



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

# VETERANS' *Health Week*

**Tools for Keeping Connected**



## **Open Arms**

*Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling* offers self-help tools on their website ([www.openarms.gov.au](http://www.openarms.gov.au)). Two of these are particularly relevant to this year's theme of Keep Connected. These tools can be printed and used at your VHW event.

### **Tool 1: Social Connections**

One self-help tool provided by Open Arms is *Social Connections* which guides users through a series of prompts to help recognise their existing social connections and identify goals to fill gaps. The tool then compiles these goals into an action plan document for users. The tool can be found at: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/self-help-tools/show-all-tools/behaviours/social-connections>

Alternatively, event organisers can use the below excerpts of the first stages of the tool to prompt conversations about social connections.

### ***Tool 2: Enjoyable and rewarding activities***

Another self-help tool provided by Open Arms is *Enjoyable and rewarding activities* which provides users with a list to identify possible activities of interest. The tool then prompts the user to create an action plan for these activities and compiles this information into a document. The tool can be found at: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/self-help-tools/show-all-tools/behaviours/enjoyable-and-rewarding-activities>

Alternatively, event organisers can use the activities list included below to prompt conversations about social connections through enjoyable and rewarding activities.



## Open Arms – Social Connections Map

There are many ways to connect with other people. Completing the map will help you recognize the important connections you already have, and fill in any gaps.

People I can share my experiences with:

People who can help with advice:

People to spend time with:

People who can help with practical things:

Important relationships I'd like to strengthen:

People who I can support and help:

Social connections could include:

- **family and friends:** husband or wife, partner, friends, parents, kids
- **community:** neighbours, colleagues, community organisations
- **professional supports:** GP, psychologist, counsellor or social worker
- **defence community:** ex-service organisations, ADF supports such as medical, welfare or division officer or your ADF chain of command



## Open Arms – Social Connection Goals

There are lots of activities you can do to help strengthen your social connections. Select up to three activities you would like to do over the next week.

- ask someone for advice
- attend a lecture or talk
- buy someone a gift
- do some DIY
- do some gardening
- do a group training session
- do some volunteer work
- fix up a community building
- go camping
- go fishing
- go for a drive
- go for a walk
- go for a run or ride
- go swimming
- go to a gig
- go to a health club or gym
- go to a party
- go to the beach
- go to the movies
- go to a sports match
- have a BBQ or picnic
- help in a fundraiser
- invite someone for a catch up
- meet someone for coffee/lunch
- join a club
- kick a football or play tennis
- learn a hobby
- look after a friend's children
- plan a trip
- play card games
- prepare a new or special meal
- send someone an email or text
- talk to a professional
- talk on the phone or Skype
- talk to someone about recent experiences
- try out a new sport or activity
- visit someone who is unwell or alone
- walk the dog
- try out a new bar or restaurant



## Open Arms – Enjoyable and Rewarding Activities List

There are lots of options for getting active. Select up to three of these activities to focus on over the next week.

- buy something for yourself
- card games
- catch up with someone
- coffee/lunch with someone
- concert, gig or show
- clean the car
- create a budget
- decorate the house
- draw or paint
- drive somewhere new
- DIY jobs
- fishing
- fundraising
- gardening
- go to the beach
- go camping
- group training session
- join a club
- have a BBQ or picnic
- health club or gym
- hiking or bush walking
- indoor climbing wall
- interesting lecture or talk
- kick a football around
- learn a hobby
- listen to music
- movies
- new sport or activity
- pay the bills
- play an instrument
- prepare a new or special meal
- plan a trip
- read a book or the paper
- run or bike ride
- swim in ocean or pool
- surfing, paddle boarding or kayaking
- team sport
- train for a marathon or triathlon
- visit someone unwell
- volunteer work
- try out a new bar or restaurant
- walk the dog
- walk
- watch a sports match
- weight training
- weekly shop
- work course or qualification