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# 2019 Navigating the Future: Making a Difference for Transitioning Service Members and Families

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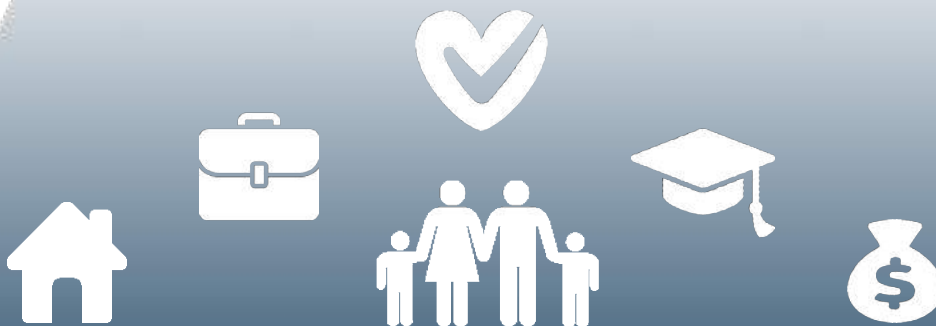
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# Navigating the Future: Making a Difference for Transitioning Service Members and Families

Year 4 Report  
2018



**zero8 hundred**  
Military Transition Support





***About zero8hundred***

The mission of **zero8hundred** is to proactively link transitioning service members, recent veterans and their families to a broad range of resources and opportunities in the community, helping them successfully transition to civilian life.



***About the Caster Family Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research***

The mission of the Caster Center is to provide research, evaluation, and consulting services that build the leadership and strategic- and evaluative-thinking capacity of local nonprofits, as well as to be the leading source of information, data, and research on the local nonprofit sector.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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San Diego is home to the largest concentration of military in the world and has the third highest population of military veterans in the United States. Moreover, roughly 20,000 service members stationed in San Diego transition to civilian life each year. Because of the prevalence and needs of transitioning service members and their families, the Military Transition Support Project (a cross-sector collaborative in San Diego County), created **zero8hundred** in 2014 which became its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in January 2019. The mission of **zero8hundred** is to proactively link these “Veterans in Process” (VIPs) to a broad range of resources and opportunities, helping them successfully transition to civilian life in San Diego County (and more recently Orange, Riverside, and Imperial Counties).

**zero8hundred** is based on a holistic veteran’s wellness model that focuses on employment, education, basic needs, physical/mental health, and social/community connections. A unique feature of **zero8hundred** is its peer navigation model with Peer Navigators (PNs) who have both lived experience in the military and education in social work/counseling. Another unique distinction of **zero8hundred** is that it provides support for transitioning military families up to nine months before leaving the military until 12 months after they separate through a first-of-its-kind Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States Navy.

In January 2015, the Military Transition Support Project (MTSP) commissioned the Caster Family Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research (Caster Center) at the University of San Diego to conduct a third-party evaluation of the processes and outcomes of the **zero8hundred** two-year pilot program, and the evaluation was continued for an additional two years. This report summarizes the findings from Year 4 (January 2018-December 2018) and some cumulative findings of all four years.

In its first four years, **zero8hundred’s** outreach and participation has been impressive. For example:

- More than 26,600 transitioning service members have been exposed to an overview of the **zero8hundred** program, representing almost 900% of the original goal of 3,000 in the first year.
- More than 3,160 VIPs have enrolled in **zero8hundred**, which has grown from 430 VIPs in Q1 2015. This represents a 700% increase from the first quarter and more than 10x the goal for the first two years.
- Nine out of ten (90%) VIPs who enrolled in **zero8hundred** requested to work with a PN, and roughly three-quarters (72%) of those have engaged with a PN.

Beyond the aforementioned successes, **zero8hundred** has also proven to be effective in helping service members and families during their transition journey. More specifically:

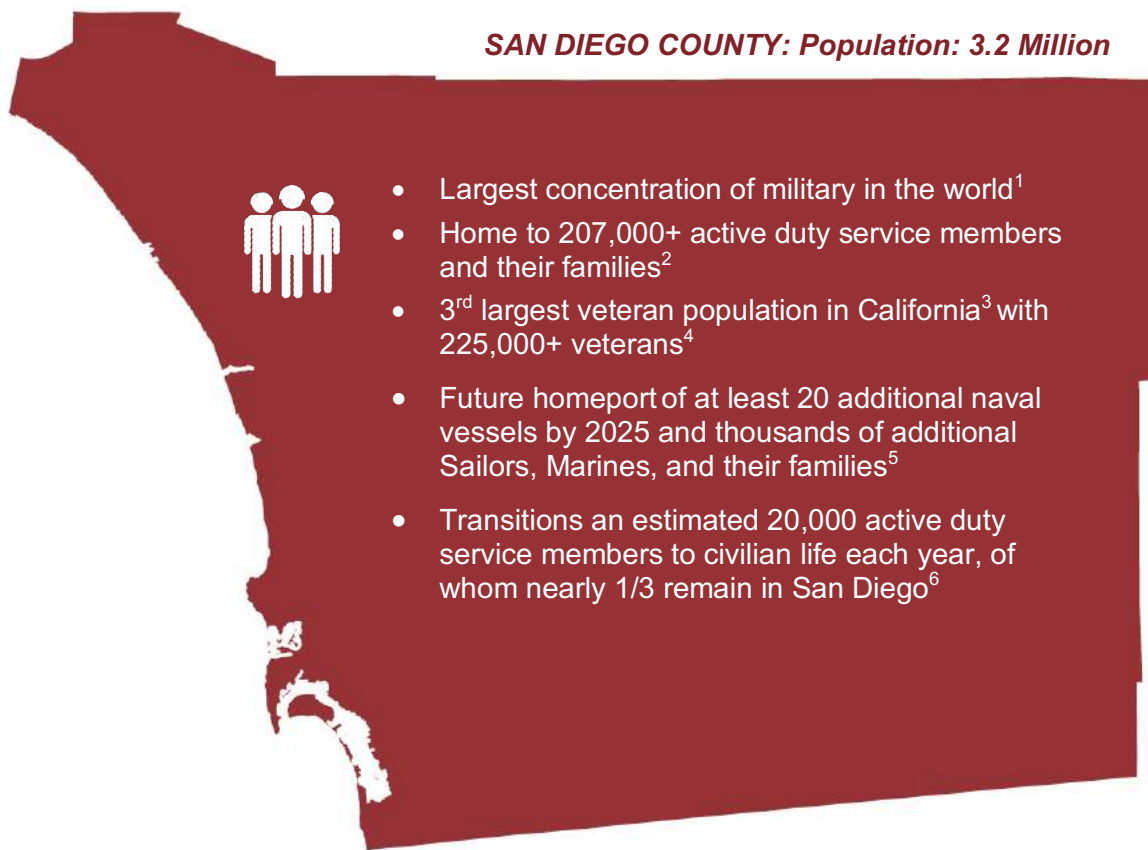
- There is solid evidence that the peer navigator model is working. That is, compared to VIPs who did not work with a PN:
  - More VIPs who worked with a PN met their primary goal.
  - More VIPs who worked with a PN were employed 12 months after separation and more than twice as many were employed at the time of separation.
  - More VIPs who worked with a PN connected to resources.
  - More VIPs who connected to resources were satisfied with them.
- Other positive outcomes of **zero8hundred** include:
  - High satisfaction with **zero8hundred** overall, their PNs, the resources **zero8hundred** connected them to, and the website.
  - Increases in confidence in navigating resources, particularly resources for their primary needs of education and employment.
  - Increases in feeling like they belong and connections with the civilian community.
  - Increases in feeling prepared and confident.
  - Decreases in stress, nervousness and being overwhelmed.

