Mass Communication Impact on Veteran Suicide Prevention

Presentation for the American Psychological Association conference, 2023

In life we do things.

Some we wish we had never done. Some we wish we could replay a million times in our heads. But they all make us who we are, and in the end they shape every detail about us. If we were to reverse any of them we wouldn't be the person we are. So just live, make mistakes, have wonderful memories. But never ever second guess who you are, where you have been, and most importantly where it is you're going.

where you have been, and my importantly where it is you're going.
"Unknown.





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(he/him/his)

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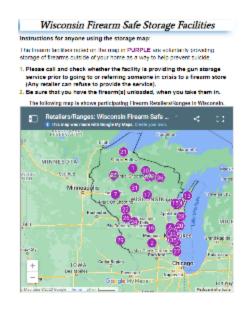
War Memorial Center

THIS STUDY IS FUNDED BY ADVANCING A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN

Public Health Messaging

Our project is designed to increase help seeking behavior and decrease the incidence of firearm suicides among Veterans through our advertising campaigns.







Public Health Messaging

Public Health Messaging is a primary suicide prevention strategy that is used to provide awareness to All People!

1. AWARENESS: The public and especially the family and friends of Veterans need to be aware of Veteran risks so they can intervene and help save a life.

2. EDUCATION: Provide information through advertising to affect change.

Veterans and Suicide Facts

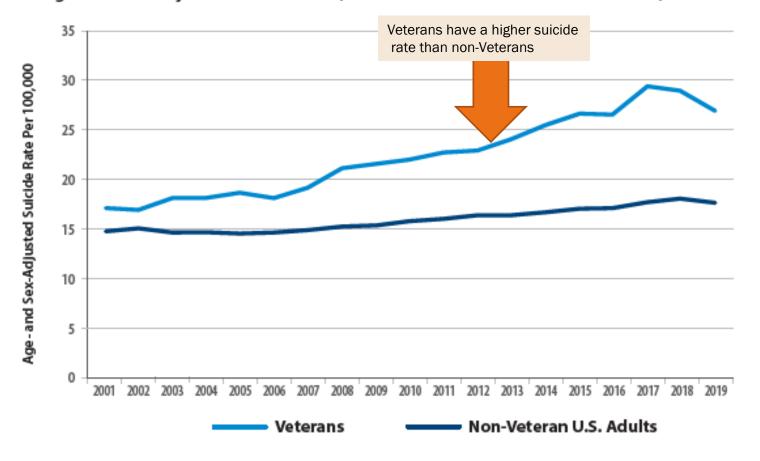
There were 399 fewer Veteran suicides in 2019 than in 2018. Adjusted rates fell from 2018 to 2019 for Veterans; rates fell 7.2% among Veterans and 1.8% among non-Veterans.

Average Veteran suicides per day decreased to 17.2 in 2019. In 2019, the adjusted rate for Veterans was 52.3% greater than for non-Veteran U.S. adults.

The rate difference between Veterans and the non-Veteran U.S. population was highest in 2017.

An overview of the trend line pertaining to Veteran and non-Veteran suicide rates by year from 2001 to 2019.

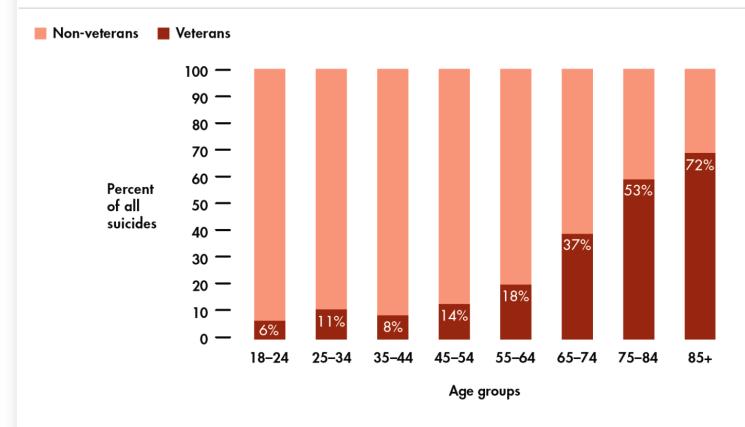
Figure 3: Age- and Sex-Adjusted Suicide Rates, Veterans and Non-Veteran U.S. Adults, 2001–2019



Veteran Population in Wisconsin

Veteran Population (as of 9/30/2017)	Wisconsin	National
Number of Veterans	363,898	19,998,799
Percent of Adult Population that are Veterans	8.62%	6.60%
Number of Women Veterans	28,907	1,882,848
Percent of Women Veterans	7.94%	9.41%
Number of Military Retirees	22,025	2,156,647
Percent of Veterans that are Military Retirees	6.05%	10.78%
Number of Veterans Age 65 and Over	1 92,64 5	9,410,179
Percent of Veterans Age 65 and Over	52.94%	47.05%

Figure 18. The proportion of **veterans** who died by suicide was **greater** in **older age groups** than younger age groups, 2013–2017.



Data source: Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2013–2017.

Figure 18. The proportion of suicides that were veterans increased with age from 2013–2017. For example, 8% of suicides among those ages 35–44 were veterans and 72% were veterans among those ages 85 or older.

