

A PROUD PROJECT OF



Mood Disorders Society of Canada  
Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada



# An Innovative Program for First Responders, Military Members and Veterans that Addresses PTSD and Moral Injury

**PROJECT TRAUMA SUPPORT  
(PTS) PROGRAM PROFILE**

Funded in part by Veterans Affairs Canada  
Financé en partie par Anciens Combattants Canada

**Canada**



# ABOUT PROJECT TRAUMA SUPPORT


## THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM ARE TO:

- (1) provide timely access to effective help for those suffering from service-related trauma,
- (2) minimize distress, and
- (3) support recovery to maintain active and healthy lives and relationships.

Through soul-searching and experiential modules, participants are given the opportunity to explore their stories with a new lens. In doing so, they are able to shift their perceptions, allowing them to move forward in their lives, in peace. Throughout the program, participants forge new friendships and deep bonds with peers that will last into the future.

Having achieved new attitudes and perspectives, participants will be motivated to continue in their healing by "paying it forward", helping others still suffering, and giving hope to others.

Project Trauma Support retreats and conferences are held at Tay River Reflections Medical Spa, a 260 acre farm property along the banks of the Tay River, Perth, Ontario. The serene location provides a therapeutic environment and backdrop to the healing journey.



# AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS, MILITARY MEMBERS AND VETERANS THAT ADDRESSES PTSD AND MORAL INJURY

Project Trauma Support is a proud project of Mood Disorders Society of Canada and is a community-based, 6-day residential program that employs a sanctuary model to create a safe and restorative environment in which veterans find healing from PTSD and Moral Injury.

## PROGRAM CONTENT

The PTS program covers many topics that are relevant to the healing process. Here are just a few:

- Establishing a confidential safe place
- Personal Experiences, paradigms, value
- PTSD Education, Moral injury
- Physical Exercise, Meditation, Yoga and Equine
- Communication and journaling
- Connections and supporting others
- Growth, habits and routines

“Project Trauma Support is providing effective, timely, and transformative interventions for Veterans, First Responders and our Military from the impact of PTSD. We see the significant positive results the program has within the lives of these incredible people going through it, as well as their family members. It is truly heartwarming to see the remarkable changes that are taking place”.

**MDSC NATIONAL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

# SUCCESS STORIES

## FROM GIRLFRIEND OF VETERAN FIREFIGHTER

"I write to you today to thank you and to tell you how grateful I am for you all and to this life changing program. In six short days you have given my boyfriend the courage and the fight to survive his daily struggles that have haunted him for so many years. The moment he came home and walked through the door I could see the changes in him. The past few days I've noticed a few things: his negative outlook on almost every situation or conversation is now gone. Sleeping, he would always be awake at 3:00, 4:00 a.m., unable to shut off his thoughts. This past weekend he's slept through the nights and awake at a decent hour. Now the ultimate test was to see him drive in the city and not once get road rage. There is no need for anyone to suffer anymore because of what you all do and I will do my part in spreading the positive work you have done for us all. Myself, our family and friends thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this beautiful gift you've given us.... his will to live a happy full life again."

## FROM MILITARY PILOT

I have completed six days at your Project Trauma Support facility in Perth. It could not be said more genuinely: it changed my life forever. I had been struggling with PTSD since the summer of 2007. For close to ten years, I was either on the verge of leaving this beautiful world or consistently trying to find the right fit in the mental health sector. As your program has taught me, the events leading to my PTS and the length of time it took me before I found and decided to apply to your program are not a mistake. I am thankful that life gave me this challenge and I now understand some of the lessons I had to learn. The outlook you and your team have instilled in me with regards to my life have changed me and my perception of the world. My traumas have brought me here today and I could not be prouder to have gone through them, they have already made me a better human being. While I attended this Cohort, I have not only met your incredible team, I have also met the new me and discovered ten brothers with whom an unbreakable bond has been created. I arrived on the 2nd of April 2017 and left on 7th of April 2017 with an actual band of brothers, united by love and trust. Thank you for this gift: you, your team and program have given me a new breath of life.

## PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

The mindset shift that originates in the Project Trauma Support (PTS) Cohort for First Responders, Military and Veterans has inspired the creation of PTS Peer Support Groups across Canada.

These structured meetings are led by peer mentors who have completed the 6-day program and can be found in Belleville, Kingston, Meaford, Guelph, Ottawa, London, Halifax, Hamilton, North Bay and Fort McMurray. We have plans to expand the support groups to other locations across the country.

These meetings are open to any First Responders, Military and Veterans with the desire to heal from the effects of trauma.



## FROM MALE PARAMEDIC SUPERVISOR

"I vividly remember looking around at everyone at breakfast on the last day. It was like I was sitting in a room of totally different people than I had met on the first day. I still recognized their faces and their stories but their postures were so different, they had real smiles. I even felt my own posture had made a significant change, I felt relaxed, something I have rarely felt over the past few years. I feel so much more in tune with my body as I type this. I feel like taking care of myself is worth it. I better understand some of the barriers that were built in at a young age that are no longer useful to me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and soul for having created this gift for us all. You are going to save and enlighten so many lives with this program."

