



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

Mental Health
First Aid Canada 



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

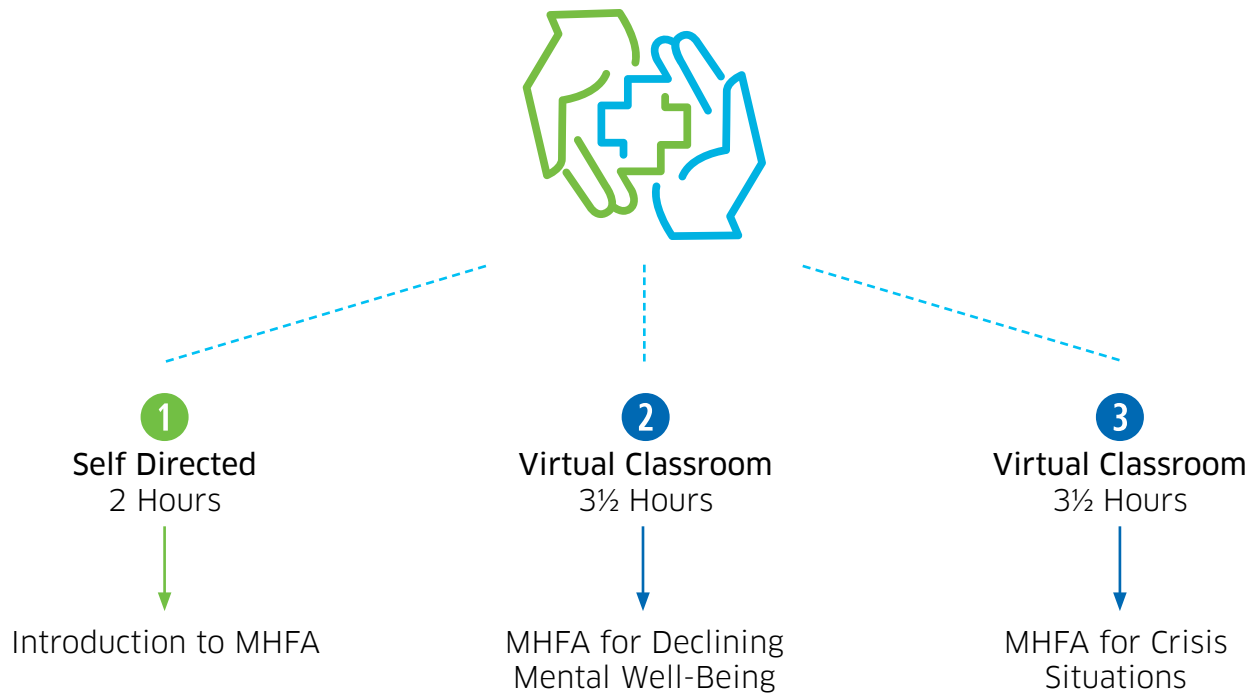
Mental Health First Aid Veteran Community (Virtual)

For supporters of Veterans and their families

Course Handout
Module 2 and 3



Course Overview



Course Aim

This course will prepare you to effectively use MHFA actions, **especially in the Veteran community**, when someone is experiencing a decline in their mental well-being or a mental health crisis.

IMPORTANT: This course is not training to provide therapy, peer support or other types of long-term support. Also, it is not designed for participants who are currently experiencing a severe mental health problem or crisis.