From: Suicide in Wisconsin Impact and Response

Released September 2020

Age groups of Wisconsin Veterans that died by suicide

Veterans who died by suicide were in older age groups.

Wisconsin Veteran and Total Wisconsin, Midwestern Region, and National Suic	Wis. Veteran suicide rate is much	ıp, 2018 ^c
	higher than the nen Veteran rate	

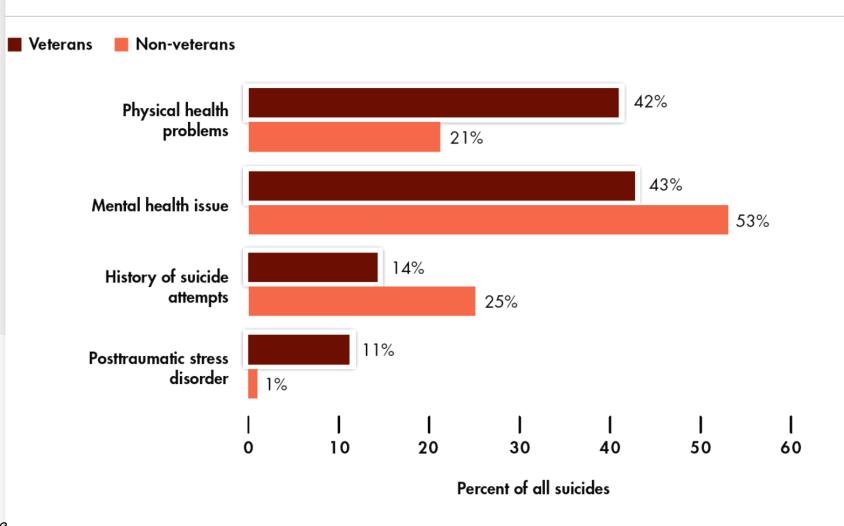
Age Group	Wisconsin Veteran Suicides	Wisconsin Total Suicides	Midwestern Region Total Suicides	National Total Suicides	Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Rati	Wisconsin State	Midwestern Region Suicide Rate	National Suicide Rate
Total	115	853	9,950	46,510	31.0	18.8	18.8	18.4
18–34	20	246	2,970	13,002	64.5	19.2	19.2	17.3
35–54	35	292	3,425	15,866	41.7	20.2	20.3	19.1
55–74	43	258	2,786	13,514	26.1	18.5	17.7	18.6
75+	17	57	769	4,128	18.7*	13.7	16.2	18.9

Suicide among Wisconsin Veterans

Wisconsin
Veterans had a
higher rate of
physical health
problems and
PTSD.

2013 - 2017

Figure 19. Veterans who died by suicide were **more likely** to have a reported **physical health problem** compared with **non-veterans**, 2013–2017.



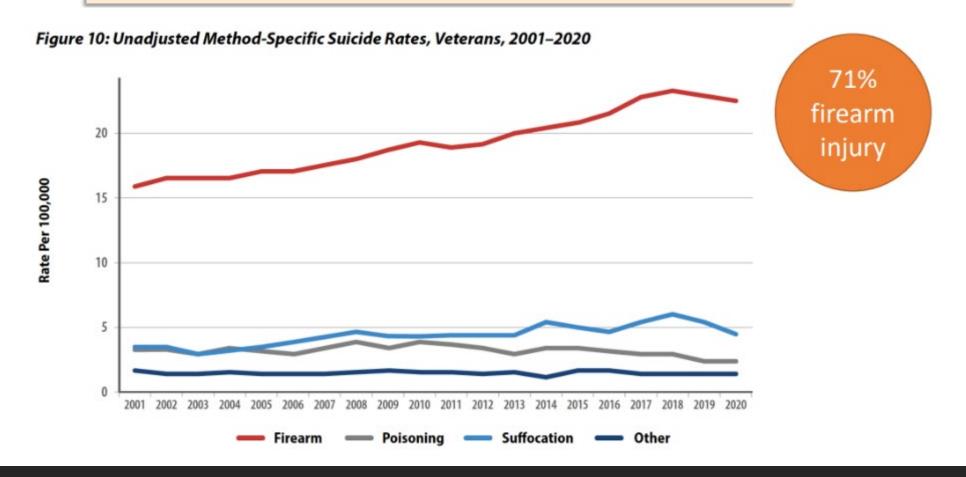
From: Suicide in Wisconsin Impact and Response

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Data source: Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2013–2017.

Suicide Method by Veterans National Data

Overall FIREARMS are the most common method of suicide.



Suicide Method by Veterans National Data

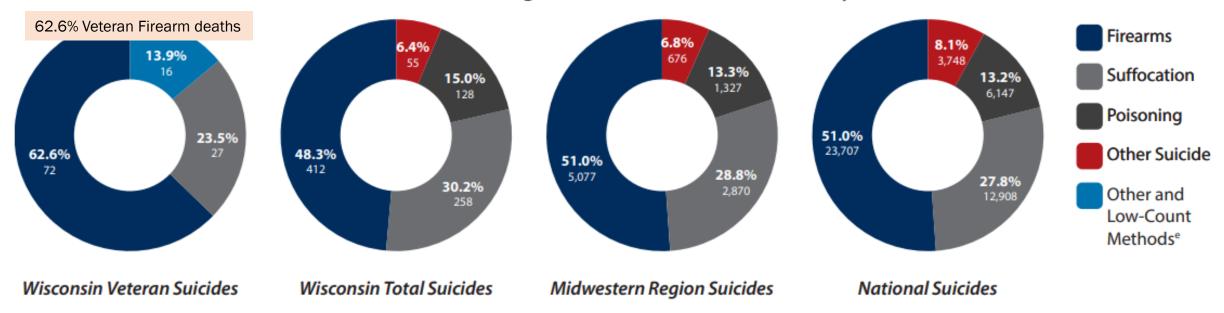
Overall FIREARMS are the most common method of suicide.

