

Tools to cope with the stress of health problems

Alysse: My name's Alysse. I served in the Navy. I went to A School in Great Lakes for electronic basic school. All throughout school I was having seizures and they kept me on base because it's a long school. I wanted to finish but as soon as I graduated and then got orders, of course, I'm a liability so I can't go to a ship. So they transferred me from one base in Point Loma, San Diego to the other submarine base where they have a Medical Hold Unit.

Having these seizures not only physically impaired me, I have a scar here from falling on the cement. I fell down stairs and broke ribs here. So just the physical impairments were tough to deal with. But emotionally, sadness, frustration. My license was taken away, I couldn't drive. Because they couldn't figure out what was happening, it caused a huge level of anxiety and having to rely on somebody when I'm so self-sufficient really broke me down and I would cry myself to sleep every single night, probably for months.

So I kept having these seizures. They weren't every day, they weren't multiple times a day. Maybe once a month, every other month, never knew when it was gonna happen. So that caused a sense of anxiety too. The Navy was really good about trying to figure out what was going on, even though it was inconclusive. I did have a whole Psychology workup, I had a Neurology workup, I had a Cardiology workup, and that was two and a half years of stress and anxiety and frustration. Before I even got out, my Command helped me get in touch with the VA.

I have done counseling at the VA here and I've actually been able to work through a lot of emotional issues talking to a doctor. I feel better about where I stand now and come to terms and get a good grasp on my feelings, and I think that's important. I'm at the point now where you have to learn to deal with it and I don't feel anxious. I think learning to accept it was something that I didn't want to do and talking to a doctor at the VA helped me realize that you can only do what you can do. What's happening to your body is not in your control.

Don't be afraid to reach out for help. Being strong enough to admit that you need help is hard. So be strong enough to say you need help.



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