

A Vietnam Veteran's story of recovery from PTSD

Warren: My name is Warren, I was in the United States Marine Corps. I was in the Marine Corps January 11th, '72, and I got out in '74. I was short, so I became a tunnel rat. That meant I had to go underground to see what the Viet Cong did, probably took over the villages and stuff, you know. It was war. When I came back, years and years I walked around, don't know why I was having these dreams, finding myself outside my house in the yard pouring down rain like I was still in the war. Sweating, clammy hands. I didn't know what it was. I got on drugs, I drunk myself a lot because I didn't want to go to sleep because the dreams would get worse and worse, and it took me a long while, you know, to look for help.

I went to the VA and I finally got me a primary doctor, and then they finally gave me a therapist, worked for me, they sent me to Coatesville Hospital. I stayed in for a couple months, you know, for the drinking and the drugging, and I've been with my own therapist almost six years. He talked through diagnosis about how far PTSD you is, and I was on the ragged end, okay? And slowly but surely, he would diagnose "Hey, you've got to do this, start doing this, you've got to start riding on buses again, you've got to start...if you go to the cemetery." I did all that. Walking at night, started playing ball again. He told me how to face PTSD, because if you don't face it, it'll destroy you, and I wasn't doing it by killing myself, but by him teaching me how to face it, you know what I mean, gave me the right tools, and without him I don't think I would have made it.

You've got to help yourself. That's what this is all about, helping yourself. You never get rid of PTSD, you never get rid of it but you know how to handle it, you know how to face it. If you let it know that "Hey, I'm not afraid no more," you know what I mean? The sweats, the dreams, no more sweats, no more ending up outside pouring down raining, no drinking, no drugging. Like I said, you're reborn all over again. Don't be hard-headed. "Oh, I'm a Marine, I can overcome everything." You're a human being. If you got the help at the VA, if you're a Veteran, go do this, go get help. You fought for this country, why can't this country do something for you?



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

MAKE THE
CONNECTION