

Finding hope again and reconnecting

Interviewee1: I found myself in a pretty dark place for a pretty long period of time. And just feeling sort of trapped, in a way, just not knowing exactly what I should do next. I was sort of at my wits end as to what was my purpose in life.

Interviewee2: I mean, coming back, the switch was off. It had an impact on my, my, all my relationships, all my family relationships. I couldn't even... I was wondering if, if I ever had grandchildren, could I love them, because of, you know, the disconnect.

Interviewee3: I had also submitted my work that I did in Iraq for military videographer of the year. And I'm standing there and, you know, all these people—the one thing, the, the pinnacle, like, "I am the best. I just became the best." I felt absolutely nothing and completely dissatisfied with the whole experience.

Interviewee4: I had a few hobbies. It was mainly, like, auto repair and racing, maybe dirt bike, stuff like that. And that stuff, I tried it when I got back, and it just didn't give me any excitement.

Interviewee5: After a 21-year career in nursing, you know, I had gotten to the point where it was hard for me to get out of bed every morning. I was lethargic. I had anhedonia which is means I had no pleasure from anything that I did. And I had suicidal ideation, and I had, had a little bit of a plan to turn around and, you know, walk in the front of a car.

Interviewee6: I went from being super active, doing everything around the house now for 12 months, I was more of a burden on my family. And I just kept feeling more and more worthless and that's when I contemplated starting to take my life.

Interviewee2: This friend of mine who was a Veteran introduced me to the group. There was a different connection, a different understanding, about what was happening. And that is what began to make the difference for me.

Interviewee4: I talked to the psychiatrist down there and then she recommended me to the, they have like an out-patient psychiatry department down there. So, they recommended the medication that I did, like 101 counselling sessions, and I've been doing it ever since.

Interviewee6: One day, one of my kids said something to me that, you know, made me realize I, I need to get help, I need to be there to, to help them. The VA crisis line was the first place I called and then I started trying to meet with a counsellor.

Interviewee7: It showed me that regardless of my medical problems, a lot of the limitations that I felt were limitations I just placed on myself, that I could still enjoy a lot of the same activities that I did, just in a different way and get the same result.

Interviewee1: I would say for the last five or six years, not only have I not had depression, but I've also been happy.



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Interviewee6: After I started seeking the help, the work performance started to increase again. I started believing in myself, I started getting more confidence. It was a lot easier to do my job, do daily things.

Interviewee5: You've got to reach out. You've got to put your hand out. You've got to make the first step, and that's the hard one, is the first step.

Interviewee2: Know that there is a way that you can get help. There is a way that you can, you can deal with, you know, some of the difficulties related to your war experience. Look at it as a community of people who want to help, I think that has felt different for me, and to keep at it until you, until you make the connection.



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