

GUIDE FOR COMPLETING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) APPLICATIONS.

FOR REHABILITATION ADVENTURE
CHALLENGES & EQUINE THERAPY.

Mates4Mates is pleased to offer our Mates and Family members the opportunity to participate in our Rehabilitation Adventure Challenges and Equine Therapy Program. For details of our programs including location and dates, please refer to our website www.mates4mates.org or contact your local Family Recovery Centre (FRC) or email admin@mates4mates.org.

This guide is to provide you with some information on how to apply to participate in our Rehabilitation Adventure Challenges and the Equine Therapy Program. **To give yourself the best chance of being offered a position on an activity, please read this guide carefully.**

Eligibility

To be eligible to submit an EOI application form for any of the activities, you must have previously submitted an application form to join Mates4Mates and have completed our induction process, which includes an interview with a Mates4Mates psychologist. The induction process is for both Mates and Family members, including children over the age of 16 years.

In cases where a child under the age of 16 years expresses an interest in participating in a Rehabilitation Adventure Challenge, they will also be required to have an induction interview (to be attended by a parent). This interview will help our psychologists to determine the child's emotional and behavioural functioning, which will help when assessing their suitability to participate in a Rehabilitation Adventure Challenge.

Please refer to the **specific Information Sheets** for each of the Rehabilitation Adventure Challenges for the minimum ages of Family member applicants. **Please note** that these age requirements are not negotiable and have been made in direct consultation and agreement with our Adventure / Program Partners who are responsible for the physical and psychological safety of participants during these activities.

If you have not been inducted by Mates4Mates, please contact us by emailing enquiry@mates4mates.org to discuss the application and induction process prior to completing an application form for a Rehabilitation Adventure Challenge or the Equine Therapy Program.

Please note, if you submit an EOI application for a Rehabilitation Adventure Challenge and/or the Equine Therapy Program prior to completing the Mates4Mates induction process, your EOI application will be returned to you and you will be required to re-submit your EOI application once you have completed the induction process.

If you are an inducted Mate or Family member and you submit an EOI application after the advertised closing date for the activity, your EOI application will also be returned to you and you are welcome to submit an EOI application for a future a Rehabilitation Adventure Challenge and/or the Equine Therapy Program.

Please note that if you are currently still serving in the Australian Defence Force (including the Reserves), you will need approval from Defence to participate. Please contact us at admin@mates4mates so that we can provide you with further information.

The Mates4Mates selection process

There are several parts to the selection process including:

- a) the submission of an application form for a Rehabilitation Adventure Challenge or Equine Therapy Program by **each** Mate or Family member wishing to participate (eg for couples Equine Therapy, **both** the Mate and partner) will need to individually apply,
- b) review of applications and short-listing Mates and Family members,

- c) a screening interview with a Mates4Mates psychologist, and
- d) final selection.

Depending on the activity, there may also be the requirement for you to attend a selection day (eg Kokoda or the Big Battlefield Bike Ride) to assess your preparedness to meet the requirements of the Adventure Challenge or activity.

EOI applications

An EOI application for an activity **must** include the following four components:

1. a **completed** EOI form, which includes information about why you would like to participate in the activity and how you think you will benefit (or if a Family member, how your participation in the activity will help the Mate),
2. a **completed** Medical Form (which varies depending on the activity),
3. a letter of **recommendation** from your treating Psychologist or Psychiatrist (if outside of Mates4Mates) – if applicable, and
4. a **signed** Participant Acknowledgement form.

Each person wishing to participate in an activity is to submit an application form, including Family members (where applicable). A new EOI application form is required for each activity, including a new Medical form (which will vary depending on the activity).

All EOI forms, Medical forms and Participant Acknowledgement forms are available on our website www.mates4mates.org.

Unfortunately Mates4Mates are unable to accept applications unless all four components have been completed upon submission.

Please note, the information you provide on the EOI form will be considered as part of the selection process to determine the final participants. Therefore, it's important that you provide enough information on the EOI form about how your inclusion on this activity will assist in your rehabilitation. If you are a Family member, you also need to articulate how your inclusion on the activity will help the Mate ***as well as yourself and family (if applicable) in your journey of support and recovery.*** Please feel free to attach additional pages if there is insufficient room on the form.

When Mates4Mates has received your **completed** application form, you will be sent an email to acknowledge receipt – so keep an eye on your inbox.

Application review and short-listing

Mates4Mates is dedicated to helping the wounded, injured and ill and their families now and into the future. As a charity, we have limited funding and therefore we can offer only a small number of spaces to those we hope will receive the most benefit, therefore it's imperative that you clearly document information on your EOI form.

