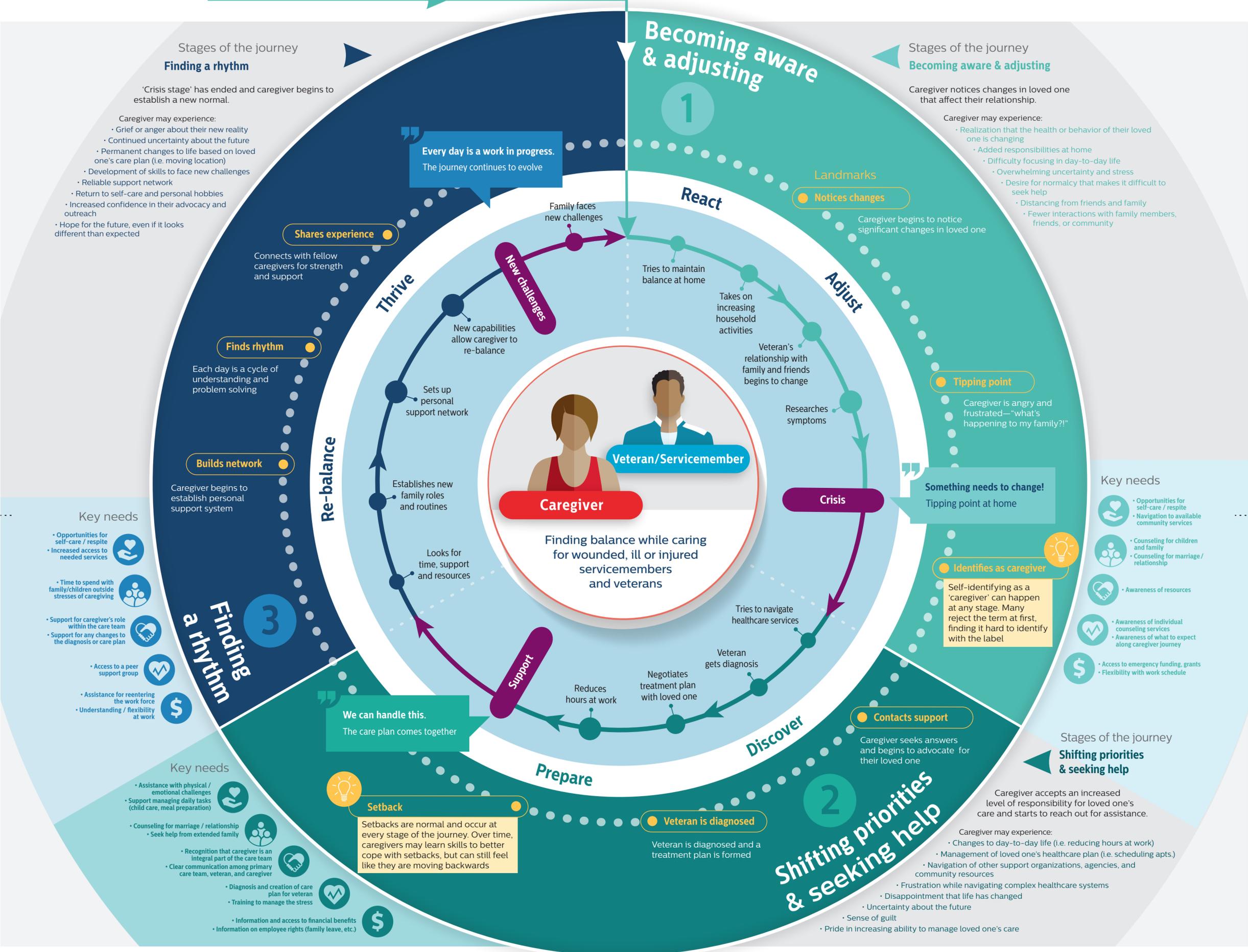


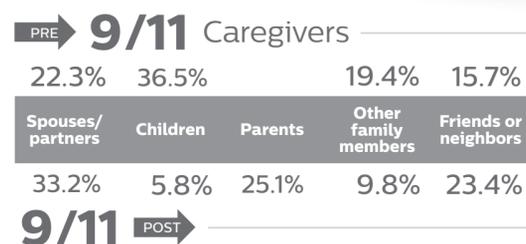
# Military and Veteran Caregiver Experience Map

Journey begins here



## Hidden Heroes | America's Military Caregivers

A military or veteran caregiver provides a broad range of care to, or manages the care of, a current or former member of the U.S. Armed Forces. Caring for a loved one is a difficult task, and military/veteran caregivers in particular are likely to suffer physical and emotional stress as a result of their caregiving duties. The information contained in Hidden Heroes: America's Military Caregivers helps us better understand this population.



mil/vet caregivers provide

**\$14 billion**

uncompensated care/year

## Key needs

- Care Coordination
- Caregiver Quality of Life
- Family Relationships
- Health & Wellbeing
- Employment & Financial Support

# Military & Veteran Caregiver Experience Map



Lead partners

The Military and Veteran Caregiver Experience Map project is an ongoing effort to understand, contextualize, and address the major challenges that military and veteran caregivers face along their journeys. This work would not be possible without the input of over 500 military and veteran caregivers, researchers, service providers, and support organizations from across the nation, as well as the support of the organizations below.

## Welcome

Military and veteran caregivers provide an invaluable service to this country: ensuring that our veterans and service members receive support and care when they need it, for as long as they need it. Caregiving, however, comes with its own set of challenges, and these men and women face great physical, emotional, and family strain – often without the help they need. In the last few years, support organizations, corporations, cities, government leaders, and others have stepped up to address the needs of this population. Due to our collective efforts, military and veteran caregivers are being recognized at the national and local level. Even in light of this progress, we still know too little about these hidden heroes, and the steps they are taking in their caregiving journey.

In order to empower these men and women and connect them to critical services and support, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Philips, and the Department of Veterans Affairs have partnered to document the military caregiver journey and convey the impact it has on their physical, psychological, financial, and social wellbeing. By mapping out key points where the right people, organizations, and service providers can step in and support family caregivers as they adapt to new roles and challenges, we'll help achieve better outcomes for these caregivers, and ultimately, our veterans.

### Our Objectives:

- Understand the caregiver journey, including the different stages and landmark events
- Describe the role of a family caregiver, normalize their experiences, and reduce the sense of isolation that too many caregivers feel
- Raise awareness and educate the community on the challenges caregivers face along their journey
- Help caregivers navigate and plan for the journey in front of them
- Identify opportunities for intervention along the journey where service providers can offer support and resources

## Onboarding

This version of the Military and Veteran Caregiver Experience Map was created to outline the journey of a “typical” military or veteran caregiver as he or she adapts to new challenges, emotions, and priorities. Undergirded by the RAND Corporation’s Hidden Heroes: America’s Military Caregivers study, and supported by input from over 500 military and veteran caregivers, researchers, and members of the military and veteran caregiver support community, this map provides an overview of common moments that most, if not all, caregivers experience.

**Stages of the Journey** | provides a framework for common stages and emotions caregivers experience as they adapt to the challenges and changes of caring for a loved one.

**The Route** | helps identify day-to-day events and actions that may occur as one progresses throughout the journey.

**Landmarks** | indicate significant events or milestones that caregivers and their loved ones commonly experience.

**Turning Points** | refer to critical points along the journey at which a decisive change occurs.

**Key Needs** | illustrate some of the most common needs caregivers and their families face during each stage of the journey.

