

Welcome to tonight's webinar. It will start at 7:15 pm AEDT.

Join a local Veteran-focused Mental Health Professionals' Network:

Networks are currently located in the following areas:

- Brisbane
- Perth
- Newcastle
- Liverpool (NSW)
- Gippsland
- Townsville
- Canberra
- Melbourne
- Adelaide

To join or find out more, click on the **supporting resources tab** (bottom right of your screen) and view the 'Join a network' document.

Mental Health and the Military Experience

> WEBINAR SERIES



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Mental Health and the Military Experience

Supporting the Families of Veterans: Understanding the Impact of Veterans' Mental Health on their Families, Partners and Children



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Tonight's panel



Dr Brad Murphy
General Practitioner



Ms Karen Green
Social Worker



Ms Joy Jenkins
Lived Experience



Dr Atsumi Fukui
Psychiatrist



Prof Mark Creamer
Clinical Psychologist
(Facilitator)

This webinar series

This is the final webinar of fifteen webinars in the Mental Health and the Military Experience series. It has been made possible through funding provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Learn more about the Department of Veterans' Affairs by visiting:
www.dva.gov.au

You may have noticed the webinar room looks a little different: we've had an upgrade.

To access all your usual interactivity and resources, hover over the colourful icons to the top right of your screen:



open the chat box



access resources including the case study, panel biographies and supporting resources



open the feedback survey

Learning Outcomes

Through a facilitated panel discussion about Jason, at the completion of the webinar participants will be able to:

- Better recognise the impact of military service and transition on families, partners and/or children
- Describe the services and resources that are available to help support families, partners and/or children during the transition period
- Have increased confidence in supporting the families, partners and/or children of veterans who are transitioning or have transitioned from the Australian Defence Force

Lived Experience Perspective

Wife perspective

- Grief
- Helpless
- Conflicted
- Guilt



Joy Jenkins

Lived Experience Perspective

Children perspective

- Confusion
- Unhealthy Relationships
- Roles



Joy Jenkins

Lived Experience Perspective

Family perspective

- Melissa and children support each other through uncertainty.
- Melissa looks after children's and husband's needs.
- Jason becoming more disconnected from the family. The daughters need their dad and need for him to be connected to them.



Joy Jenkins

Lived Experience Perspective

The future

- Despite Melissa making a decision about the course of their lives; guilt, obligation and significant memories may haunt her and make her question the decision. She may be torn between what was and what is.
- Jason didn't ask for the injury or its impact. Jason may benefit from focusing less on himself and more on the impact his outlook is having on others.
- There is no easy answer or fix. It is a complex journey for Jason, Melissa and their daughters as they try to make the best choices for everyone in a difficult and painful situation.



Joy Jenkins

Social Worker Perspective

Overview of issues impacting this family

- Jason: Adjustment to civilian life and marital/ family separation, significant physical and mental health issues and a range of psychosocial issues
- Melissa: Awareness of need for professional support for Jason, feelings of guilt for impact of issues on daughters, conflicted about issues between Jason and Ben
- Isabella: Focussed on career goals, compartmentalising emotions, concerned about Sophie
- Sophie: Lost and lonely, taking on parental role, using NSSI as a coping strategy, lack of supports/ social connectedness
- Ben: Protective role as both partner and step-parent, underlying conflict with Jason and an absence of empathy for his circumstances



Karen Green

Social Worker Perspective

Framework for understanding biopsychosocial context of issues impacting veteran, families, partners and children

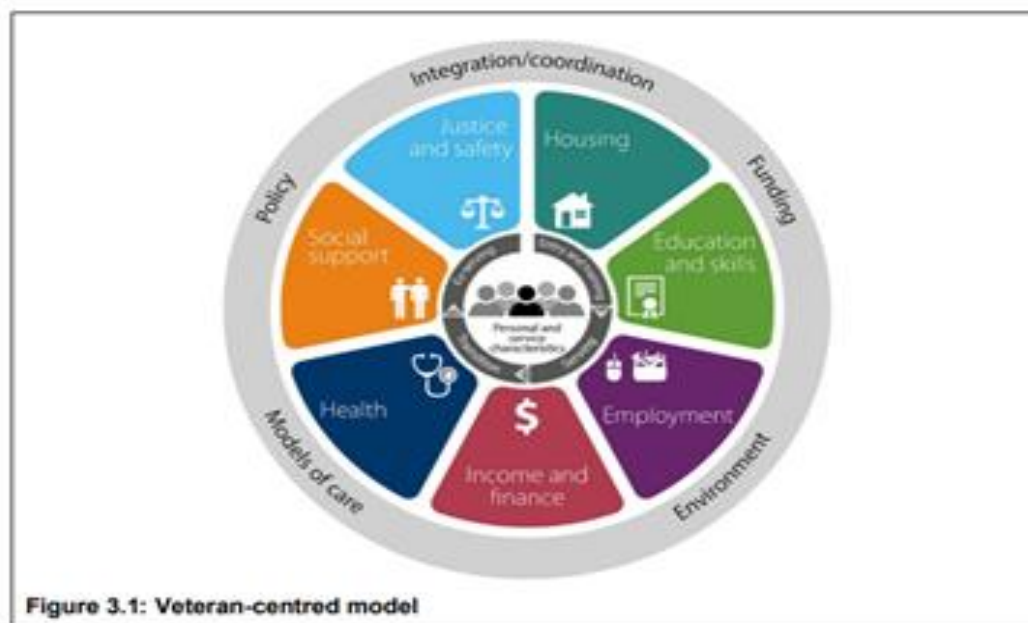


Figure 3.1: Veteran-centred model

Image taken from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. Development of a veteran-centred model: a working paper. Cat. no. PHE 224. Canberra: AIHW.



