

Building a New Mission:

Finding Purpose and Connection After Service



Everyone's experience of the transition to civilian life is different, just as everyone's experience of service is different. Regardless of how you approach the transition, these tips can help you achieve balance in this new chapter of your life. **Your service to our country was meaningful, and now it's time to create new ways of finding fulfillment.**

Building Community & Connection

Leaving the military often means losing a built-in network of peers who share your mission, and rebuilding those connections can be key to feeling grounded again.



Rebuild community by getting involved with veteran groups, local organizations, or team-based activities that offer structure, shared goals, and purpose.

Use your experience to give back—whether through coaching, teaching, or leading efforts in your neighborhood or broader community.

Don't go at it alone. Building and maintaining strong relationships is key to staying grounded and mentally well after military service.

Redefining Purpose



Military service provided clear goals and roles. In civilian life, you can establish new ones on your own terms.

Goals after service can be personal, professional, or a combination of both and can look like entrepreneurship, mentorship, public safety, or peer education and volunteerism.

Use the SMART method to set goals. SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Creating Stability and Wellness

The transition out of military service can be difficult for many reasons, including loss of relationships, structured physical activity, difficulty adapting to civilian careers, access to resources, financial security and more.



Support your mental health by maintaining regular physical activity, consistent sleep, balanced nutrition, meaningful social connections, and purposeful daily routines that reinforce structure and resilience.



Translating your skills to civilian jobs can be difficult. Resources to ease the transition into a new career, or financial situation are accessible.



Following military service, it is important to intentionally create new routines, connections, and goals to help support a smooth and fulfilling transition.

Strengthening Mental Health

Everyone's experience in and transition out of the military comes with a unique impact on their mental health. Whether you need help working through mental trauma sustained in service, or experience new symptoms after service - seeking support can help meet you where you are and help to develop a plan to get you on the right track moving forward.



If you are experiencing prolonged symptoms of irritability, sleep problems, emotional numbness, loss of purpose, isolation, unhealthy coping, hypervigilance, intrusive memories, distancing or lack of engagement with family support system or consistent anxiety it may be time to reach out for support.

Conditions like anxiety, depression, and PTSD are treatable through mental health care options like support groups, talk therapy, and medication management. Explore the options available and reach out early for support.

Where to Start

Transitioning out of service can feel overwhelming, but you do not have to navigate it alone. Here are some suggested first steps to reconnect, find support, and access the resources available to you:



Local VSOs

Contact your town or state Veteran Service Officer (VSO) for help with benefits, jobs, and local programs.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Access mental health support, career counseling, education, housing, and mental health support through the VA or local Vet Centers.



Ask Other Veterans

Peer recommendations can connect you with trusted local programs and help guide you toward additional resources you may qualify for.



Veteran Organizations

Such as Home Base, Wounded Warrior Project, Team Red, White & Blue, Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars offer peer networks, mentorship, and community events, or other reputable Veterans organizations within your community. Note, there are organizations such as Home Base that will provide assistance regardless of service era or discharge status.



Specialized National Networks

The Warrior Care Network (Home Base, UCLA, Rush University, Emory University) offers intensive mental health recovery care nationwide.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis hotlines are available for 24/7 confidential support.

Veterans Crisis Line – Call or text **988** then press **1**, or chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net**

This resource was created in partnership with Home Base Veteran and Family Care

Find more resources at mentalhealthcareworks.org

