

## Staying Connected With Others

**Jennifer:** Before treatment, I spent a lot of time by myself and in my room.

**Fernando:** I was in my studio apartment. I lived alone.

**Vernon:** I used to stay in my room and keep it as dark as possible.

**Yasmeen:** I didn't trust nobody. I was secluded. I would literally be in a dark space. Just darkness. I didn't want no light around me. I just felt like I was hopeless.

**Jennifer:** I did have a hard time having relationships. I withdrew from everybody. They thought I neglected our friendship, and in reality, I didn't know how to deal with being a friend or being supportive at all.

**Vernon:** My stepdaughter, she came and told me, "You just lay back here in this dark room. You won't play with me. You won't do anything." And when she said that, just the look of despair and concern that was on a child's face, that's when I really knew I needed to do something.

**Jennifer:** And so I turned to the VA Counseling System.

**Yasmeen:** I was talking to two psychs that were very awesome. They brought me out of my shell, just let my feeling's flow. And then slowly but surely, she started bringing me back to me.

**Vernon:** I'm a pretty good dad today. We do fun things together. I'm reliving my childhood with her. She's my little buddy.

**Fernando:** As human beings, we were made to bond. We were made to share our experiences, to be friends and family, to talk things out. Don't isolate yourself and know that you have a purpose in life.



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MAKE THE  
CONNECTION