

Repairing a marriage through counseling

Sheri: My name is Sheri, and I'm married to a Army combat Vet. I am an Army Veteran and my husband and I both, we met together in Fort Benning, Georgia. I was stationed there as a medic and he was infantry and we actually lived right down the hallway from each other in the barracks, so that's how we met. While we were together prior to getting married he was in Korea and he came home mid-tour, we got married and then he went back for another six months and then we were reassigned to Fort Campbell and that's where he deployed to Iraq.

The service member that's deployed, they're in a much more hectic environment obviously. More stressful and more life threatening than the family members, spouses that are back home, but there's having to be the sole person back home having to take care of the household, finances, children and still stay strong for yourself and for your family. I don't know if they quite understand that.

His arrival home didn't go the way that we wanted it to. I was not informed when he actually was going to arrive, so I wasn't prepared for it, so by the time I actually got to pick him up it was the middle of the night and he was left there alone, and so from that point on, our relationship was kind of stressful and on edge. I had gone through my own issues as a Veteran myself. Trying to work with depression and anxiety within myself and then on top of him coming home and having held everything in for so long and not wanting to share his experiences, he just became very distant and very closed off. He was always so rigid and just seemed cold, and it just kind of built over the years and then I think we just at that point had gotten so far apart from each other he started to seek that companionship at work and I really didn't have anyone to go to. I would talk to my coworkers.

We got plugged into a marriage counseling plus individual counseling. So, we're kind of attacking it from every direction that we can. Spouses need to try to understand that the Veteran has been through something and more than likely they're not going to talk about it with you because they want to protect you. Just kind of maybe try to make them aware that they need help, like, as a spouse, try to explain to the Veteran or the person you think needs help what you've seen and witnessed. Get on the internet and research, talk to other people, other Veterans, other spouses, seek out support groups. If it's medication that you need to help don't be ashamed to try whatever you need to try to try and get you through it.

My husband's — since he started going to counseling, he's actually gotten more involved with volunteering for PTSD groups and therapy and it's really surprised me. He is more compassionate, more at ease and relaxed and more able to kind of voice if he's feeling something. I think it's very important to not try to withdraw or keep everything in. Don't feel ashamed to ask for help. There are a lot of resources out there that you have no idea that are out there.



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