

Strengthening relationships through VA counseling

Sergio: My name is Sergio. I entered the Marine Corp in June 2003 and was honorably discharged November of 2007. Once I came back, I started working again. You think things are going to be the same, you want to see family, friends, but people have moved on and, so things are different. And it's just hard to gain your bearings on that. In the Marine Corp, you're taught to be have discipline, things are rigid, things are in order.

Everything is pretty much the same to everyone but that's usually not the case. You want to be different with everybody. You're not going to be the same person you are with your fellow Sergeants with your wife. You have to act differently, you care for them in different ways. In the military life, it's hard to leave that hat at the door. So, when you're at home, you want to be the loving, caring person that you are. But it's hard in the military. It's hard to distinguish.

I've always been the type of person, self-improvement, there's always resources. I was growing up, I knew there was always resources available, you just have to ask and you would seek help. And, before I was married, I was engaged. We wanted to seek counseling, premarital counseling. I thought that would be a good idea. So, I went to the VA and I found out that they offered couples counseling. And me and my wife took that route and we did a 4-week program with the VA. It helped just bring about communication in the relationship, how to deal with conflict management, shared meaning, and it was a tremendous help. My wife and I's relationship and I think that prepared us for marriage, and it helped so much we did the program twice. We spent 8 weeks doing the couples counseling and I think that was a great benefit the VA provided. I mean, I recommend that to many of the Vets that come back 'cause I know they want to help their family, they want to better improve their relationship with the spouse or significant other. And, that's what I did and I owe it to the VA. My relationship would probably not be the same right now if I didn't go that route.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**