

I just couldn't connect with anything

Ross: My name is Ross and I was drafted in the Army. Achieved a rank of Specialist 4. I was in Vietnam in '68 and '69. I got medevaced out, woke up in Japan. It was explosion and the damage was I've got a lot of metal me, eyes and ears, mostly soft tissue because it was an implosion so the air leaves and comes back real quick. They offered me a medical, but I didn't understand it, they didn't explain it so I figured I'd been in this long I might as well finish.

My kids love me, and they learned to live with me, but I wasn't very close to anyone. I was close to 'em but I couldn't show it. I could feel it, but I couldn't show it. I got real mean, I fought all the time, fight everything. Drank a lot, it just made it worse. I wasn't a happy drunk, I acted real ugly to my wife one time and I said, "No more, that's it." I never drank brown liquor after that.

I got to a point I didn't care. I don't think I was ever suicidal, but I didn't care if I died, it just didn't mean anything to me.

When I heard about Agent Orange I went to the VA and signed up for it, met a guy named Robert and he says you need help buddy. And he walked me right down to the mental health ward, I was accepted right away and had everything I've ever asked for. I couldn't imagine being treated any better. I go to group every two weeks. They are all combat Veterans and we all feel safe with each other and we're friends for an hour every day and then we can walk away. Then I go to a psychiatrist, I used to go at least weekly for years. It's once a month now. This helped me, I don't get mad as much as I used to, but it didn't change me, but it made me accept who I am. And I think that's been the most important thing.

The VA has been wonderful to me they helped me, they couldn't do any better by me. I mean I walked in and they gave me help, still do today.



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