

## PTSD support is available, and treatment works

**Travis:** I'm Travis and my branch of Army, was Army active duty. That was from '99 to 2006, where I served in Germany for three years, Fort Hood, and Iraq and Kuwait '04, '05, '06. Then I got out for a little while, about a year and went back in as a Army National Guard here in Arkansas.

When I was in Iraq, I did base security, convoy security, raids and transport of equipment and personnel. Is it awakening to get hit by an IED? If your one of the fortunate ones to get an armored vehicle, it don't do too much but rock the vehicle back and forth, and if your one of the unlucky one's, it could shred the vehicle in pieces. It makes you realize you're not superman after all.

When I first got out of the Army in '06, I didn't notice too much at all, but that's because my job occupation I chose, I went from the Army to driving a truck out here. I was on my own, nobody to bother me. Didn't have anybody around. I didn't really notice too much. I had a flashback once, though. It wasn't a bad flashback per say, because I knew where I was at, but I called it a flashback because I was parked in a parking lot for the night and a kid wanted, a little bitty kid, like three or four, wanted to see my truck because they're really interested in big trucks, and the mother said it was OK. As soon as the kid got up to my truck, I reached inside of the cab of the truck for a gun that wasn't there and told the kid to back off or I'll shoot.

Everybody kept saying I needed help, and I kept refusing it. My eye opener was when I almost got my wife fired from her job because I opened my mouth and threatened somebody because they were irritating her. And that was my awakening, that's when I said that enough is enough. I got to have help. I went to the VA and enrolled myself in everything they had.

Going to the visual arts therapy is supposed to help you express how you feel and then I'm going to a PTSD symptom management, and then I'm going to a PTSD support group led by the Vet Center. The symptom management one I like the most because my wife's able to come to it with me, so she's able to remember things I can't remember and help me through it because I have all the support system from the VA, but my wife is my biggest support, because I'm with her all the time. And the support group at the Vet Center, it's helped me quite a bit just because I'm able to talk to the other Veterans and hear their stories and actually get out everything I need to get out to somebody that knows what it's like.

I know what's going on with me now and now I know how to treat it. I'm on Zoloft right now, and that's mostly for the anger, and the tools they gave me was basically keep a journal, write everything down, to always talk and never hold nothing in. I got to say it's not easy, you're going to cry a lot because you're opening the flood gates. It's very worth it. Every tear I shed, even now, it gets that much better. Before I couldn't even leave the house. If I did, I'd be breaking out in sweats.

I learned a lot of compromising, mostly on my part. My daughter, she likes to go skating at the skating rink, and I can't do it. A bunch of kids, rowdy, loud, they don't know the sense of personal space, but I take her there and I spend most of the time outside, but I do go in to check on her and buy her drinks, watch her skate around a couple times. I'm



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managing to compromise for her. It makes me real happy now because I'm making her happy.

The only thing I can say to any Veteran that's coming back from Iraq now or came back from Iraq years ago or Vietnam Era even or any Veteran, it's hard but it's well worth it to get help.



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