- ➤ Veterans died by suicide using a firearm 70% of the time versus 50% among non-Veteran.
- Firearms are the most lethal means of suicide (90% or higher death rate).

Veteran Suicide Method in Wisconsin

Firearms are the most common means for suicide.

Wisconsin Veteran and Total Wisconsin, Midwestern Region, and National Suicide Deaths by Method, d 2018



Possible Solutions for Reducing Access to Firearms

- Secure and Safe Storage of firearms
 - In the home
 - Locked and unloaded
 - Outside the home
 - Family Member
 - Self-storage facility
 - Firearm retailer or range

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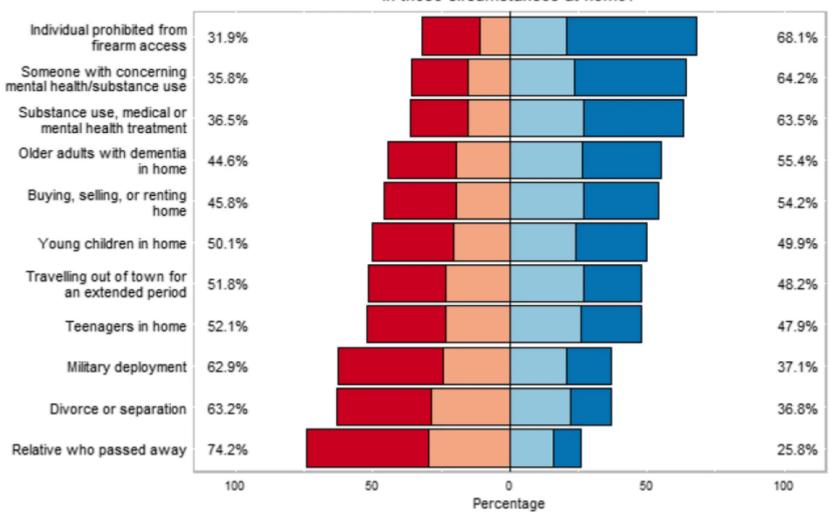
Storage of Firearms Outside the Home

A recent survey study (by Barnard et al. (2023)) of individuals with access to firearm found important information about attitudes for storing firearms outside of the home:

 64% agreed to store the firearm outside of the home if they knew someone had a mental health issue.

Barnard, L.M., Johnson, R.L., Brandspigel, S. et al. Practices, knowledge, and concerns for out-of-home firearm storage among those with access to firearms: results from a survey in two states. Inj. Epidemiol. 10, 15 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-023-00426-9

How likely would you be to store firearms away from home in these circumstances at home?



Barnard, L.M., Johnson, R.L., Brandspigel, S. et al. Practices, knowledge, and concerns for out-of-home firearm storage among those with access to firearms: results from a survey in two states. Inj. Epidemiol. 10, 15 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-023-

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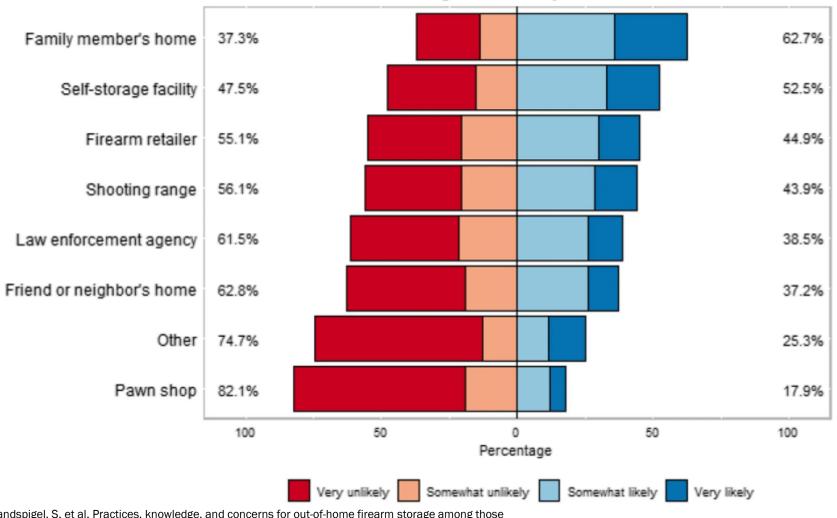
Where to Store Firearms Outside the Home

A recent survey study (by Barnard et al. (2023)) of individuals with access to firearm found important information about attitudes for storing firearms outside of the home:

44.9 and 43.9% would consider a firearm retailer or firing range.

Barnard, L.M., Johnson, R.L., Brandspigel, S. et al. Practices, knowledge, and concerns for out-of-home firearm storage among those with access to firearms: results from a survey in two states. Inj. Epidemiol. 10, 15 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-023-00426-9

How likely would you be to consider these locations for storing firearms away from home?



