



Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service
A service founded by Vietnam veterans

SUPPORT for FAMILIES

PARTNERS
CHILDREN



'I kept asking myself "What happened to the man I married?" — he'd changed so much. I didn't understand what had happened to him or how to cope with it until I came to VVCS.'

Partners

A supportive and mentally healthy partner can assist in the recovery of a veteran with adjustment or mental health concerns. Partners often also enable a smooth transition for the family through deployment cycles and guide the family through separation from the military.

Partners are usually the first to notice telltale behavioral changes in a veteran, such as emotional detachment, wanting to always be alone, aggressive or angry outbursts, or increased substance misuse. They are often also the first to notice if a parent's military service is having an adverse impact on children.

Partners need to be aware of how such an environment can affect their own emotional wellbeing and health. It is not unusual for partners to feel unsupported as a veteran works through the emotional impacts of service.

Partners may feel that they are shouldering more than their fair share of family responsibilities during the adjustment period or as a veteran works to address mental health concerns.

As a family inclusive organisation, the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) has a range of counselling and group programs that can support you to maintain a positive relationship with your military partner and equip you with the skills to cope with the challenges of the military lifestyle.

VVCS offers the family focussed services *Family Consultation* and *Let's talk about children* in centres and can provide referrals to specialised services for families and children where appropriate.



Australian Government

Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service

'She just changed while she was overseas. She won't talk about it and won't deal with it which makes it hard for me. I didn't understand what was going on with her or to our relationship.'

For more information
Call VVCS on 1800 011 046* during business hours
visit www.vvcs.gov.au



'I was always trying to keep the peace between him and the children. I was struggling to keep our family together. I was always making excuses and avoiding talking about what was really happening. I kept thinking it was my fault somehow.'

Children

Children experience military deployments through their serving parents, as absence and potentially, the effects of trauma, can impact on even the best parental intentions.

A child of a veteran may experience the loss of the parent they 'knew' and have a veteran parent who is preoccupied and distant from them, or who can be unpredictable and volatile. These factors may contribute to psychological and behavioural challenges for some children of military families.

VVCS can work with the parents and children as a family unit and directly support older children of veterans with the consent of their parents.

ABOUT VVCS

The Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) provides free and confidential, nation-wide counselling and support for war and service-related mental health conditions, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance and anger. Support is also available for relationship and family matters that can arise due to the unique nature of the military lifestyle.

CONTACT VVCS

Call 1800 011 046*

DURING BUSINESS HOURS – connects to the nearest VVCS centre.

AFTER BUSINESS HOURS – connect with Veterans Line, the VVCS after-hours telephone counselling service.

* Free local call. Calls from pay phones and some mobiles may incur charges.

Visit www.vvcs.gov.au

For access to mental health videos, self-help tools, mobile apps, and advice on how to seek professional help, visit the At Ease website at www.at-ease.dva.gov.au



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