

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-27

A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY FOR  
VETERAN AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



I am pleased to announce the achievement of a significant milestone – the release of our expanded vision for the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families in our full strategic plan.

The inaugural years of our organization, 2019–2023, were characterized by intentional growth and establishing the Atlas Institute’s community, culture and presence. The result is a solid foundation built on the principles of not only looking to the experiences of the community we are here to serve for guidance, but also actively collaborating with them to co-create the plan to lead the Atlas Institute forward.

Meaningful and authentic engagement with Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Veterans and their Families is a cornerstone of how we intend to effect change and make a difference for those who have given so much through their service. This plan is the result of a process of deep engagement with Veterans, their Families, the service providers who work them, researchers seeking new knowledge to better understand this community, and other stakeholders, both nationally and internationally.

Having a plan such as this in place is no small endeavour. I would like to express my appreciation to each person who made the commitment to sharing your voice. I would also like to share my gratitude to our team members, each of whom brings their own unique attributes and strengths to the Atlas Institute on a daily basis. And, just as importantly, for the passion with which they approach this work.

We know that in order for this plan to be effective, it must be embedded in every aspect of our organization and reinforced at every level. As we continue to approach our work at the Atlas Institute over the next few years, with this strategic plan as our guide, it is our commitment to the community that we will continue this path of listening and learning – with creativity, with innovation, and with passion.

Respectfully,

Fardous Hosseiny, MSc, CHE  
President and CEO

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## VISION

Canada's Veterans and their Families flourish and thrive in all aspects of life, benefiting from high-quality, comprehensive and responsive mental health services that recognize their unique expertise, needs and priorities.



## MISSION

Side by side with Canadian Veterans and their Families, the Atlas Institute generates evidence, mobilizes knowledge, influences policy and builds capacity among service providers to improve the mental health and well-being of Veterans and Families.



## CORE VALUES

1. Engagement with lived expertise
2. People-centric
3. Excellence
4. Co-creation
5. Humility, respect and empathy
6. Boldness
7. Inclusion and accessibility

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, GOALS AND IMPACT STATEMENTS

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: PREVENT AND PREPARE



#### GOAL

Work with partners to strengthen upstream prevention and support for Veteran and Family health and well-being.

#### IMPACT STATEMENT

The Atlas Institute collaborates with Veterans, Families, service providers and researchers to generate, share and apply evidence to create easily accessible knowledge products and trainings that promote health and well-being and reflect Veteran and Family lived experience and culture.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: IMPROVE CARE AND SUPPORT



#### GOAL

Increase capacity across Canada for more accessible, culturally competent and trauma-informed care and support.

#### IMPACT STATEMENT

Service providers and partners recognize the Atlas Institute as a trusted source of information and resources that improve their knowledge about the lived experience and culture of Veterans and Families, and on evidence-based and trauma-informed care.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: EXPAND WHAT WE KNOW



#### GOAL

Partner with Veterans, their Families and leading researchers to discover new horizons for care and support and actively and widely mobilize that information.

#### IMPACT STATEMENT

Stakeholders recognize the Atlas Institute as a trusted, accessible source of evidence and information and have access to the emergent knowledge products and research the Atlas Institute generates.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: ENGAGE AND INFORM



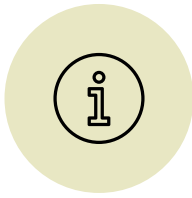
#### GOAL

Build trusted relationships with Veterans and Families, engaging them in all key Atlas Institute projects and processes, and empowering them with curated, trustworthy information that supports their health and well-being journeys.

#### IMPACT STATEMENT

Veterans and Families trust the Atlas Institute, seeing themselves as integral to its work. They are informed and equipped with evidence-based knowledge to help them support their health and well-being.

# CONTEXT



Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) serve selflessly in the face of adversity and danger, often encountering physical, emotional and mental impacts as a result of their service. Veterans and their Families have long advocated for access to safe, meaningful care and supports for their long-term health and well-being.

The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families exists because of this need for action. We work 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.

