

ANNUAL WARRIOR SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2022



WOUNDED WARRIOR
YOLANDA POUILLARD

ABOUT WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is a leading veterans service organization focused on transforming the way the post-9/11 generation and future generations of veterans are empowered, employed, and engaged in our communities. Our direct service programs, advocacy efforts, and collaboration among best-in-practice veteran and military organizations advance WWP's vision: to foster the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation's history.

WWP programs, services, and advocacy efforts are all driven by the greatest needs of warriors, informed by the responses to this survey.

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ABOUT THE ANNUAL WARRIOR SURVEY

Wounded Warrior Project's 2022 Annual Warrior Survey (AWS) has grown to represent over 165,000 post-9/11 veterans across the continental U.S. and its territories. This data provides a 360-degree view of the warriors WWP serves and allows us to track and treat warriors' most pressing needs in areas such as mental, physical, and financial wellness. It guides WWP's efforts as well as the efforts of those who share and support our mission of honoring and empowering warriors.

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Data from the AWS is representative of the 165,967 wounded warriors who were registered with WWP as of April 2022. Detailed information on sampling and methodology can be found in the comprehensive report.



BACKGROUND



WOUNDED WARRIOR
DANIEL SMEE



Scan to download the
Comprehensive Report
of Findings or visit
AnnualWarriorSurvey.com



WWP WARRIORS: A 360° VIEW

This 360-degree view lays out the basic characteristics that begin to paint a picture of those whom this survey represents — WWP warriors.

AVERAGE AGE:

41

SEX:

83%

 MALE

17%

 FEMALE

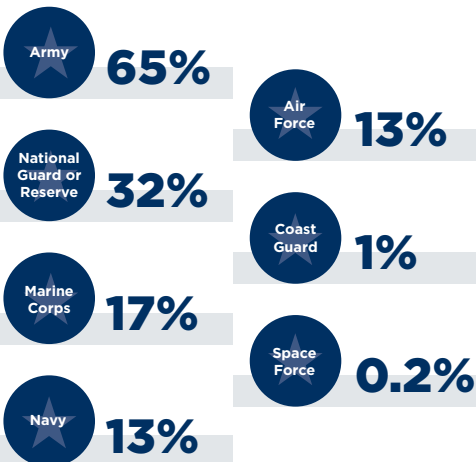
MARITAL STATUS:

65%

ARE MARRIED

BRANCH OF SERVICE:

Nearly one-third of WWP warriors have served in more than one branch of the military (31%).



EDUCATION:

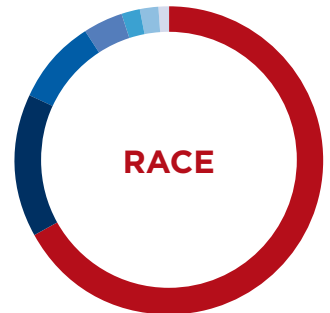
WWP warriors tend to be more educated when compared to the broader U.S. veteran, post-9/11 veteran, and U.S. adult populations.

42%

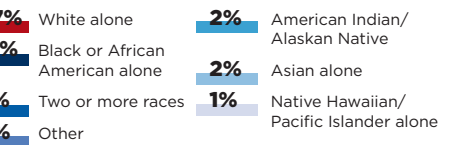
have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher

RACE AND ETHNICITY:

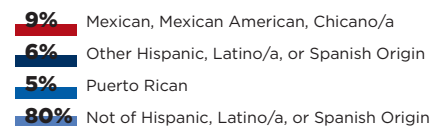
In terms of race and ethnicity, the WWP warrior population is more diverse than the broader U.S. veteran, post-9/11 veteran, and U.S. general populations.



RACE



ETHNICITY



TOP 5

Service-Related Injuries and Health Problems



80%

SLEEP PROBLEMS



76%

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS
DISORDER (PTSD)



76%

ANXIETY



74%

DEPRESSION



67%

HEARING LOSS
OR TINNITUS



VA DISABILITY RATINGS:

Nearly eight in 10 WWP warriors have a disability rating that is considered “**severe**” by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) (rating of 70% or higher).

WWP warriors with a disability rating of 70% or higher:

78%

None/Pending or on Appeal:

8%



WOUNDED WARRIOR
PELE HUNKIN



QUALITY OF LIFE

Wounded Warrior Project’s vision is to foster the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation’s history. We believe that being a successful, well-adjusted generation is predicated on an enhanced quality of life.

This enhanced quality of life is a leading priority for WWP. In the 2022 AWS, we incorporated specific analyses to help us better understand quality of life among WWP warriors and how different factors can impact it.

