

**Initial Recruitment Letter for Military Veterans/Public Safety Personnel**

Dear Military Veteran or Public Safety Personnel,

Thank you very much for your interest in this study.

We would like to invite you to participate in a research study titled: *Randomized controlled trial investigating the feasibility and efficacy of a novel sensory-based psychoeducation program for military veterans and public safety personnel with posttraumatic stress injury*. This study is being conducted by the McKinnon Trauma and Recovery Research Unit at McMaster University. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a new psychoeducational program aimed at improving posttraumatic stress injury (PTSI) symptoms among military veterans and public safety personnel (e.g., police officers, fire fighters, paramedics, healthcare workers, correctional workers, emergency dispatchers, etc.).

This program is called **SEN**sory **Str**ategies **E**ducation (SENSE) and includes 5 virtual group sessions facilitated by a trained clinician and graduate/post-graduate student in a health-related field. During each of these 2-hour sessions, facilitators will provide psychoeducation on specific themes about PTSI symptoms and sensory processing. They will then discuss how the session's topic applies to participants' everyday functioning and will provide participants with a number of strategies designed to improve their experiences in this domain.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Participation involves being randomly assigned (i.e., by chance, like the flip of a coin) to one of two research conditions: (1) a SENSE treatment condition or (2) a "waitlist" condition (i.e., delayed treatment). All participants in both the SENSE treatment and waitlist conditions will participate in psychological assessments, online questionnaires, and brief computer-based tasks at 3 timepoints: at the beginning of the study, after 5 weeks, and after approximately 17 weeks (i.e., 3 months after the second timepoint). Participants in the SENSE treatment condition will engage in SENSE during the 5 weeks between the first two assessment timepoints, whereas the waitlist condition will not receive SENSE yet. After the waitlist participants have completed all the assessments associated with this research study, they will also be offered the opportunity to receive SENSE treatment. Honoraria in the form of Amazon gift cards will be provided as a show of thanks for participating in this study.

You are likely eligible to participate in this study if you meet the following criteria:

- You are between the ages of 18 and 65 years;
- You can speak, read, and write in English;
- You are (A) a military veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces or another military group, or (B) currently or were previously employed as a public safety personnel (e.g., police officer, fire fighter, paramedic, healthcare worker, correctional worker, emergency dispatcher, etc.);
- You meet diagnostic criteria for PTSI, which will be assessed at your first research appointment;
- You are willing and able to attend virtual 2-hour sessions once/week for 5 weeks;

- You are willing to complete the pre-, post-, and follow-up assessments described above;
- You are willing to adhere to public health measures as per McMaster University policy at the time of the study;
- You have access to a smart-phone, computer, or tablet with a working microphone and camera; and
- You have access to consistent and reliable Internet connection.

If you meet the eligibility criteria described above and are interested in participating, please reach out to [sense@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sense@mcmaster.ca) or 647-551-2701 for more information about this study. Alternatively, if you prefer to be contacted by the research team, please provide your contact information at the following link: <https://redcap.link/q5x1elvs>. Your participation is completely voluntary and you can decline participation now or at any time for any reason without penalty. Thank you again for your interest in our study. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

**Margaret McKinnon, Ph.D., C. Psych.**

Professor and Associate Chair of Research, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster University  
Senior Scientist and Homewood Chair in Mental Health and Trauma, Homewood Research Institute  
Research Lead, Mental Health and Addictions, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton