

Men's Health

PEER EDUCATION MAGAZINE

A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS PUBLICATION – *Promoting healthy lifestyles for Australia's veterans*

FREE



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THE FIVE SENSES EDITION

SENSE AND CONNECT How to use mindfulness to get in touch with your senses

SENSORY PROTECTION MAKES GOOD SENSE It's worth taking control

I DON'T LIKE ... Our food preferences are often developed in childhood

THE AGEING EYE • I CAN'T HEAR YOU! • ANOSMIA – LOSS OF SMELL

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editorial



Welcome to the 'FIVE

This is my first issue as editor of the *Men's Health Peer Education* magazine, having taken over the role from Naomi Mulcahy. On behalf of the Editorial Committee, I would like to thank Naomi for her hard work and dedication over the past eight years in her role as National Coordinator Men's Health Peer Education Program and editor of the magazine. My senses tell me I have big shoes to fill!

I am quite fond of my senses and don't relish the thought of any of them declining as I get older. Wrinkled skin and greying hair are noticeable changes in our body as we age, as well as hearing loss, vision deterioration and the decline in touch, taste and smell.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What we're looking for...
Letters should be no more than
100 words and relate to articles
or topics discussed in the magazine
or regarding men's health generally.

Catherine Spooner
National Coordinator, Men's Health Peer Education

SENSES' edition.

Luckily wisdom also comes with age, so perhaps that brings a greater sense of discernment about what elements of sensory input are important in any circumstance. Our senses are the gateway to how we perceive and understand our world and yet at times easily taken for granted.

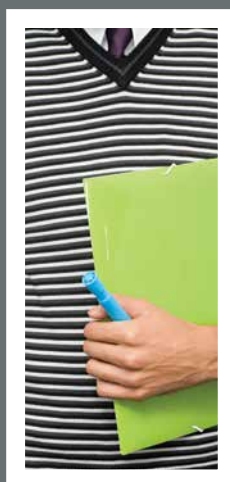
Many of the articles in this edition provide advice and ideas on how to maintain not just your sight and hearing, but also other senses, as well as how these senses all link together to affect the way that we live our life.

Make the most of your senses and get out and enjoy life!

Catherine



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The Committee would like to thank Tony Hoare for his participation on the Editorial Committee and as a regular contributor of articles for the magazine

MHPE MAGAZINE AND REPRODUCTION OF CONTENT

Just a reminder to our readers, if you would like to include an article that's appeared in an edition of the magazine in your own publication, please contact the Editor to confirm if there are any restrictions on the re-publication of the material.

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SENSORY PROTECTION MAKES GOOD SENSE



Dr Graeme Killer AO
Medical Adviser

When we are young, we take a lot of things for granted our health, and particularly our senses. Yet rarely do we think what life might be like for grandpa who is constantly looking for his glasses and has the television so loud, it practically blasts you out of the room. Nor do we appreciate how important our senses are to us as individuals and how looking after them is so important and largely in our own hands.

As an older person myself and as a doctor, I now have a far better understanding of my older patients and their needs and almost daily challenges. Despite having full access to aids for vision and hearing, they can struggle with steps, reading the paper, filling out forms, hearing announcements at the station and just ordinary conversation. Life can be enjoyable but constantly challenging because

sensory input is diminished or in some cases misleading. The glass door is closer than you think.

It's not just about inconvenience, it's about safety and quality of life. It is also worth remembering that ordinary day-to-day events involving sensory loss in and around the home are often associated with heightened levels of anxiety.

For canine lovers, loss of senses in their favourite pets mirrors the human experience. Sensory loss impacts on their everyday activities or lack thereof. Because of hearing loss my 15-year-old Jack Russell no longer responds to her name and because of cataracts has difficulty with climbing stairs and has run into glass doors. There has been one bonus, however – no more panic attacks, as she no longer hears

thunder and sleeps through violent storms. Why bring dogs into this discussion? It is because we see changes in our pets we don't often see or recognise in ourselves.

The younger people decide to better understand their own senses, the more likely they are to do

something about it to protect their senses at work and play. Without appropriate protection, eye injuries are so common at work, around the home and in sport. Of course it's the same story for hearing.

For older veterans the loss of one or more senses is a real challenge in ageing and activities of daily living.

Regular visits to your general practitioner with eye and hearing checks, regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle are important. As is use of appropriate aids. Prescribed medication can sometimes adversely impact on your senses, your vision and balance etcetera, so talk to your doctor.

In summary, sensory education and sensory protection are key issues in public health. Sensory loss potentially has a major impact on both the community at large in social, economic and health terms and for the individual. What is good for the individual is good for the country. The key message for all of us is that we can take control and do so much more for ourselves, and downstream it is worth it.

For older veterans the loss of one or more senses is a real challenge in ageing and activities of daily living.

THE AGEING EYE

Many of us are aware of the deterioration of our eyesight as we begin to age. Most individuals over the age of 50 require reading glasses as the lenses in our eyes stiffen and lose their ability to change shape to focus on near objects. This deterioration in vision is called presbyopia and is not a disease but just a reflection of ageing. Fortunately, it is easily remedied with reading glasses.

A common condition affecting the eyes as we age is cataract. In this condition, the lenses in the eyes lose their transparency and gradually become opaque. Vision becomes dimmer and it is sometimes described as 'like looking through tissue paper'. Cataract surgery has now become quite sophisticated and the

Many individuals can often get by with minimal correction after cataract replacement surgery while a few are fortunate enough to not need any glasses at all.

cataracts can be removed through a very small incision in the eye and a replacement intraocular lens inserted through the same incision. Preoperative measurement of the eye will allow a lens with the appropriate correction to be inserted. Many individuals can often get by with minimal correction after cataract replacement surgery while

a few are fortunate enough to not need any glasses at all.

In recent years, laser-assisted cataract surgery has been introduced but unfortunately the high expectation of better outcomes compared to usual surgery have not been shown. So there is no justification for spending a few hundred dollars more for laser-assisted cataract surgery.

Prevention of cataract is still important by avoiding ultraviolet light. Wearing of hats and sunglasses is now recommended to protect the eyes, even for children.

Another eye disease associated with ageing is called age-related macular degeneration (ARMD). The macula is the part of the retina at the back of the eye, which is used for best or central vision.

We use peripheral vision mainly to identify moving objects and then look at fine detail with our good central vision such as when reading, writing, watching television and recognising faces.

ARMD is now the most common cause of permanent visual loss in Australia. It usually appears as: a gradual decline in the ability to see objects clearly; distorted vision; dark or empty spaces blocking the central field of vision; and dimming of colour vision.

ARMD affects one in seven Australians over the age of 50 and increases with age, affecting nearly

one in five people over 85. It is about three times more common in smokers and appears at an earlier age. Ceasing smoking for 20 years reduces this risk to about normal. The associated visual impairment affects healthy and independent aging and is associated with a risk of falls, depression, hip fractures, and earlier admission to nursing homes.

'Wet' ARMD is twice as common as the 'dry' type and is associated with an increase in new blood vessels in the retina. These can leak or bleed, destroying the cells in the retina. The exciting news about macular degeneration is that the injection treatment developed a decade ago now appears to stop or reduce the progression of the 'wet' form of this disease. The injections into the eye reduce the growth of new blood vessels. The treatment is now widely available and is listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule. This has been one of the most exciting developments in preventing blindness in recent years.

The sooner ARMD is detected, the better the outcome, so we recommend regular eye checks.

Dr Warren K Harrex
DVA Medical Adviser



I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

Brian* didn't know much about hearing loss when he came back from Vietnam.

'No one knew about hearing protection back then. There was gunfire, explosions, and where I was, we were camped near where the helicopters took off and landed. So there was noise all around us all the time,' he said.

Hearing loss is one of the most common conditions experienced by veterans, yet it is often misunderstood by others.

Brian continued: 'I didn't think much about my hearing at first. Then I began to realise I couldn't hear so well any more, especially when I was talking in groups. My wife used to tell me I was saying the wrong thing to people, and would sometimes tell me I'm ignoring her when I just

couldn't hear her. It was frustrating and embarrassing for me, and I'll be honest, it was hard for her putting up with me constantly asking for repeats.'

Hearing loss is sometimes linked with social isolation, depression and anxiety, and for Brian, social situations became difficult.

'I gave up going to parties and restaurants. I thought, "what's the point going if I can't hear anyone anyway?" I was angry and depressed.'

After years of putting up with poor hearing, Brian went to see an audiologist.

'At first it was my wife who encouraged me to get hearing aids. At first I didn't think they'd be any good, but after a couple of weeks I got used to them and things really improved. I felt connected with people again.'

Hearing aids can help, but they don't restore perfect hearing.

'I'll never get my hearing back. But things are a lot better now. My hearing aids still don't work well at the club. I told my audiologist about it and she talked with me about some really useful strategies to help improve my communication. She helped me regain my confidence talking with people. My wife came into an appointment with me and we went through some good ways to communicate at home. Things are much easier for the both of us now.'

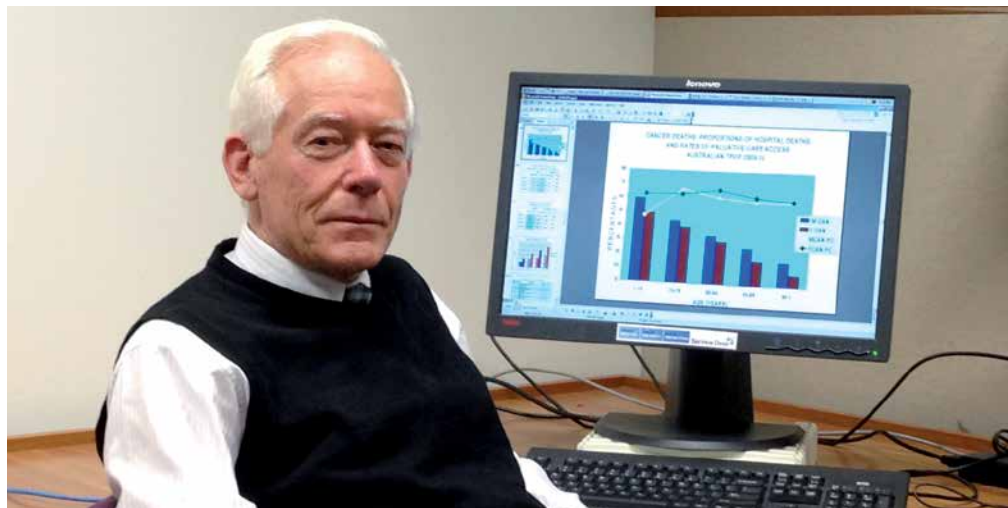
**Not his real name*

Jason Ridgway
DVA Audiology Adviser

Veterans can get help for their hearing. Talk with your doctor or your audiologist about how to apply for hearing services, or visit www.hearingservices.gov.au.