Barnard, L.M., Johnson, R.L., Brandspigel, S. et al. Practices, knowledge, and concerns for out-of-home firearm storage among those with access to firearms: results from a survey in two states. Inj. Epidemiol. 10, 15 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-023-

00426-9

How should the message about firearm storage be communicated?

When subjects were asked "What would be the 3 best ways to share information in your community about options for voluntary, temporary firearm storage away from the home?"

Survey respondents indicated that the best ways would be information provided at:

- Point-of-sale for firearms (57.9%)
- internet (55.6%)
- social media (44.5%)
- TV (35.8%)
- Sharing information via health care and mental health providers (30.1%)

Barnard, L.M., Johnson, R.L., Brandspigel, S. et al. Practices, knowledge, and concerns for out-of-home firearm storage among those with access to firearms: results from a survey in two states. Inj. Epidemiol. 10, 15 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-023-00426-9

Veteran Specific Suicide Risks

☐ Higher rate of suicide than the non-Veteran population

- Veterans have more health problems, PTSD and less likely to seek help
- Veterans use a **firearm** to die from suicide about 20% more frequently than non-Veterans

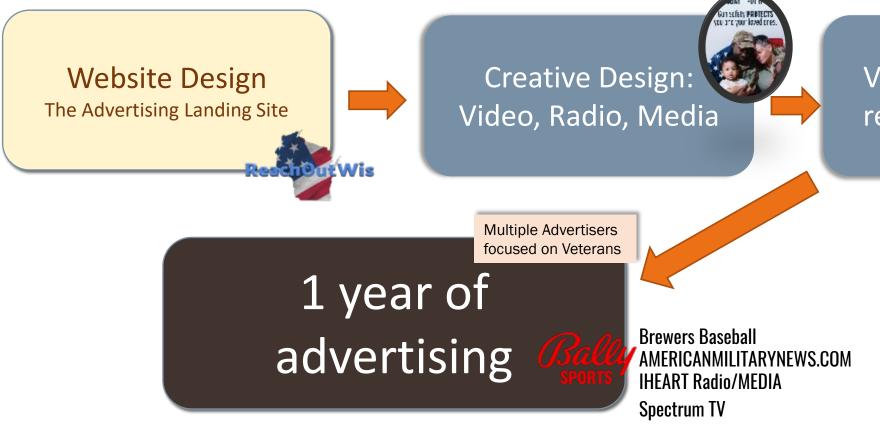
What kind of advertising could address Veteran Specific Suicide Risks?

Encourage Veterans to seek help and obtain VA services

Educate about firearm risk of suicide and provide solutions for safe storage of firearms.

Our Advertising Project 2-year study

Public Health Messaging Approach to Suicide Prevention



Veteran Focus Group review of advertising





Study Design

2-year study funded by "Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin"



Public Health Suicide Prevention Approach

Baseline Survey

Creative Design
Session 1

Focus groups
Session 1



Advertising Campaign 1

Jan to June 2022

Survey 1

Focus groups
Session 2

Creative Design
Session 2

Advertising Campaign 2

June to Sept 2022

Survey 2

Focus groups
Session 3

Creative Design
Session 3

Advertising Campaign 3
Sept 2022 to Dec 2022

Survey 3

Comparisons between Advertising campaign on the survey

Data Analysis & Dissemination of Finding

Baseline Survey

Survey 1

Survey 2

Survey 3

MCW's: Comprehensive Injury Center (CIC) Dr. Sara Kohlbeck

- ☐Study Co-Author
- ☐ Creative Advertising Consultant
- □ Focus group coordinator and refining of messaging
- □ Data analysis and project manager

Sara Kohlbeck, PhD, MPH (she/her/hers)
Assistant Professor

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Director, Division of Suicide Prevention Comprehensive Injury Center Medical College of Wisconsin



Veteran Focus Groups

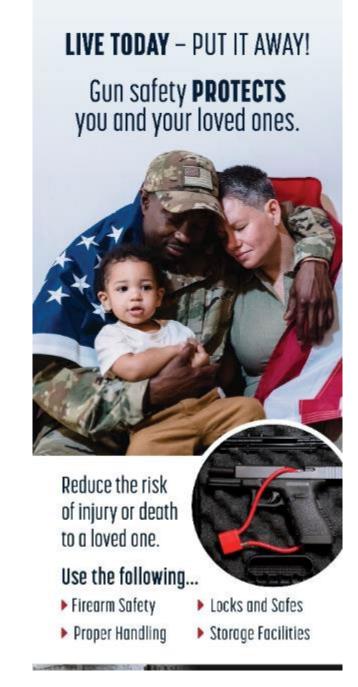
Focus groups were made up of Veterans and conducted by Veterans

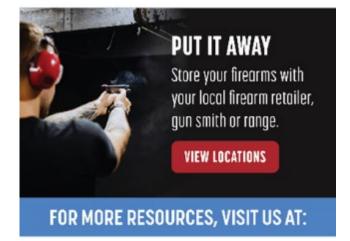
- Samples of advertising were shown to focus group members
- Open dialog on thoughts about what might work or not work
- Ideas brought back to the creative advertising team to develop more impactful narratives
- Consider the Veteran and Veteran's friends and family perspectives
- What topics will gain attention?
- Emotions good or turn off?



