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### **Suicide awareness—there is something you can do!**

Are you concerned about the welfare of a mate or someone in your family?

Current and former serving members of the Australian Defence Force are some of the most resilient people in the country but their mental health can suffer, just like the rest of the Australian population.

An initiative of VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service, Operation *Life* workshops can give you the “know how” to recognise when a mate or family member needs help, and the skills to help them.

A Welfare Officer for an Ex-Service Organisation recently attended an Operation *Life* workshop saying, “It’s given me the confidence to approach someone who I am concerned about and to ask the relevant questions. You don’t have to save them yourself—just put them in touch with others who can help.”

If you know someone who is doing it tough or going through a significant life change, Operation *Life* workshops can help you help them.

Changing life situations, such as the loss of a loved one, retirement, financial problems, discharge from the Defence Force or physical illness, can affect someone’s ability to cope. Changes in everyday behaviour, losing interest in things previously enjoyed, taking less care of themselves than usual and engaging in risky or self-destructive behaviours can all be signs of a person at risk.

Most people with thoughts of suicide signal their distress and invite help. Often these opportunities are missed, dismissed or avoided—leaving people more alone and at greater risk.

Operation *Life* workshops can help. ‘safeTALK’ is a half-day presentation on identifying at-risk behaviours and accessing support. It can help members of the veteran community to recognise someone who might be having thoughts of suicide and to link them in with appropriate help.

‘safeTALK’ workshops are currently being offered across Australia, so get some mates together and register your interest.

To register or find out more about Operation *Life* workshops, contact the VVCS on **1800 011 046** (during normal business hours).