

## Daryl faced his problems and found help

**Daryl:** My name is Daryl. I served in the Marine Corp from 2004 to 2008. While I was there, I deployed twice to Iraq. My experience in the Marine Corp was, it had its' highs and had its' lows, definitely deploying was something that was a big part of my military career, and I was deployed for 21 months in total.

While I was in the Marine Corp it wasn't very hard to get access to any type of drug that there was, along with that went some serious alcohol use and that followed me after the military as well. When I was out of the Marine Corp it just continued. Drinking and driving was just such a common thing for me to do because whenever I would go out somewhere, I would always be in that state. You know, a DUI or even crashing there is just no its not happening because I've done it so many times until I drove my car headfirst into a tree. I was in critical condition for 6 days. I broke my neck, my ribs. There was bleeding in my brain, really left me at rock bottom. I lost my job. I lost my apartment, lost my car. I had to go back home and live with my mother. It humbled me and woke me up before something more fatal happened.

I reached out to a community college. They had a Veteran counselor there. It was like he put his arm around me over the phone. He basically you know, said, hey, just come down here. I'll get everything set up for you. Being able to reach out to someone and someone that was that caring and you know just embracing definitely helped me get set back up as far as mental health and treatment through the VA.

I relapsed and it was because of just overwhelming depression. Sometimes the depression can be so crippling, like you can't get out of bed. You can't do anything and there's physically nothing wrong with you, you just can't move and I started drinking again and then you know, my family was like, "you need to go back to the VA."

After doing evaluations, sitting down with a therapist, they go, yeah, I mean you have PTSD and it would be important or it'd be beneficial to you to sit down and talk with somebody about this, and I've been going on a more consistent basis therapy with the VA. My therapist and me and her have a great relationship. I look forward to those you know, our meetings when I can just sit down and talk to her.

One great thing that you know, she always explains to me is that it's okay if you slip up. It's okay if you fall. You know, it's okay because you, you know you suffer from this, you suffer from this disease and you know if it pops up there's ways we can go about treating it.

Right now, I work at the community college. I'm the academic advisor for Veterans and it's almost like its own reward because these Veterans come out of the military and really don't know how to navigate higher education and to have another Veteran there that they can you know relate to, it brought back that same bond that you have when you're in the military. It's Veterans being there for Veterans. People mess up from time to time and it's okay to you know recognize it and seek help. Just go to the VA and if not the VA just maybe even like a Vet Center or your know, you know any type of group and just sit down and talk to somebody.



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