



BIG SONIA

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MILITARY & VETERAN CAREGIVERS

CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION

Prior to viewing the documentary, designate someone to facilitate the discussion and another person to take notes during the conversation. The questions below can be used to prompt a conversation between military and veteran caregivers about how they can relate to elements of Sonia's journey and her message of hope and perseverance. Small groups of 15 people or less are suggested for this discussion.



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Post-Screening Discussion Points

1. The title of the movie is BIG SONIA. What characteristics of Sonia Warshawski do you think led to the selection of this title?
2. Based on your experience and your family's history, how do you relate to Sonia's experience?
3. Thinking of how trauma and loss impacts individuals who experience it first-hand and their families discuss ways in which trauma can impact the lives of others such as friends, neighbors and coworkers. How have others in your community been impacted by the trauma your family has experienced?
4. What impact might this film have on a veteran who has survived trauma or loss?
5. How would someone who has not experienced trauma or loss benefit from seeing this film?
6. Which message from Sonia in the film will you remember most? How will Sonia's message affect you?
7. Sonia's son said the hard part was watching his mother "relive those moments" and "watching her pain." Have you felt similar pain watching your veteran, or another loved-one, try to cope with their past?
8. In the movie, Sonia recounts how she felt guilty in the years after the Holocaust. "I can't deny I'm damaged," Sonia says. Now that she's chosen to share her story, it's not only changing the lives of other people, but it's changing her life for the better.
 - a. As a military caregiver, do you think it's important to share your story? How can sharing your story help others?
 - b. Do you think it is important for your veteran to share his/her story? How might he/she do that?"
9. Sonia's children were exposed to some of the same things that children of combat veterans are exposed to such as night terrors, keeping friends away from the house, and the constant heaviness of pain and loss felt in the home. Do you think there has been a generational impact on your family, like the one felt by Sonia's children and grandchildren?
10. The BIG picture of BIG SONIA is that light and love can be added to a dark place, to create hope. How does this message translate to the caregiving world and what can veterans and caregivers take away from watching the movie?
11. What is one thing caregivers can do to honor the impact of the movie's message, to honor the *Sonia Effect*?

We hope you will continue to have conversations on these issues, and that BIG SONIA has inspired thoughtful discussion – THIS is how you will help us spread the #SoniaEffect in a meaningful way.



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