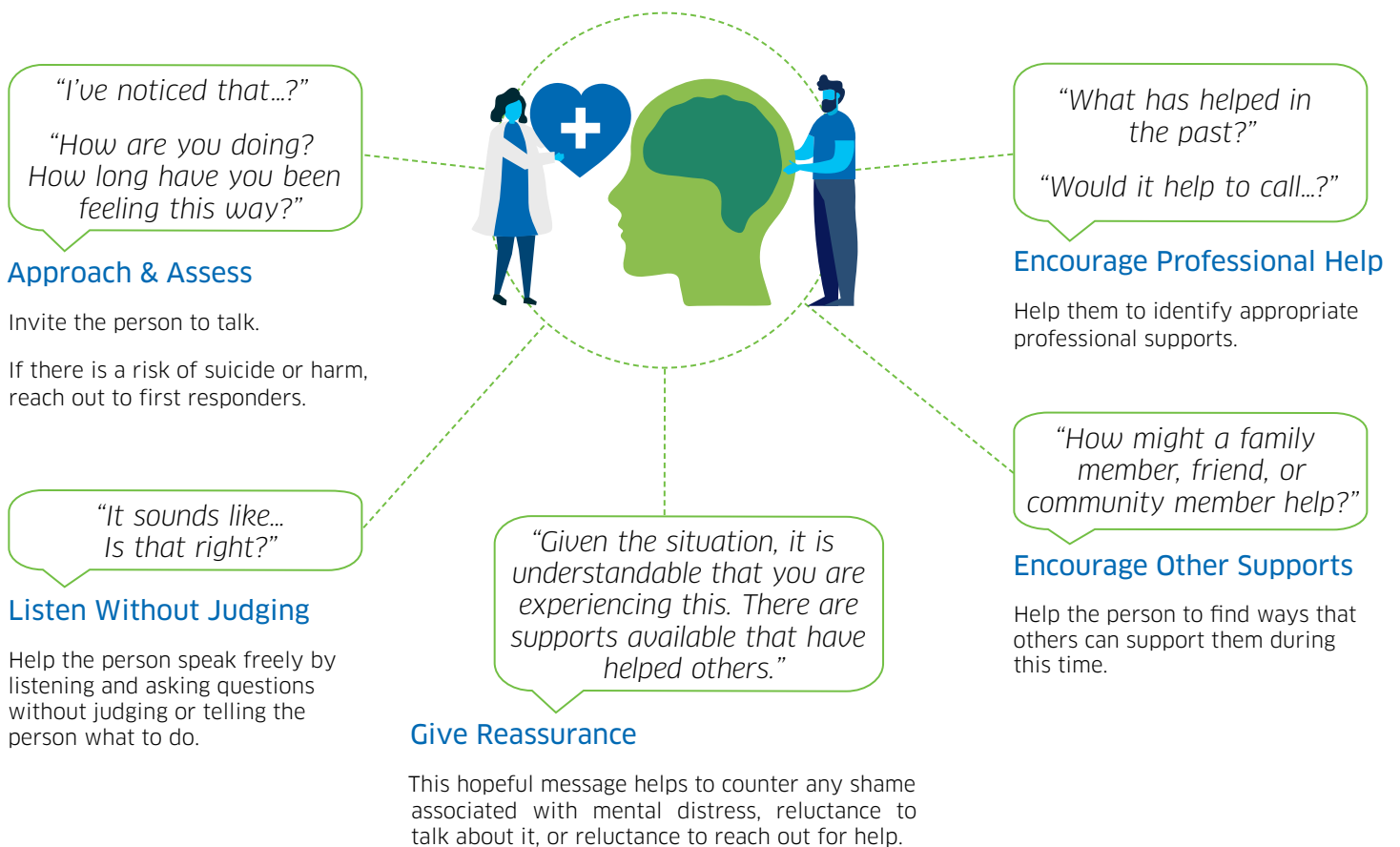
Learning Outcomes

You will learn how to:

1. Recognize signs, or changes in behaviour, that may indicate a person is experiencing a decline in their mental well-being, or a mental health or substance use crisis, especially in the Veteran community.
2. Have conversations that encourage a person to:
 - Talk with you about declines in their mental well-being.
 - Discuss supports that may help with recovery to improved mental well-being.
 - Reach out to these supports.
3. Respond with helpful actions if there is a crisis.
4. Practice self-care by using MHFA actions to manage your own mental well-being.

Conversation Guide

How can I help someone in mental distress?



Scenarios: Module 2

Some of these scenarios will be used during Module 2 and 3 to practice applying ALGEES.

