

New resources for Veteran Families offer tips to recognize and navigate experiences of intimate partner violence

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, May 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Intimate partner violence, or IPV, is a serious public health issue globally and research in the military and Veteran population suggests that factors associated within this context may increase the risk of IPV among Veteran Families.

In recognition of the need for IPV resources that take into account the specific needs and experiences of this community, the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families worked in close collaboration with an advisory group of Veterans and Veteran Family members with lived experience, researchers and service providers to develop a set of IPV resources, which are launching today. These new resources aim to help Veterans and their Family members to recognize signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship and understand the impacts on children, and to offer practical tips to talk about and navigate experiences of IPV and take steps towards support and healing.

Studies show that in the military and Veteran community, some factors may increase the risk of using or experiencing IPV, continue the cycle of abuse or make it difficult for someone to look for support. They include but are not limited to identity and relationship strain related to challenges during the transition to post-service life, isolation or dependence related to frequent relocation or living off-base, or exposure to potentially traumatic or morally injurious events and high-stress environments. These factors do not necessarily mean abuse will occur, but they increase the probability of abuse. There can also be overlap between the experiences of those who have served in the CAF and members of the RCMP and their Families.

M.E. Sam, a retired Canadian Armed Forces member who was involved in the creation of these new resources as part of the project advisory group, said that as a longtime survivor of military intimate partner violence, she knows how hard it is to find resources that reflect the needs of a military Veteran Family. "Frequent postings can contribute to feelings of isolation that survivors may struggle with, and that final posting at retirement may take you away from military or community resources. Having an online resource, co-developed by other military Family survivors, available at any time, can be the difference between suffering in silence or ignorance, and finding healing help."

Kaitlyn LaRiviere, social worker and Veteran Family Coordinator at the Esquimalt Military Family

Resource Centre, brought her perspective from supporting those experiencing IPV to the project. She said that based on her work with the Veteran community, she has learned of the importance of accessible and quality information for Families facing IPV. "This resource can raise awareness and guide individuals toward support during challenging times. Raising awareness in this community is vital, especially given the vulnerability and shame that often surround intimate partner violence. Sharing this resource helps start difficult conversations, strengthen community bonds, and promote Family wellness and resilience."

MaryAnn Notarianni, Deputy CEO and Executive Vice-President, Knowledge Mobilization at the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families, added that working alongside people with lived experience to develop resources makes for stronger resources that reflect the needs of the community. "We heard from the Veteran Family community that intimate partner violence is an area where increased awareness is important for many reasons. Having access to tools like this can not only support the building of safer environments and enhancing of resilience but also may help reduce the stigma associated with IPV and encourage those impacted to get help. We hope these tools not only offer practical guidance, but hope for the journey ahead of them."

The new series of resources includes a guide to recognize and address unhealthy relationships, as well as a guide to help parents and caregivers support children who have seen or heard abuse, including tips and strategies for having age-appropriate conversations and a curated list of trusted resources for additional support. The resources are available for download at atlasveterans.ca/ipv-guides.

STATISTICS ON IPV

While there is limited research on experiences of IPV specifically in Canadian Veteran Families, a 2022 systematic review conducted by Atlas and Phoenix Australia found:

- 1 in 5 (21%) active-duty personnel and Veterans reported experiencing IPV
- 1 in 8 (13%) reported using abuse in their intimate relationships

In the general Canadian population:

- Over 100,000 Canadians between the ages of 15 to 89 years experienced IPV in 2019, which accounted for 30% of all police-reported violent crimes.
- IPV was the most common type of police-reported violence experienced by women, with women accounting for 80% of all IPV victim reports.

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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.

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