

Asking for support can make all the difference

Jamel: My name's Jamel, I was in the Navy, and I was in aviation, boatswain's mate. It was a lot of noise, a lot of long hours. We did at least 16-hour days.

I got married while I was in Ordnance School in Florida. I was gone nine months a year, that took a toll on my family and on myself. During deployment you had up to about anywhere near 5,000 people on that ship from all over who are away from their families and going through a lot of frustrations. A lot of combat, a lot of fighting, but not with enemies of other places, amongst ourselves.

You were placed in dangerous situations but you were on a ship so you couldn't leave and you might not be able to sleep.

Getting back was a big turning point. I was really looking forward to getting back, but when I did get back things were different. About three months afterwards me and my wife separated. My children were different, my wife was different, at least so I thought.

Once I got around other Veterans and I heard their stories and I began to hear things that sounded like me, things that I had going through and things that I was experiencing and that was when I began to realize, "Jamel, it might have been you."

They recommended that I go to one of the Vet Centers and I did and they were saying that I might possibly be suffering from posttraumatic syndrome, you know, PTSD. They helped me realize that you need to talk to somebody, get some help, you need to work this out. That was the turning point going to the VA Center.

I actually seen Counselors, Therapists, professionals who are able to help me at the Vet Centers.

There is a connection, absolutely I think with all Vets regardless of what branch you were in, regardless of what you went through there is a connection. The people who I began speaking to were people who had lived it, were living it, and were just genuinely wanting to help you the way that they were helped. The VA was able to help them and they are just looking to help you.

I turned to my church and they helped me with my faith and my belief to also not take things into my own hands and to use prayer and to begin to change myself for the better.

I am actually engaged to be married here in about two months. She is a great mother, great woman and she has been a great help with me and my new walk of Faith.

There is life after the military and there are people who are willing to help us. If you are going through something and you feel like you have changed or have symptoms, go speak to somebody, go get some help, speak to some fellow Vets, speak to the Vet Center, speak to someone in faith. Get some help. The combination is a great support team. The church, the Vet Center and my fellow Vets and you know family all came together to help me be where I am at today.



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