

I didn't know what having a TBI meant

Roger: My name's Roger. I joined the Air Force back in 1982 and I was in for four years and then I got out of the military and at 40-years-old, I went back into the service.

We had lost some soldiers of our own in my own unit. They had gotten hit by an IED and the driver was killed, and my roommate had gotten shrapnel through his body several places. I got to the point that I walked out in front of a vehicle, wanting him to hit me and that didn't work. I wanted to take my weapon and shoot myself. I actually broke down, literally broke down and just cried and wept like a baby and I was smart enough to holler at one of my buddies and say, hey, you know, I need some help.

After I came home, they immediately set me up with counseling and people who I needed to see, OIF/OEF people and I was seeing a counselor monthly and basically, they just, you know, they said, hey, you have a lot on your plate. I got a knee, back, and neck injuries. I got a lot of mental stress. I've got major depression. I didn't know I had a TBI. I didn't know what that meant. And it actually causes you to think differently of how things are, and a lot of people couldn't understand that.

It was difficult coming back from the war because my family was not aware of the military things that I was exposed to because I mean, I just didn't, I didn't come home talking about stuff that had happened in the war. It's just too much, you know, for them to handle. So, I tried to love 'em and be close to 'em, but my condition wouldn't let me. At the same time, it was pushing me away.

I thought I was in the ship all by myself. But after I got into group and therapy, I learned that there's a whole lot of people in the same boat that you're in and trying to get through one day at a time and that's the key and they'll tell you that with therapy, take one day as it comes. I feel much better. I feel much better. The VA has helped me and my family tremendously.



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