Results have remained consistent over the first four years of the **zero8hundred** program evaluation. Not surprisingly, employment and education have continued to be the primary goals of most VIPs, and they are served well by **zero8hundred's** peer navigator model. Findings also reveal that transitioning out of the military can be a long and complex journey, with assistance and support needed over time -- before, during, and after separation. The evaluation demonstrates that the majority who utilize **zero8hundred**, and particularly those who work with a PN, are very satisfied and move in a positive direction as they navigate their future. **zero8hundred** has continued to fulfill a vital need and has made a difference for transitioning service members and their families. It is clear that many others would benefit if **zero8hundred** can continue to grow and reach those transitioning service members in San Diego who have not been exposed to **zero8hundred**, as well as those in Orange, Riverside and Imperial Counties.

# SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S MILITARY-CONNECTED POPULATION

Since 1846 when the first American flag was raised to establish Fort Stockton on Presidio Hill, San Diego has been known as a military town.<sup>1</sup> Some highlights of the military presence in San Diego County are summarized below.

## Military Presence in San Diego County



<sup>1</sup> [https://www.sdmac.org/static/media/uploads/pdf%20files/fbei\\_2016\\_sdmac-full\\_report\\_r4-final.pdf](https://www.sdmac.org/static/media/uploads/pdf%20files/fbei_2016_sdmac-full_report_r4-final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2017-demographics-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Military Employment in San Diego: A look at military veterans in San Diego's labor force.* San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce (2013)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sandiegocountycalifornia/VET605217#VET605217>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/military/sd-me-housing-navy-20170816-story.html>

<sup>6</sup> Hunt, K.D. & Schumann, M.J. (2017). *Continuing the promise of a new day: Support for service members transitioning to civilian life in San Diego. The first two years.* San Diego, CA: Caster Family Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research, University of San Diego.

# BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

## Formation of zero8hundred

In 2014, a cross-sector collaborative group of community members throughout San Diego County (Military Transition Support Project) formed **zero8hundred** to proactively link transitioning service members and their families to a broad range of resources and opportunities, helping them successfully transition to civilian life in San Diego. While services abound throughout the county to serve this population, the number and diversity of services can be overwhelming and very difficult to navigate. Therefore, **zero8hundred** was formed to help transitioning service members and their families navigate the plethora of services available.

The framework of **zero8hundred** was based on a holistic wellness model focused on five main pillars of service member and veteran needs:



Over the first four years, **Education and Employment** have remained the most common stated needs of those enrolling in **zero8hundred**

**zero8hundred** is a resource hub that utilizes both a website and Peer Navigators (PNs)<sup>7</sup> to connect transitioning service members and their families - known as Veterans in Progress (VIPs) - to services and resources available in 2-1-1 San Diego's comprehensive database of existing social service agencies and employment opportunities. Peer Navigators have both mental health training and lived military experience as a veteran, active duty service member or a spouse or dependent, which has continued to be unique and valuable in the military-connected space.

VIPs are first introduced to **zero8hundred** through on-base transition courses, on-base job and information fairs, spouse transition courses, and community outreach. Following these presentations and introductions, those who will be remaining in San Diego, Imperial, Orange and Riverside Counties are encouraged to enroll in **zero8hundred** and connect with a PN to help ease the transition process.

<sup>7</sup> In 2019 (Year 5), the job title of Peer Navigator was changed to Resource and Outreach Specialist.



## Evaluation Overview and Summary of Participation in **zero8hundred**

In January 2015, **zero8hundred** initiated a 2-year pilot program in San Diego County and commissioned The Nonprofit Institute's Caster Family Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research (Caster Center) at the University of San Diego to conduct a third-party evaluation of the pilot program. This was followed by continued evaluation of Years 3 and 4.

In collaboration with the staff at **zero8hundred**, the Caster Center developed a logic model (see Appendix A) and data collection tools (see Appendix B), including:

- Baseline (i.e., pre) Survey, administered at the time of first contact with a VIP;
- Midpoint Survey administered at time of separation from active duty; and
- Post Survey administered 12 months past separation.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the **zero8hundred** program from the point a VIP is first introduced to the program to the Post Survey given 12 months after a VIP separates from active duty (or if a veteran, 12 months after enrolling in the program). Figure 1 also highlights the number of VIPs who have enrolled in the program, connected with a PN, and completed each of the surveys along their **zero8hundred** journey.

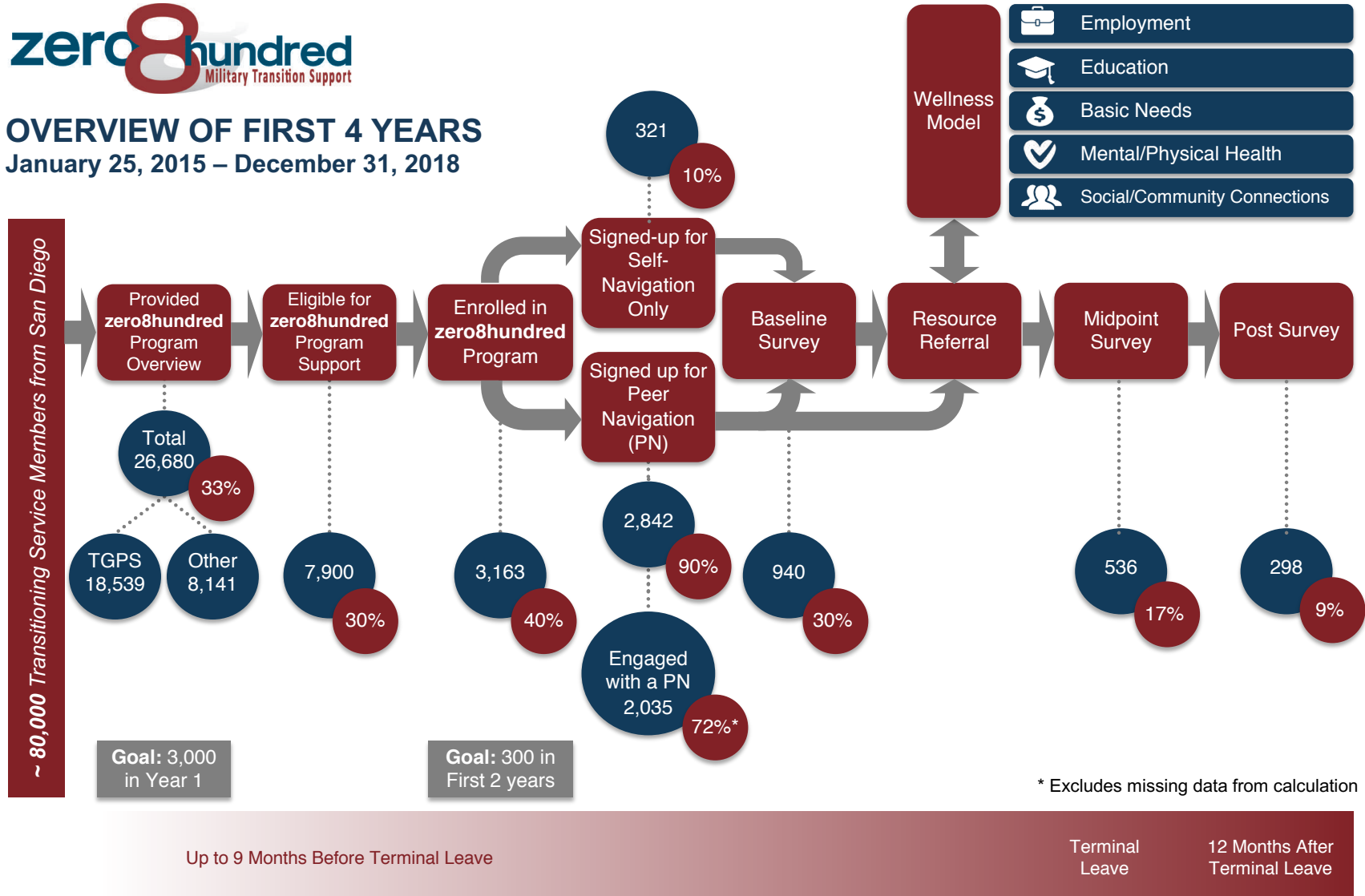
**zero8hundred** derives its name from the daily military ritual of raising the American flag at 0800 hours (8:00 am). This ritual is a signal to the military community that a new day of work has begun.

