



# GUIDE TO WELLBEING



Immediate needs support for  
Veterans facing hardship and distress

[www.veteranscharity.org.uk](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk)

Registered Charity No.1123149

**Wellbeing** *noun* – State of being comfortable, happy and healthy

It is important to realise that wellbeing is much more than momentary happiness. While wellbeing includes happiness, it also includes important things such as how satisfied we are in life as a whole, our sense of purpose and how in control we feel of our lives and the issues that affect us.

There are many things we can all do to enable and manage better wellbeing. This guide has been produced to give some inspiration and tips on ways to help your wellbeing.

If at any time you feel you need support, please reach out to us!

## Key steps to wellbeing

1. **Connect** with others
2. Be physically **active**
3. **Learn** and develop new skills
4. **Give** to others



## 1. **Connect** with others

Relationships, friendships and even interactions with strangers can have a positive impact on our mental wellbeing as well as enhance our social activities and help to build a supportive network. They are also a great way for us to benefit from supporting others.

Evidence shows that bonds that we have with others can provide a sense of belonging, feeling of being valued and can confirm our status and self-worth. Positive connections with other people are good for our mental health and wellbeing. Connecting is not only good for us because of the rewards it provides but, through connecting with others and building more meaningful relationships we can create a network of people to turn to if we do experience difficult times in our lives. Having a strong social network and support system of people that are there to listen and offer support can help us move forward from negative experiences with greater ease.

Maintaining a focus on connecting with others, even if only through a phone call, video chat or even a letter or email, is important to us all and can prevent a feeling of loneliness or isolation.

**If you need support with the ability to connect to others, for example a smartphone/tablet or calling credit, please reach out via [www.veteranscharity.org.uk/getsupport](https://www.veteranscharity.org.uk/getsupport)**

## 2. Be physically active

As anyone who has served in the Armed Forces knows, PT can be good for our physical health and capabilities but, the importance of how it supports good mental health and general wellbeing is less often spoken about.

Being physically active does not necessarily mean running a BFT or spending 3 hours in the gym. What matters is that you undertake regular activity which increases your heart rate and breathing (to safe levels – always follow doctors orders if you have a health condition!) and gets your muscles moving.

Keeping a regular routine is crucial as well because it can boost confidence and provide a sense of purpose and achievement. If necessary, use post-it notes and reminders placed strategically around your home to prompt you to do various tasks, however simple or mundane they may be. Sometimes we all need a little motivation to get jobs done!

Avoid spending the day in bed or sat in your favourite armchair. Get up, move around your home and if you can, get out and go for a walk or even a run if you feel up to it. Cycling and swimming are great for lower impact activity if you have joint/leg/back issues and many people also find lighter exercising such as simple stretches, or yoga can be very beneficial as they help with circulation and flexibility.

The benefits of regular physical activity can be huge:

- Improves both physical and mental health
- Improves circulation
- Reduces stress
- Increases energy levels
- Aids better sleep

If you feel that you would benefit from support with clothing or footwear to enable better or more regular exercise, please reach out via [www.veteranscharity.org.uk/getsupport](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk/getsupport)





### 3. Learn new skills

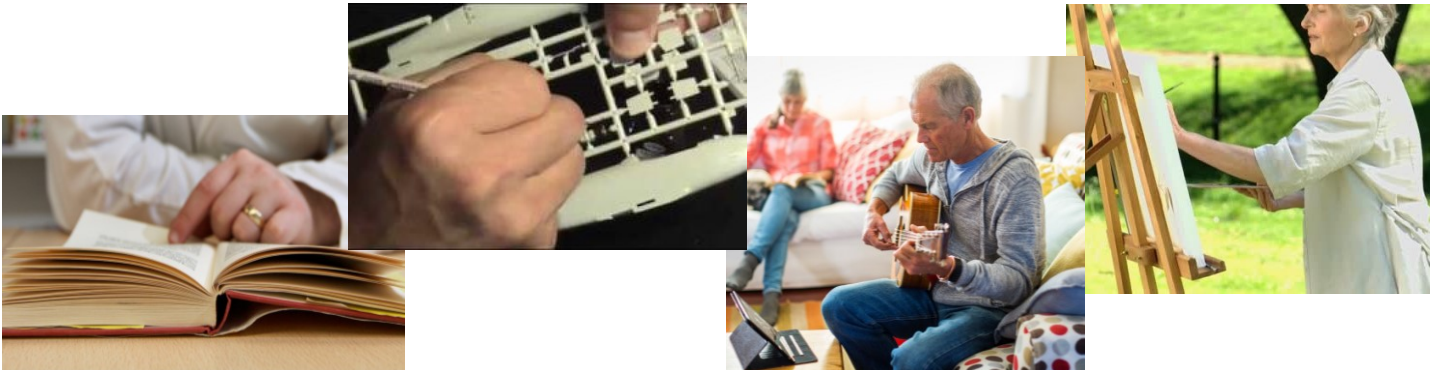
Learning is not just for children in schools or university students but it's good for our minds and mental wellbeing. Learning has been shown to have a number of benefits to our sense of wellbeing and life satisfaction.

