

A husband's support to get through challenges

Patrick: My name is Patrick. I'm the husband of Nicole, a combat Vet, Army, 50 cal gunner in Iraq. The fact that she was a 50 cal gunner and she was telling me how she stood on the Humvees and went out. I mean, that's pretty amazing.

We actually were dating when she was on the tour of duty. And, I mean, I asked the questions like, you know, "How's everything going?" She would say, "Fine." Obviously, it wasn't fine. And I think maybe one time she told me when they first got there, she said they got attacked by a mortar round. One of her captains was killed. That's pretty rough.

When she came home for the last time to where she was at home for good, we started talking about getting married. And you would notice little things like her trying to stay busy. And I would ask questions and she would still give answers like, "Hey, I'm fine. Everything is okay." And I noticed after we got married, we'd go to sleep, and she'd shake and talk in her sleep. The shaking let me know that you're having some kind of nightmare.

And migraine headaches that get so bad to the point where you can't remember something that happened the day before. If I said, "Nicole, at 12 o'clock you've got an appointment tomorrow." And she would be like, "Yeah, I got an appointment at 12 o'clock tomorrow." The next day at 1 o'clock she would call and say, "Did I have an appointment today?" That's a serious issue.

And I mean, eventually, she went to go talk to somebody, you know, talk to a psychiatrist. And the psychiatrist brought out a lot that she was holding in and that she wouldn't talk about. She would come home and tell me, "Hey, I talked to the psychiatrist today. I cried. She brought this back." But then it's funny because she goes right back to being a wife, a mother, a boss.

If she gets overwhelmed or if it gets too loud and wow, she has to go lay down or step away. I can see, yeah, okay, there's going to be some problems here. Just let me maybe take the kids or give her some space or suggest did you go see the psychiatrist this week? Did you talk to somebody this week?

My wife was diagnosed with PTSD, but it's not a problem. But I know that, hey, it's there. It is an issue. So, I try to pay attention to detail. If you need your space, whether she says it or not, I know my wife. So, I'm going to take the kids and we're going to go hang out somewhere and just let you get the time. If you feel like you want to talk about it, that's fine. But the main thing is if you notice things going on, you need to make sure that they get some help.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

MAKE THE
CONNECTION