

Faces of Wellness



Kent State University Bateman Gold Team

Latisha Ellison
Daniel Henderson
Taylor Pierce
Lauryn Rosinski
Rachel Stevenson

Timothy Roberts, Faculty Advisor
Lyndsey Fortunato, Professional Advisor

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Executive Summary

For most Americans, maintaining physical health is a constant goal and an openly discussed topic. Unfortunately, staying mentally healthy is not afforded the same priority. The current culture surrounding mental health in the United States is a pervasive problem that has real, life-altering effects for those who struggle with emotional suffering or mental health issues. These problems continue to be damaging in Americans who are over the age of 55. Although 20 percent of this age group suffers from a mental illness, it is the least likely demographic to seek out professional help. In response to this, Kent State University's Bateman Gold Team implemented a lasting campaign to change the culture of mental health in the 55 and older community at Portage County, Ohio, senior centers to ensure all those in need are empowered to seek out the care they need to live long, happy lives.

Through research conducted at the national and local level, the Bateman Gold Team found that the 55 and older community is at a high risk of experiencing emotional suffering or struggling due to mental health issues. The most common struggles they will face involve Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. These mental health issues may lead to depression and other forms of emotional suffering. The pattern of emotional struggling affects both their own lives and the lives of their family and friends, who oftentimes act as caregivers.

Once the target audience and the need for support was identified, the Bateman Gold Team designed the Faces of Wellness campaign. The purpose of the campaign was to empower the 55 and older community at Portage County senior centers to change the culture surrounding mental health and stay aware of the Five Signs of emotional suffering long after the campaign ends. The campaign focused on the development of role models in the community at Portage County senior centers and the creation of connections with support groups to continue to spread the messages of The Campaign to Change Direction® to those who need to hear it the most.

During the campaign, the Bateman Gold Team recruited six "Faces of Wellness," incorporated the Five Signs of emotional suffering into 18 support groups, increased the awareness of The Campaign to Change Direction® and the Five Signs of emotional suffering among local seniors by 15 percent, and increased the likelihood that members of the 55 and older community would discuss their mental health with friends, family, or professionals.

The Bateman Gold Team invites you to learn more about the Faces of Wellness campaign.

Situation Analysis

Mental health issues are incredibly prevalent in today's society. According to the Mental Health America website, one in five adults has a mental health issue. Although a large population of people live, or know someone who lives, with a mental health issue, a negative misperception toward mental health continues to exist. The Campaign to Change Direction® aims to change the culture of mental health in America.

Although the campaign focuses on changing the mental health culture for all Americans, one of its primary target audiences includes adults age 55 and older. While research completed by the Bateman Gold Team shows that many people believe mental health issues "just happen with old age," the mental well-being of the 55 and older community is just as important as their physical health.

According to an interview with Karyn Hall, director of community relations for the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County, the number of deaths by suicide in the 60 and older population in Portage County doubled from 2015 to 2016. The Campaign to Change Direction® website also revealed that 90 percent of people who die by suicide have a mental disorder. The Bateman Gold Team realized the 55 and older population needed The Campaign to Change Direction® now more than ever and based its campaign around empowering this community through education and conversation.

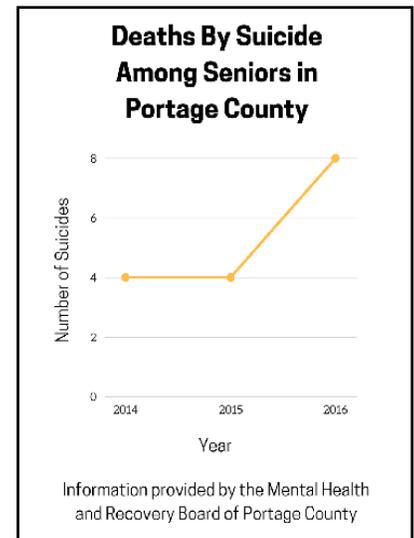


Secondary Research Summary

Alzheimer's and Dementia affect 9 percent of the 55 and older community and both are more easily managed when identified early. This population also has a high risk of depression and suicide due to mental health struggles and emotional suffering. According to The Campaign to Change Direction®, 90 percent of those who commit suicide also suffer from a mental health issue. In Portage County, deaths by suicide doubled between 2015 and 2016. The Bateman Gold Team found that when members of the 55 and older age group suffer from a mental health issue, it also affects their caregivers.

