

VIRTUAL VETERAN PROGRAMMING

RESILIENCE.

ADAPT AND OVERCOME



BraveHearts

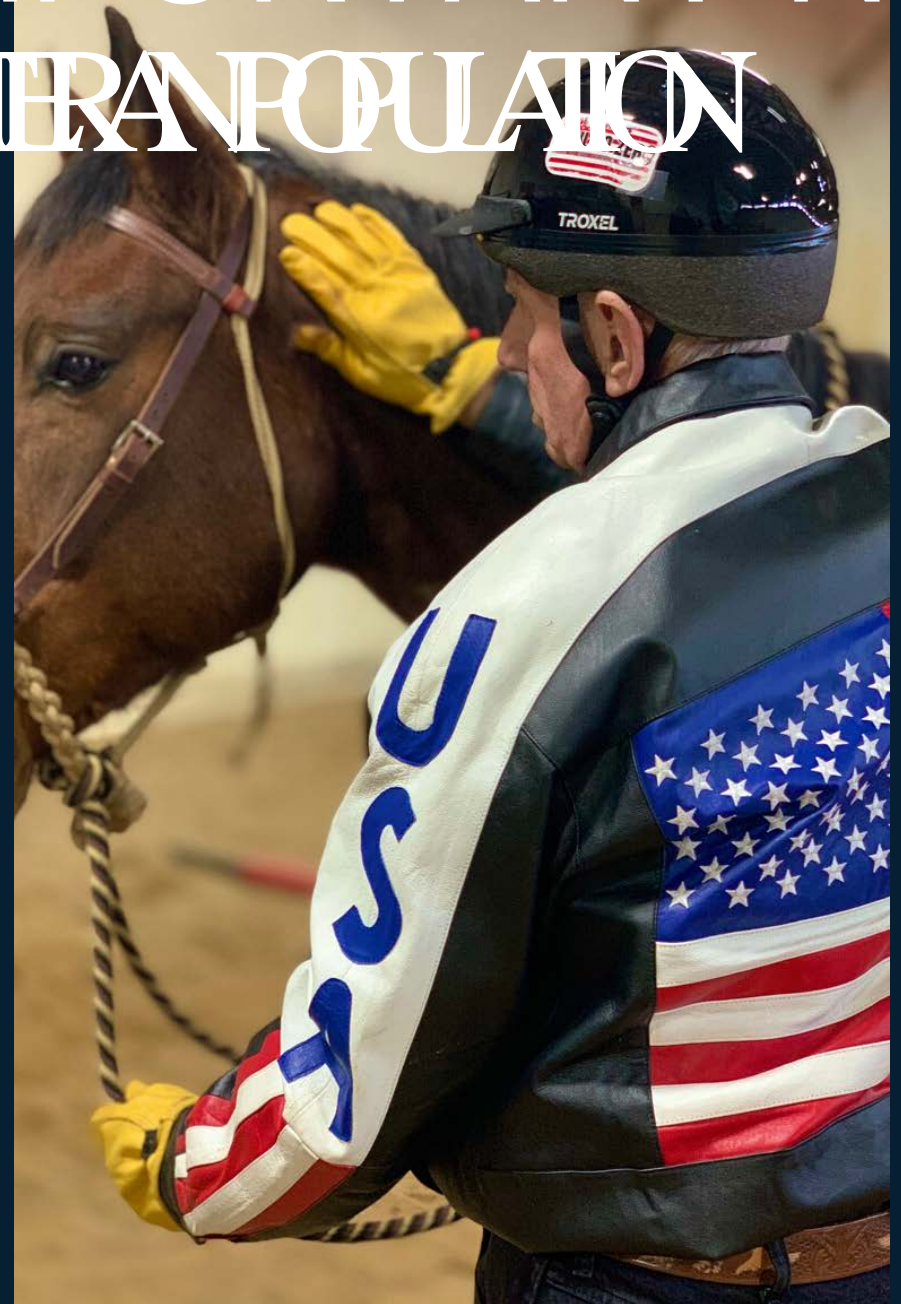
MEGGAN HILL-MCQUEENEY, PRESIDENT/COO



IT IS MORE IMPORTANT NOT TO REACH DEEP INTO VETERAN POPULATION

Take time to first think about the veteran populations you are serving and ensuring you aren't leaving anyone behind who needs support.