There are a host of free and low cost online courses to undertake but you can also take up a new hobby or even rekindle an interest in something you have previously done.

Art, craft, model-making, gardening/DIY, learning a musical instrument, writing/blogging, photography... the list of things to try and to practice is almost endless.

Go for something you are likely to enjoy and not something that may become a chore over time.

Developing a new skill can be hugely rewarding and help to build confidence as well as self-esteem and is also great for a routine!



## 4. Give to others

Giving does not necessarily mean giving away money or valuable belongings but can be as simple as offering support and time to a stranger, friend, family member, a charitable organisation, our local community or our wider community. It can involve parting with material things like money and gifts, or immaterial things like our time, skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, passion and kindness.

In practice, giving can look like a number of things – it could mean supporting a friend with a problem, donating clothes or unused items to a charity, volunteering your time for a cause you care about, or simply trying to make more time for the people that you care about.

Think about how an act of giving from someone else has helped to lift your spirits in the past and how it may have made them feel good about



There are many factors that affect our wellbeing in general including our diet, activity levels, financial security, home environment, working life and family/relationships. All of these can impact our sleep, physical health, energy and stress levels.

There are many things we can each do to help manage these factors:

### **Eating regularly**

Eating regularly and choosing foods that release energy slowly will help to keep your sugar levels steady. Eating breakfast gets the day off to a good start.

Instead of eating a large lunch and dinner, try eating smaller portions spaced out more regularly throughout the day.

Avoid foods which make your blood sugar rise and fall rapidly, such as sweets, biscuits, sugary drinks, and alcohol.

### **Staying hydrated**

If you don't drink enough fluid, you may find it difficult to concentrate or think clearly. You might also start to feel constipated (which puts no one in a good mood).

It's recommended that you drink between 6–8 glasses of fluid a day.

Water is a cheap and healthy option.

Tea, coffee, juices and smoothies all count towards your intake (but be aware that these may also contain caffeine or sugar).

### **Managing caffeine**

Caffeine is a stimulant, which will give you a quick burst of energy, but can then make you feel anxious and depressed, disturb your sleep or give you withdrawal symptoms if you stop suddenly.

Caffeine is in: tea, coffee, chocolate, cola and other manufactured energy drinks.

If you drink tea, coffee or cola, try switching to decaffeinated versions.



You might feel noticeably better if you drink less caffeine or avoid it altogether.

### **Eating the right fats**

Your brain needs fatty acids (such as omega-3 and -6) to keep it working well. So rather than avoiding all fats, it's important to eat the right ones.

Healthy fats are found in: oily fish, poultry, nuts (especially walnuts and almonds), olive and sunflower oils, seeds (such as sunflower and pumpkin), avocados, milk, yoghurt, cheese and eggs.

\*Source – [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Affording adequate food provisions is often a struggle for people who find themselves in hardship. In 2020 alone, we provided 644 food shopping deliveries to Veterans (and their families) who were struggling to buy food.**

**If you find yourself facing the prospect of going without food or having to rely on a food bank handout, please reach out via [www.veteranscharity.org.uk/getsupport](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk/getsupport)**



In addition to managing our physical health, looking after our mental health is crucial but can often be our biggest challenge.

