Public opinion research study: Evaluation of the 2023-2024 Mental Health Advertising Campaign

Executive Summary

Prepared for Veterans Affairs Canada

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

This public opinion research report presents the results of two online surveys conducted by Leger Marketing Inc. on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada. The baseline survey was conducted with 703 Canadian Veterans and their family during the month of December 2023. The post-campaign study was conducted with 701 respondents during the month of February 2024.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre « Évaluation de la campagne publicitaire de 2023-2024 sur la santé mentale ».

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Executive Summary

Leger is pleased to present Veterans Affairs Canada with this report on findings from a quantitative survey designed to evaluate the 2023-2024 Mental Health services for Veterans advertising campaign using the Government of Canada's Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET). This report was prepared by Léger Marketing Inc. who was contracted by Veterans Affairs Canada (contract number CW2336209 awarded November 1, 2023, for a total value of $49,101.89 including HST). This report presents the results of two online surveys conducted as part of this study. The baseline survey was conducted with 703 Canadian Veterans and close family members of Veterans during the month of December 2023. The post-campaign study was conducted with 701 Canadian Veterans and close family members of Veterans during the month of February 2024.

1.1 Background and Objectives

VAC mental health services were promoted to increase awareness among the Veteran community—including Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members, family members, caregivers, survivors, former RCMP members, their families, and survivors—of the available services and supports, with a particular emphasis on mental health and access methods.

The Mental Health Services for Veterans and their families advertising campaign is an annual campaign that VAC has coordinated in conjunction with organic marketing and communications (web promotion, social media, public opinion research, etc.).

Eligible Veterans, retired RCMP members, and their families can access to a comprehensive range of mental health services, support, and information aimed at easing the transition to post-military life and addressing mental health issues when they arose. This support network includes ten outpatient Operational Stress Injury (OSI) clinics throughout the country and 11 OSI satellite service sites offering services closer to Veterans' homes. Moreover, a national network of over 12,000 independent mental health professionals across Canada, registered with the Department, was available to deliver mental health services.

The VAC Assistance Services phone line offers a 24-hour, toll-free confidential service, offering psychological support, bereavement support, pastoral outreach for spiritual counseling, and referrals to local services. This service, available to Veterans, former RCMP members, their families, and caregivers at no cost, was a cornerstone of their support system.

The Operational Stress Injury Social Support Service (OSISS) offers confidential peer support to CAF members, Veterans, and their families affected by an operational stress injury, fostering a community of understanding and assistance.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, available at no cost to participants within the Veteran community is a mental health literacy training, teaching individuals to recognize symptoms of mental health problems and to provide assistance to those exhibiting symptoms.

In collaboration with several partners, VAC developed a series of free online and mobile applications for Veterans and their families, including PTSD Coach Canada, LifeSpeak, the Caregiver Zone, and the Operational Stress Injury Resource for Caregivers, further extending their support and resources into the digital realm.

Purpose and Objectives

The main research objective was to evaluate the 2023-2024 Mental Health Services for Veterans and their Families advertising campaign using the Government of Canada's (GC) Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET). As required, the research was conducted before and after the campaign's paid media placement.

Intended use of the research

ACET surveys were conducted pre and post campaign to measure aided and unaided recall, message retention and effectiveness.

1.2 Methodology

Quantitative research was conducted through online surveys, using Computer Aided Web Interviewing (CAWI) technology. The questionnaires used for both phases of the study are the Government of Canada ACET questionnaires. Leger Marketing Inc. used these questionnaires without making any modifications to their format nor to their content, except for the modifications necessary to adapt the questions to this present study on Mental Health services ad campaign requested by Veterans Affairs Canada.

The targeted audience of this study was Canadian Veterans and close family members of Veterans (18+). The baseline and post-campaign surveys were conducted with samples of 703 and 701 Canadian adults respectively. The respondents were recruited via Leger's web panel using a random selection stratified by region. The population sample was distributed as follows:

Table A.1 Regional Distribution of Respondents

Region	Number of respondents – baseline study	Number of respondents – post test study
Atlantic	75	95
Quebec	116	119
Ontario	256	252
Prairies	53	52
Alberta	71	80
British Columbia	132	103
Total	**703**	**701**

1.2.1 Baseline Study

This public opinion research was conducted via online surveys, using Computer Aided Web Interviewing (CAWI) technology. Fieldwork for the survey was carried out December 12-17, 2023. A total of 703 Canadian Veterans and their family members with demographic characteristics reflective of the targeted population were surveyed. The sample was drawn randomly from the Leo panel and the overall response rate for the survey was 2.72% (see Table 2 in the Appendix for the calculation details).

Using data from the most recent Canadian census, the results were weighted by region, gender, and age. The weighting factors are presented in detail in the appendix of this report. The weight of each region was adjusted to be equivalent to

its actual weight in relation to the distribution of the targeted population. The weighting factors are presented in detail in the appendix of this report.

A pre-test of 12 interviews was completed before launching data collection to validate the programming of the questionnaire in both English and French. An average of five minutes and twenty-three seconds was required for the respondents to complete the survey.

Leger adheres to the most stringent guidelines for quantitative research. The survey instrument was compliant with the Standards of Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research.

A complete methodological description is provided in the Appendices section of this document (please see Appendix A).

1.2.2 Post-Campaign Study

This public opinion research was conducted via online surveys, using Computer Aided Web Interviewing (CAWI) technology. Fieldwork for the survey was carried out from February 12 to March 7, 2024. A total of 701 Canadian Veterans and their family members with demographic characteristics reflective of the targeted population were surveyed. The sample was drawn randomly from the Leo panel and the overall response rate for the survey was 3.62% (see Table 16 in the Appendix for the calculation details).

Using data from the most recent Canadian census, the results were weighted by region, gender, and age. The weighting factors are presented in detail in the appendix of this report. The weight of each region was adjusted to be equivalent to its actual weight in relation to the distribution of the targeted population. The weighting factors are presented in detail in the appendix of this report.

A pre-test of 23 interviews was completed before launching data collection to validate the programming of the questionnaire in both English and French. An average of seven minutes and forty-one seconds was required for the respondents to complete the survey.

Leger adheres to the most stringent guidelines for quantitative research. The survey instrument was compliant with the Standards of Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research.

A complete methodological description is provided in the Appendices section of this document (please see Appendix A).

1.3 Notes on Interpretation of the Research Findings

This report was compiled by Leger based on the research conducted specifically for this project. This research is not probabilistic; the results cannot be inferred to the general population of Canada.

Since a sample drawn from an Internet panel is not probabilistic in nature, margins of sampling error cannot be calculated for this survey. Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have volunteered to participate/registered to participate in online surveys. The results of such surveys cannot be described as statistically projectable to the target population. The data have been weighted to reflect the demographic composition of the target population.

1.4 Political Neutrality Statement and Contact Information

Leger certifies that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada's political neutrality requirements outlined in the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity and the Directive on the Management of Communications.

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed:

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Léger