



VETERANS' *Health Week*

Resource Guide – 2024



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Background

The theme for Veterans' Health Week (VHW) 2024 is Keep Connected. Social connection is one of the most important contributors to a person's emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. This concept has received increasing attention worldwide since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, revealing more than ever before the serious negative impacts of social isolation on health and wellbeing.

Social isolation has been directly associated with poorer health-related quality of life, a higher consumption of health care resources and poorer outcomes from acute interventions, such as cardiovascular surgery. To overcome social isolation, individuals should be encouraged to become involved with clubs and associations, which in turn, widens networks, enhances social skills and provides structure and routine.

In the lead up to VHW 2024, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has provided a Resource Guide for VHW event organisers. Within this guide are support lines and services, DVA programs and online programs, tools and resources to encourage discussion of social connection and its importance for health and wellbeing.

Online Programs, Tools & Apps

Open Arms Self-help Tools

Open Arms offers self-help tools on its website. Two of these are particularly relevant to this year's theme of social connection:

1. Mapping tool to help recognise existing social connections and identify goals to fill gaps:
<https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/self-help-tools/show-all-tools/behaviours/social-connections>
2. Tool to identify enjoyable and rewarding activities and create an action plan for them:
<https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/self-help-tools/show-all-tools/behaviours/enjoyable-and-rewarding-activities>

Please see our Social Connection Tools resource on our website www.dva.gov.au/vhw.

Open Arms Online Information

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling information on being social and why it is important.

<https://www.openarms.gov.au/living-well/be-social>



The BRAVE programme

BRAVE is a fun, easy to use, evidence-based program designed for children and teens who want to learn how to reduce stress and anxiety, and improve their mood—and there's help for parents too.

<https://www.brave-online.com/>

Reachout – Mental Health support for young people and their families

Anonymous and confidential, ReachOut is a safe place where young people can openly express themselves, get a deeper understanding and perspective on what's happening in their lives, connect with people who will provide judgement-free support, and build the resilience to manage their challenges now and in the future.

<https://www.au.reachout.com>

This Way Up (help for adults and teens)

A range of tailored online programs are designed to teach you proven psychological skills to transform your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours so you can make a positive change in your life. Developed by the Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety and Depression, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney.

<https://thiswayup.org.au/>

MoodGym

Moodgym is like an interactive self-help book which helps you to learn and practise skills which can help to prevent and manage symptoms of depression and anxiety. Developed by ANU.

<https://www.moodgym.com.au/>

MyCompass

A customisable self-help tool for your mental health. Developed by Black Dog Institute.

<https://www.mycompass.org.au/>



Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue has created a 'Connections matter' booklet which provides older people with suggestions to help sustain their social networks.

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/older-people/connections-matter>

Lifeline

Lifeline offers a toolkit on how to get started on building new connections.

<https://toolkit.lifeline.org.au/articles/techniques/building-social-connections>

Go Beyond

Go Beyond is an online program designed to assist veterans as they transition into civilian life.

<https://gobeyond.org.au/>



DVA Programs and Support

Heart Health

The Heart Health Program is fully funded by the DVA and aims to help you increase your physical health and general wellbeing through 12 months of practical exercise support and advice on healthy lifestyle information. The Program's goal is to guide and assist participants in establishing positive and lifelong change leading to a healthier and more active lifestyle.

<https://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au>

Men's Health Peer Education (MHPE)

The MHPE Program raises awareness about men's health issues in the veteran community. The program supports and educates members of the veteran and ex-service community and encourages men to share responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

<https://www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm>

Kookaburra Kids

The Defence Kids Program is dedicated to supporting the unique needs of children from serving and ex-serving ADF families. The Defence Kids Program across Australia provides camps, activity days and age-appropriate mental health education focusing on coping skills and resilience, while allowing children to bond with peers who are facing similar challenges.

<https://kookaburrakids.org.au/>

Veterans' Health Check

A Veterans' Health Check is a comprehensive health assessment with your GP to help you better understand and optimise your health and wellbeing. It provides an opportunity to access early intervention care and appropriate referrals when you need it.

<https://dva.gov.au/get-support/health-support/veterans-health-check>

Community Support Team

The Community Support Team provides support to ex-service organisations (ESOs) and other veteran support groups across Australia and are located in all states and territories.

<https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/health-support/work-and-social-life-programs/community-support-team>



Support Lines & Services

Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling
1800 011 046

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling operates 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Open Arms is a free and confidential nationwide counselling and support service, available to members of the serving and ex-serving community, and their families.

<https://www.openarms.gov.au/>

Defence Family Helpline
1800 624 608

Australian Department of Defence Family Helpline operates 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. This helpline is staffed by qualified professionals including social workers and psychologists.

<https://www.defence.gov.au/DCO/emergency.asp>

Australian Defence Force All Hours Support Line
1800 628 036

The All-hours Support Line (ASL) is a confidential telephone support service for ADF members and their families. ASL operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

<https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/services-supportfighting-fit/need-help-now/all-hours-support-line>

Beyond Blue
1300 22 4636

Beyond blue is a mental health support service.

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support>



Lifeline

13 11 14

Lifeline offers telephone-based crisis support within Australia, 24-hours a day.

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

My Aged Care

1800 200 422

This support line provides information for older people and their carers.

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>

Head to Health

1800 595 212

Head to Health helps all Australians access the mental health and wellbeing services that are right for them. It makes it easier to navigate and choose the most suitable care options, whether that's face-to-face, via phone, or online.

<https://www.headtohealth.gov.au>

Mensline Australia

1300 789 978

Mensline offers counselling and resources for men in crisis 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

<https://www.mensline.org.au/>

SANE Helpline

1800 187 263

Sane is a mental health information and referral service.

<https://www.sane.org/>



Suicide Callback Service

1300 659 467

Suicide Call Back Service offers free professional 24/7 telephone counselling support to people at risk of suicide, concerned about someone at risk, bereaved by suicide and people experiencing emotional or mental health issues.

<https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>

The Salvation Army

13 72 58

Provide a variety of services to people in need.

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-services/>

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

National Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Counselling Service. Free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence.

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

Engage

Engage is an online portal for members of the veteran community to locate support services.

<https://engage.forcenet.gov.au/>

GoVolunteer

GoVolunteer is a website created by Volunteering Australia for potential volunteers to identify local volunteering opportunities.

<http://govolunteer.com.au/>