



Team Red, White and Blue Study: Enriching the Lives of America's Veterans

Background

Team Red, White, and Blue (TRWB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2010 with the mission of enriching the lives of America's Veterans by connecting them to their community through physical and social activity.

“Joining the team” is open to any community member (Veterans, active duty military, and civilians). Local chapters organize a variety of consistent, positive activities that foster authentic relationships at the local level. Veterans connect with each other, and members of their community, through events like: weekly running groups, hiking, yoga classes, functional fitness, or even volunteering.

The cornerstone of the TRWB mission is to enrich Veterans' lives. We define enrichment as “creating quality relationships and experiences that contribute to life satisfaction and overall well being.” Our goal was to survey all TRWB members through an online survey on their self-reported perceptions of enrichment: connectivity, shared purpose, the civilian-military divide, well-being, and life satisfaction since joining the team. We also looked at enrichment based upon how active Veterans reported they were in TRWB events (“less active” or “active”). In the one week period our survey was open for response, 4,034 Veteran, active duty military, and civilians responded.

Results

TRWB is connecting veterans to each other and their communities. A significant majority of members across all categories (Veteran, Civilian, Active Duty) indicated a stronger sense of purpose, more meaningful relationships, and improved health (physical, mental, and emotional). Additionally, across every measure, the more active Veterans are in TRWB activities, the greater their enrichment.

Shared Purpose and Connectivity:

Veterans feel a very strong sense of shared purpose since joining TRWB. They have more people in their lives that motivate them (69%) and have more opportunities to inspire others (73%). Three out of four veterans also reported that they have found other people who share similar passions and feel part of something bigger than themselves.

A groundbreaking component of the study was measuring the benefits of belonging to an organization that helped them to establish authentic connections. While 57% of our “less active” members said they benefited from the opportunity to share their personal journeys, an astonishing 86% of “active” members found these experiences beneficial.

Additionally, Veterans have more people they can turn to for emotional support (57%), they are more involved in the local community (60%), they have more programs they can turn to for resources (64%), and they feel an increased sense of brotherhood/sisterhood in their lives (66%).

Bridging the Civilian/Military Divide:

TRWB programs create genuine connections between Veterans and their civilian counterparts. A majority of Veterans (73% among “active” members) reported sharing the challenges they face as a veteran with civilians, and 87% demonstrated the strengths they have as a Veteran to civilians. Of equal importance, 75% of civilian members stated that they better understand both the challenges and strengths of Veterans in their communities.

Well Being:

Important improvements have been reported on Veterans’ well being since joining TRWB. A majority of Veterans reported exercising more frequently since joining the team (61%). One-out-of-three veterans (33%) reported feeling less nervous, anxious or on edge, and 15% reported drinking less alcohol. While 18% of “less active” TRWB Veterans felt that they were “less down, depressed, or hopeless, 61% of “active” TRWB Veterans felt this way.

Life Satisfaction:

Overall, 56% (79% among active members) of Veterans reported greater satisfaction and 49% agreed that the conditions of their life had improved. An overwhelming majority, 90%, would recommend TRWB to other Veterans.

Call To Action:

Our challenge for the future is to continue driving active engagement of our existing TRWB members and program growth to reach more veterans and communities. While we do not have a comparison group of non-TRWB members, even those who just “join the team” and are “less active” report increases in enrichment since joining. However, it is clear that there are significant benefits of increased participation in TRWB sponsored activities.

As our first large-scale assessment of our programs’ impact on TRWB members’ enrichment, organizationally we are fulfilling our mission. This has been accomplished primarily through the volunteer efforts of thousands of individuals, whose leadership will remain central as we continue to engage members and grow TRWB Communities.

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