

FACT SHEET



Who are *Picking Up The Peaces*



**"YOUR MENTAL
HEALTH IS AS
IMPORTANT AS
YOUR PHYSICAL
HEALTH"**

About us

To negate the connotations of negative labeling, *PUTP* refers to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS)

Picking Up The Peaces is a not for profit organisation committed to raising national awareness of Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and associated illnesses. We are proudly auspiced under the Vietnam Veterans and Veterans Federation locally in Canberra, and well supported by their national organisation. Motor vehicle accidents trigger most cases of PTS in Australia, but it can also be caused by domestic violence, sexual and physical assault, other types of abuse, war, torture, some medical procedures or natural disasters such as flood, fire or cyclone.

Emergency service personnel are a collection of people who are more susceptible to PTS due to the nature of their work. They are repeatedly exposed to horrific scenes and traumas, sometimes on a daily basis. Military members serving in the theatre of war can be exposed to gun-fire, death and degradation; police and uniformed personnel are dealing with

ragic events such as horrific and brutal murders, child fatalities, fatal motor vehicle accidents, natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

The traumas that many of our uniformed service personnel experience while performing their duties could only be described as horrifying, and sadly it is estimated that between 15-30 percent of these service members will suffer psychological distress at some point in their career.

Picking Up The Peaces provides support, resources and education to those more at risk of developing PTS and its associated illnesses.





Our mission

To raise awareness and understanding about Post Traumatic Stress in the wider population, and to also provide assistance and support to our uniformed service personnel. Our main focus is preventing and assisting those recovering from Traumatic Stress through education, support and understanding.

In this way we aim to...

- Help those more susceptible to trauma to understand resistance, resilience and recovery
- To help people recognise the very early warning signs and symptoms of traumatic stress (either in themselves, family members or colleagues)
- To help break down mental health stigma associated with PTS
- To help people support their workmates, friends or family members who have PTS
- To encourage people to seek treatment promptly before health deteriorates to the point where recovery is more difficult and symptoms become entrenched

Values

As a credible community organisation we seek to operate at the highest levels of these values:

Integrity

- Of purpose
- Towards people
- To public

Compassion

- Offer non-judgemental advice
- Validate the experience
- Empathise

Responsibility

- Accountability
- Respect
- Honesty
- Confidentiality

Health campaign

Picking Up The Peaces has developed three key preventative health initiatives:

- a National Post Traumatic Stress Awareness Day
- a PTS Education and Literacy Program
- Anti-stigma campaign – *Let's stomp out the stigma of PTS*



“NOT ALL
WOUNDS
ARE VISIBLE”

The National PTS Awareness Event

Is an annual event, tied in with Mental Health Week; it now helps to focus community attention on early recognition of symptoms and subsequent treatment. With that education, we hope we are concurrently reducing stigma.

PTS Education and Literacy program

Former uniformed service personnel living with PTS and experiencing stigma identified a need for preventative health education to be delivered to emergency service personnel. Our Education and Literacy Program was developed by trained educators with relevant work experience, the lived experience of PTS and associated illnesses plus the experience of stigma. The education methodology of using the lived experience is based on research by Corrigan & Lundin (2001), who found three strategies to be effective for positively changing stigmatising attitudes—*education*, *contact*, and *protest*.

PUTP's PTS Education and Literacy program focuses on those diagnosed with PTS, associated illnesses and experience of stigma, to tell their personal stories in educational settings. The presentations include empirical information about PTS and associated illnesses, and the benefits of prompt help-seeking behaviour.

Peer education from the lived experience has demonstrated positive outcomes toward breaking down stigma and enabling participants to be supported when identified with early signs of PTS and its associated conditions. Increased understanding of PTS reduces potential loss of specialised corporate knowledge by

encouraging people to seek intervention at the pre-clinical stage of PTS rather than at diagnosis, by which stage PTS may be acute or chronic.

The concepts underpinning the PTS Education and Literacy Program are in alignment with both Australian Capital Territory and Australian Commonwealth policies aimed at reducing stigma associated with mental health and focusing on prevention and early intervention as a priority.

The program includes:

- What PTS is, how it manifests and associated illnesses
- The three R's – *Resistance*, *Resilience* and *Recovery*
- How to ask for help and what support is available, and how to help your work mates
- What resources members can access and how to identify clear pathways to evidence-based treatments

We focus largely on detecting early symptoms, either in you or work mates, and why seeking treatment early is critical for recovery.

Our program also highlights the damage of stigma. We have implemented a highly effective interactive method of demonstrating how stigma and negative language impacts on those who may need to seek assistance in the future.

The program is delivered peer to peer by those who have experienced first-hand working in an emergency service environment, and who also understand the culture and social identity of being an emergency service worker.





“STOMP OUT THE STIGMA OF POST TRAUMATIC STRESS”

Post-Traumatic Stress is a psychological injury that brings with it an insidious ‘stigma’. As with any illness and injury that cannot be seen, it elicits speculation and false beliefs that an individual is faking, weak or trying to defraud the system. Stigma prevents many from stepping forward and seeking treatment in the very early stages when recovery is more attainable. Addressing stigma, and the effects of self-imposed stigma, is a priority for *Picking Up The Peaces*.

Anti-stigma and health promotion campaign – PTS is an injury, not a weakness.

People who experience a mental illness describe stigma as more devastating, disabling, and life limiting than the illness itself (Schulze and Angermeyer, 2003).

If you are an organisation requiring education for your employees or would like to know more about our education and literacy program please email info@pickingupthepeaces.org.au

To register your interest in becoming a trainer for PUTP please email Dave at info@pickingupthepeaces.org.au



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the Vietnam Veterans
& Veterans Federation,
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PICKING UP
THE PEACES

PTS EDUCATION & AWARENESS

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