

## Walking in the Light

**Deborah:** I can be outside, so I'm happy to do so. My name is Deborah. I did my military career '72 to '73. I was the first woman security police in the Air Force. And I'm supposed to come out and serve the community and do all those things, and I was really sick.

And that's part of my PTSD and a part of the trauma. Also, I learned I was bipolar. My life had become a hot mess. I got to the point where I couldn't leave the house. I couldn't just get out of the house. It was hard. And my symptoms kept getting worse. And I started using drugs more and more.

I went from one abusive relationship to another abusive relationship. A lot of my story, I think when I was going through it, that I was the only one. So, I seek services through the VA. When you know how to seek treatment, then you know how to seek other things that are available through the VA.

So, I went to see the psychiatrist who recommend individual therapy and group therapy. Group therapy takes you to the point where you start to trust other people because you're revealing yourself. So, you have to trust people in the group that are struggling with the same things you're struggling with, how to get past fear, how to be giving and kind, [how to love other people, thinking, meditating. Those are the tools that I learned to get to the point where I was okay with myself.

It's really changed because I was able to be outside again. The fresh air on your body is just so gentle. And I've learned in the beauty of spirituality, don't judge yourself. And don't put labels on yourself, which keeps you from seeking treatment. VA offers so many things



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