

Hearing Testimony
Dean S. Maiers
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
VA Mental Health: Ensuring Access to Care
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My name is Dean Maiers and I am an OIF/OEF disabled veteran. I would like to take some time and explain how my peer support specialist has been extremely helpful.

I had a very rough time adapting when I got out of the Navy. I pretty much lost everything that was important to me, my wife, children, employment everything seemed hopeless.

Then I found this program. It changed my life in so many ways. Ernest Johnson and the Comprehensive Work Therapy program at the Errera Center in West Haven have been a blessing to be honest. He also introduced me to several other social workers and other programs that have helped me tremendously, by getting me the right support team, and doctors to get me back on track. If it wasn't for my peer support specialist, the program I am in and all the people who are there whenever you need them, I would never have gotten back on track. It gave me a sort of relief knowing that they are always there when I need them.

Every single veteran coming home deserves a peer support specialist. Every state in this great country needs to have this program implemented. Some veterans like myself not too long ago might have too much pride to admit there is something wrong it took me 8 years of failing at everything to give it a try - and now my life has improved in every way possible.

Just the fact of knowing that someone is there for you if or when you need them is a great relief. I am happy to elaborate if you have any further questions for me today.

Thank you so much for this opportunity and your time. I hope this has been somewhat helpful. Anything I can do to help my brothers and sisters in arms to get the treatment they need and deserve.

Dean S. Maiers