

Reaching out can turn your life around

Daryl: My name is Daryl. I was in the United States Army. I served over in Baumholder from June '79 to June '80. My mother passed when I was five and my father wasn't able to handle that so, he was alcoholic. Through the years, most of my family were all drug abusers or alcoholics and things so I wanted a different way of life, so I went into the military.

Our job was to invade Czechoslovakia if we ever had to go, so we used to have alerts that we'd go one mile from Czechoslovakia and be fully combat loaded, but I was not prepared to be in a combat situation because while I was being trained, I never hit nothing with the 45 my sidearm. The M-16 I couldn't shoot and like I say, "If I stood in front of a bomb with a tank, I couldn't hit it." And I got the reputation as a coward and so that affected me. I just felt ostracized. I felt that they were out to get me. I got fearful of my life. I started getting paranoid. I dealt with my issues with my staff Sergeant with my things through drugs and alcohol. My bipolar and obsessive compulsive had kicked in and they wasn't examining that. They weren't looking at that because I have already got a reputation as being a coward and so I never got help with that part and that stuff came home with me.

I brought back an extremely large habit that the drugs here couldn't do so I done more and more and more to do it because I had a heroin habit. Through that, crime came in; through five prison bits at home. Once I got out of the service, I had been to prison five times, gave over 15 years of my life. I was a drug addict and what go along with drugs is jails and death. By God's crazy mercy, I didn't die but I went through that living hell and my family went through it and I made my decision right there is that, "I am sick and tired. I do not want to go through this no more."

When I got out of prison, that was the first thing I did. I went to a NA meeting because by being into jails and going into treatment so many different times, they would tell me, "Daryl, it's gonna be alright after you do these ten years. When you come out, just go to a meeting and tell them your name is Daryl and you don't know how to stay sober on the street." And that's what I done. I got up and I went to a shelter and I got connected with the VA.

By me being a Vet, you got to go get your physical and all that stuff. I got into addiction treatment program and that's when I seen the Psychiatrist and first visit diagnosed me with he seen the bipolar, obsessive compulsive, and depression and all that and I suffered a lot in things I had but I'll say when I was in the military it enhanced it. I went to treatment meetings had one on one therapy with my Psychiatrist. One on one talked to my team **leading (03:19)** stuff. Then, we had group meetings. Going through this, you see yourself growing. It ain't gonna grow like this, but it's gonna be step by step, inch by inch. When you feel like opening up or when you feel like you have something, then you got so many different people that you can talk to; so many different specialists, not just me or some Joe, you got all these specialists that specializes in these fields. I eventually learned to just start sharing that stuff because they want things. Pain shared is pain lessened. I'm still connected to the program. I'm still in there and they supply that with you. Some go on about their business, but I'm staying there because that's my support network and it's there as long as you want the help. If you're a Veteran and you coming home from the service or you just a Veteran, just living on the street, you don't have to be. All you have to do is show up at the hospital and tell them you want to be



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assessed for a drug treatment program and they'll take care of you from there cuz I know there's a lot of us out there that need it and we don't have to be like that no more.



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