



# Effective Communication to Build Professional Relationships

Coping with a wound, illness, or injury can change your relationships at work. Like anything new, it takes time to adjust and find your pace. Presenting your best self, being reliable and dependable, and creating open lines of communication are all tactics that can foster positive work relationships. Listed below are effective approaches to help you build and foster healthy work relationships, whether you are returning to a familiar environment or transitioning to a new assignment.

## During Treatment and Recovery

- If you are returning to a previous assignment, try to maintain contact with your team during your treatment and recovery. Keep in touch through email or even a phone call to a co-worker or your chain of command. This will help you feel more involved and up to speed upon return.
- If you are PCSing or transitioning to a new assignment, review your new Command's Welcome Aboard page and information. Reach out to your sponsor to get more information about where you're going. Utilize personal contacts you have at a location so they can help you prepare for what to expect.
- Think ahead about what you may be asked about your wound, illness, or injury and how you would like to answer. Your co-workers will probably have some questions and may not know the right way to talk about your service, absence, treatment, or recovery. Preparing for such encounters can help you manage your reaction and build open communications.

## Back to Work

- Build confidence by delivering excellence in your work and show strength by exhibiting a positive and motivated demeanor.
- Projecting self-confidence and being accountable shows your co-workers that you are ready to accomplish the task at hand. Over time, being reliable, supporting your team, and going beyond what is required to get the job done will result in trusted partnerships with your coworkers.
- Connecting with your team is important, but personal details can be overwhelming in a professional setting. Be mindful of sharing too much personal information at work, and only provide details that you feel comfortable sharing.



## Overcoming Obstacles

- Communicate what you need to be successful. Don't be afraid to ask questions or make requests. Let your supervisor and chain of command know if you need accommodations to get your job done. Being honest with your supervisor about what you need after your wound, illness, or injury will result in a more productive and effective work environment for you.
- Multitasking can be frustrating. Stay in the present moment and tackle one task at a time.
- Pace yourself as you continue to readjust to work. If you are feeling overextended, reach out to a co-worker for support and work with your supervisor to help you prioritize your responsibilities.

*If you would like to learn more about managing relationships, you can visit:*

- Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Relationships and Intimacy website : [www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/wounded-ill-and-injured/Pages/intimacy-relationships.aspx](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/wounded-ill-and-injured/Pages/intimacy-relationships.aspx)
- After Deployment: [www.afterdeployment.org](http://www.afterdeployment.org)
- Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, inTransition program [intransition.dcoe.mil/](http://intransition.dcoe.mil/)