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# PTSD: National Center for PTSD

## Help for Family and Friends

Available in Spanish: [Asistencia para Familiares y Amigos](#) | [Ver todos](#)

When someone you care about has PTSD, it affects you too. You are probably spending time and energy to help your loved one cope. Even if your partner, family member, or friend with PTSD is getting treatment and getting better, you may still feel drained, worried, or even frustrated. You need support at the same time you are giving support.

Learning about PTSD helps you to understand what your loved one is experiencing. But, you need to take care of yourself too. Your own support network - family, friends, and health providers - is a good place to start, but don't be afraid to reach out beyond that close circle. Here are some resources that can help.

### Crisis resources

You may feel helpless, but there are many things you can do. Nobody expects you to have all the answers. If you feel there is a crisis for you or your loved one, use one of these toll-free, confidential hotlines:

- The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) is a 24-hour hotline for anyone in emotional distress: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). There is also an online [Lifeline Chat](#) available from 5 pm to 1 am EST, weekdays.
- The [Veterans Crisis Line](#) connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with VA responders through a 24/7 hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), PRESS 1. There is also a 24/7 online [Confidential Veterans Chat](#) or text message support at 838255.
- The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) offers 24/7 anonymous access to shelters and domestic violence programs as well as legal advocacy, public education, and training: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).
- The [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#) operated by RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is a 24/7 resource to link victims to counseling and legal advice: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673). There is also a [National Sexual Assault Online Hotline](#) for messaging.
- The [National Child Abuse Hotline](#) is a 24/7 resource you can contact if you suspect a child is being abused, if you fear you might hurt your child, or if you have been abused: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (422-4453).

### General resources for family and loved ones

Family members and close friends sometimes neglect their own needs when they commit themselves to caring for someone with PTSD. It is important for you to find support for yourself when you are helping someone deal with PTSD.

- Most US States have a [National 211](#) referral line that connects people with important community services (employment, food pantries, housing, support groups, etc.). Dial 2-1-1.
- The [SIDRAN Institute](#) is a nonprofit organization that helps people understand, recover from, and treat

traumatic stress and offers a referral list of therapists for PTSD. You can contact the Help Desk via [email](#) or by leaving a confidential voicemail: 1-410-825-8888.

- The [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) offers a [Family-to-Family Education Program](#) for caregivers of people with severe mental illness. You can also [email](#) or call the Information Helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264).
- You can find more resources on our [Web Links: Families](#) page.

## Resources for loved ones of Veterans and Service Members

Some of the resources listed above are specific to Veterans and Service Members. Additional resources are listed below:

- The [VA Caregiver Support](#) program provides services to support family members who are taking care of a Veteran: 1-855-260-3274
- VA's [Coaching Into Care](#) program helps family and friends of returning Veterans find the right words to help their loved one get into care. For free, confidential coaching [email](#) or call: 1-888-823-7458
- The [Vet Center Combat Call Center](#) is a 24/7 call center for combat Veterans and their families to talk about their military experience or issues about readjustment to civilian life: 1-877-WAR-VETS
- The [Defense Centers of Excellence \(DCoE\) 24/7 Outreach Center](#) offers information and consultation in mental health and traumatic brain injury: 1-866-966-1020. DCoE also offers email and online [chat](#) support.
- The [National Resource Directory](#) links to over 10,000 services and resources that support recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration for wounded, ill, and injured Service Members, Veterans, their families, and those who support them.
- [Give an Hour](#) is a nonprofit organization offering free mental health services to US military personnel and their families affected by Iraq and Afghanistan.
- You can find more resources on our [Web Links](#) page for Families, Military Resources, and Veterans Service Organizations.

## Resources for children with a parent who has PTSD

Children respond to their parents' PTSD symptoms. A child may behave like the parent to try to connect with him or her. Some children take on an adult role to fill in for the parent with PTSD. If children do not get help with their feelings, it can lead to problems at school, in relationships, or with emotions (like worry, fear, or sadness).

- [MilitaryKidsConnect](#) (MKC) is an online community for military children (age 6-17) with resources for children to give support before, during, and after a parent's or caregiver's deployment.
- Sesame Street offers a [Talk, Listen, Connect](#) parent toolkit to help military families coping with deployment.
- It is important children know that a parent's PTSD symptoms are not their fault. An interactive workbook for teens may help: "[Finding My Way: A Teen's Guide to Living with a Parent Who has Experienced Trauma](#)"
- You can find more resources on our [Web Links: Children and Teens](#) page.

## More help

If your family is having a lot of trouble talking things over, consider trying family therapy. Family therapy is a type of counseling that involves your whole family. It is important that each member of the family, including the children, have a chance to say what they need. A therapist helps you and your family communicate, maintain good relationships, and cope with tough emotions. Your health professional or a religious or social services organization can help you find a family therapist who specializes in PTSD.

Remember, caregivers need care too. Whether you turn to your family, friends, health care providers, or the resources listed here, be sure to get the help you need. To help yourself, you need to take care of yourself and have other people help you.

*Date this content was last updated is at the bottom of the page.*

**The National Center for PTSD does not provide direct clinical care, individual referrals or benefits information.**

**For help please see:**

[Where to Get Help for PTSD or  
Get Help with VA PTSD Care, Benefits, or Claims](#)

**For Web site help:** [Web Policies](#)

PTSD Information Voice Mail:  
(802) 296-6300  
Contact Us: [ncptsd@va.gov](mailto:ncptsd@va.gov)  
Also see: [VA Mental Health](#)

## Connect with us

