

Women Veterans Outreach Report

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Office of Research

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This report is a result of the collaborative efforts of the following WJC's graduate students – Hillary Scudder, Robert Ortega, Jenny D'Olympia, and Julion Marrinan

Introduction

The Second Annual Women Veteran's Outreach Spring Fling was co-sponsored by the Military and Veteran Psychology program (MVP) at William James College, doing business as Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (WJC d.b.a. MSPP) and the Department of Veterans Services (DVS). Throughout this report, the acronym of WJC d.b.a. MSPP will be consolidated to 'WJC' for ease of read. Like last year, the intent was to give female veterans and their families the opportunity to connect with the larger veteran and military community, and to offer a safe space; respite from the difficulties of daily life, where they and their families could enjoy some time building and strengthening familial relationships as well as give them an opportunity to network with other women veterans and veteran service providers. Besides fun and games, the event was structured to help our veterans learn about the various statewide resources available to them, including WJC as a mental health resource. A total of 40 veterans (32 women and 8 men) and 10 children attended.

A warm introduction by Director of Military Veterans Psychology Program MG (ret.) Robert Catalanotti, was followed by welcoming remarks by our student veteran Jenny D'Olympia and Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans' Services, Francisco Urena. Gen. Catalanotti expressed his gratitude to be working with us, and discussed his objectives as COO. Secretary Urena; United States Marine Corps Veteran, Purple Heart recipient, and fierce advocate of veterans and their interests, was proud to announce that veterans are no longer afraid to ask for help. "We don't just settle for the state-mandated minimum," he said. "We support great institutions such as William James College and promote those who want to be great leaders." He also thanked the faculty, staff, and veterans in attendance for their engagement, leadership and service in ensuring veterans have a place to call home and to capture opportunities.

This report describes and interprets the results of a survey that was handed to attendees towards the end of the event. A copy of the survey and detailed results are available on request. For the sake of brevity, they have not been included in the actual report. A total of 14 respondents (13 women and one transgender) responded to the outreach evaluation survey. In addition to data from the survey, the introduction includes observations of participating students and faculty.

Some of the faculty and staff were asked for their opinion during the event. Many noticed how enjoyable and comfortable the atmosphere was, and the eagerness to socialize. People were really coming out of their shells and interacting on a happier, deeper level. Cheryl Poppe of the Soldier's Home remarked on last year's Women Veterans Outreach that it was the first time she had seen an event where the children were made to feel welcome. Mother-child activities included a credible performance by a local magician, arts & crafts, massage, yoga, board games, and self-care for adults. This included making relaxation boxes that the women veterans were given to take home with them. This simple gesture was also a meaningful token of the continuing fraternal love and support of the community towards our women Veterans.

This event gave women Veterans an opportunity to connect, learn, and enjoy being recognized for their service. This special day also offered mothers a chance to connect with their children within the

context of their former military lifestyle. The sad truth is that many veterans tend to become isolated after service, making it all the more important that they form peer connections and nurture family support. The day's events, and the students and faculty who staffed it, successfully developed a sense of community and belonging, while creating awareness of the Military and Veterans Psychology (MVP) and Train Vets To Treat Vets (TVTV) programs, scholarships, and educational opportunities.

Section I: Event Respondent Profile

This section contains detailed respondent profile information, providing an overview of respondent history and background. All the responses are depicted in pie charts that report the percentage for each section of the pie.

1. Military Status

Respondents involved in the military ranged from veterans (46%) to active duty members (12%). There was also a steady presence of military family members (12%) and retired service individuals (9%). Also noteworthy is the attendance of respondents with no military involvement (12%). See Figure 1 below for a more detailed breakdown of respondent military involvement.