For those transitioning to civilian life, **zero8hundred** serves as a signal that the promise of a new day has begun.

Figure 1. Summary of Participation in zero8hundred



**OVERVIEW OF FIRST 4 YEARS**  
January 25, 2015 – December 31, 2018



## Growth and Evolution of zero8hundred

**zero8hundred** grew quickly during its first year, far exceeding the goals of exposing 3,000 individuals to the **zero8hundred** program by the end of Year 1 and enrolling up 300 VIPs by the end of Year 2. In fact, by the end of Q1 2015, 430 VIPs had enrolled in the program and that multiplied to 3,163 VIPs by the end of 2018.

The evaluation of the initial pilot program and subsequent two years showed that **zero8hundred** was filling a gap by supporting service members up to 9 months before separation through 12 months post separation. As will be shown in the remainder of this report, VIPs benefited from the **zero8hundred** program and peer navigation proved to be quite impactful.

**75%+ of VIPs  
were “very satisfied”  
with zero8hundred  
across all four years**

In 2017, **zero8hundred** began expanding into neighboring counties beginning with Orange County and has added Imperial and Riverside Counties to its service area. In addition, **zero8hundred** has reached out to reservists, veterans and their families in all four counties to expand support for the military-connected community.

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*“The responsiveness and professionalism of **zero8hundred** and the assistance they gave me with the referrals helped me land an internship.”<sup>8</sup>*

*“**zero8hundred** Peer Navigators are extremely proactive and very helpful making sure you stay on track and are caught up.”*

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### Highlights of Changes in Year 4

- **Hired** a new Executive Director and Programs Director and other personnel changes
- **Transitioned** to a 501(c)(3) organization moving from its former structure as a fiscally sponsored nonprofit organization
- **Migrated** data collection and case management efforts to Salesforce
- **Created** an online registration **zero8hundred** enrollment option for all qualifying VIPs
- **Continued** outreach and expansion in Orange, Riverside, and Imperial Counties, as well as to Reservists, veterans, and their families
- **Began** website redesign

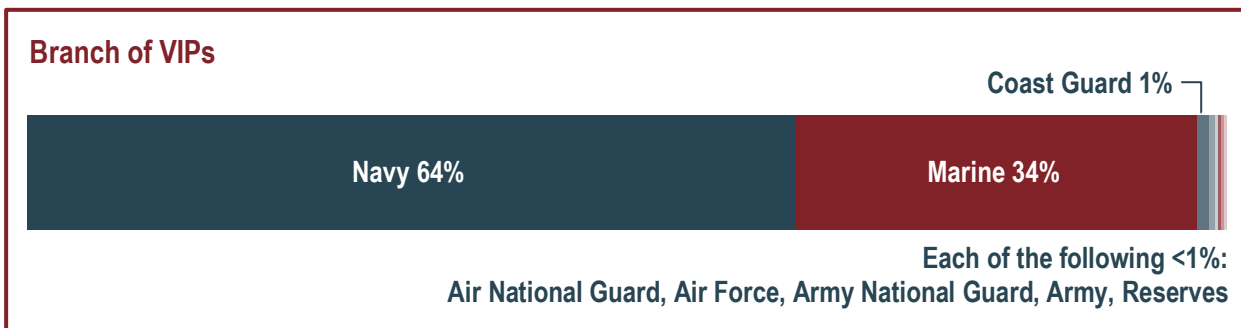
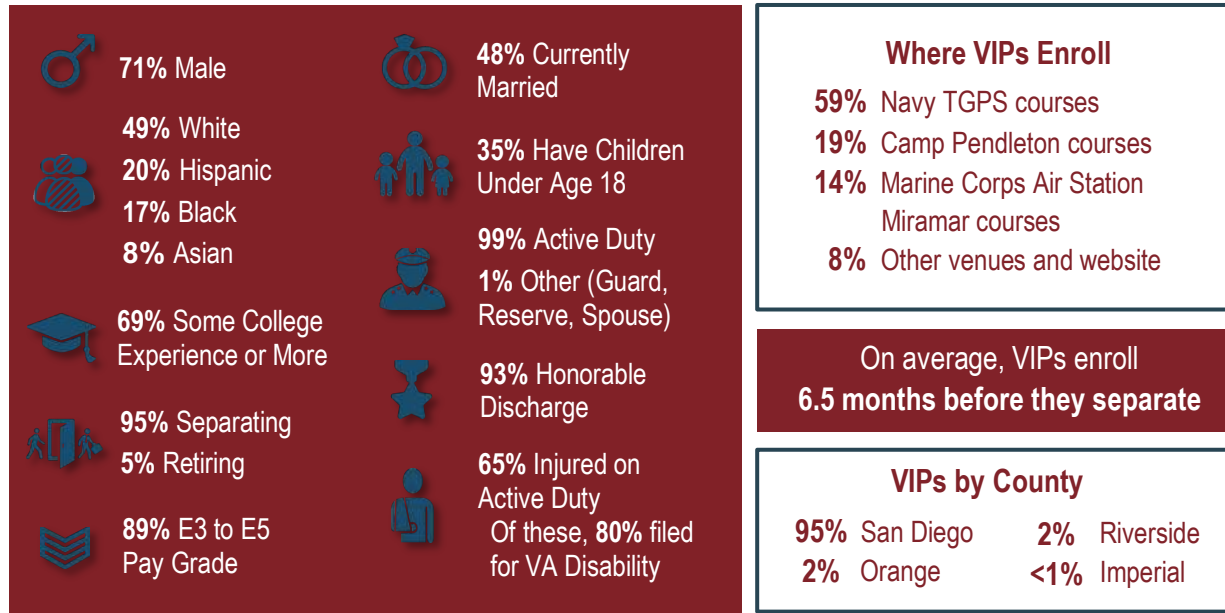
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<sup>8</sup> All quotes in the report are verbatim responses from VIPs who completed the Midpoint or Post Surveys.

# WHO ARE ZERO8HUNDRED VIPs AND WHERE DO THEY ENROLL?

VIPs include a diverse group of individuals. However, the majority are male, E5 and below, separating (vs. retiring) from active duty, and reside in San Diego County. Figure 2 summarizes the demographic profile of VIPs who enrolled in **zero8hundred** during the first four years of the program.

**Figure 2. Profile of VIPs Who Enrolled**



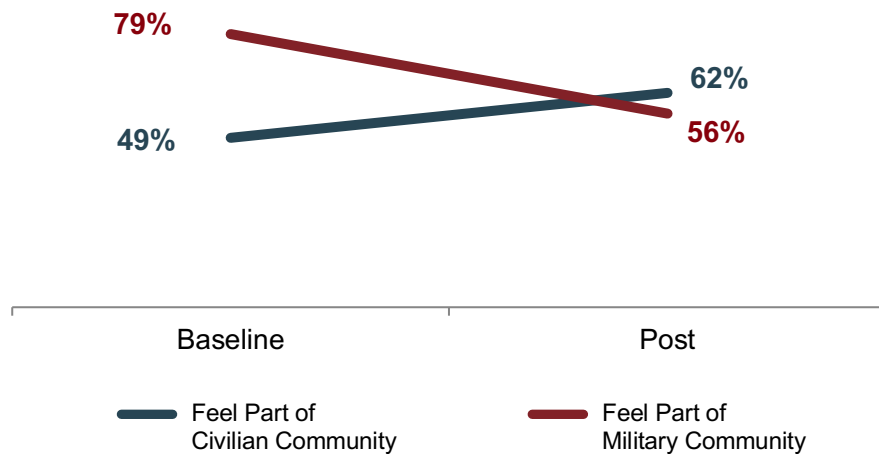
# WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF ZERO8HUNDRED?

