BROUGHTON HOUSE
VETERAN CARE VILLAGE
1916 ONWARDS
WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO SERVED US
ARMED FORCES SUPPORT HUB

MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION

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INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION

Mental health and addiction can manifest in many ways for veterans, impacting their thoughts, behaviour, and perceptions. Serving in the Armed Forces often means facing highly stressful situations, prolonged separation from loved ones, or difficulties adjusting to civilian life after discharge.

These challenges can take a toll on a person's well-being. When mental health is affected, it can sometimes lead to harmful coping mechanisms such as addiction, excessive drinking, gambling, or drug use.

Before they know it, veterans may find themselves trapped in a downward spiral, struggling to see a way out.

INTRODUCTION TO MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION

Signs of addiction:

- Blackouts
- Continuing to drink despite negative effects on health
- Reliance on alcohol or drugs to manage everyday tasks
- Financial difficulties, including debt or bankruptcy
- Inability to cover basic needs like food, rent, or bills
- Frequently borrowing money or taking out loans

These can also have a profound impact on family and friends, who may feel helpless as they witness changes in their loved one's mental state and emotional well-being.

In the UK, anxiety and depression are the most common mental health conditions. Triggers include social isolation, unemployment, financial hardship, bereavement, or Post-Traumatic Stress.

THERAPY OPTIONS

There are various therapies available to support veterans in managing their mental health and addiction, including:

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a form of talking therapy that helps change the way you think and behave to manage problems more effectively. It focuses on addressing current issues rather than past experiences. CBT can be beneficial for conditions like anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, alcohol misuse, insomnia, PTSD, and panic attacks.

Counselling

Counselling offers a safe space to explore your emotions with a trained therapist, either one-on-one, in a group setting, or over the phone. While it may take a few sessions to feel the benefits, with time, veterans often notice gradual improvements in their well-being.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness involves paying attention to your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings in the present moment. Slowing down and being mindful can help you better understand yourself. Activities like yoga or walking can quiet a busy mind, while mindfulness meditation or Tai Chi, with its focus on breathing and gentle movements, are also effective techniques.

There are numerous apps, like Headspace, that can help with mindfulness. Many fitness trackers now offer features that assist with stress management, sleep, and mindfulness. You can also use them to monitor and reflect on your daily feelings and mood.

ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE WELLBEING

Exercise

Physical activity not only boosts mental well-being but also improves fitness levels. Exercising triggers chemical changes in the brain that can elevate your mood.

Connect with others

Spend time with family and friends, whether by going out or simply chatting. Try limiting screen time and engage in activities like games or quizzes to strengthen connections.

Learn something new

Taking up a new hobby or learning a skill can boost your well-being. This might be an art or cooking class, or perhaps a small DIY project like upcycling furniture.

Explore local organisations

Many charities and voluntary groups in your area offer services and activities that can promote well-being.

CONCLUSION

Mental health and addiction are complex issues that can deeply affect the lives of veterans and their families. The journey towards recovery may be challenging, but it is important to remember that there are a variety of therapies and activities that can provide support. From Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to mindfulness practices, veterans can find ways to regain control over their mental health and break free from harmful coping mechanisms. By engaging in positive activities like exercise, learning new skills, and connecting with others, veterans can significantly improve their overall well-being.

Recovery is not a path that needs to be walked alone. Support is available, and no veteran should feel ashamed or isolated when seeking help for mental health or addiction.

Here at the Armed Forces Support Hub, we believe that no veteran or family member should face these challenges alone. We can connect you to relevant services, helping you take the steps towards a fulfilling life.

Please contact us on 0161 464 9521 or email hub.support@broughtonhouse.com and one of our team will be in touch with you to discuss how we can help.

If you ever find yourself in a mental health crisis, don't hesitate to seek help. Call Samaritans on 116 123 or 111 for Mental Health Crisis services.

USEFUL LINKS

Some recommended websites can be found below, but please note we are not responsible for third-party content.

Mental Health Greater Manchester - 0800 953 0285, Online referral form

Manchester Mind Charity - 0161 769 5723

Pennine Care - 0800 014 9995 (NHS)

Samaritans - 116123, jo@samaritans.org

Veterans In Mind - 0800 953 0285 – Crisis, Phone Referral – 0151 908 0019

Veterans Gateway

Veterans in communities

The Fed – Jewish Communities

CONTACT US

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