

Veteran Family Summit 2026

Answers to submitted questions



Thank you to everyone who submitted questions during the registration process. A number of your questions were answered by the speakers during the live event. Here are some additional information and resources for those questions we may have missed.

Please note: The following questions appear exactly as provided during registration and have not been modified.

TOP LEARNING PRIORITIES FOR THIS YEAR'S SUMMIT

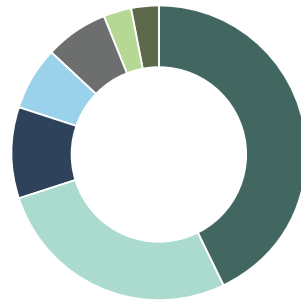
VETERAN AND FAMILY COMMUNITY

- Gain knowledge or understanding **28%**
- Ways to support or cope **23%**
- Available resources **22%**
- Experiences and needs **16%**
- New and current work underway **6%**
- Connection **5%**
- About Atlas **1%**



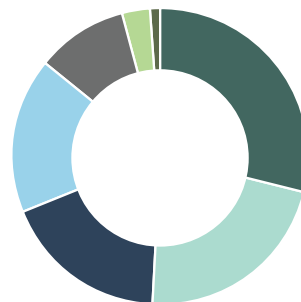
RESEARCHERS

- Experiences and needs **43%**
- Gain knowledge or understanding **27%**
- Available resources **10%**
- Ways to support or cope **7%**
- New and current work underway **7%**
- Connection **3%**
- About Atlas **1%**



SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Gain knowledge or understanding **29%**
- Ways to support or cope **22%**
- Available resources **18%**
- Experiences and needs **17%**
- New and current work underway **10%**
- Connection **3%**
- About Atlas **1%**



? Going forward how can we create spaces and help children in military Families that have lost a parent?

This represents an area that needs a deeper dive into. As Atlas does not yet have any grief resources, we'd like to share some of the organizations that joined us as resource booths at the summit. They offer alternative supports such as podcasts, books, peer support, tips on how to have difficult conversations with children and bereavement camps:

- **BEREAVEMENT AND GRIEF RESOURCES**
Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS)
bit.ly/bereavement-resources-cfmws
- **HOPE PROGRAM**
Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS)
bit.ly/cfmws-hope
- **TALKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH ABOUT SERIOUS ILLNESS**
Canadian Virtual Hospice
bit.ly/talking-children-cvh

INFORMATION ON MENTAL HEALTH

? What did you find most helpful on your journey? What did you find least helpful?

Gaining knowledge and understanding of all the resources available to you and perhaps leaning on an organization or peer that can help you navigate the resources are important steps as it can be overwhelming at first. Every resource can help in some way, whether directly or by referral to a more appropriate organization.

? What work is underway to understand (or reduce negative) the potential impacts of protecting the North to mental health?

Atlas aims to continue our learning about the needs and experiences of Northern and remote Veterans and Families. See our report from our rural and remote roundtable held in Winnipeg in 2024: atlasveterans.ca/rural-remote-roundtable-report

Additionally, we are currently working with an advisory of Indigenous community members to better identify and understand the needs and experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Veterans. Learn more: atlasveterans.ca/indigenous-veterans

? What is a great resource that is underused for Veterans to access?

Several resources and programs are likely underutilized for various reasons. One reason may be Veterans and Families not being aware of what is available. We encourage folks to check out our directory of services, Knowledge Hub and the resource booths featured at this year's Veteran Family Summit.

- **DIRECTORY OF SERVICES:** A list of various resources, broken down by category, that are available for Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Veterans and Families in Canada. atlasveterans.ca/directory-of-services
- **KNOWLEDGE HUB:** A library of summaries, fact sheets, research reports, videos, guides, webpages and more, produced by Atlas and our partners for Veterans, Families, service providers and researchers. atlasveterans.ca/knowledge-hub
- **RESOURCE BOOTHS:** Visit our Veteran Family Summit 2026 event page for a list of featured resource booths available at the live event. atlasveterans.ca/veteran-family-summit-2026

? Why are spouses/Families of injured service members or Veterans still not able to get the wrap around support needed for their own well-being and personal security after there has been decades of in-depth studies on the affects of injury to members and its Families. Spouses and Families have "No Voice" or "Protection" from an injured members abuses when mental health is affected or when it is complicated by substance abuses. When can we expect effective help?

