

## Veterans describe an effective therapy method

**Speaker1:** I felt like an outsider. I felt like I couldn't connect with people. They couldn't understand me, and I couldn't open up to them. I kept everybody at an arm's length.

**Speaker2:** Just the everyday anxiety of being in transition is a lot. I'm starting to get palpitations and nausea right now and I'm at the mall. What do I do?

**Speaker3:** I had gotten to the point where it was hard for me to get out of bed every morning. I was lethargic and I had no pleasure from anything that I did. I never had any real ups. It was always down.

**Speaker4:** I sort of really went into this deep major depression. I would start having panic attacks and I didn't know what those were. I didn't know how to deal with them. And they were horrible. I mean, my heart felt like it was racing down the street.

**Speaker5:** I became very depressed that I could solve everybody else's problems except those that were closest to me.

**Speaker6:** I know I had dreams and nightmares. I woke up many times with the sheet twisted and just soaking wet on many occasions.

**Speaker7:** I had this one incident where I was holding my daughter and I kind of had like an anxiety attack flashback, and I don't remember. And it was the scariest feeling. And it was in that moment that I said something had to be done.

**Speaker8:** A buddy of mine who had recently gotten out of special operations came down and we got a place together. It just so happened that our landlord happened to work within the VA system. And she asked the two of us, "Do you go to the VA? Do you see anyone for different things?"

**Speaker2:** My provider said, "You know, I've looked through the last few screenings of you and you kind of send up some flags for post-traumatic stress." And I said, "Well, I've never been in combat." And he says, "Okay, you know, yeah. But you still have some things." And so, I start to go. We talk about anxiety, so I get into this anxiety clinic. And I get into a group for cognitive behavioral therapy for social anxiety.

**Speaker4:** It was the trauma counselor that really, really helped me. She did a cognitive behavior therapy with me. It's a working therapy. It's hands-on experience.

**Speaker6:** Then I actually got assigned a counselor for the CBT, and that was for depression. You get to do exercises and change the way that you think about a situation. And in that process, you also want to remove the self-talk mechanism that a majority of us folks have. It's a good way to talk things out and get to the base and root of the problem.

**Speaker2:** Having that person beside you who is teaching you and helping you say, "okay, so this is what this is, and this is why you're reacting this way. Now, why do you think that is and what's the likelihood that your fears are going to be actualized because of this?"



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**Speaker9:** We would start from the beginning. Everything that led up to it, what happened during the part that I remember the most and things that happened afterwards. And what they refer to as the part that you remember is a stuck point. You don't remember the beginning. You don't remember the end. All you remember is the most traumatic part of the event. And so, the cognitive-based therapy helped me to kind of put things together.

**Speaker7:** It was really about pushing me to process what happens at this point. What are you going through? Let's figure out something to help you see that you're not in this place. You're trying to figure this out. And then learning some techniques to help me in those moments.

**Speaker4:** She worked wonders with me. She gave me a whole new attitude about how to quit thinking so negatively.

**Speaker2:** Once you get in and start to deal with things and start to first realize what's happening and then how to deal with it, you find all the extra time in the day. You can do a lot more with your day when you're not stuck on can I even get out the door.

**Speaker8:** I've gone through the therapies. I've successfully graduated from school. I've done a 180 in my life.

**Speaker7:** I began to notice that I was a little bit stronger at handling stuff. I knew how to figure out different things, and I didn't feel like I was in it alone.



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