



Responding to and Treating Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: What Works?

This document highlights some additional resources to help support veterans affected by Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Treatment services for veterans

Non-Liability Health Care

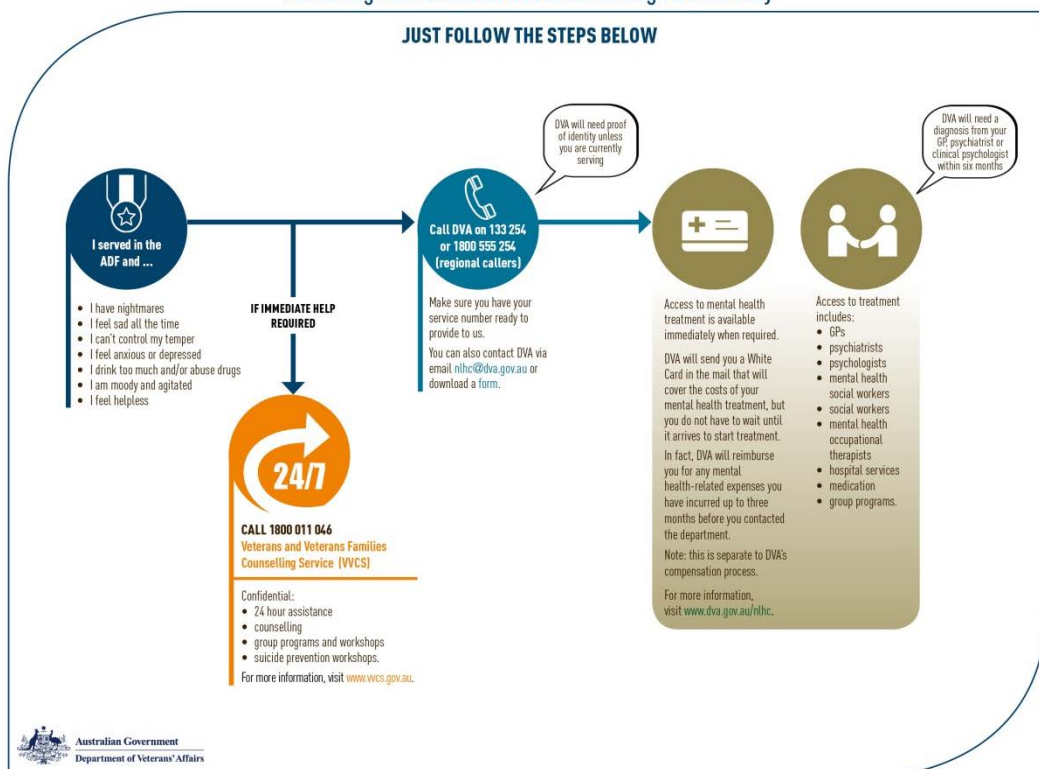
The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) can pay for treatment of certain mental health conditions without the need for the conditions to be accepted as related to service. This is known as non-liability health care. The conditions covered are:

- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Depressive Disorder
- Anxiety Disorder
- Alcohol and Substance Use disorders.

Non-liability health care is available to anyone who has served as a permanent member of the ADF.

www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/treatment-your-health-conditions

Accessing mental health treatment through DVA is easy



Trauma Recovery Programs: Treatment for veterans and former serving members

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

The standards address the key components of quality service provision:

- clinical governance
- access and targeting
- veterans' rights and responsibilities
- clinical pathways
- treatment
- clinical data collection.

If you are interested in finding out more about the programs, please contact one of the hospitals listed in the Appendix.

ADF Post-Discharge GP Health Assessment

All former serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) can access a comprehensive health assessment from their GP. This assessment is available to all former serving members of either the permanent or reserve forces and a Medicare rebate is available.

A key objective is to help GPs identify and diagnose the early onset of physical and/or mental health problems among former serving ADF members. This tool includes screening tools for alcohol use, substance use, posttraumatic stress disorder and psychological distress, as well as information on how to access other DVA services that their patient may be eligible for. Ask your GP for further information.

www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals

Clinical resources

At Ease Professional website

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

www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/assess-and-treat/ptsd

At Ease portal

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

<http://at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/recognise-the-signs/common-mental-health-disorders/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/>

Australian Guidelines for the Treatment of Acute Stress Disorder and PTSD

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

www.phoenixaustralia.org/resources/ptsd-guidelines

PTSD – Psychological Interventions Program eLearning

PTSD – Psychological Interventions Program is a free eLearning program for mental health clinicians. The program helps providers better understand the preferred treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, through a combination of case studies, active learning activities and video demonstrations. The program contains audio and video throughout to demonstrate important points or therapy techniques, self-assessment activities to test the learner knowledge and, references and links throughout so the learner can access relevant research and online resources.

