

Anna, a disabled female veteran, entered the Easterseals VT Military & Veteran Services (MVS) program in the fall of 2017. Anna served in the United States Army in the late 1970s, and suffers from service-related PTSD. She sought medical attention and has been prescribed medication for a number of years. Anna also suffers from severe anxiety; loud noises, groups of people, and unfamiliar places all increase Anna's anxiety. She does receive therapy and tries to be aware of her triggers. It can be difficult for Anna to attend large family events, and even mass at church. Anna is proud that she could serve her country regardless of the impact of her military service on her mental health and well-being.



Recently, a series of medical issues, including cervical cancer and a broken leg, stretched Anna's budget to the breaking point. She couldn't afford the co-pays, medications, and uncovered care she needed. In an effort to make ends meet, Anna had to forgo necessities such as heating oil. This was no small sacrifice in the cold months of a Vermont winter, but she had no choice.

Having been challenged by PTSD and depression for years, Anna was no stranger to suffering but the bills were piling up and she didn't know where to turn. The stress was weighing her down, and affecting her health. Like most veterans, Anna sees herself as someone who should help others rather than be on the receiving end of services. She was active in her church and community, and didn't want to draw attention to her needs. Anna had never reached out to any veteran organization for financial assistance.

Fortunately, Anna met Morgan Blanchard, a Care Coordinator for the Easterseals Vermont's MVS program. Morgan was able to ease this well-deserving veteran's mind that a small hand-up was justified and would get Anna back on her feet. Morgan was able to request financial assistance for much-needed home heating fuel so Anna could stay warm.

Anna truly appreciated the emergency financial assistance she received from MVS. When facing challenges such as cancer and a painful broken leg, depression can easily take hold. Furthermore, the bleak discomfort of being in a cold home can become a tipping point leading to a downward spiral.

"It was so comforting knowing I was coming home to a warm house after all my treatments," said Anna.

Anna's story exemplifies the mission of our Military & Veterans Services, which is to provide critical and timely financial assistance and services when no other resource is available to veterans, service members, and their families to ensure their dignity, health and overall well-being. Without the help of MVS, Anna would not have been able to get through the winter.