Scenario 1a: Signs of a Substance Use Problem

Your sister, Maria, asks you to speak to her husband, Jim.

- He served on two missions in Kandahar.
- On his last mission, he was in an armoured vehicle when it ran over an IED (improvised explosive device).
- Two members of his unit died in the accident.
- He was severely injured, requiring 3 surgeries to his back. He still lives with a lot of pain.
- His wife, Maria administers Jim's medications. He is now asking for more frequent doses of the opiates.
- When she questioned this several weeks ago, he got angry and took charge of his medications.
- He is now more withdrawn.
- His eyes are glazed over most of the time and he has trouble falling asleep.
- When his dose wears off, he sweats and becomes anxious and irritable until the next dose.

Scenario 1b: Signs of a Substance Use Problem

You join your monthly executive meeting on Zoom with a Veterans Association.

- You notice that Jahanne, one of the meeting participants who prefers the pronoun 'they', does not look as professional as usual.
- Their eyes are red, hair messy and t-shirt stained.
- They speak with a slight slur today and seem far more unfocused than usual.
- You know that they released from service due to a leg injury a couple months ago.
- They told you last month that they were frustrated because they can no longer run and play hockey.
- After the meeting, you call Jahanne to invite them to go for a drive and get take out but they decline.

Scenario 2: Signs of Anxiety

Your friend, Ahmad:

- Was discharged from the RCMP several years ago.
- Had a bitter separation from his wife last year.
- Recently gained shared custody of his teenaged daughter.
- Stopped his daughter's participation in after school activities and says he needs to protect her from the danger he witnessed on duty.
- Has no other symptoms, no history of mental disorder, and all physical tests are normal.

Scenarios: Module 3

Scenario 3: Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours

Your social media friend, Shujaat:

- Never went on mission so that he could care for his spouse who lived with a chronic disease and recently died of Covid-19.
- A few weeks ago, he wrote that his spouse died.
- He is no longer posting regular stories about his beloved service dog.
- Today he writes, “What a relief my buddy must have felt when he died by suicide years ago.”
- When you message him he responds, “I must’ve brought Covid home. It’s my fault. I can’t live another day.”
- He says he has given back his service dog.

Scenario 4: Panic Attack

Your friend, Lara:

- Is a former army corporal.
- Had been on mission several years ago.
- Tells you she is still having trouble concentrating and remembering things.
- Reluctantly agrees to go to a festival in a park with you.
- Becomes increasingly nervous as you drive her toward the park.
- Refuses to walk through the crowded booths along unpaved paths.
- Seems agitated and unable to sit down or calm down.
- Is taking shallow, rapid breaths.

Scenario 5: Reaction to a Traumatic Event

Your brother:

- Is a CAF Veteran, now a full time RCMP Officer.
- Goes with you to an evening barbeque at a friend’s house.
- Throws himself on you when fireworks go off nearby.
- You both crash to the ground.
- He seems disoriented.
- He says he thought he was back on duty in Kandahar.

Scenario 6: Severe Effects from Alcohol Use

Your spouse/partner:

- Did three UN peacekeeping missions during 25 years of service.
- Tried a 30-day treatment program for an alcohol use problem due to an impaired driving charge.
- Feels he can't share his military experiences in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) because he feels different from the other members.
- Today he has slurred speech.
- Trouble moving.
- Irregular, shallow or slow breathing.
- Irregular, weak or slow pulse rate.
- Cold, clammy skin.



ALGEES Worksheet: Scenario 1a or 1b

<p>Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Give reassurance and information</p>	
<p>Encourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage other supports</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALGEES Worksheet: Scenario 2

<p>Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Give reassurance and information</p>	
<p>Encourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage other supports</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALGEES Worksheet: Scenario 3

<p>Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Give reassurance and information</p>	
<p>Encourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage other supports</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALGEES Worksheet: Scenario 4

<p>Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Give reassurance and information</p>	
<p>Encourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage other supports</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALGEES Worksheet: Scenario 5

<p>Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Give reassurance and information</p>	
<p>Encourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage other supports</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





ALGEES Worksheet: Scenario 6

<p>Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Give reassurance and information</p>	
<p>Encourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage other supports</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	





Module 3 Activity: Two Commitments to Practice

	Commitment 1	Commitment 2
What will I commit to doing?		
Why is this important to me?		
When will I start?		
Who/What resources could help me?		