The lack of comprehensive wraparound support for spouses and Families of injured service members and Veterans remains a critical gap, particularly when compounded by mental health challenges and substance use. It is hard to say when best effective support for Families will exist, but it's really important in the meantime for Families who might be experiencing abuse and substance use disorder to get support. The [Eggshells program](#) would be a good start. Think about utilizing other free access programs through organizations such as [Wounded Warriors Canada](#), Can Praxis and [OSISS](#) (Operational Stress Injury Social Support). They might be the beginning of change and hope for your Family.

? What resources are needed to meet the needs of our Veterans and members of the RCMP and their Families?

When Atlas uses the term “Veteran,” it is inclusive of former/retired uniformed RCMP members as well, so most of our resources are created with them in mind (and RCMP members and Family members are part of many of the advisory committees providing their insights to co-create these resources). Recognizing that there are some differences in experiences to take into consideration, we are also in the process of working with an advisory made up of RCMP Veterans and Family members to write and design resources specifically for this community – stay tuned. In addition to developing resources specific to RCMP Veterans and Families, we also hosted a series of in-person and virtual dialogue sessions to hear directly from as many members of the RCMP Veteran and Family community as possible. The summary and themes from those sessions will help inform our future work and will also be shared publicly so other organizations can use the learnings to address the needs identified by the community.

Learn more about the RCMP dialogue series: atlasveterans.ca/rcmp-dialogue-series

? Are there local, in person resources that can be recommended?

It is encouraging to see that there are many helpful resources and programs that specifically support not only Veterans but also Veteran Families. A good place to start is to check out the Veteran Family Summit 2026 webpage and explore the resource booths that participated this year. Many of these offer in-person supports. Another great source of information on supports that are available in-person is your local Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC).

- **RESOURCE BOOTHS:** Visit our Veteran Family Summit 2026 event page for a list of featured resource booths available at the live event. atlasveterans.ca/veteran-family-summit-2026
- **CFMWS AND MFRC SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES:** Browse resources and services offered by your local MFRC. bit.ly/cfmws-support

? What services can an adult child of a Veteran receive?

VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA (VAC) ASSISTANCE LINE (bit.ly/vac-talk-mental-health-professional):

Call **1-800-268-7708** to speak to a mental health professional right now or use the **online chat** to set up an appointment. A confidential and free service available 24-7 to Veterans, former uniformed RCMP members, their Family members, and caregivers. (This service is available to children up to 21 years old (or up to age 25, if they are full-time students).

Under the **TREATMENT BENEFITS PROGRAM (bit.ly/vac-treatment-benefits)**, VAC may cover the cost for mental health services for Family members when the mental health professional who is treating the Veteran indicates it will have a positive impact on the Veteran's mental health.

For participants in the **REHABILITATION PROGRAM (bit.ly/vac-rehabilitation-program)**, VAC may cover the cost for Family members who need mental health services when the assessing or treating professional identifies that it will help meet the participant's rehabilitation goals and that these services are not available through other programs.

? Sometimes resources are available for CAF Members only. Are you able to include information available for RCMP members?

