

FOCUS Marines Program

[H1] SYMPTOMS: ISOLATION

When a veteran makes the transition from military to civilian life, past injuries begin to catch up. Whether due to visible wounds like lost limbs and disfigurement, or invisible ones like Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), it can be easy to feel like there's nobody who understands you now that you have moved away from a community of brothers- and sisters-in-arms.

These feelings can lead to a veteran spending more and more time alone. Perhaps you feel that you should be able to tackle your challenges by yourself. Or perhaps spending time with others reminds you of things you'd hoped to forget.

This can become a vicious cycle, where the more time you spend alone, the less you feel like people understand you. And the less you feel like people understand you, the more you want to be alone.

Spending too much time alone—to the point that you begin actively avoiding people and activities that you usually enjoy—is a sign of social withdrawal. For some, this can progress into true isolation, where all you want is to be alone most of the time. If allowed to progress, it can lead loved ones to start seeming stressful and annoying, placing enormous strain on your relationships. [\[LINK\]](#)

Social isolation can tend to accompany a handful of other problems, such as addiction [\[LINK\]](#), insomnia [\[LINK\]](#), and anxiety [\[LINK\]](#). This behavior is also usually associated with depression [\[LINK\]](#).

While some veterans show signs of social withdrawal when transitioning from military to civilian life, others may have felt this way for a much longer time. Those who have experienced traumatic events, both military-related and not, also tend to isolate themselves.

Allowing isolation to take over your life only makes the problem worse. For those who find themselves showing more and more signs of withdrawal, it's important to confront the reason you want to be left alone and address it. It's also essential to reach out to someone you can trust. Even if it's the last thing you want, research has shown that spending time with others has a positive effect on health.

That said, it isn't always so easy to do these things. At times, the idea of a conversation may seem overwhelming. The best way to handle this is to take small steps. Luckily, by reaching this site, you've already done just that. And you've already bested one of the hardest challenges around: you overcame basic training and earned your Eagle, Globe, and Anchor.

Now, the next step is to get yourself used to company again. At the FMF, the goal of our FOCUS program is to provide a space for servicemen and women where everyone around you understands the challenges you're facing. We provide the tools and the support to allow you to overcome your isolation through your own abilities and take back control of your own life.

If you or a loved one is showing signs of social withdrawal, please contact us. It's time to come home.