

Helping a Veteran with PTSD

1. **Situational awareness** is key to seeing what others may not and finding a way to open the door.
2. **Your service matters!** Veterans are especially well-suited to help other Veterans-we need to do this together. **BUT. Avoid the pitfalls of judging** someone else's experience (e.g., combat vs. non-combat) or stereotyping based on branch or period of service.
3. **Lead by example** to help alleviate other Veterans' fears, instill confidence, and empower them to act. When the time is right, provide practical support: Walk with them to their appointment, help them with paperwork, ensure necessary tasks get done – **be a friend** to them.
4. **Listening** is paramount! **BUT.** Sometimes listening is not enough. Learn to recognize when practical assistance or resources are needed.
5. As Legionnaires, you'll see people at the bar. Don't be afraid to break the ice, **share a story**, and just **do what you can** from there. You're not expected to be a professional.
6. **Be a Battle buddy.** Make a commitment to the person and walk with them through the process when the time is right. If they're in place of blaming and anger, don't push for a specific outcome.
7. **Don't assume** you know the reasons for someone's behavior. They may have a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) that affects their attention/memory.
8. **Listen well.** Sometimes you'll have to listen for what's not being said to figure out what's really needed.
9. **PTSD can manifest itself as "acting out"** and getting into trouble with the law.
10. Consider **self-disclosure** when you believe it will help the other Veteran and deepen the relationship.
11. **Fostering relationships** through shared lived experience is at the heart of it all. This can help you move past the barriers to help-seeking that are endemic to military culture.