

THE AMERICAN VETERAN  
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SEGMENT TITLE: BEREAVEMENT COUNSELING

JENNIFER BRADEN, HOST: A FAMILY'S WORST FEAR THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE. VA'S VET CENTER BEREAVEMENT COUNSELORS ARE HELPING FAMILIES AND COMRADES OF OUR FALLEN SOLDIERS. THE FAMILY OF ARMY SPECIALIST BRAD BEARD RECEIVED HELP AT THE RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA VET CENTER.  
HERE'S THEIR STORY.

BETSY BEARD, BRAD'S MOTHER: ON OCTOBER 15TH OF 2004, THE DOORBELL RANG.  
THEY CAME IN, AND I WAS SURE THAT MY HEART STOPPED BEATING, BUT IT DIDN'T.

RANDY BEARD, BRAD'S FATHER: LOSING A SON, I'VE SAID TO OTHER PEOPLE, IF THERE'S SOMETHING MORE DIFFICULT TO GO THROUGH, I DON'T WANT TO, I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT THAT IS.

COKE ARIAIL, REPORTER: IT WAS SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER BRAD'S DEATH BEFORE BETSY FELT STRONG ENOUGH TO APPROACH THE VET CENTER ABOUT THEIR COUNSELING PROGRAM.

BETSY: I PROBABLY WOULD NEVER HAVE GONE INTO THE VET CENTER IF I HADN'T GOTTEN A CALL FROM THEM FIRST, BECAUSE MY COMFORT LEVEL WOULD NOT HAVE INCLUDED GOING TO A STRANGE LOCATION AND TALKING TO A STRANGER ABOUT SOMETHING THAT WAS SO HUGELY PAINFUL THAT I COULD BARELY TALK ABOUT IT AT ALL.

GREG INMAN, PHD, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, RALEIGH, NC, VET CENTER: I THINK IT TOOK A LOT OF COURAGE ON HER PART TO COME IN.

BETSY: I KNEW THAT THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT I COULD NEVER HANDLE ALONE.

INMAN: AS A PROFESSIONAL, WE'RE HERE TO LISTEN AND WE WANT TO HEAR THE STORY. WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THE PERSON WHO HAS DIED AND WE WANT TO BE THERE TO HELP WITH THE GRIEF, AND IT'S OKAY THAT YOU CAN CRY IN FRONT OF US, IT'S OKAY THAT YOU CAN TALK ABOUT THE PERSON, IT'S OKAY IF WE HEAR THE SAME STORY OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

RANDY: WORKING WITH GREG HAS HELPED ME TO ALLOW THOSE PAINFUL EMOTIONS TO HAPPEN.

ARIAIL: TWO YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF THEIR SON, WITH THE HELP OF THE VET CENTER AND SOME OF THEIR NEW FRIENDS, BETSY AND RANDY ARE SLOWLY BEGINNING TO ASSEMBLE THE PIECES OF THEIR NEW LIFE. BUT THEY HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN.

BRADEN: IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS HAD A LOVED ONE KILLED IN COMBAT, PLEASE CONTACT THE NEAREST VA VET CENTER AND ASK ABOUT THE BEREAVEMENT COUNSELING PROGRAM.

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