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

Case Formulation eLearning

Case Formulation assists front line therapists to make better sense of complex presentations and to design and plan treatment in collaboration with their patient. This eLearning program assists clinicians to identify and focus on the presenting problems that are likely to have the most impact on recovery and help set priorities for treatment. Users will learn about the case formulation approach, and have the opportunity to hear from experts, watch demonstrations of case formulation, and then practice case formulation based on veteran case studies.

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

Mental Health Advice Book

This book draws upon the latest Australian and international best practice guidelines for the treatment of common mental health problems and aims to update practitioners who regularly treat veterans, as well as inform those who may be less familiar with veterans' mental health issues.

www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/mental-health-advice-book/mental-health-advice-book-introduction

The Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist (PCL)

The PCL (Weathers et al, 2015) is an easily administered self-report rating scale for assessing the 20 DSM-5 symptoms of PTSD. It has excellent test-retest reliability over a 2-3 day period. Internal consistency is very high for each of the four groups of items corresponding to the DSM-5 symptom clusters as well as for the full 20-item scale. The PCL correlates strongly with other measures of PTSD, such as the Mississippi Scale, the PK scale of the MMPI-2, and the Impact of Events Scale, and also correlates moderately with level of combat exposure.

www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/files/2016/10/Oct-2015-30-App-C_Measures.pdf

Veteran Mental Health Consultation Companion mobile app

The *Veteran Mental Health Consultation Companion* (VMHC2) is a free application for tablet devices, designed to assist mental health practitioners in the evidence-based assessment and treatment of their veteran patients. It contains interactive psychometric and assessment measures (including the PTSD Checklist), details of referral pathways and recommended treatments. The app also contains a range of clinical resources and patient handouts.

Please note that, due to technical issues, VMHC2 is currently only available for Apple devices.

www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/clinical-resources/vhmc2_app

High Res (High Resilience) mobile app

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

www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/highres

PTSD Coach Australia mobile app

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

www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/resources/mobile-apps/ptsd-coach

PTSD Coach Australia video

This short YouTube video details the benefits of using the *PTSD Coach Australia* mobile app as an adjunct to clinical treatment and explains how the app can be used effectively.

<https://youtu.be/2sUmqltIQvE>

Beyond The Call

This collection of stories shares the experiences of Australia's veteran community and the challenges faced by veterans and their families every day.

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

DVA Evidence Compass

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

One question analysed on the Evidence Compass is “*What emerging interventions are effective for the treatment of adults with PTSD?*”

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

The US National Center for PTSD

The US National Center for PTSD website has a wide range of resources about trauma and disaster for clinicians, researchers, PTSD sufferers, and families.

www.ptsd.va.gov

Research

Australian Gulf War Veterans' Health Study (2003)

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

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

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

The published study is available from:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/gulf-war-veterans-health-study>

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

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

The Australian Gulf War Veterans' Health Follow Up Study was a longitudinal cohort study that built upon the findings of the 2003 baseline study. As in the 2003 study, the 2015 Follow Up Study aimed to examine the physical, psychological and social health and military-related exposures of ADF veterans who served in the Gulf War as compared to ADF personnel who had not served in the Gulf War. All 1,456 participants of the baseline study were eligible to participate, and 715 Gulf War veterans participated in the Follow Up Study.

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

The published study is available from:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/research-and-development/health-studies/australian-gulf-war-veterans-follow>

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

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

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

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

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

The published study is available from:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/Health/DMH/Docs/MHPWSReport-FullReport.pdf>

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

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

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

The published study is available from:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/about-dva/publications/research-and-studies/health-research-publications/mothers-middle-east-area>

Vietnam Veterans' Family Study (2014)

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

The published study is available from:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/vietnam-veterans-family-study>

Timor-Leste Family Study (2012)

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

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

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

The published study is available from:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/timor-leste-family-study>

Rwanda Deployment Health Study (2014)

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

The study was commissioned by DVA and conducted by the Centre for Australian Military and Veterans' Health. The aim of the study was to examine the health and compensation history and outcomes of veterans of Rwanda deployments (Operation TAMAR (Troops and Medical Aid Rwanda)). The study sample included 680 veterans of Operation TAMAR. Major findings included: half of participating veterans had an accepted compensation claim, with 31% having a claim or treatment for PTSD; medical personnel had fewer compensation claims and medical presentations than rifle company and support personnel; claims were mainly lodged around the time of discharge not at incident; the majority accepted 11-15 years after the deployment.

