

Brenda found the support she needed to live well

Brenda: My first name is Brenda, and I served in the Army Reserve, and my MOS was a 72 Echo which was a Telecommunications Specialist. When I was in basic training, I was a little nervous about the, because I'm left-handed, about the grenade pit. The dummy grenade goes up into your face instead of down as a right-handed person, and I picked up one defective grenade and it blew all my skin off and caused me to rattle a little bit, so they got me to the hospital, I stayed there for a day, they stitched me up. It punctured my eardrum and then it caused me to have nightmares. I couldn't work a full-time job, I was working at the post office, and I was working 60 hours a week and I just couldn't do it anymore. Like, every little thing I would do and dealing with people, I would get all stressed out. I would have panic attacks and I would have all that kind of stuff, and I couldn't relax, and I couldn't work, I couldn't focus, and I just went on to the VA and started going there and I received a Psychiatrist, and I received a Therapist, because I was hearing voices. Well, I had developed schizophrenia. Then I had post traumatic stress disorder from the grenade, then I had anxiety, and I had insomnia. So, I had a whole lot of issues going on.

I just went with a neighbor to the casino. I would go down there every day and I would spend all my money, and I would still have people helping me out, but the gambling felt like a drug. It felt like I got high every time I went in that casino. People would treat you nice and they had music, you could drink. But I got into debt with the gambling. I told the VA, they put me in the detox unit for a week trying to get those cravings out of me, and then I went to GA, Gamblers Anonymous, and I met other gamblers.

We have a women's health clinic that centers on women. They understand women's issues and problems, where you get with the guys, you don't feel as special. But that women's health really makes you feel good.

I'm fortunate to have a few friends, and we go to the movies, and we go do things around the city and around where I live. So, that helps me out a lot, too. But nothing helps me out better than the VA. Because you have people that understand what you're going through. There are sincere people there to help you and they really do a good job.



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