

Group therapy helped Kelly become a better mom

Kelly: My name is Kelly, and I served in the United States Marine Corps. I completed two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. I was an intelligence specialist and then when I was stationed in Omaha, Nebraska I actually did nuclear targeting at the Air Force base. When I first got to MOS school I was in a class every day, came back from Christmas break and the Marine that sat next to me wasn't there, and nobody could find him, and it ended up being that a Navy personnel on the base had murdered him. I had been in the Marine Corps for six months, that it molded me to believe that it was always going to happen, I was always going to lose people. I had an anger issue from that point and that's how I dealt with my feelings. Instead of mourning a death I expressed it as anger. Over the years it was everything that I couldn't control in my life, I reacted in anger and I became very much OCD. I had to control every aspect of my life.

I came home from Afghanistan and I'll never forget it. It was about 5:30 in the morning, I had my daughter in the back seat and I was taking her to daycare so I could get to work. We got in and I pulled out of the garage and I had told her to put her seat belt on and she couldn't get it buckled, and I had gotten so angry that I put the car, I slammed it in park and I got out and I snapped her seatbelt in, and it wasn't until I got to the stop sign and I looked in the rearview mirror and she had her head down and she was crying, and I just I looked at her and I said, "What's wrong with you?" And she said, "I'm sorry that I made you so angry, I just couldn't see." And it was at that point I knew my actions and how I was dealing with things were affecting her, and that's when I knew I really needed to do something to not be so angry, because I didn't want to hurt her.

I called the clinic and asked to see mental health, and I went back and I had spent six weeks with a counselor and throughout the time every week that I saw him he said, "I think you should go to group therapy, I think you should go to group therapy," every time. I just gave in. "Fine, I'll go once, but I'm not going to promise that I'm going to sit through all of it." And it was a women's group for individuals who had gone through trauma, for active duty women, and I had went and I just kind of sat, and so I went back a second week just to see, give it a little bit more of a chance, and it turned out to be the best decision that I had ever made.

Being around other people who want to better themselves pushes you to want to be a better person and work through your issues, so they have been definitely my saving grace. I've come out a happier person and it reflects in the way that my daughter is now, because now she has a happier life because her mom is happy, and I have the tools that I've learned through therapy to be able to help guide her into being a better person as well.

Whether you have a mental health issue or not, I like to think of counselors as a life coach. Someone to help guide you through life. The first thing you try may not work for you, you know, the first individual that you go and say "I need help" may not be the person that you feel truly connected with, that can help you, but once you find that person you always feel so much better. I think that it's very important for people to seek help even if they feel like they don't need it, because you never know how great you can feel once you've talked through all your trauma.



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