

Learning new tools to navigate life's challenges

Jessica: My name is Jessica. I served in The United States Army from 2003 to 2009. When I reported to my duty station, my orders had changed and I had an entirely new position and I was deploying for a year plus right away. I felt like I didn't have enough time to prepare. When my analysis wasn't correct or the analysis that was distributed wasn't on point or some catastrophic event happened in the battalion, I was really taking it on internally. It definitely triggered this response of depression and anxiety in me. It just really skyrocketed and I've been seeking help through the VA in Los Angeles and my Therapist there was very concerned about my health and she is the one that actually started the process for the medical discharge.

I was going back to school and I just kind of thought, "Okay, fresh start; new chapter in life. And here we go, I'll be okay." And that MO does not work. I almost got kicked out of grad school. I would get into deep depression and not be able to attend my classes. It caught the attention of my bosses; it caught the attention of my roommate. I was really at the end of my rope. At one point I was considering suicide; that scared me to no end. And I realized it was extremely serious and that I needed help.

I reached out to a Vet Center and I started seeing a Therapist there. I really clicked with my Therapist. She tells it how it is and so I felt like I left with something. I'm learning ways to deal just in general in life and not only deal with what has happened in the past but deal with what comes up now. When I am just really struggling, I've reached out to my family and my boyfriend and my friends. To be honest, to my best friends I've been very honest about the state of my mental health and said, "I'm really having a hard time." And they have responded with nothing but support and love. And that's another thing, I wish I knew that years and years ago, that asking for help is amazing; it's a good thing. There are tons of people out there that care and that are at the ready to be there for you. And they're amazing; just give them a chance.



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