In 2021, under our former name as the Centre of Excellence on Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Related Mental Health Conditions, we undertook a strategic planning process involving significant consultation with multiple stakeholder groups. The result was a strategic framework with four zones of focus. This work was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic, which encouraged the Atlas Institute to adapt and shift to a virtual work environment.

In March 2023, we re-engaged in the planning process that was truncated by the pandemic, with a focus on:

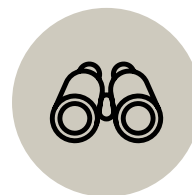
- Clearly defining our shared vision, mission and values
- Developing meaningful impact statements that articulate the results (outputs, outcomes, impact) we will focus on achieving

Our strategic planning process reflects the Atlas Institute way, characterized by collaboration and co-creation. Building upon the groundwork laid during the 2021 stakeholder consultations, the ensuing plan embodies the collective insight of Atlas Institute staff, which includes individuals with firsthand experience as Veterans and Veteran Family members. The insights gained through this additional consultation have helped us to hone a set of statements that will set the direction of the organization for the next five years.

# STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## VISION

Canada's Veterans and their Families flourish and thrive in all aspects of life, benefiting from high-quality, comprehensive and responsive mental health services that recognize their unique expertise, needs and priorities.



## MISSION

Side by side with Canadian Veterans and their Families, the Atlas Institute generates evidence, mobilizes knowledge, influences policy and builds capacity among service providers to improve the mental health and well-being of Veterans and Families.



## CORE VALUES

### 1. **ENGAGEMENT WITH LIVED EXPERTISE**

We honour Veterans and their Families, valuing their contributions, unique experiences and insights. Listening and learning from them, we ground our efforts in their realities to advance their well-being.

### 2. **PEOPLE-CENTRIC**

We care about the whole person – Veterans, Families and our team members. We strive to create an environment in which everyone feels psychologically safe, recognizing that everyone's well-being is essential to achieving lasting positive outcomes.

### 3. **EXCELLENCE**

We are committed to excellence, focusing on evidence-informed practices and high standards in research, knowledge products, implementation, communications and policy. Striving for excellence, we meaningfully impact the lives of Veterans, Families and the mental health landscape.

### 4. **CO-CREATION**

We build collaborative partnerships among the Veteran and Family community, service providers, researchers and others nationally, with the goal of improving the mental health landscape for Veterans and their Families. Embracing the journey and emerging insights, we highly value the collective wisdom and diverse perspectives of our stakeholders. Recognizing the transformative power and synergy of collaboration, we catalyze change within the mental health system through innovation, bridge-building and barrier-breaking.



### 5. **HUMILITY, RESPECT AND EMPATHY**

We embrace curiosity, eager to learn from Veterans, Families, researchers and service providers. We cultivate a growth mindset by treating others as learning partners. Our interactions throughout the Atlas Institute are defined by mutual respect and empathy, ensuring everyone feels valued, heard and supported, both within the organization and beyond.

## 6. BOLDNESS

We are unafraid to take action, make tough decisions and speak up when something isn't right, even if it means going against the grain. We drive innovation in research, seeking unique solutions and embracing the unknown. Our willingness to work in ambiguity and tackle complex issues sets us apart. We strive to influence system transformation with thought leadership, driving positive change.

