

Taking steps to get back on track

Tyler: My name's Tyler. I was in the Army for four years, stationed out of Fort Lewis, Washington. We always knew we were going to deploy. We were Infantry. But when it finally came down that we were going to go, it was exciting. But it was scary. Most of the people in my unit have never deployed before.

Right when I got back, I started doing the process of, you know, ETSing, getting out of the Army. And, so it was quick. It was like I went from combat to civilian life.

So, I was a little nervous about, you know, what the next step was going to be. Am I going to go right to school? Am I going to go try and find a job? Where am I going to live? All those things, I didn't have answers to any of those.

After I'd separated, I was getting headaches for no reason. At least, I didn't think there was a reason. So, I went to the VA Hospital. And so, they did CT scans, brain scans, all that other stuff. Couldn't find anything physically wrong with me. We did get blown up a couple of times, but I guess they ruled out TBI and other physical things. So, I couldn't figure it out. I was also having some problems with kind of relating back to civilians. So, I decided to talk to one of their Psychiatrists.

There were the headaches and there were the, sort of just the transition issues, kind of relating to other civilians, especially strangers, who A) didn't know that I was in the service and B) couldn't possibly know what I went through.

So, I talked to the doctor a lot about that, and she had some suggestions. She just got me to just talk about my experience, really. She wasn't picking or prodding. She was just saying, like, "Yeah, let's just talk about everything." And surprisingly, the headaches started to go away.

Well, my Psychiatrist said that maybe I was, she felt that I was having some depression issues, and I agreed that maybe I was. I always thought that it was all in your head, kind of thing. Like, oh you're not really depressed. You just need to smile more, or something like that. But it's a real thing. And I guess I finally accepted that.

So, we went that route with the antidepressants and that seemed to work really well. And, just looking back on the experiences, a lot of the things that we trained on and were taught have, you can cross them over into the civilian world. Like, it was crazy over there, had some crazy experiences, but I'm good. There are so many ways in the VA that will help you, and have helped me. And sure enough, the people actually do support us.



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