

Written By Dwayne

First let me say I am no expert.

I want to offer a little insight from personal experiences. None of this posting is to be taken as gospel, or medical fact. There is no silver bullet, or blanket statement and ideas that will fit every veteran and families. Every one of our veterans will process their experience overseas differently. All of our veterans have experienced different levels of combat. Therefore the information I am postings is basic thoughts that worked for me.

It is extremely difficult to walk out of a war zone, directly into your comfort zone virtually over night. You go back to what is good and safe in your life for usually 2 weeks to 30 days if you are going on leave. You know when you leave you will return to the battlefield and it will be time to get busy again.

As a rule of thumb most of us realizing this, know that we can not afford to get too comfortable at home because of the transition of getting back to work and being mentally sharp immediately is paramount.

This short period of time is not sufficient for us to answer allot of questions about our experiences over there nor is it enough time for us to completely let our guard down to fully enjoy time off.

Leave is different than being discharged it is temporary.

Short term I would say:

- 1. Make their environment at home as normal as possible.**
- 2. Show them how much they are loved.**
- 3. Give them their space.**
- 4. If you are scheduling events, an initial welcome home is good, however: please don't make allot of social engagements on their behalf without consulting them first. Most folks want to spend quality time with close friends and family rather than whole communities.**
- 5. Do not pester them on war stories. Some will want to talk about them others won't. If they feel the need to talk and vent welcome that, but don't pursue it.**
- 6. After their initial rest period it is not a bad idea to keep them active in normal family daily activities if they haven't made plans of their own; keeping them busy helps them not have time to dwell on the war.**

7. If while in public you encounter anti war wacko and military haters spewing insults, get them out of the area immediately, especially if alcohol is involved.

8. When they get ready to return to the war, I recommend you give them a family item, piece of jewelry, picture, note, something of value to them and you to carry in their pocket. Make sure this item does not have any family member's names, addresses or phone numbers on it.

9. If problems arise that you do not understand or are fearful of, do not hesitate to call close friends or family members for advice or help.

10. Do not expose them to sudden and unexpected loud noises. While it may be funny to some, they will not find it amusing, and you will not be pleased with their reaction.

11. Do not abruptly wake them from sleep. Don't shake or yell at them. For your safety if you must wake them stand a good distance away. This is not a joke!

This information is directed at those coming home on leave and returning to combat.

Those that are on leave and will be returning to a state side base and not heading back to a war zone may be a little more relaxed, and will have a ton of support from there comrades and base services.

Most of all: we need to remember that these are our own; they are the same, fundamentally; as they were when they left. There is no need to treat them "much" different.

Just love them with gusto and be there for them. The rest will come naturally.

I hope this helps a bit.

Semper Fi,

May God bless all of our troops and their family members. 🇺🇸