

## A diagnosis led to a path of recovery

**Rose:** My name is Rose. I served in the military from 1973 to 1983, Navy. And, I was a personnelman, E-6. I was aboard a sub tender. After you've been in for 10 years, you kind of get used to the Navy way and everything is orderly. And it just wasn't like that anymore. The civilian population doesn't know how to follow rules and take orders. Being a petty officer, I gave orders. It just wasn't like that anymore. It's just difficult. It was just crying every week. I couldn't maintain. Stress. A sea of depression.

I heard that the Navy gave physical exams for people that were less than 5 years out of the military. And so, I went and found out I had PTSD and bipolar. And from then on, I've been treated.

My first psychiatrist, he was very helpful. He brought out everything that was hurting. He made you feel comfortable. He made you feel like this was a long-time friend that you haven't talked to about it yet. It was off of my shoulders.

I've been bipolar all my life, but it was just diagnosed. It's hard to concentrate. You have stress-related incidents, and you have to deal with that. Living with that and not knowing that, not knowing that there is a name for it. I just thought I was weird and not worthy of my military ranking and all that stuff. So, when it was diagnosed, it was such a relief.

Things are normal, as normal as they can be. I still have problems now and then, but I stay on my medication. I'm here and I have a boyfriend. We've been together for 12 years. Life is good. Life is good.

Without the VA I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have been able to get out of the door. My doctors are so good. They are so understanding. They're comforting. You have your choice. If you don't like your doctor, if you can't open up to your doctor, they'll give you another one. They'll give you somebody that you can communicate with. That is half the healing. Medication is half, but the communication is the other half.



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