

Reducing the Stigma of PTSD in the Military

Kaitlyn Pothier (ME), Lexi Ferrini (MA), Hannah Borges (BB), Blake Wofford (BME)
GPS: Heal the World - Professor Elizabeth Stoddard and Professor Reeta Rao

The Problem:



Stigma surrounding PTSD drives veterans away from seeking treatment for their mental health diseases.

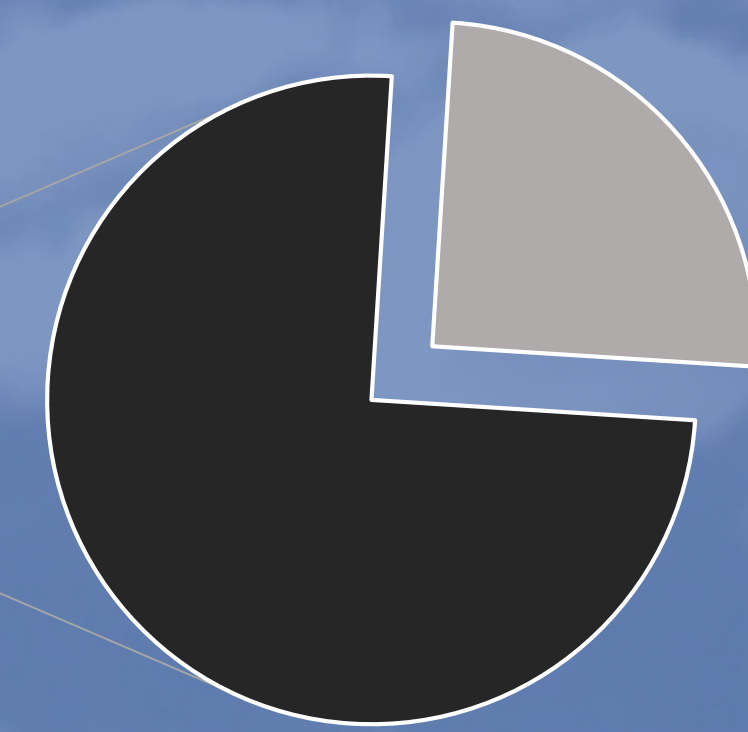
The Impacts:

