

## Working together to find tools for recovery

**Dani:** My name is Dani and Brad is my husband and he was in the Army for eight years. He is now a disabled Veteran. He spent one tour in Iraq and he came away with a brain injury and severe PTSD.

He was extremely angry. His emotions are all over the board. We often refer to it as a roller coaster. You never know, he can be happy one minute and literally two seconds later he is full blown angry. You have no idea what triggered him. No idea if it was a flashback or he smelled something that brought back a memory. He will not sit with his back to a restaurant or anywhere we are, he has to have his back to a wall, otherwise he's extremely uncomfortable and anxious the entire time. Extreme sleep disturbance, nightmares, night terrors, wakes up sweating, wakes up crying. It's just severe emotional and it often comes out as anger, whatever he's feeling.

In the beginning the reason that we did contact the VA is he came back and he got out a year after Iraq, and so he all of a sudden was thrown into the civilian world and he was completely lost. Didn't know how his skills translated to the real world, didn't know how to make a resume, didn't have a resume, was trying to find a job and he did find a few. His issues were really getting in the way. He would lose a job every three or four months, right when we were about to get insurance benefits and after about a year and a half of that, I said, "I can't take this. I need more stability. You have got to just work on yourself." And so he agreed. We were already in the process for Disability Benefits and so he agreed and we went to Mental Health together and he said, "I need you to come with me."

So we went in for Counseling Services and the first Counselor that he saw, he saw her for a while, but he did not connect with her, so he stopped seeing her and luckily, for myself and the kids, he decided he would still try another Counselor. We went down to the Denver VA and he actually got placed with a pretty amazing Counselor and she saw him individually for a while and he had me go with him until he felt comfortable seeing her alone and then also has done some couples counseling with us.

The counseling, in the beginning when he was able to go on a regular basis, it was really helpful to him. He was learning a lot of skills that he didn't have before. He was learning a lot of different ways to deal with living in a family basically. It's all about communication and the way that you deal with each other. So a lot of that has improved. He did the PTSD Inpatient Program, I believe it's eight weeks, and he came away from that feeling a little more comfortable about himself.

One thing that did help him quite a bit is he was in the Voc-Rehab Program and he was going to school and he was having a really difficult time with some of his college classes. The VA put him through a Brain Training Program and that program was actually pretty tremendous. His memory is a little bit better. He is able to focus a little bit more and in his ability to focus more, he gets a little less angry. There's a lot of extra programs that you can find that can help.



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