

With support, this Veteran turned his life around

Patrick: My name is Patrick. I was in the United States Army. I was stationed in Hanau, Germany. I was a supply clerk. I was stationed in Germany for four years from 1988 to 1992. I'm the youngest of 14, including myself and six of my brothers. We had five in the Army and one in the Navy and one in the Air Force.

When you're in the military, everything's structured. You know what you're going to do. You've got this to do. And when you come back, you're trying to, first of all, get employment, which with military experience, it was like, that doesn't count in our world. That counted for something in the military, but not in our world.

I found myself smoking a lot of weed, just drinking a lot. Had issues with my kids, because I was in their lives, but I was away from them. I got laid off from work and went to selling drugs. Got caught, got indictment, went to federal prison. They had some Veteran reps that came in and was like, hey, you're a veteran. Give it a chance.

I've only been out for going on 12 months. And I went through the homeless Veteran program. What it is that they will give you a place to stay. They will help you with food. And if you're willing to work, they actually have a program where you can work.

I got employment. I worked at the VA hospital. The program's called CWT. So it gave me income, because I'm just out of prison — no job, no anything. When you enter these programs, you have to go through counseling. That's part of the program. The group that I was in is the SUD group, which is a substance abuse group.

The first thing, you're always going to go through denial-- I don't need this group. I don't need this group. But one thing about it is it gives you that feeling that, hey, man, it sounds like somebody knew what you're going through. I've been through that. There is a brotherhood that with veterans that's like no other. And that's one thing about in the program, vets always try to help each other.

It humbles you to let you know that, hey, getting help is OK. There's nothing wrong with getting help. I mean, it was of those things like, man, being homeless. Yeah, I was homeless. And if I hadn't have been, I don't think I could be where I'm at now if I hadn't have went through that program. Actually, I'm doing a benefit concert for the homeless and homeless veterans. I'm working full time. Just recently got married.

My advice I would give any vet that's having any issues that they're getting out, any of you feel like you have any issues, visit the VA, talk to other Veterans. You're a Veteran. You volunteered to fight for this country. And there is programs that's fighting for you.



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