Sometimes, it is vital to reach out for professional support to help us to improve our mental health. There is no mental health condition that cannot be improved but, seeking support at the right time is important.

Thankfully, there are organisations that provide mental health support to Veterans in a variety of ways.

Op COURAGE is an NHS mental health specialist service designed to help serving personnel due to leave the military, reservists, armed forces veterans and their families.

### **How Op COURAGE can help**

Op COURAGE can help you and your family with a range of support and treatment, including:

- supporting you with intensive emergency care and treatment if you're in a crisis
- helping you transition from military to civilian life by providing mental health care with Defence Medical Services (DMS)
- supporting armed forces families affected by mental health problems, including helping you access local services
- helping you recognise and treat early signs of mental health problems as well as more advanced mental health conditions and psychological trauma
- helping you to access other NHS mental health services if you need them, such as finding an NHS psychological therapies service (IAPT) and eating disorder services
- helping you get in touch with charities and local organisations who can support your wider health and wellbeing needs, such as housing, relationships, finances, employment, drug and alcohol misuse and social support

### **Who will I speak to?**

Everyone at Op COURAGE is either from the armed forces community or is experienced in working with serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families.

They understand military life and the courage it takes to speak with someone. They will work with you to make sure you get the right type of specialist care, support and treatment.

## **Who Op COURAGE can help**

To receive help and support from Op COURAGE, you must:

- be a resident in England and have served in the UK armed forces for a full day
- be registered with a GP practice in England or be willing and eligible to register with a GP
- provide your military service number

It does not matter how long ago you left the armed forces. You can contact Op COURAGE even if you left many years ago.

You can also contact Op COURAGE if you are still serving but have a discharge date.

## **Contacting Op COURAGE**

You can contact the service in many ways, including:

- directly getting in touch yourself, or through a family member or friend
- asking a GP to refer you
- asking a charity to refer you

The service will arrange for you to have an assessment, to make sure you get the right care and support.

It is important to contact the Op COURAGE for your local area. This allows them to give you the best support they can provide.

## **North of England**

Call 0800 652 2867 or email [VTILS@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:VTILS@cntw.nhs.uk)

## **The Midlands**

Call 0300 323 0137 or email [mevs.mhm@nhs.net](mailto:mevs.mhm@nhs.net)

## **The East of England**

Call 0300 323 0137 or email [mevs.mhm@nhs.net](mailto:mevs.mhm@nhs.net)

## **London**

Call 020 3317 6818 or email [veteransservice@candi.nhs.uk](mailto:veteransservice@candi.nhs.uk)

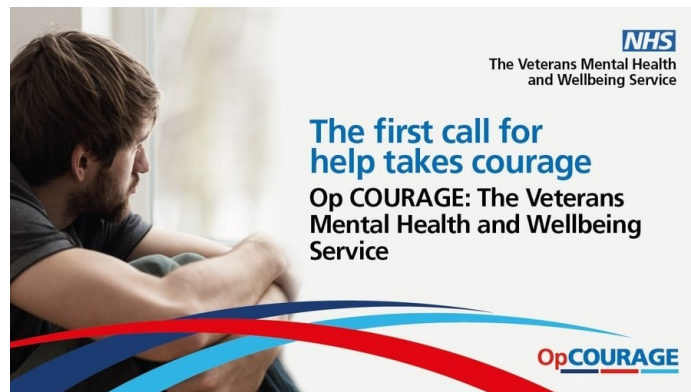
## **South East England**

For services in Sussex, Surrey or Kent, call 020 3317 6818 or email [veteransservice@candi.nhs.uk](mailto:veteransservice@candi.nhs.uk)

For services in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Berkshire, Oxfordshire or Buckinghamshire, call 0300 365 2000 or email [gateway@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:gateway@berkshire.nhs.uk)

## **South West England**

Call 0300 365 2000 or email [gateway@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:gateway@berkshire.nhs.uk)



[www.ptsdresolution.org](http://www.ptsdresolution.org) - PTSD Resolution is a charity (no. 1133118) that helps Veterans, Reservists and Families who are struggling to reintegrate into a normal work & family life because of trauma suffered during service in the armed forces. The programme is community-based, with treatment and support provided locally through a nationwide network of 200 therapists, accredited by the Professional Standards Authority.