IT'S TOUCHING



Dr Tony Ireland, PhD
DVA Medical Adviser

So many notions in a single word ...
At my 60-year school reunion, most of us declared that it was good to touch base. The reunion survivors vowed to stay in touch.

In touch is also where the football action temporarily stops. The half-century reached with a flowing cover drive, the fifty-foot putt stopping dead by the hole invariably raises the murmured commentary about excellent touch. "Touché!" cries the fencer while stabbing an opponent, or the joker when the jest is fired back. "Taché" is fizzy wine with a hint of colour and flavour from contact with grape skins.

A thought or expression is called touching if it makes you feel warm and special, or perhaps touchy-feely if it makes us squirm. Touched can mean a degree of madness, sometimes attributed to a touch of the sun. Being a soft touch is the opposite of being a banker. We use touch-paper to release fireworks and a touchstone is a benchmark of quality or a description of a true friend.

Nothing can touch the ability of super-champions or the ego of politicians. Some of us mere mortals may briefly and occasionally experience, or touch, something similar. Touching up can have lewd connotations, but more properly it describes making small renovations or cosmetic changes, and jockeys will do this to any steed other than Winx.

Our sense of touch, most evident in our fingertips, distinguishes heat, cold, sharp, blunt, vibration, itch,

As we age many or most of our senses lose some of their sharp edge. This can include our sense of touch in all its varieties.

pain, pleasure – or simply that we are touching something. My father could identify different types of timber just by feeling them. Touch is one of our key defences against environmental hazards and one of our key means of recognising friendly signals, whether animal, mineral or in the supermarket.

Some folk seek to find wellness with massages, while others do the same in the zero-touch bliss of the

flotation tank or the maxi-engaged heaven of the rugby scrum. Perhaps these are ways of getting in touch with your inner self?

As we age many or most of our senses lose some of their sharp edge. This can include our sense of touch in all its varieties. Illnesses like diabetes or damage to the nervous system can leave us without awareness of sensation in parts of our body, creating a greater risk of injury. We can fall out of touch with friends, family, the multi-media frenzy of the modern world, the price of real estate or this morning's weather.

We are sometimes advised to counter these disasters by stopping to smell the roses. While not advising random touching of rose bushes, we may also consider being more conscious of what we are touching and what touches us – body, mind and spirit. Be careful of situations where our touch has become less certain, but practise ways of touching and staying in touch with the important objects, events and persons in our lives.

You might be touched.

MAKING SENSE OF WINE: AN ENCOUNTER WITH A 'NOSE'

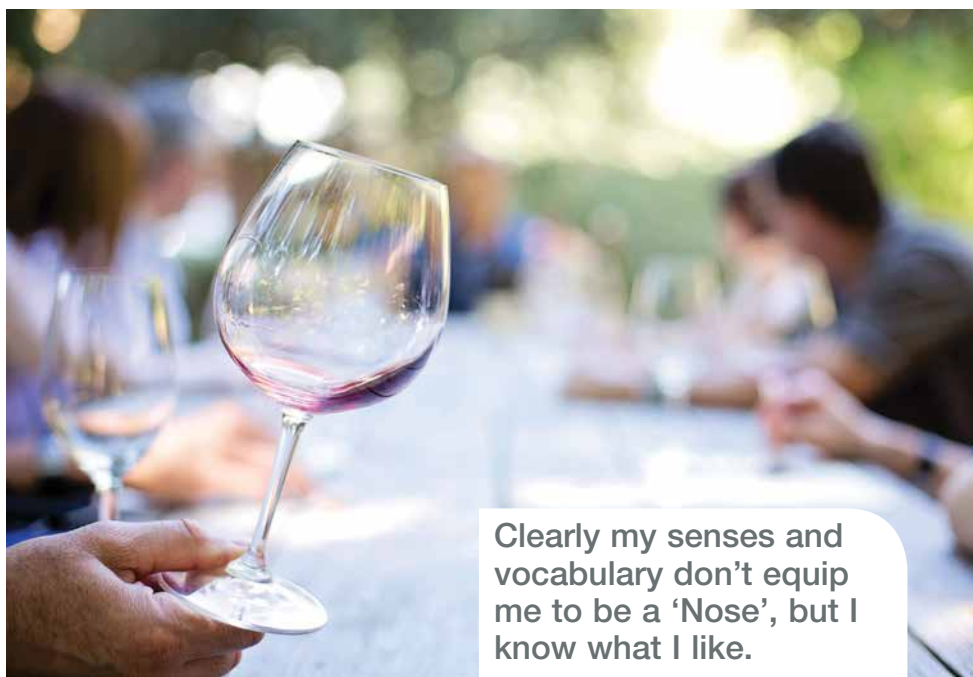
'A nose of mulberry, sandalwood and golden syrup, with a back note of freshly opened chips, suggesting a cheeky central Victorian picked at full moon by a Scandinavian backpacker in thongs.'

Seems like a nice wine to me; am I missing something? Perhaps I need someone knowledgeable who can help guide me through what is desirable in a wine, and who tolerates my price bracket.

The components of wine tasting (apparently) are appearance, aroma, mouthfeel and aftertaste, and a good wine exhibits these elements in harmony. The first of these is missing if we put a paper-bag-wrapped bottle to our lips, or drink from a 'Best Dad' mug. So let's start with a glass, and make it one that tapers at the top to concentrate the aroma. This also lets you have a sniff, a swirl and another sniff to affirm the second of the four elements.

What I don't smell is grapes. If you wish to communicate what you can smell, there are hundreds of terms, including pencil shavings or bacon (good, maybe) and wet wood (bad). I might know the smell but can't name it, but an experienced wine 'Nose' says 'mulberry' and I realise 'that's it'.

Now the fun as it goes in the mouth. I think it's my taste buds, but no, it is up the back of the mouth to millions of smell receptors and I struggle even more to describe the wine. But I am enjoying it—let's not forget why we are doing this in the first place! 'What can you notice now?' Hmm, the mulberry is gone but I notice liquorice. 'That's because it's a shiraz' says the 'Nose'. (That's on the label; now I am getting it!)



Clearly my senses and vocabulary don't equip me to be a 'Nose', but I know what I like.

OK, so taste is really smell. But mouthfeel is not taste (so does taste exist?), and I appreciate that; my children still dislike the texture of avocado. Chewy and big is good (apparently) but this is a liquid being appraised. I'm struggling again!

Aftertaste is interpreted by the brain, despite the fact the wine is now in my stomach or spittoon (the latter rarely used at a dinner party). 'Long' says the 'Nose', with no sign of a tape measure 'and persistent' – I vaguely understand. If it was awful wine I paid too much for, that would also leave a bad aftertaste. The 'Nose' dismisses the joke, and suggests a horizontal tasting; is this a bad pick-up line or what you do after a fourth bottle?

Clearly my senses and vocabulary don't equip me to be a 'Nose', but I know what I like. Next time you feel overwhelmed by a wine snob, remind them of the Judgement of Paris, repeated over the decades with similar results. Great wines

from France and California were blind-tested by French judges (this means they couldn't see the bottles, not that they were inebriated), and the New World wines won. Sacré bleu! More importantly, studies have demonstrated that the average person has trouble differentiating expensive wines from cheaper ones (above a certain price bracket anyway).

Missing from my encounter was the most important sensory descriptor, Joy. That is what occurs when you stimulate all your senses as you plan, prepare and participate in eating and drinking a meal with people who share your passions. From the sounds of music playing and a cork popping, to a kiss on the cheek as you pass the glass, wine (in moderation) is best enjoyed as an integral part of a social event. Just remember to invite the 'Nose'.

Tony Hoare
DVA Health Promotion

WHITE CARD ON TRANSITION

Access to mental health care is set to become even easier under a new process the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will use to supply White Health Cards to transitioning members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

From mid-2018, eligible transitioning personnel will automatically be sent a White Card to access mental health treatment without the need for claiming.

Accessing mental health care is simple:

- Once you have your White Card or letter from DVA confirming your eligibility, show either to your treatment provider to receive treatment paid for by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- Treatment providers include: general practitioners (GPs), psychologists, psychiatrists,

mental health social workers, mental health occupational therapists, hospital services, and more.

- It's a good idea to check that your treatment provider accepts DVA White Cards at the time you make your appointment.

Note that you will have to pay for any medicines you're prescribed as part of your treatment.

However:

- Show your White Card to the pharmacist and you can buy the medicines at a reduced concessional rate.

- You may also be eligible for a fortnightly payment to help with the cost of medicines. DVA will write to you if this is the case. Please let the department know if your contact details have changed post-separation.

If you have already transitioned from the ADF and do not have a White Card for mental health treatment, you may still be able to access this treatment. Simply contact DVA via email nlhc@dva.gov.au or call 1800 555 254. Your condition does not need to be service-related, and you don't need a diagnosis.

If you have any questions please call DVA on **1800 555 254** or email **generalenquiries@dva.gov.au**.

More information can be found at **www.dva.gov.au/nlhc**. Immediate assistance can also be provided by the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS), which provides a free and confidential 24-hour counselling service for eligible veterans and their families on **1800 011 046**.



