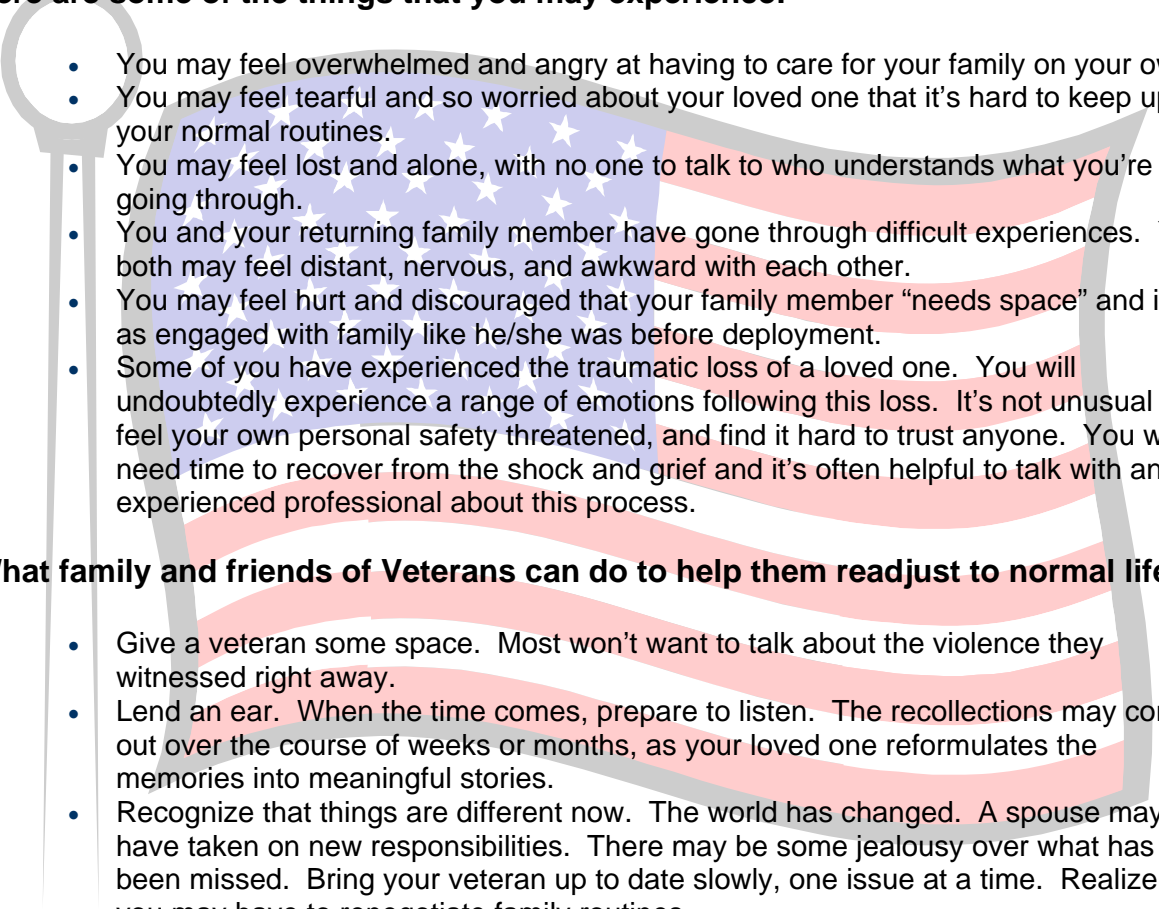


Family Members Supporting Returning Veterans

As a member of a military family, you too have challenges to face regarding your family member's military service. Although, you may be proud of your spouse, son, and or daughter for serving our country, you may also find yourself upset in ways that you didn't expect.

Here are some of the things that you may experience:

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- You may feel overwhelmed and angry at having to care for your family on your own.
 - You may feel tearful and so worried about your loved one that it's hard to keep up your normal routines.
 - You may feel lost and alone, with no one to talk to who understands what you're going through.
 - You and your returning family member have gone through difficult experiences. You both may feel distant, nervous, and awkward with each other.
 - You may feel hurt and discouraged that your family member "needs space" and isn't as engaged with family like he/she was before deployment.
 - Some of you have experienced the traumatic loss of a loved one. You will undoubtedly experience a range of emotions following this loss. It's not unusual to feel your own personal safety threatened, and find it hard to trust anyone. You will need time to recover from the shock and grief and it's often helpful to talk with an experienced professional about this process.

What family and friends of Veterans can do to help them readjust to normal life:

- Give a veteran some space. Most won't want to talk about the violence they witnessed right away.
- Lend an ear. When the time comes, prepare to listen. The recollections may come out over the course of weeks or months, as your loved one reformulates the memories into meaningful stories.
- Recognize that things are different now. The world has changed. A spouse may have taken on new responsibilities. There may be some jealousy over what has been missed. Bring your veteran up to date slowly, one issue at a time. Realize that you may have to renegotiate family routines.
- Understand the veteran's need to spend time with war buddies. Families need to know that the veteran's lifeline to peers often makes the difference between coping and a withdrawal into isolation.
- Expect a period of adjustment. It can take six to eight weeks to get back to something that approaches normal, both physically and mentally.
- Get help. If problems persist for more than three months, professional help may be needed.

Please contact Cascade EAP for information, counseling, and resources.

800-433-2320 or 503-639-3009