



## Improve the Veteran-Family Relationship by Not...

### ❑ Giving up on them

- Forcing them to attend functions, no matter how special you feel it is
- Respect the fact that they most often want to avoid these:

Crowds

Questions about their service

The added attention focused towards them

They do not feel secure in those places.

Statements like the following are important to recognize: "I have to keep my head on a swivel. I'm looking everywhere for a threat. My wife knows when we are at a restaurant I must sit with my back to the wall and my face towards the door."

### ❑ Veterans may not be interested in your social or support groups

- "Mom, your support groups are not the types of meetings returning personnel would appreciate. They were talking about things I did not care about."

### ❑ Veterans may not like:

- Fireworks exhibitions
- Where balloons are popped, air horns used, or large parties

### ❑ Letting the veteran draw you into a confrontation or argument with them

- They sometimes want a confrontation and family members are convenient targets for their frustration
- The argument makes them feel better due to the adrenaline charge it brings them
- Unless it is a safety issue, avoid getting sucked into an argument. Smile and let it pass

### ❑ Expecting your veteran's personality to be the same as it was before s/he entered service

- Continuing to be a close, touchy-feeling son/daughter may be an unrealistic expectation on your part
- The spouse may have changed as well.

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- ❑ **Sharing your online research of news articles that your veteran's unit fought in**
  - Avoid bringing your veteran into these conversations
  - They become anxious thinking they will be judged or need to re-live the events – they feel that these unsolicited questions are an intrusion into their personal space
    - Usually results in driving you and your veteran farther apart
  - Wait to be invited into such a conversation by your vet
  
- ❑ **Providing unsolicited advice, such as:**
  - You ought to quit drinking
  - You should stop smoking pot
  - You should take better care of yourself
  - You should ...
  
- ❑ **Letting the veteran's PTS/TBI define your life too**
  - PTS/TBI veterans may have trouble showing empathy, sympathy, and other emotions
  - This is not personal to you, although it may feel like it

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