

By reaching out, Schuyler turned things around

Schuyler: My mouth would get jammed up, and then I thought, you know, “Maybe there’s something wrong with me, maybe something’s not right.” So, I went down to the VA, and they asked me, they said, “Have you ever been blown up before? Or, have you ever been exposed to a blast?” I said, “Yeah, uh, yeah, quite a few times,” and they were like, “How many?” And I told them, and they were like, “Wow, well, you probably have traumatic brain injury.” And I thought, “No, I don’t, you know, I don’t drool out of my mouth, I can still go to the range and shoot my M4, I don’t have any traumatic brain injury.” And then they started listing symptoms and asking me if I had them, “So, do you have trouble concentrating? Do you have a labile mood? Do you get angry from time to time or easily frustrated? Do you sometimes suffer anxiety and you don’t know why? Do you have trouble sleeping? Do you sometimes feel depressed?” All the, I mean it seems like they listed every symptom that everybody has, you know, and they said it might be the result of traumatic brain injury. Apparently being close to these concussive blasts changes the air pressure and that pressure change can go through different orifices, your ears, your nose, your mouth, and it can actually put pressure on your brain, cause it to twist, it can put pressure on the frontal lobe, and it can cause anywhere from miniscule, moderate, to pretty severe damage, and some of that damage is characterized by inability to concentrate, inability to regulate mood, trouble organizing, trouble planning. It helped with my memory and concentration issues and how to regulate my mood and stuff like that, and that was a really productive experience, because at one point, I felt hopeless. I felt like I’m on the road to not recovering. I’m on the road, I’m on a downward spiral into some abyss of like, you know, mental disability, but working with speech pathology and TBI clinic at the VA just, I mean they had me turned around quick.



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