

It took me six months to say I have PTSD

Hodari: My name's Hodari. I served in the Michigan Army National Guard, still serving, and I was deployed to Afghanistan, part of Iraq, and Kuwait. Somewhere midway between Afghanistan and me coming back to Kuwait, I was attacked in my sleep by a fellow soldier, and that's basically why my anger management and sleep problems has started.

He started hitting me in the middle of my sleep and by the time I woke up, we were like full blown fighting, and we were separated, and then the rest is like a blur, because I just remember blacking out shortly after that. During that time, they said I had PTSD, but they couldn't really fully diagnose me. Until... then when I got back home and I started going to the VA, that's when they said I had PTSD, anxiety, anger management, and a host of other list of things that deal with mental health and adjustment disorder.

I got connected with a primary care doctor first. Then, I got connected with the mental health department and got assigned to a social worker and psychiatrist, and it took me about six months for me to say I have PTSD after being back home. So, it was only after I accepted that I had PTSD, that's when I got really involved in my own mental health recovery.

I just woke up one day and said, "You know what..." you know, I prayed about it and I said, "Okay, if I really want to overcome all this, let me first accept it." You know, it's just like someone who has alcohol or drug addiction, you have to admit it first. And I said, "Let me accept that I have this. Let me sit down with my parents and siblings and tell them I've been told I have PTSD, but this is what I'm going to do to try to help myself recover from it."

They noticed some change in me. They noticed that I wasn't the same happy, joy, lucky person I was. You know, some of them applied to I'm not working yet, so that could be it, but then they also noticed that, you know, my attitude was getting worse or I wouldn't want to go out and be around people. Like shopping and stuff just terrified me. They noticed that I wasn't sleeping. I just started being more involved and talking to them and trying to see group therapy with other Veterans who were a part of the Operation Enduring Freedom or OIF Wars who, you know, can give me assistance, and we can talk and get free advice from some of them and see what experiences they're dealing with, and maybe we can feed of each other.

If someone was talking to me you know nasty and everything, it can trigger my attitude, but what I've learned to cope with it is sometimes people have bad days. So, instead of me getting back mad with them for how they're talking to me, I'll take myself back and I just say, "Okay, something is wrong with you today. I see you have an attitude, but we don't have to continue to talk right now. I'll talk to you another day." And you know just keep it moving. Just learning those type of little tips really helped me.

The VA and the Vet Centers have really been very helpful to me. Without them, I don't think I would be sitting here with you today. Like, they've saved my life more times than not. My advice is if you're dealing with depression, you're dealing with anxiety or sleep problem or whatever, PTSD, get help, go to the VA and take advantage of these free sources. It doesn't mean something is wrong with you. It doesn't mean your whole world is going to end if you go out and get the help. It's thousands of people, millions of



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**

people who are fighting a mental health battle everyday. Your story can help someone else in your family or it could help a stranger off the street, so go get the help you need and take advantage of the resources and health benefits that's out there.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

MAKE THE
CONNECTION