

**BC/YUKON COMMAND**  
**The Royal Canadian Legion**

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January 21, 2025

TO: All Branches  
For Information of Members of Command Executive Council

FROM: Michelle Courtney, Executive Director, BC/Yukon Command

SUBJECT: Operational Stress Injury Programs for Branches

Memo 06.25

Comrades,

The Royal Canadian Legion Operational Stress Injury (BSO Legion OSI) initiative provides outreach, peer support, and referrals for Veterans and their families affected by operational stress injuries. BSO Legion OSI offers two programs, **Buddy Check Coffee** and **Operation VetBuild**, which can be set up by your Legion Branch.

The attached Public Release Form and Inventory Form can be used for both initiatives.

**Buddy Check Coffee (BCC)**

Buddy Check Coffee (BCC) is a Veteran-run peer program, where Veterans can gather regularly and connect over coffee. BCC is coordinated and co-marketed by a Local Host who must meet the following qualifications:

**The Local Host:**

1. Must be a Veteran and Legion Member.
2. Must become a member of BSO Legion OSI. To become a member, they can email [membership.bso.osi@gmail.com](mailto:membership.bso.osi@gmail.com) with a photo of their Legion membership card to confirm eligibility. (For more information, please visit: <https://portal.legion.ca/member-programs/bso-legion-osi>)
3. Has to have taken or be willing to take a Mental Health First Aid for Veterans (this can be arranged by BSO Legion OSI).
4. Must hold everything discussed at meetings in confidence.
5. Must become aware of other support services available for Veterans who may need additional support other than the BCC.
6. Must join the Buddy Check Coffee Host Facebook Group.
7. Is not expected, nor permitted, to act as a Service Officer for participants of BCC, unless they are already a Command, District, or Branch Service Officer.

**BCC General Guidelines:**

1. A BCC is held at a location chosen by the local host (either a Legion Branch or commercial coffee shop). If a BCC is hosted in a Branch, the RCL Poppy Manual 402 V (B) applies if approved at the Branch Poppy Committee level.
2. Participants must be Veterans, but they don't have to be Legion members.
3. Hosts and participants of the BCC can decide whether to invite First Responders. (However, in accordance with the RCL Poppy Manual: Poppy Funds cannot be used for First Responders, unless they also qualify as a Veteran.)

4. BCCs must be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance.
5. Consumption of alcohol at a BCC is not permitted.
6. BSO Legion OSI strongly recommends that Local Hosts do not hold a BCC one-on-one. Wherever possible, aim for a group of three or more.

### **Operation VetBuild**

Operation VetBuild offers peer-to-peer Veteran support, bringing Veterans and their families together through participating in hobbies together, such as building scale models and painting with acrylics, oils, and watercolours. These hobby sessions promote skill building, relaxation, and community bonding. Operation VetBuild is hosted by a team Leader who must meet the following qualifications:

#### **The Team Leader:**

1. Must be a Veteran or current serving member of the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, or Allied Forces, and must also be a Legion Member.
2. Must become a member of BSO Legion OSI. To become a member, they can email [membership.bso.osi@gmail.com](mailto:membership.bso.osi@gmail.com) with a photo of their Legion membership card to confirm eligibility. (For more information, please visit: <https://portal.legion.ca/member-programs/bso-legion-osi>)
3. Has to have taken or be willing to take a Mental Health First Aid for Veterans (this can be arranged by BSO Legion OSI).
4. Must hold everything discussed at meetings in confidence.
5. Must become aware of other support services available for Veterans who may need additional support other than the BCC.
6. Must join the OP VetBuild Team Leader Facebook Group.
7. Must complete additional Team Leader duties and screenings listed in the attached document, “Op VetBuild Team Leader Instructions.”
8. Is not expected, nor permitted, to act as a Service Officer for participants of BCC, unless they are already a Command, District, or Branch Service Officer.

The Team Leader is responsible for coordinating meeting times and working with their local Legion Branch to facilitate these meetings. Their role also includes securing donations through the Poppy Fund by leading fundraising activities and reaching out for sponsorships. At Operation VetBuild meetings, the Team Leader will assist participants, introduce new members, and provide a safe setting for everyone.

#### **Operation VetBuild General Guidelines:**

1. Participants must be Veterans, current serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, or Allied Forces; immediate family members of the above; or Law Enforcement Officers who have served on an overseas mission.
2. Participants don't have to be Legion members.
3. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.
4. First Responders can participate in the program. (However, in accordance with the RCL Poppy Manual: Poppy Funds cannot be used for First Responders, unless they also qualify as a Veteran.)
5. The Team Leader is welcome to invite a subject matter expert to facilitate learning during the meeting. (The expert should be a Legion Member.)
6. Op VetBuild activities must be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance.
7. Consumption of alcohol at a BCC is not permitted.

**BSO Legion OSI** can assist with signage, communicating with Branches to help host a BCC or OP VetBuild meeting, referring participants to recommended resources. Please note that BSO Legion OSI is not a counselling service nor group of mental health professionals— they can listen, have empathy, and refer a Veteran to further resources as required.

For questions or assistance, please reach out to Terri Orser, OSI Representative for BC/Yukon Command, either by phone (778-966-1963) or email ([Terri.Orser@leigonbcyukon.ca](mailto:Terri.Orser@leigonbcyukon.ca)).

In comradeship,

Michelle