



**REAL WARRIORS * REAL BATTLES
REAL STRENGTH**

ABOUT THE REAL WARRIORS CAMPAIGN

While many returning warriors report reintegration challenges, only a minority seek psychological health care.^{1,2} To address this gap, in 2009 the Defense Department launched a multi-media public awareness initiative known as the Real Warriors Campaign (RWC). RWC encourages positive psychological health behavior by promoting facts (such as spreading awareness about signs and symptoms) and removing barriers to seeking care. The campaign's messaging, products and tactics are based on the RWC theory of change model that takes elements from the Health Belief Model, the Transtheoretical model and the Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior model to better reach service members, veterans and their families. One of RWC's most effective channels to disseminate health information is social media, and the campaign currently reaches an average of more than one million unique users per year through the power of social sharing. Today, RWC remains one of the most engaging Military Health brands on Facebook.

Visit realwarriors.net to access professional development opportunities, patient resources and clinical practice guideline information.

Contact Information:
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ABSTRACT OVERVIEW

The Real Warriors Campaign (RWC), sponsored by Defense Health Agency's Psychological Health Center of Excellence (PHCoE), is a multimedia public awareness initiative designed to encourage service members, veterans and families (SMVF) coping with invisible wounds to reach out for help. RWC connects SMVF to psychological health resources with the help of more than 160 military, veteran or 501(c)(3) organizations, as well as through social media, website, radio/satellite media, and face-to-face interactions. RWC relies on partners to help disseminate psychological health resources to stakeholders that the campaign might not reach through traditional channels. This poster shares RWC's approach to strategic partnership with various organizations that improve reach and impact with stakeholders.



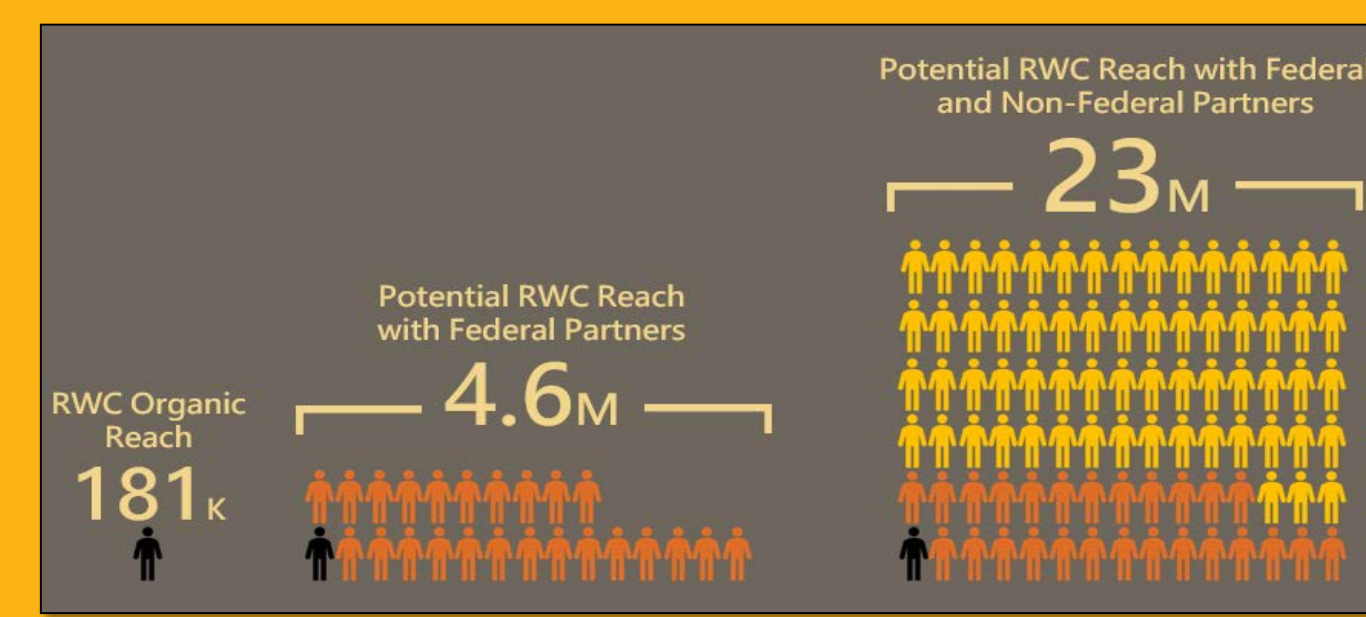
THREE SUCCESS FACTORS FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The RWC approach of strategic partnership informed by ten years of collaboration in the military and veteran communities. The overarching goal of the campaign's partnership activities is to increase SMVF access to mental health tools and information. RWC has found success in focusing on the following three factors:

CREDIBILITY: Research shows that credibility plays an important role in audience reception of information. Positive credibility is associated with positive attitudes and positive behavioral responses.¹ For over 10 years, RWC partners have boosted the campaign's trustworthiness and generated improved attitudes toward psychological health.

EDUCATION: Evidence confirms that establishing strategic partnerships can influence an underserved audience.² RWC seeks out niche audiences that are critical to influencing attitudes about psychological health. Campaign partners like Sesame Street for Military Families and Army Wife Network help educate and inform military families on common challenges in military life. Sharing information with these organizations can help influence a service member's decision to reach out for help.

REACH: Research shows that strategic partnerships often contribute to cause amplification and increase engagement among target audiences.² As such, RWC's partnership activities identify partners that have an engaged audience and can disseminate the campaign resources and materials widely. The graphic below shows the potential reach of strategic partnerships.



