



# Webinar

Organized by the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Melanie Noel
- Dr. Helena Hawryluk
- Ms. Jerris Popik

**Stay tuned!** Follow us on social media (respectcanada) and visit our website: [respectcanada.org](https://www.respectcanada.org)

## Chronic pain in veterans: the impact on families.

First webinar in a Fall 2021 educational series exploring intergenerational chronic pain, otherwise known as the impact on children of chronic pain experienced by one of their parents. The webinar began with a description of the latest research on the topic, conducted by Melanie Noel, PhD, at the University of Calgary. Dr. Noel is currently conducting a study focusing on military families. Following her presentation, Dr. Helena Hawryluk and Dr. Jerris Popik of Wounded Warriors Canada spoke about current programs to build resiliency in children and youth.

To (re)-see this webinar: <https://www.veteranschronicpain.ca/education>

## The intergenerational transmission of chronic pain in veterans, service members, and their children

- Dr. Melanie Noel

How we experience pain early in life determines how we will experience pain as adults. The parent's pain and trauma can also influence the lives of children: this is the intergenerational transmission of pain. "We found a strong graded relationship between the extent of exposure to childhood maltreatment or home dysfunction and multiple risk factors for several of the leading causes of adult death" (Felitti et al., 1998). In other words, the more negative childhood experiences a child has, the more likely he or she is to develop diseases in adulthood.

The emotional context is associated with pain: there is occurrence between the symptoms of PTSD and chronic pain. Thus, traumatic events can increase the risk of developing chronic pain. Chronic pain is an important issue in adolescent health: 1/5 adolescents in Canada experience chronic pain. 2/3 of these children will continue to suffer from chronic pain even after the pain is gone: mental health issues.

The objectives of the current study are to:

- 1) characterize and establish the prevalence of pain in Canadian veterans and their children;

- 2) to gain an in-depth understanding of the experience of pain among veterans and their children.

## Wounded Warriors Canada: Warrior Kids Camp and Virtual Program

- Dr. Helena Hawryluk et Ms. Jerris Popik

13 years ago, a need began to emerge: families were asking for support for their children, including help in how to discuss OSIs with them (how to ensure they have best practices). Youth assume the identity associated with military culture: hence the importance of peer healing being incorporated into supportive care.

> Communication about injuries: youth can understand complex concepts such as "invisible injuries". Age and developmentally appropriate discussions about parental injuries are critical to family resilience and children's mental health.

> Warrior Kids Program: designed for children and youth ages 8-16, who have a parent who is a veteran or first responder with an OSI. Evidence-based programs developed using trauma-informed, resiliency-based, and play-based methods. Program goals are to: 1) foster peer connection; 2) raise awareness of OSIs; and 3) provide coping tools for better mental health.