2% of the U.S. population are Veterans



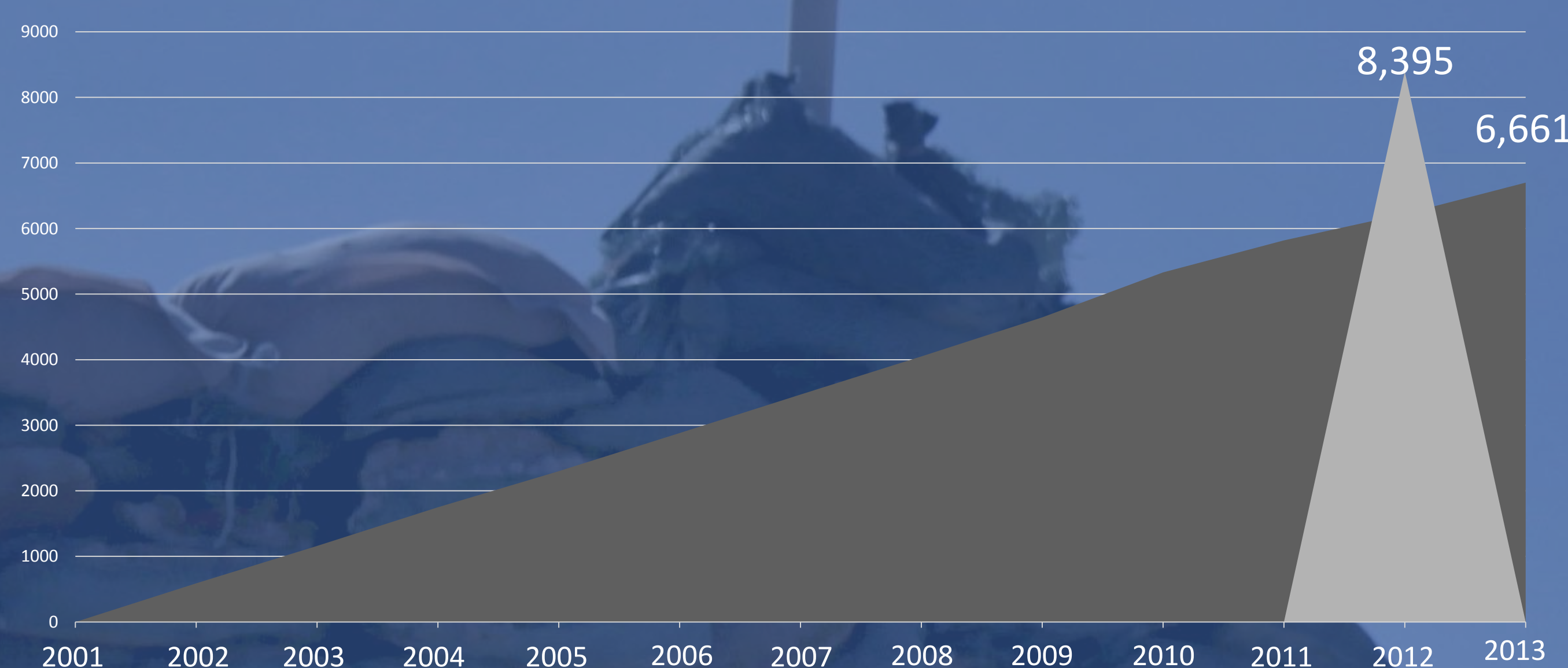
U.S. Population Civilian v Veteran

25% of the U.S suicides are Veterans



U.S. Suicide Rate Civilian v Veteran

Veteran Deaths



■ Deaths in Afghanistan
■ Suicides



Veterans with PTSD are 75% more likely to be diagnosed with substance abuse, which is highly linked to mental illness and could signal potential risk of suicide.

Existing Solution:



In Michigan

Limitations:

- Only implemented in one area
- Only used after veterans return home

- Peer to Peer programs for soldiers
- "Buddies" are extensively trained
- Soldiers are given advice in seeking help
- Train community clinicians about military culture and issues

Benefits:

- Connects military veterans with resources they may need
- Provides connection with someone who shares similar experiences

