



BeyondDuty+

Relationships, Divorce, and Family Strain

Military service often places immense pressure on relationships. Extended deployments, emotional unavailability due to **trauma**, and **behavioural challenges linked to PTSD** or substance misuse can strain families. Veterans are at increased risk of **divorce**, and many face difficulties reconnecting with children and partners after service.

Domestic instability affects not only the veteran's wellbeing but can also contribute to intergenerational cycles of trauma.

Navigating Relationships After Military Service: A Guide for Veterans

Transitioning from **military to civilian life** is a significant shift that impacts not only veterans but also their relationships with family, friends, and new acquaintances. Military service can profoundly change a person, which may affect how they **connect with others** after leaving the service. **Managing and nurturing these relationships is key** to a smoother transition and long-term well-being.

Understanding How Military Service Affects Relationships

- **Shifted Perspectives:** Military service often changes how veterans view the world, which can create differences in values, priorities, or interests compared to loved ones from before their service.
- **Communication Differences:** Veterans may be used to a direct and structured style of communication, which can contrast with the more nuanced or indirect ways civilians often interact.

- **Rebuilding Bonds:** Time apart during service can strain relationships, requiring patience, effort, and understanding to reconnect and strengthen those ties.

Reconnecting with Family and Friends

- **Honest Conversations:** Sharing your experiences and feelings with loved ones can help close emotional gaps and rebuild trust.
- **Patience and Empathy:** Allow time—for yourself and others—to adjust. Readjustment is a gradual process.
- **Shared Experiences:** Engage in activities together to create new memories and reinforce bonds.

Forming New Connections

- **Join Social Groups:** Participate in clubs, hobby groups, or community events to meet new people with shared interests—these are excellent foundations for friendships.
- **Veteran Communities:** Connect with fellow veterans who understand your background. These communities offer valuable support and camaraderie.

Navigating Romantic Relationships

- **Open Dialogue:** Be honest with your partner about your military experience, feelings, and expectations. Clear communication builds trust.
- **Seek Support if Needed:** Couples counselling or support groups can help navigate challenges that arise in post-service life.
- **Spend Quality Time:** Prioritise shared activities, date nights, or simply talking to deepen your connection.

Managing Workplace Relationships

- **Adapt to Civilian Culture:** Civilian workplaces often operate with different social dynamics. Observing and learning these norms can help build positive professional relationships.
- **Network Professionally:** Building connections through networking can lead to mentorship, collaboration, and new career opportunities.

Handling Conflict

- **Effective Resolution:** Approach conflicts with active listening, empathy, and a problem-solving mindset.
- **Seek Help When Needed:** If relationship issues become overwhelming, don't hesitate to reach out to counsellors or therapists for guidance.

Handling Conflict

Life after the military brings challenges that can deeply affect relationships. By focusing on open communication, rebuilding old connections, forming new ones, nurturing romantic partnerships, adapting to civilian environments, and addressing conflict constructively, veterans can foster meaningful, healthy relationships in civilian life.

Remember: Building and maintaining relationships is an ongoing process—and a vital part of thriving beyond military service.

Contact Us

For more information and support, get in touch with our advisors and veterans with lived experience today.



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