

VOLUNTARY PATRICIA PROGRAM UPDATE

2019 AGM

The Voluntary Patricia Program (VPP) continues to support veterans and their families across Canada. The overall aim of the program is to help others get the professional help they need to address whatever issues they are dealing with.

The process used by the VPP is a very simple one. Individuals with an issue are identified to the program from a variety of sources: social media; word of mouth; by the Regimental Veterans Care Cell at RHQ; through Association Branches; or from other outside agencies. Once an individual with an issue is identified, the first step is to link them up with a VPP Coordinator. VPP Coordinators are volunteers, primarily from Branches, most of whom have now received the mental Health and Suicide Awareness training. The role of the VPP Coordinator is to link up with the individual in order to ensure that they know there is someone out there who cares and is willing to help. At the same time the VPP Coordinator listens to the individual to determine what the issues are, asking questions to make sure that they have a sound understanding. What the VPP Coordinator **does not** do is provide advice.

Once the VPP Coordinator has a sound of what the issues are they will consult with the national VPP Facilitator and/or the appropriate support services and agencies to develop options for a plan of action to address those issues. These options are then presented to the individual for consideration. It is very important to note that the decision on how best to move forward is one for the **individual to make**. In many cases an individual may decide to take no action. In that case the role of the VPP Coordinator is to simply maintain contact with the individual and attempt to introduce them into a wider social support network.

Should the individual decide on a plan of action, then the role of the VPP Coordinator is to assist the individual in implementing that plan. This may include arranging appointments on behalf of the individual with the agencies and services best able to support the individual; assisting the person acquire or complete documentation required to further their plan of action; and assisting with transportation to and from appointments. While the plan of action is being implemented, the VPP Coordinator will maintain contact with the person and monitor their progress, providing moral support, encouragement and assistance as required.

Many of the cases that we have encountered to date have involved people who do not live in close proximity to a Branch. In these cases, the VPP Facilitator has reached out to Association members in the local area to seek their assistance in helping a brother or sister in need. I am happy to report that in all cases these fine Patricia's have stepped up to the plate without hesitation to fill the role of an ad hoc VPP Coordinator and they have done a fine job supporting those in need of assistance on your behalf.

Dave Pentney
VPP Facilitator