

Opening up helped Henry through his challenges

Henry: My name is Henry. I was in the Army. I served at Fort Carson, Colorado from 1976 to '79. I was discharged with an honorable discharge and my job was 11C Mortarman. I knew I had to get out and do something with my life, so I decided to join the service. But while I was in the service, I got introduced into drugs.

I think it was like in 1980 we went down range on a bivouac. And one of my partners, we were asleep, sleeping out at night and a tank ran it over. And that stuck with me for the rest of my life. I still deal with it today. I have nightmares at times still, but I'm getting a lot of help at the VA and they helped me adjust with it.

I think what really escalated my problem... I got out, I felt like, I was never respected or honored for anything. I couldn't get a job at first. No one and where nowhere to go, and I had no structure in my life other than my family.

A lot of times I couldn't sleep at night, I would wake up in cold sweat or swinging and hollering in the bed and stuff, and a lot of relationships I was in, my significant other couldn't deal with it.

My bipolar was... my thing was when I was low, I always got real low. I always was by myself. I usually liked to sit in the house. But when my anxiety, when it rose up, I would stress out at people. You know the main thing I do is verbally launch out at people and start hollering and cursing for no particular reason or it shouldn't have been that severe for me to holler at them like that there. I figured they should have been there for me, not understanding what I'm putting them through at the same time.

Eventually, I turned back to drugs. So now I'm out in the streets and going through changes on drugs and everything, and I see myself getting back in my same pattern, so I ended up at the VA.

I ended up in the hospital, went into a deep depression, got diagnosed with bipolar. I ended up getting clean, getting off of drugs and everything. I ended up doing volunteer service for about a year and then they put me in the CWT program.

The CWT program has helped Veterans out there struggling, that's been on drugs, or just been out in the streets. They get you a job and they just get you back in the workforce. I did that for nine months, then I ended up getting a permanent job there, which is what I'm doing right now.

I think it turned my life around 360 right now because, like I say, I'm in the workforce now in the day, I get along with all my coworkers, I can go to the movies, got a significant other, planning on getting married next year. And my family, we just get along too good now. Everything like to me, is like peaches and roses now. Right now, I feel real good about myself and everything that I'm doing.

My thing is go talk to somebody. We got to realize we're not the only one out here struggling, going through this here. You need to come open up. Speak to people about it. It helped me out tremendously because I felt I'm not the only one going through this here. I see it's not just me.



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