

Understanding PTSD to support a spouse

Terri: My name is Terri and I served in the United States Navy from 1992 to 1993.

I'm married to a Veteran who was injured in Somalia. He was shot. Jim, he has PTSD and he's been dealing with PTSD since he was shot and he started going to therapy.

When we met, we actually went to therapy a couple times together at the Long Beach VA. And that's, you know, what really helped me understand PTSD much better and how it affected him and our relationship and things that we could do to make it better.

We have five kids. So, he had two from his previous marriage and I had two and then we had one together. It's really important to explain to the kids what's going on and let them know this is nothing that they're doing.

Before the treatment and the medication and stuff, he would have like anger outbursts and fights like road rage or get in a fight with anybody at any time. Now he is not that way now that he has gotten treatment. He has a really good Doctor here at the Pittsburgh VA. He has been seeing this Doctor for about eight years now and he's really comfortable with him. So, it's helped our marriage out a lot. I don't really see any anger outbursts anymore. Marriage is much better. We don't fight as much.

He's out more in public a lot more. Prior to that, he didn't really like to go anywhere. Christmas time he would just sit in the room away from everybody or walk into a different room if a large crowd came in. So, he tried to avoid crowds and now like at Christmas, he is actually in the crowd with everybody opening presents, talking to people. So, it has helped out a lot.

The most important thing is is that we're getting treatment, we're getting help for this. And help is the biggest thing. You actually need someone that's trained and can sit and listen to you and help you and tell you maybe you need this medication or maybe you just need someone to talk to. And I think that will make a big difference too. Because when you go to talk to a friend, sometimes they'll criticize you or they'll say, "Oh leave him or leave her," but when you get a Psychologist or a Psychiatrist it's all about not only helping you but helping the whole family.



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