

Reaching out for support helped her husband

Ashley: My name is Ashley. I am married to Zach. He was in the Army. He is now serving in the Reserves. We had been long distance for three years of the relationship, so it was a little different moving in and getting to know him that way, but at that point in time, he had not been deployed. When he was getting ready to deploy to Guantanamo, you could definitely see the anxiety, things that would not trigger any emotion before, he was suddenly getting really stressed out about and to me, I was like, "Oh my goodness, what is going on with him?" And I definitely noticed something and then he left for Guantanamo and while he was over, our relationship, it was strained. When we moved back to Oklahoma when he got back from Guantanamo things definitely seemed different. He was stressed. He was anxious, about really little things would just trigger him to blow up and get mad at me, get mad at the dogs. I mean, anything that he didn't like, he was not in control of.

So, when he finally got out of the military and we moved back to Tampa, I thought you know maybe when we get into a routine things would get better, but they didn't. It was just felt like it was getting worse even though he wasn't surrounded with all the Army stress. And so finally, his mom had finally mentioned, "Maybe you should go talk to someone." She talks to someone and it really helps her out and he did; and it just it's not something that instantly helped him, but definitely going time and time again, they brought up the word PTSD and he didn't go to war. I didn't think my whole thing was, "Oh PTSD, it's when you go off to war and you come back and you have issues." But, it's not like that at all. It can be triggered from any type of stressful environment.

I really think him talking to someone has helped tremendously opening up. I definitely think just talking and those issues and that person not judging and just listening has really helped him. Now when there's an issue, he knows, "Take a breather. Take a step back and then come back to the situation when I'm ready and calm." To a spouse going through this, I would let them know that, "Telling them that they need help, it is okay." They might not come around to the idea right at the time that you mention it, but if they keep hearing it, maybe from you, maybe from a really close relative, I think eventually that they'll come around and it's so helpful. It's changed my life. It's changed his life just talking to someone and getting the help that they needed.



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