

A New Purpose

Benoit: Leaving the military, it was kind of chaotic and nerve-racking, because that was all I knew. I would heavily drink, depression, anxiety. I ended up getting to a car accident. It was a wake-up call. My name is Benoit. I served in the army for roughly about six years. I wanted to go to college, but didn't have the income. It was a great resource for getting out of my hometown. I was 19 when I joined the service. So pretty much that was my whole adult life. Being around all those drill sergeants, all those people from different backgrounds, you're surrounded by a whole different world, a whole different way of behavior, a whole different way of doing things and everyday life plus your military lifestyle, on top of that. It was really eye-opening.

Getting help and assistance with the VA gave me the feeling of hope. You would do therapy. Therapy was freeing for me. You listen in, you get a little bit more comfortable and become able to share your story, because you know you're not the only person going through things. I benefit greatly from it. It was a lot of camaraderie that we had. That went a long way because you feel like somebody who needed help and they're there to offer it to you. I was okay with discussing everything and my progress, what I've learned from the program. It was a great experience and it just felt like home.

You learn things that's beneficial. Not only to yourself, to the people around you. Become a little bit more self-aware. I've learned things to do physically, noticing the textures around me, such as like the chair or what I'm wearing today. If I'm feeling my heartbeat just become stronger and pounding, I recognize something's going on. Something's there and how to cope with those things. From the beginning of my day, when I wake up, how am I feeling, what's going on within myself? And that carries on into my day. How am I feeling with my family? Family and friends supported me from the beginning. They just got me through every step. We're always checking in on each other. We recently picked up archery. It builds family time. It helps us relate on a level where we can help each other grow. The VA, you have that support group behind you, your benefit and your wellbeing is part of their joy.



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