

It can't hurt to talk to somebody

Calvin: My name's Calvin. I was in the Navy. I was an Engineering Laboratory Technician onboard the USS Albuquerque from 2010 to 2016. I got out of the Navy and immediately went to school. All of a sudden, I'm just like a community college student instead of a submariner. So, that was kind of difficult trying to regain your identity and realizing that you kinda have to work... you have to build yourself back up again.

I was in school with a bunch of 16 to 18-year-olds, and I don't really identify with them at all. I've had a lot more different experiences than they've had in their lives so far. So, it was definitely tough, and I don't feel like I could really talk about any of that with them. I kinda sat around for six months not wanting to tell anybody that I had a problem. If you don't know how to articulate like what's bothering you, you kinda just shove it down.

It's a struggle just trying to find that sense of self again. I definitely reacted in a way of isolation. I'd sit on the couch and play video games a lot. I wasn't really excited to go out and do things. I just kinda wanted to hang out and be by myself and try to figure stuff out. But that's almost counterproductive sometimes.

I was very anxious. I had a lot of just general anxiety. There's a bit of depression that comes along with it too because you're not who you thought you were anymore. I proposed to my fiancée and my anxiety just kind of really overwhelmed me and the proposal didn't really go as I had planned due to my anxiety. And I felt like I'm missing out on these important moments because of this issue that I have, and I don't want to do that. I don't want to miss out.

I went to the VA in Seattle and talked to one of the mental health. I just made an appointment, and everybody seemed to like really care about me. And nobody was judging me and I told them, "Hey, I don't really know what's wrong with me, but there's something that I can't really handle right now." I did a couple sessions of therapy with a therapist, and that was really good to just kind of be able to express all of my thoughts vocally. Even the thoughts like... you're kinda afraid to tell somebody, it's a good way to just kind of actually see for yourself who you are and like kind of organize your thoughts.

People seem like they're much more proud of me now. Seeing people that are happy for me and that I'm doing well now kinda brings that sense of pride back that I was missing when I got out of the Navy.

Nothing can be hurt by going into the VA and saying, "Hey, I wanna talk to somebody. I don't really know if I need to or not." Those kinds of invisible wounds get pushed to the side and they're not really considered important. But they are definitely very, very important.



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