



Brandon Lay

Brandon served 4 years active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Combat Engineer. He was deployed twice to Afghanistan, with his primary mission locating IEDs for dismounted patrols. After his enlistment was completed in the beginning of 2011, he moved to Iowa to marry his fiancé, begin college classes, and return to work as a Private Investigator.

After a few years, he found himself struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress, missing the brotherhood of the Marines, a loss of self-identity with an unclear purpose in life, addicted to drugs, and thoughts of suicide. He took off to the wilderness of Montana and Western Wyoming in an effort to find his purpose in life. After a week, he

returned home with hope and two missions. His first mission was to help himself. He researched, read through books, online articles, and watched videos on PTS to determine what the best course of action for him. He completed Cognitive Processing Therapy with the help of a passionate and determined therapist and he took regular trips to the wilderness as he recovered from PTS and drugs.

His second mission was to be involved with an organization that helped veterans. After hearing of Project Rebirth through his wife, he knew he wanted to be a part of the new initiative Project Rebirth was launching, Project Cohort. The idea of starting small veteran cohorts in communities, taking them on wilderness adventures, and facilitating the recovery process and building resiliency was something that Brandon quickly envisioned and wanted to be involved with.

Brandon joined the team in October of 2014, and he currently serves as a Military and Veteran Advisor for Project Rebirth. He is currently involved with organizing events for veterans within his community and he is heavily involved with launching Project Cohort in the Central Region. Along with being involved with Project Rebirth and Project Cohort, he has returned to college at Iowa State University to study Psychology in hopes that one day he can be a therapist for veterans struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress. Brandon currently resides in Des Moines, Iowa with his wife, Kate, and their two dogs.