



KEEPING WELL HEADING INTO 2025

The end of the year can be a fun *and* busy period. We hope you all take the time to recharge, enjoy yourselves and celebrate the achievements of 2024!

KEEP SIGHT OF WHAT'S IMPORTANT

The lead up to Christmas and the summer holidays are often busy, and pressures, risks and stressors can build up at work and at home.

It's important to continue to prioritise your wellbeing so that you can enjoy the best of the holiday break. This can be as simple as:

- being deliberate about scheduling in things that fill your tank, even if that's lingering over a coffee, savouring a hot shower or unwinding with your favourite music
- spending quality time with others – this helps to release the “feel good hormones” oxytocin and dopamine
- taking a couple of minutes twice a day to practice some mindful breathing or relaxation
- going for a walk in the bush or down the beach, throwing a ball around with your tamariki, or spending some time in the garden.

Keep an eye out for others — Christmas can be a lonely or challenging time for some. Be thoughtful of those who aren't able to be with friends or family over the holiday period, particularly if the last year has been a difficult one. Remember, giving time, words and presence not only helps others feel great, it also lifts your own mood and sense of meaning.

Virtual celebrations— If you'll be apart from friends and loved ones over the holiday period make a point of connecting on-line or over the phone. This could be a virtual festive catch up, the sharing of the opening of presents, or reading a favourite children's story together. Make plans too for a delayed celebration for when you can be together.

HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICES

For information on where to seek after-hours health or dental care over the closedown period, refer to the Defence Health Hub — Pūtahi Hauora health.nzdf.mil.nz.

NZDF support services continue to be available to our community during this time. Contact details and more information about the support options available can also be found on Pūtahi Hauora, health.nzdf.mil.nz.

KEY MESSAGES:

- ⇒ Prioritise your wellbeing
- ⇒ Enjoy celebrations that are inclusive and safe
- ⇒ Focus on giving quality time to others
- ⇒ Help is always available
- ⇒ Have a well deserved break!



NZDF4U WELLBEING SUPPORT

Confidential, 24/7, free wellbeing support for all members of NZDF and the Defence community.

Trained external mental health professionals are available to discuss the best support options for your needs. Over the phone, online or face-to-face counselling can be arranged when you call.

Contact information:

Call 0800 NZDF4U
(0800 693 348)

Text 8881

Overseas +64 9 414 9914

Email:
wellbeingsupport@nzdf4u.co.nz

HAVE YOURSELF A COST - FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS

Here are some budget - friendly ideas for the festive season:

- **Make use of the Force 4 Families discount scheme** when shopping (see force4families.mil.nz for information on this and other financial benefits available through the Force Financial Hub).
- **Buy food on special ahead of season**, when prices are lower. This can also help manage the Christmas budget.
- **Make Christmas arts and crafts.** Bake seasonal treats to give away as presents, create decorations, or DIY your own cards. Crafts are a great way to get tamariki involved in the festive spirit.
- **Take friends or whānau to look at Christmas lights** or head along to listen to some community Christmas carols.
- **Your advent calendar could include little tasks** such as picking flowers for a neighbour, ringing a distant family member, giving food/toys to charity, or putting a thank you note in someone's letterbox.
- **Visit people in your community** who may be a little lonely. Rest homes and animal shelters value companionship and Christmas cheer.

FINANCIAL HEALTH



This time of year can really put pressure on your finances so it's a good idea to look at your financial health. Check out the helpful tools and resources on force4families.mil.nz, or for specific advice email: benefits@nzdf.mil.nz

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Respect each other: People can get frustrated, argumentative, and tired this time of year. It's okay to press pause on a conversation before things escalate. It's never okay to become physical or abusive with others. If you are worried about the safety of someone, check in with them. If you feel unsafe because of family harm, talk to someone and share what is happening to support your whānau wellbeing. Call Police on 111 if there is immediate concern or 0508 326 459 (Oranga Tamariki) if there are concerns for child safety.

Consent: Having open conversations about shared and different sexual wants, needs, boundaries and limits helps us form consensual and mutually pleasurable sexual experiences. Consent is freely given, look out for the clear and enthusiastic yes. Yes is communicated in many ways including verbal, body language and eye contact. **Consent is ongoing, someone can change their mind at any point and it must be respected.** Non-resistance does not equal consent.

Create safe spaces: Let's look out for one another within our social settings and events this summer. If you're worried about someone's safety, or someone committing harm, think about the role you can play. Remembering your safety comes first, things like calling Police, talking to bouncers, checking in with people at risk of harm or behaving in harmful ways, can all contribute to creating safer spaces.

It can be tricky recognising and disclosing harmful sexual behavior. If you'd like to talk, contact a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Advisor (SAPRA). SAPRAs provide advice, resources, and support to individuals and teams to prevent and respond to harmful sexual behaviours.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE ADVISORS - 0800 693 324 - 365 days 24/7

Overseas: +64 4 527 5799 or SAPRA@NZDF.MIL.NZ

OP STAND - SAFER SUMMERS

As the holidays approach, Op Stand is again promoting safer summers which is about making sure our people have all the relevant information to keep themselves, their mates and their whānau safe regarding all things alcohol and other substances. It's been a long year for many and we want to encourage everyone to relax and unwind but with the knowledge and information to be free from harm.

Different situations bring different social challenges and so we offer the following top tips from the experts:

- ⇒ **Take it easy** and don't rush into drinking too much too soon or partying too hard
- ⇒ **Know your personal limits** and steer clear of peer pressure
- ⇒ **Be a good host** and set clear boundaries. Try to think of ways to entertain where alcohol doesn't need to be the catalyst for having fun.
- ⇒ **If you know someone who's using substances**, help them understand the current market supply risks and get them to always check their substances at a drug checking clinic
- ⇒ **Stay up to date** with the latest information on websites like the drugfoundation.org.nz, knowyourstuff.nz and thelevel.org.nz
- ⇒ **Know what to do if something goes wrong**
- ⇒ **And as ever – don't be afraid to ask for help**

For lots more information check out the Op Stand resources available [via DDMS](#), [Pūtahi Hauora](#) or contact the team at Op Stand at OpStand@nzdf.mil.nz.

DEFENCE HEALTH RESOURCES



Introducing *Tāngata Whaiora* – your new guide to Defence Health Services

The handbook is designed to arm Regular and Reserve or Territorial Force members with the information you need to maximize use of NZDF health and wellbeing services. Inside you'll find information about medical and dental gradings, specialist care and referrals, when and how to access health and wellbeing services, health FAQs and much more.

Whether it's clarifying processes, outlining your healthcare entitlements, or building trust in the services offered, *Tāngata Whaiora* will empower you to utilise the wide range of Defence Health services available.

Take the time to explore this valuable resource – it's an important tool for safeguarding both individual and collective wellbeing within the NZDF. Printed copies can be obtained through your local Defence Health Centre, and are also available for download from the **Defence Health Hub - Pūtahi Hauora** (health.nzdf.mil.nz).

Also available on the Defence Health Hub:

- ⇒ Guidance on maintaining physical, mental, spiritual, and social/whānau health
- ⇒ Health at work resources: workload and burnout, fitness standards, transition, deployments, injury rehabilitation to peak performance, nutrition
- ⇒ Men's and Women's health advice
- ⇒ Tips on relationships, parenting, finances, and mental wellbeing
- ⇒ Self-assessment tools
- ⇒ Resources and tips for self-management, goal setting and action planning
- ⇒ Videos, webinars, shared stories and links to additional resources.

Scan below for the
Defence Health Hub :

