

Pearl's Story on helping her partner through depression

He'd changed. It was gradual at first. He was angrier, quick to lose his temper and flying off the handle at everything. He said it was everyone else's fault. He became more and more withdrawn, he never laughed or smiled, and at home he mostly sat in 'his' chair with a scotch in his hand staring into the floor or at the TV. He stayed on at work a lot more and slept in weekends. Our kids were the soft target of his temper and increasingly spent time in their rooms when he was home. We were all walking on eggshells not to upset him. People were noticing the change at work too asking if he was ok. He didn't think he had a problem. He told me he didn't know if he wanted to be with me and the kids anymore. I began to doubt whether I wanted to be with him too. After a couple of months of this he moved out. I felt relieved, I think the kids were too, but worried for him. Things on the work front got worse, and finally he got help. The doctor diagnosed him with depression, put him on stress leave and referred him to a clinical psych. He went on medication, he didn't like doing that at first but it made a big difference.

He realised it wasn't us anymore and he came home. He gradually got better, I remember the first time we laughed together again, it had been a long time for both of us. Our relationship has changed, but we are ok. He's off medication now and mostly back to his old self again.

What caused it I don't know - there was some family history but there were work pressures and some stuff from deployments that he'd bounce right through at the time. Our men are tough, asking for help isn't easy for them. He had to hit a crisis before he got help and even then, he didn't really know he had the problem, partly that was the depression. It's hard was hard on him and everyone around him. But he got help and he is ok now.