Karen Green

Social Worker Perspective

Framework for understanding biopsychosocial context of issues impacting veteran, families, partners and children (continued)

- Biopsychosocial model of mental health
 - Individual lifestyle factors
 - Social and community networks
 - Socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions
- Veteran and family centred care - What really matters to each member of this family?
- How will one positive change toward improved health impact the family system?



Karen Green

Social Worker Perspective

What will help Jason, Melissa, Isabella, Sophie and Ben?

- Accept professional support is required
- Comprehensive physical and mental health MDT assessments
- Clinical case management, counselling, group programs and access to peer support via Open Arms
- Access to counselling support for all family members
- Use of self-care strategies
- Psychoeducation and links with reputable, evidence based resources including websites, apps
- Highlighting resilience and strengths of individuals and the family system
- Ongoing review, risk assessment and monitoring



Karen Green

Social Worker Perspective

Key take-away messages for health professionals

- Early intervention for individual/ family + self-care + support from family/ friends + professional care + community connectedness = better health outcomes
- Resources are available to increase practitioners knowledge of veteran and family issues
- Centenary of ANZAC centre – Practitioner Support Service
- Stay informed about health research relevant to military and veteran communities
- Ecological models provide a foundation for understanding the relational influences on systems



Karen Green

GP Perspective

- Who is your patient?
- Importance of collateral information...
- Duty of care responsibilities and challenges re rapport...



Brad Murphy

GP Perspective

- Varying experience of the GP and team in these areas
- Don't be afraid to ask for advice/guidance/help... But where?
- RACGP Special Interest group being established



Brad Murphy

GP Perspective

Referral opportunities

- D904 DVA referral for veterans
- Open Arms 1800 011 046 - are there OA referral opportunities in your area?
- Refer to resources available.
- Specialist referral - psychologist/psychiatrist/both???
- Special interest referral opportunities - what are the opportunities within your local area? How is the specialist interest area communicated? How do you establish these working relationships?
- What are the local resources??



Brad Murphy

GP Perspective

- Patient relationships are crucial
- Importance of regular review / developing rapport and therapeutic relationship



Brad Murphy

Psychiatrist Perspective

Impact of military service on veterans

- Members/veterans do not discuss work or trauma experiences with family
- Separation - Absences from home and many live away from family
- Spouses and family often unaware of veteran's distress
- Difficulty maintaining support network due to frequent postings - isolation



Atsumi Fukui

Psychiatrist Perspective

Jason/Veteran – psychosocial factors

- Reluctance to seek help
- Loss of identity and career
- Ongoing effects of traumatic stressors
- Anger, shame, guilt, blame, mistrust, withdrawal



Atsumi Fukui

Psychiatrist Perspective

Jason/Veteran – clinical considerations

- Injuries, chronic pain
- Substance use
- Clinical Dx - MDD, PTSD, alcohol use disorder, suicide risk
- Treatment options



Atsumi Fukui

Psychiatrist Perspective

Melissa/spouse/partner

- May have no idea of veteran's issues until significant issues arise
- Guilt, anger, ambivalence, helplessness
- Caring for personal wellbeing and those of the children



Atsumi Fukui

Psychiatrist Perspective

Family

- Involve partners/carers when managing veterans - psychoeducation
- Managing the disconnect
- Support services for family members GP, Psychologist, Open Arms
- Safety



Atsumi Fukui

Questions and answers



Dr Brad Murphy
General Practitioner



Ms Karen Green
Social Worker



Ms Joy Jenkins
Lived Experience



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Local networking

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- For more information see the 'Join a network' document in the supporting resources tab (bottom right of your screen)
 - Interested in leading a face-to-face network of mental health professionals with a shared interest in veterans' mental health in your local area? MHPN can support you to do so. Contact Amanda on 03 8662 6613 or email a.zivcic@mhpn.org.au

Panellist and DVA recommended resources

- For access to resources recommend by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the panel, view the supporting resources document in the documents tab at the bottom right of the screen.

Thank you for your participation

- Please ensure you complete the feedback survey before you log out.
- Click the Feedback Survey tab at the top of the screen to open the survey.
- Your Statement of Attendance will be emailed to you within four weeks.
- You will receive an email with a link to online resources associated with this webinar in the next few weeks.

Mental Health and the Military Experience

This was the final webinar of fifteen webinars in the **Mental Health and the Military Experience** series, produced by MHPN and commissioned by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

Thanks to all who have participated in this webinar or any of the other webinars in the series.