Employee Assistance Services (EAS) provides free and confidential short-term professional counselling for up to 8 hours per issue for all categories of RCMP employees and their dependants. The EAS Crisis and Referral Centre is available 24-7 to assist with any type of issue. Dependants include:

- A spouse, including a common-law spouse
- Unmarried children, including adopted children, stepchildren and foster children who meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - 21 years of age or under
 - Over 21, up to and including 25 years of age, and in full-time attendance at school

Learn more: bit.ly/canada-eap

- **LIFESPEAK** is a free, 100% confidential service for all RCMP employees and their Families.
 - Visit LifeSpeak (canada.lifespeak.com)
 - Enter Access ID: **canada**
 - Type **Royal Canadian Mounted Police** in the text box and click **Submit**
- **PSPNET FAMILIES** is an online well-being hub designed to support the specific yet diverse challenges faced by loved ones of public safety personnel (PSP).
bit.ly/pspnet-families

? What supports are available for spouses of Veterans to assist in looking after our well-being while we mainly focus on supporting our injured spouses?

Here are some places to help you get you started:

- **DIRECTORY OF SERVICES:** A list of various resources, broken down by category, that are available for CAF and RCMP Veterans and Families in Canada. atlasveterans.ca/directory-of-services
- **SPOUSAL RESILIENCY PROGRAM, WOUNDED WARRIORS CANADA:** Clinically facilitated group-based trauma support for Veteran and first responder spouses who have been exposed to operational stress injuries in their relationships. bit.ly/wwc-spousal-resiliency-program
- **OSISS:** National peer support network for CAF members, Veterans and their Families who are experiencing an operational stress injury (OSI). bit.ly/osiss



? **What are the recommendations to help a member and their Family when they all experience a loss of purpose once the member leaves the military?**

Loss of purpose, meaning and identity can be a lot for both the Veteran and Veteran Family members to process. Communication is key. If you are all feeling the disconnect, it may be helpful to look for a Veteran organization to help fill the void and where you can give back to the community. Atlas is currently doing a couple of studies on transition – stay tuned for the outcomes.

? **Need community support and connections after military service?**

Absolutely, this is key. The Legion, OSISS and the CannaConnect lounges are places you could meet people with similar interests.

? **Some transition resources / tools for Veterans and young Veterans' Family after medical released due to PTSD / Brain Injury / others injuries?**

Transition from the military can be a challenging and complex experience in itself, let alone adding the management of a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury as well. Here are a couple of places to get you started:

- **DIRECTORY OF SERVICES:** A list of various resources, broken down by category, that are available for CAF and RCMP Veterans and Families in Canada. atlasveterans.ca/directory-of-services
- **TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY:** Information and resources on TBI for Veterans, Families and health care providers. atlasveterans.ca/tbi
- **PTSD AND SOME TREATMENT OPTIONS:** Learn more about some of the causes and symptoms of PTSD, along with information on diagnosis, therapy and treatments. atlasveterans.ca/ptsd

- ?** What is the reasonable and acceptable delay in getting care in order to finalize the required evaluations and get an answer on a decision? Personally, I received the final decision five years after my release. The whole process really affected me.

Quel est le délai acceptable et raisonnable pour obtenir des soins et pour finaliser les évaluations nécessaires du programme de réadaptation afin que le personnel de DCG analyse notre situation et rende une décision? Pour ma part, j'ai obtenu la décision de DCG 5 ans suivant la date de ma libération. Tout ce processus m'a beaucoup affecté.

That sounds like it was very stressful for you. It's something that our Lived Experience team members hear a lot about when we travel to visit with Veterans and their Families. The Legion's Provincial Command Service Officers can be a great resource to help make sure all the correct paperwork gets put in and can follow up with the claims periodically. bit.ly/legion-service-officers

- ?** When transitioning out of the CAF, what support do you need to make this process smoother?

There are several transition resources that you can access from our directory of services, including peer support services that can be very helpful during transition. atlasveterans.ca/directory-of-services-transition

You might also find this page helpful: bit.ly/canada-transition



? How can I become more involved in Atlas Projects as a Service Provider and Independent Researcher?

There are a few ways you can stay informed and become more involved with Atlas:

1. **AS A SERVICE PROVIDER:** You can explore all of the opportunities that our Implementation team offers to services providers by visiting: atlasveterans.ca/training
2. **AS A RESEARCHER:** Learn about our latest research, find ways to get involved and stay up-to-date with our *Research Compass* newsletter: atlasveterans.ca/research
3. You can also subscribe to our email list to make sure you don't miss out on any opportunities, such as training and research updates: atlasveterans.ca/mailling-list

? What are the key elements you are looking for in a service provider?

