

## Strategies to manage PTSD and live well

**Jim:** My name is Jim. I served in the United States Marine Corp from 1988 to 1994.

**Jim:** I deployed twice. Once just to Okinawa for deployment but my big deployment where I got wounded was in Somalia.

**Jim:** I was Operation Restore Hope. We were the first ones over there, the Marine Corp. We went over to try to help feed the Somalis and wound up turning in a combat mission basically. People were getting trigger happy, that was the main thing. That's how I wound up getting shot.

**Jim:** It's even harder to deal with when you get shot by friendly fire, I think.

**Jim:** I got released May of 94'. That was about a year and a half after my 4-year enlistment.

**Jim:** You have sleeping problems and you go through a divorce. All that happens. It just takes a toll on you. It exacerbates your symptoms basically.

**Jim:** Back in 01', where just too much at one time and it all crashed at one time. That's when I started getting real treatment from my post traumatic stress disorder.

**Jim:** Counseling with my experience is pretty simple. Just a good doc, "Hey, what's going on with your life right now?" "What ya doing?" It just helps you vent, get it off your chest, talk to somebody. It's confidential, it's private. If you're afraid to talk to your parents, your spouses, brothers, sisters. This is somebody you can go talk to and just say "Hey, this is how I'm feeling."

**Jim:** One on one is the way I like it and we just talk about what's ever bothering me that day or, he also gives you some strategies of how to control some symptoms. It's just like having diabetes. It's just like having an amputation. It's actually a physical disability. It's just something you can't see.

**Jim:** I rarely have dreams now because I take a medication that suppresses those dreams. My agitation is down. My anger gets down, I'm able to control it a little bit more. But yeah, it helps in my situation.

**Jim:** You got work it out and it takes time. A lot of Vets, they don't want to put in the time, but the end result can help.

**Jim:** Like I've been in VA and I've always had a good psychiatric help from the Veteran's Administration. Just don't give up.

**Jim:** It can take several medications, several doctors before you're comfortable. Don't give up. There's always someone out there. I mean get it started.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE  
CONNECTION**