

RECONNECT WITH OTHERS



INTRODUCTION

Social supports like your friends, family, significant others, and peers are important resources to help you heal and recover from combat stress and trauma. Interacting with others after experiencing a traumatic event may be challenging because they may not fully understand what you've been through. Here are a few quick tips to help you reconnect with friends and loved ones.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



1 The people closest to you want to support you — they just may not know what to say or how to say it. As a result, you may hear statements that aren't helpful, such as, "It'll be alright," or "It'll get better," or even things that you find hurtful, like "Well, at least it's over." Even though your friends and family are well-intentioned, phrases like these might suggest they think you should "suck it up" and move on.

People may think that way because they're scared and wish things were back to the way they were. Accepting the new normal is a process for both you and those close to you. In most cases, they do not intend to be hurtful, or harmful to you. Keeping this in mind can be very helpful.



2 TRY NOT TO TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY

It's important not to take others' discomfort personally. Your loved ones and friends can't read your mind. They need your help to know if something they say bothers you. Try to figure out what will help them communicate better with you. By putting yourself in their shoes, you can realize they also want what's best for you.



3 Try to make the conversation more useful and positive by telling the person exactly what you need. Take the initiative, and work to break down any barriers between yourself and others.



4 KEEP TRYING

Don't give up when you experience frustration. Keep communicating things from your heart. Positive change doesn't happen overnight. So, push through it when you hit a rough patch. By cutting people slack, not taking things personally, and being assertive with your feelings, you're moving in the right direction — one step at a time.



To learn more about Wounded Warrior Project® mental health programs, visit woundedwarriorproject.org/experienceCSRP.