

The VVCS Legacy

The Vietnam War was a difficult chapter in our nation's history. For those who served, the experience forged a bond that remains undiminished with the passage of time. Vietnam veterans' commitment to looking out for each other saw them successfully lobby the Australian Government for counselling and support services for veterans and their families. In 1982 the Australian Government established the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service.

Over the years, the Australian Government extended the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service to provide support to veterans of all conflicts, their families, and members of the Australian Defence Force. 25 years after the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service was founded, the service was renamed VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service.

The name VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service, acknowledges the heritage of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service and the efforts of the Vietnam veteran community in establishing the service, while also promoting the availability of this important service to the wider veteran community and their families.

Other VVCS Programs

VVCS group programs are designed to help you to live a happier and healthier life by equipping you with skills and knowledge which can help you and your family develop new networks, friendships and support. These programs include anger management, sleep, relaxation, anxiety and stress management and depression. You can find out more about the range of programs available by contacting your nearest VVCS centre.

How do I contact VVCS?

Contact VVCS by phoning

1800 011 046*

During business hours – connects you to the nearest VVCS centre. There are 15 VVCS centres located across Australia.

After business hours – connects you with Veterans Line, the after-hours telephone counselling, support and crisis assistance service.

www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs

*Free local call. Calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur charges.

Heart Health Program

Getting veterans fitter, happier and healthier.



P00480 October 2008

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service
A service founded by Vietnam veterans



Australian Government

VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service

What is the Heart Health Program?

The Heart Health Program aims to help you increase your physical health and wellbeing through practical exercise, nutrition and lifestyle management support. The program runs for 52 weeks and includes two physical activity sessions per week tailored to your needs and 15 health educational seminars.

The program covers a range of topics including setting healthy goals, eating well, lowering alcohol consumption, communication and stress management, quitting smoking, taking care of your body, solving problems and maintaining a healthy heart.

The program is offered in two formats – the Heart Health Group Program and the Outreach Heart Health Program.

Why should I register for the Heart Health Program?

Physical health is vital to your mental health and your overall quality of life. There are a number of benefits to a daily routine of exercise and balanced nutrition.

Exercise can help you to:

- prevent chronic diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer

- maintain a healthy weight
- strengthen your heart and lungs
- improve your sleeping patterns
- improve your sex life
- have fun and socialise.

Most people want to improve their health but find it hard to get started. Registering for Heart Health gets you started and keeps you going on the path to new lifelong health habits.

Changing our routines to improve our health can be challenging. The Heart Health Program gives you the skills to improve and sustain your health and wellbeing by giving you practical information and access to specialist advice and training.

Heart Health Group Program

This program is delivered in groups of approximately 10-15 participants. The group meets at a designated gym for weekly activity sessions and educational seminars. Experienced exercise and health professionals provide the participants with a structured and supervised fitness training schedule.

Outreach Heart Health Program

Veterans and peacekeepers unable to attend a group can access the Heart Health Program via a correspondence version. It has similar support to the regular program.

The Outreach Heart Health Program is delivered via correspondence over a 12-month period with participants having their own tailored physical activity program and health education modules.

Participants are supported by their general practitioner and a health coach who guide participants through the program. The support team conduct fortnightly sessions via the phone with you when it's most convenient and will tailor a program specifically for you. The program will make it easier for you to exercise in a way you enjoy. All Heart Health participants receive a series of booklets with great tips and information on health topics to keep as a ready reference.

The Outreach Heart Health Program provides the veteran community with more flexible access to information and education to give them the tools they need to improve their physical health and ultimately, to enjoy a healthier and happier lifestyle.

Eligibility

The Heart Health Program is open to all veterans and peacekeepers who have not previously participated in a Heart Health program. All participants require medical clearance from their GP before beginning.



“ As an older member of the group I was able to exercise within my ability and was able to participate in all activities. The mixing and social side of the program was excellent. ”

“ I am feeling fit, am able to get around more freely, sleeping better after exercise and doing more around the yard without feeling any pain. I am also playing more sport, swimming and bowls. ”

“ As a person suffering with diabetes, I am very happy with the improvement in my health and fitness. My blood glucose readings have dropped and my doctor has reduced my medication. ”