



# Helping Military Personnel to Access Mental Health Services: What Works?

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# Overview...

- Introduction
- Background
- Project Goal and Objectives
- Theoretical Framework
- Methods
- Intervention
- Recommendations
- Conclusion



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## Background...

- Untreated MH issues in the CF a concern.
- 1/3 of CF personnel with PTSD did not obtain any form of treatment in their lifetime (Fikretoglu, Guay, Pedlar, & Brunet, 2007).
- Concern about possible stigmatization and other barriers to seeking MH care (Hoge et al., 2004).
- Strong association with PTSD and compromised physical health, decreased psychosocial, occupational functioning, and quality of life (Fikretoglu et al. 2007).
- Significant economic impact on civilian and military populations (Fikretoglu et al).
- Implementation of strength based intervention.



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## Goals...

- To examine how some military personnel accessed MH services and to learn what these individuals found helpful in accessing MH services and other health promotion services and to explore what other health or support programs they have used.



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## Objectives...

- a) to explore the strengths of military personnel who accessed services, how they became connected with mental health services, what was helpful, difficult and what these individuals would recommend as helpful to others.
  
- b) to develop an intervention based on the military member's responses – utilizing the voices of the military personnel. The intervention highlights what has worked for others in similar situations and success strategies for accessing services.



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## Framework: McGill Model of Nursing...

- Based on whole person care, patient and family centered, and empowerment.
- Nursing responds to the clients individual characteristics and circumstances and the relationship is collaborative.
- Assisted in understanding what works for military personnel seeking MH services so that interventions can be developed in collaboration with those who need services and develop better, more relevant programs for military members (Gottlieb & Gottlieb, 2000).



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## Methods : Setting...

- Operational Stress Injury Clinic : ROH – Ottawa.
- Specialized outpatient clinic.
- Provides comprehensive assessment and treatment for operational stress injuries (OSI), education to veterans, military members and their families, professionals and the general public.



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## Participants...

- Recruitment through recruitment flyer and letter, informal conversations and word of mouth.
- Eight volunteers.
- Presently serving and retired military personnel.



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# Intervention Design...

## Pre-brochure

- Needs assessment.
- Advisory group.
- Interviews.
- Feedback questionnaire post interview.

## Post-Brochure

- Feedback tool for evaluating brochure to identify the effectiveness of the brochure.



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## Themes and Subthemes...

- Connecting to MH Services.
- Seeking help: subtheme: Decision to seek help and rationale for decision.
- What Helped: subtheme: What was helpful in connecting.
- Where to Next: subthemes: Continued connection to care, helpful for others and other information.



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## Accessing Mental Health Care

### WHAT WORKS?

## Searching for Solutions to Accessing Mental Health Care.

### How Do I Know I Need Help?

- Loved ones tell you that you are not the same
- Colleagues ask you if you feel okay
- Loss of self confidence
- Difficulty feeling emotions
- Feeling confused
- Difficulty making decisions and setting priorities

### Others report:

- Anger
- Trouble sleeping
- Changes in appetite
- Depressed mood
- Feelings of anxiety
- Trouble working or meeting responsibilities
- Problems in relationships
- Misusing alcohol or other substances
- Thoughts of death, suicide or wishing to be dead

### How do I connect?

Other military personnel have successfully accessed mental health services. Read on and learn how they did it and what they recommend.

## What Can I Do?

### Resources other military personnel recommend:

- Talk with a trusted colleague or health care professional
- Seek help from family or friends
- Talk to your medical doctor at the local Canadian Forces Medical Clinic
- Call Mental Health Services at your base  
Psychosocial Services can be accessed through self referral at your Mental Health Clinic
- Speak with a Padre at your unit
- Canadian Forces Members Assistance Program  
1-800-268-7708  
(Confidential 24 hour/day, 365 day/year short term problem solving service)
- Seek Peer Support  
Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (OSISS) The OSISS program provides peer support to members and veterans 1-800-883-6094  
[www.osiss.ca](http://www.osiss.ca)
- Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) 1-866-522-2122

There is help. It's there for you.

## What Military Personnel Say About Connecting To Mental Health Care

"Things have changed. It is not all doom and gloom."

"Let people know it is not a death sentence, it can be worked through, and it can be overcome."

"Need to normalize your experiences. You are not the only ones having problems. Find someone who had a similar experience as a resource."

"Educate yourself. Take control of your health. We have success stories of people with PTSD and are still employed by the CF and are getting better."

"The biggest problem to date is in our heads. There is nothing to be ashamed of."

"There is help and it is effective. If you want to continue with your career or at least get healthy the only way is to get clinician help through the resources that are available."

"You need to find the right fit with a clinician. You will find people out there who are a good match don't give up till you find them."

"Speak to someone at OSISS. Talk to someone who has been through the system and is a vet. Come to the groups."

"Tell them to access services and if they are shy about it to get some reading material and find out what is really going on."





## Recommendations...

- Further research needed.
- Increased options to obtain assistance including prevention and self identification of MH issues.
- Submission of brochure to the MH Directorate, for translation and publishing.
- Brochure noted as extremely effective, and better than anything so far. Easy to read, uncomplicated messages, testimonials, great graphics and colours.



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## System Recommendations...

- Feedback mechanism needed.
- More sensitization/awareness/education of MH issues at supervisory levels in the CF.
- Barrier: Confidentiality.
- More educational programs to facilitate VA to better understand the needs and issues of today's veteran's.



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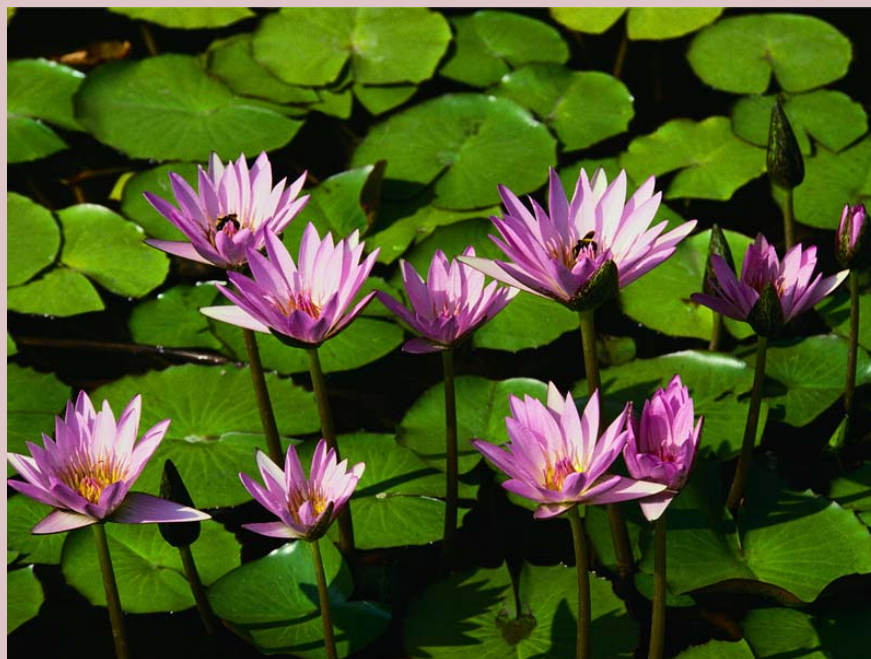
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Questions...

Thank you - Merci...



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