

I didn't even know what PTSD was

Rebecca: My name is Rebecca Escabido. I am Brian Escabido's wife. When I first met him, he didn't have PTSD. So, he was a different Brian to the one I know now, who I still love.

The worst time he ever went through, I think, well one of them actually, was, you know, of course right after his third deployment. When he came back, it kind of came back in the form of, you know, flashbacks, nightmares, alcoholism, stress, anger. He tried hard not shut off from me, but he was shut off from me emotionally. I didn't know about PTSD. I had never heard of it before. He just approached me on, you know, he talked to me on the phone one day and he said, you know, I've been realizing that I have certain symptoms. I think I have PTSD. So, I am going to the doctor, I am going to put it to them and see what they think. And sure enough, he was spot on. I mean, I didn't realize how common it was. I didn't know anybody who had faced this sort of thing before, you know, in my generation. I didn't know how to support Brian and I didn't know how to support myself. I didn't know how to seek help. I didn't even know there was help out there.

Since we've been married and since I've been living in Houston the last five months, I've been learning a lot. He feels more comfortable just being open with me about his symptoms that are coming up just on the spot. Last Sunday, we were in church and he, you know, we were there literally for two minutes and then he goes, I'm just going to get a water. But he didn't come back for probably 20 minutes, half an hour and I'm thinking, that's a lot of water he's drinking, but I knew that he was having some sort of experience and he came back right at the end just before church finished and then he said he was having, you know, flashbacks. And you know, fortunately there were people in the corridor he could talk to.

The first sort of concrete thing that we did together was go to a camp. There's, you know, Veterans and their spouses or family members or friends or just allies in general can go. They'll go through group sort of sessions where they get in a small group; a small group of people that are in a similar situation as them, like they were combat Veterans or they are the spouse of a Veteran, so we can talk about anything; you know, we just take turns. It's very free. If you don't want to talk, you don't have to talk and that was the first time I'd ever, ever done anything like that. I never thought that that was something that I needed to do because I'm the one who supports him, but I never realized that I needed help too. You know, if I'm going to be able to support him to my fullest, I need to be able to understand myself and how I'm dealing with it as well.

The first time I sat down at one of those group sessions, it almost made me wanna cry and I didn't even expect it; you know, that was like the most I'd ever come out and shared with people who've already also been through the same thing. So, it was like this massive relief to be able to feel understood and it was like, when I heard those people speaking, it was like looking in the mirror.

It's easy to feel like you're not supported and to feel like no one understands, but believe it or not, there are thousands and thousands of people out there who know exactly what you're going through as weird and bizarre of a situation you're in, the symptoms, the depression, the suicidal feelings, the financial situation, difficulties at work, relationship issues, everything, no matter what it is, there are people out there that understand, that have actually been through it. There is so much more help out there and understanding



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than you'd even realize, but you have to get off your butt and you have to go and seek it. You know, don't stay inside the house. You know, reach out to even if it's just a friend or a family member or just a hotline. Do something.



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