



The Family Information Network For Defence (FIND) <1800 020 031> FIND is a phone service that provides easy access to personnel information on matters of everyday interest and concern. It is a confidential service that is available to every Service person and family, anywhere in Australia.

Lifeline <131 114> If you, or a friend, need to talk to someone about a problem immediately, you can call Lifeline for the cost of a local call.

Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS) This service is available to veterans of all deployments and their families. **VETLINE** - 24 hour emergency line (Sydney/Canberra) <1800 011 046>

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY (ADFMHS)

Defweb Address <defweb2.cbr.defence.gov.au/dpedhs/>

Internet Address <www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dhs>

Email <ADFMHS@cbr.defence.gov.au>



ADF MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

posttraumatic stress disorder

FACT SHEET



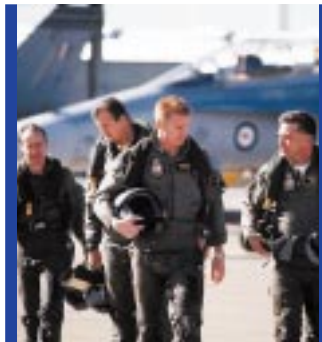
WHAT IS POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)?

PTSD is a serious mental disorder that can sometimes occur after exposure to a traumatic event. It is normal for most individuals to experience some form of distress after highly traumatic events. However, for a small number of individuals this develops into a long term and incapacitating problem. The earlier that assistance is sought in these cases the better the rate of recovery.

WHAT IS A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

What constitutes a 'trauma' is different for everyone, however there are a number of generic events that have the potential to cause significant distress. These include but are not limited to:

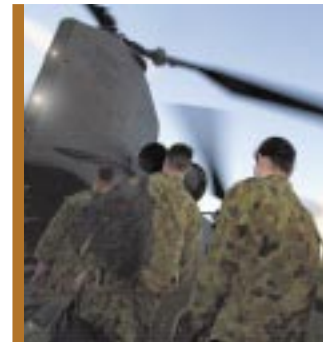
- threat of death
- serious injury
- viewing or handling of dead bodies
- death or serious injury of a close friend/colleague
- death or serious injury of a family member
- exposure to a potentially contagious disease or toxic agent
- witnessing human degradation on a large scale
- an action or inaction resulting in the serious injury or death for others



WHAT ARE COMMON REACTIONS?

Most people experience strong reactions after traumatic events, these may include:

- Re-experiencing the event (visual images awake or asleep)
- Intrusive thoughts about the event
- A desire to avoid anything attached to the event
- Feelings of panic or being highly anxious
- Feeling sad, tearful, hopeless or depressed
- Feeling your personality has changed
- Drinking more alcohol, or misusing other substances
- Feelings of guilt or anger
- Trouble concentrating, disorientation, and memory problems
- Sleep disturbance, excessive alertness, easily startled
- Feeling unable to control your moods, especially when trying to control your anger
- Having difficulties with relationships.



WHEN SHOULD I SEEK HELP?

If the symptoms outlined are causing you considerable distress and impacting on your ability to work or function socially, you need to seek help.

If these symptoms persist for more than four weeks, you should seek help.



WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you are experiencing ongoing distress please seek help as soon as possible. Contact your local Medical Centre, Chaplain, Psychologist, Social Worker or the Duty Officer/Officer of the Day. You do not have to do this alone and there is help available.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Local Medical Centre Your local medical officer can provide immediate assistance and referrals as required.

Psychology Support Section All Psych Support Sections offer a 24 hour emergency service that can be accessed through your local Duty Officer/Officer of the Day.

Defence Community Organisation <www.dco.dod.gov.au> The DCO provides assistance to members and families in all regional areas. They provide 24 hour assistance in crisis situations in all military locations and will help with appropriate referrals if required during office hours. The after hours service can be accessed through your local Duty Officer/Officer of the Day.

Chaplains There are Chaplains connected to all units in Australia who can provide support and appropriate referrals.