

Therapy helped me become a stronger person

Pauline: My name is Pauline. I served in the United States Army from 1983 to 1986. For three years, as a radio talk tech communicator, I sent and receive messages from Commander to Commander for the Pershing unit. We used two very, very loud generators for our AC power and after three years of working with those generators, sometimes I had protection, sometimes I didn't.

They gave me an exit exam and the doctor checked me from head to toe and then he asked me, "how's your hearing?" and I said, "fine, why?" He says, "all your hearing scores are off." I thought okay, good to know. Then my hearing, I noticed didn't affect me until about a year or two later and then it got worse, and worse, and worse, and worse.

I just started feeling anxiety and depressed because when I started communicating with other people and missed the conversation I felt dumb, kind of stupid, and I thought I need help. I was an isolated person. I didn't know who I was. I was accepting a lot of things, negative people. I actually had a first marriage and divorce with some domestic violence, and then the second marriage ended up being domestic violence as well. So, I just thought I wasn't good enough and maybe I was accepting the men that would try to control me and my life.

So, I went to the VA Mental Health Services and then I got counseling. The Psychologist and the Therapist that I'd seen, there were several of them really helped me look inside of who Pauline was and what it is I wanted in life. I'm aloud to cry, I'm aloud to express every need and want and desire that I have, that Pauline has inside, and share with her my goals that I want to attain and it really helps. There's a big change in me.

Now, I advocate for my own rights. I'm advocate for myself for disabilities and domestic violence. I ended up going to college and later ended up getting my master's degree in mental health counseling. My Psychologist, she said, "well, Pauline what is it you want to do, do you identify with?" I said, "people with hearing loss," and that's when I told her, "maybe I'll focus on the deaf and hard of hearing." So, that's when I went in the deaf community and started learning sign language.

There are a lot of resources available, counseling, support groups, and resources for those that have hearing loss, mental health issues, and that have gone through domestic violence. There's people out there that will listen to you, support you, and give you better understanding of who you are and how to communicate with other people. Therapists helped me become a stronger happier person.



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