

Talking About War Injuries

The injuries of war — combat or non combat-related, visible or invisible – are life-changing events for the injured, their families and children. Family and friends play a vital role in the recovery process, especially that of talking and listening. Yet, communicating about a serious injury is challenging for most people. How do you talk about the injury? When and what do you tell your children? Which questions should you ask healthcare providers?

Experts who have worked with war-injured families within the hospital setting and throughout the recovery process have developed this website with special resources (takes you to thumbnail with brochure, talking to your child fact sheet, etc.) to help you, the injured family, talk to healthcare providers at a time of great stress and anxiety, and to help you communicate as a family, especially with your children.

Below are some tips as well as some fact sheets that you can print out and keep with you.

Important Tips for Supporting Your Loved One and Your Family

- **Acknowledge the injury and its impact.** As an involved adult in the life of an injured service member, it is important for you to talk about the injury with those who can provide needed information, support and resources. When you are ready, begin to address the impact of the injury and your future plans.
- **Talk about the injury with your wounded warrior when he/she is able and ready.** Serious injury creates a sense of loss, frustration, and pain that is often directed at loved ones in the form of anger or withdrawal. Explain that you are there to listen and to talk when your wounded warrior is ready. Your touch, your voice communicates comfort and caring essential for conversations to begin.
- **Encourage your wounded warrior to continue to parent.** Staying involved in parenting enhances the morale of the wounded warrior as well as the entire family. Encourage your wounded warrior to parent through use of the telephone, email, video chats or a hospital visit, if it can be arranged.
- **Utilize professional resources and support to keep your family strong.** Injury recovery has a past, a present and a future. While you, your wounded warrior or your children may not be ready to seek help now, remember that WHEN YOU ARE READY there are professionals who can assist you.



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*CSTS is a partnering center of the Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, and
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