- Age
- Demographics
- Various Diagnoses i.e. PTSD
- Outspoken vs.. Reclusive Veterans
- Consistent Veterans
- VA Groups
- Vet Center Groups
- Substance Recovery Vets
- Veteran Family Members



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THE BROKEN NEED



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"Some of us are pretty severely broken and like me, some of us are looking for a place to feel at home and have a brotherhood again."

"Its just really hard since I'm starting to get the feeling this will go on a lot longer than we all expected. I love BraveHearts so much.... feels like its being ripped from me. Having hope is hard since every time I'm starting to get grounded and stable something destroys it."

"The depression is hitting a lot harder than expected, trying to hold it together but my demons are coming back. I'm having a hard time with even basic functioning... BraveHearts was the only thing that worked for me. I'm honestly scared I will fall too far back."

"The world changed and created a pressure cooker of stress."

THE URGENT NEED

"I'm ok just lethargic and in pain."

"I watched Hank today on the Easter Egg Hunt... I cried. I didn't realize I missed him so much."

"With no possibility of going to the barn, due to the COVID-19 lock down, I find that I am more depressed. I have gone there every Friday for several years. I feel a bit lost and really don't have a sense of purpose. The interaction with the community and the horses... I really miss my horses. The first dinner with Oatie actually made me cry, I was so happy to just see him eating hay. I need to be with "my" horses. It is that important to me."



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THE CONTINUED



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"It has been 18 days since myself and the other veterans have been able to set foot inside a BraveHearts barn. It has been a hard and difficult situation for us to experience and manage as that is our 'safe place' and saving grace. The closest thing I can compare the feelings of not having the barn to turn to is when I discharged from the military. When discharging from the military there were feelings of loneliness, abandonment, regret, and frustration, some of the same feelings we are experiencing now without having BraveHearts to turn to as our second home. Without the wisdom and power of the horses I find myself lost again, attempting to go back into my old ways of drinking and using (I have not relapsed or slipped), but I miss the strong support system that comes from BraveHearts and the people and horses within. Without the barn it feels like a piece of myself is missing. I feel I have lost my purpose to get up and move most days, and I know I am not the only veteran feeling this way during this time.

BraveHearts has done so much to pull myself and other veterans to our feet after getting lost in dark places and I fear that we could once again find those dark places without the barn. This is why I and others feel it is important and essential to have the BraveHearts barns open and offering services again."

Veterans in the most vulnerable state Many veterans are reporting an increase in:

- PTSD episodes
 - The longer I go without my PTSD symptoms, the harder it is when they return."
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fear
- Stress
- Isolation
- Lethargy
- Hypervigilance
- Physical pain
- Flashbacks
- Thoughts of substance abuse (many support groups are inactive at this time)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low resilience

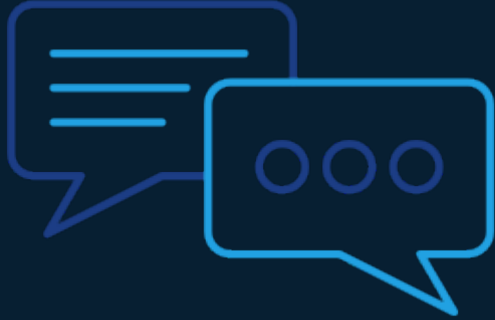
PREVIOUS VULNERABLE

EXACERBATED BY COVID-19



BRAINSTORM

WHAT ARE OUR CURRENT OUTLETS



Recognizing PATH Intl. Centers are a life-line for veterans and determining how to immediately increase your communication with our already established outlets. Ideas to consider:

- Social media presence
- Text Messages (Remind App)
- Email Marketing (Constant Contact & Weekly Friday Emails)
- Newsletters/Mailings
- Calendars - editing for COVID-19 (TeamUp)
- Website and developing a page specifically to COVID-19
- Utilizing these to establish contact and communication across all mediums



1. Speak to your veteran community on their needs

- Check-in's, assessments, and sending out surveys
- Tele-health with Mental Health Professional for vets in crisis - Crisis Line to allow easy access - 1.800.273.8255 and pressing 1, at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or by texting 838255

2. Invest in setting up a few tools to get you started

- Zoom, Remind, TeamUp, etc.