[www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk) - Today we provide specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues related to their military service.

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) - Samaritans offers a safe place for you to talk, any time, in your own way, about whatever is bothering you. We're here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are confidential, free to call and will support anyone. If you're given the time and space to talk things through, you can find a way through your problems. Samaritans help you to explore your options so you can make decisions that are right for you.

---

Grounding techniques are a valuable tool in managing anxiety. One of the most popular and effective methods is the '54321' method as set out below. Try to practice this whenever you may be feeling anxious. Many people even find it a useful resource to aid better sleep and practice it when going to bed.

Take a few slow and deep breaths and describe each thing in detail, taking time to do it. If you need to, say them out loud. Take a few more slow and deep breaths afterwards. Repeat as often as you need to.

# FIVE SENSES

What are

5

THINGS YOU  
CAN SEE



**SUN**  
PICTURE ON THE WALL  
**PEOPLE  
WALKING**

4

THINGS YOU  
CAN FEEL



**WIND  
BLOWING**  
FEET ON THE FLOOR  
**PENCIL IN HAND**

3

THINGS YOU  
CAN HEAR



**BIRDS  
CHIRPING**  
CLOCK TICKING  
**CAR HORNS**

2

THINGS YOU  
CAN SMELL



**FOOD FROM THE  
CAFETERIA**  
LAUNDRY DETERGENT ON CLOTHES  
**FRESH CUT  
GRASS**

1

THING YOU  
CAN TASTE



**MINT**  
Breakfast  
**TOOTHPASTE**

Ideas



The following technique can help you regain a sense of calmness and clarity. It requires at least 3 minutes, and ideally a space with a degree of privacy or anonymity.

- **Stand and close your eyes**
- **Become aware of your breathing**
- **Follow the rhythm of your breathing and settle into your body becoming aware of any physical sensations**
- **Wriggle or shift your weight as often as you need to**
- **Then become aware of your feet on ground. Feel the ground. Soften your feet and let go of tension.**
- **Let this awareness travel up your body. Softening joints as it passes, through the ankles, knees, the hips and upwards**
- **Then do the same from your fingertips, following the sense of awareness up your arms to your shoulders. Letting go of tension and tightness.**
- **Then into your head. Look out for tension in the jaw and facial muscles. Make you're your teeth are unclenched, and not touching. Let your breathing soften the facial muscles and smile.**
- **Let your attention now settle back into the pelvic region and remain quiet and still for a short period, say 30 to 60 secs.**
- **Open your eyes and tries to retain some of that softness.**

\* [Source = people.nhs.uk](https://people.nhs.uk)

#reachout



When you were serving, calling for support during difficult times was the way forward. It's no different in civvy street. Reach out...



Immediate needs support  
for Veterans facing hardship

***“The Rapid  
Reaction Force”***

[www.veteranscharity.org.uk](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 1123149