## "THE PROJECT TRAUMA SUPPORT (PTS) COHORT PROVED TO ME THAT HEALING IS POSSIBLE"

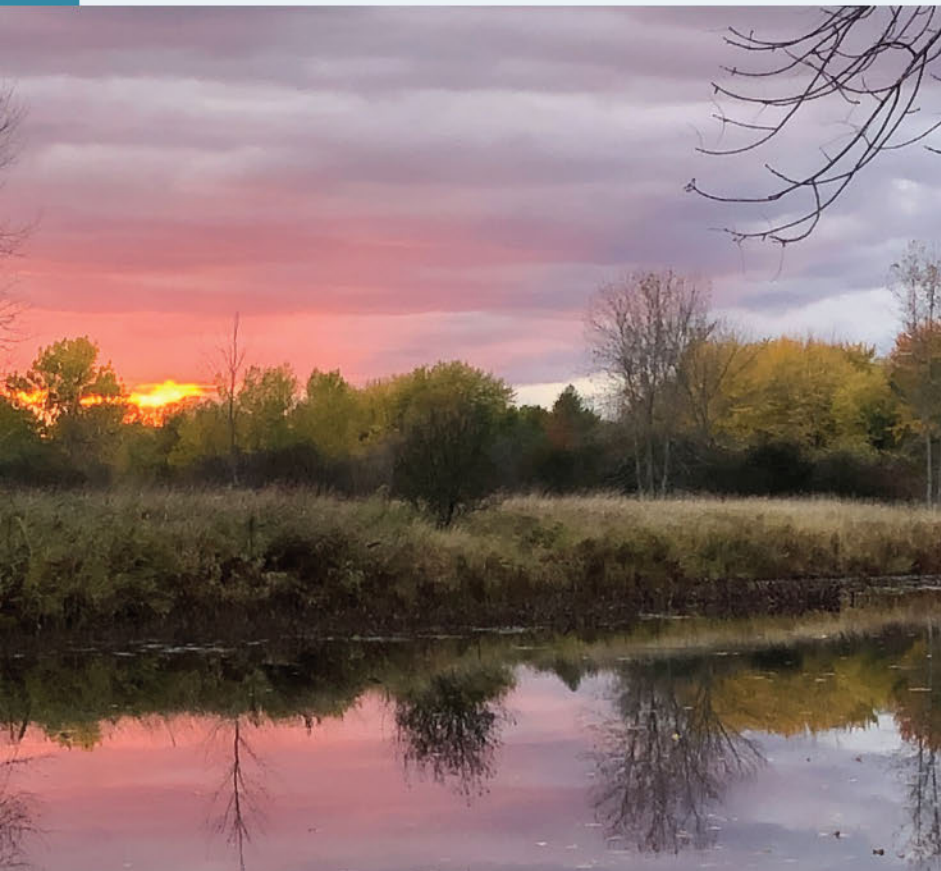
## FROM POLICE OFFICER (20 YEARS)

"I spent approximately 2 years struggling on my own prior to being diagnosed with PTSD and Depression in early 2015. I then spent approximately 20 months receiving treatment/therapy and was believing I would never get any better. The Project Trauma Support (PTS) Cohort proved to me that healing is possible. I was not only provided the tools/techniques to move forward with my healing, I was shown that these tools/techniques work. I personally had several "Aha" moments during the cohort where what I was being taught was applied with great success. Thank you Project Trauma Support for showing me how to get my life back."



# TESTIMONIALS

“I have felt true joy inside me for the first time in 8 years”



“Ever since the cohort I have felt true joy inside me for the first time in 8 years; the world appears brighter to me now. I was able to release and let go of something when I was there, it was a catalyst to the positive change in living my life forward!”

**MILITARY POLICE OFFICER**



"I came away feeling that something had fundamentally changed in me and the way I would deal with my PTS. Not only have I noticed a difference in the way I now live my life, others around me have noticed as well. I only wish I could have had this 14 years ago."

**RCMP OFFICER**

"We come to this program not knowing what to expect. We are asked to 'lean in and remain curious'. I found answers by embracing the mystery."

**MCPL (RET'D) RCEME**

"The light has returned to my husband's eyes. I don't fear his suicide now and after so many years of it always being close in my mind, that has been such a relief!"

**WIFE OF POLICE OFFICER**



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## **ABOUT MOOD DISORDERS SOCIETY OF CANADA (MDSC)**

Formally launched and incorporated in 2001, MDSC is one of Canada's best-connected mental health NGOs and has a demonstrated track record of forging and maintaining meaningful and sustained partnerships and collaborations with the public, private and non-profit sectors throughout Canada.

MDSC is engaged in a wide range of projects and initiatives designed to support the inclusion of persons with mental illnesses in Canadian society and has taken a lead proactive role in public policy and program development in many capacities on the national stage.

It is very well recognized that exposure to combat and traumatic situations can have a profoundly negative impact on the minds and bodies of those involved. PTSD represents a significant and costly illness to veterans, first responders, military members, their families, and society as a whole.

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