

# Veterans' Families United Foundation

Resources for  
**Friends & Families**  
of Veterans



## CONSEQUENCES OF FACING WAR RELATED ILLNESS

### Why Veterans will be resistant to seeking help.

**This information is crucial to both veterans and family members for understanding why many veterans resist help.**

Most Veterans will be highly resistant to the admission of war related illness due to the consequences it may bring. These consequences are very real and the impact can be deep and affect the veteran and their family with long lasting and devastating effects.

If a veteran starts to notice his/her OWN behaviors that are worrisome or cause for concern, he/she will most likely choose one of these two routes:

- a) To recognize something is wrong but be cautious about who they tell and the amount of detail that they share. Information shared will be on a “need to know” basis, meaning that if the veteran feels that he or his family is threatened in any way, he/she will share only what they believe is “safe” to share. Many times, important information needed for diagnosis is **LEFT OUT** due to this fear.
- b) They “bite the bullet” and/or “suck it up and drive on” which means, that they will ignore all danger signs of the illness. This is especially problematic during the initial stages of illness when, if faced, there could be meaningful intervention and help AND may help the veteran avoid other related problems, like self-medication through alcohol and drug abuse.

**For example:** Pvt. Johnson starts recognizing that “something is wrong”, yet he is the sole financial provider for his wife and small children. He is fearful of admitting possible challenges to either civilian or Veteran medical facilities due to the possible consequences he perceives and/or fear of his family not being provided for...potential loss of income due to his illness, potential loss of job opportunity, potential threat of being admitted to a facility, etc.

Let's say that Pvt. Johnson currently earns \$3,000 a month from his civilian job to support his family after returning from deployment. Examples of his expenses include: \$900. per month mortgage, \$400 for car payments, \$400 for insurance and gas, \$450 for utilities, \$500 for food, leaving the remaining for misc. needs of the family.

Pvt. Johnson will be resistant to seeking help because he is not prepared to forgo the financial security he has or to threaten the well being of his family without assurance that they will be cared for.

Pvt. Johnson also knows that there may be help through the VA System, but that it is slow and difficult to apply for and that he and his family cannot afford to wait for even the POSSIBILITY of receiving benefits.

THEREFORE, Pvt. Johnson shares only PARTIAL information to HIS family and/or to medical and mental health practitioners, hoping that the problem will “go away on its own”, because the consequences are too great to do otherwise.

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The reality is that Pvt. Johnson is facing what many of our veterans are facing, a no-win situation in which it seems like it would be better to “hang on” than to ask for help. And this is just one of countless possibilities facing our veterans today.

There are some federal emergency funds available, but not enough and most of the time, ANY funding is difficult to apply for and receive...especially if you are sick OR you are the family member of an ill veteran. The process for assistance is extremely lengthy and anxiety provoking for anyone who is healthy, much less under the tremendous stress of war related illness.

There are **NO EASY ANSWERS or SOLUTIONS** to this problem, but it plagues many veterans. Understanding the **EXTREME** effects of **ADMITTING** something is wrong can help family members and healing practitioners to be more sensitive to the veterans' fears. **THEY ARE REAL.**

Understanding the **EXTREME** effects of the devastation and impact of war related illness can help our Country to understand the opportunity we have to provide **NEW** options to help those who have made a great sacrifice for our freedom.

If you **NEED** help, please click “I NEED HELP-Veteran” or “I NEED HELP-Veteran Family Member”.

If you **WANT** to help, please click “DONATE”.

NOTE: VFU does not guarantee results or outcome of the information provided in any of its materials.

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