

Navy Veteran describes bipolar symptoms

Randy: My name is Randy. I served in the Navy from '79 to '86, what's called a three by six. We were in Portsmouth, Virginia, in Norfolk Naval Shipyard. I went out, got an apartment because my wife was supposed to move with me. She came down, she stayed maybe a week, and then she left, and I tried to commit suicide.

I didn't want to go back to... on a ship. I didn't, I missed her. I was just having a real rough time and I wanted to go home to Detroit, and I couldn't. And I missed my daughter. And then I wound up at the Naval Regional Medical Center for a long time.

When I was released from the hospital, I went to Norfolk Naval Air Station, First Lieutenant Division, and that was basically, it was eight, nine... eight to four job.

To this day, I'm still manic depressive and bipolar. You can be walking down the street, right, and somebody that you've never seen in your life and in the back of your mind you know you'll never see again, call you ugly or they don't like your pants or they don't like your shoes. And you will carry that with you for days. I'm not as good as that person. I could be happy, so happy, 30 minutes later I'm down in the dumps for no reason at all.

One day I'll like you, the next minute I wanna fight you. You know, this... And since I've been out of the Navy, four or five times I've been in a mental hospital. But see, these were before I knew about the VA Hospital.

I didn't know about... I could qualify for services through the VA Hospital until I got the job I got now, which is Veteran Services. They taught me tricks through all these years of when I feel myself getting depressed, do something you enjoy. And one of the best things I learned was walking. When I feel myself getting depressed, I walk. I walk a long way.

I'm keeping myself busy and that's what's helping. I don't have time to feel sorry for myself. I don't have time to say, "Woe Is Me." There's tricks of the trade, and the only way to learn those tricks is go to a psychiatrist, therapist. Pick up the phone. Just pick up the phone. Go, go to... no matter what it takes to get down there, go there.



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