Our Changes

- Implement nationwide
- Use during and after deployment
- Include families

Acknowledgements

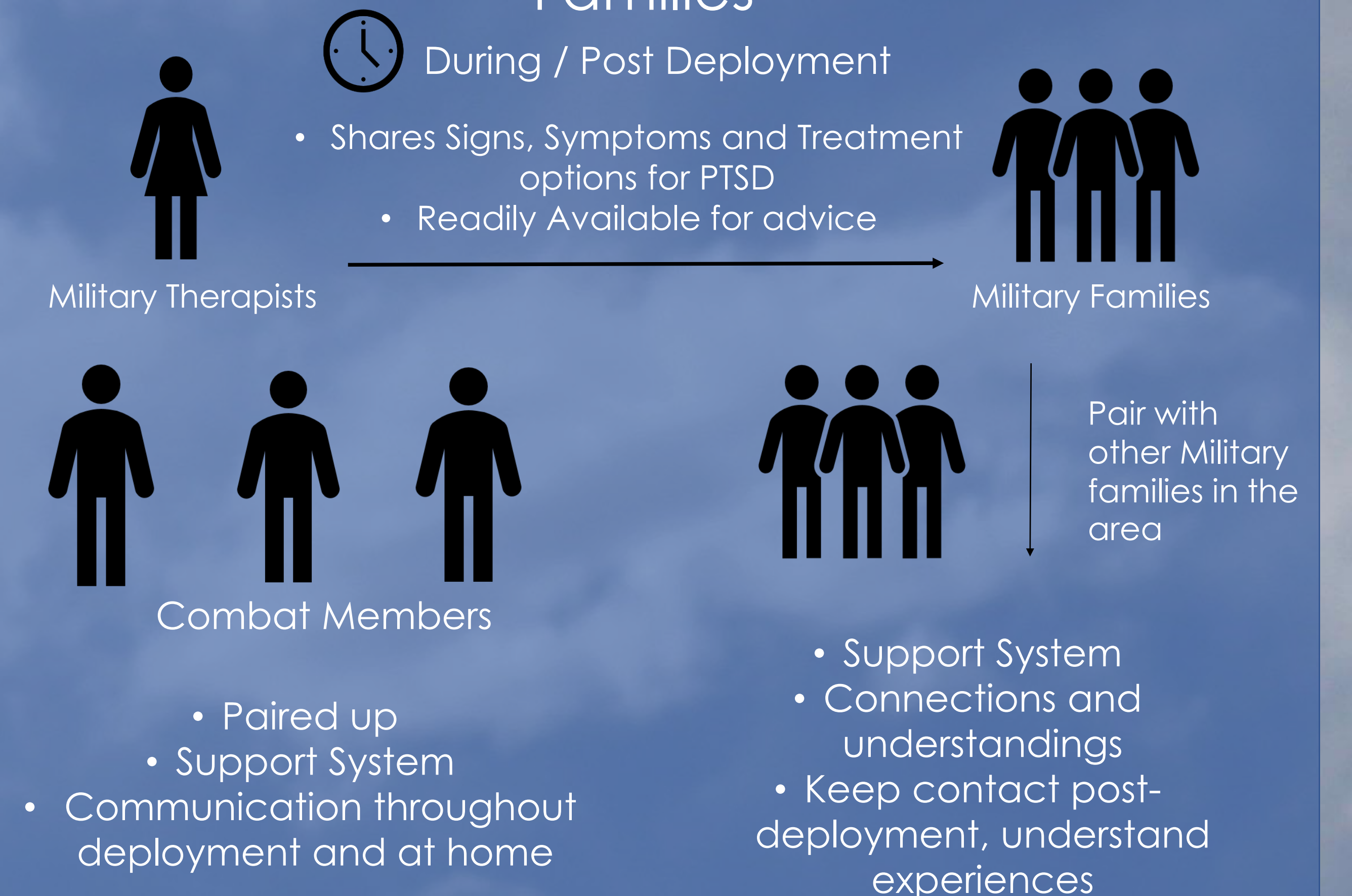
Thank you to veterans Carlos Huerta and Ryan Casavant for agreeing to speak with us about the stigma they saw while deployed, and the continued stigma within civilian culture.

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Our Solution:

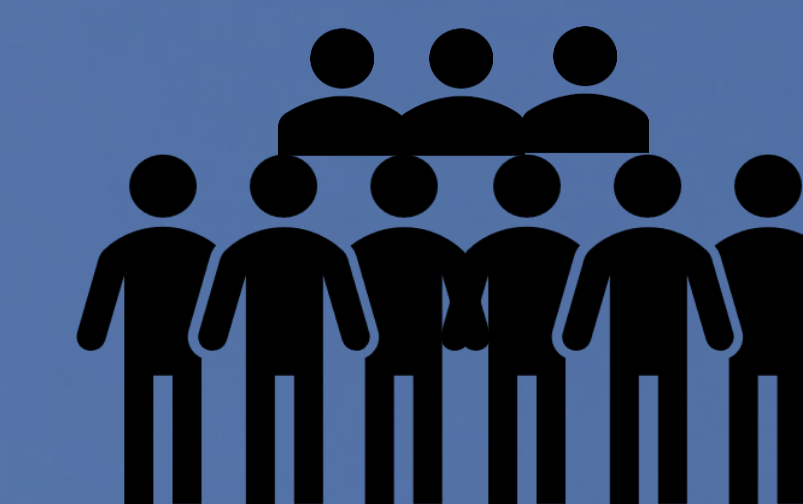
Class and Buddy System for Military and Families



Goals

- Make Veterans feel welcomed into society
- Provide knowledge of PTSD in society → Reduce Stigma
- Increase Support and Comfortability of Seeking Treatment in Military

Assessment Plan:



Perform a trial with a small group of veterans and volunteer families in Alaska, that is the state with the best VA benefits.

6 months after follow up



- Observe suicide rates;
- Number of veterans part of the program in the present;
- Interview families and veterans participants
- Observe Family relationships



If effective...

- Advertise
- Seek government for approval and funding
- Seek funding from profitable and non-profitable organizations