3. Start with a broader general virtual program and then build off of it

- "Live Feed" Cam with interaction - Google Nest

4. Give yourself space to reflect and brainstorm with members of your team, board and volunteers to keep them engaged

5. Letting your donors know you are responding and taking action

- Leaning on them for support for resources you're developing - Zoom, Nest, Constant Contact

TOP IDEAS -
HELP YOU
FOR A VERY
DIFFERENT



6. Initiated peer support

- Veteran Support Groups (mindfulness, isolation support, horsemanship Q&A, maintaining healthy relationships, mustangs)
- Facebook Group

7. Test & launch virtual programs

- Volunteer Trainings, Virtual Horsemanship
 - Recording to use in the future
- Virtual veteran challenge trail course
- BraveHealth - currently developing (recorded videos) Highlighting Vet gardening, cooking, yoga etc. initiated by veterans
- Behind the Scenes

8. Branching out into smaller groups to address specific need

- Recovery Support Group (Zoom)
- Drill Team Support
- Virtual Veteran Leadership Support

9. Measurable outcomes of virtual components through assessment and evaluations

- Call-In Assessment
- Wellness Survey (now during virtual programs & 2 weeks after start date)
- Virtual Program Survey

10. Developing pieces to utilize for grants & donors

- COVID-19 Response Document (Canva)

TOP IDEAS TO
HELP YOU
FOR A VERY
DIFFERENT



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COVID-19

RESPONSE SERVICES FOR VETERANS

COVID-19 has not ceased BraveHearts services for veterans. Rather, it has led to a constant innovation of virtual horsemanship and veteran support.

Newsletter released to veterans and VA's to let them know of our COVID-19 response efforts.

HEARTLINE

With many substance support groups during COVID, BraveHearts launched this virtual program for veterans in recovery from substance abuse/addiction to gain the support from their fellow veteran community.



RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP



Veterans connect with one another through video and phone to discuss horsemanship and personal growth related topics.

DAILY SUPPORT CALLS



Tele-health services are offered to veterans needing 1:1 support from a mental health specialist. Additionally, our team connects with veterans daily for a routine check-in.

TELE-HEALTH & 1:1 STAFF CALLS

A unique horsemanship experience through video conferencing allows veterans to advance their horsemanship using videos and instructor discussion while giving veterans an interactive approach to learning.



VIRTUAL HORSEMANSHIP

Bringing healthy lifestyle tips to veterans through video recordings from a variety of guests and professionals.

BRAVEHEALTH

"Another test, another battle. Two weeks before the outbreak effected my world, my life was back on track. I was dual diagnosed with severe alcoholism and PTSD. The biggest thing for my recovery was not to self-isolate... That's the part of what was killing me. BraveHearts is my safe-zone. The veteran daily call-ins, video live feeds of the horses, and support from the BraveHearts Team is one again saving my soul. This is a tough trail right now for me, I'm thanking God he's putting these resources here for us and the community."
BraveHearts Veteran

SAMPLES OF RESPONSE



"Live Feed" Cam

THE HEARTLINE

SHARING OUR FARMS WITH OUR COMMUNITY

We miss our BraveHearts family dearly and understand that being away from the farms is challenging for all. However, your health and safety is of the utmost importance to us at this time. We have launched various programming to continue interactions and support our community.

HERE'S HOW TO STAY CONNECTED WITH US

"Live FEED" Cam
Weekdays 4pm-6pm CST
Tune in to see live videos of our herd with optional Q&A with our team.

Connect on Social Media
Like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram!

Veteran Support Calls
Weekdays 2pm-3pm CST
Veteran Support Calls welcome veteran participants to connect with each other in a positive, safe & social environment. Each call focuses on a topic of discussion allowing personal growth in self, well-being and horsemanship. To join us, contact veterans@braveheartsriding.org for the conference call in information.

