



Operation Early Impact

Executive Summary

Founded in 2007, Heroes on the Water (HOW) is a 501(c)3 non-profit that provides recreational wellness experiences. Our primary modality is kayak fishing which has proven cognitive and emotional benefits. These programs incorporate structured activities in a pressure-free environment creating opportunities for community building and personal healing. Our participants receive much needed camaraderie and support.

HOW HAS TWO PRIMARY PROGRAMS:

- HOW Volunteer Programs are placed across the United States and provide wellness services to veterans, first responders, and their families.
- HOW Therapeutic Programs provide the healing benefits of kayak fishing to improve the recovery of our military in treatment.

To better understand the impact of our kayak fishing programs, HOW embarked upon a study of our Therapeutic Programs dubbed Operational Early Impact. We used a peer-reviewed tool developed by the program's Research Coordinator, Shelby Jackson, PhD. The initial results are positive, and we will continue the research in 2023 by implementing the study in our volunteer programs.

About Operation Early Impact

The primary objective of the study was to explore the impact of HOW therapeutic kayak fishing programs on service members regarding stress-management, relationships, and self-efficacy.

BACKGROUND

Process-Development

Below is a visual outline of the process used to create the 2022 version of Operation Early Impact Survey and next steps.



Process-Next Steps

Below is a visual outline of the steps to be completed through the current and future fishing seasons.



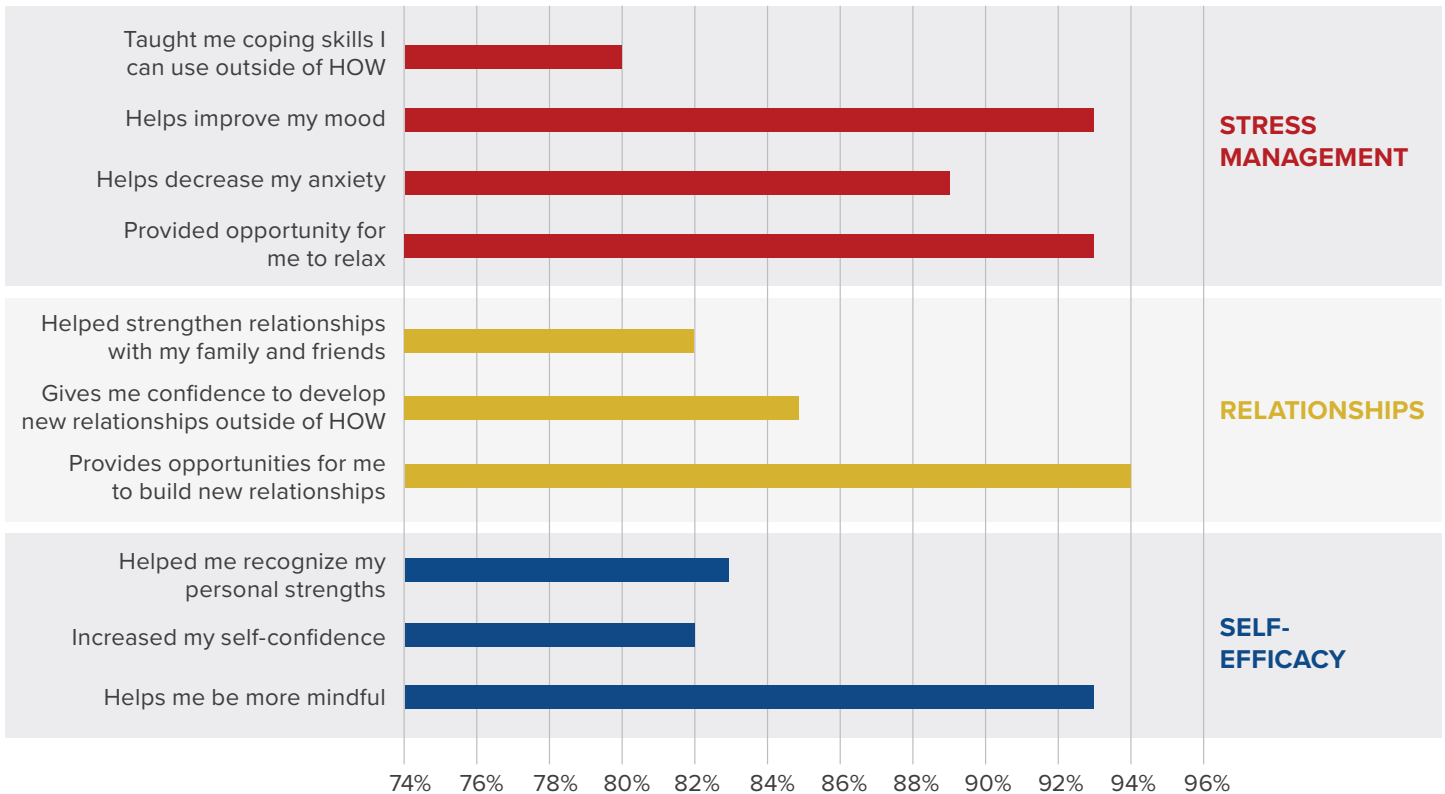
The study will be published in full later.



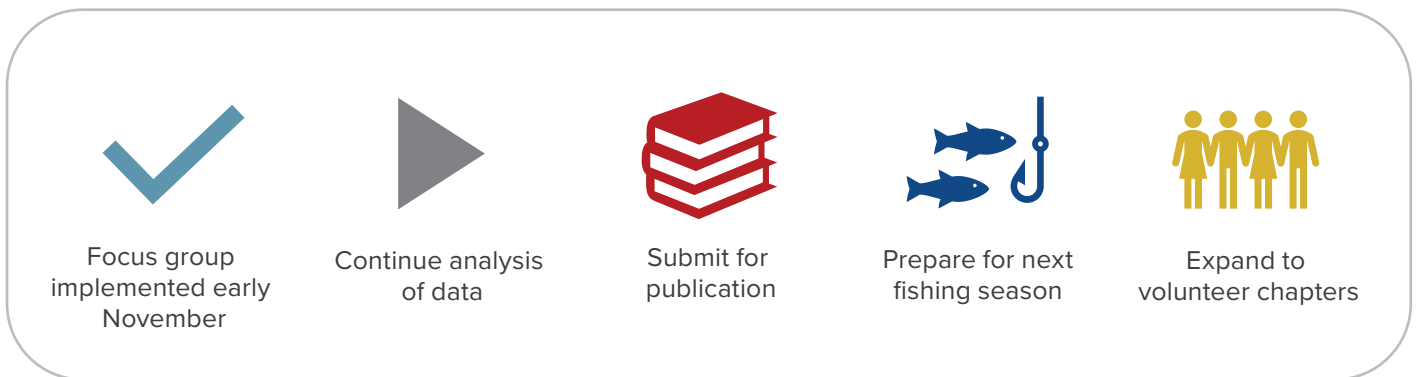
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Major Findings

RESPONSE SUMMARY



NEXT STEPS



Study Presented at Jackson, S. & Winston, Joe. (2022, November). *Operation Early Impact*. [Conference presentation]. Therapeutic Recreation Symposium of the Southwest, In-Person Conference.

Additional references available upon request