

## Support from fellow Marines made a difference

**Jonathan:** My name is Jonathan. I served in the Marine Corps from 2007 to 2012. I was deployed to Haiti following the 2010 earthquake and to Afghanistan in 2011. I have noticed that after getting back it seems like nothing matters. When you're used to dealing with life and death scenarios, nothing else will ever be as significant as that. The worst part was I was unemployed right when I got out of the Marine Corps and going from having a purpose and something to do every day and a job to go to, to having nothing at all was a very difficult transition to make.

The first time that I saw people for mental health purposes was two weeks after I got back. I had a violent incident and then I was hospitalized for three days for suicidal ideations. My incident was a result of traumatizing personal issues mixed with alcohol.

I was able to fall back on my training, and I realized that I wasn't in a place that I normally was personally. And I called a friend. When I got to the hospital, I spoke with a doctor at first and he asked me what was going on. And I explained things. I had a resting heart rate of about 190 beats per minute. He gave me some Ativan so I could calm down.

I was seen by the psychiatric ward there and was restrained from leaving for three days until I was cleared. I would often go three days without sleeping, and that was something that the hospital was able to help with. Just trying to get back onto a normal sleep schedule. Because without that, you can't really deal with any of your other problems.

After I was released from the hospital, my entire command was very understanding of what had happened, and they made it really easy for me to seek help from them. There were a couple of real influential staff and COs that had been through similar experiences and were able to kind of relate their own personal story of how they were able to cope to me and give me kind of really sound advice about things that I was having trouble with as well as just being somebody that I could relate with.

After that my wife and I had several issues that we wanted to work on, and so we sought help from Military OneSource, which is available to all service members. And they were able to set us up with a marriage counselor. That experience really benefited the both of us. There's no magic pill. But what the marriage counselor and other health professionals can provide is someplace to start.

Trying to apply the lessons that I learned in the military to my own personal life really required a different approach, and I was able to get that through the marriage counseling. I would bet that no situation that any service member might be having is original to them. There's probably tens, hundreds, or thousands of other service members that have all seen the same thing.

Things are never going to be as they were before I left. And that's something that is important for everybody to realize. There's no way to undo anything that's happened. It's all about moving forward and finding new solutions to old problems.



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