VIPs reported feeling greater connection to the civilian community, an increase in employment, and an increase in positive feelings as they moved through their transition along with **zero8hundred**. Furthermore, those who connected to **zero8hundred** PNs experienced better results.

## Connection to Military and Civilian Communities

**Figure 3. Feelings of Connectedness**

Figure 3 shows that as VIPs moved through the transition process, they reported increasingly stronger connections to the civilian community while their connection to the military community declined.

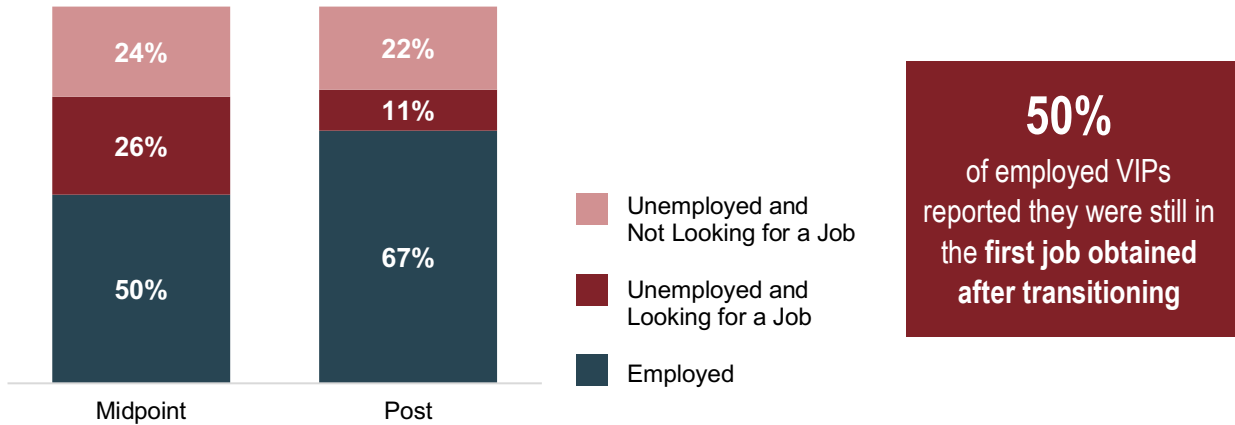


Feelings about military experience remained  
**Over 71% Positive**  
from Baseline to Post

## Employment

As Figure 4 shows, more VIPs were employed 12 months after separation (67%) than at the time of separation (50%).

**Figure 4. Overall Employment (Midpoint n=403; Post n=217)**



*“At the beginning [transition] was stressful because you don’t have a job and don’t know how you’re going to make ends meet, but once you find work...you will be able to make it after all.”*



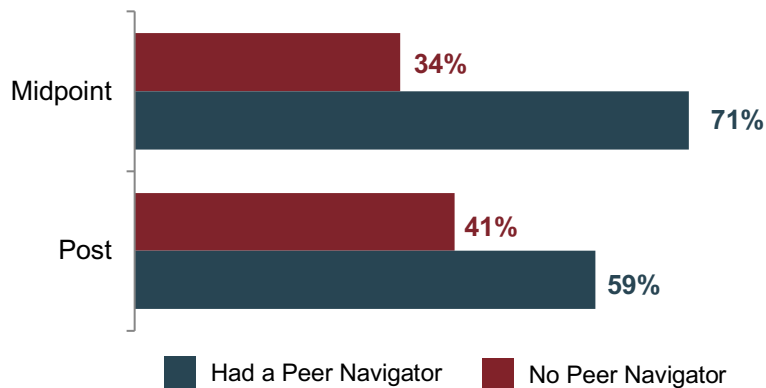
## Does Peer Navigation Make a Difference?

Peer Navigation is key to the impact **zero8hundred** has with the transitioning service members and their families. During Year 4, more VIPs who had contact with a PN reported finding employment (see Figure 5) and met more of their self-identified goals (see Figure 6).

### Employment

Figure 5 illustrates the responses of 96 VIPs who took both the Midpoint and Post Surveys and answered questions about employment. More than twice as many VIPs who had a PN (71%) were employed at the time of separation than those without a PN (34%). Similarly, more VIPs who had contact with a PN (59%) were employed 12 months after separation than those without a PN (41%).

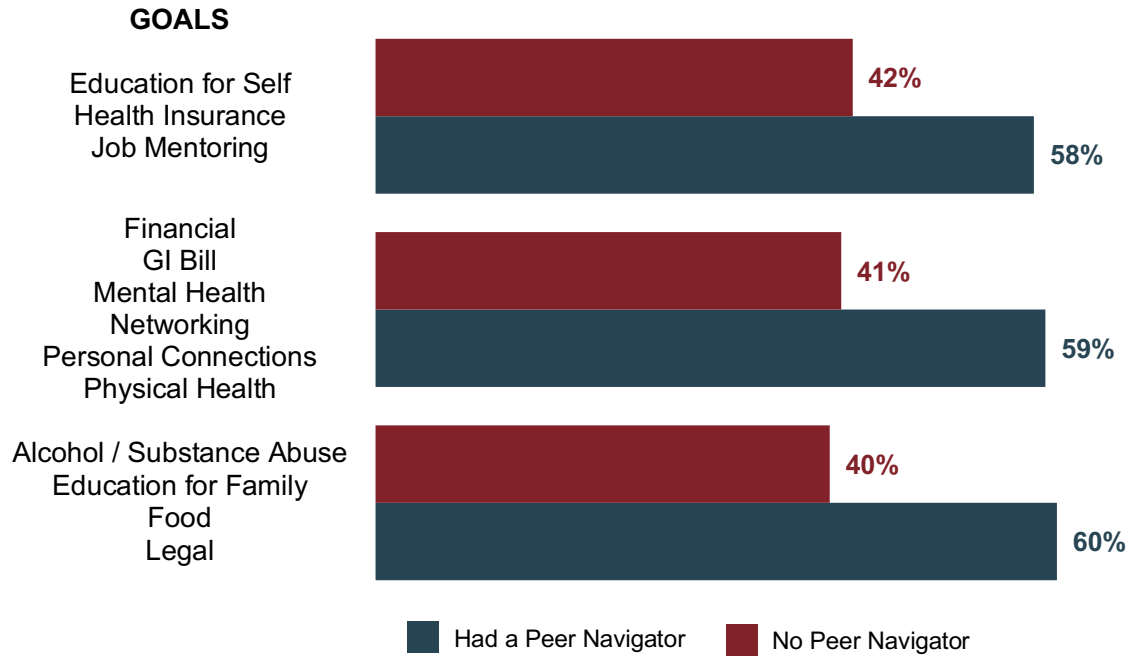
**Figure 5. Peer Navigator vs. No Peer Navigator: VIP Employment at Midpoint and Post**



## Goals Met

In addition to employment, more VIPs met their primary and secondary goals when working with a PN compared to those who did not (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Peer Navigator Goals: VIPs Who Reached a Goal**

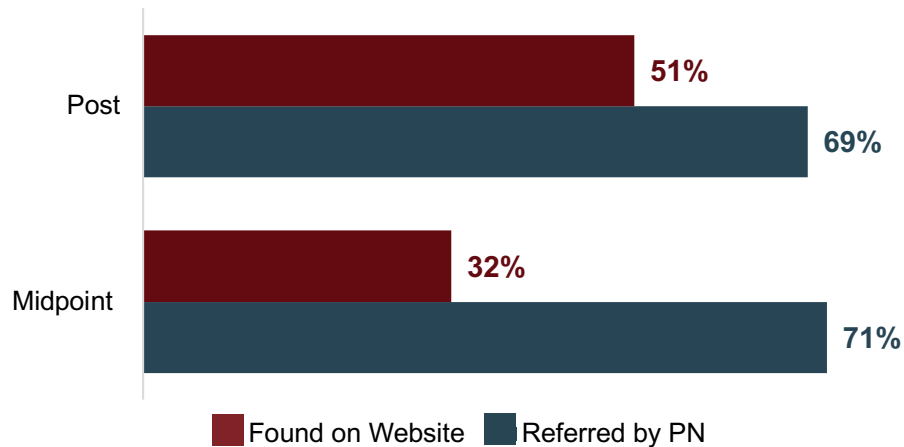




## Resources for Support

As Figure 7 shows, more VIPs contacted resources when referred by their PN than those who found resources on the website. In addition, more VIPs were satisfied with the resources when they were referred by a PN, compared to those who self-navigated on the website (see Figure 8).

