

Healing after an abusive relationship

Jillynne: My name is Jillynne. I was in the Navy. My original job was Corpsman, but I broke both of my legs and my left hip doing some training and spent a lot of time in recovery, but while I was doing that, I had a desk job. They were really good about it and they wanted me to be set up with the VA at least medically so that when they did cut me loose and give me my severance pay, I wasn't paying to see a doctor. So, that kind of got me there VA-wise.

While I was on terminal leave, I had married somebody who was in the Army. Things started to get very...there was no grey area, it was very, very good or it was very, very bad, and he started becoming violent and it was pretty unrelenting. It was bad. Once we got back stateside, it was just too much. They finally did let him off active duty.

I did seek some help from the VA. They had known what went on and it was really scary. With the anxiety, your heart races. It goes just insanely fast. You sweat, you get paranoid, you keep looking over your shoulder. Insomnia, you don't sleep. Your body is so tired, especially after these anxiety and panic attacks, it really feels like you ran a marathon. You can feel your heart palpitating very quickly.

There was a lot of trust issues, and I had doctors that worked through it with me. It made my anxieties very high, and always looking over my shoulder, just never trusting somebody. You feel that the person that you trust most in the world, if that can happen to them then what about somebody you don't trust, how bad can they hurt you, and it made me a very, very afraid and scared person for a very long time.

My second ex-husband, civilian, but he had different issues. He was raised in a house of violence. His father was very abusive to his mom and I didn't see the warning signs. It was after that that I got the most help for what the root of the problem was, and I was very aggressive with it.

When I went to the VA here, I kept telling them, "Something's not right, something's not right. I'm still very nervous and I don't know what it is. I can't tell you what it is." So, I pushed and, they were able to find out what it is, and give a diagnosis to what it is and they said, "It's PTSD" and I kind of laughed at them, I'm like, I was not, injured in Combat. I did not see, my shipmates pass away or anything like that or get shot, and they're like "No, it happened in your own home." That was kind of eye-opening too like there's different reasons for it happening.

The VA was able to help me by finding out people that they knew of in the community, or there was a social worker down there and she's like, "There's a women's center, there's, this one, there's story time that, you can go to and this is a safe place." They were able to kind of point me in the right direction, but the biggest thing was the groups, and just getting to talk to the other women and I don't know, kind of the sisterhood, and through like us helping each other or just knowing that each other was there, that was kind of the biggest therapy, is just knowing that somebody else is there.



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