


## DO YOU KEEP PTSD A SECRET?

Some people who have signs of PTSD keep them a secret. They may think that being in the military means being a tough warrior who should not show any signs of weakness. When we see action movies or TV shows we rarely see the weaknesses of the heroes, but only their bravery and ability to endure pain and hardship. But action movies and TV shows are not true to life. All humans have strong emotions, and having strong emotions is not something to be ashamed of. Sometimes these emotions serve us, like when we feel unusually alert when danger approaches, and sometimes these emotions make life harder than it needs to be, like when we continue to feel alert and anxious even though the danger has left.

If you are troubled by PTSD symptoms like nightmares, constant anger or irritability, or problems relating to other people, then you need to admit these symptoms to yourself, and to other people who can help you.

It may take some time to accept that you have PTSD and to understand that it is nothing to be ashamed of, and that's okay. Talking about and coping with your problems is usually done in small steps.

 In the space below, list five people you can talk to about your problems. Start with the person who you think would be most helpful, and then write down other people who would be good listeners and would also provide you with support and advice.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

If you can't think of anyone to talk to, then you should certainly talk to a trained counselor. Keeping your PTSD a secret will only make things worse.

