

New resources launched to support public safety personnel with post-traumatic stress injuries

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, January 31, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The nature of the work of public safety personnel (PSP) means they are continuously exposed to potentially psychologically traumatic events. This can impact their mental health and well-being and increase their risk for developing post-traumatic stress injuries (PTSI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In recognition of this, the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families, in partnership with the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT), has launched new educational resources and videos that share first-person experiences of PTSIs as well as helpful coping tips and strategies for PSPs, military members and their Families. These resources were created with the guidance of an advisory committee of current and former PSP and their Family members.

MaryAnn Notarianni, Deputy CEO and Executive Vice-President of Knowledge Mobilization at the Atlas Institute, says there are many reasons why PSP might find reaching out for help and support difficult. "The new videos and resources aim to help PSP and their Families recognize they are not alone, that support and resources are available and recovery is possible," she said. "The objectives of developing these videos and resources are to reduce stigma, and then correspondingly to provide information that will support the well-being and help-seeking behaviours of PSP and their loved ones and caregivers. Acknowledging the issue is important, but having accessible supportive information is also crucial for the recovery journey to begin." Notarianni adds that these videos complement other resources the Atlas Institute has been producing for military and RCMP Veterans and their Families, acknowledging that many military members change one uniform for another and enter PSP roles when they transition to post-service life. "These videos add to the suite of resources the Atlas Institute has been developing to raise targeted awareness of PTSIs and the impact not only on individuals but Families as well."

The videos feature seven first-person accounts from current and former PSP and their Family members, speaking to their personal experiences with PTSIs as a result of their work as first responders or other PSP or while supporting a loved one. There are also four educational videos providing information about PTSIs and how PSP and their Families can cope, with corresponding downloadable written resources, as well as a list of other helpful links, all featured at atlasveterans.ca/PSP.

Giselle Valaire, a community parole officer and member of the advisory committee for the project, says, "The perception is: 'You've chosen this line of work, so you shouldn't be affected by the trauma you have experienced.' The culture is one of not showing weakness, especially as a woman." She adds, "I suffered in silence for a long time because I did not want to be seen as weak by my co-workers or managers. I was worried others would judge me and lose faith in my ability to do my job. Mostly I was judging myself for being unable to cope with the environment I chose to enter." Valaire says she feels it was important to use her experience to support others who might be dealing with their own struggles in silence.

Nicholas Carleton, Scientific Director at CIPSRT, echoes the need for PSP to have access to evidence-based resources that support the mental health and wellness of the community of individuals who work to keep Canadians safe. "We know that first responders and other PSP put their own lives on the line to keep others safe. By virtue of their work, PSP experience physical and psychological risks. We know that talking about mental health can reduce stigma, helping people to access evidence-based interventions earlier and supporting better health outcomes." Highlighting the partnership between the Atlas Institute and CIPSRT, Carleton adds that organizations with complementary mandates can coordinate to help tackle complex challenges, allowing for further potential benefits for all who serve.

The project is funded by Medavie through the Medavie Foundation, as one of its community investment initiatives focused on helping first responders and Families impacted by post-traumatic stress injuries.

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ABOUT THE ATLAS INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES

The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families works with Veterans, Families, service providers and researchers to bridge the divide between research and practice so Veterans and their Families can get the best possible mental health care and supports. The Atlas Institute was originally established as the Centre of Excellence on PTSD and Related Mental Health Conditions, through the Minister of Veterans Affairs November 2015 mandate letter, with funding and budget announced in the March 2017 federal budget.

ABOUT CIPSRT

As part of the National Research Consortium, CIPSRT serves as the Knowledge Exchange Hub for knowledge synthesis, translation, and exchange that relies upon the best contemporary research evidence supporting an overall mission to help current and former public safety personnel, their leaders, and their families to maintain and improve their mental health and well-being. For more on CIPSRT, please see cipsrt-icrtsp.ca.

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