

I found hope, and you need hope to change

Phillip: My name is Phillip. I served in the Navy, CBs from 95 to 2000. We got deployed out to Honduras and Hurricane Mitchell hit and destroyed Central America. The constant death, bodies floating in the water, down the river, just death everywhere.

I guess when I got out I got home, I guess right away, I didn't notice that I had a problem. I started staying up late. I couldn't sleep. I had nightmares. I get agitated real quickly especially when I see a news article about something or about disaster somewhere. That was my mental health you know so I told myself "I don't want to dream", so I don't know I got hooked on meth, you know. I didn't have to deal with it, you know, deal with the feelings. I suppressed a lot of my feelings, you know. Meth messed my mind even more up. I lost my job, then a few weeks later my woman kicked me out of the house. She was tired of putting up with my lies and drug use and everything, you know. So I found myself all of a sudden homeless. I got down on my knees and I prayed, you know to my creator. I said "I am so sorry. I used to be a prayerful person" and I said, "you know what I am sorry for doing things without you and I need help, I need help."

So it was put into my mind go to the VA, go to the VA. I wasn't sure they would help people like me. I found a bus ticket and I went to the bus and went straight to the VA. Low and behold they had a homeless clinic there. Then I found out, I get a little bit of money from the casino revenue, and that was enough for me to be able to get HUD-VASH, Associated Housing for Homeless Veterans. I was like "what I can get my own place?" So I got a voucher and a month or two months later I got my first apartment. It felt so good. I felt so grateful. Such gratitude, so humble that I was given a second chance. I know I had been working very hard, by changing my mental health, I went to anger management, I finally got diagnosed with PTSD. So I got help by taking all of these classes, seeing a psychiatrist at the VA and I found hope. I had hope and you need hope to change.

PTSD will always be there for me, but now I know how to manage the symptoms now before they get out of hand. So all of the tools and the treatment for the PTSD, treatment from the mental health, from the VA has improved my life in so many dynamic ways. I have made amends to the people I have hurt including myself. I made amends to my mom, my dad, my brother and sister. I am also a state certified Pure Support specialist. I got my state certification so I could help people with their habits and hang-ups, you know.

I want to continue serving our Veterans, especially the ones who are suffering and give them hope. If it wasn't for some Veterans talking to me I wouldn't be here right now. I am so glad I can be somebody you can count on. You know, you can count on me.



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