

Timothy reached out after experiencing challenges

Timothy: My name is Timothy. I served in the United States Army. I was a 92 Alpha. My deployment occurred at approximately around 2006. We went to Camp Liberty, Iraq. The scariest thing probably would be the not knowing, the unknown, and quietness, or to go on a brief and see a lot of red dots where things have happened.

I know when I was there I became a more non-emotional person because I felt like if I got too emotional I would forget my goal, which was to make it home. So I kind of just learned to shut my emotions completely off. I just became a non-emotional null person and it kind of carried to when I got back home.

I was just null and just numb to the emotions with people. I didn't care if I hurt people's feelings or anything. The person I was when I first came back, I didn't like that person. It was pretty horrible. My loved ones, I stayed distant from them, when they were the ones trying to come love me and talk to me. I didn't want to talk about anything and I was just shutting everybody completely down.

I drank a lot. Alcohol was probably one of my biggest things that I liked to do. I didn't know how to turn the off button off. I could not just have an argument with someone and leave it alone. It was always "take it to the next level" with me. I couldn't stand to be around people who would walk up behind me. I hated the Fourth of July. I didn't like fireworks. I didn't like anything that had to do with the Fourth of July.

The first time I got help was when we were in-processing at Fort Hood. There weren't necessarily mental health people that worked at the VA, like at the hospital on post, they were just another group of counselors. So I decided to go through there and go through counseling there first. It was very helpful. I got to talk to a couple of my battle buddies that were there. Two of us, actually me and my other friend, we went together.

My counselor would talk to me and let me know "Hey you have to tell yourself you can do it. You can overcome this. If someone has a problem with you it's not that serious. If someone steps on your foot, it's okay, maybe he's having a bad day." I've had to try to learn and look at it the other way. How would this person feel if I had done it to them? Would they take it to this level? Probably not, so I kind of hyped myself up and tried to look at it both ways before I started acting out.

When I felt like I had it under control, when I felt like I could control myself, I stopped, which was probably the worst thing. Because once I stopped I got complacent. I don't have that back up that I had before when I was going to counseling. I don't have anyone encouraging me, I don't have that group that I'm talking to. It's like I'm going back to those bad habits that I had and it continued on to where I started getting Article 15s. At that point in time, I had met my wife, and we went to Korea at that point in time. It took my wife to say "Babe, you might actually have a problem. You need to go back and get help." That's when I went to the actual mental health facility in Korea and I started actually getting real help.

I went there and I started talking to the doctor and I let him know that it was going on. I had other mental health issues as well and they tried medications and we tried counselors, and we went through a variety of things until I eventually got to where I was comfortable to be the person that I am today.



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I don't drink anymore and I don't club anymore, I have a family, I have daughters, and I can stand for people to walk behind me. Just a couple years ago, I think two years ago, I enjoyed my first Fourth of July. Really no jumping, no anything. I can really just enjoy my life and live it. If I get into it with a person, I don't escalate. I'd just be like "Hey, maybe this guy had a bad day or maybe it's not worth it." I think about the outcomes of things now. Before I just didn't think about the outcomes. I would just react and just go along. But now I think more about life and how I enjoy it and try to live my life to the best.

I am currently going to pursue my Bachelors in psychology and I would like to get my Masters in counseling so I could try to work at the VA and help people as well. Help them through their struggle and let them know that they're not the only one that has been through it. I feel like if someone is there that's a Veteran themselves, they can say "Hey, this is my struggle and hey, I want you to know that you can come up from where you're at and be something."

At first it's gonna be scary when you want to go get help. But I feel like once you go get help and you start the process and get the ball rolling, it'll be a lot easier once you get started with everything. It's a whole beautiful life that you're missing out on by being a certain way and I feel like once you get the help that you need and you get medication or you get the counseling that you need, you will be able to enjoy your life and live it a lot better.



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