

Stories of strength from Navy Veterans

Speaker 1: I knew since I was eight years old I was gonna go in the Navy. So it's like, now's the time to do it.

Speaker 2: I love the Navy. I met a lot of good friends, lot of good people. I still keep in contact with a lot of my friends. I love the whole idea of having structure.

Speaker 3: A lot of things that we did were like shipboard operations, taking on fuel, cargo, line handling, steering the ship, and a number of other things. I mean, the job is very detailed. But it makes you responsible.

Speaker 4: During deployment, you had up to about anywhere near 5,000 people on that ship from all over who are away from their families and going through a lot of frustrations, you know, just like myself.

Speaker 5: You just push it away. And there's no time for emotion. There's no time for feeling. It is not the place. It's not the place.

Speaker 3: You really can't escape it. It's not like you can just leave the ship, like especially when you're out to sea. You can't just leave and just say, no, I don't want to deal with this today. You had to deal with it.

Speaker 6: Well, when I got out, I can honestly say that the difference between a civilian life and military life, it's two different cultures. It's almost to the extent of living in another country. Your mannerisms are different. The respect level's different. How you view your job and how hard you work is different. How you treat each other is way different.

Speaker 5: I was having issues with proximity of people coming close to me or loud sounds and stuff.

Speaker 7: So much was on my mind. I wouldn't be able to sleep. Or I was just totally drained and I would just want to sleep all day. Didn't really want to be around people. I was a hermit, I guess you would say. I tried to isolate myself and stay away from others, just 'cause I wasn't really comfortable speaking with them and talking about what was going on in my life.

Speaker 8: I would see people that were happy. I would see people having a good time. And honestly, I didn't fit into that. I couldn't be happy. I didn't want to be successful. I just didn't care.

Speaker 9: Also, the biggest thing for me is that I felt very out of place. I'm in a college environment. I'm working with kids that are my age, but still feeling like they're perceiving me



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as being this very hard military girl. And I was trying so hard to get out of that. And I couldn't, no matter what I did, seem to change that about myself.

Speaker 1: The bad dreams, the nightmares, they all started coming in. And it was like, I need help.

Speaker 10: Well, family more or less encouraged me. You know, “Go to the VA. You’re a Veteran. See what they can do to help you.”

Speaker 4: Once I got around other Veterans, and I heard their stories, and I began to hear things that sounded like me. And it helped me realize that you need to talk to somebody. You need to get some help. You need to work this out. That was the turning point there, going to the VA center.

Speaker 7: I had a hard time sharing things with my friends. But knowing that they’re licensed and that they are there to help and they do see these things quite often, it was encouraging to open up to them.

Speaker 11: It’s given me some strength and confidence, and I know some things to work with a little bit. I know I can go on and go forward.

Speaker 6: It's kind of like you’ve had this burden and this heavy pressure that’s just been lifted right off your shoulders. And you feel a lot better.

Speaker 2: Whenever you’re going in battle or doing whatever you were doing, you did it because you wanted to fight for your country, for your freedom. Going to see somebody to help is gonna also help you to take that first step to get your freedom back so that you can be free from whatever is trying to take you down in your head, in your mind, in your body, in your spirit. You gotta fight for who you are and what you are.

Speaker 5: Because of therapy, because of the things that I was able to learn through the VA, I have the courage to still go forward what I want to do with my life.



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