

Avoidance only prolongs problems

Speaker1: As a marine and a Navy Corps man, you're always told to suck it up. And sucking it up was not always an easy thing to do.

Speaker2: We was out on night patrol and it's crazy because an I.E.D. had hit. When stuff like that happens, you kind of have to bottle it up. You can't sit there and sulk and cry, even though you just lost your last buddy, because the next morning we're back out on a mission. That's just the way it is, you know.

Speaker3: The day that I left, my platoon got hit, another gunner with an E.F.P. and he didn't make it. It was kind of rough. No closure there really, but there is not ever really any closure especially when you are in Iraq or Afghanistan. You know you have a small memorial and then drive on.

Speaker4: We stick it down just to drive on for the mission. I mean we have got to deal with the problems there that is readily available at our hands and you know we really can't give any time to think about some of the things that we are going to think about later when we get back home.

Speaker5: When you don't know how to handle something like that when it gets to a place where you have never handled that kind of pain before you just avoid it.

Speaker6: I never said anything to anybody, I never talked about it because some of the things you see there are not things you really want to keep harping on or remembering.

Speaker7: I just buried it all and that was really kind of stupid, but I just didn't want to talk to anybody about it.

Speaker8: I was fighting with myself, that didn't happen, let it go. It happened in Korea, bury it there.

Speaker9: Staying busy to the point where you are exhausted, so you hold everything in and it just boils and simmers there for a long time.

Speaker10: One of the things I was doing is that I did not talk to anyone that I served with. I had no connection with anyone. I had nothing to do with anything military and I never, ever mentioned anything about me being in the military or anything about my military service.

Speaker11: I put Vietnam clean out of the picture and if I get to having too much problems you know going back I actually would take on more work, okay. I worked 16 hours a day at my job, come home and raise a garden, mow the yard, keep my house up.

Speaker12: I had some issues with my son and I was avoiding him. That is a big thing with PTSD. You avoid everything, it may be just returning a phone call. If a bar was too...or family gathering was too crowded I would come up with reasons to get away from it.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**

Speaker13: I used to work 14 – 15 hours a day just to keep my mind busy and I went 20...about 25 years doing the same thing over and over and over again. Fired from this job, fired from that job.

Speaker14: For 3 years when I got home I didn't want to talk to nobody. I just stayed busy, I blanked it out. But guess what – it doesn't go anywhere, it is there. You are going to run but you are going to get tired sooner or later and that problem is going to be there.

Speaker15: I kept working and keeping myself very, very busy and doing things. Not until later when I really had a chance to reflect on things did I find behaviors and issues that I was basically masking up.

Speaker4: What the VA did is they basically hooked me up with a good Counselor. We met with them. We got to basically lay everything out. What plan of attack was going to be the best thing whether it was going to be group or single, one-on-one.

Speaker16: It is a process to help you like what is on your chest. How can we help you? I mean you can't get rid of the memories. They are always going to be there, but how you cope with them is a different story.

Speaker3: I went to mental health, just talked with a Counselor. I went over the course of probably about six months total, but immediately it really helped cause I didn't even realize how much I was holding in.

Speaker4: What they did is they started working it out. Okay, hey I want you to go into small crowd, basically like a little park, okay. There is not going to be that many people in the morning, so it was kind of a good way to just ease me back into it and that was great; because it is just like watching that scary movie playing it over and over and it is not scary anymore.

Speaker5: That was our treatment was the repetitive exposure and talking it through and forcing myself to emotionally experience it. Through that structure, through his guidance he started me on the path of moving through it.

Speaker12: All of a sudden it is like a big blast of fresh air. I can be around friends. I can sit there and watch my other kids play or whatever and I am not okay, we gotta go. It has opened up a whole bunch of possibilities for me.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

MAKE THE
CONNECTION