

They helped him become a wonderful husband

Sheri: My name is Sheri and I'm married to Vernon and his branch is the Army. I didn't know Vernon had mental issues from the Army. As time progressed in our relationship, I started seeing signs of mental illness like depression, isolating his self, not interacting with the family, not taking care of his personal hygiene or his personal space around him. I didn't really know how to approach Vernon every day. I didn't know whether to say hi. I didn't know whether to give him a hug or whether to leave him alone, but I kept him encouraged. I didn't badger him about it. I let him know that we loved him and that there was help available for him.

It was my daughter. I wasn't present for the conversion. I was in the living room and she went in the back room and she talked to Vernon and she said, "You're not fun anymore. You don't have fun with me. You don't talk to me anymore. We don't play anymore." She said, "Maybe you should go see the doctor again and go to the hospital." And that night he told me that conversion with tears in his eyes and with a great deal of emotion. Less than a week later he sought help and he's been on his way ever since.

I did go to the VA with him in the beginning to support him. And when Vernon sought help, he was open; he was caring. He was more active in our life, going to school, the PTA meetings, the school events with us and just easy to talk to. Now he's a wonderful husband. He's caring. He's supportive. He makes me feel good about myself. I can just be easy. I don't have to walk on eggshells and he's a wonderful stepfather.

He has a passion for helping others all the time. That's what he wants to do and him helping others to help himself as well. Every time we go somewhere someone sees Vernon like, high five Vernon. Thank you so much for what you've done for me or they'll ask Vernon, "How can I get this help?" and things like that and he'll direct them in the right direction.

Don't give up. If you feel alone seek help. There's not only help for the people suffering with mental illness but there's help for us as well. If you have any questions, any concerns instead of guessing and just being frustrated with yourself like you don't know the answers ask questions. There's help available and it does work.

I'm just glad that he cared enough about himself and loved his self-enough to seek help so he can be a wonderful father and a wonderful husband to us. I'm very proud of him.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**