

## Couples can benefit from VA resources

**Shelia:** I'm Sheila. I've been married to a Vietnam Veteran for 44 years, and his name is Pat. We courted for a year and it was rough. He wanted to know where I was all the time, always you know, checking up on me. He's very paranoid, very anal about things, everything has to be in order, everything has to be a certain way, has to be his way. I mean, he didn't talk much about Vietnam at that time. After we were married, he started opening up more about different things. He suffers from survivor guilt. He can't understand why he made it back and others didn't, some of the things that he has, you know expressed. It was difficult for him to talk about, and it was difficult for me to listen to, but it's okay. That's part of you know, a relationship, you know being able to open up to each other and release you know some of that and if he didn't do that I don't know, I really don't know what would happen. It's something I will never, ever say, I've heard this 100 times, no, I'll hear it 100 more times. Different signs and noises and smells and open fields that will bring it back, that will bring back you know flashbacks or start him off on his stories.

As time went on, I, I could see him changing where I saw that he really needed some help. Someone I believe may have mentioned the Vet Center where we live and that's, he called and got hooked up with them and in the beginning he met one-on-one and we met as a couple maybe 2-3 times.

When we went to the Vet Center and met with his counselor down there, I felt freer to be able to speak up and say what I wanted to say with him sitting there listening. Where I probably wouldn't say those things at home. He loves going to the counseling and the group sessions. He really enjoys it, being with other Veterans and being able to talk and feel free and not be judged. I would really like to see these Vet's and their wives when they are discharged, both go into a program so they can learn how to deal with certain stressors. It's very important if you're gonna be in a marriage or relationship with a Veteran, that you have to understand and know where they're coming from.



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