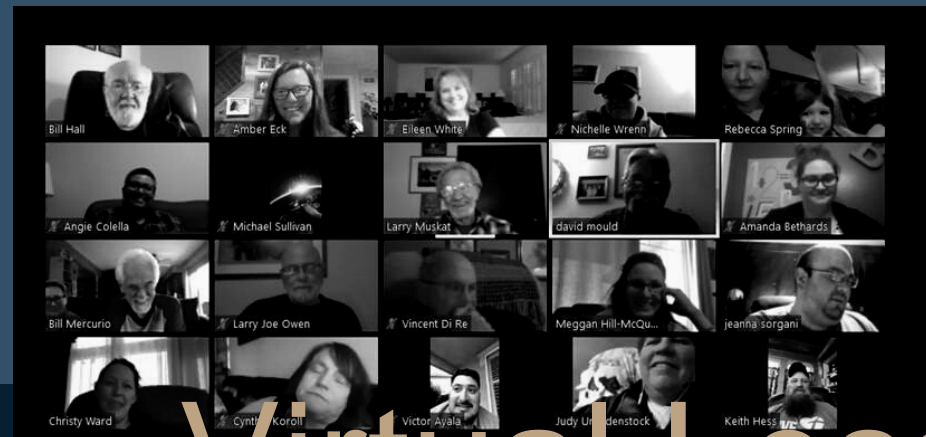
Giveaways
Saturday's on Facebook
Giveaways announced on our Facebook "Live Feed" Cam!

Volunteer Remotely
Handy on computer, good at writing, enjoy being creative, love to plan... or more?? Contact volunteers@braveheartsriding.org on how you can log hours remotely!

"Distancing doesn't mean you can't help further our mission."

Vet Virtual Leadership

PROGRAM	STAFF	VET ASSIST
Challenge Course	Marshall	Dave
Drill Team	Amber	Bill
Recovery Support	Marshall	Jeff
Behind the Scenes	Meggan	Alex
BraveHealth	Jeanna	Mike S
Virtual Horsemanship	Meggan	Nick
2pm Support Group	Amber	Tim
Buddy Check-Ins	Amber	Hedlund
Telehealth	Amber	Marsh
VA Zoom	Amber	Reno



VIRTUAL HORSEMAN

What does it entail?

Begin to think about how you can teach veterans horsemanship through videos. Then build a series of topics and short footage in a professional order to keep them all engaged and to allow further discussion to occur.

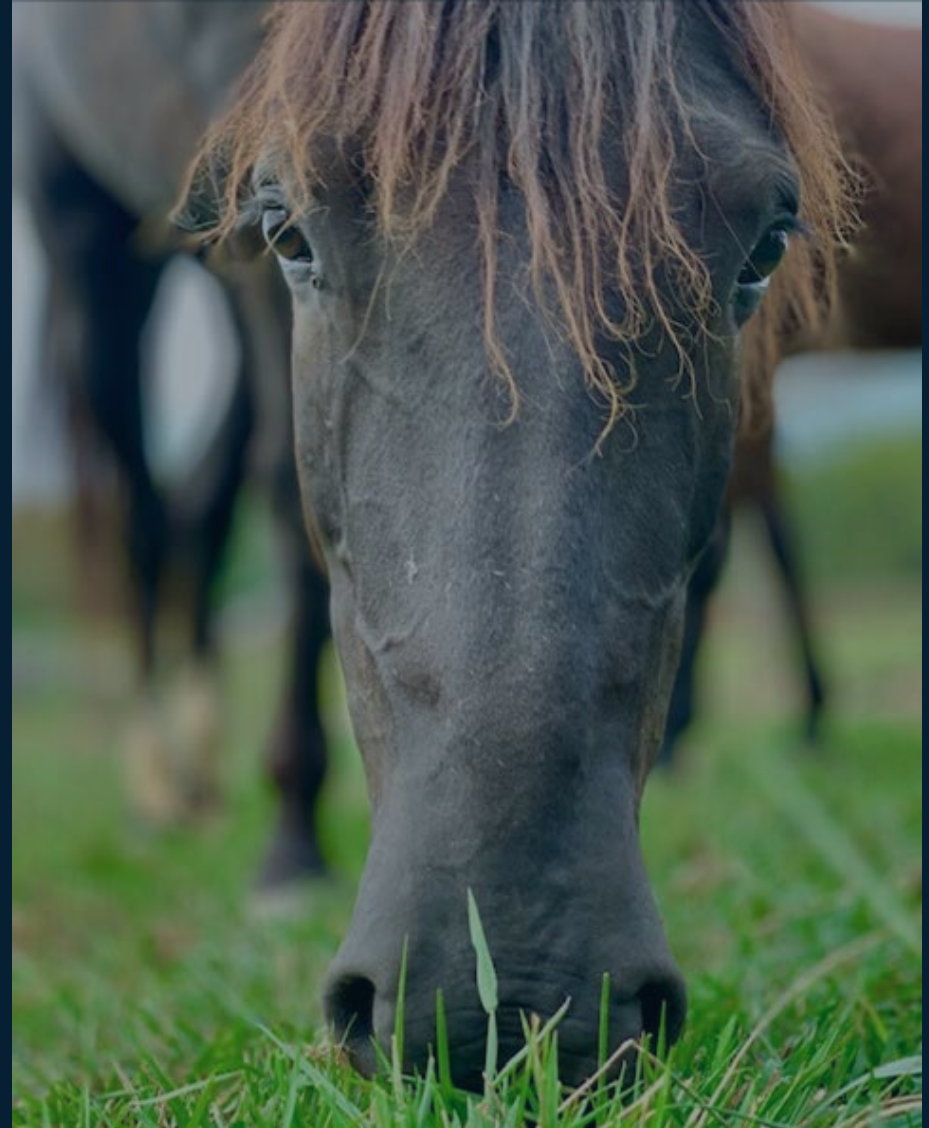
We will pause for a short clip...



