

Post 9/11 Veterans' Voices on Managing PTSD

Interviewee1: You just have that feeling, that gut feeling that something wasn't right. The truck was hit with a claymore-like IED. It looked like a giant shotgun had hit the truck. Knowing that could've been me was, was my surviving, survivors guilt.

Interviewee2: We were right at the very beginning of the Iraq war and my squad leader was killed, and I looked up to him and so, losing him was crazy.

Interviewee3: Lost some friends when I was in and even just in basic, my father died when I was in basic training. So, that was a bit tough. I didn't deal with the emotions that much when I was in. I could see that I was having issues with it, but wasn't willing to talk about it. There was a point after Afghanistan where I was like crying myself to sleep a lot of nights. I'd wake up the next day and almost forget that that even happened.

Interviewee4: You just pushed it out of your brain because you had so much else going on. So, you didn't really even think about it or process it at the time at all, and then as the months started going by, then it was like my brain suddenly started remembering all this stuff.

Interviewee5: When I came home, I wasn't the same. You know how some people, they say they have a short fuse? I almost had no fuse and it was to the point where if I got angry for any type of reason I would immediately just chew somebody out as if I was a drill instructor in the Marine Corp.

Interviewee6: Being highly aggressive or being hypervigilant and not really showing any type of empathy or sympathy.

Interviewee7: Just being very paranoid of loud noises, jackhammers, cars, suddenly you know zooming past us on the street.

Interviewee8: I was still drinking a lot to use that as self-medication, and I just wasn't, emotionally just completely shut off. I did my diligent research just reading about all this and could see I checked almost every box for PTSD.

Interviewee9: So, I went to the Vet Center on Corona and I started seeing a counselor there. So, she basically educated me about what was happening in my brain so that I was able to understand why I was having the reactions that I was having so that I could learn to manage them.

Interviewee10: The psychologist would sit there and go through very detailed questions to have you remember very detailed, very detailed things about the past.

Interviewee11: They taught like a daily practice of meditation. They taught about PTSD and how it affects the brain.

Interviewee12: For me, what was the most effective was finding, signing up for group therapy. That I actually liked and enjoyed because I could meet up with other Vet's. I didn't feel like it was just me dealing with my issues. I've been on an uphill swing now for a while which has been amazing.



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Interviewee13: My mom definitely has noticed that I'm a lot more kind to people. Now, I'm a lot more patient and I'm more positive now than I've ever been.

Interviewee14: If I didn't have the tools given to me through my therapies, my therapist, my mental health provider I don't think I would be here.

Interviewee15: When you can tell your story and let people know what you've been through and just admit and accept that what happened, happened. That's when you're going to heal.



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