**Figure 7. Peer Navigator Referrals vs. Website: VIPs Who Contacted a Resource**



*“I really liked the job resources and I was able to find a job. Finding a job made it easier for me to transition into civilian life.”*

*“I really liked the amount of resources and the guidance I received from my Peer Navigator.”*

**Figure 8. Satisfaction with Resources Referred by Peer Navigators vs. Resources Contacted from the Website**

Satisfaction with:	Resources from Peer Navigators		Resources from Website	
	Midpoint	Post	Midpoint	Post
Number of resources	93%	85%	87%	88%
Types of resources	96%	83%	86%	87%
Responsiveness of resources	84%	83%	77%	87%
Ability to meet needs	88%	79%	82%	88%

## Satisfaction with Peer Navigators

Peer navigation continues to be a vital part of **zero8hundred**, with VIPs reporting a high level of satisfaction with all elements associated with working with PNs. Figure 9 shows the percent of VIPs who reported being very satisfied (8-10 ratings on a 1-10 scale) for each of the elements associated with working with PNs.

**Figure 9. VIP Satisfaction with Peer Navigators**

	Midpoint	Post
Overall	98%	99%
Professionalism of Peer Navigators	98%	97%
Understand needs of VIPs	94%	91%
Resources recommended by Peer Navigators	89%	84%
Flexibility of Peer Navigators	95%	92%
Peer Navigator knowledge of military culture	92%	90%
Support before transition	86%	85%
Support during transition	89%	89%
Support after transition	89%	86%

**98%-99%**

Overall satisfaction with Peer Navigators remained high at Midpoint and Post

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*“No matter what I was going through during my transition, it didn’t matter what I needed whether it was for school or work, [Peer Navigators] always responded within 24 hours. I always appreciated that they were there for me. They always found what I asked for.”*

*“The only thing that was a shame was that the program was not able to transfer with me when we moved. I loved my Peer Navigator.”*

*“He was extremely professional and caring. He kept me well informed.”*

*“She showed me how to navigate, and I will never forget all that she did for me. I’m very grateful.”*

*“At that time, I was so stressed out and [Peer Navigators] were there to talk me through it.”*

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# HOW DO VIPS FEEL ABOUT NAVIGATING THEIR FUTURE?

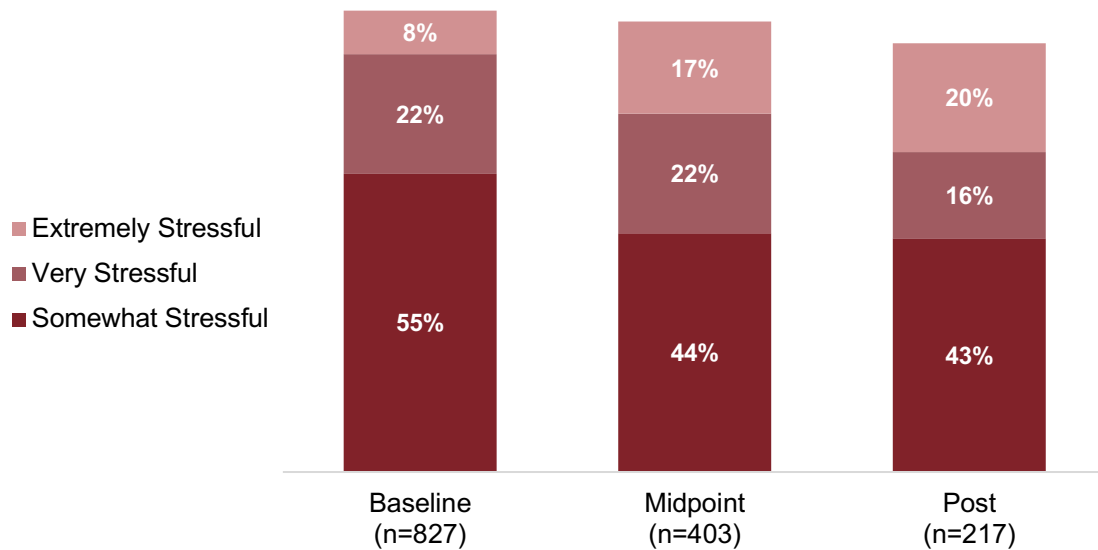
Overall, positive feelings about transition increased while negative feelings decreased, and VIPS reported greater confidence in navigating resources for transition.

## Feelings About Transition

### Stress

Figure 10 shows the stress level of VIPS from the time they enrolled in **zero8hundred** through 12 months post separation. As VIPS worked with PNs, their overall level of stress declined.

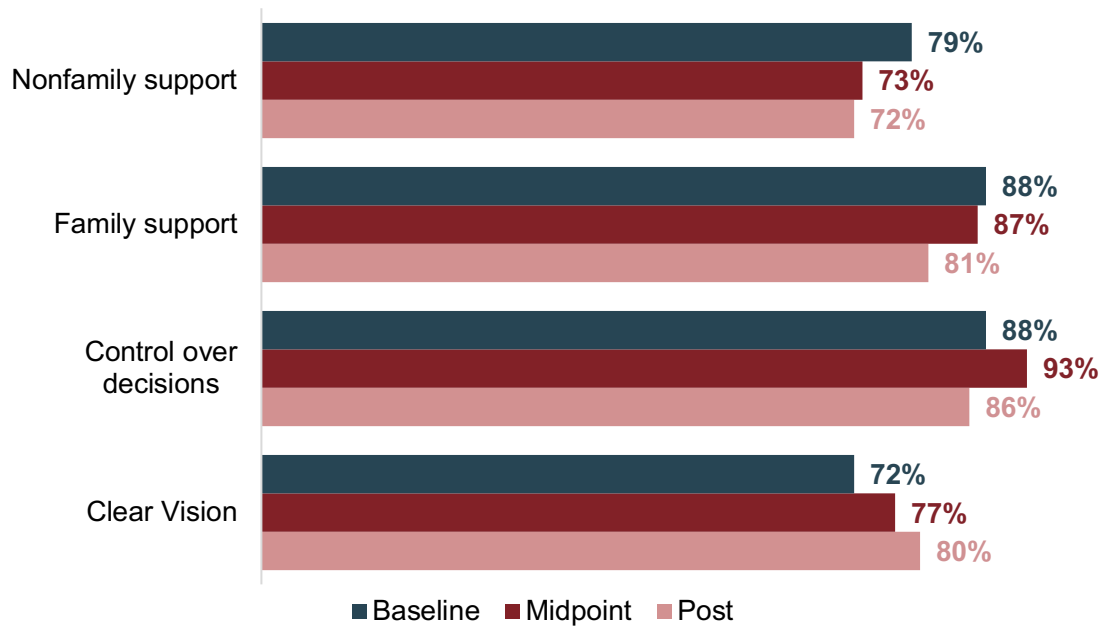
**Figure 10: Percent of VIPS who Rated Transition from Active Duty as Stressful (3-5 on a 1-5 scale)**



## Social Support and Locus of Control Measures

Figure 11 illustrates that VIPs have strong family and nonfamily support, particularly in the early stages of transition. Support dropped slightly 12 months after separation, which could indicate less of a need to rely on others. Locus of control measures (control over decisions and clear vision) remained high, despite the drop in feelings of having control over decisions.

