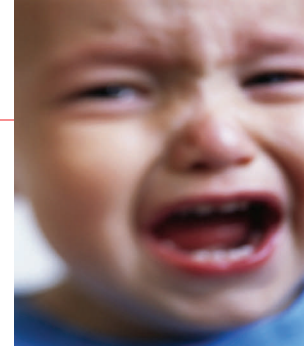


Indiana Association for Infant & Toddler Mental Health

Recent tragic events have brought attention to the issue of stress in those who serve in the Armed Forces. With estimates that 20 percent of returning veterans demonstrate symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), there are calls for increases in screening and treatment. As we think together about how to support military personnel who suffer these kinds of combat injuries, it is important to recognize that their family members, including infants and very young children, can also feel the effects of these experiences. Changes in the parent may lead to tension and differences in interactions that babies can detect. Parents who have PTSD or other symptoms such as sleep problems, recurrent difficult memories, feeling jumpy or easily startled, or depression, may find it hard to interact with their babies in positive and consistent ways. Babies may respond with their own symptoms: sleep or feeding problems, aggression, excessive clinging, or regression. **First Steps mental health professionals can help military and other families when parents struggle after experiencing stressful events.**



Important Facts about PTSD and Stress

- * Stress-related symptoms can happen to anyone.
- * Symptoms can appear immediately or weeks or months after returning home.
- * Stress responses in one family member can affect other family members.
- * Seeking and receiving support is a sign of strength—not weakness.
- * Treatment and help are available.

Learn More:

Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University
<http://www.mfri.purdue.edu/>

Also see Military Projects at Zero to Three
www.zerotothree.org

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