Sample Advertisements by our Creative team

Provided by Dan Buttery of the War Memorial Center, Creative team lead Adverting consultant









In Collaboration With







Creative
Development,
Advertising Team and
Analytics of our
Advertising Reach

DAN BUTTERY, CEO WAR MEMORIAL CENTER MILWAUKEE WI







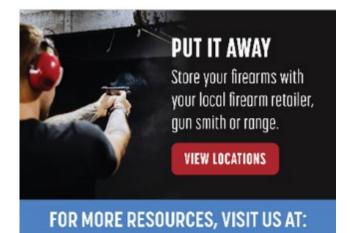
Our Advertisements Videos

DAN JIM & BOB TALK TO VETERANS
WEDDING SCENE
LIVE TODAY- PUT IT AWAY

Our Advertisements

Email







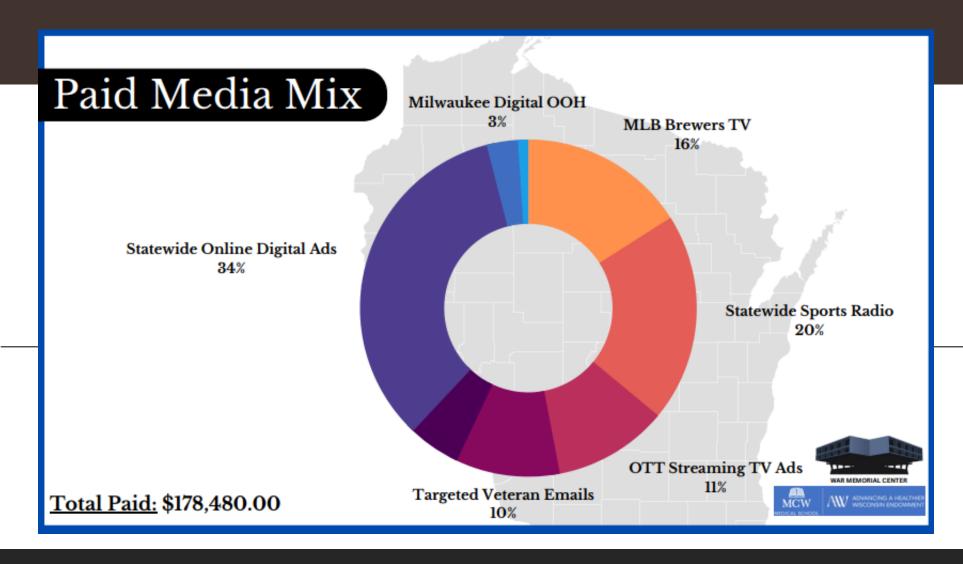


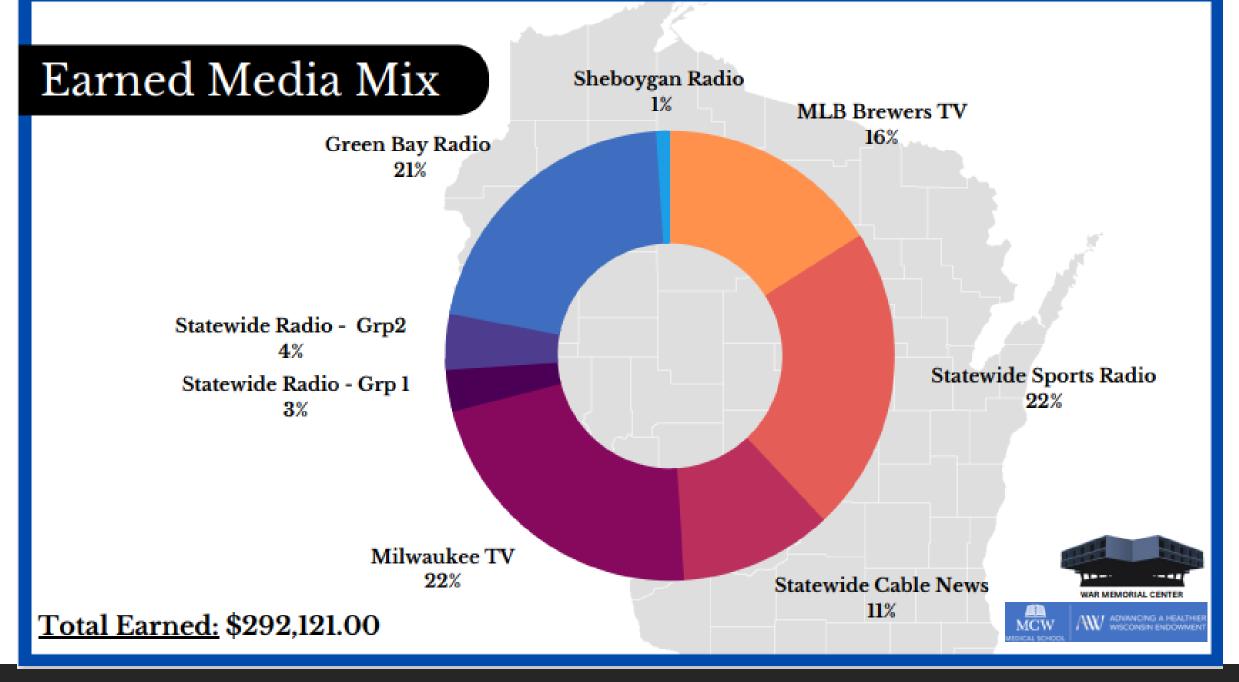
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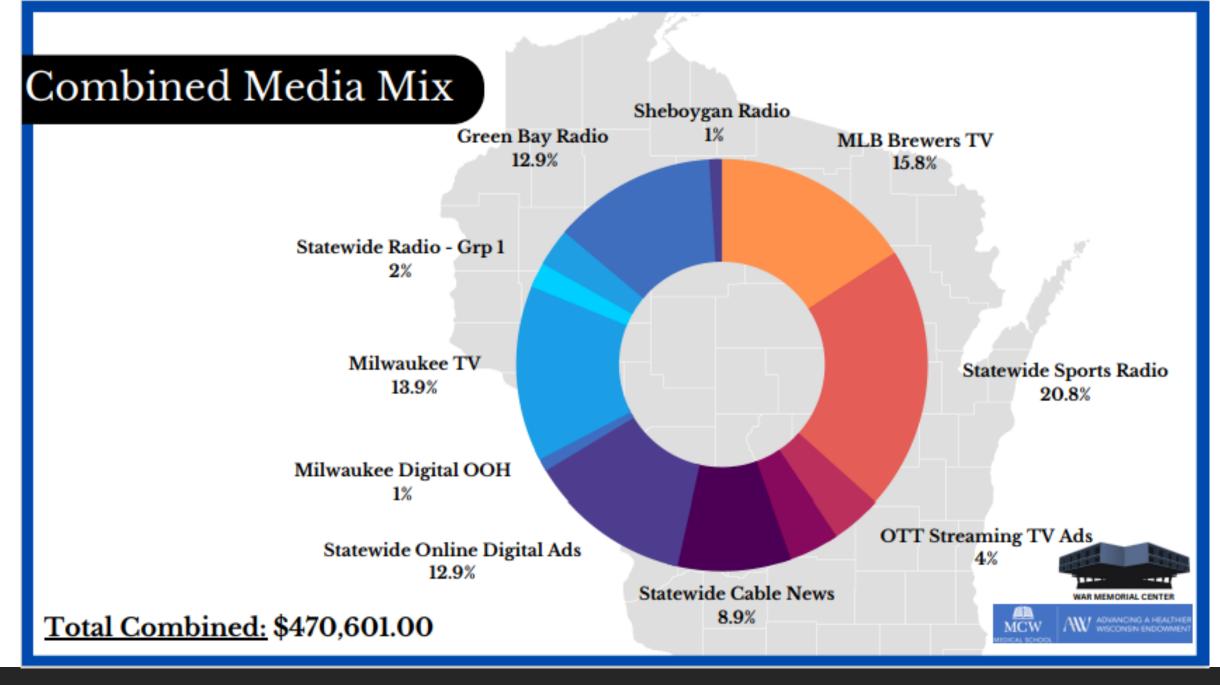




Campaign: Effect of Mass Communications on Veteran Suicide Prevention: Help Seeking & Firearm Safety Behaviors







Veteran Targeted Digital CREATIVE – Q3 & Q4 2022

For this effort, we used three primary creative concepts. The first was a soldier-specific ad that ran in September and October with month-specific messaging. The second concept, which only ran in October, was designed to appeal to parents with young children and their relatives. Finally, the third concept, which only ran in October, focused on drawing attention to female servicemembers.

