

Adjusting to civilian life with support

Dan: My name's Dan. I served in the Army, the United States Army. I was 13 Bravo Field Artillery. I served from 1987 to 1991. My whole tour was, I was stationed in Germany just outside of Frankfurt. I took it very serious and I really removed the civilian side of myself. I noticed that I wasn't relating to my friends and family. The whole reason I got out was to save my marriage. We weren't fighting, it's not like we weren't getting along, but I really did start loving the Army and the military more than my wife especially after Desert Storm. That was like the icing, that's what took the last little bit of civilian, you know the civilian Dan away. It was, that person was gone.

Coming back to the world just a shock of everybody has a different haircut now, everybody talks different, everybody dresses different. Nobody talks like me, nobody acts like me, nobody thinks like me. I short circuited, you know the severe nightmares, the severe social anxiety, not being able to be around crowds, I couldn't go to stores, things like that and over the years that got worse and worse to the point where I wouldn't go anywhere without my wife except maybe a couple, like a sporting goods store or something, anyplace that had weapons, guns, because I was comfortable, it was weird.

So, I became a recluse. I did drink, but I didn't do it all the time. You know, I would go out and drink, but what I would do was I would go out and go to a bar and try to find the biggest nastiest person in there I possibly could and I would do whatever I had to, to start a fight and one night I was in an alley and I was beating, fighting this guy and a friend of mine came out to look for me and he found me and he stopped it. I realized every time during one of these fights somebody had to stop me and what if somebody isn't there to stop me sometime and I actually, what if I kill somebody. I realized needed help and I went to the VA. I even told my wife, I said, "I need help." And it was hard, it was incredibly hard to admit that I needed help.

I started seeing a psychiatrist and the first one didn't work. You have to find the right, the right one and I did finally find a good counselor there and then also the Vet Center. I started getting involved with the Vet Center. The VA referred me there. So, between the two I was able to start integrating myself back into society and if I hadn't gone to the VA I would not be sitting in this chair.

When I was diagnosed with PTSD it was, I did get some relief because now I have something to look at. I've been told what, why I act the way I act. Every Marine, soldier, airman, you give them a mission they're going to succeed, and my mission was to live with PTSD. What I could relay to another Veteran is, you know, we were there for each other on the field and now we're here for each other in the world. We are the only ones that understand each other. If you have an issue, if you're at the end of that road and it doesn't look like there's any way out, go to the VA because they have people there that understand and they have people there that care and they will do anything and everything they can to help you. We've sacrificed so much, sacrificing a life or your quality of life is unacceptable. Don't give up on yourself. Go get the help you need.



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