



Intimate Partner Violence: *Help For Military-Related Victims*



What Is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

IPV, also known as domestic violence, is physical, sexual, and/or psychological harm that occurs within an intimate relationship. The range of abusive behaviors may include:

- Intimidation
- Coercion and threats
- Emotional abuse, e.g., name calling, put downs, mind games, public embarrassment
- Use of children to control a partner
- Economic coercion
- Minimization, denial, lying and blaming the victim
- Stalking
- Forced sex

IPV occurs in heterosexual and same-sex couples, and in military and non-military families. It can occur in relationships where one or both partners are active duty military, Reserve, National Guard, or veterans.

Combat-Related Problems That May Interact With IPV

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Substance Abuse
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Depression and Suicide

If you are experiencing IPV, knowledgeable advocates can help you assess the pattern of violence that's occurring and your risk of serious injury or death. They can explain available resources and work with you to determine what will help stop the violence and to develop an effective safety plan.



Is My Partner More Likely To Be Abusive Since Returning From The War?

While most returning military personnel have some readjustment and stress issues, most do not become abusive to their families. In some relationships with a history of psychological and/or physical violence prior to deployment to a war zone, there are reports of increasing violence upon return. In some relationships in which there was no history of violence/abuse prior to deployment, there are reports of psychological, physical, and/or sexual violence upon return from the war zone.

Different Since Returning. *Why?*

Your partner's time in the war zone will affect him or her for a long time. Military members learn combat skills and function in a battle mindset to survive in the combat zone, but this mindset may create problems when transitioning home.

Most people returning from war zones experience stress reactions and need time to readjust. This can be especially intense during the first months at home. These common stress reactions are a normal part of readjustment: anger and aggression, guilt, hurt, anxiety, depression, or withdrawal. Most service members and veterans successfully readjust to life back home. Remember that reintegration takes time and patience.

However, untreated stress reactions can affect relationships, work, and overall well-being. Your partner may cope with stress by drinking, taking drugs, withdrawing, isolating, and may have sudden emotional outbursts. Even minor incidents at home may lead to over-reactions.

Which Risk Factors Indicate Increased Danger For IPV Victims?

The following factors indicate a higher risk of danger and lethality:

- A history of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse toward intimate partners
- Access to lethal weapons
- Threats to kill partner
- Threats of suicide
- Relationship instability, especially a recent or imminent separation or divorce
- A pattern of coercion and attempts to control your daily activities
- Obsessive jealousy
- Stalking and surveillance
- Strangulation
- Forced sex or pressuring for sex even when separated
- Antisocial attitudes and behaviors and affiliation with antisocial peers
- Presence of other life stressors, including employment/financial problems or recent loss

What Should I Do If Any Of These Risk Factors Are Present In My Relationship?

Research has shown that when the risk factors listed above are present in a relationship, there is reason to be concerned about safety for yourself and your children. Trust your instincts – if you think you are in immediate danger, you probably are. Take steps to protect yourself and seek information about legal options and military or civilian community services available to you.

Helpful Resources

- For active duty military, National Guard, Reserves, veterans, and their families in crisis, The Veterans Crisis Line can be contacted by calling 1-800-273-8255 and press 1; via chat online; or, by sending a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This line serves active duty military, National Guard, Reserves, veterans, and their families. The website is www.veteranscrisisline.net.
- For confidential assistance and referrals (24/7), call the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-SAFE (7233); TTY for the deaf: 1-800-787-3224. Assistance is available in over 140 languages.
- For assistance for active duty military, Reserve, and National Guard personnel and their families, contact Military OneSource (24/7), at 1-800-342-9647, or online at www.militaryonesource.mil/health-and-wellness/family-violence.
- If an active duty military service member lives or works on a military installation, contact the installation victim advocate, the Family Advocacy Program (FAP), and/or law enforcement, or the domestic violence programs in the local civilian community. FAP contact information can be found online at www.militaryonesource.mil; then, click on "Installation Locator."
- For caregivers of veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs Caregiver Support Services can be contacted at 1-855-260-3274 or www.caregiver.va.gov/index.asp.
- For programs and services for wounded warriors, service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers, access the National Resource Directory at www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/nrd.
- For information on PTSD, access the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center for PTSD public webpage, www.ptsd.va.gov/public. Its subpage, *Return from War*, www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/reintegration/index.asp, includes useful guides for both military personnel and their families.



For further information, please contact:

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