

## VA knows Veterans more than anyone

**Maggie:** My name is Maggie and I'm married to Tracy. When she came back from being deployed, she had a very difficult time just transitioning back into the civilian world. I think she held back a lot, especially any military connections or Veterans connections. She was reticent to check in with her unit that she had deployed with when they were getting together either the VFW or other social events. Just because it stirred up a lot of stuff and she wanted to see those people, she wanted to keep that connection, but it was difficult.

I was academically familiar with PTSD, but not personally. I was aware of the situation, I understood some of the psychologically, biologically what's going on, but I had not had someone so close to me experiencing these things.

She was seldom sleeping at night and so she would sleep during the day. Tried to find work, but I think wasn't quite ready to be working full time. When she did work, she ended up working at the VA, which had some advantages as it turns out, but also some disadvantages in that it was a little bit too close to home in terms of the struggles that she was going through.

One of the great things that happened because of that was that she was able to see some of the services that were available to her and so I think she reached out for some services earlier on in her transition than other people might have. And even though it was uncomfortable, and she didn't want to, she knew it was important.

Tracy received some medical services at the VA, so that was important at a base level, helped physically take care of some of things happening with her. But then also her doctors were able to help connect her with a Counselor that she was visiting with on a regular basis and then also at times some of the women support groups. She was lucky in that the VA that she was first attending was really putting an effort towards reaching out to the women in particular.

When Tracy was getting ready to go back to school, she had a few things that came along with her. Not only was she returning to school as a transfer student who had been away for a while, which has its own struggles, she also was returning after being deployed and after having struggled to transition into a civilian life in general. She certainly did not feel like many of the people around her were her typical peers. I think at times it was frustrating in that it seemed they were so young and knew nothing about anything.

The VA knows more than anyone what the Veterans are doing, what they're up to, what the trends have been. So, it's nice to be in a place where that's familiar. Where you don't have to explain every acronym that you're using to describe your experiences. Cause for the most part, whoever is on the other side of that tends to know what you're saying, what you're talking about, where you're coming from. So not only is that important for the Veterans, I think it's a good resource for family members and spouses as well.



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