

# Veteran Culture and Talking to Vets



**Cari Myles, MSW, LCSW**  
**OEF/OIF Outreach Coordinator**  
**Wm S. Middleton Memorial**  
**Veterans' Hospital**  
**Madison, Wisconsin**

# OEF/OIF – Common Complaints

## Aches and pains

### Muscular/Skeletal Injuries

Armor is heavy 75-125 #



# Common Complaints...

## Aches and Pains

**Hot, Dusty,  
Dirty, Bugs.....**



# Common Complaints...

## Aches and Pains

**The terrain is tough...**

**Many in chronic pain  
and taking powerful  
medications**



# Common Complaints...

## ringing in the ears...hearing loss

**Military Training and  
Combat Zone is  
Noisy**

**tinnitus**

**hearing loss**



# Common Complaints...

## Can't sleep, numb, anxious

### Trauma, loss, Readjustment....

**“People say I’ve changed...I used to be social, now I’m not; I have anger management problems; I don’t sleep good.”**

**“I’ve been home for a year now and I’m tired of everyone being worried about me. I get drunk often and everyone is scared.”**

**“It destroyed 2 marriages; I snap at family; it’s better for everyone if I just stay away.”**



# Common Complaints... on alert, sad, “who am I?”

**The war is physically harsh, mentally demanding and dangerous. The enemy wears no uniform, uses innocent civilians, and strikes without warning with the intent to kill and terrorize.**

**“The war...remains very personal”**



# Adjusting to life after war...

## The Transition from Battlemind to Home

Training for war includes preparing the soldier mentally –

**Self Confidence** – taking calculated risks and handling challenges

**Mental Toughness** – overcoming setbacks and maintaining positive thoughts during times of adversity and challenge

Walter Reed Institute of Research

# Returning Home Battlemind

**Buddies vs.  
Withdrawal**

**Accountability vs.  
Controlling**

**Targeted Aggression  
vs. Inappropriate  
Aggression**

**Tactical Awareness  
vs. Hypervigilance**



# Returning Home – Battlemind

**L**ethally Armed vs.  
“Locked and Loaded”  
at home

**E**motional Control vs.  
Anger/Detachment

**M**ission Operational  
Security vs.  
Secretiveness



# Battlemind – Returning Home

**I**ndividual Responsibility  
vs. Guilt

**N**on-defensive (combat)  
driving vs. Aggressive  
Driving

**D**iscipline and Ordering  
vs. Conflict



# Talking to vets

**Assume nothing and treat everyone with respect and compassion.**

**“War is about combat, combat is about fighting, fighting is about killing and killing is a traumatic personal experience for those who fight.”**

Col. Timothy Hanifen, USMC Iraq 2003  
in On Combat, David Grossman 2008;

# Talking with vets

- **Understanding begins with knowledge. Educate yourself about the wars and military life.**
- **Show interest, understand that “trust has to be earned”:**

**Say what you mean and mean what you say.**

**May “throw out” information to see how you handle it before giving you more.**

**Be aware of your emotions and keep them in check.**

- **“Hero” status**
- **“Thank you for your service”**

# Thank you for supporting our country's veterans!

<http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/battlemind/index.html>

<http://iava.org>

<http://estripes.osd.mil>

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov>

<http://www.va.gov>

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**OEF/OIF Outreach Coordinator**  
**Wm. S. Middleton Memorial Veteran's**  
**Hospital**  
**Madison, Wisconsin 53705**  
**(608) 280-7285**  
[Carolyn.myles@va.gov](mailto:Carolyn.myles@va.gov)