

VA offered everything I needed

Deborah: My name is Deborah, and I joined the United States Air Force from '73 to '76. I was one of the first six security policewomen in the United States Air Force. When I got out of basic, I went to Fairchild, and I was raped by my Sergeant. And back in those days there was no rape kit. It was his word against your word. And he was a Sergeant.

So, his Sergeant above him wasn't going to believe me. They were pals. So, I kept my mouth shut and suffered internally. I did start drinking. I didn't use drugs, but I drank a lot. Once I got out and I didn't have to do drug tests, so I started using cocaine and then crack cocaine. I went from one abusive relationship to another abusive relationship because I didn't see myself as worthy and I kind of deserved it. So, that made it worse.

I would have nightmares. I would have insomnia where it was hard to go to sleep. Panic attacks. I got to the point where I couldn't leave the house. After 13 and a half years, it was getting towards the end of my addiction where I couldn't function. I was so used to being high I feared getting sober. And I said to myself, man, look at all these people walk around and they're sober, and they're okay.

And I just got tired of being sick and tired. So, seeking out help regardless health issues, mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, the only way to start getting better is to get help. I decided I wasn't going to let this person control my life. And so, I seek services through the VA.

I went to see the psychiatrist who recommended individual therapy and group therapy. So, I went through that. They recommended classes, which I took those. For the drug and alcohol, they had services for that. So, I went through that therapy. They had women's services where a group of women met and talked about their rape too. And then I got connected with the outside agency, but it was meant for women and men who got raped in the military.

I mean, I didn't jump into treatment and wake up the next day and said everything was fine. It took me about a year or two to get to the point where I was okay with myself and I didn't see myself as bad or deserving what happened to me. And so, I utilized everything the VA had to offer. And the VA offered everything I needed.

Since I stopped drinking and drugging, I started going to church. I'm a different person today than I was. I'm no longer a victim. I always had a feeling that one day I would quit, but I couldn't image how great it was going to be. And now, I know how great it is.



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