

A family member was the reason Chris reached out

Chris: My name is Chris. I was in the Army from 1989 until 1992, active duty. And then I was in the National Guard from 1992 until 1995. Then I was in the Navy from 1996 until 1999. My job, I was going to be a Naval flight officer. So, I graduated college. I went to Pensacola, Florida to start OCS. And within probably...I was down there maybe a month. I was in training for about a month and I dislocated my ankle. They wouldn't allow me to continue in training until my ankle was healed, but it was a several month process. So, from that time I was in a sort of like holding platoon. I had a son who was 2 years old at the time, and a really bad breakup with his mother. Then they told me I couldn't be a flight officer because I failed the depth perception on the vision test.

All of that stuff came together. I didn't have anything to do. I was just sitting down there and just got progressively more depressed, more angry. I didn't really have an outlet. I signed up and went to a psychiatrist and was prescribed an anti-depressant. Then I ended up getting a medical discharge for my ankle. And so, I thought then that was the end of my problems, you know, free of these people. But it just got worse. In fact, I think it was probably worse after I got out than when I was in because when I was in at least I had structure.

Eventually, I had a family member who worked at a VA hospital and I talked to her. She encouraged me to go to basically check myself in. Well, to go with the idea of checking myself in. It turned out to be a really very positive thing.

First of all, just to have a little bit of time away from just the day to day stress of life. There was a whole range of classes that I took that were about coping, about how you try to respond to adversity, about communications, about life management. I got medication as well, but what I think I learned is that there are other things you can do without medication that can also help.

My life is far more stable relationship wise, work wise. And it probably would not be had I not gotten that treatment. The issues don't necessarily completely go away. But I think with having developed better abilities to deal with them, you have a better life. You are better able to manage them. I still go to the VA for psychiatric treatment. If you can just get over that initial fear or whatever, the help is there for you. It is there, and it will make your life better.



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