While Atlas doesn't employ service providers, we do help equip service providers that work with Veterans with evidence-based trainings, webinars and community of practice opportunities. Check out the learning opportunities we offer to service providers on our training page: atlasveterans.ca/training

? How can we reach the family directly? As we now need the permission of the serving member/Veteran to do so, unless the Family reach out to us.

This is a challenging issue. It's important organizations and service providers understand how important it is to equip Families with information, not leave them in the dark. Strategies can include using social media, having unit nights where spouses or Families are invited and working together with other organizations that deliver Family programing. Family days can also be a great opportunity to invite support organizations to be set up for Families to interact with.

? How can we take research data and turn it into beneficial programs for Veterans and their Families?

At Atlas, research and real-world practice go hand in hand. Whenever we learn something new, whether it's from our own team or from other community partners, we make sure it actually gets used. Our Knowledge Mobilization team takes those findings and turns them into easy-to-use resources for Veterans, Families and service providers.

Meanwhile, our Implementation team focuses on bringing those ideas into clinical settings and programs, helping people adopt evidence-informed practices and strengthening the whole system of care for Veterans and Families.

Basically, research at Atlas doesn't just sit on a shelf. We share it, simplify it and put it into action so it can genuinely make a difference for Veterans and their Families.

? What is something a service provider can do better to help a Veteran succeed?

This is a great question. Thank you for asking it and this speaks to your commitment and interest in helping the Veteran community. A good rule of thumb might be: The more knowledge and understanding, the better. Learn and understand your individual client's skills that they bring from the military that you might be able to draw from. For example, most military members are excellent problem-solvers and likely have skill sets that apply.

Look for opportunities to learn more about Veteran culture, needs and experiences. Find some training options, including the [Trauma-exposed professionals training](#), [Managing problematic anger course](#) and other opportunities for service providers on our website: atlasveterans.ca/training



? May we explore opportunities to collaborate and develop a global initiative, recognizing that these challenges are universal and affect serving communities, Veterans, first responders and Families around the world?

While the primary focus and mandate at Atlas is to support Canadian Veterans and Families, we recognize there is a lot of benefit in knowledge exchange with other countries. Atlas, along with other Canadian stakeholders, participates in several activities including the [Global Leadership Exchange](#) and the [Five Eyes Mental Health Research and Innovation Collaboration](#). Additionally, we have developed international partnerships, including with [Phoenix Australia](#) and [Military and Emergency Services Health Australia](#) (MESHA). We are excited about our continued contributions to these important global dialogues and what we can glean from them to best serve our Canadian Veterans and Families.

? What is the process of military grief?
Are the steps the same as “classic” grief?

Quel est le processus de deuil militaire?
Les étapes sont elles les même qu’un deuil classique?

This is an interesting question and one we might be able to explore as a future summit presentation topic.

? What can churches do to better support Veterans and their Families?

Many churches are already helping Veterans through food support or homelessness programs. We recommend connecting with a local Veteran organization to see how you might be able to help them.

? What to do to plan for a veteran’s funeral?
Who to contact and what to do?

Here are some resources to help you get started:

- FUNERAL AND BURIAL PROGRAM – Last Post Fund: bit.ly/funeral-burial-last-post-fund
- FUNERALS AND BURIALS – Royal Canadian Legion: bit.ly/funerals-burials-legion

? How can we get this program in the US?

The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families is a Canadian organization, but all of our resources, materials and information are openly available to anyone. While we are very intentional about ensuring Canadian Veterans and their Families see themselves reflected in our work, much of the content is broadly applicable and relevant across borders. We encourage you to explore our website.

One of the key objectives of the Veteran Family Summit is to be as accessible as possible to anyone interested in attending. For that reason, the Veteran Family Summit has always been – and will continue to be – open to participants regardless of location.