

## Working your way back into the family

**Lauri:** The first part is admitting that there's something wrong. They have feelings that they aren't quite sure what they are. A lot of anger issues. They don't know why that all of the sudden in the middle of a conversation they have an accelerated anger response, and the person that they're talking to doesn't quite understand how the elevation got to that point from a conversation. Forgetting, nightmares, night terrors. Those are a lot of the things that I'm seeing now that they come in and they don't know what to do with that because they thought, I'll get back, it's gonna be an adjustment period. A couple of months will go by and instead of it going away or getting better it seems to get worse.

It affects not only immediate family but the extended family. A child doesn't know who to go to whether the soldier was mom or dad, they were gone. The primary caregiver then, the parent that was behind, was the one making all the decisions. The soldier will come back into that home with all the attendant issues and all the child will know is that, I missed mom or dad, and this person that left is not the same person that came home. So they struggle to find their way and don't know who to talk to, because at the same time the spouse is dealing with the change in the Veteran.

Moms and dads have the best intentions in the world. I'm a mom so I know that I just want my child, my soldier, to be able to cope and be the child that I remember leaving, and that doesn't happen. So sometimes you go overboard which causes the soldier to then withdraw further, to go back to what they know. Usually they're buddies. His or her buddies. That support system that they had, the people that had their back. Sometimes families feel abandoned by that. You were gone for x number of months and you're still not back. It's working the way back into the family and back into the life that becomes a challenge.



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