COMPETITORS EMBRACE 10,000

The Department of Veterans' Affairs recently coordinated its second National 10,000 Steps Challenge. The theme for 2017 was the Kokoda Track, with the event timed to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the 1942 Pacific War campaign. The four-week challenge tied in with Veterans' Health Week (VHW), with its 2017 focus on physical activity.

The broad veteran community was invited to join in, resulting in a healthy increase in participation numbers from 780 steppers in 159 teams in 2016 to more than 1,300 steppers and 260 teams in 2017.

This increase in participant numbers was in part the result of

early promotional work by many enthusiastic and competitive previous participants.

As with the inaugural 10,000 Steps Challenge, a key component of the challenge was the focus on military history, complementing the aims of strengthening social connections and improving participants' daily step count within a fun, friendly yet competitive environment.

A wide selection of challenge categories provided the opportunity for a new group of participants and for the first time several teams of war widows entered the challenge. With an average age of 80+, these advocates of Nordic Walking were

an inspirational example of the health benefits of staying active through life. Winning the national title for the most steps taken in their category, the Warragul Norti Walkers attributed their success to their walking coach, Shane McSweeney.

The ex-service organisation (ESO) category was the largest, with more than 845 participants registering in 169 teams across Australia, accounting for more than half of all categories combined. The Bayside Blitz team from Swansea RSL Sub Branch in Tasmania took home the National ESO 10,000 Steps trophy for most steps taken, with team members also taking out titles including those for the most steps



Below: Winning MHPE team - *The Banyo Bandits* from Geebung RSL Sub-branch, Queensland.



Below: National winning team - RDW from Kapooka Barracks, NSW and National winning ESO team - Bayside Blitz from Swansea RSL Sub branch, TAS



STEPS CHALLENGE

taken by an individual and by an over-60 individual.

MHPE volunteers were well represented with many of our volunteers not only participating themselves but also spending their time encouraging, motivating and coordinating a number of teams. In the true spirit of 'if you want something done, give it to a busy person', Rick Paton (Assistant Secretary for Geebung RSL Sub Branch) went that extra mile by not only coordinating the step entry for up to 11 teams, but finding time to develop an interactive step entry form that collated multiple team entries into the one spreadsheet. His contribution was greatly appreciated by the challenge co-ordinators and team members alike.

The current serving or Australian Defence Force category attracted 34 teams, more than double the number in the previous year. The national winning team was RDW – Recruit Development Wing from Kapooka, though for only an extra 640 steps per team member per day, the NSW-based Happy Wanderers would have 'walked' away with the title.

Although the challenge is over, the fitness trackers, smart watches and pedometers are still being fired up and the counting continues, as steppers everywhere aim to reach a few more steps than yesterday.

Vicki Fox
National Coordinator
DVA 10K Steps National
Challenge



I DON'T LIKE...

*chilli capsicum banana
tomato garlic
pineapple avocado
cabbage*



The problem is quite simple – I just don't like vegetables,' my client revealed. I listened, but to be honest, it wasn't the first time I had heard 'I don't like x, y or z'.

'What if there is no such thing as tastes?' I asked. Being a science teacher, my client thought he was about to be tricked and had reservations about accepting this statement without putting up a fight.

The truth is, taste preferences are more about other factors than the actual sensations emitted by our taste buds in response to different foods. Taste preferences are developed in early childhood, but do change over time and with intervention.

Familiarity is the biggest part of taste preferences. Why do Australians love Vegemite, why will Thai children eat Thai curries but not Indian curries and why do the Japanese enjoy raw seafood? With frequent travel and moving between different cultures, you will find that you start to enjoy a variety of foods, even ones you initially found confronting.

Strategies to change taste do not take effect overnight, although they can be rapid. When you have grown up not liking a particular food, you will continue to have negative associations with it.

It is known that new taste buds take at least three weeks to develop, but the psychological aspects of taste can take much longer. In children, it has been shown that they need to be exposed to a food more than

10 times before they will accept the new food. Funnily enough, I have tried this with numerous adults, and the same is true.

You can introduce the food to yourself and train yourself to like a variety of healthy foods. You can also do this to big kids, like husbands or teenagers who refuse to make changes.

You only need to eat small amounts to change taste preferences. Although a bite of broccoli might not remarkably improve your (or a child's) nutritional intake initially, the benefits of familiarity and long-term acceptance are worth it. This can also go the other way. For example, with children, a tiny sip of coke or finger of chocolate spread may not negatively affect their nutritional intake, but can be the start of poor taste preferences for the child who becomes a teenager then an adult.

Creating a positive environment with different foods that you once didn't like is needed to create positive associations with new foods. Simple strategies include self-suggesting 'I love x prepared in this way', and making sure you are in a nice place without negative distractions, or fights. This is why nagging children and causing arguments about eating certain foods only exacerbates distaste for those foods.

At the start, this is something you make yourself do. Challenge yourself. Once you challenge yourself, it will become habit and, sooner or later, you will be saying to a friend 'Do you remember when I didn't eat that?'.

You can introduce the food to yourself and train yourself to like a variety of healthy foods.



PREPARING TASTY FOOD

It is common that people don't eat, and think they don't like, some foods because they simply don't know how to prepare them. Again, this comes down to familiarity, rather than true taste. It's traditional in our culture to eat meat and three vegetables, but you don't need to stick to rules associated with this.

As we age, our senses also decrease (and I probably don't need to tell many that our food has changed over the years). If you are having trouble tasting foods, or food tastes different, make sure you get an Accredited Practising Dietitian or doctor to check you out. It may be a side effect of a medication, indication of an illness or a nutritional deficiency such as zinc.

Once your health has been given the tick of approval, make sure you are well hydrated. As we get older our thirst mechanism is weakened, so we don't drink enough. Flavourings that are still healthy can spice up your meals. For example, garlic, ginger, herbs and spices can make foods tastier, and different from the night before if you are having a repeat. Preparing foods in a variety of ways is the key to keeping you and your family interested in each meal. However, for some people, variety in preparation techniques is not the problem. Convenience is. Keep healthy food at eye level, batch cook and make it easy for yourself to eat healthily.

Tara Diversi/DVA Dietetics Adviser

GENERAL EYE HEALTH

Maintaining good eye health is important throughout your life. In addition to having regular eye checks with an optometrist, you should follow these tips to help keep your eyes healthy.

WEAR PROTECTIVE EYEWEAR

Common household chores and DIY projects around the home result in thousands of eye accidents every year. You should wear high-quality protective eyewear when playing sports or doing activities such as mowing the lawn, using hand tools or spray painting. Protective eyewear includes safety glasses and goggles, safety shields and eye guards. Depending on your occupation, your employer may be required to supply protective eyewear in order to provide a safe work environment.

QUIT SMOKING

Smoking is bad for your health, including the health of your eyes. Smoking greatly increases the risk of developing a retinal disease (e.g. age-related macular degeneration)

and cataracts, worsens existing vision problems and can cause optic nerve damage, leading to blindness.

PROTECT YOUR EYES FROM UV RAYS

The sun's harmful rays can cause a number of eye conditions, including cataracts, eye cancers, photokeratitis (eye sunburn) and pterygium (Surfer's Eye). Good-quality sunglasses, especially ones that are wraparound with polarised lenses, are a great way of avoiding the damage caused by bright sunlight. When purchasing sunglasses, look for ones that block out 99–100% of both UVA and UVB radiation. A wide-brimmed hat should also be worn to help shield your eyes. Avoid looking directly at the sun as you may end up with permanent damage to your eyes.




AVOID FLASH BURNS

Exposure to a welder's torch, reflection off water or snow, a sunlamp in a tanning salon or

looking directly at extremely powerful lights, such as a photographer's halogen flood lamp, can cause a flash burn on your eyes. Protective eyewear should always be worn in any of these situations. Flash burns of the eye can be thought of like sunburn and can cause a painful inflammation of the cornea. If the burn isn't too serious, it can heal itself after a few days. If more serious, it must be treated quickly as it may lead to vision loss, especially if it becomes infected. If a flash burn is suspected, see a doctor as soon as possible.

TAKE BREAKS FROM THE COMPUTER

Spending a lot of time at the computer or focusing intently on something is linked to eye fatigue and a decrease in blinking. Try the 20-20-20 rule – every 20 minutes, look 20 feet (roughly 6 metres) away for 20 seconds. This can help reduce eye strain and encourage blinking.

<p>1</p> <p>COLD WATER FISH SUCH AS SALMON</p>  <p>Fresh Frozen Tinned</p> <p>Omega 3 oils</p> <p>3 times a week</p>	<p>2</p> <p>LEAFY GREENS</p>  <p>Spinach, kale, cabbage, brussel sprouts</p> <p>Lutein and zeaxanthin help stem the development of macular degeneration</p> <p>A serving every day</p>	<p>3</p> <p>BRIGHT COLOURED VEGETABLES</p>  <p>Yellow foods in particular- pumpkin, yellow capsicum and sweet potatoes</p> <p>Betacarotene, Vitamin C, A, niacin, lutein and amino acids</p> <p>3–5 times a week</p>
<p>4</p> <p>BRIGHT COLOURED FRUITS</p>  <p>Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries</p> <p>Rich in vitamin C</p> <p>3–5 times a week</p>	<p>5</p> <p>NUTS AND SEEDS</p>  <p>Almonds, sunflower seeds, pecans</p> <p>Vitamin E</p> <p>Once a day</p>	<p>EAT FOR YOUR EYES</p>  <p>Your vision and the rest of your body will thank you</p>



USE CONTACT LENSES AS DIRECTED

Incorrect use of contact lenses can be bad for your eyes. Make sure you:

- Always clean your hands first to avoid the risk of infection
- Check your contacts for any debris, tears or defects before use
- Insert and remove lenses as directed by your eye care professional
- Use the correct contact lens solution
- Never clean or store your contact lenses in tap water or saliva because of the risk of infection
- Clean and change your storage case regularly
- Don't use contact lenses for periods longer than that recommended by the manufacturer
- Remove your contacts immediately if you feel any discomfort while wearing them
- Never sleep with your contacts in
- Always carry a pair of glasses with you.

