

## Encouraging a spouse to share his experiences

**Dara:** My name is Dara, and I am the wife of Tim and he served in Afghanistan in the Army. We met when he was on base. He was stationed in Fort Drum, New York. We were friends for a long time before we actually started dating.

I didn't really hear anything about what went on over there with him. I didn't know about his job or anything until we really got closer. He wasn't with his Army buddies anymore. He didn't have a lot of people to talk to besides family, and I always told him if you ever want to talk about something, I want to hear it, tell me. I wanted to make sure he knew that I was there for him, so I kind of let him bring it out to me and I didn't really push for it. The first thing I noticed is how we would go out to dinner and he would have to sit a certain way. He would have to face the windows or, you know, he couldn't have his back to the crowd and you could constantly see him looking around to scope out who was there and he could make sure we're safe. So that was something that I definitely noticed. Being in crowds, we would go to bars and go out to clubs and things like that and he was just antsy, he didn't want to be in those places.

The VA, would call him and schedule appointments and things like that for counseling and that definitely helped. If I'm not understanding, it's maybe somebody else that has been there, done that, that he's talking to at the VA. He comes back with a positive mind on his shoulders. I would definitely say his anger levels were definitely higher before counseling, and afterwards he's more calm. He was more anxious beforehand and now it's calmed down. Every day, I'm just so glad that he's come this far.

Some of the things that I've learned would be to be very patient with Tim, and that has also taught me more about patience as well because forgetfulness is something that is a symptom of his, so I just have to learn to remind him of certain things and to write them down, to put them in your phone, to make a list. His emotions are definitely more positive. I couldn't be more proud of him.



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