According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, 33 percent of caregivers who care for an older adult with dementia exhibit signs of depression. This exposed a need among caregivers to be able to identify emotional suffering in themselves as well as others.

An extended analysis of the team's secondary research starts on page A24.



Primary Research Summary

Professional Interviews

To better understand the 55 and older community, the Bateman Gold Team interviewed six professionals who specialize in mental health services, gerontology, and mental health messaging. The Bateman Gold Team discovered the following:

- The 55 and older community is a disenfranchised group, meaning they are not supported by society when it comes to mental health issues.
- The best way to reach seniors is by using face-to-face communication.
- Messaging is best when using positive words such as: empower, growth, and improvement.
- Caregivers tend to ignore their own mental health because they are focused on taking care of someone else, and often do not think their problems are as severe as the individual they are providing care for.
- Caregivers are hard to identify because a lot of people do not consider themselves caregivers, especially if they are caring for family members.

Informal Focus Groups

To gain a better understanding of how members of the 55 and older community in Portage County felt about discussing mental health, the Bateman Gold Team conducted informal focus groups with more than 35 members of two local senior centers: the Portage County Senior Center and the Streetsboro Senior Center. Key findings from the focus groups included:

- Maintaining independence is extremely important. In fact, many felt that they would rather keep their mental health issues a secret, especially if they thought it could cost them their independence.
- They believe depression and anxiety are brought on by loneliness and lack of socializing with friends and family.
- They would prefer to discuss their mental health issues with a loved one such as a spouse or child as opposed to a medical professional for fear of a deeper diagnosis.
- Only a handful of seniors used the internet, indicating that social media would not be a good form of communication with them.
- Most seniors would prefer to attend events held at their local senior centers before noon.

Primary Research Summary

Survey Results

The Bateman Gold Team surveyed members of the Portage County 55 and older community to gauge awareness of The Campaign to Change Direction® and their feelings toward mental health issues. The team discovered the following:

- 68 percent of those surveyed had no awareness of The Campaign to Change Direction®. Thirty-two percent of individuals surveyed recognized the campaign's name but did not know its mission and who the campaign serves.
- Although 29 percent of those surveyed said they knew the Five Signs of emotional suffering, no one could successfully identify the Five Signs.
- 50 percent of those surveyed felt neutral, disagreed, or completely disagreed when asked if they would want to discuss mental health with friends, family, or medical professionals.
- Fewer than one percent of those surveyed said they received their news and information online.

An extended analysis of the team's primary research starts on page A16.



Publics

Primary Audience

55 and older members of the Portage County Senior Center and Streetsboro Senior Center

- The 55 and older members of the Portage County Senior Center and Streetsboro Senior Center are at a peak point in life when mental health issues manifest themselves.
- Members of the 55 and older community are most at risk for experiencing mental health issues and are most reliant on family and friends for support.
- Senior centers are popular areas for members of the 55 and older community. The Bateman Gold Team also observed that members of the senior center communities often engage in open dialogue and care for one another. The Bateman Gold Team concluded that their messages of empowerment and encouragement would effectively reach the senior center members.

Secondary Audience

- Administration at Portage County and Streetsboro senior centers
- Family-Caregiver support groups
- Local media outlets
- Support group board members and administrators

Campaign Theme

By observing and talking to senior center members, the Bateman Gold Team realized this is a community that cares and supports one another; they talk to and listen to each other. The team also found that these members look up to and are inspired by opinion leaders in their community. Opinion leaders for members of these senior centers include activity coordinators, volunteers, and long-standing, respected members of the senior center community.