DON'T RUB YOUR EYES

Though it may seem harmless, rubbing your eyes can cause vision problems. If you are prone to rubbing your eyes on a regular basis, it can increase eye pressure and/or damage the cornea. In some cases, eye rubbing can weaken the structure of the cornea and cause it to become more conical in shape, like a rugby ball. This condition is known as keratoconus and can lead to significant distortion of vision.

THROW AWAY OLD MAKEUP

Our hands and skin carry all kinds of bacteria, which can be transferred to our eyes via makeup. Cosmetic eye products (e.g. eye shadows, eyeliners, mascara and foundation) become unhygienic over time. They should be replaced every three months, and makeup brushes should be thoroughly cleaned with hot water and soap on a regular basis. People who wear contact lenses need to be especially careful about using clean eye makeup. Do not share eye makeup with others, as this further increases the risk of infection.

EAT YOUR WAY TO HEALTHY EYES

A healthy, balanced diet is essential for maintaining good eyesight. You can lower your risk of developing eye diseases such as macular degeneration by eating the foods in the table (page 14) regularly.

KNOW YOUR FAMILY'S MEDICAL HISTORY

Finally, many eye diseases and conditions are hereditary – that is, the increased risk of developing the condition is inherited in your genes. If someone in your family has been diagnosed with an eye disease, you may be at higher risk of developing it yourself. It's important to make sure all of your healthcare providers know your family's medical history. This is particularly true if a family member has been diagnosed with an eye condition.

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

There is a clear link between excessive weight and the development of several eye diseases. Extra weight is known to increase blood pressure which can put stress on the delicate blood vessels in your eyes. Damage to these blood vessels can cause vision problems. Being overweight or obese also increases your risk of developing diabetes and other medical conditions, which can lead to eye conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma.

GET REGULAR EYE CHECKS

Taking these steps to keep your eyes healthy is important, but it's equally important to get your eyes checked by an optometrist regularly, even if you don't notice anything wrong with your vision. Optometrists don't only prescribe corrective glasses and contact lenses. They check the overall health of your eyes and can refer you to an ophthalmologist if necessary. Not all eye conditions have obvious symptoms and early detection of eye conditions can save your sight.

Vision Eye Institute
visioneyeinstitute.com.au

ANOSMIA – LOSS OF SMELL

The exact mechanisms behind the sense of smell remain a mystery. Odour molecules in the air are breathed into the nose, and funneled inside the nasal cavity to the olfactory epithelium (tissue). This small cluster of cells, located roughly in line with the top of the cheekbones, is covered with tiny hairs ('cilia') and a thin layer of mucus. Each cell is connected to an olfactory neuron, or nerve cell. The cilia trap the inhaled odour molecules. The information on the molecules is transmitted to the olfactory neurons, then relayed via the nervous system to the brain, where the smell is processed and experienced.

'Anosmia' means the loss of the sense of smell. There are numerous medications, diseases, hormonal disturbances and chemicals that can disrupt the sense of smell, sometimes permanently. People are less sensitive to smells the older they get, and women tend to have a more acute sense of smell than men. There is some evidence that smell sensitivity may be inherited, to a degree.

TASTING IS ACTUALLY SMELLING

It is commonly thought that the flavour of food is experienced by the 'tastebuds' on the tongue; in fact, the mouth distinguishes only rudimentary information on sweetness, saltiness, sourness and bitterness. Odour molecules from food rise to the olfactory epithelium and supplement the information from the tongue with much more sophisticated data. That's why food tastes bland when you have a head cold; the olfactory epithelium is clogged with mucus and can't function properly.

SMELL ADAPTATION

If you smell an odour for long enough, you eventually stop noticing it. This is because prolonged exposure to a strong smell is believed to saturate the olfactory epithelium with odour molecules to the point where information is no longer delivered to the brain. This is called 'adaptation'. Loss in smell sensitivity is only temporary and is particular to that 'over-smelled' odour. Recovering

from adaptation depends on the individual but can range from a few seconds to a couple of minutes.

EVERYDAY FACTORS WHICH DIMINISH THE SENSE OF SMELL

The sense of smell can be dampened by everyday factors, including:

- **Smoking** – particularly for the half hour after smoking a cigarette.
- **Nasal mucus** – caused by a number of ailments, such as colds, influenza, hay fever or sinusitis.
- **Adaptation** – experienced when the olfactory cells are flooded to saturation point with particular odour molecules.

FACTORS THAT DISRUPT THE SENSE OF SMELL

Anosmia means loss of the sense of smell, while hyposmia means reduced smell sensitivity. Measuring the degree of 'smell loss' is difficult, since the experience of smell is subjective. Unlike other senses, there is no diagnostic test that can judge smell sensitivity with objective accuracy. However, different factors that are known to interfere with the smell sense include

- **Chemicals** – a wide range of industrial chemicals, including heavy metals, inorganic and organic compounds, acids and pollutants.
- **Diseases of the hormonal system** – such as diabetes, Cushing's syndrome and hypothyroidism.
- **Diseases of the nervous system** – such as Alzheimer's disease,

Measuring the degree of 'smell loss' is difficult, since the experience of smell is subjective.



multiple sclerosis, migraine, Korsakoff syndrome, brain tumours, brain lesions and epilepsy.

- **Drugs** – stimulants (such as amphetamines and cocaine), depressants (such as morphine), some antibiotics and other drugs, including the vasoconstrictors in nasal sprays.
- **General diseases** – such as bronchial asthma, leprosy and cystic fibrosis.
- **Trauma** – including blows to the head or injuries to the nose.

OLFACTORY NEURONS CAN REGENERATE

The nerve cells servicing the olfactory epithelium are unique to the nervous system. Unlike nerve cells anywhere else in the body, the olfactory neurons are able to recover or regenerate after injury. This means that incidences of anosmia can be temporary.

WHERE TO GET HELP

- Your general practitioner
- Ear, nose and throat specialist

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Anosmia means loss of the sense of smell, while hyposmia means reduced smell sensitivity.
- The olfactory neurons are able to recover or regenerate after injury.
- Smell sensitivity decreases with advancing age.

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FAVOURITE SMELLS... are yours pictured here?



KEEPING YOUR MIND ACTIVE

Challenging your brain with puzzles and games can keep your brain active and improve its physiological functioning.

e	e	c	p	i	e	d	t	v	s	i	a	s	s	s	y	g	a	s	l	n
c	v	o	m	l	w	e	l	f	a	r	e	s	p	t	i	n	o	p	n	e
i	s	m	e	l	l	m	t	n	a	c	i	f	i	n	g	i	s	y	s	t
n	r	m	t	i	t	e	l	n	a	r	u	v	h	e	e	l	a	l	c	w
o	p	u	a	h	e	n	t	h	u	s	i	a	s	m	a	e	u	o	h	o
i	t	n	g	r	r	t	e	v	i	t	a	t	n	e	s	e	r	p	e	r
s	c	i	e	n	t	i	f	i	c	e	a	l	o	v	d	f	a	u	m	k
i	s	t	l	h	o	a	i	a	s	r	e	m	i	e	h	z	l	a	i	s
v	y	y	e	n	v	i	r	o	n	m	e	n	t	i	s	a	l	d	c	h
e	t	e	d	n	r	e	t	p	d	d	p	a	a	h	v	n	e	a	a	o
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o	l	d	e	y	s	s	l	c	u	u	i	t	e	a	r	e	g	v	s	h
t	a	o	h	m	e	a	a	a	t	r	h	h	r	e	r	g	i	c	s	o
t	u	s	p	n	e	t	s	a	t	i	t	e	s	o	t	o	e	l	t	o
e	q	c	s	a	i	g	s	a	m	t	v	s	a	e	p	n	s	r	c	r
r	u	o	d	o	r	n	a	i	m	i	i	i	b	l	t	p	u	s	i	c
d	r	p	n	s	u	t	g	g	t	o	e	t	t	o	t	a	u	l	h	l
y	m	e	t	r	a	i	n	i	n	g	r	h	u	y	e	h	m	s	o	e
t	c	i	d	n	u	o	s	e	t	e	b	a	i	d	l	t	y	u	v	v
i	n	e	h	c	u	o	t	t	r	u	s	t	a	h	e	a	r	i	n	g
k	q	e	d	i	p	e	n	i	c	i	e	l	e	a	m	d	p	t	t	p

WORD SEARCH

Words can run forwards, backwards, up and down and diagonally. Letters may be used more than once.

Achievements	Activity	Allergies	Alzheimers	Aroma	Attitude
Aural	Carer	Chemicals	Community	Delegate	Dementia
Depression	Diabetes	Endoscope	Engagement	Enthusiasm	Environment
Feeling	Healthy	Hearing	Hyperactivity	Mateship	Medication
Nasal	Network	Obstruction	Odour	Oral	Partner
Polyps	Positive	Quality	Relationships	Representative	Scientific
Sensory	Sight	Significant	Smell	Sound	Stink
Support	Taste	Touch	Training	Trust	Unsaturated
Value	Velcro	Vision	Volunteer	Welfare	Workshop

EAT WELL, EAT SMART AHEAD OF VETERANS' HEALTH WEEK

Veterans' Health Week (VHW) 2018 will be held from 22 to 30 September and planning is already underway. This year's theme is nutrition. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) may provide some funding for events that focus on this theme.

Good nutrition is essential for an individual's health at all ages. Eating well plays a key role in reducing the risk of developing a range of chronic health conditions. Events based on this year's theme will help veterans and current serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families to eat better and eat smarter.

Each year, VHW promotes one of four themes. Along with nutrition, the other themes include: social inclusion, physical activity and mental wellness.

Now is the time to get creative with nutrition options for you and members of your community. VHW 2018 is a good way to promote what you've been doing, to celebrate your success and to encourage others to join in.

The purpose of VHW is to encourage current and former ADF personnel to find out more about healthy lifestyle options, including information on ways to actively participate in veteran community programs, organisations and resources that promote good health and wellbeing.

VHW 2017 was a great success with around 14,000 people attending more than 200 events across Australia.

The theme for 2017 was physical activity and its importance to our mental and physical health.

