

Hundreds of people out there are willing to help

Brian: My name is Brian. I served in the Army from 1987 when I got commissioned through ROTC at Virginia State University to 1997 was my first ten years, then from 1999 to 2009. I did have to deal with, you know, the KIAs during Desert Storm. That really wasn't something that I was prepared for after I got out of the military because those traumas, those stressors that I received during that time started affecting me later on in life.

There is a big issue and that happened to me of transitioning from the military to civilian life. People didn't understand what I had seen or what I had gone through. So, a lot of times, you know, I felt like I was kind of being isolated or wanted to be to myself. I wasn't stable. I was, you know, I didn't hold a job too long. I was always wanting to move around; maybe that affected me from being in the military, moving from duty station to duty station. I wasn't with my family a lot. I kind of went on jobs that took me away from home. I was just trying to just provide a living, you know; go to work and make a living for me and my family. My marriage was failing. My children were getting older and I still was having these issues of not wanting to be in one place. I couldn't keep transferring my family from place to place, so I was just doing it on my own which was allowing my family to suffer at that point. But they noticed it. They started questioning it. My mom also questioned it.

In 2010, I started seeking out some help. I started going to the VA and I met with a counselor. They started putting me into a PTSD category. After meeting this person for three or four times, I started confiding in stuff that was going on and that's when we started basically getting deep down inside of what was going on with me. Meditation is a big thing that we do even with all our classes, sometimes we start our classes with a meditation or mindfulness program. The mindfulness training kind of deals with cognitive behavior therapy as well as dialectical behavior therapy where you can actually take your thoughts and your thoughts go to feelings and those feelings promote actions.

All these things have helped me tremendously and they offered me to go back to college. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I started out as a Psychology major in Clinical Psychology. That wasn't the right choice, but they brought me in that way and then I eventually changed from that to go into the School of Social Work. I found that social work was a better position for me to be able to help Veterans who might have gone through some of the stuff that I've gone through.

I'm interning right now, and I deal with only the Veteran students. When they find out that I'm a Veteran, they immediately start opening up and talking because Veterans, men or women, will kind of open up more when they know that you've gone through some of the same things that they might have gone through or speak the same language that they speak. The great thing for my kids, number one is that I'm stationary. I'm here. Right. So, I'm here for a while. I'm here two years to go back and can get my Master's degree and they just loving that. When we go out, we have dinners and stuff like that, so they love that and they do say that they've noticed that my demeanor, you know, is a little more open. I'm not as confined. You know, I'm always willing to call them. They find that I'm a little more stable and they like that.

You know, there's hundreds of Veterans out there that are willing to kind of take someone and talk to them for a little bit and become a mentor. Don't be ashamed about



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getting help. You may not be able to get the help from your family members, so you gotta seek out other Veterans in order to find out what avenues you have to go through to try to get help.



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