## 7. INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

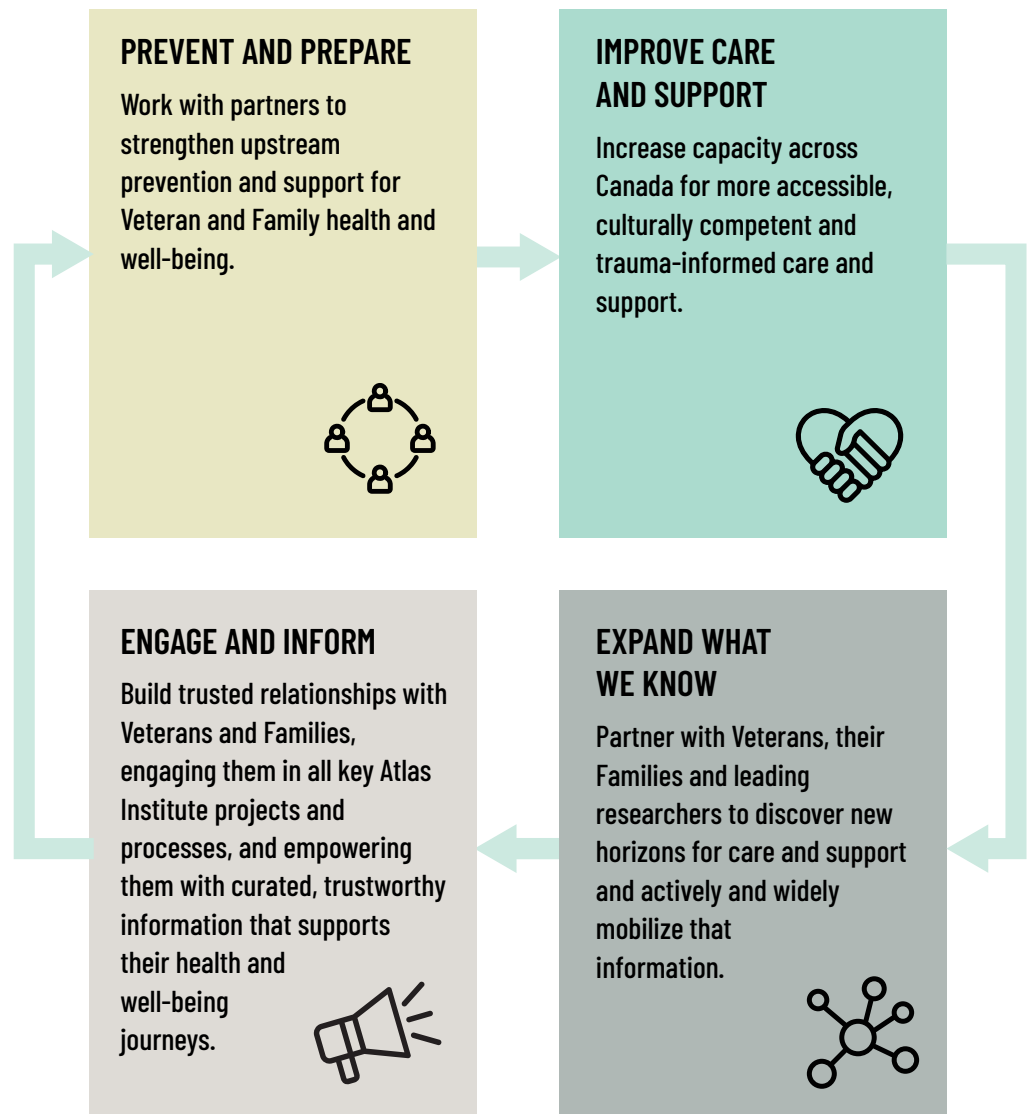
We recognize and value diverse identities and viewpoints, actively fostering inclusive spaces where all voices are heard and respected and everyone feels a sense of belonging. By acknowledging and honouring unique experiences and expertise, our work genuinely represents the communities we serve.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



All Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Veterans and Families have access to safe, meaningful resources and supports that protect dignity and identity, create foundations for hope, connection, and community, and improve health and well-being.

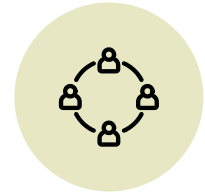
We've got your back.



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: PREVENT AND PREPARE

### GOAL

Work with partners to strengthen upstream prevention and support for Veteran and Family health and well-being.