These key findings helped the Bateman Gold Team determine the theme for its campaign. The “Faces of Wellness” are the opinion leaders who can make a difference within the communities. By pledging to be a “Face of Wellness,” an opinion leader is pledging to recognize the Five Signs of emotional suffering and talk to peers exhibiting the signs. “Faces of Wellness” will encourage others and show them that taking charge of their mental health will make them feel more empowered and secure their independence.

Key Messages

Key Messages for Senior Center Communities

1. Become a “Face of Wellness” and empower your community members to take charge of their mental health.
2. Maintaining your independence depends on an all-around healthy lifestyle, including physical and mental health.
3. If you know the Five Signs of emotional suffering, you can be the resource a friend needs, when they need it.

Key Messages for Support Groups

1. Take the pledge and be a proactive force in changing the culture of mental health in America.
2. Empower caregivers to take charge of their own mental health and recognize the warning signs in themselves and others, so they can continue to care for their patients.
3. Know the Five Signs of emotional suffering to ensure you and those around you receive the help needed to live a healthy life.

Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, and Results

Objective One: Recruit six “Faces of Wellness” at Portage County senior centers to represent and promote the physical, mental, and social aspects of health and wellness for senior citizens by March 15, 2017.

Rationale: Recruit three people at each of the two county senior centers to represent the “Faces of Wellness.” The “Faces of Wellness” will encourage good physical health, mental health, and social health by providing information about local health resources. This will empower members of these senior centers to serve as mental health ambassadors and encourage their peers to discuss ways to improve their mental health wellness.

Strategy One: Inspire influential members of the Portage County and Streetsboro senior centers to commit and become “Faces of Wellness” through face-to-face communication.

Tactic: Meet with possible opinion leaders within the senior centers and explain The Campaign to Change Direction® and how their roles as opinion leaders can make a difference.

Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, and Results

Result: The Bateman Gold Team successfully recruited six members of the senior center community to be “Faces of Wellness.” All of these “Faces of Wellness” frequently visit their respective senior centers, maintain relationships with other members, and volunteer their time to help others.

Tactic: Create a pledge dedicated to maintaining mental health tailored toward the 55 and older community and encourage the “Faces of Wellness” to sign the pledge.

Result: The Bateman Gold Team created pledges for the “Faces of Wellness.” All six “Faces of Wellness” signed the pledge and promised to look out for anyone in the senior centers exhibiting the Five Signs of emotional suffering, talk openly about mental health, and provide a list of local resources to friends and family members in need.

Strategy Two: Develop print material to train and prepare the “Faces of Wellness” to serve as representatives of positive all-around health in their communities.

Tactic: Create informational packets and visual brochures to give the “Faces of Wellness” lasting, take-home materials to supplement their knowledge of the Five Signs and promoting good all-around health.

Result: The Bateman Gold Team created brochures and local resource reference sheets and distributed them to each “Face of Wellness.” These leaders serve as a primary resource for the other members of the community; therefore, having these materials on hand and readily available will ensure they have the answers to help their peers.

Tactic: The Bateman Gold Team also created bookmarks with the Five Signs on them to act as another resource.

Result: The bookmarks serve as a constant reminder of the Five Signs and a reminder that the “Faces of Wellness” will always have on hand and review often.

OBJECTIVE ONE EVALUATION — MET

The Bateman Gold Team successfully recruited six influential members of the Portage County and Streetsboro senior centers to become “Faces of Wellness.” After discussing The Campaign to Change Direction® and the importance its key messages would have on the senior center community members, the six seniors signed the pledge to become a “Face of Wellness.” The Bateman Gold Team subsequently provided the new “Faces of Wellness” with a list of local resources and a bookmark of the Five Signs of emotional suffering. These ambassadors of good mental health will be vital resources in the senior center communities and will be a crucial aspect of empowering their peers to adopt an open, honest, and judgment-free environment when discussing mental health.