TOOLS FOR STRATEGIC OUTREACH

RWC uses traditional and new media for strategic outreach. RWC uses these tools to share its messaging in digital and live arenas, reaching service members, veterans and families where they are.

SHARING PRINT MATERIALS

MATERIALS: Our co-branding initiative increases the credibility of our printed materials among service members located within a base. For example, in 2019 RWC partnered with Madigan Army Medical Center to co-brand materials. After the Madigan team selected a popular product, RWC assisted in adding the Madigan logo for on-base distribution. The co-branding helps service members on the base recognize that the content is endorsed by their home installation.



COLLABORATION VIA CONFERENCE AND EVENTS: RWC understands the importance of engaging service members and leadership on the ground. In the last two years, RWC has participated in 20 conferences or events, and 19 site visits at military installations across the country. Additionally, the campaign conducts outreach to the National Guard and Reserves, participating in 67 Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events since 2013 as service members prepare for or return from deployment.

SOCIAL MEDIA/ NEW MEDIA PARTNERS

RWC often partners with entities that support the campaign's goals and can help disseminate RWC products widely. For example, in April 2018, RWC co-hosted a Twitter chat with Sesame Street for Military Families; tweets using the #MilFamsReachOut hashtag reached more than 100,000 users and garnered more than 100,000 impressions. Top participants in this Twitter chat were non-federal partners, enabling RWC to reach members of our target audience who otherwise would not have seen our resources.

GenParenting @gen_parenting · Apr 11
Replying to @KerryHawk02 @audreyoclar and 9 others
Thank you for leading a discussion on this topic as families are challenged to balance their child's healthy development when using various types of screen devices. We need more guidance on how to nurture a digital citizen at various stages of development.

Army Wife Network @ArmyWifeNetwork · Apr 11
Such great resources! Grateful to partner with them in their mission. #MilFamsReachOut

Real Warriors @realwarriors
@realwarriors of the Psychological Health Center of Excellence (PHCoE) supports the military community through all stages of deployment. #MilFamsReachOut Visit bit.ly/AboutRealWarriors to learn more.

CASE STUDY: Engaging a niche audience through new media: Army Wife Network

OVERVIEW: On May 8, 2017, the campaign facilitated a podcast interview with Army Wife Network's (AWN) Army Wife Talk Radio show in Fort Hood, Texas, featuring clinical psychologist Maj. Demetrice Pittman and campaign profilee Mrs. Sheri Hall. As part of Mental Health Awareness Month, Maj. Pittman and Mrs. Hall, both military spouses, discussed the challenges military spouses and families face during deployment. The interview also highlighted the campaign's tools and resources and encouraged SMVF with psychological health concerns to reach out for care.

FORMALIZING PARTNERSHIP: Literature reviews and campaign stakeholder analyses show that promoting real-life examples of individuals who experienced psychological health concerns and received care or support with positive outcomes is a successful method for delivering anti-stigma messages. Based on this research, establishing a partnership with AWN helped disseminate psychological health resources to an engaged audience. When considering working with a potential partner, the campaign evaluates:

MISSION ALIGNMENT	ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY	CLEAR AND VIABLE PATHS TO COLLABORATION
RWC and an organization's shared goals prove to be the basis for establishing a partnership. ³ Collaboration between RWC and a potential partner creates value for a shared target audience, SMVF. Examples of mission alignment include organizational prioritization of psychological health information sharing and an emphasis on outreach to the military and veteran community.	Before establishing a partnership, RWC evaluates the timing, resources, and opportunities of the partnership. Part of this process is gaining an understanding of an organization or campaign's life cycle, financial health (if 501(c)3), leadership, and goals. As both parties lend credibility to the other, an understanding of each program's long-term viability is essential.	As communications and behavior change best practices continue to evolve, RWC consistently explores how best to collaborate with programs, whether through digital or in-person channels. The campaign works with partners to establish which collaboration medium could best provide value for mutually shared target audiences. As seen above, Army Wife Talk Radio presented a valuable opportunity to discuss resources for the SMVF community.

PARTNERSHIP IMPACT: Collaboration with AWN increased the visibility and reach of the campaign's message and provided AWN with psychological health informational content. The podcast interview reached more than **40,000 potential listeners of a niche audience** with psychological health tools and information for military families.

After the second tour, I noticed (his change) in behavior. In late 2005, I knew something wasn't right. I encouraged him to reach out and talk to someone. It was not until 2.5 years later that he really started exhibiting those signs of PTSD. We needed to get help, and that is why I reached out to his command.

– Ms. Sheri Hall

Army Wife Network @ArmyWifeNetwork · 8 May 2017
Welcome Sheri Hall and Maj. Demetrice Pittman @realwarriors - What questions do you have? #armywife

Army Wife Network @ArmyWifeNetwork · 8 May 2017
We're back with AWTR guests Sheri Hall and Maj. Demetrice Pittman @realwarriors #armywife

References

- Goldsmith, R. E., & Yimin, Z. (2014). The Influences of Brand-Consumer and Cause-Congruence on Consumer Responses to Cause Related Marketing. *Journal of Applied Marketing Theory*, 5(2), 74-95.
- Holmes et al. (2019). Innovating public engagement and patient involvement through strategic collaboration and practice. *Research Involvement and Engagement*, 5(30), 1-12.
- Wildridge, V., Childs, S., Cawthra L., Mudge, B., How to create successful partnerships—a review of the literature. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 21, 3-19.