

## Recklessness may be a sign of other challenges

**Interviewee:** I was a thrill junkie. I was just constantly looking for that adrenaline rush that I experienced in Vietnam, living on the edge. Your blood pumping as fast and as hard as it possibly could and I just thrived for that to relive that feeling.

**Interviewee1:** Risk taking behavior was just like having a gun in the house, having it loaded; then driving erratically like not just speeding on the freeway but driving like a maniac, trying to drive somebody off the road who had cut you off; doing things like hanging out in Detroit and not completely aware of my surroundings because I had been drinking too much and I just didn't care.

**Interviewee2:** I was crashing my motorcycle and I was doing a lot; an absurd amount of alcohol and drugs and I also lost a quarter of a million dollars. There's a lot of different ways you can try to destroy yourself.

**Interviewee3:** I spent money like crazy. I was so focused on the fact that I had just lived through this incredible experience and had come out physically unscathed. I just went wild.

**Interviewee4:** I still had the attitude. I did that for years and then finally I hurt my leg at a good job and the guys that was working there was Veterans and they really helped me and they told me, "Man, go up there and get yourself together. Take care of yourself."

**Interviewee5:** I'm starting to realize, like all these things that are going on; my aggressiveness toward others, me yelling, me staying up at all hours of the night, partying, just really dangerous behavior. I noticed that there might be something going on, but still at this point I'm really ignorant to what it is.

**Interviewee:** I found that if I did want to get help, if I did want some relief from what I was feeling, I needed to talk about it.

**Interviewee3:** I ran into another guy who was about the same age and we just kind of looked at each other and he was like, "Army, Marine?" He was like, "I was in the Marines." I kind of started building that support network up and we were leaving class one day and he was like, "Hey dude, by the way, you should check out Student Services, they have counseling. I go to it from time to time."

**Interviewee1:** Started seeing a therapist outside the VA once a week just to do talk therapy, and he was somebody who had worked with Veterans in the past, so I felt that that was something that I really could trust him.

**Interviewee4:** I had a problem with just living life on life terms, in a way, and I had to find how I can incorporate myself and be more productive. Counseling helped me to just put a lot of stuff that I had inside away, a lot of my resentments and hatreds and just a lot of different things that I had to just let go.

**Interviewee5:** After I started receiving counseling through the Vet Center, I was able to better recognize my triggers. I was able to spot them at maybe a level two or three. I was able to understand, "You know what, I better step aside. Take a breather. Walk away."



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**Interviewee:** My rationality for things is so much better. The relationships are better. My anxieties are less. My anger is less, a lot less. So, I'm able to deal with things a lot better.

**Interviewee3:** It's been working process, finding out what works and what doesn't is a challenge, but it's a good challenge. It's been worth it.

**Interviewee1:** Just know that you're not alone. Use the outlets that you have; the friends that you meet at a therapy group; the friends that you have left; the people that can help you.

**Interviewee4:** In the end it makes me a better person. I can wake up in the morning and I know that I've really changed. I love myself. I got self-esteem back. There's nothing on this earth that I can't do. I'm just a better person all around.



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