

Reaching Out – Overcoming Stigma

Daniel: Being a third generation Marine raised by and been around my entire life. I don't need anyone's help. I'm good. I can do whatever. Why do we do that? Why is that the mentality? Help is not a bad thing. Asking for help is probably the strongest thing you can do. Fighting that stigma of that you don't need anyone's help is step one.

Jennifer: I always heard, "If you go to mental health, you're weak. You must be crazy." I didn't want to be seen as weak or crazy because I'm already a woman in a male dominated field, and so I let that stigma dominate me.

Rick: I didn't speak to anybody about it, not even my wife or my kids, because I was ashamed.

Ponce: You're really not fooling anybody. I look back now, and I really thought I was kind of fooling some folks, but we had providers from the veterans and the resources from the VA that took you where you were and fashioned the therapy or fashioned help in a manner that can reach me.

Jennifer: It was so great to be in a place with somebody that was listening to me without judging me.

Daniel: It takes a incredible amount of strength to be self-aware of where your life currently is and that you need help.

Rick: I think of about all my grandkids. I want them to be proud of their grandfather. I am a warrior in that I can overcome, you can overcome anything you want to if you put your mind through it.

Jennifer: Now that I have help, I'm happy. I don't have to do it alone. I don't have to struggle alone.

Ponce: There is no stigma in seeking help.

Rick: You can get help because it helped me.

Jennifer: There's nothing wrong with getting mental health.

Ponce: These are resources that are available to us, with committed people in personnel and take advantage of it.



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