

# INFO BRIEF



FAST FACTS ON...

## 2017 VETERAN SUICIDE MORTALITY STUDY

Suicide prevention is a public health priority for the Government of Canada. The first Veteran Suicide Mortality Study (VSMS) reports suicide mortality in the Veteran population compared to the general Canadian population. The study linked administrative data from the Department of National Defence to Canadian mortality data at Statistics Canada for the period 1976 to 2012 (37 years). Continuous improvement in suicide prevention through research is one of the key lines of effort in the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada Joint Suicide Prevention Strategy.

### 1

#### Death by Suicide in Veterans Released 1976 to 2012

- ◆ This study included Veterans who released from the Regular Force or Reserve Class C from 1976 to 2012.
- ◆ The rate over this period of time was 37 per 100,000 for male Veterans and 11 per 100,000 for female Veterans.

### 2

#### Risk for Male Veterans

- ◆ Overall, the risk of suicide among male Veterans was 1.4 times higher than the general population.
- ◆ The risk was highest among males under age 25, who had a 2.4 times higher risk of suicide than the general population.
- ◆ Male Veterans aged 55 and older had a lower risk of suicide compared to the general population.

### 3

#### Risk for Female Veterans

- ◆ The risk of suicide among female Veterans was 1.8 times higher than the general population.
- ◆ The risk was similar for both younger and older female Veterans.

### 4

#### Risk over Time

- ◆ The higher risk of suicide for both male and female Veterans has remained relatively consistent over the past four decades.

### 5

#### Help is Available

If you or someone you know needs help:

- ◆ If you are in crisis, **call 9-1-1 or the emergency number in your community.**
- ◆ For additional resources, please consult the back of this Info Brief.

...see back for References & Additional Resources

## **RESOURCES**

If you are a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) member, a Veteran, a family member, caregiver, anyone with a member or Veteran in your life who needs support, these are the places you can start to access a wide array of resources.

If you are in crisis, **call 9-1-1– or the emergency number in your community.**

The **Canada Suicide Prevention Service** enables callers to access crisis support using the technology of their choice (phone, text or chat), in English or French.

- ◆ For telephone support, call toll free: 1-833-456-4566
- ◆ For chat support: [www.crisisservicescanada.ca](http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca)
- ◆ For SMS support: text 45645 or 1-833-456-4566

**For CAF members:** visit <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services-for-members-designated-assistance-guide/part12-contacts.page> for a vast range of services available to CAF members and their families.

**For Veterans:** visit <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/services/health/mental-health> for information on the supports and services available to Veterans and their families.

Also, there is a 24 hour a day, seven days a week **Assistance Service for CAF members and Veterans (1-800-268-7708)** or **TDD (1-800-567-5803)** where you can speak with a mental health professional to organize up to 20 face to face counselling sessions.

## **Info Brief References (2017 Veteran Suicide Mortality Study):**

Simkus K, VanTil L, Pedlar D. *2017 Veteran Suicide Mortality Study: 1976 to 2012*. Charlottetown (PE): Veterans Affairs Canada, Research Directorate Technical Report; November 2017.

Report available at: <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/research-directorate/publications/reports>

Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada Joint Suicide Prevention Strategy. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada. 2017.

Report available at: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2017/caf-vac-joint-suicide-prevention-strategy.pdf>