

Hello! My name is James Hollimon I am 57 years old and a 20 year veteran of the A.F. I retired in 1992. I was raised in Kerrville Texas. My Father died when I was 14 and I became the Man of the house. After I enlisted I was stationed in Thailand. I found out we flew over to DaNang on a regular basis. The duty was difficult for 19-20 year old with undiagnosed mental issues that he hid in a bottle.

I kept having several stress related illnesses which was my way of compensating for my Mental illness. I was having a hard time managing my alcohol abuse and my mental problems. My bad habits and my mental illness progressed to cause problems in my military career as well as at home. I was an alcoholic and I had a Big Problem.

My frequent trips to the V/A and Benefis occurred shortly after I retired. I started seeing a Psychiatrist, and a Therapist. Along with seizures I also admitted for the first time to hearing voices that weren't there. I had a binding trust with my Psychiatrist and Therapist. We worked together for several years. My therapist helped me over the months of therapy to come to the realization that the voices I heard was not able to hurt me. I still hear voices but with the help of medications and therapy I am able to cope.

My Pastor, S.C. Schearer pointed out that the major thing lacking in my life was God. I knelt down on my living room floor by my couch and asked the Lord in my heart. This new found relationship with a Higher Power helped me to stop drinking without any DT's. I began to study and memorize scriptures and my life had meaning. I still however had mental problems I couldn't shake. By the time I retired in 1992 with 20 Years service there was a lot of evidence that something was wrong. My spirituality that kept me going and my family and church family gave me strength. I still hear voices and I still have a mental health diagnosis At times I still need to go to the hospital but I am doing better with the proper tools to help me be a better family man as well as live each day with Mental Illness to the best of my ability.

I also found a major coping tool in the Wellness Recovery Action Plan. I took Wrap in October of 2006. And my mental life got a jump start on the road to recovery. Experience has taught me to take things very slow and easy as I resume my regular task.

Later in Oct of 2006 I took Peer Employment Training. That is where I got the tools of Recovery. We will always be recovering and will not necessarily ever be fully recovered. Recovery is a series of Baby steps. That sometimes we fall down and pick ourselves back up. I have been a Peer Support Specialist since Oct of 2006 helping other people in Recovery and as I help someone I also help myself to grow. In Sept of 2010 I became a WRAP Facilitator I learned how to be well versed and well practiced in facilitating WRAP. I will pass on what I have learned. Recovery is something that is never ending for me for I am always learning from the situations my illness puts me through. I now have tools to help me cope.

I would not have been able to progress as far as I have with help from the Mental Health Center, my Therapist and Psychiatrist. The help I received through Medicare and the V/A was what helped me to progress to the point I am now. Please consider my story when you are faced with discussing changes to Medicaid, Medicare or the Mental Health System. Thank you listening to what I said and allowing me time to talk.