Each concept had six high-visibility sizes, 300x1050, 300x600, 320x480, 480x320, 970x250, and 970x90, that rotated evenly based on impression availability.



CREATIVE CONCEPT 1

Overall Average CTR = 0.34% Top Size: 300x1050 (0.69%)



CREATIVE CONCEPT 2

Overall Average CTR = 0.32% Top Size: 480x320 (0.62%)



CREATIVE CONCEPT 3

Overall Average CTR: 0.27% Top Size: 480x320 (0.39%)

"Top Size" indicates the best-performing ad size based on CTR, with at least 10,000 impressions.

DEMOGRAPHICS – CLICKS Q3 & Q4 2022

Exploring this further, we compiled the gender and age data on the same table and focused only on male and female users. Despite receiving fewer impressions, women between the ages of 18 and 34 performed significantly better than most groups, except women over 65, who had an average CTR of 0.5%.

IMPRESSIONS BY AGE AND GENDER

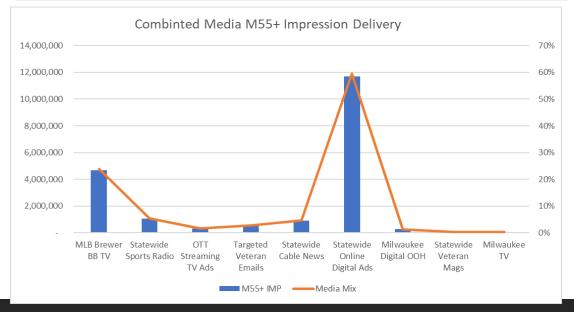
GENDER	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	UNKNOWN
MALE	413,516	431,254	434,054	579,253	504,666	341,910	426,747
FEMALE	348,935	244,127	190,545	175,152	561,291	741,424	356,667
UNKNOWN	281,666	82,664	232,449	145,818	170,035	130,329	938,661