HOW WWP DEFINES QUALITY OF LIFE (QoL)

QoL: A warrior’s ability to fully participate in and enjoy life.

QoL is made up of five components: physical, mental, financial, social connection, and spiritual.



QoL is measured by: The Veterans RAND 12-Item Health Survey (VR-12), a widely used quality-of-life measure that provides an overall mental component score (reported as mental health QoL score) and a physical component score (reported as physical health QoL score).

QoL Analysis: Factor analysis was conducted to explore which factors from each of the five QoL components were the best predictors of WWP warriors’ QoL. The variables that had the strongest impact on each component of QoL were:

- **Mental component:** PTSD and depression
- **Physical component:** Body mass index and sleep quality
- **Financial component:** Employment
- **Social connection component:** Loneliness
- **Spiritual component:** Post-traumatic growth



FACTORS WITH GREATEST IMPACT ON QoL FOR WWP WARRIORS

STRONGEST PREDICTOR OF GOOD QoL: **SLEEP**

This suggests that as a WWP warrior's quality of sleep improves, so does their quality of life. This is a critical insight, considering that 80% reported sleep problems in 2022, making it the most common self-reported injury or health problem by all WWP warriors.



STRONGEST PREDICTOR OF POOR QoL: **DEPRESSION**

This suggests that as the severity of depressive symptoms increases, WWP warriors' quality of life decreases. This is also a critical insight, considering that nearly three in every four WWP warriors reported experiencing depression (74%) and about half screened positive for moderate to severe depressive symptoms at the time of the survey (55%).