VHW 2017 was also enjoyed by families and friends across a variety of events. These included Vets Go Surfing, Swimming with the Whales and five-kilometre runs, to easier activities such as walking tours, tai chi and bowls. There was strong participation from Defence and ex-service organisation groups and activities were held on weekends to encourage family participation.

DVA encouraged event organisers to use the week as an opportunity to reach out to people who often miss out on the benefits of engaging with their local veteran and ex-service community groups.

Men's Health Peer Education and ex-service organisation volunteers were central to the planning and implementation of many events.

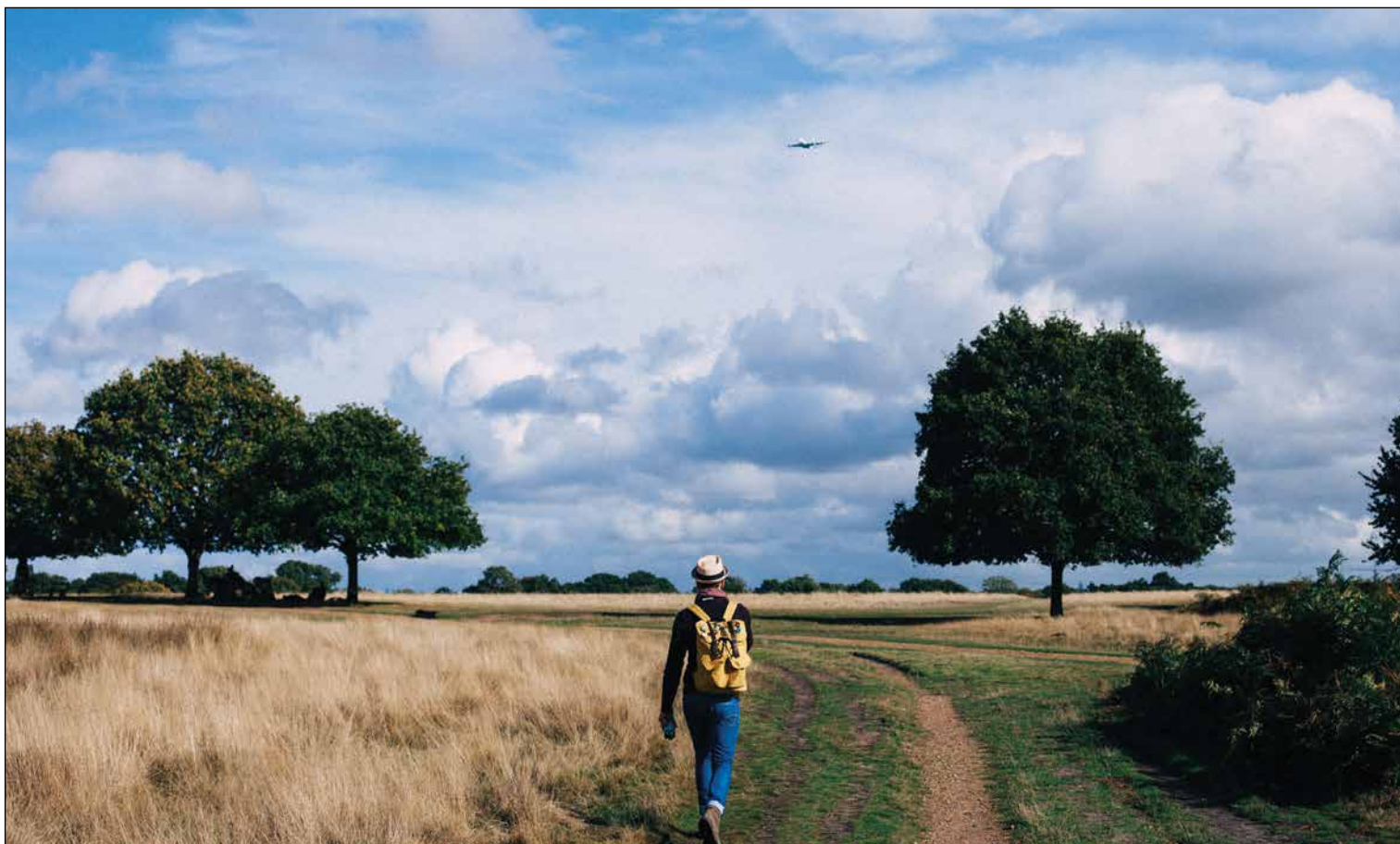
Volunteers worked in partnership with DVA personnel throughout 2017 to engage with service providers, community organisations and former and current serving ADF personnel.

Naomi Mulcahy
VHW National Coordinator

**Now is the time
to get creative with
nutrition options for
you and members of
your community.**

For more information on Veterans' Health Week, or to start planning your event for 2018, contact DVA on 1800 555 254 or visit www.dva.gov.au/veterans-health-week.

SENSE AND CONNECT:



Taking a walk is a peaceful way to spend an afternoon. Strolling along the riverfront as the sun hangs lazily in the sky, its rays send a warming sensation that trails across the skin of your face. Your eyes catch the bright glinting reflections that dance off the tiny waves created by the gentle breeze caressing the surface of the water. That same breeze tickles your neck as it playfully swirls through your hair. All around you birds call. In the distance come the shrill screams of children playing at a nearby park. The air is fresh and crisp with the changing of the season. You're not in any

hurry to leave this place, instead you saunter, allowing your feet to rustle the fallen leaves scattered across your path and you just revel in the peace of the moment.

The above scenario can happen at any time, under any circumstances. Living mindfully in this way can serve to recharge our minds from the exhaustion of everyday life. Being completely engaged in the things we do helps us to restore balance to an otherwise overwhelmed nervous system. At any given moment during the day, our minds are searching, showing us our potential future and reminding us of our past; in essence, taking us away from the

present moment. If your mind is elsewhere, then you are not getting the full benefit of what this moment in life has to offer you. We take for granted all that exists around us if we focus only on internal mental wanderings.

Our minds and bodies are closely intertwined. Our thoughts affect our bodies, our moods are dependent on the emotions we're feeling, and the things we feel often come from our mental forays into anxiety over future or regret over past. The key to achieving a more balanced existence is harnessing your natural ability to be here and now.

How to use **mindfulness** to get in touch with your senses

SENSING EXERCISE

This exercise will help you get in touch with your senses. You can spend as much or as little time in each sense as you wish. Switch your senses between each exercise, so you're only focusing on one sense at a time.

Look around you. Use only your eyes and see, don't describe it, just focus on one object and look at it. Try to keep your mind silent. Gently hush it if you notice it describing or wandering into thoughts. Your only goal is to use your eyes.

Close your eyes, flex your fingers and notice the sensations. Feel what is beneath your fingers. Rub, touch, feel but resist the urge to describe or look; simply touch.

Inhale deeply and become aware of any smells. Smell them in isolation. Once again, do not get caught up in a mental labelling game; simply inhale, smell the smells, allow them to be what they are – chemical signals reaching your olfactory system.

Inhale again and this time open your mouth. Our sense of smell is so tied in with taste that for this exercise it is rather difficult to isolate the two (unless you have something to taste; go ahead taste it, savour it, let it wash over your tongue to get to every taste bud). Otherwise, open your mouth and inhale deeply. Notice how the smell changes, if at all.

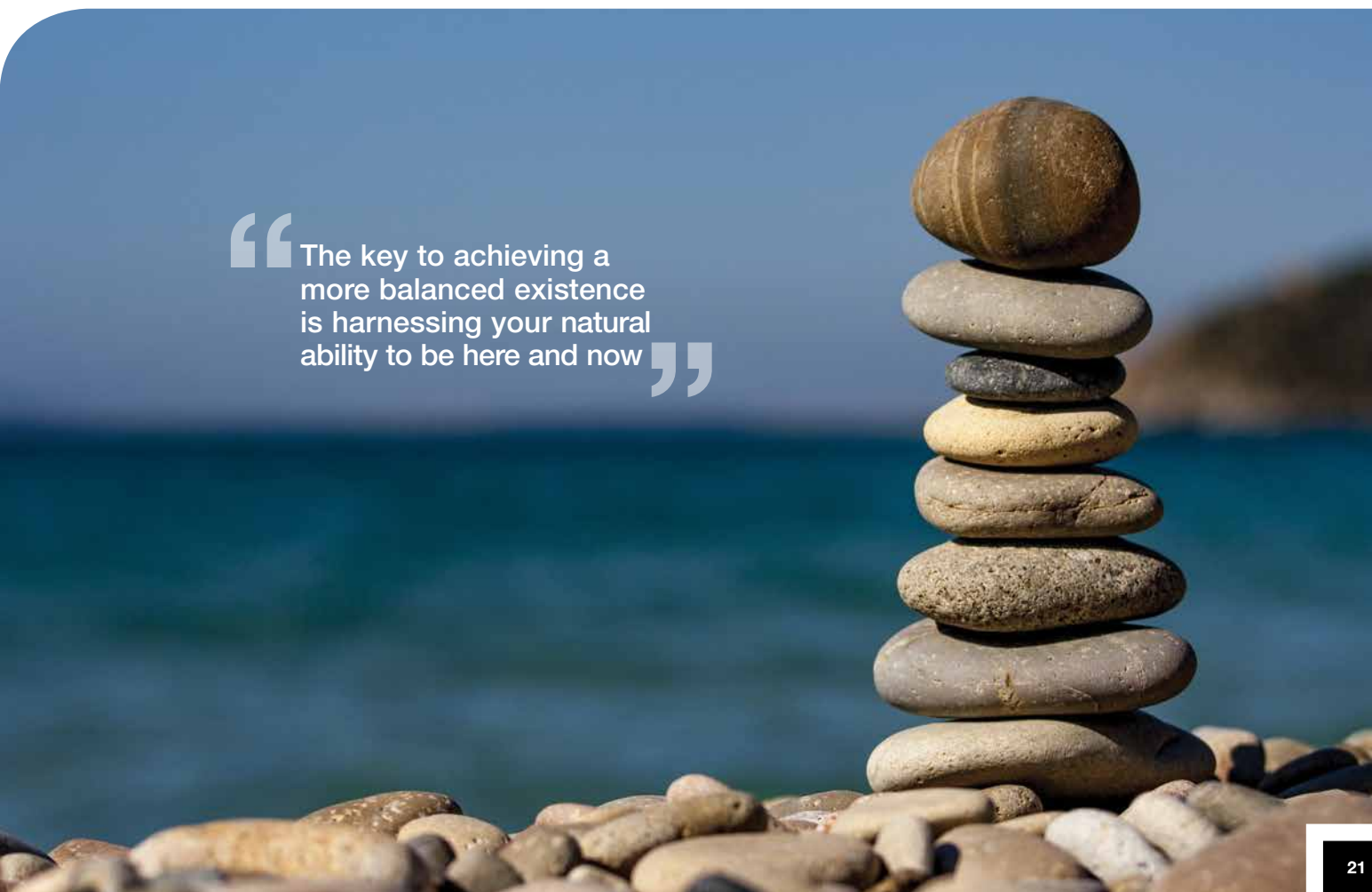
Close your eyes and sit unmoving. Slow your breathing to a rested pace and listen. Acknowledge the

existence of sound, no descriptions and no judgments or wandering into thought; simply hear.

