	Comments
Output	National Implementation Plan	% of stakeholders satisfied with the national implementation plan (confirmed via email)	I am satisfied with the national implementation plan*

		% of law enforcement agencies that have implemented the MVWP	
Output	Internal and External Communications Strategy	# of months/years since the last review of the internal and external communications plan  % of stakeholders satisfied with the internal and external communications strategy (confirmed via email)	I am satisfied with the internal and external communications plan*
Output	Awareness Site	# of months/years since last review of awareness site  Monthly traffic on Awareness site	You would want to see a steady increase
Outcome	Law enforcement agencies across Canada implement the Military Veterans Wellness Program and are supported in doing so	# of Canadian law enforcement agencies that have implemented the program  % of Canadian law enforcement agencies that have implemented the program  % of law enforcement agencies who feel satisfied with the support provided by the program creators (confirmed via email question)	I am satisfied with the support provided by the program creators*
Outcome	Law enforcement members across Canada and the Canadian public are aware of the MVWP values, vision, and progress	# of law enforcement agencies that implement the MVWP training program into their training for members.  # of views on social media platforms  Additional social media statistics  # of external news pieces about the program	Additional social media statistics and indicators will be developed by SMEs
<b>Program Intermediate and Ultimate Outcomes Indicators</b>			
<b>Outcomes</b>		<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Intermediate	Veterans receive support from national	# of veterans who have an assistance form submitted on their behalf	

	veteran's service agencies	# of veterans who have a second assistance form submitted for them through another interaction  Annual # of veterans receiving assistance through national veterans service agencies	
Intermediate	law enforcement agencies are optimized by reducing repeated service calls for veterans	Annual # of repeated service calls for veterans	
Intermediate	The referral of veterans to support services is streamlined across Canada	# of law enforcement agencies who have implemented the training program and assistance form  % of law enforcement members who feel that the referral form is easy to access and use.	This will come from the an evaluation question after the training
Ultimate	Decrease in veteran homelessness and suicide	Annual # of veterans experiencing homelessness  Annual # of veteran deaths by suicide	Review Canadian scholarly articles and journals about homelessness and suicide.
Ultimate	Dignity and prosperity for all our Canadian Armed Forces veterans	# of Canadians who feel that the program has a positive impact on the future prosperity for military veterans	This is likely not possible but you would want some kind of poll or public opinion research, once there is more widespread awareness of the program 3 to 5 years after implementation across Canada
Ultimate	Increased public safety for all communities across Canada	A comparison of public safety statistics of Canadian communities where the program was implemented year over year	This is likely not possible and would also be due to many other factors. It is also okay to not have an indicator for the ultimate outcomes since the program is only contributing to them



# **MILITARY VETERANS WELLNESS PROGRAM**

## **Royal Canadian Mounted Police**

**September 26 – 28, 2023**

Warm greetings to everyone taking part in the national launch of the Military Veterans Wellness Program.

First, I want to express my gratitude to our military veterans for their incredible sacrifices to protect our freedoms and values, and make our country and world a safer and better place. I recognize that many veterans experience wellness challenges due to the stresses of military service. I also know that these challenges can result in unemployment, relationship difficulties, addictions, homelessness and suicidal thoughts.

Many thanks to the excellent and dedicated people at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Toronto Police Service (TPS) for spearheading this much-needed initiative. It's great to see our two esteemed law enforcement organizations collaborating in the spirit of promoting safe and supportive communities. Working together, the TPS and the RCMP can empower law enforcement members to help veterans find the support services they need so they can transition to civilian life and live with dignity.

Best wishes on the success of the Military Veterans Wellness Program.

**Doug Ford**  
**Premier**



Veterans Affairs  
Canada

Deputy Minister

P.O. Box 7700  
Charlottetown, P.E.I.  
C1A 8M9

Anciens Combattants  
Canada

Sous-ministre

C.P. 7700  
Charlottetown (Î.-P.-É.)  
C1A 8M9

9 March 2022

Mr. James Ramer  
Chief of Police  
Toronto Police Service  
40 College Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2J3

Dear Chief Ramer,

I was recently briefed on the work of the members of the Toronto Police Service and its new initiative, the Military Veterans Wellness Program.

Military service, like law enforcement, is a public service with unique mental, physical and social challenges. As members leave the Canadian Armed Forces, some may encounter difficulties adjusting to life out of uniform, as they find themselves distanced from the structure and camaraderie of the military. Such difficulties may lead to homelessness or mental health crises, which can present their own challenges for law enforcement when interacting with at-risk Veterans.

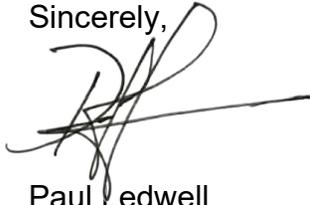
Veterans Affairs Canada is proud to partner with the Toronto Police Service in this initiative. The Department is dedicated to providing exemplary service to all Veterans, in particular to our most vulnerable, homeless or at-risk Veterans. This partnership will allow us to better support at-risk Veterans, improve the supports already in place, and strengthen our collaboration with community agencies, providers and stakeholders so at-risk Veterans get the support they need faster.

