

A couple finds strength through support

Jessie: Hi, my name is Jessie. I am a spouse of a fellow Veteran as a Veteran myself. We are both in the Navy, and that's actually how we met.

I was the new one on the ship and he had been there for a deployment before. We ended up hanging out and talking and became really good friends and then started dating. We dated for a year before we got married.

After the Navy, my husband was really...the only way I can really explain it is kind of withdrawn. He tried working, but you know you have this mentality of the military. You have to have that military mindset. I'm not trying to talk ill of civilians, but it's very different. And he had trouble fitting in because people would be complaining over what to us would be trivial. And you know he just had problems making friends with people because he just didn't relate. And he was having a really hard time and I could see it. And I was having a hard time because I wanted to help him, but I didn't know how to.

I still had that military mindset. I couldn't help him to get out of that mindset when I was still in that mindset. And it was very difficult.

You can love somebody with all your heart and soul, but there will always be something that you can't talk to them about. Especially if it involves them because you don't want to hurt their feelings. You don't want to be mean you know to somebody you love. And there were things that we weren't able to talk to each other about.

We went and started seeing a doctor because we both have issues.

We got help through the VA mental health clinic. I never actually realized there was a bunch of them in different hospitals, but there are. They are in every hospital. We decided that, you know what, we're going to go see what they can do for us. And we went down to our primary care doctor, well, each person's primary care doctor. And they recommended us to mental health. And they sit down and they just talk to you. They try to figure out, okay, where are you, what kind of mindset you are.

You go back and we would see them about once or twice a month. We thought we would just go in there, spill all our guts and be fine, and it wasn't. It was more of a why don't we feel different? The more we went, our reactions to each other when we would have an argument or a disagreement, we started seeing subtle differences. You know you kind of see things in a different light when you have somebody kind of reflecting what you're saying back to you. It kind of helps you see things clearer.

The more we saw the doctors, the more we realized that these petty things aren't the reason why we're blowing up. You know we have these feelings and we're frustrated. We've seen things that nobody else has seen and been through and done things. Now that we know that, we are better because of it. We can now sit down and actually talk to each other and express to each other how we felt. And at first, we couldn't do that. We didn't know how to until we got help.

As a spouse and a Veteran, myself, my advice to the spouses whose husband or wife comes back and they're not the same, don't give up. Don't just get frustrated and give up. There is something going on that they may not be able to talk about. There are



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people out there that know what to do. They know what they're going through. And to seek them out because they're there for that reason. And as hard as it may be to take that first step, it is worth it in the end.



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