

Misty found healing for MST in a women's group

Misty: My name is Misty. I was in the United States Air Force. I was an aircraft guidance and control specialist. When I was in the service, another airmen that worked in the same building had raped me, so I had MST, which is Military Sexual Trauma. And I developed severe PTSD symptoms. And it had to do with nightmares, flashback. My biggest one was hyper-vigilance. I'd call myself a lockaholic. I lock everything about 7 times before I go to bed and make 3 or 4 rounds before I leave and just distorted thinking.

Avoidance was my other coping method. Not a healthy one. And pain and rage. I was angry at the perpetrator. I was angry at the military. I was angry at myself. There was a lot of anger and rage. It just filled me up and it made my body hurt and started breaking down. I was like, I've got to do something. And that's one of the main points why I started addressing the specific issue.

How I ended up getting out of the military was they were trying to treat me for PTSD while I was in transition. They kept telling me, "Get into the VA system. Get into the VA system." And I did, and they took care of a lot of my primary care needs. And then I would keep going to the VA and I'm seeing triggers everywhere and realizing that being in big buildings with lots of military guys was not, not really good for me right now. And that's when they said, "You can go to a Vet center."

So, then I started going to the Vet center and there's more women there. And there's women's groups that help, and there's different parts of the VA hospital that's dedicated to women. They have groups, support groups for the specific PTSD MST that help women together. We're stronger together.

The psychologist I go to about once every 3 months, and she helps me with my sleeping. And sometimes it takes medicine to do that, but you can train your body to the time it's supposed to go to sleep and then hopefully you won't have to take medicine all the time. But she helps me with that. And then I go to the Vet center once a week for personal counseling and then once a week for group counseling with women.

I've got 12 years, 10-12 years of counseling and therapy that I can pull from my toolbelt from the counselors I've had through the VA and the Vet centers and one that's really helpful is gratitude journal where you write down everyday stuff you're grateful for. Especially when you don't feel like doing it. And then if you're having problems worrying, schedule you 30 minutes in the day and call this is my worry session. I can write that down, but that's got to wait until tomorrow. And you just watch yourself for negative thinking. So, I stopped the negative, the absolute words, and it's changing my thinking and starting to use affirmations.

A lot of writing, journaling for the MST because once you write through it, that's the biggest step is to write through it. And writing a letter to the perpetrator and giving him all of your anger is very helpful.

My one piece of advice would be don't give up. Especially women. Don't give up. PTSD and MST is something I'm diagnosed with and it's hard to deal with. But I know each female out there that has it, they are a warrior. I know that they can battle it and they can beat it.



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