The Toronto Police Service's Military Veterans Wellness Program and the training it will provide its members will ensure homeless or at-risk Veterans are treated with care, compassion and respect, in part by understanding the challenges some Veterans face when releasing from the military.

Canada<sup>+</sup>

I look forward to hearing about the progress of the Military Veterans Wellness Program, and the positive changes and benefits it will provide our at-risk Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PL', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Paul Ledwell  
Deputy Minister



National Defence  
Headquarters  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0K2

Quartier général de  
la Défense nationale  
Ottawa (Ontario)  
K1A 0K2

Mr. James Ramer  
Chief of Police  
Toronto Police Headquarters  
40 College Street  
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2J3

7 April 2022

Dear Chief Ramer,

ENDORSEMENT LETTER  
MILITARY VETERANS WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) Program is a partnership program between Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence which offers peer support to Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, and their families who suffer the impacts of an operational stress injury (OSI). We have representatives across Canada who provide mentorship based on firsthand lived experience and practical knowledge of what life is like with an OSI. The OSISS team includes peers, who offer non-judgmental support, and can walk alongside those impacted by an OSI, in their journey. Simply put, the OSISS program is for peers by peers.

It is with great pleasure that the OSISS Program offers endorsement of the Military Veterans Wellness Program (MVWP) started by the Toronto Police Service (TPS). The OSISS Program has been involved with the MVWP since its inception in August 2020 and will continue to partner with TPS and potentially other Canadian law enforcement organizations as the MVWP grows and evolves nationally.

The Military Veterans Wellness Program (MVWP) aims to help improve the well-being of Canadian military veterans by providing law enforcement members with a better understanding of some of the issues veterans may face following their release from the military.

OSISS is confident that the MVWP will be successful in launching nationally as it is well positioned for success with all the key components of a strategic framework, logic model, performance indicators, referral system, and the training program in place.

Should you need further assistance, please contact my team via email at [OSISS-SSBSO@forces.gc.ca](mailto:OSISS-SSBSO@forces.gc.ca). We look forward to supporting the Military Veterans Wellness program.

D.R.P. Pappin  
Lieutenant-Colonel  
Acting / Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM)





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89 Industrial Parkway North  
Aurora ON L4G 4C4

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Fax: 905-841-9992  
Email: rclontariocommand@on.legion.ca  
Website: www.on.legion.ca

Mr. James Ramer, Chief of Police  
Toronto Police Service  
40 College Street,  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2J3

As a Veteran, a volunteer and Provincial President of The Royal Canadian Legion, I am writing to express my support for the Toronto Police Service's Military Veterans Wellness Program.

The primary mission of The Royal Canadian Legion is to support Veterans who have honourably served in the Canadian Armed Forces, the Commonwealth or its wartime allies, as a regular member of the RCMP, or a peace officer in a special duty area, or who served in the Merchant Navy or Ferry Command during wartime.

My current role involves leading over 390 Legion Branches in Ontario and we help homeless and near-homeless Veterans get off the streets through our "Operation Leave the Streets Behind" program. Since 2010, we have assisted almost 1,000 Veterans with gift cards for food, clothing, gas, utilities, along with funding for rent and apartment kits, when applicable.

One of the greatest challenges to assisting Veterans is finding them, as many will not self-identify. This is why The Royal Canadian Legion, Ontario Command, is proud to partner with the Toronto Police Service, Veterans Affairs Canada and Operational Stress Injury Social Support on this important initiative.

The Military Veterans Wellness Program will help us better identify Veterans on the front line to address their immediate need, provide long term solutions and to make sure no one gets left behind.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garry Pond". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Garry Pond  
Provincial President



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*Uniform Field Services*

**Clayton Campbell**  
*Director*  
*Uniform Field Services*

**Ron Tait**  
*Director*  
*Uniform Field Services*

September 18, 2023

**DELIVERED VIA EMAIL**

Toronto Police Service  
Military Veterans Wellness Program  
c/o Community Partnerships & Engagement Unit

Dear Constables Aaron Dale and Jeremy Burns:

On behalf of the Toronto Police Association, I am pleased to offer our endorsement of the Toronto Police Service's Military Veterans Wellness Program.

The TPA has been involved with this program from the beginning. We have done this because it is simply the right thing to do. Not only does this program better equip our members to serve their communities but it can help any of our own members who, like you, are veterans.

By engaging with key stakeholders, like federal government agencies and experts in operational stress injuries, you have developed a first-class program that is free and provides training on military culture, transitioning to civilian life, and how to provide support to a veteran in crisis.

The men and women who have served our country with pride and distinction deserve our respect and support. There is no better way to do this than to ensure they are living their lives to the fullest. Thanks to your efforts, more veterans are getting this chance.

The Toronto Police Association is incredibly proud of what you have accomplished, and we would strongly encourage others to lend their support to this life-saving program.

Yours truly,  
TORONTO POLICE ASSOCIATION

Jon Reid  
President

**WE PROTECT THOSE WHO PROTECT OTHERS**