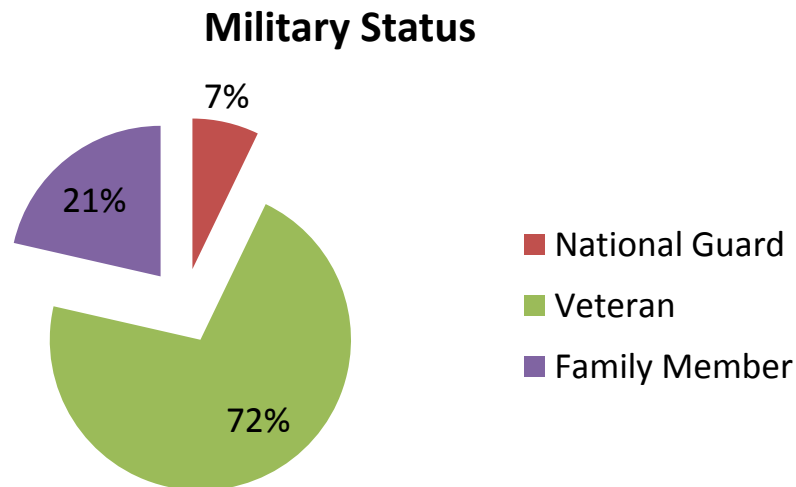


Figure 1: Military Status of Respondents (N=14)

2. Respondent Gender

Most respondents were women because this was an event targeting women veterans, however one person identified as transgender.

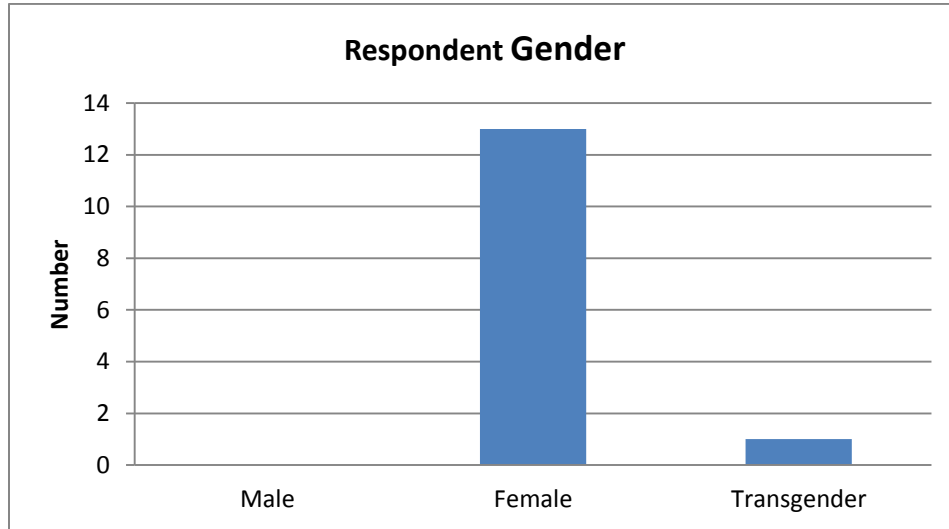


Figure 2: Respondent Gender (N=14)

3. Respondent Age

Majority of the respondents were between the ages of 30-59 years old.

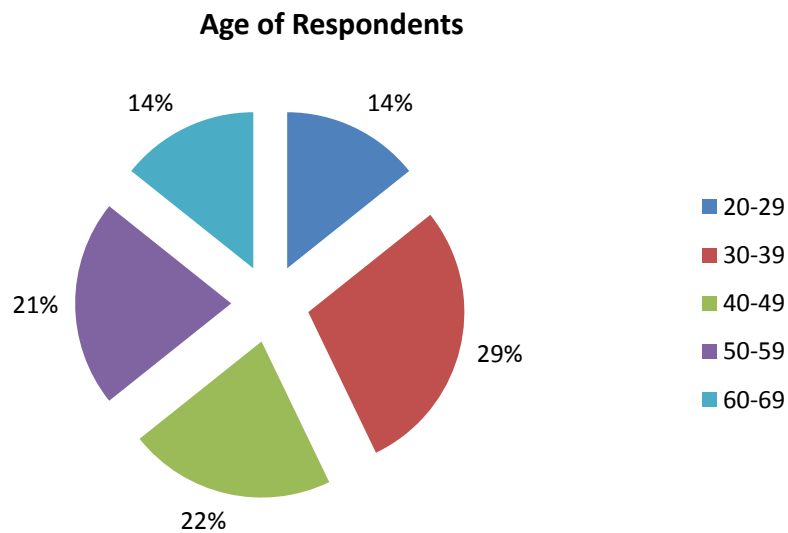


Figure 3: Respondent Age (N=14)

4. Marital Status

As depicted in Figure 4 below, there was a relatively equal distribution of single (34%), married (30%) and divorced (24%) individuals attending the event.