It may seem fairly simple and straightforward but learning to pay full attention to our senses individually can help us to enhance our everyday experiences, aiding us in tackling the things that we encounter with a more rested and peaceful outlook. The above exercise can be done any time, any place, and whenever we need a quick recharge. The key is allowing yourself to be fully in the experience rather than lost in past or future thinking. Let go of your cares or worries and just experience your surroundings. Better yet, go out and take a walk.

Wanda Monague

“The key to achieving a more balanced existence is harnessing your natural ability to be here and now”



SPIDERS' WEBS AND BOOKWORMS

JO WAGNER, DVA LIBRARIAN

ONLINE RESOURCES

A CLEAR VIEW: IDENTIFYING AUSTRALIANS WHO LIVE WITH DEAFBLINDNESS AND DUAL SENSORY LOSS / PAULA DYKE |

SENSES AUSTRALIA

This report identifies demographic characteristics of those who were blind with additional disabilities and people who were deafblind throughout Western Australia. It focuses on obtaining a picture of the demographic characteristics and service needs of those with a dual vision and hearing impairment within WA and across Australia.

<https://www.senses.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/a-clear-view---senses-australia.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

LET'S TALK ABOUT...MENTAL HEALTH AND DEAF PEOPLE : SHAPING A BETTER, STRONGER, SUPPORTIVE FUTURE /

DEAFVICTORIA

The purpose of this paper is to have a bottom up approach to a mental health discussion about what is currently working and not working in Australia's mental health system, with an end goal of devising a plan of action. These discussions revealed how Deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people are currently accessing mental health services. The report includes real life stories of Deaf/ Hard of hearing/ deafblind consumers of mental health services and their experiences accessing the system.

<http://thesignsoflife.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Deaf-Mental-Health-report-ONLINE.pdf>

WHAT WORKS TO PROMOTE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN OLDER PEOPLE / YVONNE WELLS |

BEYOND BLUE

This booklet covers a range of interventions that can be used to promote emotional wellbeing to help people with anxiety or depression. Emotional wellbeing includes satisfaction, optimism, self-esteem, mastery and feeling in control, having a purpose in life and a sense of belonging and support. This booklet offers a range of activities to help you enjoy sensory enrichment including relaxation therapies and sensory stimulation.

<http://resources.beyondblue.org.au/prism/file?token=BL/1263A>

BOOKS

DEEP LISTENING : A HEALING PRACTICE TO CALM YOUR BODY, CLEAR YOUR MIND AND OPEN YOUR HEART / JILLIAN PRANSKY AND JESSICA WOLF

In Deep Listening, Jillian Pransky presents her signature Calm Body, Clear Mind, Open Heart program—a 10-step journey of self-exploration that she's taught around the world. Derived from the techniques that healed her suffocating anxiety, the practice of Deep Listening invites you to pay close attention to your body, mind, and heart. You're taught how to tune inward and relax into a state of openness, ease, and clarity. This is the new frontier in integrative wellness—mindfulness designed for healing.

RRP \$39.99

SEEING VOICES / OLIVER SACKS

Seeing Voices offers a way into a world that is, for many people, alien and unfamiliar – for to be profoundly deaf is not just to live in a world of silence, but also to live in a world where the visual is paramount. In this remarkable book, Oliver Sacks explores the consequences of this, including the different ways in which the deaf and the hearing impaired learn to categorise their respective worlds – and how they convey and communicate those experiences to others.

RRP \$24.99

EAT RIGHT FOR YOUR SIGHT / JENNIFER TRAINER THOMPSON

Safeguard your vision with 85 simple, satisfying recipes rich in the nutrients that fight macular degeneration. The Bad News: Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of central vision loss in adults over the age of fifty. It can wreak havoc on the ability to see faces, read, drive, and move about safely. Millions of people are at risk, and we still don't have a cure. The Good News: The latest research suggests that healthy lifestyle choices, including a diet rich in lutein, zeaxanthin, and other key nutrients, can delay the onset and progress of AMD. Eat Right for Your Sight provides a delicious way to add the best ingredients for eye health to every meal of the day.

RRP \$39.99

GUT: THE INSIDE STORY OF OUR BODY'S MOST UNDER-RATED ORGAN /

GUILIA ENDERS

The key to living a happier, healthier life is inside us. Our gut is almost as important to us as our brain or our heart, yet we know very little about how it works. Beginning with the personal experience of illness that inspired her research, and going on to explain everything from the basics of nutrient absorption to the latest science linking bowel bacteria with depression, Enders has written an entertaining, informative health handbook. Gut definitely shows that we can all benefit from getting to know the wondrous world of our inner workings.

RRP \$29.99

TASTE MATTERS: WHY WE LIKE THE FOODS WE DO /

JOHN PRESCOTT

Why do we like the foods that we do? What happens when we eat not for nutrient intake but for sensory pleasure? How far are our food preferences determined by genetic inheritance, by maternal diet, by cultural practice? These are some of the questions that sit at the heart of John Prescott's Taste Matters, a book that provides scientific explanations for why we eat in the way that we do.

RRP \$39.99

THE HEARING LOSS GUIDE: USEFUL INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES /

JOHN M. BURKEY

Although millions of people could use good advice about hearing loss, it turns out that asking is difficult, and accurate advice is hard to come by. This book directly addresses the problem. It provides useful, first-hand advice from people who have experienced hearing loss themselves, along with accurate treatment information from a highly experienced audiologist. Prompted to write this book by a patient who thought the reality of hearing loss and its associated problems could only be truly understood by someone with personal experience, audiologist John M. Burkey gathered information from his own patients and their spouses. The Hearing-Loss Guide presents their candid recommendations for anyone who suffers hearing loss, as well as families, friends, and co-workers.

RRP \$34.99

THE SMELL OF FRESH RAIN /

BARNEY SHAW

Smell is the most emotional and evocative of our senses: it can bring back memories faster and with more immediacy than a photograph – so why is it so little understood? Armed with a hungry curiosity and a willingness to self-experiment, author Barney Shaw goes in search of the hidden meanings of smells. An investigation into the biology, psychology and history of smell, and a search for effective ways to put into words scents that we instantly relate to, but find strangely ineffable, 'The Smell of Rain' includes a 200-entry thesaurus of succinct descriptions of common smells.

RRP \$29.99

FOOD TRAILS /

LONELY PLANET
Lonely Planet, one of the world's leading travel guide publishers, has produced a book that will incite all the senses. For everyone who loves travel and trying the local delicacies, this beautifully illustrated book is the must-have to a year's worth of perfect weekends around the world for food lovers. Featured trails include an homage to Buenos Aires steak, cozy wintertime French Canadian cuisine, Puglia's distinctive dishes, and Parisian patisserie. Each trail is an itinerary, detailing when and where to indulge in the local specialties. There are 52 trails, each with gorgeous photography, a bespoke map, expert writing and practical details of how to get there and where to stay. This is the second in Lonely Planet's Perfect Weekends series, following the critically acclaimed Wine Trails.

RRP \$34.99

MHPE NATIONAL ROUND-UP

MHPE volunteers participate in a range of activities to encourage members of the veteran community to look after their health and wellbeing. The MHPE National Round-up provides a snapshot of volunteer activities and plans for the year ahead.

MHPE NSW & ACT

**On the Mid-North Coast of NSW
Men's Health Info Stand at Old Bar
17 Nov 2017**

19 November 2017 was International Men's Day. MHPE held a Men's Health stand at the Old Bar Pharmacy on Friday 17th and also did



John Macartney NSW/ACT State Volunteer Representative with staff from the Old Bar Pharmacy.

health checks with a bag of health info for each participant. The day was a success because one of the passing blokes who "volunteered" for a health check after a lot of excuses about how fit and healthy he was had a fairly high BP and was sent off to make an appointment at the medical centre. It highlighted the importance of regular checkups and know your own basic health info!

*John Macartney
NSW State MHPE Volunteer
Representative*

MHPE QLD

Recall Training 2018

Forty-one MHPE volunteers from all corners of the state came together for the 2018 Recall Training Day held on Wednesday 21 February in Brisbane. We welcomed into our midst three northern NSW MHPE Volunteers, who were temporarily Maroons for the day.

The theme for the day was 'Fuelling Your Body – Nutrition' and the day started on a very positive note where participants were guided through

the art of 'Mindful Eating'. This set the scene for the keynote speaker Tara Diversi, DVA's Dietetics Adviser. Tara brought to the room her energy, extensive experience and very positive approach to nutrition education. Kevin Moss, MHPE QLD State Representative, facilitated a session where we heard from a number of volunteers about their MHPE and VHW activities. One of the MHPE Volunteers, Trent Morrison, described the benefits he has personally gained from his Assistance Dog Cookie, and how he is reaching out to his peers with Cookie by his side, and the positive impact this has made on his and others lives. Another MHPE Volunteer Daniel O'Connor outlined the strategies he uses to promote and encourage men of all ages to be involved in health and wellbeing events. He told us of his recent successful kayaking trip up the Boyne River, with more plans in the pipeline.

