

## Strength and support for overcoming challenges

**Carol:** My name is Carol. I was in the Army from January 1983 until July of 1986.

I was a 76<sup>th</sup> Victor I worked in a warehouse supply and I was stationed in Mainz, Germany.

I went into the military to really just get away from like my neighborhood, where I grew up at. 'Cause I grew up like in the hood, like in a tough neighborhood. I just felt like if I didn't go into the military, I wasn't going to never see anything. I didn't adjust well to being a civilian at all, I really wish that I would've stayed in the military.

When I came home, I had a son and I really wasn't ready to be a mom and then, my mom was even more overbearing. My friends was on crack, and the neighborhood really went down. So, when I came home, I was depressed. I really came home to nothing. Then I went into like a real bad state of depression. Then I started wound up getting on drugs. My mom put me out, so I became like homeless. And it was really hard.

A friend of mine that was in the Navy that lived down the street from me, he was telling me why don't I go down to the VA hospital in Philadelphia and I did.

I was tired of living the way I was and yeah I was scared but the staff, they sat down and they talked to me and reasoned with me and I told them I was scared and they knew I was scared. And I went to rehab, I went to the Rehab at the VA Hospital in Wilkes-Barre and I stayed in rehab for a couple of months out there.

You know they really help you out as far as like, dealing with becoming like a civilian again, once you leave the military, they help you deal with your issues about what's really going on with you.

The VA Hospital will help you if you have addiction problems, and even mental problems. Because I have a doctor that they had referred to me that I still have. He's a part of like the outpatient that I go to and he's really good. I've had him for like a year now.

Even though their grown, but I got my kids in my life. My mom is 91 years old and she lived to see me get off of drugs. I go to school now. I want to be a drug and alcohol counselor for adolescence. I went to the VA and I got help. And I will continue to go to the VA.

Once you make the first step, they'll be there to help you.



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