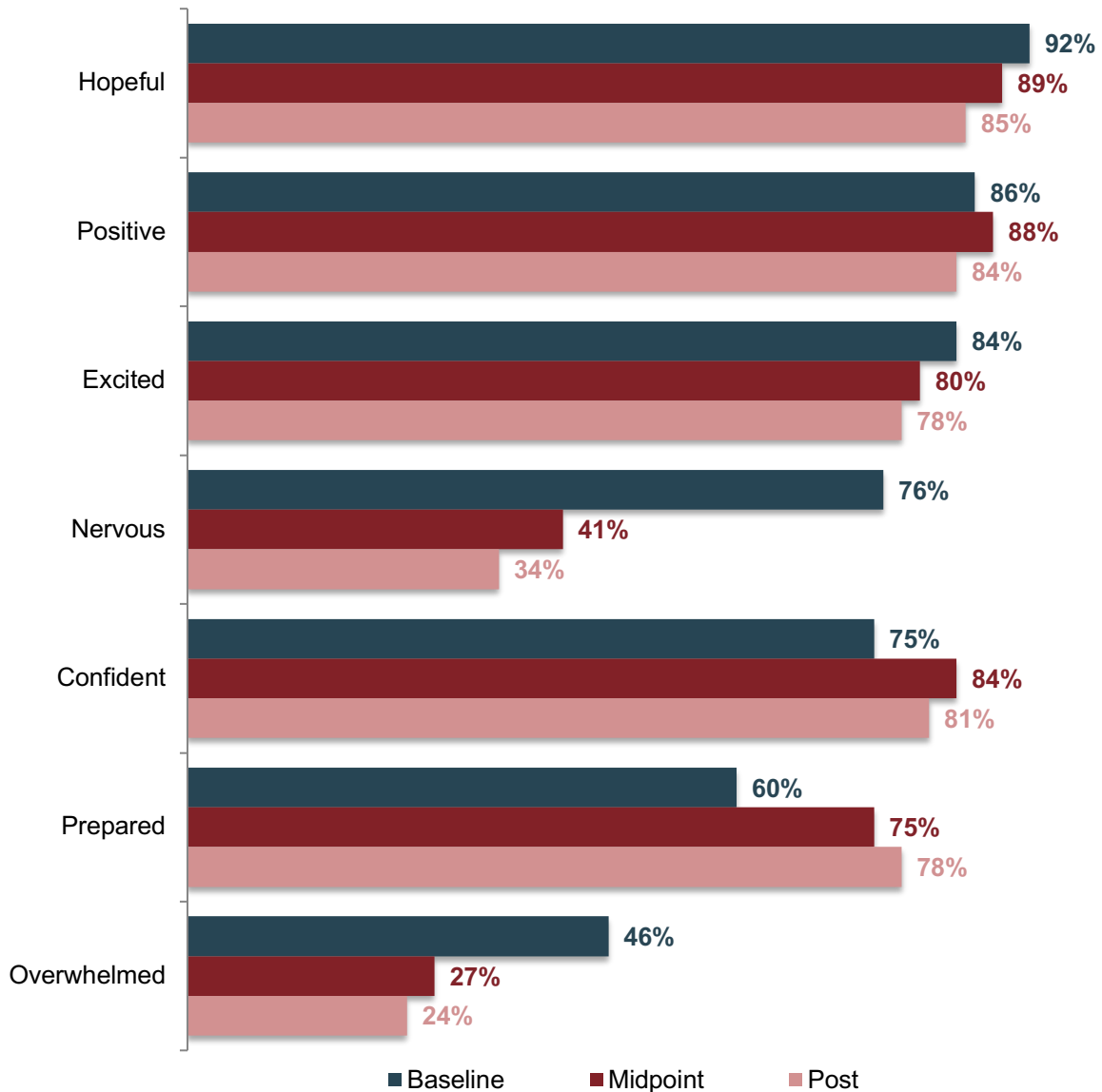
**Figure 11: Percent of VIPs Who Agree They Have Social Support, Control, and Clear Vision (4-5 on a 1-5 scale)**



## Feelings About Navigating the Transition Process

Overall, VIPs reported positive feelings about their transition over time, including a notable increase in their preparedness and confidence from the Baseline to Post Survey and a very marked decrease in feeling overwhelmed and nervous (see Figure 12).

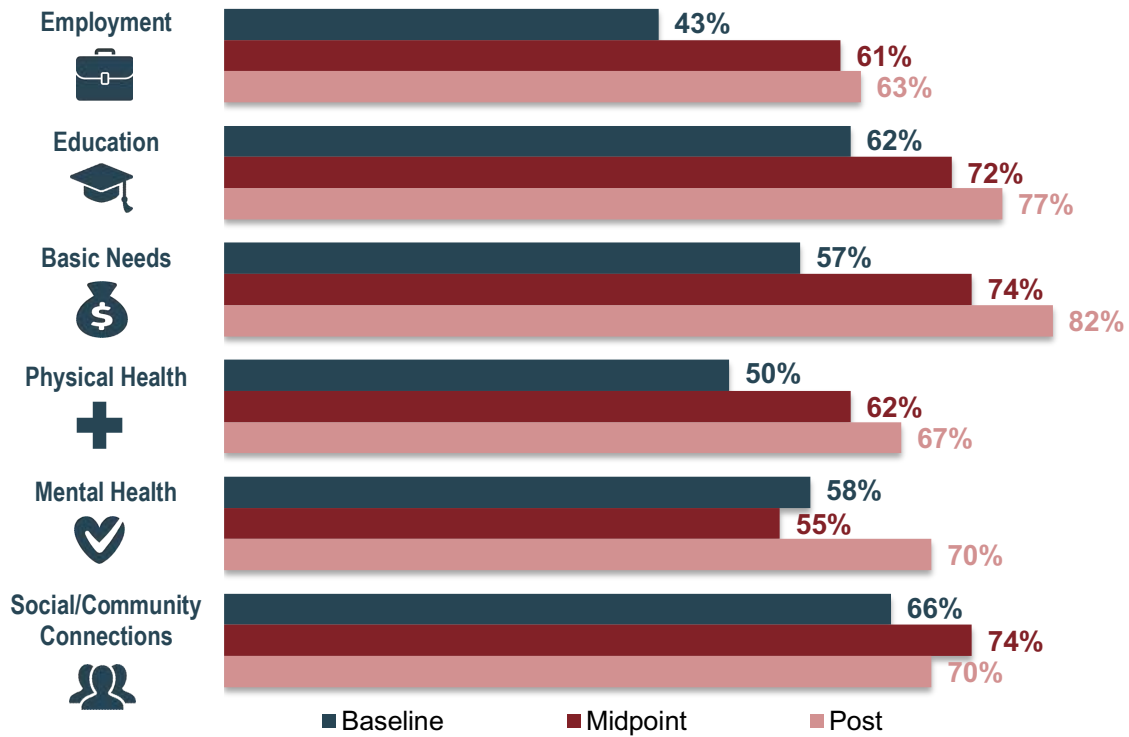
**Figure 12. Percent of VIPs Who Agree They Have the Following Feelings About the Transition Process (4-5 on a 1-5 scale)**



## Confidence Navigating Resources

As can be seen in Figure 13, VIPs gained confidence over time in navigating resources for their transition. While confidence increased across all types of resources from the Baseline to Post Survey, increases in confidence with navigating resources for employment, education, and basic needs increased the most.

