



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

THE NEW
VETERANS
CHARTER
For OF Veterans and their Families



How to Get Help and Help Yourself During a Mental Health Crisis

Canada 

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency Services 9-1-1

Hospital Emergency Room

Child Protection Services

National Contact Centre Network
1-866-522-2122 for services in English
1-866-522-2022 for services in French

VAC/CF Member Assistance
1-800-268-7708 (national 24 hrs/day toll-free line)

Kids Help Phone
1-800-668-6868 (national toll-free line)

Community Mental Health Clinic

Crisis Line

Friends & family I can contact:

Coping strategies that have worked for me in the past:

Positive thoughts I can use during difficult times:

Remember – if one resource is not immediately available try another!

What Causes Stress?

At one time or another, everyone feels stress.

Major events in our lives can bring on stress.

You might feel “stressed out” when you:

- return from a military deployment;
- leave the military to return to civilian life; or
- retire.

Stress can also happen if you have:

- problems at work;
- problems at home;
- money problems; or
- problems with alcohol or drugs.

Sometimes it can be hard to deal with stress if you have a mental health condition like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression.

It can also be very stressful if you are a family member trying to help a loved one in need.

Can Stress Cause a Crisis?

Yes. Stress is normal. But if you are having a hard time coping with stress, you may be in crisis.

How Do I Know if I’m in Crisis?

- You may feel out of control.
- You may feel that you cannot function.
- You may feel confused, overwhelmed and helpless.

If I Am in Crisis, What Can I Do?

If you are thinking about hurting yourself or someone else, or taking your life:

- Call 9-1-1 and tell them you need medical help right away.

- Call the toll-free VAC Assistance line at **1-800-268-7708**.
- Call the suicide hotline in your area. The number should be listed in your local telephone book on the front page of the white pages.
- Have someone drive you to the nearest hospital emergency room.

8 Ways to Prevent, or Deal With, a Crisis

Talk to your doctor. Visit your family doctor. If you do not have a doctor, seek help in finding one. Talk to your doctor when you are not in crisis. This way, your doctor can learn about your needs, put in place a plan to help you, or put you in touch with others who can help you. This might help you avoid a crisis down the road.

Prepare a list of important phone numbers.

You can use the form that is in this brochure. Keep it in a handy spot like your kitchen, wallet, or home office space.

Call Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). Call **1-866-522-2122** to learn about services and supports through Veterans Affairs Canada.

Call the VAC Assistance Service. This service offers short-term professional counselling services to former CF members, former RCMP members, war Veterans, and their families. Urgent face-to-face counselling can be arranged. You can call the VAC Assistance Service 24 hours a day at **1-800-268-7708**.

Seek Peer Support. VAC and DND offer a peer support program called OSSIS. This program puts you in touch with someone who has gone through similar stressful events, knows how you are feeling, and has been trained to help you. It is offered to CF members, Veterans, and their family members who are dealing with operational stress injuries as a direct result of military service. Call **1-800-883-6094** or visit the OSISS Web site at **www.osiss.ca**

Call a telephone crisis service. Telephone crisis lines operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Look in the white pages of your local telephone book for a service in your area. A trained person will listen to you, talk you through any difficult periods, and help you decide the next step in getting the help you or your family may need.

Contact a mental health facility or a community health clinic in your area. Staff in the clinic can usually provide mental health counselling and a range of other services. Some offer evening appointments. If you are already getting treatment through a clinic, talk to the people who are treating you. When appropriate, they can quickly arrange for emergency appointments and services.

Seek/accept help from family or friends. Let a person close to you know that you are in need of help. They might be able to provide you with the support you need until you can see a professional or get other help.

11 Ways to Take Care of Yourself

- Be easy on yourself during this difficult time.
- Do only what you need to do until you are feeling better and able to cope.
- Reduce your stress.
- Eat well.
- Get some sleep.
- Do some light exercise.
- Practice taking deep breaths.
- Think positive thoughts (“Things will get better.” “I will make it.”)
- Think about how you successfully coped with stress in the past. Use those coping techniques again.
- Try not to be alone.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and illegal drugs.

Remember...

There are a number of services and supports in place to help you. You do not have to deal with your problems alone.

This publication is available upon request in multiple formats.

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