



"Assessing Posttraumatic Stress Injury Symptoms Among Royal Canadian Mounted Police"

Search and Rescue (SAR) volunteers are public safety personnel with service-specific responsibilities that involve air, ground, and marine search and rescue operations. However, the rate, frequency, and severity of service-related mental health challenges for SAR volunteers is largely unknown.

We are a mental health research team who recognize the impacts of exposure to potentially psychologically traumatic events that SAR volunteers may experience during search and rescue operations. With the support of Public Safety Canada as part of the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund and the support of the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC), the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA), and Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA), we have designed a survey to share your experiences in an anonymous Canada-wide assessment of wellbeing in SAR volunteers. SARVAC, CASARA, and CCGA have agreed to distribute the invitation to participate to their volunteers on behalf of the researchers.

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

The survey will ask you to reflect on your own mental health, which may be challenging at times, but will add your anonymous voice to those of your peers across the country. The more of you who participate, with or without mental health problems, the more weight your collective voice will have in understanding and fostering mental health among your colleagues. *Thank you to those who have participated thus far and provided valuable information and feedback.*

Based on previous participant feedback, the survey has been revised and shortened.

The survey asks for demographics, a general history of traumatic exposure, symptoms you may experience, the impact those symptoms may have on you, service-related stress, issues regarding stigma, and differences in risk and resiliency. The estimated time required to complete all sections of the survey ranges from 15-20 minutes.

You can complete the survey in sections or quit at any time. You will be provided with a unique identification code that will allow you to return to the survey at any time if you wish to do so. It will also be necessary to have your code should you wish to withdraw your participation. **Please do not lose your code.** If the code is lost, it will not be possible for the researchers to retrieve it and you will have to start the survey again with a new code.

The survey link is provided below and will take you directly to a secure website that will 1) provide you with more details about the survey and the team; and 2) provide instructions on how you can participate anonymously. If you already have an access code and would like to return to the survey to complete it or withdraw from the survey, these links can be found at the bottom of this email.

Link to the survey: https://uregina.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bk3wKA1ghdu2Dyu

We sincerely hope you choose to participate, thereby supporting yourself and your peers, and allowing us to provide evidence that can inform appropriate resources for supporting the mental health of Search and Rescue Volunteers.

The current research project was approved by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board (File #2022-182; Approval date: April 4, 2023). If you have any questions before or during participation about the survey, please feel free to ask by contacting the research team at katie.andrews@uregina.ca or nick.carleton@uregina.ca or by telephone at 306-337-2473 (out of town participants may call collect), or if required the Research Ethics Board by email at research.ethics@uregina.ca. Please note: if you choose to contact the researchers, you are revealing that you may be a participant or that you may be intending to be a participant in the study. The researchers will not be able to link your survey responses to you in any way.

If you **already have an access code** and are looking to return to the survey. You can access the survey with this link:

https://uregina.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4PjoxhLa4tHEXb0

If you **have already started the survey and are looking to withdraw**, please use the link below. You will need to have their **access code** for your information to be removed:

https://uregina.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3ltLL9qM2vuwpIC