

## **We get better when we acknowledge we need help**

**Catrina:** My name is Katrina. I served in the Army from 2002 to 2005, and I was a 92 Yankee Unit Supply Specialist.

My first week back was really difficult because when I deployed to Iraq, I had a roommate, and when I came back from Iraq, I did not anymore. She was killed overseas. And one of the hardest things that I had to go through was that glorious day when you get all your stuff back out of storage and you try to start over, they brought all my stuff but then they started bringing all of her stuff. And that was hard. It's those little things that you didn't think...I don't, I guess you can't really prepare for.

But as far as the transition, I didn't want to go out grocery shopping. And I thought it was perfectly normal to go grocery shopping at 11:00 at night when the store was still open. And I just thought, "I don't want to deal with people." I think that's easier to say than, I feel anxious in public right now, or, I'm overwhelmed with all these people around me. It's too busy. I don't think that's easy to acknowledge or say about yourself.

In 2005 to 2000, I think, '7 or '8, was when I finally did have my first flashback. I didn't even know what a flashback was. I didn't know much of any of that. But I knew I had to talk to professionals, and so that's what I did. I reached out to a Vet Center in my area.

As you reach out and as you talk to these specialists, these therapists, these counsellors or church support groups, what you learn is it's okay to not be okay, that you just have to acknowledge what are the stressors, or just acknowledge that you have stress. Sometimes I waste time trying to figure out what is it that's bothering me, but sometimes I just need to, hey, I'm bothered. I need to talk to somebody now.

If you really are trying to utilize the VA or the Vet Centers or church resources, you have to be honest, These are my shortcomings right now. This is what is an issue right now. And they've always been able to not let me walk around or dance around the issues. They know. They know what they're doing.

And then on top of that, being a law enforcement officer, they know the stresses that I still am undergoing. And sometimes they're connected. Sometimes they're not. Sometimes it's just you're not taking care of yourself, and you need to hear that.

My family, they understand. They don't push. They don't love me any less or treat me any different. There's nothing wrong with needing help. It's best to utilize everything and anything available that's going to make you a better person rather than feel like you're alone, and feel like you're going crazy or feel like you're damaged and beyond repair, because you're not.

We can only get better when we acknowledge that we need that help. And there are plenty of people out there that are waiting to talk to you and help you and give you that guidance that you need to become healthy in all aspects of your life.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE  
CONNECTION**