

Find the support you need at a vet center

Ed: My name is Ed, I joined the Army in November of '68. I was trained as a motorman and the secondary MOS was infantry, 11 Bravo. I served in Vietnam 17 days short of a year.

We are from a background of drinking. Everybody drank and went to work, when you got off work you drank. So that didn't seem like it was a problem, that just seemed like normal way of life, but then I used to smoke a lot of pot. Then one day it just all of a sudden I smoked a joint and I turned around and went back home. I couldn't go out anymore, I quit going out at night, it was just, I was going to get in trouble if I went out at night. Once I got divorced I was like ostracized from being with my friends as a group.

My father and mother never said a word about it to me, you know. They were all very close with her. I did not react towards my family, but a lot of it where I didn't feel like I was part of it. People clammed up after Vietnam. They never talked about it. My dad never talked to me about it. He was combative infantry in World War II. It was just you came back and you went right back to where you were two years before that as if nothing happened. I think that is part of the reason things got buried, for myself anyway.

It wasn't until after I retired things changed. Once I retired I just wasn't...it is like I was always in a work crew, I was never a boss, so for all those years, maybe 30 years I was always told what to do and I was fine with that, but once I retired it just all changed. At one point I said I need to see somebody. This guy that I saw and I still see I tell people he was my rode map. He says this is what you need to be doing, this is who you need to talk to. This is your next step and stuff like that. So, I contacted the VA, but I could always go back to my vet center and talk one on one with this guy to where he just, he was just my road map. He kept me focused. I found out that I wasn't alone, I mean I wasn't the only one experiencing this. I didn't know anything about PTSD, when I saw this doctor she told me, "well this is PTSD" and I didn't know that. I could deal with anger better, I learned that I am not the only person with problems. This other person might have a problem.

So I just become more tolerant in a way. I don't let minor things bother me. So if you've got a little problem or you think you have a problem, or a big problem, I don't know just maybe stop in the vet center. That is the street level entrance into the VA system as far as I can see. You can just stop in and talk, set up an appointment, start out with that. Or talk to somebody like myself who's been there, you know. I have steered a lot of guys to that very vet center over there. And just start out with the basics.



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