

A fellow Veteran urged Mike to seek support

Mike: My name is Mike. I was in the Army. I served in Vietnam from '71 to '72. I lost 7 friends in a helicopter crash. I had to go with a CO and company to the crash site the next morning. I still have a lot of bad dreams about that. It bothers me.

When I came back, I thought I was okay and there was nothing wrong with me. I didn't have any great affects due to that, but I did. I waited a long time before I got any kind of help. It made things difficult in transitioning back to the real world. I had a lot of anger, suppressed anger and stuff that I didn't really come to terms with. It affected me in relationships with my family, with my friends.

Looking back on it now, I wish I would have gotten some help. I was glad to be home, but along with being home there was something missing. I think myself and a lot of my Veteran friends, we self-medicated ourselves through alcohol. It doesn't really help. For sleeping, to this day I still don't sleep well. I don't get a good restful night's sleep. Alcohol was about the only way to go ahead and basically pass out and you get to sleep.

My anger management and alcohol gave me a lot of trouble with relationships and family. Alcohol seemed to bring out the demons that I was carrying. I waited well over 30 years before I took any advantage of the VA system to seek help. I was in denial for so many years. There's nothing wrong with me. I don't know. I guess maybe it was just a lucky thing that I went ahead and a friend of mine, another Veteran friend of mine encouraged me and rode me for a long time and bugged me to go down and check it out. I finally listened to him and went down. Once they pointed out the symptoms and all this stuff and show you what's going on, you realize that, hey, this is me. I fit all of these categories. Something is up here.

I go to a PTSD group once a week with other Vietnam Veterans. We've been together in that group for about 5 years. You may have some of the worst problems that week yourself, but if you have a Veteran friend that's got problems too, you'll find yourself helping him and it helps yourself too. It keeps me focused. It's like a once a week grounding. It grounds me and puts me in a good direction.

We were brought up to not be weak. We were brought up to be self-sufficient and strong. It's not a weakness. It's just that things like this affect you. You don't realize it, but if you want to live life and enjoy life you have to accept a few things. Being in denial is no good because it's not going to get any better unless you try to make some changes and try to come to terms with what is affecting you.

Go seek some counseling and see if they can help you.

Speaker2: Text



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