

Have you met someone with PTSD? Chances are you have, multiple times, and may not have realized it. Why is this, you may ask? The reason is that unlike other ailments such as the cold and flu, which can be seen and felt, PTSD can only be felt by the person who has the disability. I did not always have PTSD, but after four years of service in the United States Navy, I was diagnosed with it. Being in the military and developing this disability has dramatically affected my ability to pursue an education.

I joined the U.S. Navy in 2011. I knew that I would enlist from an early age because I wanted to follow in my father's footsteps just as he had followed his father's footsteps. The military has been in my life long before I was born, and I knew I needed to carry on the family tradition. I proudly became a Corpsman in 2012 and went on to Advanced X-ray Tech C School, where I graduated number one in my class before making my way to the fleet.

I came to the fleet not knowing what to expect. I had only one thing on my mind, and that was success. I wanted to make an impact; I wanted to be the top dog. I worked diligently at my job and soon was noticed for my hard work. I began to go to school and soon earned two Associate's Degrees. I soon began on my Bachelor's degree with hopes of going to MECP and becoming a commissioned officer. My hard work did not stop there; I began to be taken seriously by superiors and went on to win Sailor of the Month, Bluejacket of the Quarter, and Bluejacket of the Year.

I was the epitome of a sailor; I made my family proud. I knew that I wanted to continue this career for the rest of my life and retire just as my father had. But, in 2015, life decided it had other plans for me, I was assaulted, and my life was forever changed. I was working full-time nights while going to school full-time during the day. Before the assault, I was making

straight 'A's in all of my classes. But, shortly after it occurred, I began to experience my first symptoms of PTSD.

Schoolwork became difficult for me, something I had never experienced in the past. I could no longer sit in my classes and stay focused. Anxiety and fear overwhelmed me so much that I began to fail all of my classes. I knew at that point I had to drop out of school because I was wasting my time and money. I took about a year off before switching paths and trying beauty school; another mistake on my part. I was able to go to the classes for about a week, but anxiety and fear once again got the best of me.

2018 came around, and I realized my dream of going to medical school and becoming a doctor was gone. I knew I no longer could go to school where I had to sit in class, so I found an online school and switched degree plans. I began studying History because it has interested me since I was young. Due to unforeseen circumstances and tuition increases, I had to stop working towards my degree. 2020 came with many unexpected changes, including changing my degree to Western Governors University (WGU).

I am currently pursuing my Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in the hope that I can use my degree to make a positive impact in America one day. I could never have imagined in 2011 that it would have taken me more than six years to complete my Bachelor's degree. PTSD affects every aspect of my life. Most people do not know I have it unless they know me well or I tell them. Having PTSD has made it extremely difficult to pursue my education because of the fear and anxiety that I experience daily. Through hard work, determination, and motivation, I will complete my degree through WGU.