Objective Two: Increase awareness of The Campaign to Change Direction® and the Five Signs of emotional suffering from zero percent to 40 percent among those who visit the Portage County and Streetsboro senior centers by March 15, 2017.

Rationale: The Bateman Gold Team’s research showed a significant lack of awareness in the 55 and older community about The Campaign to Change Direction® and about specific local resources that help with mental health issues. By increasing awareness of the national campaign, the Bateman Gold Team will also be raising awareness of the Five Signs of emotional suffering. Through greater awareness of these resources, the 55 and older community is more likely to utilize them.

Strategy: Empower members of the Portage County and Streetsboro senior centers to learn the Five Signs through event-driven, face-to-face communication.



Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, and Results

Tactic: Design and distribute brochures emphasizing the Five Signs and The Campaign to Change Direction® at both senior centers. These posters and brochures will be used at all events hosted at the senior centers.

Result: Each member of the senior center was provided with a brochure and extra copies were available for those who weren't present at the time. The brochures were a main element of each event to help reinforce the Five Signs and The Campaign to Change Direction®.

Tactic: Host a BINGO event at the senior centers and use BINGO chips representative of the Five Signs. Seniors will be encouraged to use the BINGO chips associated with the signs when playing the game.

Result: The team managed the BINGO game at Streetsboro March 7 and at Portage March 8. About 80 seniors attended both events and listened to a presentation by the Bateman Gold Team about the Five Signs and the national campaign. During the actual games, attendees used the chips, which reinforced the Five Signs. The team recruited three Faces of Wellness after the games.

Tactic: Create jigsaw puzzles using the Five Signs faces and have them readily available at the senior centers for visitors to use and serve as a reminder of the Five Signs.

Result: The jigsaw puzzles served as a constant reminder to look out for the Five Signs in themselves and others. The puzzles were presented to the centers by the team as a fun way to think about mental health.

Tactic: Attend the Streetsboro Valentine's Day party and host a "Sweets and Greetings" event with the seniors. The Bateman Gold Team will pass out promotional materials and introduce The Campaign to Change Direction® to the seniors.

Result: About 60 seniors attended the "Sweets and Greetings" event February 17, and the team distributed information and talked to the group about The Campaign to Change Direction®, the Five Signs and local mental health resources. The event helped introduce the campaign to our key public and create a lasting impression on individuals to increase their recognition of the Five Signs.

Tactic: Create a press release promoting the Faces of Wellness campaign and distribute it to local media to describe how the campaign is benefitting the community.

Result: A press release was created and sent to The Record Courier, a newspaper in Portage County. The release described the Faces of Wellness campaign and was aimed to raise awareness about the importance of mental health support for the 55 and older community. The release was not used by the paper during the implementation period.

OBJECTIVE TWO EVALUATION — EXCEEDED

In a post-campaign evaluation, 56 percent of the seniors successfully identified the Five Signs of emotional suffering, and 64 percent said they were aware of The Campaign to Change Direct. This exceeded the Bateman Gold Team's objective of increasing awareness of the Five Signs of emotional suffering and the national campaign by 40 percent. By doing this, the Bateman Gold Team spread the informative and empowering messages of The Campaign to Change Direction® to more than half of its target audiences.

Objective Three: Encourage three family-caregiver support groups to incorporate the messages of The Campaign to Change Direction® into their educational programs by March 15, 2017.

Rationale: Caregivers are a key secondary public to the senior population because research showed that many seniors are likely to reach out to family or friends.

Strategy: Use face-to-face and digital communication to educate and encourage the leaders of Portage County caregiver support groups to adopt the Five Signs of emotional suffering as part of their support groups.



Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, and Results

Tactic: Create presentations to educate caregiver support groups about The Campaign to Change Direction® and explain the importance of this resource for caregivers and their family members.

Result: The Bateman Gold Team made a formal presentation on its campaign to the Portage County National Alliance on Mental Illness Board February 23. The board accepted the team's materials and agreed to incorporate the messages of The Campaign to Change Direction® and distribute them to its caregiver support group. In addition, on March 14, the coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association in Northeast Ohio agreed to incorporate and distribute the national campaign's messages to 17 caregiver support groups in 17 Ohio counties.

OBJECTIVE THREE EVALUATION — EXCEEDED

The Bateman Gold Team followed up with the support group representatives and asked if The Campaign to Change Direction® information would be distributed to caregivers at the support groups. These representatives revealed that The Campaign to Change Direction® information was disseminated to 18 different support groups in 17 different counties. This exceeded the Bateman Gold Team objective of spreading this information to three support groups.

Objective Four: Increase the likelihood that senior citizens at the Portage and Streetsboro centers would discuss mental health with family, friends, or professionals from 50 percent to 66 percent by March 15, 2017.

Rationale: Our primary research showed that almost 50 percent of our target audiences either did not want to talk to or were hesitant to talk to medical professionals, friends, or family members about mental health issues.

Strategy One: Empower members of the 55 and older community to take charge of their health and talk to people they trust about their mental health through face-to-face communication.

Tactic: Host an "Eggs and Education" event at the Streetsboro Senior Center. Seniors will be encouraged to gather for a meal while engaging in conversation with the Bateman Gold Team and each other about the Five Signs and The Campaign to Change Direction®.

Result: The "Eggs and Education" event February 27 attracted 32 seniors, many of whom participated in an open discussion about mental health. Most of those attending had previously indicated during the Bateman Gold Team's primary research that they did not wish to talk to loved ones or medical professionals about mental health. However, after the event, a number of senior center members said they would relay the information from the campaign to family members and others.

Tactic: Distribute brochures and engage in conversations with seniors about mental health, emphasizing the importance of openly discussing everyday mental health issues.

Result: The five Bateman Gold members built relationships with the seniors, who shared their experiences with mental health issues and their views on the culture toward mental health.

OBJECTIVE FOUR EVALUATION — PARTIALLY ACHIEVED

In the post-campaign surveys, the Bateman Gold Team asked if the members of the senior center community would be willing to talk to friends, family members, or medical professionals about mental health issues. Sixty-eight percent agreed they would talk about mental health issues with friends and family, while 61 percent would talk to a medical professional. Both these figures were substantial increases from the 50 percent figure in the pre-campaign surveys. This indicates a very positive start in permanently changing the culture of mental health at these senior centers. As the Faces of Wellness continue to be a positive force in their communities, the Bateman Gold Team expects this objective to be fully realized in the future.



Conclusion

The Bateman Gold Team created a campaign that will last long after the implementation period has ended. The team helped create an environment where seniors could feel comfortable enough to talk about their mental health without fear of losing their independence or being judged. These seniors care about each other and want to support one another; the Bateman Gold Team just helped empower them to go the extra mile and ask their peers if they were okay. With the “Faces of Wellness,” the seniors now know who they can look to for help and guidance. The “Faces of Wellness” have the tools needed to guide their peers in the right direction when a mental health issue occurs.

The team also provided materials about The Campaign to Change Direction® for caregiver support groups. Caregivers are oftentimes the first people to notice if the person they are caring for is going through emotional suffering. By providing support groups with the information about the Five Signs of emotional suffering, the caregivers will be able to recognize when their patient is suffering and when they need to seek additional help.

The Faces of Wellness campaign shows that by having influential members in the community commit to promoting good all-around health, people are more willing to discuss their mental health. This campaign sparked an important dialogue among the “silent generation,” a dialogue that will last longer than the campaign. The Faces of Wellness campaign is one that can be easily duplicated in senior centers across the country.