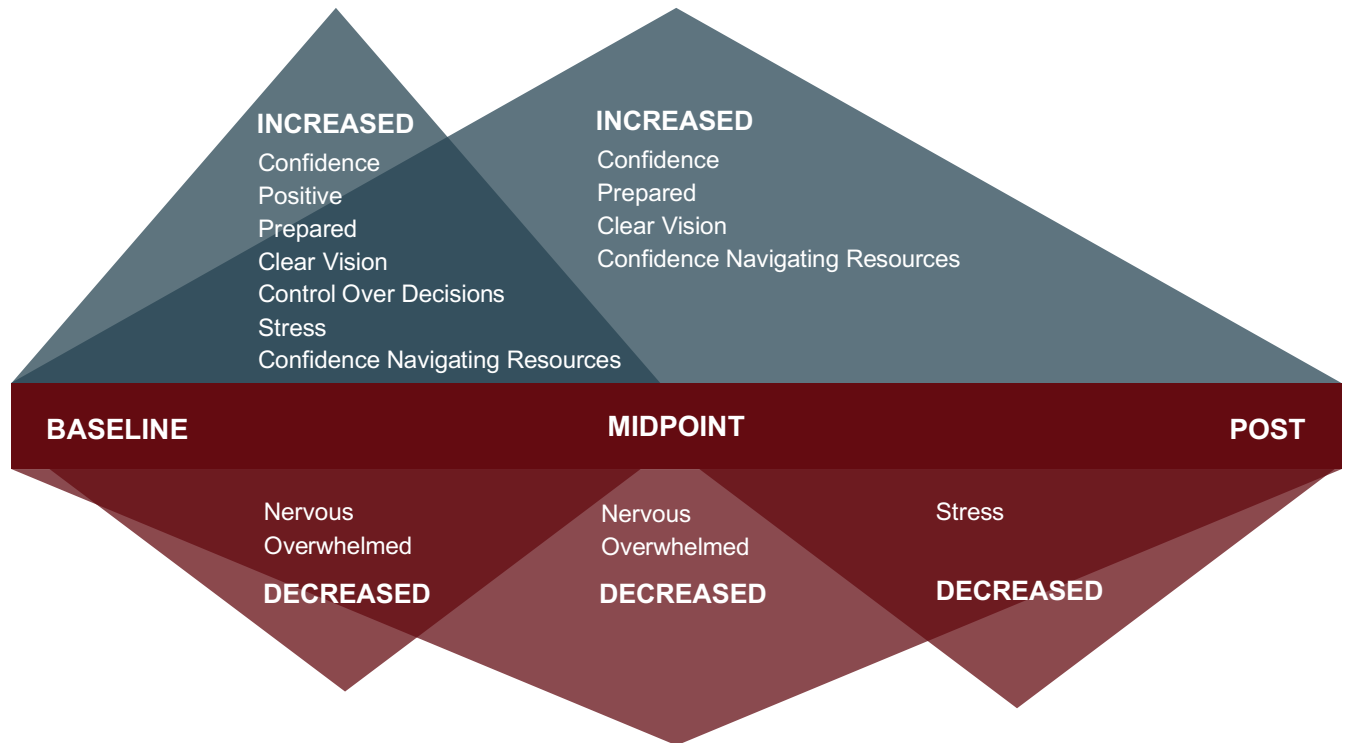
**Figure 13. Percent of VIPs Who Are Confident Navigating Resources For Self and Family (4-5 on a 1-5 scale)**



## Significant Changes Over Time

Figure 14 shows the statistically significant changes\* in VIPs' feelings about transition from: 1) Baseline to Midpoint Survey; 2) Baseline to Post Survey; and 3) Midpoint to Post Survey. As VIPs transitioned from active duty to 12 months post separation, they reported experiencing a decrease in stress and an increase in confidence navigating resources and other positive feelings.

**Figure 14. Significant Changes in VIPs' Feelings Over Time**



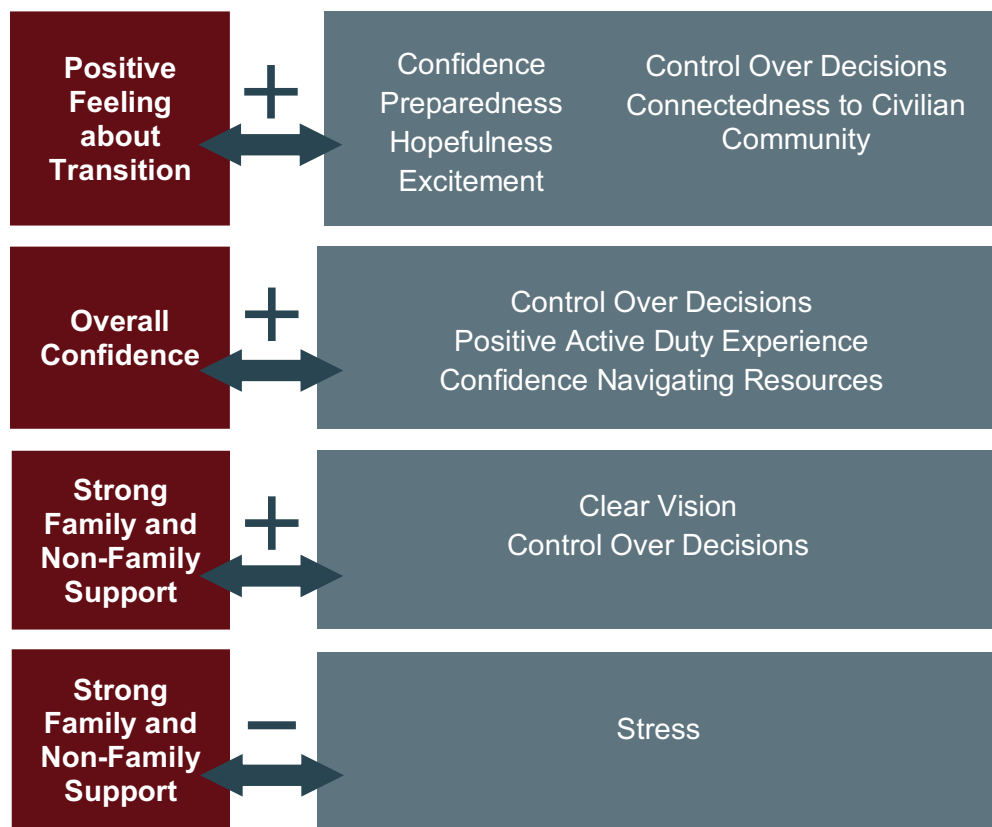
\* The changes were statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$  using a paired sample t-test  
*n*=188 (pre to mid); *n*= 95 (pre to post); *n*= 96 (mid to post)

## Significant Correlations

In addition to the statistically significant changes over time, there were also statistically significant correlations\* (i.e., relationships) between: 1) positive feelings about transition; 2) confidence; 3) strong support systems, and the feelings that are listed in the blue boxes in Figure 15.

Specifically, if the feelings in each of the top three red boxes increase, then the feelings in the corresponding blue boxes are also likely to increase. Similarly, there is a significant negative correlation between strong support systems and stress, in that as one increases, the other is likely to decrease. These findings suggest that by addressing on these key measures, **zero8hundred** can improve the overall well-being of VIPs during their transition process.

**Figure 15. Statistically Significant Correlations Between Key Measures**



\* Pearson's correlation coefficient was statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$   
*n*=188 (pre to mid); *n*= 95 (pre to post); *n*= 96 (mid to post)  
 Note correlation does not mean causation



# WEBSITE ANALYTICS AND OUTREACH

Throughout the four years, VIPs continued to be active in using the website and following **zero8hundred** on social media. Overall, VIPs were very satisfied with the website and its features.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 16. Hits on Veteran Wellness Pillars<sup>10</sup>**



**Figure 17. Analytics**



**Figure 18. Overall Satisfaction with Website and Website Features**

	Midpoint	Post
Overall	98%	99%
Website was easy to use	86%	82%
Would recommend the website	86%	90%
Has sufficient number of resources	82%	81%
Resources are easy to find	82%	81%
Will visit again	64%	54%

*“The website was easy to access and provided good information.”*

*“The resources were very helpful and the support gave me peace of mind.”*

*“The website is user friendly, easy to navigate, and there were plenty of resources available for people, especially for veterans.”*

<sup>9</sup> The website began redesign in late December 2108.

