

Strength to overcome MST through counseling

Melissa: My name is Melissa. I was in the United States Army active duty from 2001 of October until 2009 of July.

Melissa: When I was active duty, I was stationed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and I was trained on Neuro, Ortho, basically brains and spines, joints, pretty much everything that you can imagine.

Melissa: When I was in the service, I was assaulted by a coworker, and it was probably the most traumatic thing that had ever happened to me. I filed a report and this person was suspended while they investigated.

Melissa: Shortly after I got out, I saw the person that assaulted me and then it was almost like you go from one place in time where you know your in control of your situation to seeing this person that had done this to me. And you know all this like emotion, heightened sense of alert. All of this stuff that you don't even think about just kind of comes back. And it really changed my life.

Melissa: I mean not being able to sleep to just being constantly over alert whether it's not wanting to go out at night in the parking garage, even in a relatively safe area. Just different things, certain behaviors. It started to affect my relationship, and it came to a point where it was like okay, I really need to talk to somebody about this.

Melissa: I mean I saw a great doctor and I went through very rigorous 12-step, well sort of a 12-week Program of intensive therapy. And what it involves is basically repeated exposure to the traumatic event. And so, the idea behind is to lessen your reaction to it so that it just kind of becomes a normal part of, instead of this whole separate anxiety filled event, you become less stressed out with it and better able to function in society.

Melissa: Life is great. I mean I think this experience ultimately made me a much stronger person and better to deal and cope with things that come up. I basically started my own business and I'm graduating with my bachelors in September.

Melissa: So, I've gone from, where I was at one level into more focused business-oriented, goal driven person and I'm sure that the therapy had something to do with that. Because instead of going through life and kind of questioning my environment or not dealing with that, I was able to use the services through the VA to just kind of change the path that I was headed on.



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