

Mental Health Santé Mentale

Issue

- Whether the government provides sufficient and effective mental health supports and services to Veterans, Royal Canadian Mounted Police members and their families.

Background

- The men and women who have served our country deserve to receive timely mental health support when they need it. Veterans, retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police members, and their families have access to a wide range of mental health services, support and information to assist them in reducing the stresses of transitioning after their service, when present.

Considerations

- Veterans' well-being depends on finding purpose, financial security, safe housing, good health, adapting to change, contributing to their community and being valued. We have a mental health strategy that includes major initiatives, new projects and other well-being enhancements to existing programs, procedures and policies.

Current Status /Next Steps

- Eleven Operational Stress Injury clinics (OSIC)—10 outpatient and 1 inpatient—located across the country and 9 additional OSIC satellite service sites provide services to Veterans and retired RCMP members, Canadian Armed Forces members and active RCMP members. More OSIC satellite service sites will open across the country based on need. These clinics are funded by Veterans Affairs Canada.
- To access the services of the Operational Stress Injury Clinics, Veterans and former RCMP members are referred by VAC, Canadian Armed Forces members are referred by the CAF, and active RCMP members are referred by the RCMP. They have access to an interdisciplinary team of mental health professionals who provide specialized assessment and treatment services.
- Veterans who qualify also have access to approximately 4,000 independent community-based mental health professionals across the country who are registered with the department to deliver mental health treatments.
- In addition to Veterans and former RCMP members, their families and caregivers also have access to the Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Service (1-800-268-7708) or TDD (1-800-567-5803). The service includes a 24-hour toll-free help line, face-to-face psychological support, bereavement support and referral services for those individuals who are experiencing mental health or personal

difficulties. There are no requirements to qualify for the service. Also available is LifeSpeak, a free online, anonymous and confidential, mental and physical health information and self-help resource for Veterans and their families.

- The Operational Stress Injury Social Support Service (OSISS) offers confidential peer support to Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans and their families impacted by an operational stress injury. Trained peer support and family peer support coordinators provide the support. These individuals generally have first-hand experience with operational stress injuries and are familiar with Veterans Affairs Canada services and with resources available in the community. The toll-free number to reach OSISS is 1-800-883-6094.
- Anyone interested in Mental Health First Aid training for the Veteran community can receive it at no cost. We partnered with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to offer mental health literacy training which focuses on the Veteran experience..
- Veterans and their families impacted by an operational stress injury can use a series of free online and mobiles applications developed in collaboration with a number of partners. Among these are the PTSD Coach Canada and the OSI Connect mobile applications, the Operational Stress Injury Resource for Caregivers, the Veterans and Mental Health tutorial, and an Online Caregiver Training Program.
- The Royal Ottawa Health Care Group has received funding from VAC to establish and operate a Centre of Excellence on Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Related Mental Health Conditions.. The Centre of Excellence will work with and expand existing Canadian mental health clinical and research networks to increase creation and dissemination of Canadian expertise on military and Veteran mental health issues. The new Centre of Excellence opened in June of 2019.
- Additionally, the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada have launched a Joint Suicide Prevention Strategy on October 5, 2017. The Strategy includes comprehensive Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada Action Plans. The Veterans Affairs Canada Suicide Prevention Strategy Action Plan identifies 63 action items. As of spring 2019, we have completed one-third of the action plan items.