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MORE VETERAN PROGRAM IDEAS

- Facebook Live with Instructors or Rec. Therapists
- Workout challenges
- Meditation and Movement Challenges
- Nutrition Coaching
- Daily writing prompts
- "How to" Webinars i.e. how to start a blog
- Virtual Game Night
- "Coffee" Meet & Greet
- Book or Movie Club
- Zoom yoga classes



PROS



ON AVERAGE,

18 veterans are on our group support calls.

We had 25 veterans on the virtual horsemanship call launched last week.

WE ARE ROTATING

staff and veterans to try to find the right person to connect with the veteran.

CREATING A ROUTINE

Same programs at the same time gives veterans normalcy and something they can both count on and look forward to.

CREATING CONTENT

being creative and understanding the value of your program and new tangible concepts that can be utilized for years to come.

SOME VETERANS ARE

eager to engage and are signing up for every new virtual program we are offering while others are not as quick to respond. Zoom vs. Calls – Allowing vets to remain anonymous.

VARIOUS PLATFORMS

Learning them all can be time consuming. Try to keep it both simple and accurate to keep it relevant and timely for today's needs.

NOTHING IS GOING TO

replace the horse.

We just have to try our best.

TECHNOLOGY IS NOT

always our friend. It can be very frustrating especially to veterans who are eager to connect when they cannot get the technology to work or do not have the appropriate technology in place - countless hours have been spent on training.



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RESPONSE FROM V

"Another test, another battle Two weeks before the outbreak effected my world, my life as a veteran was back on track I was dual diagnosed with severe alcoholism and PTSD The biggest thing in my recovery was not to self isolate. That's the part now that's killing me BraveHeart is my safe zone The veteran daily calls, video live feeds of the horses, and support from the BraveHeart team is once again saving my soul This is a tough trail right now for us, I'm thanking God he's putting these resources here for our veteran community

"When everything around us has seemed to close, it has felt like BraveHearts never left."

"Your zoom chat led Marie to get her horse books out again Also, she has not stopped talking about horses, and Rosiesince"

"This is what I really needed, it made me so happy I started actually crying. Thank you so much for thinking of us. Thank you. I can't tell you how much I needed this right now, today."



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THE FALL

- It will be even harder to connect with them when our doors reopen if we DO NOT have these resources and keep them engaged NOW.
- Continuity is **critical**.
- The combination of lost revenue from cancelled fundraising events, reduced patient volume, and billable activity; coupled with increasing staffing costs, acquiring personal protective equipment, altering service delivery methods to maintain access to care, and other unanticipated expenses is simply overwhelming many providers.
- According to National Council for Behavioral Health CEO, Chuck Ingoglia, “if we don’t take steps now to avert the collapse of the system, we can expect millions of individuals with mental illness and addiction to arrive in overtaxed emergency departments across the nation.” With COVID-19 continuing to dominate the focus of health care systems, a new poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation, published on April 2, shows the psychological toll the pandemic is taking on many Americans. *According to the survey, 45 percent of adults (53% of women and 37% of men) say the pandemic has affected their mental health, and 19 percent say it has had a “major impact.”*

OUR FAVORITE
Tools and Links

