

For Tony, VA counseling was the solution

Tony: My name's Tony, I served in the Army in the 101st Airborne Division. I was in from 1967 through 1969. I went to Vietnam in early part of 1968. I was wounded in the last part of May—actually it was May 22nd, 1968, medevaced out and flew out of Da Nang to Japan and spent nine weeks in a hospital in Japan. After I got medevaced back to the US and then I still had almost a year to serve, so they sent me to two different bases. When I got to San Francisco airport I got spit on, yelled. That's something that really hurts you inside, to have all the names called and just disrespect. I tried to go back to my job that I left, but my physical condition stuff, it kind of hampered me and I really pushed myself and I went to college, I was going to college night school three nights a week and working two jobs.

Trying to get integrated back in it was just, it was hard. I didn't talk to anybody, I didn't even tell anybody that I went to Vietnam, not sleeping but three, four hours a night and having bad nightmares, flashbacks, sweating, not being able to be out in crowded, places. Moved up here and got registered in the VA here and that's when I started getting the counseling for mental and for the PTSD and set me up with this counselor. I had one-on-one counseling sessions with her every week for...almost two years, and then she introduced me into a group of Vets and she, co- counsels that group and I've been in that group till now.

In individual counseling with her, she made me face the problems that I was having and the reason. That's what's so good about the individual counseling is because all the—the blame and the guilt and stuff that you have inside, through her process she brings out and has you look at the other side of the whole picture instead of just what you're focusing on. Through her I'm working through all the counseling. It really brings you, brings the stuff out that you've been holding in, and then within the group counseling that is just outstanding. That—everybody should have brothers that you can sit down and you can talk about anything and relate to his experience that everybody has, maybe the same incidents but different experiences.

The older Vets that have been turned away all these years and reluctant to come back, no, please come back, there's help and all you need to do is come in and push. That's all, and if you can't do it by yourself just ask another Vet. We'll take you. Everybody deserves that recognition and the help that they need.



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