ENGAGEMENT (CTR) BY AGE AND GENDER

GENDER	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	UNKNOWN
MALE	0.29%	0.29%	0.26%	0.21%	0.28%	0.41%	0.13%
FEMALE	0.48%	0.47%	0.39%	0.35%	0.36%	0.5%	0.26%
UNKNOWN	0.4%	0.36%	0.54%	0.17%	0.26%	0.3%	0.24%

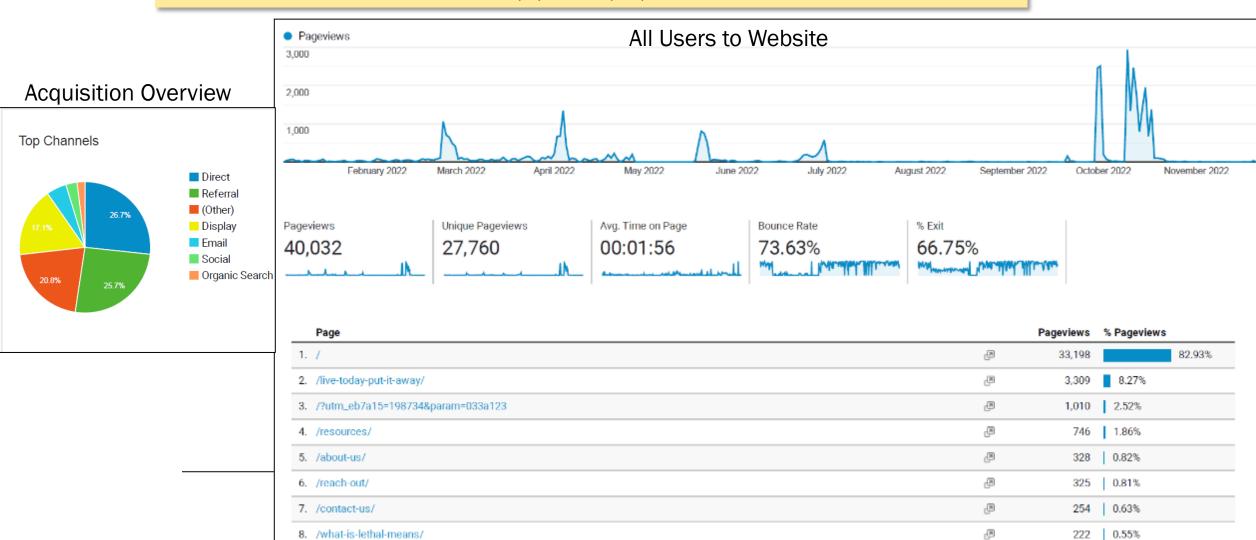
Dec 2021 – Oct 2022 Combined Men 55 and over Impressions Delivered

Combined Media	<u>M55+ IMP</u>	Media Mix
MLB Brewer BB TV	4,690,225	24%
Statewide Sports Radio	1,075,100	5%
OTT Streaming TV Ads	334,486	2%
Targeted Veteran Emails	549,560	3%
Statewide Cable News	920,839	5%
Statewide Online Digital Ads	11,696,388	59%
Milwaukee Digital OOH	273,005	1%
Statewide Veteran Mags	83,047	0%
Milwaukee TV	64,280	0%
Statewide Radio Group II	Unknown	
Statewide Radio Group II	Unknown	
Green Bay Radio Group	Unknown	
Sheboygan Radio Group	Unknown	
Est. Total Impressions	19,686,930	100%



STATEWIDE - ADVERTISING PERFORMANCE

ReachOutWis.org Website Landing Page Statistics
1/1/22 - 11/23/22





Views by Content and Average View Duration

Top 4 Videos on YouTube



Content	+) Views ↓ ⚠	Watch time (hours) 🛦	Average view duration	Impressions	Impressions click-through rate A	
Total	129,661	759.7	0:21	6,006	3.0%	
Daryn Colledge 15 H264	54,699 42.2%	226.9 29.9%	0:14	388	4.4%	
Bride 15 Front H264	42,478 32.8%	224.4 29.5%	0:19	888	3.5%	
Bride 15 Back end H264	13,159 10.2%	51.2 6.7%	0:14	527	5.9%	
Jim Tasse Long Video H264	6,546 5.1%	138.7 18.3%	1:16	1,369	1.3%	

Measurements of Effectiveness: The Survey

- ❖Survey used across time (4 samples).
- The survey was used before advertising and after each advertising campaign.
- We measured overall changes and differences between Veterans and non-Veterans:
 - 1. Increased viewing of suicide prevention advertising.
 - 2. More likely to seek help if in crisis
 - 3. Attitude changes in firearm storage
 - a) Storing the firearm more securely



Survey Research Samples

- Research sample of 400 500 Wisconsin residents over 4 time frames (Jan 2022 to March 2023.
- About 2000 Wisconsin residents took the survey.
- Qualtrics Survey Software was used.
- Qualtrics Research Group obtained a random sample of a representation of Wisconsin

