

There was a problem for a long period of time

David: My name is David. I was in the Air Force from 1972 to '75. At that point it seemed like it was really easy for anybody to yell at us. If you had a uniform on you were just bad news. People would treat us pretty badly. It was a constant barrage of just meanness. The things about baby killer and about killers and that was really tenuous to me. It was always a problem to me.

I can't explain how much pressure there was going anywhere and being proud of being in the Air Force and serving my country and stuff and being hammered and I'm telling you hammered by people that I didn't even know. And not just that but also the people that stood up for us or the ones that were really pro American like I am today in fact turn their eyes, they just kind of averted their eyes and that had a huge impact on me.

We kept getting told that we'd see movies and stuff that were always showing us as being nuts. Every film that came out it seemed, "You're a Vietnam Vet; you're crazy You're a drug addict." All these different things, which was really another thing that was strange because it wasn't true. There was nobody that I knew that was like that. I went into a rock band after that and I was like a lead singer in a rock band and grew my hair out and it ended up that I kind of hid amongst that if you will.

I had a hearing issue for a long, long time and I wasn't sure my dad had the hearing problem as well. He was in the Army. He was in the artillery. So, the statement always in the family was, "Wow, he was in the artillery unit; you got stuff blowing up all the time and of course his hearing's going to. Well, mine was that C130s and all sorts of.... We didn't have anything. They didn't stick ear plugs in us or headphones or anything back then and then I go into a rock band of course.

So, it was really bad, and I was losing clients in fact. I'd say something to a client that was completely wrong to what they asked. They'd ask me a question and I'd give them an answer that had nothing to do with the question. So, we went to [UNINTELLIGIBLE] and I had tinnitus, really major tinnitus and I have 43 and 48 percent loss in my hearing. They gave me these hearing aids. "What's up with that?" I thought, "They never done anything for me." That was kind of the turning point.

They gave me every test that was possible. They said, "You haven't been here in how long?" I said, "Thirty -five years." They go, "Why?" and I went, "Let's not get into it." They said, "What do you need me to do?" They did all sorts of tests, a ton of different things. They gave me a doctor, which I really liked. I tell you what, this was like night and day, the end of '05 when we went there. I mean, the people were nice; nothing like what I experienced all those years earlier. They were nice. They were efficient. They wanted to help; you could tell it.

What ended up happening shortly after that was that my 33-year-old daughter died. Of course, losing your child before you, there's no words. There are no words whatsoever in that loss. She married and had two kids, grandsons of mine. And I thought, "Well, I've dealt with worse." And I really believed that. I thought those words in my head, "I dealt with worse." But I didn't do anything about it because I thought, "I'm not going to talk to anybody. Who am I going to talk to? Nobody understands this. Nobody understands this. How many people could possibly understand what I'm going through? It's not possible."



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I talked to people at church that I knew and everything else. So, I had some people that had the same type of thing. Whether they had a son that was killed in the service in Afghanistan or Iraq. The same kind of a thing; the same impact. It didn't matter what they died from. If you got a kid that dies, your kid dies. Two years later, I was a total mess.

Personally, I don't like group counselling. I just don't like it and they gave me the option to do one-on-one. They said, "We can do either way." So, I liked that and so I did one-on-one with this doctor. I don't really trust them most of the time, but I trusted her, and she helped me through a whole lot of it. I would meet with her pretty often early on and it helped. It helped substantially because, again, I don't like shrinks. I don't like them, but she really made a difference, I think.

Don't not talk about this. Don't not talk about it because you have so many different people that are here to help you it's just ridiculous. They've got a good program here. They've got people that really care about the needs that are out there.



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