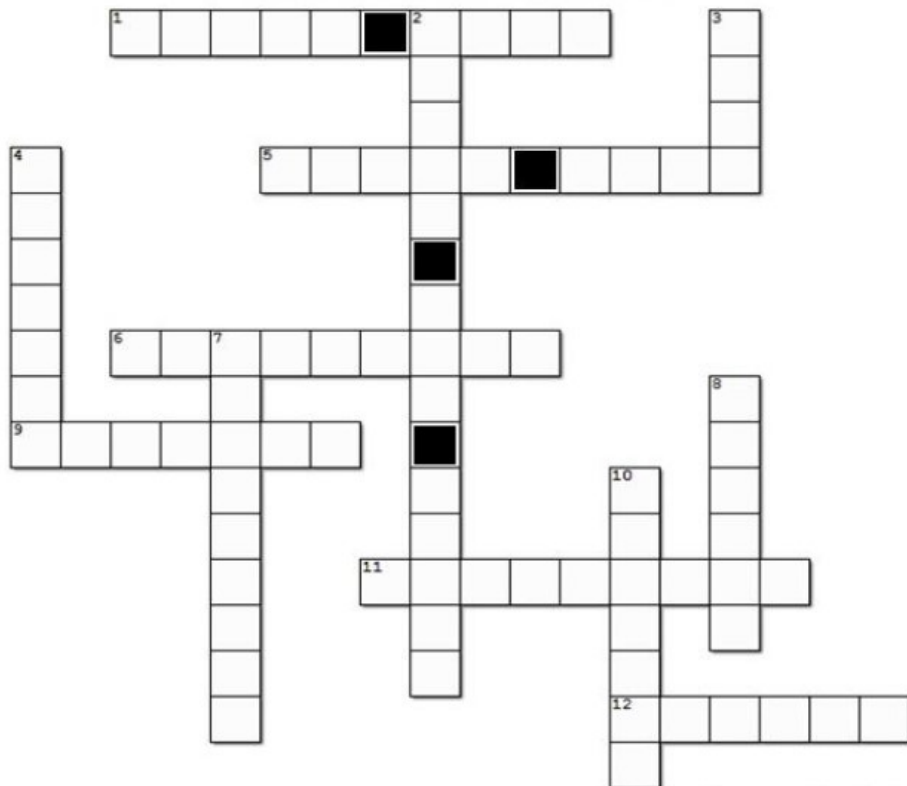


## The Veterans Charity Wordsearch

I	N	O	I	T	A	D	O	M	M	O	C	C	A
C	O	M	M	U	N	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	S
F	U	N	D	R	A	I	S	I	N	G	D	O	E
C	O	L	L	A	B	O	R	A	T	I	O	N	I
A	D	A	H	A	R	D	S	H	I	P	O	U	T
M	I	L	I	T	A	R	Y	U	A	C	F	U	I
N	N	U	S	O	M	Y	T	I	R	A	H	C	L
T	E	A	M	W	O	R	K	Y	M	P	D	I	I
U	Y	D	N	A	M	R	O	N	Y	U	H	Y	T
A	I	R	F	O	R	C	E	E	O	R	N	R	U
S	E	G	I	L	T	L	A	R	R	E	F	E	R
T	R	O	P	P	U	S	P	Y	V	A	N	S	L
N	O	I	T	C	A	E	R	D	I	P	A	R	I
E	O	E	E	P	E	G	A	S	U	S	U	R	N

RAPID REACTION  
 UTILITIES  
 PROUD  
 AIR FORCE  
 ARMY  
 ACCOMMODATION  
 COMMUNICATIONS  
 HARDSHIP  
 MILITARY  
 FUNDRAISING  
 PEGASUS  
 NAVY  
 TEAMWORK  
 COLLABORATION  
 NORMANDY  
 REFERRAL  
 CHARITY  
 SUPPORT  
 FOOD

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1908320/>



### Across

1. Lounge keeps watch (5, 4)
5. Prince has a favourite colour (5, 4)
6. Lower than a bootneck (9)
9. Huge dog attends erect church service (7)
11. Moving to a school leaver's dance (9)
12. Surprised by a morning hedge (6)

### Down

2. Queen oxygenates gravity (5, 3, 5)
3. Not leggy (4)
4. An application for higher education (7)
7. Bambi imprisoned on warship (9)
8. Rodent is not electrically charged (6)
10. Animal carer did digital athletics (7)

# The Veterans Charity Maths Squares Puzzle

	-		×		-		-		+		-387
-		×		+		+		+		-	
	+		-		-		÷	6	-		-4
+		÷		+		÷		+		×	
	-		-		+		-		+		17
+		+		-		-		+		-	
	×		-		+	15	+		+		91
-		-		-		-		-		+	
	-	25	-		-		+		×		321
÷		-		-		+		+		+	
	-		-	22	×		+		+		-203
-21		145		18		18		35		-442	

## Fill in the missing numbers

The missing values are the whole numbers between 1 and 36.

Each number is only used once.

Each row is a math equation.

Each column is a math equation.

Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.





Founded in 2008, The Veterans Charity is the immediate needs support charity for Veterans who find themselves in hardship and distress.

**[www.veteranscharity.org.uk](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk)**

Registered Charity No. 1123149

