

## Drinking to stop the nightmares didn't work

**Michael:** Well, it first started off with my knee. It gave out. They call it steel deck syndrome. I have deterioration of my left knee. So, after everything was over with, I got out and a couple years later I was classified as having chronic PTSD as well.

I would wake up in cold sweats. You know, just screaming or something and yelling. And I drank quite a bit actually. I was drinking about three 6-packs of beer along with whatever else you put in front of me and smoking quite a bit at the same time. And I knew something was wrong, but I wasn't quite sure what. I knew that during the night those dreams would come to me and I was trying to do the best I could to get rid of 'em by drinking.

I have physicals every six months at the VA hospital. One day the nurse came in and asked me, we're supposed to ask you these questions now. Do you feel suicidal? Depressed? Anxiety? Crying a lot and I kind of looked at her and said, yeah, a little bit. She goes, are you willing to see psychiatry? And I said, no, cause I'm not crazy. And she said, well, we're not saying you're crazy. She kind of pushed me towards making appointment to see a psychologist and psychiatry.

A lot of people deny having PTSD, and the ones that do have it are in denial with it. I think they are a little bit hesitant to go and see a psychiatrist because it's something new that you never had to do before. Their overall cure for it is drugs, alcohol, stuff like that, you know. But in the long run, you're probably going to put yourself in a position that I was in because I used to drink a lot and I almost died from it. So, I think anybody out there who needs to, who thinks they need to see somebody, please do it now because it gets worse and worse and worse.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE**  
**CONNECTION**