Father-son support

Troy: My name is Troy. I served in the United States Marine Corps from 1989 to 1993. I spent most of my time in Twentynine Palms, California. A couple times, I deployed overseas, three or four times in some different zones; Philippines, Okinawa.

Liam: My name is Liam and I'm his son.

Troy: The military was tough physically and mentally, but it fit right into where I was at that point in my age. What was tough is when I got done, all of a sudden, I'm no longer a Marine. A lot of my challenges had to do with reacclimating myself, being around people again, well, civilian people. I had a lot of anxiety. I would worry about something and it would just, it would be like it was circling the drain and getting bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger until there got to be a point where I lashed out at people. I lashed out at his mom. I lashed out at the kids. I'd come home the lawn's not cut, I'm furious, silly stuff like that. Everything had to be perfect and when it wasn't, I let that really bother me. As time went on, it cost me my relationship with my wife. With my children, I wasn't always the best I could be. I just became impossible to deal with. There was no pleasing me. I used to thrive on pressure, and it would seem like when a whole lot of pressure would hit where I normally used to be my best, all of a sudden, I'm just, I can't come up with nothing, can't think straight, can't do anything. So, as that started to happen, my wife did some research and found, somebody in the community that I could go see, a Psychiatrist, for him to give me some medicine and my nerves were less stressed.

Liam: Me being so young, I'm only 23 now, I didn't really see, maybe the, what was going on really. I just knew he'd be angry, irritable when he came home like he said. If someone was parked in the wrong parking spot, he's getting angry. But I didn't really know what mental health was. I didn't understand what he was going through. I just thought that was normal. Once, I was in high school, we had a little scare and he went into a mental institution for two weeks.

Troy: How they found out I was in the in-patient unit that he called a mental home.

Liam: I know what you mean.

Troy: But how they found out was, they came home from school and where's dad? I mean there was no heads up. They were basically thrust right into it at a young age of, this is it. When I was in the hospital, it consisted of group therapy. I think I met with a doctor once a day to talk about where I was and how I was doing, but mostly it was to get myself acclimated to medicine. After that though, we went on a pretty good path.

Liam: It was just a better change when he came out of there. You could just tell his mentality, the way he looked at things. Once he understood what was actually going on, it was 180-degree change.

Troy: I mean, there was therapy that went for months and months and months afterwards and little pieces of that all fit into the puzzle. I made a lot of changes and I decided that I wasn't going to let the things bother me anymore that used to bother me and when something does bother me, I have a few different things I do to try to alleviate the pressure.

Liam: Before he went into the in-patient, we didn't talk. We were always, the whole family with edgy. We just couldn't, we really couldn't talk to each other.

Troy: The thing is to talk. Talk. Talk about anything. Just start talking.

Liam: My dad's my rock and I know he's helped me get through a lot of stuff and I know I helped him get through this time, so it was the least I could do for everything he's given me.

Troy: Without support, I cannot imagine that I would have been able to get to where I am today. If I can help anybody out, that'd be the great thing. I feel like the VA saved by life X amount of years ago and I've always wanted to give back. So, that's what it's about, being able to make people realize that if two guys like him and I can come on here and talk about it, then everybody should be able to.