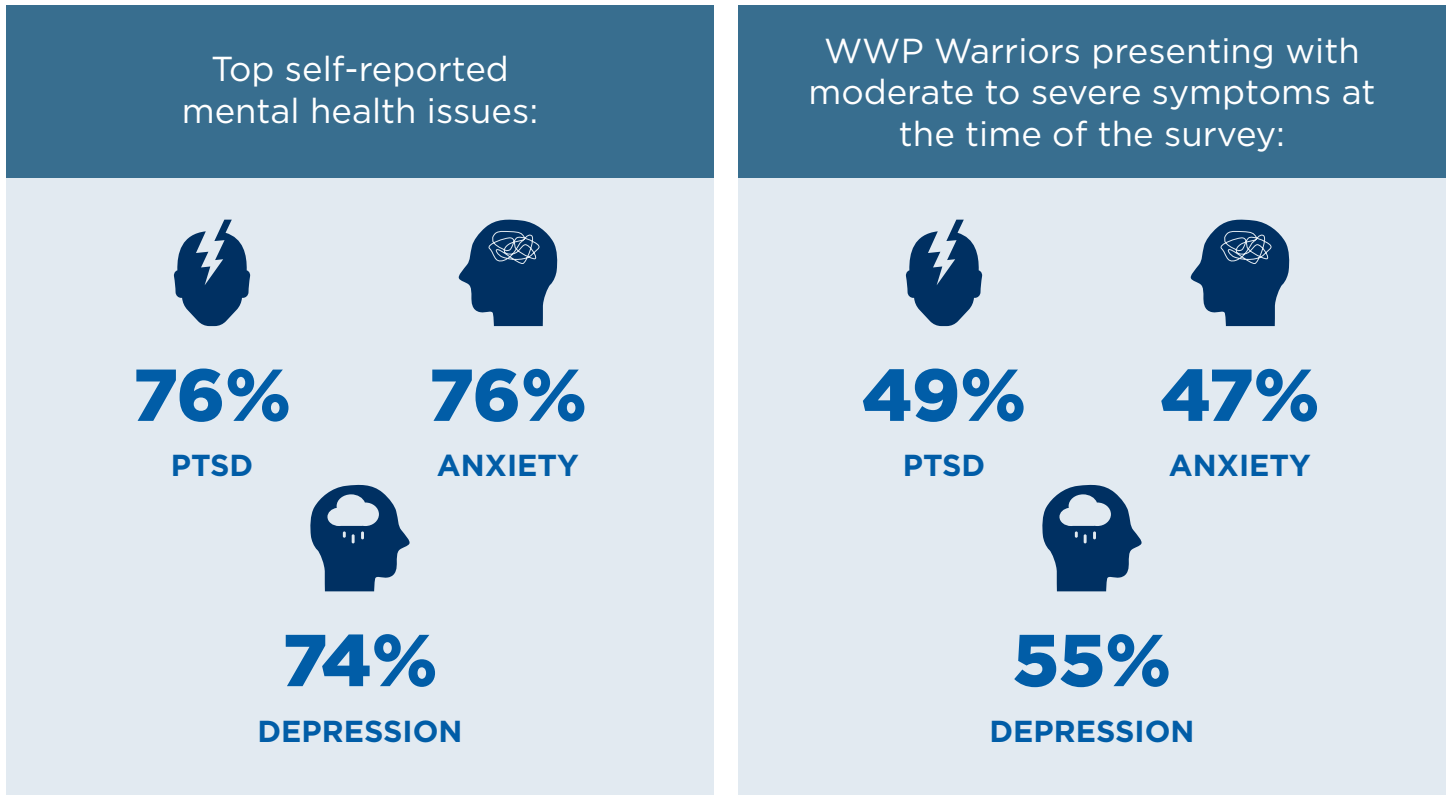




MENTAL HEALTH

TOP MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

In 2022, WWP warriors reported PTSD, anxiety, and depression at rates similar to 2021. These continue to rank as top service-related health issues among WWP warriors. However, the number of WWP warriors presenting with moderate to severe anxiety symptoms has fallen from 73% in 2021 to 47% in 2022.



Though it does not fall into the “most common” list, military sexual trauma (MST) is a critical issue to report on. **About one in 10 WWP warriors reported experiencing MST during their service** — 45% of all WWP women warriors and 3% of all WWP male warriors.

Half of WWP warriors (50%) presented with moderate to severe symptoms for **two or more mental health conditions**.



Our QoL analysis determined that PTSD, anxiety, and depression all have a negative impact on quality of life for WWP warriors.

SUICIDE

As mental health issues persist as top-of-list concerns among WWP warriors, suicide remains a critical topic. The number of WWP warriors who've attempted suicide or reported suicidal thoughts has grown since 2021.

- **Nearly one in five** WWP warriors have attempted suicide at least once in their lifetimes (19% in 2022 vs. 16% in 2021).
- **Over one in four** WWP warriors (28%) have had suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months. Of WWP warriors who reported having suicidal thoughts, **72% reported having them in the past two weeks** (25% and 70% in 2021 AWS, respectively).

The 2022 AWS shows that some factors, including **PTSD, MST, and substance abuse**, are associated with **higher rates of suicidal thoughts among WWP warriors**.

Protective factors, which are associated with **lower rates of suicidal thoughts**, include **social support and the ability to access care when needed**.*

MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND SUPPORT

The 2022 AWS shows that WWP warriors rely on many different support mechanisms when it comes to mental health — highlighting the importance of a supportive community, veteran peer connection, and accessible professional care.

66% of WWP warriors **visited a professional** at least once in the past 12 months to help with issues such as **stress, emotional, alcohol, drug, or family problems**.

When dealing with stress, emotional challenges, or mental health concerns, WWP warriors reported that they most often turn to:



66%

TALKING TO FAMILY
AND FRIENDS



61%

TALKING WITH
ANOTHER VETERAN



59%

PRESCRIPTION
MEDICATION



55%

SERVICES AT A VA
MEDICAL CENTER



55%

PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY

*WWP warriors who reported experiencing no barriers to accessing health care for their physical injuries or problems in the past 12 months.



HEAD-RELATED TRAUMA AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

As the WWP warrior population continues to age, head-related trauma, including traumatic brain injury (TBI), becomes increasingly important to observe. The prevalence of these injuries has not changed significantly since 2021.

36%

of WWP warriors experienced typical symptoms of head injuries during their service (such as loss of consciousness)