<sup>10</sup> Website analytics combined the Employment and Education pillars.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

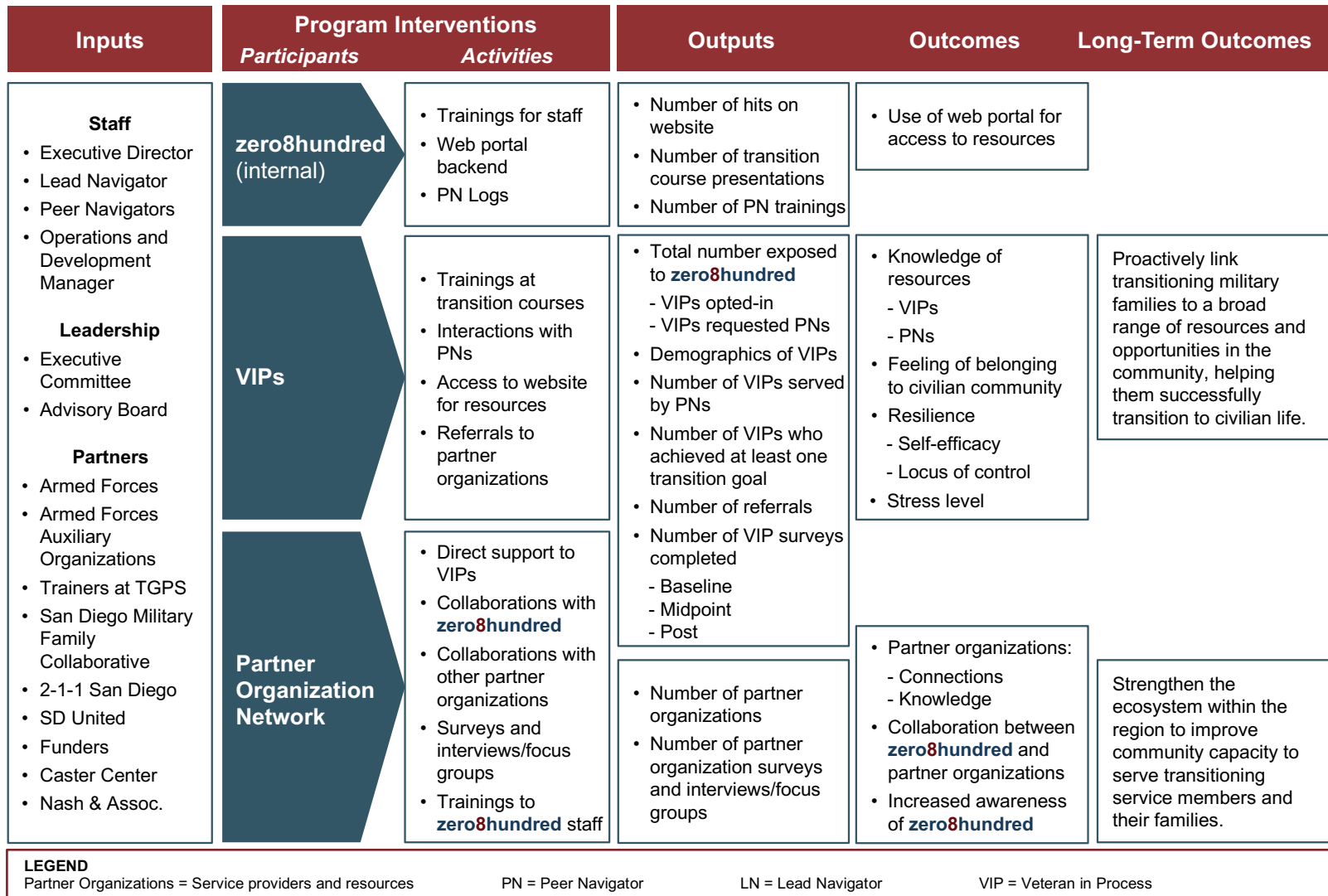
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**zero8hundred** continues to make an impact with transitioning service members and their families four years after presenting in the first transition course with the Navy, and many of the findings have remained consistent over time. **zero8hundred** has grown to include neighboring counties (Orange, Riverside, and Imperial) and now supports reservists transitioning from activation back to civilian life, and veterans who have already transitioned out of active duty service. **zero8hundred** remains connected to many partner organizations, many of which provide vital support to VIPs throughout the transition process in all five of the veteran wellness pillars. Employment and education remain extremely important to VIPs, and **zero8hundred** is making an impact with VIPs in their rate of employment and easing their overall transition into the civilian community.

**zero8hundred** would benefit from considering the following recommendations:

1. Continue to strengthen the peer navigation model which has proved to be very successful. This includes utilizing PNs who have both lived military experience and formal education in social work/counseling.
2. Strengthen relationship with SDUnited and work with the SDUnited team to identify and track **zero8hundred** VIPs after graduating from the **zero8hundred** program.
  - a. Measuring the longer-term impact of working with **zero8hundred** could lead to insights into best practices for long-term transition success.
3. Maintain diversity within the peer navigation team that resembles the gender and ethnic diversity of VIPs.
4. Re-examine the evaluation approach and survey content in light of new populations (e.g., reservists).
5. Consider reviving the Quarterly Reports to update the community and all those connected with **zero8hundred** about successes, impact, and changes.
6. Invest in nonprofit board training to understand the new and expanded 501(c)(3) responsibilities.

# APPENDIX A. zero8hundred EVALUATION LOGIC MODEL



## APPENDIX B. EVALUATION DATA SOURCES

Data Source	Description
Registration/Intake Demographics	Each VIP completes a registration form with background and demographic information when he/she enrolls in <b>zero8hundred</b> .
Database of VIPs	A Salesforce database is maintained by the <b>zero8hundred</b> staff, which includes the basic intake data and any data the Peer Navigators collect when contact is made with the VIP, such as VIP contact status, which goals have been met, status of the VIP (i.e., active, self-navigating, moved), and other intake information.
Observations	The evaluation team observed transition presentations for the <b>zero8hundred</b> program, operations and staff meetings at the <b>zero8hundred</b> office, and Advisory Board meetings.
Web Analytics	Number of “hits” on <b>zero8hundred’s</b> website (www.zero8hundred.org) is tracked through Google Analytics.
Baseline Survey (n=940)	The Peer Navigator administers a Baseline Survey to the VIP during the first phone call before he/she transitions out of the military. The survey includes questions about the VIP’s level of stress, confidence, locus of control, and comfort level navigating his/her future in the civilian community.
Midpoint Survey* (n=536)	A <b>zero8hundred</b> volunteer or contracted trained interviewer administers a Midpoint Survey by telephone to the VIP when he/she begins or is past terminal leave (i.e., final separation from the military). This survey includes the same questions asked in the Baseline Survey, as well as questions about goal attainment, status with the Veteran’s Administration (VA), employment, current place of residence, and experiences and satisfaction with the <b>zero8hundred</b> program.
Post-Transition (“Post”) Survey* (n=298)	A contracted trained interviewer administers a Post-Transition Survey either online or by telephone to the VIP approximately 12 months after terminal leave begins. It mirrors the Midpoint Survey and includes additional questions about the <b>zero8hundred</b> program’s impact on the VIP’s transition (including employment) and recommendations for the <b>zero8hundred</b> program.

*\*As an incentive to increase participation, VIPs receive a \$20 gift card upon completion of the Midpoint Survey and Post Survey.*

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