KEY BASELINE SURVEY				
Stress and help seeking behavior				
December 2021 (Prior to advertising)	Veterans	(n=122)	Non-Veteran	ns (n=278)
Strongly Di If I was in a mental health or suicide crisis, I would seel from a friend or loved one Results: Veterans appear to be less likely to seek help from a	 11 (9%) 34 (28%) 13 (10%) 33 (27%) 31 (25%) 80 (65%) 32 (26%) 10 (8%)	Strongly to Not sure: 47%	34 (12%) 70 (25%) 22 (8%) 80 (29%) 70 (25%) 218 (78%) 40 (14%) 20 (8%)	Strongly to Not sure: 45%
	76 <mark>(62%)</mark> 37 (30%) 9 (8%)		195 (70%) 61 (22%) 20 (7)	

KEY BASELIN		3. T		
Firearm Owner	ship and storage		Veterans	Non- Veterans
December 2021	(Prior to advertising)		(n=122)	(n=278)
	I own or have at least one	firearm	81 (67%)	104 (37%)
	Veterans own more firearms and are mo likely to have them loaded/unlocked.	re Yes No	40 (33%)	174 (63%)
Average number of fir	earms owned		3	1
I store at least 1 firearr	n loaded and unlocked	Yes No	<i>n=81</i> <mark>42 (52%)</mark> 39 (48%)	n=104 14 (13%) 90 (87%)
If I was in a mental	health or suicide crisis and had (o	or have)		
firearms, I would st	ore the firearms outside the home			
	even if there was a crisis.	Agree Unsure Disagree	65 (53%) 30 (25%) 27 (22%)	196 (70%) 58 (21%) 23 (9%)

	SELINE SURVEY DATA POINTS et 2021 (Prior to advertising)	Veterans (n=122)	Non-Veterans (n=278)
People should lo	ock their firearms in their home when someone is experiencing a mental health or		
suicide crisis	General agreement to lock up firearms when in a crisis. Agree Unsure Disagree	107 (88%) 11 (9%) 4 (3%)	248 (89%) 16 (6%) 14 (5%)
-	emporarily store firearms outside of the home when someone is experiencing a mental		
More non-V	Agree eterans agree about keeping firearms outside the home when in a crisis. Disagree	85 (71%) 19 (16%) 15 (13%)	210 (77%) 35 (13%) 29 (11%)
-	ave firearms removed from the home when someone is experiencing a mental health		
or suicide crisis	More non-Veterans agree to have firearms removed when in a crisis. Agree Unsure Disagree	65 (53%) 24 (20%) 33 (27%)	194 (70%) 52 (19%) 32 (11%
	to store firearms outside the home when someone is experiencing a mental health or		
More non-Vo	Agree eterans agree it is a good idea have firearms outside the home when in a crisis. Unsure Disagree	81 (66%) 20 (17%) 18 (15%)	227 (82%) 28 (10%) 21 (8%)

Final Survey Results Who saw the advertising?

Survey Question	Baseline (n=122)	Survey 1 (n=126)	Survey 2 (n=172)	Survey 3 (n=166)	Baseline (n=279)	Survey 1 (n=274)	Survey 2 (n=335)	Survey 3 (n=342)
	Veterans				Non-Veterans			
I have seen or heard advertising about mental health or suicide prevention crisis lines in the past year.	99 (81%)	117 (93%)	172 (100%)	85 (51%)	209 (75%)	232 (85%)	335 (100%)	161 (47%)
I have seen or heard advertising about veterans and suicide prevention.	107 (88%)	115 (91%)	120 (70%)*	81 (56%)	173 (62%)	208 (76%)	219 (65%)	163 (56%)
I have seen or heard advertising promoting safe storage of firearms for suicide prevention.	52 (43%)	110 (87%)	80 (46%)	66 (52%)	99 (35%)	166 (61%)	140 (42%)	128 (49%)

Final Survey Results Storage of firearms when in a crisis

Survey Question	Baseline (n=122)	Survey 1 (n=126)	Survey 2 (n=172)	Survey 3 (n=166)	Baseline (n=279)	Survey 1 (n=274)	Survey 2 (n=335)	Survey 3 (n=342)
	Veterans				Non-Veterans			
I think: "People should temporarily								
store firearms outside of the home								
when someone is experiencing a								
mental health or suicide crisis."								
Agree				I				
Unsure	85 (71%)	105 (83%)	123 (71%)	140 (84%)	211 (77%)	218 (80%)	254 (76%)	274 (80%)
Disagree	19 (16%)	15 (12%)	28 (16%)	16 (10%)	35 (13%)	35 (13%)	51 (15%)	41 (12%)
	15 (13%)	6 (5%)	21 (12%)	10 (6%)	29 (11%)	21 (8%)	30 (9%)	27 (8%)
I think: "If I was in a mental health								
or suicide crisis and had (or have)								
firearms, I would <mark>lock up</mark> the								
firearms at home."				I				
Agree	74 (61%)	100 (79%)	<u>121 (70%)</u>	149 (90%)	193 (69%)	206 (75%)	242 (72%)	284 (83%)
Unsure	31 (25%)	13 (10%)	36 (21%)	17 (10 <u>%)</u>	42 (15%)	53 (19%)	54 (16%)	58 (17%)
Disagree	17 (14%)	13 (10%)	15 (9%)	0 (0%)	44 (16%)	15 (5%)	39 (12%)	0 (0%)

Questions?

Thank YOU!

Please check out our website!

ReachOutWis.org

You can use your phone to link to it using the QR code

