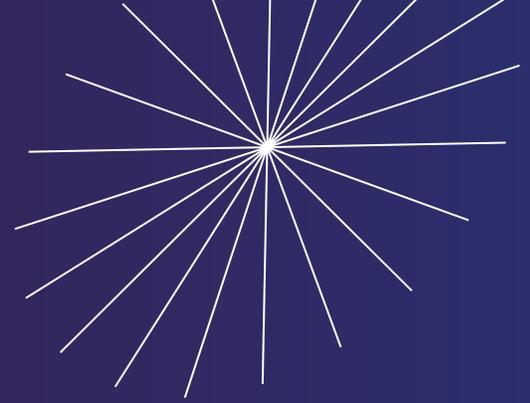




**COUNTRY ROAD**  
your road to recovery



# 12 SIGNS A Veteran is Struggling with PTSD & Addiction

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You know there's something wrong. But what?



If a veteran you love has turned into someone that you don't recognize, PTSD and addiction could be to blame. Luckily, there are many resources to help veterans and their families heal from the wounds of war. But first, you need to get some clarity on what kind of help your loved one needs.

These questions may help.



1

## Does your loved one seem like a different person these days?

If your loved one has changed – and not in a good way – since deployment, it's worth taking a deeper look at what's going on. They may be suffering in silence, just waiting for someone like you to notice and to help.



2

## Did they experience a life-threatening event?

By definition, all members of the military put their life on the line to defend our country – even if they don't see active combat. The fear and uncertainty of deployment can leave emotional scars, and the horrors of combat leave psychological wounds that deserve care.

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3

## Are they experiencing internal reminders of that event?

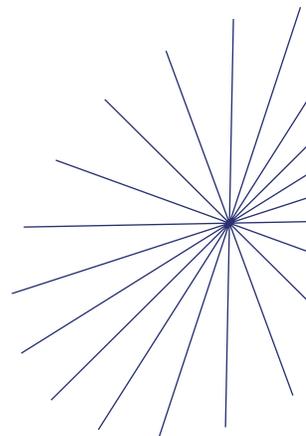
One sign of PTSD is experiencing flashbacks or internal reminders of a traumatic experience. Your loved one may share with you that this is happening. If not, you may notice that they've become more withdrawn or seem consumed by worry.



4

## Are they triggered by seemingly innocent things in daily life?

Fireworks, for example, are a seemingly innocent symbol of celebration that can trigger horrific memories for vets. If you notice that people, places, and things in your loved ones daily life seem to be bothering them more than before, there could be a deeper reason.



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5

## Do they avoid those triggers or other reminders of painful times?

Have you ever asked your loved one about their service only to be told, "I don't want to talk about it"? Trying to avoid the painful reminders of past trauma is one way that people suffering from PTSD try to protect themselves.



6

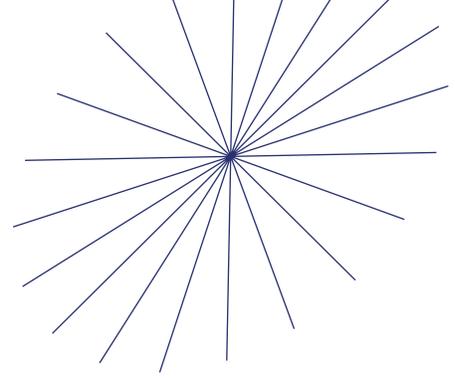
## Are they easily startled?

Is your vet jumpy or easily startled by things that seem like no big deal? After a traumatic experience, it can be hard for the body and mind to feel safe again. The "fight or flight" mode is constantly activated, and many turn to drugs and alcohol in a desperate attempt to find some relief.

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7



## Do they seem anxious or on guard for danger?

People suffering from PTSD are constantly on high alert because their brains still think they are in danger. In the laughter of children, they hear screams. They're waiting for the other shoe to drop at all times, and seem to find the worst outcome in every scenario. If this sounds like your loved one, their brain could still be trapped on the field of battle.



8

## Are they having trouble sleeping?

For many vets who struggle with PTSD, nighttime is when the demons truly come out. Your loved one may take drugs to stay up all night so they don't have to face their nightmares. Conversely, they may drink or take drugs to knock them out, in the hopes that they'll finally get some rest. If your loved one seems exhausted and is having trouble sleeping, they may be fighting a battle that you can't see.

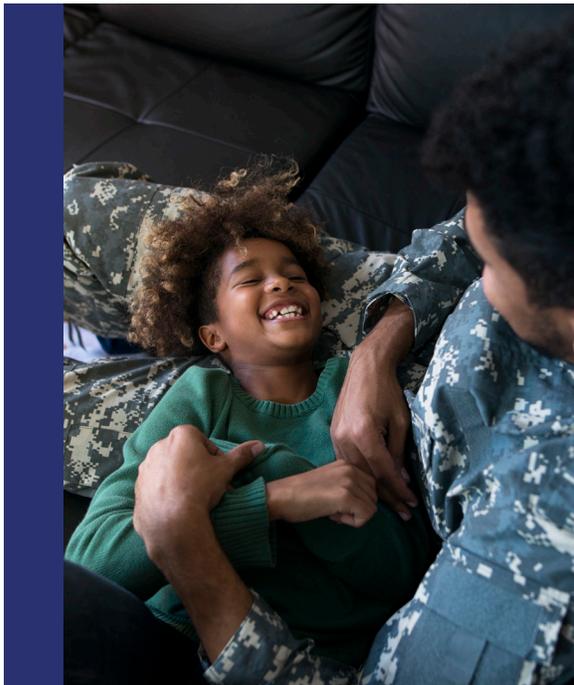
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9

## Do they have trouble concentrating?

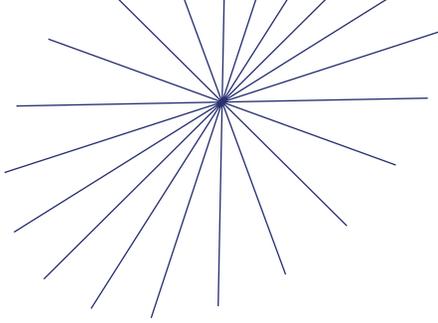
Trouble sleeping and the high adrenaline of fight or flight mode can make it hard for your vet to focus on complex tasks. If drugs and alcohol are in the mix, they make it even more difficult.



10

## Are they irritable and prone to outbursts?

It's hard to believe if you're on the receiving end of it, but anger is often the outer expression of fear and pain. If your loved one has been prone to outbursts since returning to civilian life, try not to take it personally. It's probably just another symptom of their trauma.



11

## Are you finding strange, unexplained objects?

Tinfoil, spoons, syringes, bags, and plastic wrap can all be signs of drug use. Of course, extra bottles of alcohol in the recycle bin are an easy indicator as well. If someone's drug and alcohol abuse has escalated, it's hard to hide the signs for very long.



12

## Have they asked for help?

It can feel impossible for struggling veterans to ask for help. Even though we've come so far in our understanding of addiction, the stigma may prevent them from sharing their painful secret for years. If they've asked for help, seize the opportunity to get them into comprehensive residential addiction treatment. There, they can identify and heal the deeper reasons for their drug and alcohol abuse, so they can start a new road of peace and happiness.

If they haven't asked for help yet, there's still hope. At Country Road, we specialize in treating veterans with PTSD and addiction. Give us a call and we'll walk you through your options and appropriate next steps. You don't have to walk this road alone any more, and neither does the vet you love.

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