“Knowledge is of no value
unless you put it into practice.”

Anton Chekhov





Veterans Affairs Canada Mental Health Services and Supports

Veterans deserve to receive timely mental health support and access to services when they need it.

Veterans, retired RCMP members and their families have access to a wide range of mental health services, support and information to assist them in reducing the stresses of transitioning after their military service and the burdens of mental health illness.

Mental Health Services and Supports

- Veterans who qualify have access to 11 **Operational Stress Injury Clinics** (10 outpatient and one inpatient), located across the country, and nine satellite sites that provide services closer to where Veterans live. These clinics are operated by provincial health authorities with funding from VAC.

Veterans **who qualify** have access to a national network of more than 12,000 independent mental health professionals across Canada.

- Veterans, former RCMP members and their families have access to the **VAC Assistance Service (1-800-268-7708)** or TDD (1-800-567-5803), which includes a 24-hour toll-free help line, psychological support, bereavement support and referral services close to where individuals live. URL: www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/contact/talk-to-a-professional.
- The **Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS)** offers confidential peer support to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members, Veterans and their families impacted by an operational

stress injury. Trained peer support coordinators and family peer support coordinators are familiar with VAC services and resources available in the community. Toll-free number: **1-800-883-6094** URL: osiss.ca.

- Families of medically released Veterans can also access the **Veteran Family Program** through one of the 32 Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) across the country. The Veteran Family Program aims to address the unique needs of medically releasing CAF members, medically released Veterans and their families. As families journey from military to post-service life, they can access the Veteran Family Program for information on overall health and well-being, including the Family Information Line and CAFconnection.ca.
- The **HOPE program** (Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy) is a peer support program that provides confidential peer support to military families who have lost a loved one. Call them at **1-800-883-6094** or email HOPE-ESPOIR@forces.gc.ca.



Free Online and Mobile Applications

Veterans and their families who are impacted by an operational stress injury can also access a series of free online and mobile applications, developed in collaboration with various partners:

- **PTSD Coach Canada** is a mobile application that provides information about posttraumatic stress disorder, where to find support and ways to help manage symptoms and stress. The application is available for download from the Apple Store or Google Play. URL: www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/resources/stay-connected/mobile-app/ptsd-coach-canada
- **OSI Connect** is a mental health learning and self-management mobile application developed to help OSI Clinic clients and their families understand the nature of operational stress injuries and the help available in the OSI Clinics. The application provides information on post-traumatic stress, depression, anger management, sleep problems, substance use disorder, stress management and more. URL: osiconnect.theroyal.ca.
- **LifeSpeak** is an online self-help resource that includes 900 short videos and podcasts featuring leading subject-matter experts on topics such as depression, nutrition, financial health and parenting. It features “Ask the Expert” sessions that can be accessed anonymously. LifeSpeak is also available as a downloadable free mobile app from the Apple Store or Google Play and offers the same content, along with new features. URL: veterans.lifespeak.com. Password: canada (lowercase).
- **Veterans and Mental Health** is an online tutorial for anyone who wants to learn about service-related mental health issues or supporting a loved one with a service-related mental illness. URL: camh.ca.
- The **Online Caregiver Training Program** offers support to informal caregivers of Veterans with an operational stress injury. <https://caregiverzone.ca>.
- The **Operational Stress Injury Resource for Caregivers** is a self-directed online tool for caregivers and families of CAF members and Veterans living with an operational stress injury. It includes information on operational stress injuries, their impact on the family, and how to support a CAF member or Veteran through the treatment and recovery process. URL: cfmwsms.com/caregiver/story_html5.html.