

It's not something to be shameful about

Veronica: My name is Veronica. I was in the Marine Corp. I served from 2008 to 2015, and I went to Afghanistan in 2010 to 2011. We did I think seven months in Afghanistan, and we didn't have any issues. We all come back. And then, a couple days after we had got back, a friend of ours had died in a car accident, and he had two kids, a wife. So, that was like really difficult. That was the first time I really had lost someone that I was pretty close to. After deployment, we didn't really talk about it. I was young, but I was also still in a leadership position. It was kind of like you know you have to be strong for the Junior Marines. You have to be strong for everybody. I definitely underestimated getting out. I thought it was going to be a lot easier. I thought I was going to get out. Oh, I'm a Veteran. I'm going to have jobs lined up, and that was not the case. You know, I had to pretty much learn everything over again, and that was a huge you know eye opener for me, because I was...I thought, oh, Veterans. People are going to be calling me for jobs. Not, I'm going to have to learn how to interview, and I'm going to have to learn how to write a resume.

I remember my first interview, I didn't even make it, because I had to pull over so many times, because I was throwing up, because I was just so anxious, and I just couldn't figure out you know why am I so nervous? Like, you know I was in the Marine Corp. You know, I know how to do this. Like, this is not that hard. I would get an interview, and then not go because of my anxiety. You know, I automatically put it in my head that I wasn't going to get it, so then I just wasn't you know going to interviews. I wasn't applying for jobs that I thought that I was you know qualified for. I passed up a lot of job opportunities that I look back and say, "Man, I wish I would have applied for this, because I let my anxiety get to me."

I tried to you know just you know get myself in sports, try to you know keep myself like constantly keep my schedule busy like how I was when I was in the Marine Corp, so that I didn't have time to think about it. And then, after awhile, I started stopped going to you know play softball. I stopped going to play basketball, and I just started like sitting in my house. Like, friends would call me, "Hey you want to go out?" And then, like I wouldn't go, and I'm just like yeah, I definitely like started just not having interest in things anymore, and that's when I went to the VA.

At first, I was just like you know I don't know if this even for me. Like, can I even be seen at the VA? So, it took me a couple times to like actually understand exactly what the VA offers. They have so many good programs, but you have to actually like go out and find out, but I mean once I started asking questions, like you know, "Can I be seen for this?" And they're like, "Definitely." I was like you know, "Can I be seen for this?" And they're like, "Of course." And I was just like, "Oh, I didn't know that."

They put me in contact with this...it's called the Choice Program. So, I was able to see an outside therapist. She was amazing. I talked to her...I think I seen her twice a week. So, I went to see her for like my anxiety and my depression for that. I was definitely the person who thought this is my problem. I have to deal with it, and it's a lot. It's a lot to put on yourself, and like the moment I was able to go and talk to someone, it felt like a huge burden, it was just lifted off of me.

I ended up finding a great Veteran resource that gives you little mock interviews, and it was amazing, because you know they're actual real HR people that will sit down with



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you and give you a mock interview. So, that helped me with being more calm and just not being so anxious and being able to do an interview. So, there's lots of groups that I'm in on social media for Veterans. And so, just like reaching out, especially like you know we do the...you know, we have phone rosters in one of my groups, and you know we always...they assign someone to like, "Hey, you know call this person. You know see how they're doing." You know, just checking up on a Veteran.

You're not the only one out there. Reach out if you feel like you know something's not right. You know, believe, trust your gut, and you know just reach out to someone. You don't have to tell them exactly what's going on, but just sort of let them know, "Hey, you know, something's not right." You know, try to just get some help. There's definitely resources out there. It's not something to be shameful about.



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