All completed applications will be held until the closing date. After the closing date, the review of all applications will be undertaken and the initial selection process will begin.

The number of places on all activities is limited and unfortunately we are unable to offer a place to everybody who applies. Some of the considerations when reviewing applications for the short-list include:

Therapeutic value. How does the activity link to the Mate's physical, psychological and social goals? Is the Mate willing to contribute to the group by sharing their personal experiences?

Readiness. How motivated, confident and committed is the Mate to the specific requirements the activity / program e.g. enduring prolonged periods of day after day physical hardship and harsh environmental elements such as living rough in the outdoors, unpredictable travel arrangements, crowded places, living in a social group for prolonged periods, adhering to the Mates4Mates Code of Conduct (e.g. no drugs or alcohol during the activity / program), participating in activity and daily group debriefing sessions etc.

Group dynamics. Is the Mate willing and has the capacity to get to know others and engage in a non-judgemental relationship despite differences in age, service-civilian status, experience, or capability? How will the Mate “fit” with the others on the activity?

Engagement with Mates4Mates. It is not essential for applicants to be actively accessing services through Mates4Mates prior to submitting an application form for an activity. In some cases, Mates may be geographically isolated, feeling socially isolated or fearful or reluctant to engage with Mates4Mates for a number of different reasons. The lack of current engagement with Mates4Mates is not considered to be detrimental to the Mate’s suitability to participate in an activity.

Participation in previous activities. Mates and Family members who have previously participated in a Mates4Mates activity will not automatically be ruled out of future activities. Given that one of the important selection criteria is the therapeutic value the activity offers a participant, Mates may be offered the opportunity to be involved in other activities if there are deemed to be benefits to the Mate. However, if the applicants in the selection pool are deemed likely to obtain equal therapeutic benefit from attending an activity / program, then the recency and frequency of previous Mates4Mates activities / programs will be considered in the selection process to allow equitable access for all Mates and Family members.

Selection of family members. Some activities may offer the opportunity for Family members to attend with a Mate. Their attendance must directly provide a benefit to the Mate and enrich their lives, that is, the attendance of the family must somehow contribute to the rehabilitation of the Mate as well as the Family member.

Screening interview

Unfortunately, where we receive excessive EOI applications for an activity, we are unable to offer all applicants a screening interview.

For those applicants who are offered a screening interview, you will be contacted by one of the Mates4Mates team to book in a suitable time for a screening interview. The screening interview will be with one of our psychologists and its purpose is to ensure that you are in the right place in your rehabilitation journey to participate and that there are no **significant** barriers to you attending.

Please note that if your application is for the Equine Couples Therapy program, you and your partner will be assessed individually and your information will be treated as confidential. This means that we will be unable to share with your partner, any information you provide to us, and/or the reasons we deem you to be suitable or unsuitable for the program.

Unfortunately due to the high demand for appointments with psychologists, if you are unable to attend your agreed scheduled appointment, we may not be able to reschedule. The only exception is if your reason for non-attendance is due to exceptional circumstances beyond your control in which case you should contact Mates4Mates as soon as possible to discuss further. The rescheduling of appointments is at the discretion of Mates4Mates, **based on the availability of our psychologists** and cannot be guaranteed.

Final Selection

After all screening interviews have been completed, the final participants will be selected. All Mates and Family members who have had a screening interview will receive notification via email about their selection, even if they haven’t been offered a position on the particular activity.

Additional Information

Costs and travel expenses. Attendance at Mates4Mates Rehabilitation Adventure Challenges and the Equine Therapy Program is free for inducted Mates and Family members. This includes the **reasonable** cost of travel (usually from your nearest airport), accommodation and meal expenses for the duration of the activity. Please refer to the individual information sheets for each activity for further information.

Media. So that we can raise awareness of Mates4Mates and bring attention to some of the issues our Mates are dealing with, we often look for media opportunities to advertise our free services and to let the general community know that Mates4Mates are here to help. Participating in any media opportunities is strictly voluntary and any Mates or Family members who agree to do so will be guided and supported by our Media Liaison Officer. Any current serving ADF members will also need approval from Defence before being involved in any media – Mates4Mates can help facilitate this process.

Fundraising. To help us offer our services free of charge to our Mates and their families now and into the future, we would appreciate your help with fundraising. Agreeing to fundraising is voluntary and can be done online via Everyday Hero. Anybody who volunteers to fundraise will be supported by our Fundraising Team.

Thank you for your support and if you have any questions about the application process, please contact Mates4Mates on 1300 462 837 or email admin@mates4mates.org.