

## **Veteran's Affairs**

### **Living a happy sober life after therapy**

**Marco:** My name is Marco, I served in the United States Air Force. I served from 1977 to 1991. I was a radio operator and I was a 7-skill level radio operator.

The transition, when I departed the military, one of my biggest, I say detriments, to really what I wanted to do is trying to find something that related to what I did in the military, jobwise. I could not secure the type of employment that I wanted. I didn't have the experience, and that in turn can be a frustrating, you know, experience for someone who's-- at that point I had a family, and you know, when you're getting out of the military and you're making a good living, and then you get out of the Military, and you're working for \$7.00 an hour.

I went through bouts of depression, drug use. I found that, for me, it made me not think about the things that made me depressed. So, you know, my drug of choice was cocaine, marijuana and everything. Those were the two, you know, my biggest things and some alcohol. It was just really, it put a lot of strain on our family.

My sister, who was a Vet, actually told me that I should go to the VA to get some help. So I called them and then I wound up going to Coatesville VA to get help for my addiction problems and the psychological problems because obviously if you're using drugs, you're not in your right frame of mind anyway.

They were very helpful in helping me get my life, you know, on track. They got into my head and I had to look at myself and I'm a confident man today, but back then I was not confident. There were times in which I did want to kill myself because I just got so tired of being unhappy. And when you look at yourself and you say, "Wow, I really do need help in these areas. This is really me." And you get to the point where I had to do the therapy sessions. I had to actually look at it and say this is why things are happening to me because I needed a cold dose of reality.

As they worked with me, I became more confident. I also learned that I can work, you know, and I actually got a job and I built up my computer skills and I became more confident in actually doing what I do today.

I did go to the VA when both my parents passed away a couple of years ago because I was very depressed and I could see myself going back to that direction of using again and they gave me medication which I took and actually it made me cope a little bit more with the problem of losing your parents. I was a staunch non-believer in medication. I would think that you know you'd be a zombie, and you would just you know, narcoleptic and everything. And I found out that with the medication I could still live my life and I actually saw the change in myself.

I'm going to be attending Drexel University here in Philadelphia in September and I am gonna be majoring in behavioral health. I feel that that is my goal. My calling is to help people, you know Veterans, just anyone, but I mean Veterans are close to my heart because we're family.

My final thoughts to any Veteran out there is don't let your pride stop you from getting the help that you need. Put your life in the hands of professionals that do this daily. And



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then follow their advice. You know, follow their advice, so that you can become that wholesome human being that you want to be.



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