

It has motivated me to keep my head high

Darren: My name is Darren. I served in the United States Navy. I was discharged as an E-5. On the submarine, I was a Reactor Operator and ET Nuke. What I did was Reactor Controls Division work, making sure that the nuclear reactor was functioning properly, and all the instruments were working properly.

I was diagnosed with depression, disqualified submarines, and then they told me I had to pick a new rate. So, I picked IT. Because I was on medication, they said I couldn't operate the reactor anymore.

My marriage went sour towards the end of my service in the military and then I, you know, really just started drinking quite heavily. It's ruined some of my relationships just because, you know, I was trying to cope with the depression and alcohol doesn't help.

I wasn't sleeping well or I was sleeping too much. It was kind of... it varied quite a bit. Didn't really want to be around people. You know, I tried to kinda... I was a hermit I guess you would say. I tried to isolate myself and stay away from others and just because I wasn't really comfortable speaking with them and, you know, talking about what was going on in my life. So, I started talking to a chaplain. The chaplain did refer me to Balboa Medical Center because it was in San Diego and I went there and was seen by a psychologist and psychiatrist. They diagnosed me. And then after I was diagnosed, they prescribed me a medication and then I would meet up with the doctors routinely.

I had a hard time sharing things with my friends, but knowing that they're licensed and that they are there to help and they do see these things quite often, it was encouraging to open up to them.

I've been, you know, been able to have better relationships and I realize that, you know, communication is one of the key things within a relationship. And when I would hold my feelings in and not talk about them, it really caused problems within the relationship and being able to open up a little more bit more, it became easier to open up.

You know, there are doctors out there that you can talk to and share your thoughts and your feelings, and they will provide you feedback. You know, I would suggest someone to contact the VA Hospital nearest them, schedule an appointment. Sometimes it could be several weeks before the appointment can take place, but it has really helped me. It has motivated me to keep my head high and not give up.



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