



Wellbeing Tips

Sharing wisdom through mentoring



The power of mentoring in veteran families

Sharing wisdom through mentoring can be a deeply beneficial and mutually enriching experience for both those doing and receiving the mentoring, especially in a unique environment such as the veteran family community. When a veteran family member with many years of lived experience takes the time to share insights, practical advice and encouragement with someone newer to the community, it helps the newer families make connections, build confidence, resilience and a stronger sense of belonging.

A veteran partner or widow can offer guidance and encouragement to someone newer to the lifestyle, providing both practical tips and emotional support, such as:

- Sharing lived experience: Offering insight into Defence life, such as managing relocations, deployments, and the emotional ups and downs of service life.
- Providing social connection: Introducing the newer family member to local support networks, community groups, and Defence family events to help them build a sense of belonging.

- Offering emotional support: Listening without judgement, reassuring them that feelings of loneliness or uncertainty are normal, and sharing or modelling coping strategies that have worked in the past.
- Practical guidance: Sharing tips about navigating Defence systems, housing, family support programs, or childcare options.





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- Encouraging self-care and independence: Helping newer veteran families identify personal goals, hobbies, and employment or study opportunities that maintain their own identity outside the Defence role.
- Building resilience: Sharing stories of adaptation and perseverance, which can help normalise challenges and foster confidence in managing future changes.

At the same time, mentoring can be deeply rewarding for the mentor as well, with the more experienced mentor often finding purpose and connection in supporting others, reflecting on their own experiences and learning fresh perspectives from newer or younger family members.

Offering support to others can foster a renewed sense of identity and contribution.

Sharing hard-earned knowledge and helping others navigate Defence life can validate the mentor's own experiences and highlight the personal growth and resilience they have developed over time.

These informal, peer-to-peer supportive relationships strengthen not only the individuals involved, but also community bonds, fostering a culture of mutual support, trust, understanding and connection that helps all members navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of Defence life together.



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