

Stephanie Petersen

Stephanie Petersen, a Sarasota native and former Marine, overcame homelessness and military sexual trauma to become an advocate for women veterans, founding Fidelity Wellness. Alongside her pioneering work, she's a Licensed Massage Therapist and former Acupuncturist, leveraging holistic healing to empower others on their journey to recovery and well-being.

Stephanie Petersen's journey is one of resilience and unwavering determination. Growing up in Sarasota, FL, Stephanie knew from a young age that she wanted to be a nurse, influenced by her mother's work as a certified nursing assistant. However, her path was far from easy. At just 16, she was kicked out by her father, and the following year, her mother followed suit. Despite these challenges, Stephanie remained focused on her goals, earning her nursing assistant certification during her junior year of high school and diving headfirst into the workforce to support herself.

As she entered college on a scholarship, Stephanie found herself struggling to balance her studies with the demands of full-time work to cover her expenses. Feeling overwhelmed and burnt out, she made a bold decision to enlist in the Marine Corps during her first semester. Departing for boot camp within days of making the decision, Stephanie celebrated her 19th birthday scrubbing decks and embarked on a journey that would shape her in ways she never anticipated.

Stationed in Okinawa, Japan, Stephanie dedicated herself to her service, deploying to Afghanistan twice in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. However, her greatest battles would come upon her return to civilian life. Struggling with undiagnosed PTSD, Stephanie faced a long and arduous journey toward understanding and healing from her trauma. It wasn't until years later that she realized the full extent of the trauma she had endured, including military sexual assault, which she had blocked from her memory for years.

Drawing from her own experiences, Stephanie emerged as a fierce advocate for women veterans, recognizing the significant gaps in support and resources available to them. In 2022, she was honored as Female Veteran of the Year for Sarasota County in recognition of her tireless advocacy and dedication to her community. In her mission to support women affected by military sexual trauma, Stephanie founded Fidelity Wellness, a nonprofit organization committed to empowering military women to overcome their trauma and lead purposeful lives.



In addition to her advocacy work, Stephanie is a Licensed Massage Therapist since 2015, utilizing holistic healing modalities to support her clients' well-being. She furthered her education by graduating with a Master of Science in Oriental Medicine in 2020, becoming a Licensed Acupuncturist and holistic mental health telehealth provider.

Through her multifaceted approach to healing, Stephanie continues to make a profound impact on the lives of others, demonstrating resilience, compassion, and unwavering dedication to her community.

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