

Positive outcomes from counseling

Jeff: Hi, my name is Jeff. I served in the Marine Corps, and I was in from 2003 to 2007. I served in Afghanistan and in Iraq on two combat deployments. My buddy who...actually both of my buddies on the mission, they ended up having to get attached over there, and I was attached away from them, so it was like my whole mortar team and they all got blown up, so it was like, "What the hell...?" you know that survivor's sort of, like, "Why wasn't I there?" sort of thing.

It was like a lot different when you first come back, just because it takes you a while to dial that down, dial down your mindset. At first I swear it was culture shock. I did a lot of the same of what I was doing in the Marines. We drank a lot in the barracks and I carried that over to my house, and my parent's house, I mean I did go to school pretty much right after, but I'd rent a movie and drink in my room alone. I was at a concert once, and a common theme with Veterans is you don't like crowds. Understandably because when you're in Iraq, you're in the marketplace and this and that, you want to be in control.

When I was at this concert, when I had just first got out, it was one of my favorite bands, but the whole concert was ruined because I got into that moment of caging and closing up and my sister was like yelling at me and I just told her...because I actually...that's one of the experiences too from Iraq because I almost got shot on Post. A sniper's bullet like literally lodged in the sandbag in front of me. So, in my mindset, I said, "I wish the bullet hit me."

I'm like something's not right, why am I saying this stuff? Why am I wishing death upon myself? That's not right, and then I thought back to the traumatic experiences, like the Lieutenant, my buddies, they would want me to live better. So, I recognized and I went to the VA and they basically were like...did the screening. Then they put me with this guy I really liked, he was non-Vet, but he was a clinical social worker, and I actually told him too a few times, "Man, I don't know what to do. It's like I wish I could stay in this room forever and talk to you because when I go out there, I don't know what I'm doing." So, that's when they started recommending like month long these and different exercises to do throughout the week. So then that starts breaking down and helping you and also they connect you with uh, groups of Veterans that have gone through the same thing.

Once you get people who get you, you'll realize there's a lot of people who get you it's not just the one counselor, it's not just...all of a sudden you start running into Vets and even civilians who maybe don't have a combat experience, but they have a traumatic experience of some sort.

It's like... you just start to...positive turns into a positive, and the next thing you know, all that stuff you learned in the military is starting to come full circle. You still have the discipline, you still have the drive. You'll realize too, it becomes easier to talk about and not so like, bragging talk about, but easier to use your experience as an advantage in a lot of places, like the workplace...and just getting involved in activities and you should be amazed in communities how many people who crave someone like you, like a Veteran or military to... because they just know you have it inside you and they know you've already overcame a lot of obstacles.



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