John Morris, MHPE Volunteer (and a member of the Banyo Bandits who won the National MHPE 10k Step challenge award) described his Veterans' Health Week event titled 'Mind over Muscle' and provided an overview of the project planning tool he uses for events such as these, and we heard of his 10k Step successes. John Robinson provided insight about successful grants and the assistance this funding has provided for a range of projects.

The group was also fortunate to hear from Glenys Smith – DVA's Social Work Adviser about Managing Change. Also included was an information update about DVA

grants, and their inclusion in the Community Grants Hub, as well as the Be Connected program which is an initiative that aims to improve digital literacy for older Australians.

The day was rounded off with a Think Tank – with teams being formed and ideas discussed for MHPE involvement in activities for events such as Mens' Health Week and VHW2018.

Feedback from all the participants was extremely positive and all were very involved in the day's proceedings, with old friendships and acquaintances renewed, and new ones made. If the Recall was a gauge to go by, it looks like 2018 will be a great one!

*Melissa Bristowe-Browne
Qld MHPE Co-Ordinator*



Participants in Qld Recall Training 2018

MHPE VIC

Victorian MHPE volunteers were again instrumental in helping to deliver a successful Veterans' Health Week (VHW) in 2017 with 56 registered events and more than 2,400 people participating. Here is a snapshot of what the Victorian MHPE volunteers got up to:

- Marty Tanzer organised and participated in six VHW activities with the Sale RSL, which included



Marty Tanzer (MHPE Volunteer), Lindsay Burton and Michael Donahue from the Sale Men's Shed.

a family day, pilates and yoga classes, a seminar on physical activity, swimming and exercise sessions, and a BBQ day with the local Men's Shed.

- Hugh Morrison ran a session on meditation and mindfulness at the Box Hill RSL's for VHW. Hugh continues to run his meditation classes at the Camberwell RSL.
- Gary Treeve participated in the 'Walk and History' information session on the Murray River in Wodonga.

The VHW theme for 2018 is Nutrition and the team is looking forward to hearing about what activities the MHPE volunteers are cooking up for this year!

Veterans' exhibition

MHPE volunteer-in-training Gordon Trail has added curator to his wide repertoire of skills. Gordon recently curated an exhibition of veterans' arts and photography called Coming Home as part of his peer support coordinator role with Grief Work Uniting. The exhibition showcased visual artworks that depicted the experiences of current and ex-serving members returning from deployment and the impact on their families and selves.

International Men's Health Week

is coming up from 11 to 17 June with planning already underway. Alan White, Victorian Volunteer

Representative, is looking to organise an activity with his local prostate cancer support group.

The MHPE volunteers in Victoria have continued to engage with their local communities to promote health messages through information stalls at events, visiting Army Reserve units and Men's Sheds, attending community events and having informal but valuable chats with other blokes.

MHPE SA

The Inaugural Baker Gordon Charity Shield Army vs Air Force Cricket Match

Thanks to Richard Kirkman, Ian Short and Bob Kelly for assisting the VAN Community Support team as one of the defence support organisations present at this inaugural event. The event was a full day, so it was great to have the option of a roster! The volunteers enjoyed networking at the event – Bob certainly seemed to as he bumped into a couple of 'old mates' whom he'd not seen for a long while!

10,000 Steps National Walking Challenge

Well done to all South Australian MHPE volunteers who enjoyed the 2017 DVA 10,000 Steps National Walking Challenge – The Kokoda Track. There was strong participation from volunteers and we were also delighted with the way they spread the word to their peers and encouraged others to participate. Congratulations to Keith Wells in particular who signed up nine teams from the South Coast areas.

Veterans' Health Week (VHW)

Twelve of the 18 MHPE volunteers from South Australia organised and/or attended VHW events, helping

to promote the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing. Events included veterans walking and crabbing, come and try golf and bowling, exercise demonstrations, a Heysen Trail walk, the launch of a veggie garden and much more! Planning for VHW 2018 is in progress by SA MHPE volunteers.

DCO Welcome Day – Adelaide Zoo (February 2018)

Richard Kirkman, John Hunter and Ian Short assisted the VAN Community Support team at a Twilight Welcome expo with close to 1400 defence members and their families in attendance. The volunteers networked, promoted DVA information / resources and informed attendees about the MHPE role. A big thank you to Bob Kelly who assisted the VAN Community Support team with organising products and resources in preparation for the event.

Men's Health Week events

Volunteers are currently either planning a Men's Health Week event or finding out about events in their area in which they can assist. Brian Thorpe in particular has been full steam ahead in organising a Pit Stop event for the people of Yankalilla with a specific focus on veterans,



Richard Kirkman, Bob Kelly, Ian Short and Ana Teleki at the Baker Gordon Charity Shield Cricket match

MHPE NATIONAL ROUND-UP (CONTINUED)

Men's Shed attendees, Lions, Rotary and many other members of the community. Brian has lined up support from health professionals, MHPE volunteers, 'South Coast Veterans' and other organisations.

Recall training

Two Recall training sessions have been organised with the end of year 2017 session focusing on reviewing the year's achievements whilst also including a planning session of future activities for 2018. The May 2018 Recall has a strong focus on the VHW theme of Nutrition. This includes a volunteer-led healthy cooking demonstration and volunteers bringing a dish and explaining their cooking method and ingredients. Yum yum!



MHPE Recall training December 2017

Community engagement activities

The South Australia VAN Community Support team have put together a Community Engagement schedule that incorporates visits to new and existing contacts to discuss a variety of Mental & Social Health program opportunities and also wider DVA services. MHPE volunteers are being invited to attend these meetings where appropriate to engage with veteran groups in their areas and explore partnership opportunities.

Men's Sheds

MHPE volunteers are exploring opportunities to assist Men's Sheds and recent contacts have been made at the Murraylands, Yankalilla, Mount Pleasant, Kersbrook and Mannum Men's Shed's and also the Defence Shed at Port Adelaide.

MHPE WA

Maritime Day – 4 November

MHPE volunteers Phil Lear, Howard Cock and John Sharp (WA State Rep) attended Maritime Day which was held at Victoria Quay, Fremantle Inner Harbour. Maritime Day is an annual public event hosted by Fremantle Port Authority which celebrates the maritime industry and Fremantle Port. Over 80 exhibitors were involved and more than 15,000 people attended the event. Both John and Phil along with DVA OBAS Officer, Matt Gray held an information stall displaying DVA and MHPE resources. The MHPE volunteers were kept very busy; talking and handing out resources to 1,000s of visitors to the stall. John and Phil thoroughly enjoyed the day and were delighted that they got the opportunity to have a tour of a Collins Class Submarine that was docked at the harbour.

Pop Ups

During the months of January and February 2018 a group of MHPE volunteers held two "pop-ups" at the Forrestfield Shopping Centre. DVA and MHPE resources were displayed and the volunteers were kept busy with a consistent flow of people to the stand. MHPE volunteers have held a presence in this shopping centre for some time,

having previously had a shopfront in the centre. The redevelopment of the centre unfortunately resulted in them losing this space but they hope to have a "pop-up" at the shopping centre again within the coming months.

Fortnightly "pop-ups" operate at the Banksia Grove Shopping Centre and the High Wycombe Shopping Centre and are set up out the front of the Friendlies Pharmacy. MHPE volunteers Eric Aitkins and Alastair Mackenzie volunteer at the Banksia Grove Shopping Centre and Bill Southall and Phil Lear volunteer at the High Wycombe Shopping Centre.

Welcome to the West Expo – 11 February

Three MHPE volunteers-John Sharp (WA State Rep), Dean Dyer and Nola O'Shea assisted on a DVA/ MHPE information stall along with Matt Gray, DVA, OBAS/Senior Client Contact Officer at the Welcome to the West Expo, held at the Perth Convention Centre. Hosted by Defence Community Organisation, Welcome to the West is an event for defence members and their families that have been posted to WA. The expo is a great opportunity for families to find out about support services available in the region. The MHPE volunteers spoke to hundreds of veterans and their families about the MHPE program and provided information on DVA and other support services for available to veterans.

Regional Events: Blues at Bridgetown Festival –

11 November

MHPE volunteer Clare Quinn held

VVCS

PEER SUPPORT

an MHPE information stall at the Blues at Bridgetown Festival Street Party; held in the main street of Bridgetown the festival attracted thousands of visitors to the South-West town and is one of the longest running music festivals in Australia. The festival was a great opportunity for the volunteers to raise the awareness of the MHPE program and to share health information to both veterans and the general public.

Congratulations to Major Paul Prickett (Retd) WA – CSM Award

Paul has served for over 42 years in the Australian Regular Army. He enlisted as a 15 year old in 1973 as an Army Apprentice. In 1977 Paul graduated from Portsea as 2nd Lieutenant, initially to the Royal Australian Engineers; he transferred to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps in 1981. He has served in a variety of operational, regimental, and staff appointments within Australia and overseas; he has had active service in East Timor and Afghanistan.

In the 2018 Australia Day honours Paul was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal for his meritorious devotion to duty as the Executive Officer of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, the School of Infantry and the Parachute Training School.

Paul has been a Men's Health Peer Education volunteer since June 2016.



Major Paul Prickett (Retd)



When experiencing an emotionally difficult time, most people will seek support from a friend or loved one prior to seeking help from a mental health professional or counsellor. It is not unusual for friends and loved ones to be unsure of how to best help someone in this situation.

Peer support is assistance provided from one person to another from a position of similarity and common ground. This can be through sharing similar identifying factors (such as gender, nationality, age) or lived experience (such as, military experience, postings, deployment history). To put it simply, peer support is about standing shoulder to shoulder with our mates and their families.

The Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) employs Peer Advisors who have been in the Australian military and understand the psychological challenges that can be uniquely associated with that experience.

