

## Lyndsay overcame anxiety and is living well

**Lyndsay:** My name is Lyndsay. I was in the Air Force from January 2006 to July 2011 and I was stationed in Beale Air Force Base and then I was also in Charleston. I was a Public Health Technician and so we did a lot with like communicable diseases, food inspections on base and just working in the clinic. Our OIC, Officer in Charge, she and I butted heads all the time and it was just a very difficult experience. When you have a supervisor or you have an OIC who you don't exactly see eye to eye with, it's hard to talk to someone that you work with about that especially when you're going through it. It got to the point where I was having anxiety about going to work in the mornings, where I was just, and at night, it would keep me up where I was just like, "I can't imagine sitting there or being in the same office with this person for this whole week." Sunday nights were the worst, where it was just like, "I just don't want to do this." And I had to figure something out because I was there. You can't just quit.

I started going to the Mental Health Department and it was such a good choice because I was able to vent and they gave me great advice for how I could go about it, ways of communicating. It was really helpful for me to be able to take an hour out of my day and talk about what was happening.

Getting out, it was a lot more difficult than I thought it was going to be. I thought I was going to feel relieved and free, but it doesn't feel that way. You sort of feel panicked. You're kind of just thrown out there, like this baby bird, just thrown out of the nest. It's like, "Oh wait, I don't have to tell someone where I am all the time." And that was sort of an adjustment as well. It's just going back to that and there's a lot of people that just don't care and it's a cruel world. Going to the VA after I got out, it felt sort of like home. It was like, "Okay, I can." Everyone knows that I'm a vet now in this building and speaking with a psychiatrist there that I see regularly at this point, it helps me remember what I did while I was in the military, but also being a functioning civilian now which I didn't realize how difficult that could really be. My psychiatrist and I have a very strong relationship. I've been seeing her now for about almost three years. I've been out for almost three years and she's very careful with I guess prescribing medication. So, I do take medication now. It took a little while because I didn't want to like admit that I needed something or I didn't want to admit that I had anxiety issues. I have to think about it and be like, "Okay, well this here and someone who you trust has prescribed you this, so it's okay if you take it." It's helped me a lot. It's helped me where I don't need to go every month, but I know that when I am going through something, she's always there and I can go to the VA.

I went to grad school. I used my GI Bill which was fantastic. Having that GI Bill, having the VA Mental Health Care, I mean that, all of that put me on the right track and showed me the right way to go. When I lay down at night and I look at just what I have now, it just makes me so satisfied and I'm pretty proud of myself. When you're in the military, it's not really about you. It's about the team and about the mission. After you get out, you are the team. You are the mission. You have to make sure that that is moving forward and that that's getting taken care of. Having the VA and having it be available to you, it's just worth just trying it out. It can be a little scary, but it really is worth it.



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