

## Peace and Serenity

**Courtney:** I believe that when I was in the Marine Corps, that's when I started to struggle a little bit mentally, trying to fit in, especially as a female. That's a little intimidating. Then I ended up getting injured and having to get four hip surgeries. That really took a toll on me mentally, because I was an injured female in the Marine Corps. That's something that's just very frowned upon. I was losing friends. I was partying all the time. Pretty much doing anything to avoid my feelings. I think after a while, I kind of realized I can't do this anymore. Then understanding that I needed to go get help.

My name is Courtney. I was in the United States Marine Corps from 2013 to 2018. My MOS was administrative specialist. I graduated high school, wasn't sure what I really wanted to do with my life. I ended up talking to a Marine Corps recruiter and within three weeks I was in bootcamp and then I got injured. Then that's when everything really took a deep dive. That was hard, because it felt like I was not finishing the mission. I didn't know who I was. I lost a lot of my identity. I was kind of in like this crisis mode, but luckily the VA did take care of me pretty well.

When you get out of the Marine Corps and you're medically discharged, they automatically set you up with an appointment at the VA. We started looking into one-on-one sessions with therapists. I was diagnosed with anxiety and then PTSD. Treatments helped me a lot with trauma, especially any type of violence that's happened to me, and also how to deal with stressors, anxiety. When I feel like things are getting too much, how to calm myself down and make sure that I feel safe and that's been something that's been so helpful to me.

I grew up hunting, camping, and fishing. I really love nature and spending time with my family in the mountains and just getting away from the city. I'm always on the go constantly. When I come to the mountains, it's just such a slow pace. If you can find a spot by the river and just sit there and relax and listen, it's just the perfect piece and serenity that anybody could ask for.

I believe having outdoor hobbies really helps with my mental recovery. When you're an independent woman and you're getting out, I think it's empowering. Receiving treatment to this day helps me tremendously. It's such a relief for me to be able to go and have someone other than my family or friends, someone else to talk to who can actually help me and give me really good advice. That's something that I actually look forward to every week. Those type of things have really centered me and put me in a better place mentally.



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I'm so proud that I put myself back together and understand what I needed to work on to heal myself to live a better life. It's definitely something that is a huge accomplishment for me.



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