

## They want to listen and offer solutions to help

**Dave:** I'm Dave. I'm a Colonel in the Air Force. I came into the service about 27 years ago and in the Air Force I've been an Astronautical Engineer for my entire career working on satellites and rockets.

When I came back from Iraq, I started to spend a lot more time outside and so I was doing 24-hour races as a soloist, doing long bike rides and hikes, camping out by myself. It was during those times when I just felt like I could control the environment; it was quiet and peaceful, and it really gave me time to reflect.

When I think about the first time, I realized that I might actually have a mental health problem, it wasn't when my wife came to me a suggested that I seek help. And when I actually got help the first time, I really thought this was her issue and that she was having trouble dealing with me because I had been deployed. I'm the same person. It wasn't until many years later when my children really started to have an issue in dealing with me when I was feeling a lot of anxiety, a high state of anxiousness. And that translated into me being short-tempered with them, unreasonably so that I started to say, "Wait a second it can't be my children's fault, it's got to be my fault." And that's when I decided my wife was right. I need to go, and I need to get more help.

So, generalized anxiety disorder for me manifests itself mostly when I'm in areas where there's a lot of people; there's loud noises. Basically, I start to get tight. So, when I got treatment at Cape Canaveral and was diagnosed with general anxiety disorder, the doctor offered me a couple different options for treatment. One of the treatments the doctor offered was cognitive behavior therapy, CBT for short.

Another he offered me was a prescription drug and deciding at the time that frequent treatments in person for CBT would be difficult with my job as a Commander; I opted to go with medicine. And I was so impressed how two or three months later my wife came up to me and said, "Honey, I notice such a difference." And, again, it happens so slow and I just think I haven't changed. But it's the people around you; the people who are most affected by my mental health were noticing the differences.

So, after that first visit after; once you get a chance to sit down with a therapist and realize all they want to do is help. They want to listen to what's going on in your life. They want to tell you; this is not exceptional; this happens to a lot of people and they want to offer you solutions to help. So, my biggest recommendation is to get past those initial barriers and then once you do the next time you go you don't even think about it. You just go right through those steps because by the time you get the chance to sit down in the room with a therapist that they're going to make your life better.



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