



From the Deputy National Welfare Adviser

28 April 2020

Dear Area/Branch Secretaries, Welfare Officers and Shipmates

CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) – SURVIVING ISOLATION (MENTAL HEALTH)

RNA sends all shipmates best wishes as we enter week 6 of lockdown and self-isolation. Briefing 2 provided advice on protecting your mind. This continued isolation brings fresh pressure on us all and on our mental health which underpins our physical well being.

What can you do to help yourself? Briefing 2 gave a number of sources of support and general advice. Just as we exercise for good bodily health so we all need to be mentally fit as part of good mental health. **This week saw the launch of a new mental health self help tool, HeadFIT**, specifically aimed at all parts of the Defence family, whether you are a veteran shipmate, new recruit, long-serving personnel, civilian staff, or serving in uniform. All the techniques are designed so they can be easily be made part of your everyday life whether at work or at home.

What is HeadFIT? HeadFIT (<https://headfit.org/>) is designed specifically for the Defence community providing 24/7 access to a wide range of online self-help tools that can help you proactively to manage the stresses of everyday life, enhance your drive, confidence and mood.

Who supports it? It has been developed by The Royal Foundation's Heads Together campaign, the Ministry of Defence and Kings College London with clinical advice from Dr Vanessa Moulton. Its operation is supported by Heads Together (<https://www.headstogether.org.uk/>) and MoD.

What does it provide? It provides the tools to get to where you want to be mentally and to be the best that you can be. The site asks first what are your mental health goals? Are they to **De-stress** from life's pressure **or Improve Drive** to be motivated and get things done **or Increase Confidence** by belief in yourself and abilities **or Improve Mood** and your ability to cope with life's ups and downs. Choose the goal and then choose the tool under that goal that works for you by simple clicks.

For every HeadFIT tool the key things to do are:

STOP-Get off autopilot and refocus on what you are feeling and thinking.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF– Ask yourself if your thoughts and feelings are really helping you?

CHANGE - Choose a different way of thinking and behaving so you can achieve your chosen goal(s) and be the best that you can be

Why should I use it over other sources of help or self-help? Simply put HeadFIT is aimed and developed for the defence family in its widest sense, whether served or serving or civilian, to provide the tools they need to be mentally fit in their lives whatever the challenges. It's at least worth a look as it's been produced specially for you! Other sources such of help such as shipmates, charities and online sources such as NHS (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>) are still open for you to use and good, it is doing something about your mental health that's important.

We all need to keep our minds shipshape throughout life and particularly during this crisis. Stay well shipmates and access the help/tools out there for you when needed and not suffer in silence.

Best wishes and stay safe, stay well and stay at home,

Geoff Apperley