

Dealing with grief with someone who knows

Lauri: In Minnesota, there's not many soldiers around, so the next step for me was finding a job to work with Veterans and that's how I became a County Veteran Service Officer. The previous County Veteran Service Officer had helped with my son's death; helped bring his body back and those types of issues. So, when I took the job, it was cathartic for me to actually work again with the same people that I had such a heart for. They saw in me a couple of different things. They saw a County Veteran Service Officer that was a soldier, the wife of a soldier, the mother of a soldier, and also the mother of a soldier that had been killed. So, it kind of was a 360 and we had had some soldiers that had been killed in Iraq from the county that I am from and I think that helped establish my credibility.

They came in and they saw me, and I could get where they were coming from. I got that they were a soldier. I remember all my son's friends and still to this day, his best friend still keeps in contact with us. So that established a little bit of credibility. It also helps with families because coming into see me is not like going into see just another Veteran. I have had the folded flag handed to me and it establishes a lot of rapport with families knowing that whether it's a World War II Veteran that is worried about his spouse when he passes away or an OIF/OEF Vet whose mom is worried about them and wants to talk to somebody. I can be that person because I am that same person that they all see. So, that's really what drives me every day. I think I have the best job in the world because I get to work with heroes every day. They walk through my door. It's the only thing that walks through my door is a hero, whether it be the soldier, the Veteran, or their family. I think that they're all heroes and it's great.



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