Amanda Hostetter’s Story

As a six-year Veteran of the Air Force, Amanda is currently months away from every college student’s daydream, graduation. While in the service, Amanda worked as a mental health tech, which allowed her to realize how much she enjoyed caring for others. She deployed twice and made her fair share of sacrifices to get to where she is today. Amanda, like many others, reveals having a difficult time when transitioning from active duty to civilian life. She bashfully admits how stressful periods tend to lead her to isolation. Consequently, her isolation while trying to navigate a new life only added more negativity and stress to the recipe. Amanda joined the Air Force Reserve hoping to have some familiarity around her and continue her service. However, it was nothing like active duty, and it just accentuated this changing, difficult time in her life. She even considered rescinding her contract. Several plans fell through, and she ended up in the great state of Ohio ready to become a Buckeye. Amanda had extensive knowledge regarding mental health, and she knew she had been ignoring hers for a while now. She slowly started connecting with people and finding resources. She accepts that she still does not have it together all the time, but she also recognizes that mental health, just like physical health, is on a continuum. Amanda attributes much of her good health to her yoga practice.

“Yoga and meditation have been huge and not just in daily life, but also school and relationships”. She explains how she loves trying new things, “I sat in a pink Himalayan salt cave this weekend, and it was super relaxing. It was a different experience, very peaceful.”
She goes on to say how everyone is different, and how it takes trying new things to figure out what you need or benefit from. “I have also tried a sensory deprivation pod; I try different things continually. I’m taking an integrative medicine course (at OSU) that has taught me that there are alternative ways to channeling energy, emotions, and feelings.” Amanda emphasizes how crucial it has been for her to go out into her community and find what resources are available to her. Counseling at our university and journaling have also been a part of her exploration methods. “I’m an avid journaler now, I haven’t always been though...a little self reflection sometimes isn’t necessarily what I want.” She shares her experience with it and how it did not work for her before, because it felt like an obligation. “That’s the cool part, it’s not a homework assignment. It’s something that if I don’t do one day, it’s fine. If I want to write in the third person, that’s okay.

If I want to write about emotions one day or feelings, that’s also okay.” She goes on to joke how crazy she would look if someone were to find her journal and read it. However, she also mentions how sometimes being honest with how she feels with others is empowering. She implies how being secretive or putting up a façade is stressful for her. Essentially, being truthful and raw with her emotions takes away the power they held over her and puts it back in her hands. “My mental health is very important to me, it affects my relationship with myself and the relationships with those I love. It affects me physically; I don’t sleep well if I’m not taking care of myself. I feel tired and heavy…it’s really draining.” “My big thing is to encourage people to explore. Reading, music therapy, church, there’s so many outlets. Don’t be afraid to just try anything, or everything. You might be surprised at what you find.”

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Remember, you are a valued student of this university. You matter. Seeking help makes you strong. Taking care of you is always the right thing to do.

For comments, feedback, or story submissions email Camacho.49@osu.edu.