



Dan

Dan lives for his grandchildren. Wants to stay healthy to see his youngest graduate from college.

- * Sgt. in Viet Nam
- * Divorced, with girlfriend
- * Had good job as construcion foreman
- * Depression and PTSD
- * Diabetes from Agent Orange

Dan JM

anthony masalonis | August 13, 2020

Scenario

Dan recently contracted COVID-19 and shortly thereafter lost his construction foreman job. As a result, his existing depression has been exacerbated.

Expectations

Get out of this "funk", come up with some coping mechanisms for being cooped up inside, and strategies to get back to work

Problem identified

During a routine telemedicine visit with his primary care, the doctor senses that Dan is more depressed than before. He's been in counseling (non-VA) for his PTSD and depression in the past, and the PCP thinks he could benefit from psychotherapy at VA.

Maybe it is time to go the counseling route again. It helped before and I feel hopeful that they can help me again.

Initial consult

The appointment is via telehealth. Dan allows 5 minutes before the start of the session to get on, but runs into difficulties and 10 minutes after the scheduled start time, calls the VAMC in frustration and they decide to do a phone session. Once it starts, they have a good conversation - though it takes time to get into the groove because of Dan's frustration with the technology - and establish a care plan.

This is so frustrating! I wish I could just get out of this house and go talk to the therapist in person.

First Therapy Session

Get to know the patient; identify the issues to work on

The decision is made to do psychotherapy only, though Dan would prefer to have medication in addition.

It would be more helpful if I could get some drugs. Medication helped me quit smoking; I think it would help my mood too. And this business of doing it on the computer is still frustrating.

Homework

Spend time each day looking for work; go for a walk each day or at least sit out on the porch.

Keep a journal of his emotional state daily.

I feel like I'm taking charge of my life and getting myself back on my feet. It helps to track my moods, so I can see how I'm doing. I look forward to checking in with Dr. Jones again. Well, the appt. is this afternoon. I still have some trepidation that the computer will blow up on me again. I want to get out of this house!

Ongoing Sessions

Dan attends psychotherapy sessions once every three weeks for eight sessions.

Some of the visits are better than others. I guess things are getting better in general and I feel better but I don't know if I can attribute that to the therapy. I do like having Dr. Patel to talk to, though. She's easy to get along with.

Transition out of MH

The discussion begins about Dan transitioning out of Mental Health care and having medications managed by Primary Care.

I still think some sessions go better than others, but I'm making progress. I don't want to feel like I'm being dropped like a hot potato. I think I need to continue this but they almost seem to think I'm "all better".