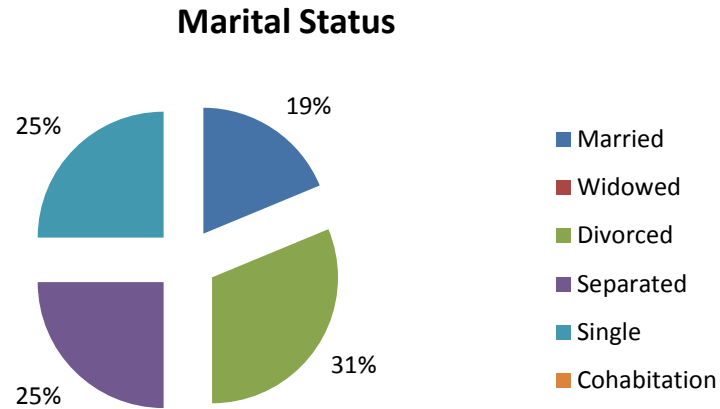


Figure 4: Respondent Marital Status (N=14)

5. Race/Ethnicity of Respondents

As shown in Figure 5 below, the event attracted a diverse group of individuals. Although the majority of respondents (55%) were of European descent, African-Americans and those of Hispanic descent were very well represented, with the groups accounting for a combined 36% of respondents.

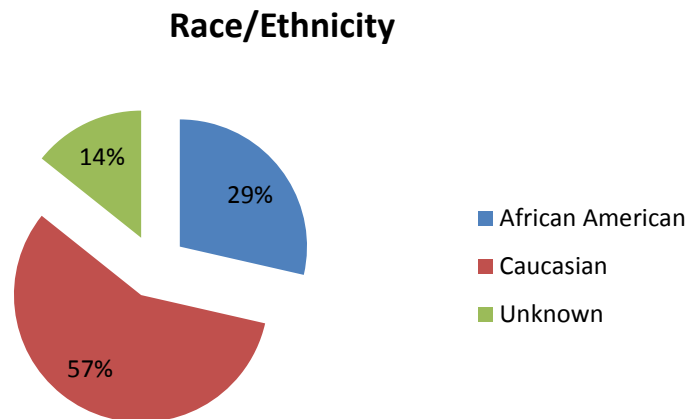


Figure 5: Respondent Race/Ethnicity (N=14)

6. Respondent Education Level

Figure 6 gives a breakdown of respondents' education level. As evidenced by the figure below, there was a fairly equal distribution among respondents. Most of the respondents at the event indicated that they had completed some college (25%) or received an associate degree (25%). Furthermore, a significant percentage of respondents completed college either at the undergraduate or graduate level (31%).

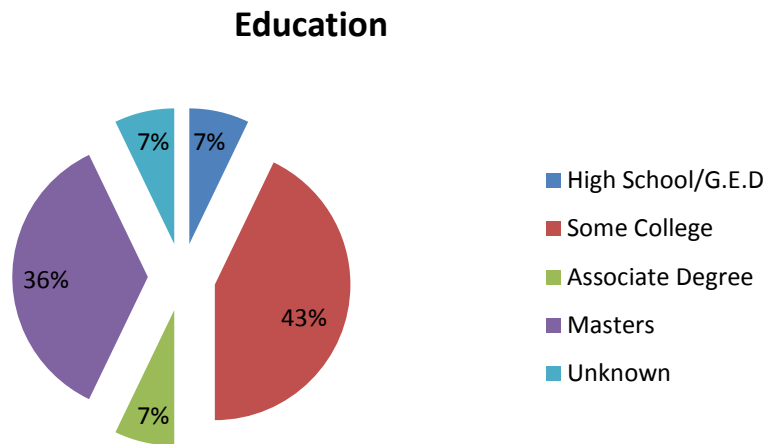


Figure 6: Respondent Education Level (N=14)

Section II: Event Evaluation

1. Overall Rating of Event

Respondents rated all aspects of the event very favorably, with each criterion scoring a mean of 4.7 or higher. This positive attitude toward the event is further reflected in the large percentage of high scores across all categories. Please see Table 1 below for a more detailed breakdown.

