

Working through posttraumatic stress together

Tara: When he was home there were little things that made him jump. So when we, my parents live off a dirt road, when we'd go from the pavement to the dirt road, he'd tense up and he'd kind of lean forward because driving tanks in Iraq he's very used to being alert to look for bombs and things that are out of the ordinary. So it was little things like that that I could tell were triggering things in him.

When we got married, he woke up a lot at night and he would just like kinda grab me and hold me close because he thought something was about to happen to me. So I'd have to like wake him up and calm him down and you know, "We're fine, we're just in our bedroom." So there were things like that. It probably took about six to nine months for some of those things to start going away. But you know it was just that posttraumatic stuff coming out. Loud noises if we go on a bike ride and there's construction nearby, he would jump thinking it was gun shots. A little thing will just make him get the situation escalates a lot more than maybe it would for someone else. He recognizes that and that just really frustrates him because he's like, "Why do I have to be upset about something so small?"

So we've had to work through that and that's hard when you're newlyweds too, and he's working through all of that. I think also too, you had mentioned being the spouse. It probably took a good year before I remember him looking at me and being like "You know what, you're working through things too." Like it's not just him.

I had a lot of anxiety when he got home. Whenever he'd go on a trip or if he was driving home from class and I couldn't get a hold of him I would start panicking. So a lot of anxiety on my part as kind of the girlfriend, then spouse who was at home, kind of waiting for the phone calls and not knowing what was gonna go on.

So it got to a point where even last year I went and saw a Counselor, just three times. It didn't take a lot. I just needed help identifying some of the things I felt going on inside of me, but it was a huge help. It just opened my eyes to why I was feeling some of things I was feeling and how I could support him and work through it. But it definitely was two-sided but it took us a while to realize that, cause it's very focused on him as the soldier for a while, but thankfully his eyes were kinda open to, "You know what? You went through quite a traumatic experience too, on the other end." So t's kind of working through it together.



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