

Army Veterans' advice on treatment and recovery

Speaker1: When I was a kid I always dreamed about joining the army.

Speaker2: The Army allowed me to find direction and gave me a little bit more discipline. It made me a better person.

Speaker3: There were times where I lost friends. There were times of high stress, extreme situations obviously where we were shot at or where we- our convoy hit a roadside bomb over a dozen times.

Speaker4: When I came home, things had changed. Things had changed in my relationship with my wife. I was not the same person. I felt like I didn't fit in anymore.

Speaker5: For six or seven years I was in denial, and I mean, my signs were pretty obvious.

Speaker6: Lots of nightmares. Walked in my sleep. Talked in my sleep. Almost two years. Did a lot of couch hopping. When I got back I couldn't stay in my house.

Speaker7: You know, I was either easily agitated or irritable, but I tried to prove to myself that I could still do anything.

Speaker8: At first when I got out I self-medicated. I couldn't hold down a job. And then I was in a rehab center and one of the guys was a Vietnam Vet, and suggested that I go to VA.

Speaker9: Yeah that made a huge difference, you know, because they were able to be empathetic and sympathetic. That was the key and you know that helped out a little bit, so I knew I had someone to talk to.

Speaker10: The one thing again we talked about at the Vet Center and Counseling, and we still talk about, is just understanding how to make everything work. To say "It's okay. I'm here and I'm still living, but what can I do to make it better?"

Speaker11: And I said to myself "Oh my God I didn't even realize I harbored those feelings inside for so many years." So programs that are available to Vets, incredible.

Speaker12: So I talked to some more doctors and it started to help a lot. Surprisingly. I always thought it was "all in your head" kind of thing, like "Oh, you're not really depressed. You just need to smile more." Or something like that. But it's, I mean it's a real thing, so I guess I finally accepted that.

Speaker13: Getting mental health helped me embrace my life. I started being happy again.

Speaker14: Now it's just I know how to deal with it better. You know, I know what my triggers are and what I should be looking out for. You know, I can see what causes it and like how I react to it. And I just try to just change that immediately.

Speaker15: You need to talk to a friend. You need to talk to you know, another Army guy. You need to talk to somebody to express what you're going through.



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Speaker16: Going to counseling makes me a stronger soldier and a stronger man because I can now deal with those issues and problems as they arise, quicker.

Speaker17: If you're not completely happy with who you are and where you are, that you need some sort of help. Whether it's physical help or mental help, financial help, you know, if you're not happy, there's somebody there to help you.

Speaker18: I just want everybody to go out there. Don't be afraid. And seek help. You know, it worked for me and it probably could work for you.

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