



How families are key to supporting veterans

24th April 2025 Kate Hinchliff and Sarah Potter



Suffolk Family Carers

About us:

- ✓ Established for over 35 years
- ✓ Offering information, advice, guidance and emotional support to family carers of all ages including young carers across Suffolk.
- ✓ There are over 65,000 identified carers living in Suffolk.
- ✓ Every day another 6,000 children and adults across the UK will take on a caring responsibility – that equates to over 2 million people each year.
- ✓ 442 individuals currently registered with us with a UK Armed forces connection
- ✓ 726 individuals with an armed forces connection have registered with us since Jan 2022.

Family Carers- we use the term today, but recognise that not everyone sees themselves or wants to see themselves this way or with a label. But we include, families, children, affected others, those impacted by, friends and colleagues.

Veterans- we use this term today and include ex- service, those that have served, those that completed national service- or however they wish to describe themselves.



How families are key to supporting veterans.....

Usually!



A word cloud containing the following terms: infidelity, trauma, finances, anger, children, abuse, isolation, loneliness, domestic, alcohol, pressure, health, mental, gambling, illness, housing, disconnected, control, and debt.



•71% of survey respondents said that their caring responsibilities have had a negative impact on their mental health in the last year, with 50% saying they had negatively impacted their physical health in the last year.

Less than one in ten carers in the Armed Forces community who responded to our survey have been able to take a break from caring in the last year (9%), which was even lower if the carer was caring for a veteran (4%).



Impact Of Caring & What Supporting Family Carers achieves

➤ You are offering 'proxy' support to the person being cared for

➤ You are increasing the likelihood of better health and social outcomes for the whole family network

➤ You are decreasing the likelihood of caring role breakdown

Encourage the family carer to think about ways of taking a break, even if it's a walk around the garden

Confidentiality- Don't let this be a barrier!
The family carer might have really important information they want to share with you, and are not necessarily looking for private details of treatment or therapy

Listen- ask how they are rather than the person they care for

Guilt! Family carers often express feelings of guilt, not being able to care the way they want, wanting a break, not wanting to care for that day or ever again- allow time to offload and if possible away from the cared for person

Signpost for support independent of the person being cared for

'Thank you very much for your kind words and support today.'

'I am so glad that I made this call. We have a very long way to go, but I now know that I am not alone'.

How?

Recognise that there can be several caring relationships in a family unit, that might all require different support- whole family working recognises the individual needs within a situation

Help with information about benefits, rights & entitlements. Whilst the person might prefer to do this themselves they might also be really grateful for some assistance

