through the looking glass
how the experiences of a victim of domestic violence mirror those of a combat veteran

I served my country, so I thought my country would serve me.

After I was deployed, every day I lived in a warzone. I never knew when to expect the next attack.

But I kept fighting. I was committed to protecting my country. I found ways to cope with the violence.

(A study of soldiers screened 3 to 4 months after returning from deployment to Iraq showed that 27% met criteria for alcohol abuse and were at increased risk for related harmful behaviors. \(^1\))

When I finally came home, I thought I would have options. I thought my community would support me.

(It is estimated that 57,849 veterans are homeless on any given night. \(^2\))

But everywhere I turn, I face new barriers to getting the help I need.

(One out of three veterans ages 18 to 24 were without work the last quarter of 2011, double the civilian rate. \(^3\))

No matter what I do, I will never be the same. I can hardly remember the person I used to be.

(Of returning soldiers, clinicians identified 20% of active and 42% of reserve component soldiers as requiring mental health treatment. \(^4\))

I loved my husband, so I thought my husband would love me.

After I married him, every day was like living in a warzone. I never knew when to expect the next attack.

But I kept going. I was committed to my family. I found ways to cope with the violence.

(Women who have been abused are 15 times more likely to abuse alcohol and 9 times more likely to abuse drugs than women who have not been abused. \(^5\))

When I finally left him, I thought I would have options. I thought my community would support me and my children.

(92% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives. \(^6\))

But everywhere I turn, I face new barriers to getting the help I need.

(In one study, 93% of victims requested help with economic issues and 61% needed three or more kinds of economic help. \(^7\))

No matter what I do, I will never be the same. I can hardly remember the person I used to be.

(The prevalence of PTSD in domestic violence victims ranges from 45% to 84%. \(^8\))

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