37%

of WWP warriors self-reported incurring at least one TBI during their service

**WOUNDED WARRIOR
CHRIS GORDON**





PHYSICAL WELLNESS

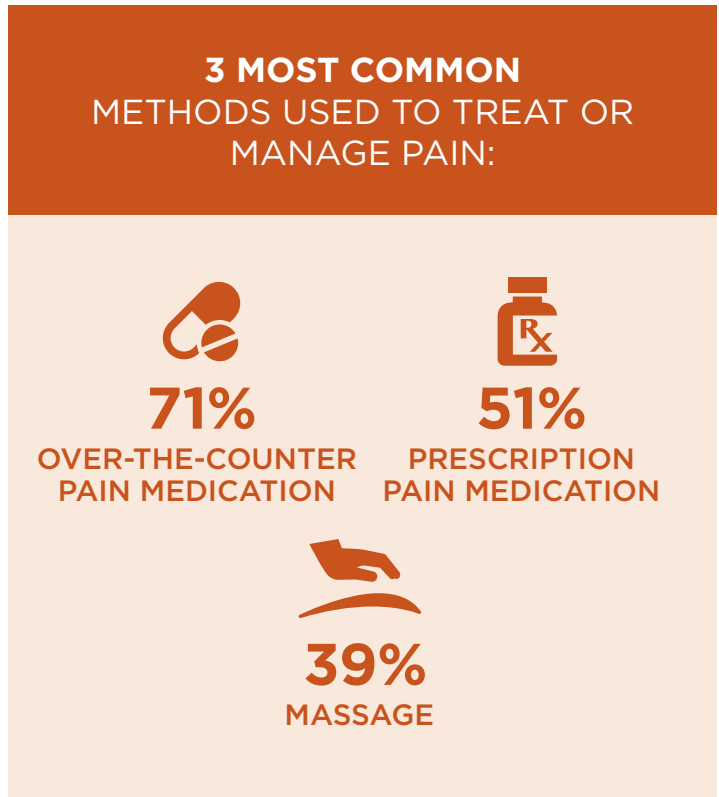
CHRONIC PAIN

Issues like chronic pain can take a toll on WWP warriors' ability to fully participate in and enjoy life. Given the high prevalence of injuries and health problems, chronic pain is a critical concern for the WWP warrior population.

About three in four (76%) WWP warriors scored in a range indicating **moderate or severe pain**.

Pain, Enjoyment of Life and General Activity scale: The overall average score among all WWP warriors was 5.3, which indicates moderate pain that interferes with activities and enjoyment of life.

Half of WWP warriors who reported pain in the previous three months reported they were “only a little effective” or “not at all effective” in managing their pain (39% and 11%, respectively).



Our QoL analysis determined that physical activity has a positive impact on quality of life for WWP warriors — implying that if they move more, they feel better. In fact, 55% of WWP warriors reported using physical activity to help overcome feelings of stress or emotional or mental health challenges.

SLEEP

As noted in the QoL section, we found sleep to be the strongest indicator of good quality of life among WWP warriors. This suggests that better sleep can lead to improved quality of life — presenting a massive opportunity given the prevalence of sleep issues among WWP warriors.

80% of WWP warriors reported sleep problems, putting it at No. 1 on the list of all self-reported injuries and health problems.

The proportion of WWP warriors getting less than the recommended amount of sleep is more than double that of the general U.S. population.

SLEEPING FEWER
THAN SEVEN
HOURS PER NIGHT:

78%
OF WWP WARRIORS

35%
OF U.S. ADULTS



WOUNDED WARRIOR
SERGIO ALFARO



FINANCIAL WELLNESS

EMPLOYMENT

The WWP warrior unemployment rate appears to have made great improvement since 2021 — falling from 13.4% to 6.8%. However, it is still higher than the U.S. veteran and general populations.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:



Our QoL analysis determined that employment has a positive impact on quality of life for WWP warriors — making it critical to understand and address the barriers warriors face when seeking employment.

Given their unique experiences in the military and the high rate of injuries and health problems, WWP warriors face unique barriers to employment. **For the 6.8% of WWP warriors who are unemployed, the top-reported barriers to employment are:**

- Mental health or psychological distress: 48%
- Difficulty translating military skills to the civilian workforce: 37%
- Lack of education: 24%

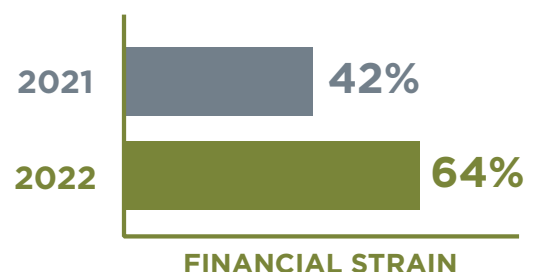
FINANCIAL STRAIN

Financial strain among WWP warriors has risen since 2021, with warriors citing an increased cost of goods as the top source of financial strain.

In 2022, more than six in 10 warriors reported that they did not have enough money to make ends meet at some point in the past 12 months (64%).

Top sources of financial strain among WWP warriors:

- Increased costs of goods (e.g., food, gas, rent): 82%
- Family obligations: 27%
- Working but not making enough money: 27%
- Out of work: 18%
- Medical bills: 6%





**WOUNDED WARRIOR
SEVERA PARRISH**



SOCIAL CONNECTION

LONELINESS

Finding connection and feeling understood after transitioning to civilian life can be a common challenge for veterans. Most WWP warriors reported that they feel isolated, lack companionship, or feel left out — a stark contrast to the camaraderie and companionship that many experience during their time in the military.



WWP WARRIORS REPORTED THAT THEY SOMETIMES OR OFTEN:

78%

FEEL ISOLATED

73%

FEEL LEFT OUT

71%

FEEL THEY LACK COMPANIONSHIP



Our QoL analysis suggests that loneliness has a negative impact on WWP warriors' quality of life.