Categories	n	Mean	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
Facilitators	14	4.93	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%
Event Activities	14	4.79	0%	0%	0%	21%	79%
Event Facilities	14	4.93	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%
Event Volunteers	14	4.93	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%
Overall Event Experience	14	4.93	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%

Table 1: Overall Rating of Event

2. Overall Experience

As indicated in Table 2 below, the mean score for each category was above 4.6, signifying a high level of satisfaction with the event and its delivery. The majority of respondents indicated that they plan to return to the event, and to bring family and others with them.

Statements	n	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would attend an event like this again in the future	12	4.92	0%	0%	0%	8%	92%
I would bring my family back to an event like this in the future	12	4.83	0%	0%	0%	17%	83%
I would encourage others to attend an event like this in the future	12	4.92	0%	0%	0%	8%	92%
I felt welcomed at today's event	12	4.92	0%	0%	0%	8%	92%
I felt connected to a bigger community at this event	12	4.83	0%	0%	0%	17%	83%

Table 2: Overall Conference Experience

3. Overall Experience

As indicated in Table 3 below, the mean score for each category was above 4.6, signifying a high level of satisfaction with the event and its delivery. The majority of respondents indicated that they plan to return to the event, and to bring family and others with them.

Activity For Adults	n	Mean	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Yoga	5	4.80	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Self Care Boxes	8	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Massage Chairs	9	4.89	0%	0%	0%	12%	88%
Lunch	11	4.82	0%	0%	9%	0%	91%

Table 3: Overall Experience of Activities for Adults

4. Overall Experience

As indicated in Table 4 below, the mean score for each category was above 4.6, signifying a high level of satisfaction with the event and its delivery. The majority of respondents indicated that they plan to return to the event, and to bring family and others with them.

Family Activities	n	Mean	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Family Self Care Box Making	5	4.20	0%	0%	20%	40%	40%
Craft Activities	6	4.67	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%
Family and Children's Yoga	3	4.30	0%	0%	33%	0%	67%
Family Lunch	6	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Magic Show	4	4.50	0%	0%	25%	0%	75%
Fun With Robots	3	3.33	0%	0%	33%	0%	67%

Table 4: Overall Experience of Family Activities

Section IV: Conclusions

The survey results indicate that the event was well received by women veterans and their families. We would like to highlight our successes and opportunities for growth moving forward.

1. Successes

The results from the event survey and respondent observation indicate that respondents enjoyed themselves, and that there was a general feeling of wellbeing surrounding the experience. Respondents greatly appreciated the pre-arranged activities that helped foster a sense of connection between respondents and their families. Additionally, the opportunity to interact with fellow veterans was also highly appreciated, highlighting the desire of many veterans to socialize with others who have had shared similar experiences. These results are extremely encouraging given that the purpose of this event was to connect women veterans to each other in hopes of forging support systems and community involvement. The congenial atmosphere indicated that hosting this event was a step in the right direction to developing and enhancing veteran connections. Many respondents also indicated that they would be likely to recommend this event to others. It is also important to note that this event attracted a diverse group of respondents, with many respondents coming from varying backgrounds and military branches.

2. Opportunities for Growth

A very small subset of respondents voiced concerns about the event; these included a desire for more detailed information about the event and better outreach. Moving forward, WJC should remain cognizant of outreach efforts and also make sure to allot sufficient time to send out necessary information to the desired audience. Some respondents also indicated the need to coordinate WJC calendar with other veteran events so that we can draw a larger group to our event.



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3. Conclusion

The event was very well received. The majority of respondents indicated that they not only enjoyed the experience, but would also recommend it to others. A welcoming environment, with opportunities to connect and engage, was the essence of our event's success. We would like to point out that this event was a great success thanks to the Department of Veteran Service and the members of TVTV and MVP community at WJC military community under the leadership of Jenny D' Olympia. We would also like to extend our thanks to the faculty and students at WJC who helped with event planning and execution.