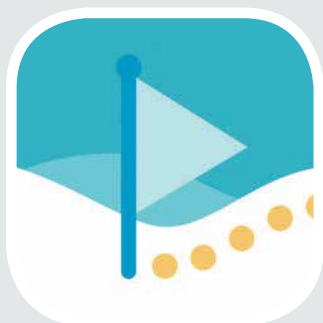
The Peer Advisors are able to draw on their own experiences to offer support and hope to individuals and their families who are dealing with their own military related concerns.

Last month, VVCS hosted a community webinar to explore the importance of peer support in our community and provide advice and resources to allow you to help your friends, family and colleagues experiencing challenging personal times.

The webinar was hosted by Dr Mark Creamer and featured VVCS National Advisory Committee Chair, Professor Jane Burns, and VVCS Peer Advisor, Timothy Loch.

Other community webinars scheduled to take place over the next 12 months will be hosted by Dr Mark Creamer and cover the topics of Relationships, Military Transition, Suicide Prevention, Families, Anger and Chronic Pain.

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY JOHN HALL, DVA



BEYONDNOW (FREE, APPLE AND ANDROID):

If you truly need to be aware of all five senses in maintaining your mental health this is a valuable resource. Developed by beyondblue (through funding from the Movember Foundation) BeyondNow could be an essential tool if you or someone close to you is considering suicidal thoughts or feelings. This app allows a 'safety plan' to be created that lists warning signs, reasons to live, creating a safe environment, positive activities, people and places to spend time with, as well as friends and family that you can speak with (as well as professional contacts).



REACHOUT BREATHE (FREE, APPLE):

Quite often a reaction by one or more of your senses can cause you a degree of stress or worry. ReachOut Breathe helps you to control your breath and measures your heart rate in real-time using the camera in your phone. ReachOut Breathe can help you reduce the physical symptoms of anxiety by slowing down your heart rate and breathing, with the aim of increasing calmness in your body. Through your iPhone or Apple Watch you can measure your heart rate, and be able to compare it with previous readings. You can also then measure and regulate your breathing with another simple procedure. So, achieving composure is now literally at your fingertips!



NATIONAL PUBLIC TOILET MAP (FREE, APPLE AND ANDROID):

Our friends at the Department of Health (as part of the National Continence Program) created the National Public Toilet Map, an app that will definitely assist your sense of sight, ensuring you no longer have to peer through car windows or trudge unfamiliar streets looking for a public toilet. There is information on more than 16,000 publicly-available toilets across Australia, including accessibility, opening hours and facilities such as showers and baby change. In summary, this app will provide relief (pun intended) wherever you may wander, whether it be to the next suburb or interstate.



HIPSTER SOUND (FREE, ANDROID):

our last app is less serious than the others, but nonetheless, is meant to appeal to your sense of hearing (and, as a bonus, boost creativity). Research notes a moderate level of ambient noise is more conducive to thinking and creativity. While many apps offer natural sounds (for example, rainfall and wind blowing) to help you relax, Hipster Sound allows you listen to a number of background café tracks as well as others to mix and create individual background levels of ambient noise. In the coffee shop, the chatter and clatter actually will distract you a bit and will allow your creative juices to start flowing (and without the need to have other customers give you dirty looks because you snagged the window seat!).

HIGH RES —

STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The High Res website arose to strengthen mental health support for veterans through an online resilience program. Its aim is to help currently serving and ex-serving members develop coping strategies to manage life's day to day challenges.

The initiative was an opportunity to bring the Self Management and Resilience Training (SMART) approach into an online environment, reinforcing the resilience skills and knowledge learnt 'in service' to use 'post-service.'

The suite helps to promote mental health and wellbeing by helping individuals to build resilience as either a prevention tool, or help them cope and bounce back from stressful situations.

It was a collaboration with Defence, Defence Community Organisation and the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service to develop the website and app, based on evidence-based cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) principles.

HIGH RES WEBSITE – THE EDUCATION/LEARNING COMPONENT

The High Res website provides users with interactive tools to manage stress and develop resilience over time through a resilience plan.

'Learn about Resilience' allows users to learn about or refresh their memory about SMART. The information provided reinforces the SMART principles and shows the user how to 'test and adjust' their reactions to achieve optimal performance.

'Understand Service Challenges' highlights some of the possible challenges of service life across training, deployment and readjustment post-service. It also

explores the realities of being a military family member. Each section provides case studies that show how the 'test and adjust' process works in real life.

'Plan to Improve my Resilience' shows how the user can use their personal dashboard to identify goals, select tools and track their progress over time.

'Tools to Manage my Stress' helps direct users to the most appropriate self-help tool based on the physical reactions, thoughts, behaviours or emotions they are experiencing.

HIGH RES MOBILE APP – ACTION COMPONENT

The downloadable app provides interactive tools that help people self-manage their physical and psychological reactions and improve their resilience in real time.

The app uses the smart phone features to reinforce the CBT tool. As an example, the thought-stopping tool tries to mimic the physical act of writing the negative thought on a piece of paper and throwing the paper away and discarding it from their thoughts.

Tools are offered in the four quadrants: Physical, Thoughts, Emotions & Behaviours.

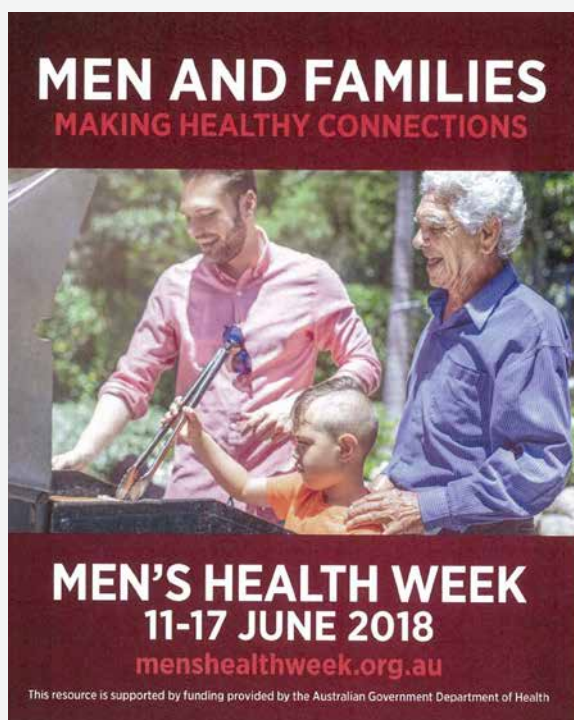
- **Physical:** Controlled Breathing, Grounding, Progressive Muscle Relaxation – All Audio and Visual
- **Thoughts:** Thought Stopping, Quick Ways to Reassess your Thoughts (screenshot), Challenging Thoughts – Questions
- **Emotions:** Distraction, Emotional Control (Stop, Breathe, Think, Do), Controlling Anger
- **Behavioural:** Physical Activity, Social Connection, Healthy Sleep



Go to at-ease.dva.gov.au for more information

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK 2018

In Men's Health Week 2018 Australian communities and organisations are invited to put on events to promote the health of men and boys.



This year's theme "MEN AND FAMILIES – MAKING HEALTHY CONNECTIONS" explores the different ways families support the health and wellbeing of men and boys, and the positive contributions men and boys make to their families (of origin and choice).

The focus is on healthy connections and families – exploring what these can look like, and how men and boys can make and sustain positive family connections.

Celebrate Men's Health Week in 2018 and create an event in your community, workplace or organisation. Events can be any size, and can be fun, serious, or both.

Men's Health Week is your opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of men and boys.

11-17 JUNE 2018

MHPE VOLUNTEERS What do they do?

MHPE volunteers share health information. For example: one-on-one chats; health week events; working with Men's Sheds; distributing health information; running a stand at a community expo, or giving a talk at a local community group or ex-service organisation meeting.

To talk to a volunteer, please contact the relevant MHPE State/Territory Volunteer Representative below:

If you are based in Tasmania, please contact the DVA MHPE National Coordinator on: 1800 555 254

Name	State/Territory	Phone number	Email address
Kevin Moss	Queensland	0418 734 899	kevin.moss04@gmail.com
Alan White	Victoria	(03) 9598 1007 or 0407 617 800	askypilot@bigpond.com
Ron Blanchard	Northern Territory	08 8927 5638 or 0476 145 303	aileron@bigpond.com
Richard Kirkman	South Australia	08 8336 7082 or 0413 816 437	bkandrc@tpg.com.au
John Macartney	New South Wales & ACT	(02) 6657 4165 or 0427 787 296	jrmaca@bigpond.com
John Sharp	Western Australia	08 9291 9214 or 0419 663 246	rosssharp@iinet.net.au

NEXT ISSUE

VOLUME 17. NO.2. 2018

Nutrition

VETERANS' HEALTH WEEK issue

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS 29 JUNE 2018

If you'd like to share your story with our readers or have an idea for an article, we'd like to hear from you. You can email the Editor at menshealth@dva.gov.au or call 1800 555 254 and ask for the MHPE National Coordinator.





The Men's Health Peer Education (MHPE) program aims to raise the veteran community's awareness of men's health issues and to encourage men in managing their own health and wellbeing.

Your local contact is:

MHPE volunteers share health information in a variety of ways. For example: having one-on-one chats; holding a health week event; working with Men's Sheds; distributing health information; running a stand at a community expo, or giving a talk at a local community group or ex-service organisation meeting. For information about the MHPE program, visit our website www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm or contact the relevant DVA MHPE Coordinator below.



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Men's Health Peer Education

Men's Health Peer Education Magazine is available for download at www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm

Feedback, Articles and Ideas
Email the editor: menshealth@dva.gov.au

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DVA NT MHPE Coordinator	Northern Territory	08 8935 1415	MHPENT@dva.gov.au
DVA SA MHPE Coordinator	South Australia	08 8290 0375	MHPESA@dva.gov.au
DVA TAS MHPE Coordinator	Tasmania	03 6221 6711	MHPETAS@dva.gov.au
DVA NSW & ACT MHPE Coordinator	NSW & ACT	02 9213 7661	MHPENSW@dva.gov.au