



**American
Red Cross**

Military and Veteran
Caregiver Network



You are not alone.



Common Reactions

In reaction to current events in Afghanistan, Veterans may:

- Feel frustrated, sad, helpless, grief or distressed
- Feel angry or betrayed
- Experience an increase in mental health symptoms like symptoms of PTSD or depression
- Sleep poorly, drink more or use more drugs
- Try to avoid all reminders or media or shy away from social situations
- Have more military and homecoming memories

Veterans may question the meaning of their service or whether it was worth the sacrifices they made. They may feel more moral distress about experiences they had during their service.



Common Reactions

Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors may feel like they need to expect and/or prepare for the worst. For example, they may:

- Become overly protective, vigilant, and guarded
- Become preoccupied by danger
- Feel a need to avoid being shocked by, or unprepared for, what may happen in the future

Feeling distress is a normal reaction to negative events, especially ones that feel personal. It can be helpful to let yourself or those that you care for feel those feelings rather than try to avoid them. Often, these feelings will naturally run their course. If they continue without easing up or if you feel overwhelmed by them, the suggestions below can be helpful.



General Coping Strategies

- **Engage in Positive Activities.** Try to engage in positive, healthy, or meaningful activities, even if they are small, simple actions. Doing things that are rewarding, meaningful, or enjoyable, even if you don't feel like it, can make you feel better.
- **Stay Connected.** Spend time with people who give you a sense of security, calm, or happiness, or those who best understand what you are going through.
- **Practice Good Self Care.** Look for positive coping strategies that help you manage your emotions. Listening to music, exercising, practicing breathing routines, spending time in nature or with animals, journaling, or reading inspirational text are some simple ways to help manage overwhelming or distressing emotions.
- **Stick to Your Routines.** It can be helpful to stick to a schedule for when you sleep, eat, work, and do other day-to-day activities.
- **Limit Media Exposure.** Limit how much news you take in if media coverage is increasing your distress.



How is MVCN Serving?

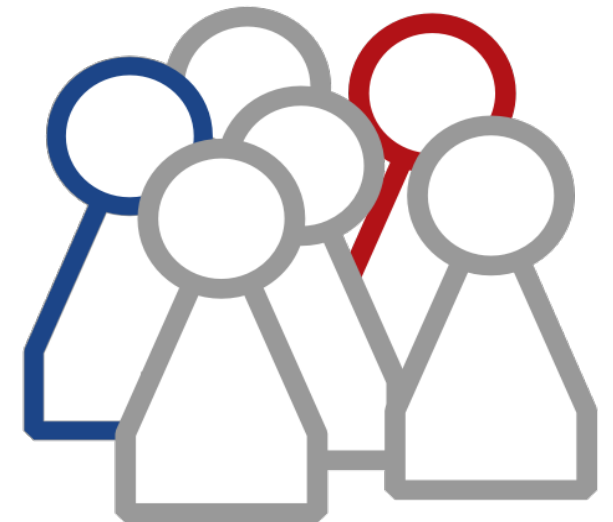
The MVCN serves caregivers of **all eras, stages of life, and relations**, across **all locations**.

Caregivers play a vital role in supporting the recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration of wounded, ill, and injured military servicemembers and veterans.

Families (including children) and caregivers are experiencing the same reactions themselves and are impacted by increasing symptoms in their loved one.

Support from MVCN is provided with:

- Secure Caregiver Online Community
- Caregiver Peer Support Groups
- Caregiver Mentors





Resources



- **Hero Care Resource Directory** – with **800+ resources** for every zip code in America, searchable with military and veteran caregiver filters and updated regularly to reflect the most current services.
- **VA** 1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411) is never the wrong number
- **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** 800-959-TAPS (8277)
- **Vets4Warriors** 1-855-838-8255
- **National Center for PTSD** <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- **Moral Injury Support** <https://moralinjuryproject.syr.edu/about-moral-injury/>



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Website: [redcross.org/caregivers](https://www.redcross.org/caregivers)

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Email: programs.mvcn@redcross.org

Connection • Engagement • Knowledge • Skills • Hope