

Lay/Buddy Statement Builder

Purpose: Help you organize your own firsthand observations into a clear statement in your own words.

WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW.

You are being asked to describe something you personally observed. You are not being asked to diagnose a medical condition, interpret medical records, determine how severe a condition is, or argue for a particular outcome. If you do not know something, leave it out.

1. Your Relationship and Perspective

My name is [name], and I know [veteran] as [relationship].

I have known them since/about [date or period].

During [period], I personally observed [what you actually saw, heard, or experienced].

One specific example I remember is [specific event or observation].

I observed this approximately [frequency or pattern, only if you can accurately describe it].

When this happened, I saw them [what you personally observed them do, stop doing, change, or need help with].

Over time, I noticed [change, pattern, improvement, worsening, or variation, if personally observed].

Anything else I personally observed that may provide useful context: [your own observation].

I personally observed:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

4. My Final Review

- ☐ I wrote about things I personally know, or I clearly identified when something was told to me.
- ☐ I did not diagnose a medical condition unless I am qualified and am actually providing that professional opinion.
- ☐ I did not exaggerate what I observed.
- ☐ I did not include something merely because I was asked to.
- ☐ This statement reflects my own recollection and words.

A useful lay statement is independent evidence, not an echo of the veteran's statement.

Clear is better than impressive. Your statement should sound like you and be easy to understand.