



Wellbeing Tips

Exploring friendship



Building meaningful connections in the veteran family community

Building friendships can feel challenging at any stage of life. Making new friends is not always easy, and for many people it can feel increasingly challenging over time. Routines change, social circles shift, and opportunities to meet others might seem limited. For veteran families, these challenges may be amplified by the demands of service, frequent relocations, and periods of separation, all of which can interrupt friendships and support networks.

Forming meaningful connections takes time and patience. Strong friendships are often grounded in shared values and experiences, and grow through trust, mutual respect, and authenticity. Connection does not need to happen instantly. It can be built gradually through small, consistent moments of care and understanding. There are many simple, everyday ways to nurture new connections, which include:

- Actively listening to allow others to feel heard and valued.
- Offering or accepting support to strengthen trust and deepens relationships.
- Showing gratitude
- Sharing laughter
- Exchanging personal stories to help create warmth and familiarity.
- Finding common ground. Whether it's a shared interest, experience, or sense of purpose, the brief interaction can turn into a lasting connection.

Within the veteran community, friendship holds particular importance. Veteran families often carry extra responsibility in supporting their loved ones whom serve. Too often, this support happens quietly and in isolation. Veteran families supporting veteran families creates a unique sense of understanding that can't always be found elsewhere. Shared experiences can ease the feeling of having to explain or justify one's reality, allowing friendship to form more naturally and authentically.

By showing up for one another in small, genuine ways, veteran families can build friendships that offer understanding, strength and a shared sense of belonging.