

Finding ways to overcome combat trauma

Eddie: I'm Eddie. I was in the United States Marine Corp from 2001 to 2010. My second deployment where I had three Marines in my squad pretty much killed in one IUD attack, it was an improvised rocket launcher, and that was something that was pretty hard to take at first and I still deal with a little bit now.

I used to be real outgoing. I used to love to fish and a lot of other things, I just didn't have any pleasure in doing them anymore, and I just would sit in my room and do absolutely nothing. And then I was forgetting things. I had a different sense of what was important. Somebody would tell me, hey, we need this done whatever time, and I would just totally forget about it because in my mind it wasn't important. So, it was just things like that that was really affecting my job, affecting my relationships with other people.

Actually, I was forced to talk to somebody. I had an incident, whenever I was at Weapons and Field training battalion one of my jobs was to do the repel tower for recruits going through bootcamp there and I had a staffing CO who was in charge me at the time and he said something to me that I didn't agree with and I basically went off on him right in front of everybody. They pulled me off the tower, took me in the office and my Platoon Commander pretty much told me that he can see things aren't right with me, I need to go see somebody and at the time Parris Island was starting up a new mental health unit or whatever at the hospital there. I went in there and talked to them and it actually was probably one of the better things that happened to me.

I actually started out, I was talking to like a Psychologist one-on-one for a little bit to kind of get a better feel for what I needed or what was going on with me. They recommended I go to group therapy and also once a week for one-on-one therapy. I didn't have to do any kind of medication or anything like that if I didn't want to. It was just, they told me what they could do for me. Group therapy was actually pretty good because I was just in a room with a bunch of people, a bunch of guys that had kind of been through the same thing I had been through. I didn't realize there were other people on base that kind of had gone through a lot of that. It was good for me to meet other people and talk about things. I was medically retired. I had to keep going to my therapy and all that on the way out but once I got out I didn't have anybody there to tell me I had to keep going to therapy.

I quit going for a little while and that was like the worse thing I could have done because for that probably first 6 months after I got out and I wasn't talking to somebody on a regular basis, my wife and I were fighting and it was already stressful as it is because, I don't have that structure anymore. I don't have somebody telling me, hey you have to do this every day. Now I'm left to my own devices and I really started to kind of slip back into the problems I was having with the anger and everything and then finally my wife said, you know you need to get, pretty much told me I needed to go see somebody, get with the VA, get signed up, and the VA had already kind of had things set up for me to go right into it. I just didn't take the time to do it. They gave me an appointment with Mental Health due to my medical records and things like that. I went and talked to them and really at that point the transition was pretty easy.

I go every couple weeks now. It's down from once a week, but it's one-on-one. There's a marked improvement and like me and my wife's relationship for instance, I'm not as jumpy as I once was when I hear loud noises or things like that.



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For the most part, it's with treatment it's becoming more, it's easier to deal with those things on a daily basis. I got more joy out of going to my parents house, hanging out with my family. Making new friends wasn't really something that I cared about but then I realized it makes life a little easier. I'm definitely changed since starting therapy and everything. I enjoy more things now and I'm probably about as close as I will be to being back to normal but I just had to realize that my normal is a new normal for me.



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