

The Vet Center worked for him

Javier: My name's Javier. I served in the Marine Corps and the Army National Guard. I made that promise that I was gonna come back and go to school. I was accepted and went out to register for classes and there was a few hundred kids standing in line to register for class and I just didn't feel comfortable. I started having panic attacks, kinda withdraw on myself, and it kinda continued. I just didn't have the same fervor for life that I had before and I felt guilty obviously, a lot of guys and gals coming back feel that.

You have a hypervigilance, what they call just kinda checking out, cause you're always scanning. I came back and I had to start school, so I finished my bachelor's degree in two and a half years so I stayed busy. That was my thing, and then on the weekends I would drink because I wasn't in class or anything. So I was trying my hardest to ignore the anxiety and all that and be old Javier and just stay busy, and I figured if I stayed busy enough and I do well enough in class and I do well enough in school, they won't ask me about that stuff.

It's just something, I just felt like, what am I doing, and so I just stopped drinking. That was my first step. Stop drinking, have discipline, do it. Stop drinking, and I had stopped smoking. So I cut them both. I was like, I'm going to cut these, I'm going to get control of that and I still had the problems though. So then, it was about three months after that when I went to the Vet Center and talked to someone and then I went to the VA.

One of the things I worked on was like being so hard on myself. Like, having the guilt. That was one of the big exercises. The other things that we worked on was kind of breathing and recognizing like the triggers for like the anxiety and stuff, panic attacks and just trying to nip it in the bud or like recognizing what's going, talking through things, and working here with the Vet Center one of the things we're working on is how to communicate effectively with people in my life.

For me, the biggest thing is just going and talking and being able to have that, and then the rest, I'm just dealing with it. It's not easy and it still affects my daily activities, but I've been able to accomplish a lot and I'm very fortunate, and so I know it's helped. My experience at the Vet Center has been a great one and I always try to tell people, guys and gals that I know, just go and just talk to them.



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