

After a flashback, Russ knew he needed a change

Russ: Hi, I'm Russ. I had two stints in the military, first one I was active duty back in 1985 through 1989. I got out, decided that I wanted to do something for my country again, enlisted into the Reserves, and ended up going to Kuwait. Once I returned, it was kind of awkward. I felt that I didn't really fit in. I felt uncomfortable being at home even though I had my family there. I was angry. I felt disconnected. I spent roughly a month in my bedroom isolated away from the rest of my family. I was depressed because I was away from everybody that I knew, my buddies, my battle buddies. I was depressed because I wasn't in a combat zone where I felt comfortable.

We were moving some stuff from one storage unit to another and I was going through a turn light and for whatever reason everything went to a point where as if I was in a convoy. All I saw was desert, the pickup that my wife was driving was a Humvee, the pickup that I was driving was a Humvee. When I got three-quarters of the way through the turn, I came out of it and realized that I had a yellow flashing light, and I was basically throwing my keys at my wife and said, "I'm not driving anymore." She ended up calling the Vet Center in Boise to get me set up for counseling.

Through the Vet Center I get one-on-one counseling therapy. It doesn't cover just one specific area, it covers the whole me. There's also group therapy. They ask us how we're doing because there maybe specific talk, something comes up in the news that maybe triggering something that triggers what goes on with us in our PTSD and we can talk about that in group and get ideas from each other how to cope and deal with that. You go into group and getting that stuff off my chest and talking, getting that camaraderie is worth it.

It's difficult for us as Veterans coming home from combat, it's difficult for us to say we need help. We see things that no other person sees when we're in a combat zone. We need to take and help ourselves because we've helped others. It's time to help us.



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