

PTSD treatment improved his life

Tom: My name is Tom and I was in the Navy for eight and a half years. I was a Yeoman, it's like a Clerk. Then I was in the National Guard, joined the Army National Guard of Arizona. During the time I was in there, I went all the way to retirement. During I was in there, we were activated for Desert Storm. So, you know you're only a Clerk Typist, when you're in a war zone you're anybody, you got a target on your back like everybody else. We were in this MP unit and I was the Operations Clerk. We were scud targets and mop suit wearers and the whole shoot and match.

I started noticing something was going on when we were over there. I was kind of disappointed that I couldn't do what I was capable of doing, so, that didn't help none. But anyway when I came back, when I first went back to work, I snuck in the back door, went out the back stairs, and nobody even knew I was there for a while because I'm in my own office. I couldn't even tell you why, I just felt kind of embarrassed. It's kind of hard to describe. It's kind of like, what did I do, why am I here? My marriage started to suffer, my job started to suffer because I would take vacations, unauthorized and just head off into nowhere and my thoughts and then come back and get yelled at by the spouse and by work. There was no substance abuse, but there was definitely depression. I would have killed myself anytime. I even thought about it when we were in Desert Storm.

I had heard from I think a friend had said it, told me about the Vet center in Phoenix, so, I went there and I met a really sweet lady that was a social worker and she got me talking and telling my story. She was a comfort to talk to, because my wife didn't understand it at all. I didn't even understand so it was kind of hard to think that she would, but the lady at the Vet center was just fantastic. She referred me to the VA hospital, and I went to see the Doctor and of course he prescribed medication and he told me that I had PTSD and I said, "What's that?"

There were support groups, it was mostly direct with the Physicians, the Psychiatrist, and just talking one on one kind of thing. Well, the medication helped like I say leveled me out some. There's two things. First was this one Doctor at the VA in Phoenix and he would sit down and tell me that "If you have an occurrence of thought of that significant event, you need to recognize that, first of all that that's happening, you need to be focused on it. You can't fix it, but what you can do is you can work on your reactions to it. If this thought comes into your mind, you, in your history, you have done this. You have taken off; you've had a fight with your wife. When it comes into your mind then you can stop hopefully an event from occurring."

I wish that I'd known about the Vet center sooner. Because we're talking quite a bit of time after I got back. If I was to tell a Vet anything, it's "Find a Vet center."



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