

Finding sources of support to move beyond MST

Krysten: My name is Krysten. I was in the Coast Guard stationed in San Juan, Puerto Rico and I was in the Coast Guard from August 2009 to September 2010 and I worked aids to navigation. My dad was in the Navy. My brother was in the Army and my sister was in the Air force and so, I was like, I could do the Marines or the Coast Guard. I was like, I'll just join the Coast Guard and see what happens.

It was my 20th birthday and me and all my friends went out and then I went home, and my friend called me and was like, hey, can you help me up the stairs, I'm really drunk? And I was like, okay.

Well, I helped him up the stairs and then he sexually assaulted me. I think it happens a lot, but I don't think people come forward because in my case I went forward and then when they did the investigation they found out that he had done the same thing to like five or six other girls who hadn't come forward, and I was like, well you know. If they had come forward, it kind of wouldn't have happened to me, but I mean I think it happens a lot but I don't think people say anything because they're scared, because they feel like they're doing something wrong when they didn't do anything wrong.

I was really upset that day that I did come forward. I was like, everyone on base is going to hate me, like everyone loves this guy, like I don't know what to do. I was kind of having a dilemma with myself. I went forward and nobody was mad at me. They were like, that's what you should have done, like you did the right thing and so it helped having like, support from my friends, but I didn't have support from my command which was disappointing.

I got my orders and so I left in June and I moved back in with my parents for the summer and I was like, well you know, I'm going to go to school because I get these benefits. Well, I found out that my friend was looking for a roommate and so I moved in with her and I started school and you know, I got really close to her and kind of told her what happened and she was like, you know, if you go to school they have free counseling for students, and I was like, yeah, that's a really good idea. I think I should do that. It was kind of weird at first because like I didn't know what, like I didn't know how to like start up, like just a random conversation with someone I'd never met before and so, like she would always ask me questions and then she would be like, well tell me what happened. Like, and if you're not comfortable you can leave some parts out and you know we'll get there when we get there. And so, I went for like the entire semester and talked to her once a week. She would like push me to make sure that I was in a place that I needed to be to make me feel better and you know live with what happened.

I'm who I am. I'm happy with myself and knowing that I was happy with myself is probably a big reason why I chose not to go anymore because I wasn't unhappy anymore. I'm a really outgoing person, I'm really friendly. I make friends easily and so before I did the counseling like, I became like a homebody, I didn't want to do anything, didn't want to see people. If I went to the movies, I went by myself.

Afterwards, it was like I had my personality back. I was me again and so I was able to go out with my friends, go to the pool, go to the beach, and just be free I guess, like it was like a weight off my shoulders. It doesn't matter what you've been through.



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I think you know, if you want to get help I think counseling is a really good option. Don't be afraid, like just go for it because being scared isn't going to get you anywhere. You gotta go for it.



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