



Veterans Affairs  
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# Mental Health Support for Family Members

## Mental Health Advisory Group

May 21, 2020



## ▼ Mental Health Services for Family Members under POC 12 Policy

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- The Mental Health (POC 12) Policy describes mental health services that may be funded as part of a Veteran's treatment or rehabilitation plan, including mental health services for family members.
- The purpose of providing mental health services to family members is to support the Veteran's treatment or rehabilitation.
- Family members can be involved in two types of counselling:
  - Family and/or couples counselling (where the Veteran is present)
  - Individual or group counselling (where the Veteran is not present)
- These services can be provided by licensed: psychologists, social workers, psychotherapists, and counselling therapists.

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- In March 2020, the Minister instructed that the policy be applied using care, compassion and maximum flexibility in all cases.
- On May 6, 2020, VAC issued a new Guideline indicating:
  - *Treatment Benefits*: family members may be involved in mental health services **when the Veteran's treating mental health professional indicates that it will have a positive impact on the Veteran's mental health.**
  - *Rehabilitation Program*: family members may be involved in mental health services **when the assessing or treating professional identifies it will help meet the participant's rehabilitation goal.**

## ▼ How VAC Responds To These Requests

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Medavie will issue decision letters for all requests.

Reasons for denial include:

- The Veteran is not seeing a mental health professional.
- The Veteran's treating mental health professional doesn't:
  - provide any information; or
  - indicate that the services will be beneficial to the Veteran.
- There is no:
  - relevant rehabilitation plan/goal; or
  - evidence that the service will contribute to achieving the participant's rehabilitation goal.

If family members are not eligible through POC 12, or require additional support, VAC staff will help family members locate other resources, e.g. community, provincial.

## ▼ Supports Available to Veterans And Their Families

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Veterans and family members with mental health needs are also supported through a number of means, including:

- VAC Assistance Service (free, available 24/7)
- Public Service Health Care Plan
- Operational Stress Injury Social Support
- Veteran Family Program



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# DISCUSSION