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About two in five (39%) WWP warriors reported their physical health and emotional problems interfere with their social activities “most of the time” or “all of the time.”

WOUNDED WARRIOR
TANIKI RICHARDS (CENTER)





SPIRITUAL

POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

Spiritual well-being is related to one’s unique purpose, identity, values, beliefs, and life vision. This can include a person’s approach to life after trauma and finding purpose beyond difficult experiences.

Post-traumatic growth is a measure of positive coping after experiencing trauma. Considering the high prevalence of trauma, it is important to understand how WWP warriors have coped and the purpose they’ve found beyond the trauma they’ve experienced.

Overall, WWP warriors have an average post-traumatic growth score of 20.3 (scores range from 0-50). This is the baseline score that we will refer back to in future AWS waves to see how WWP warriors’ post-traumatic growth has changed over time.

35%
AGREED

“I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life.”

31%
AGREED

“I changed my priorities about what is important in life.”

23%
AGREED

“I discovered that I’m stronger than I thought I was.”



Our QoL analysis determined that post-traumatic growth has a positive impact on WWP warriors’ mental health quality of life but no significant difference on physical health quality of life. These analysis details are available in the Comprehensive Report of Findings.

RESILIENCE

Resilience is an individual's ability to overcome adversity. Even when faced with difficult life events and trauma, resilience can help warriors face, overcome, and bounce back from challenges.

On average, WWP warriors presented with moderate levels of resilience.

RESILIENCE SCORE:



WWP
WARRIORS



U.S. GENERAL
POPULATION

WWP WARRIORS WHO
AGREE THAT OFTEN OR
NEARLY ALL OF THE TIME:

47%

I am able to adapt when
changes occur

45%

I tend to bounce back
after illness, injury, or other
hardships

WOUNDED WARRIOR
BRYAN WAGNER
WITH HIS FAMILY





SUPPORT & CARE

HEALTH CARE COVERAGE AND PROVIDERS

Reliable and easily accessible health care is a critical component of any strong support system, especially for WWP warriors, who live with service-related injuries and health problems. Most prominently, the VA occupies this support role for warriors.



WWP WARRIORS PREDOMINANTLY USE VA MEDICAL CENTERS FOR:

67%

PRIMARY CARE

54%

MENTAL HEALTH
CARE

54%

SPECIALTY CARE

TOP FACTORS

THAT WWP WARRIORS CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A
HEALTH CARE PROVIDER:



92%

HOW QUICKLY
THEY CAN BE SEEN



91%

EASE OF SCHEDULING
APPOINTMENTS



91%

THE PROVIDER HAS A
MEDICAL LICENSE

BARRIERS TO CARE

For more than two in five WWP warriors, the support and care they need hasn't always been easy to get. Issues like inconvenient hours and a lack of understanding around benefits are some of the top contributing factors when it comes to getting care at the VA.

More than two in five WWP warriors report experiencing barriers to getting care for physical injuries or health problems (44%).

Top five barriers to using VA care (now or in the past):

- “There is not enough access to VA healthcare services and benefits.”
- “The VA is too far away.”
- “VA providers are not sensitive to my needs.”
- “I don't understand my benefits.”
- “The VA hours are inconvenient.”

TELEHEALTH

Telehealth is one of the ways WWP warriors can overcome barriers to get the care and support they need. The idea of telehealth appears to be well-received by WWP warriors, as most who've been offered a telehealth appointment have utilized it, and even many of those who were not offered a telehealth appointment reported that they would have used it if offered.

Among WWP warriors who **were** offered a telehealth appointment, **89% utilized telehealth at some point in the past 12 months**. Among them, 21% used it once or twice a month for physical care, and 31% used it once or twice a month for mental health care.

About one in five WWP warriors reported that they were not offered a telehealth appointment in the past 12 months (22%). When asked if they would have utilized telehealth if offered, most reported that they would (64%).

AID & ASSISTANCE

For many WWP warriors, a well-rounded support system includes another person's aid and assistance for daily activities and tasks due to the nature of their injuries — whether physical, mental, or both.

More than three in 10 WWP warriors need aid and assistance from another person due to service-connected injuries or health problems (31%) and **need an average of 55 hours of care per week**. However, nearly half who need aid and assistance are not receiving it (49%).

WWP warriors' caregivers are:

- 76% The warrior's spouse.
- 11% The warrior's parent or sibling.



191
AG
Y FOR:
ines - wife

8638
FITNESS
I CARRY FOR:
[Name and Address]

1061
FLAG
I CARRY FOR:
[Name and Address]