### OBJECTIVES

1. Engage with Veterans and their Families to build knowledge and evidence around upstream prevention and best practices to support healthy transition from service to retirement.
2. Build collaborative relationships with the Department of National Defence, CAF, RCMP, Veterans Affairs Canada and relevant partners to explore and plan for the development of guidelines, recommendations, educational tools and programs that can normalize traumatic stress. Build capacity to recognize signs and symptoms of mental distress. Grow a trauma-informed culture, augment programs and develop trauma-informed practices and resources that support active CAF and Reserve forces and active-duty RCMP and their Families to address all elements of the Veteran Well-being Framework and healthy transition.
3. Create easily accessible plain-language resources and tools for Veterans and their Families that enable them to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of traumatic stress and to locate the range of accredited support services available.
4. Work with existing peer transition support groups to develop a set of best practice guidelines for peer support groups and develop a training and certification program for peer leaders.

### IMPACT STATEMENT

The Atlas Institute collaborates with Veterans, Families, service providers and researchers to generate, share and apply evidence to create easily accessible knowledge products and trainings that promote health and well-being and reflect Veteran and Family lived experience and culture.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: IMPROVE CARE AND SUPPORT

### GOAL

Increase capacity across Canada for more accessible, culturally competent and trauma-informed care and support.



### OBJECTIVES

1. Develop and promote trainings and resources for service providers on trauma-informed care, military and RCMP culture, and priority areas impacting the mental health and well-being of Veterans and their Families, contributing to greater consistency of care across Canada.
2. Build strong communities of practice and learning programs for peers and providers in support of greater consistency of care across the country, equip them with tools and skills, and signal safe places for Veterans and their Families to receive care.
3. Grow and mobilize knowledge related to leading evidence and emerging practices for PTSD and related mental health conditions.

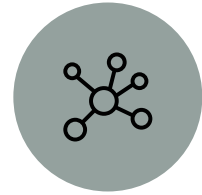
### IMPACT STATEMENT

Service providers and partners recognize the Atlas Institute as a trusted source of information and resources that improve their knowledge about the lived experience and culture of Veterans and Families, and on evidence-based and trauma-informed care.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: EXPAND WHAT WE KNOW

### GOAL

Partner with Veterans, their Families and leading researchers to discover new horizons for care and support and actively and widely mobilize that information.



### OBJECTIVES

1. Establish the Atlas Institute as a nationally and internationally recognized thought leader on PTSD and related mental health conditions.
2. Build trusted relationships and grow collaborations with researchers and Veteran and Family groups across Canada to continually explore and advance key research questions related to health and well-being and the reconceptualization of trauma and traumatic stress, including those related to minorities among military and Veterans, and novel and holistic complementary therapies.
3. Empower Veterans and their Families by engaging them as key partners, co-investigators and co-authors of research, including a process for their participation in reviewing research outcomes from a lived expertise perspective.
4. Develop guidelines for all research conducted in this space to honour and plan for the complexity of the project and potential triggering impact. Ensure ethics and consent are translated in ways that are transparent, in plain language and clearly outline the purpose of the research.

### IMPACT STATEMENT

**Stakeholders recognize the Atlas Institute as a trusted, accessible source of evidence and information and have access to the emergent knowledge products and research the Atlas Institute generates.**

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: ENGAGE AND INFORM

### GOAL

Build trusted relationships with Veterans and Families, engaging them in all key Atlas Institute projects and processes, and empowering them with curated, trustworthy information that supports their health and well-being journeys.



### OBJECTIVES

1. Build strong, trusted relationships by engaging with diverse Veterans and Families across Canada, using best practices to identify intersectional needs and focus areas for the Atlas Institute through partnership, advisory roles, early engagement and consultation.
2. Intentionally expand recruitment to have Veteran and Family members embedded throughout the organization to inform the Atlas Institute's work.
3. Generate and offer resources and training to build awareness and capacity among our stakeholders (Veterans, Veteran Families, service providers, researchers and members of the general public).
4. Create a unique and recognizable brand by demonstrating leadership, embedding lived experience and making concrete actions to support greater equity, diversity and inclusion in our workplace.
5. Create tools that build awareness about the role and value of service in the military and the RCMP to assist with public engagement.

### IMPACT STATEMENT

**Veterans and Families trust the Atlas Institute, seeing themselves as integral to its work. They are informed and equipped with evidence-based knowledge to help them support their health and well-being.**

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