

What We'd Like our Family Members and Friends To Know About Living with PTSD

Suggestions from Veterans who were Involved in Combat in the Vietnam War
Oklahoma City VA Medical Center

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(Printed and shared with permission of the veterans in these groups)

1. GIVE ME SPACE when I need to be alone – don't overwhelm me with questions. I'll come and talk to you when I'm ready.
2. Get away from me if I am out of control, threatening or violent.
3. Be patient with me, especially when I'm irritable.
4. Don't personalize my behavior when I explode or get quiet.
5. Learn and rehearse a time-out process.
6. Don't patronize me or tell me what to do. Treat me with respect and include me in conversations and decision making.
7. Don't pity me.
8. Don't say, "I understand," when there are some things that you cannot understand.
9. Realize that I have unpredictable highs and lows – good and bad days.
10. Anticipate my anniversary dates – recognize that these could be tough times.
11. I'd like to share my traumatic experiences with you, but I fear overwhelming you and losing you.
12. I want to be close to you and share my feelings, but I'm afraid to ... and sometimes I don't know how to express my emotions.
13. I also fear your judgment.
14. Know that I still love and care about you, even if I act like a jerk sometimes.
15. Don't ask me to go to crowded or noisy places because I'm uncomfortable in those settings.