

It takes a strong person to ask for help

Lucinda: Lucinda, United States Coast Guard from 1987 to 1997, Supply and Logistics. So, I was a storekeeper. My husband had gotten out of the Coast Guard and we had my son Alec who was a little over a year and then I had Eric who was three months. And I was going to the Coast Guard Base to get a physical. On the way back my pager kept going off and it was saying 911. And my second son, my three-month-old, he was at the babysitter and he stopped breathing. It was interrupted SIDS, so he was put on life support, like I said, and there was no chance of him living. So, my husband and I decided to take him off life support.

After he passed away, my family and I flew to Montana and buried him here. And then I flew back with my mom, back to Virginia and I decided I wanted out. And then what happened is I discovered that alcohol is a really good solution for grief temporarily.

My first job out of the Coast Guard was working for the Sheriff's Department as a Jailer. One day I was serving inmates food and the next day I was an inmate there because I got a DUI. So, the sheriff let me go. He said that I needed to deal with some things, that they would absolutely love to have me back but that I needed to really get some counseling for the loss of my son and kinda get my life straight.

So, I sought help through the VA. I was diagnosed with PTSD, which I did not buy into at all. I hadn't been in the jungle. I hadn't been in the desert. I mean, I knew something was wrong with me, but I adamantly denied that I had PTSD until probably February of last year, so just a year ago.

When EMS or fire engines would go by and be really close to me, that I'd almost just get in a fetal position and hide, and it started making sense about why those sirens would just make me want to hide and not know what to do with myself.

And I started working with a psychologist and I wasn't really willing to do much about it. What happened was my granddaughter was born January 31st and that made a world of difference to me. So, I decided I needed to do something, and I need to do it now and give it 100%. So, I went back to the VA and I started a group for substance abuse and Seeking Safety, which is PTSD as well as substance abuse.

So, I mean, just the things that treatment has taught me through the VA on how to handle my anxiety and my fear and understand why I did the things I did. So, it's... I don't know, the VA.... I can't say enough for the treatment that they've offered, inpatient as well as the outpatient programs that I'm still in and will continue to be in until I feel comfortable leaving.

I'm starting to feel more. My passion for things has come back. I have a deeper desire to be close to people although I am only taking baby steps. Especially women, I like to help them get out and no matter if they feel intimidated or uncomfortable that everybody has to start somewhere.

And but physical fitness for me is just spiritually, mentally. I go to the top of the mountain sometimes and I just look around at all the beautiful scenery here, and I just know that there is something bigger out there and that he's got my back too.



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Do it right away. I mean, if you can just take one step in front of the other and walk in those doors and ask for help, it could save years of grief, hardship and your life. I don't know, I guess some people might think that they're stronger than needing help, but it takes a strong person to ask for help. So, get the help.



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