The published study is available from:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/rwanda-deployment-health-study>

Peacekeepers' Health Study

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

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

The published study is available from:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/research-and-development/health-studies/peacekeepers-health-study>

Appendix: Hospitals providing trauma recovery programs

New South Wales

St John of God Hospital – Richmond

177 Grose Vale Road
NORTH RICHMOND NSW 2754
Phone: (02) 4570 6100
Free Call: 1800 808 339
Fax: (02) 4571 1552
Website: www.sjog.org.au

Wesley Hospital – Ashfield

91 Milton Street
ASHFIELD NSW 2131
Phone: 1300 924 522
Website: www.wesleymission.org.au

Wesley Hospital – Kogarah

7 Blake Street
KOGARAH NSW 2217
Phone: 1300 924 522
Website: www.wesleymission.org.au

Baringa Private Hospital – Coffs Harbour

31 Mackays Road
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450
Phone: (02) 6659 4444
Website: www.baringaprivate.com.au

Queensland

Greenslopes Private Hospital

Newdegate Street
GREENSLOPES QLD 4120
Phone: (07) 3394 7111
Fax: (07) 3394 7322
Website: www.greenslopesprivate.com.au

Mater Health Services (Townsville)

42 Diprose Street
PIMLICO QLD 4812
Phone: (07) 4727 4187
Fax: (07) 4755 0801
Email: tru@matertsv.org.au
Website: www.matertsv.org.au

Please note this is a non-residential programme, however, out of town residents are booked into a nearby motel.

Toowong Private Hospital

Day Treatment Services
496 Milton Road
PO Box 822
TOOWONG QLD 4066
Phone: (07) 3721 8055
Fax: (07) 3721 8054
Website: www.toowongprivatehospital.com.au

Sunshine Coast Private Hospital

12 Elsa Wilson Drive
BUDERIM QLD 4556
PO BOX 5050
Maroochydore BC 4558
Phone: (07) 5430 3305
Fax: (07) 5430 3375
Website: www.sunshinecoasthospital.com.au

South Australia**Repatriation General Hospital**

Southern Adelaide Local Health Network
Daws Road
DAW PARK SA 5041
Phone: (08) 8276 9666
Fax: (08) 8277 8267
Website: www.rgh.sa.gov.au

Victoria**Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital**

Psychological Trauma Recovery Service
300 Waterdale Road
WEST HEIDELBERG VIC 3081
Phone: (03) 9496 4138
Fax: (03) 9496 2418
Website: www.austin.org.au

The Geelong Clinic

98 Townsend Road
ST ALBANS PARK 3219
Phone: (03) 5240 0700
Fax: (03) 5248 4852
Website: www.thegeelongclinic.com.au

Western Australia

Hollywood Clinic

95 Monash Avenue
NEDLANDS WA 6009
Phone: (08) 9346 6801
Fax: (08) 9346 682
Website: www.hollywoodclinic.com.au

The Marian Centre

187 Cambridge Street
WEMBLEY WA 6014
Phone: (08) 9380 4999
Fax: (08) 9381 2612
Website: www.themariancentre.com.au

Northern Territory

At this time, there are no PTSD programs accredited in the Northern Territory.

Inquiries regarding veterans who reside in the Northern Territory should be made initially to the VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service in Darwin on 1800 011 046 or to Daw Park Hospital in Adelaide on (08) 8276 9666 or the Mater Hospital in Townsville on (07) 4727 4187.

Australian Capital Territory

At this time, there are no PTSD programs accredited in the Australian Capital Territory.

Inquiries regarding veterans who reside in the Australian Capital Territory should be made initially to the VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046 or to one of the programs in New South Wales.

Tasmania

At this time, there are no PTSD programs accredited in Tasmania.

Inquiries regarding veterans who reside in Tasmania should be made initially to the VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046 or to one of the programs in Victoria.