

WHAT HAS CHANGED

Multiple deployments. Little sleep. Lots of changes at home.

Understanding Stress · A Guide for Military Families

*Let's face it, life after war is just not the same.
Perspectives change and you may feel uncomfortable or different.*

For the Veteran

The experience of combat may lead to startle responses or trauma triggers. When the family doesn't understand them, reactions can seem intense and unpredictable.

Flashbacks and nightmares can interrupt sleep and normal activities, and they can be upsetting.

The traumatic impact of combat is common, yet it is difficult for service members to reach out for help.

Some people cope with trauma and related stress by drinking or using other substances, eating too much or too little, or smoking more.

"Unplugging" from life can be a sign that processing combat experiences and readjusting back at home is difficult.

Back at Home

The partner or spouse who stayed behind to manage the home and care for children has become the decision maker. Finding balance in family decisions can be a challenge after a veteran returns home.

Dealing with all these changes is hard enough. Explaining them to children can add to an already stressful situation.

Changes don't only affect relationships between the veteran and his/her immediate family. Relationships with friends, parents, and other relatives can also be impacted.

Witness Justice is a national nonprofit organization that provides support and advocacy for victims of violence and trauma. Contact us at WitnessJustice.org or call **800-4WJ-HELP**.

How to Notice "Triggers" That Can Impact the Whole Family

Every person is different - and any one of our senses can trigger unpleasant memories. By identifying potential triggers, you can try to avoid some stress while healing takes place or, at a minimum, manage your reactions to these triggers.

Some potential triggers include:

Loud noises · Crowds · Movies or TV shows containing war or violence · Being surprised or suddenly approached from behind

Stay Safe and Stay Connected!

Talk! - a no-brainer, but talking is key to staying connected to people who care

Stay close - distance doesn't heal or help to work out relationship issues

Know when to ask for help - sometimes volatile relationships need some outside help from a trusted family member or friend, leader in your faith community, or professional counselor