

SUMMARY

Basic Overview of Research and SW:S Long term survey outcomes

TIME FOR RESEARCH

In fall of 2018, we received a call from Harvard Massachusetts General Hospital's Drs. Ron Hirschberg, MD (*Neurorehabilitation Consultant*) and Louisa Sylvia, PhD, (*Director of Health and Wellness*) at the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base (HB) program for veterans. The two wanted to see if our collaborative songwriting sessions would improve veterans' sense of well-being and perhaps reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Unlike the songwriting sessions that take place within the full SW:S weekend retreats, the study focused on individual, two hour collaborative songwriting sessions where the veteran arrived, met the songwriter, immediately wrote a song together, received the recording, and then, departed (returning only for follow-up with researchers, no more contact with SW:S).

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

The Home Base team ***“participants reported a 33% reduction in their PTSD symptoms and a 25% reduction in Depressive symptoms over the four-week study period.”***

HMG / Home Base Study	
PTSD Symptoms	33% reduction in symptoms
Depressive Symptoms	25% reduction in symptoms

“Participants also reported experiencing a calming effect while listening to their song and found it very therapeutic to share it with their family members and friends. While it would be premature after just one pilot to make a concrete determination on the efficacy of the program, the experience was an overwhelmingly positive one for the 10 Veterans involved.”^[3]

WHAT DID WE FIND?

SongwritingWith:Soldiers sent a follow-up survey in December 2018 to all past participants (with active email addresses) to gather long term feedback in a variety of areas. (55 Responses came from attendees at 22 different retreats held between 2012-2018. All had the option of remaining anonymous. 47 chose to give their names.)

SW:S Participant - Long Term Survey	
# of times listened to song	More than 53% have listened more than 20 times 46% have listened 5 - 20 times
# of times song shared	More than 38% have shared it at least 20 times 84% have shared it at least 5 times
Increased optimism/ feelings of hopefulness after having attended the retreat	77% feel more optimistic 78% feel hopeful
Increased Activity / Creative Pursuits	83%
Stayed connected to others met at the retreat	78%
Stayed connected to SW:S since the retreat	83%
Felt the retreat was beneficial	96%
Would recommend to others	100% would recommend the program to others

The majority of the participants are not interested in learning about songwriting. They attend the retreats with a desire to find relief from PTSD and/or to address transition issues.

Looking more closely at what is happening through collaborative songwriting and the SW:S program in general, is essential. The participants in both the HMG study and the SW:S retreats come away feeling better than before. From the SW:S survey, the retreat, connections, and inspiration seem to have a lasting effect.