

## **Happy + Air Force Pilot: Three-Month Update - August 2022**

### **Summary: Happy's Frictionless Service is Generating Stunning Results**

Happy is a novel wellness service that proactively delivers the essential ingredient of mental health, emotional support. Happy partnered with [Air Force Base] on a six-month pilot focused on reducing isolation, anxiety and stress, increasing morale and retention, and supporting productivity and readiness. Three months into the pilot, **54%** of Service Members trust Happy and are using the service to meet their wellness needs. These Service Members have been “struggling in silence,” and Happy is giving them a voice, providing them 24/7 support, and increasing their readiness.

### **Call to Arms / Why: New Approaches Are Needed to Address Mental Health Epidemics at Scale**

Current approaches to reducing anxiety, depression and suicide are insufficient. New approaches are needed to address America's spiraling mental health epidemics, which are having a significant and detrimental impact on military readiness.

- Nearly 60% of military personnel struggling with mental health issues never seek support for their struggles (<https://academic.oup.com/epirev/article/37/1/144/423274>).
- Morale and retention remain critical concerns in a competitive job market (<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/05/13/bigger-bonuses-pentagons-top-weapon-combat-recruiting-crisis-troops-head-exits.html>).
- Every mental health epidemic affecting Service Members is projected to worsen.

### **Scope of Pilot: Testing Frictionless Mental Health with 375 AES and Select Wing Staff**

- Population: 129 Service Members of the 375 AES and select Wing staff
- Duration: 6 months total (3 months at the time of this report)
- Service: Four check-ins annually; unlimited follow up calls; 24/7 availability

### **Highlights: Industry-Leading Adoption Rates, Clinical-Level Impact, Clear Preference for Happy**

- **54%** of Service Members are using Happy to support their mental health and wellness
- **88%** of connected calls resulted in Service Members receiving support / expressing gratitude for check-in
- **89%** of first calls led to improvement in mood
- **98%** of second calls led to improvement in mood
- **86%** of Service Members stated they do not trust mental health resources offered by the base
- **55%** of Service Members did not wait for Happy's regularly scheduled follow-up and instead scheduled follow-ups on their first call
- **99%** of service members stated they would recommend Happy to others

We are also seeing which issues Service Members are struggling with the most:

- **54%** of calls involved **family dynamics**, particularly parenting/relationships
- **46%** of calls relate specifically to **mental health concerns**
- **39%** of calls addressed **career stressors/burnout**

A significant concern that Service Members have articulated in their support sessions is a general distrust of base resources, which is attributable to several factors:

- **Wait times:** Service Members discussed base resources being “ridiculously understaffed” and complained about unbearable wait times (“It takes months to get to talk to anyone”).
- **Compatibility with counselors:** Service Members acknowledged that they failed to “mesh well” with counselors on the base. One Service Member had several sessions with a counselor, and said “It was just awkward and didn't help at all.”
- **Reporting/Lack of confidentiality:** Service Members expressed concern about the lack of confidentiality inherent to base resources — i.e., they are being encouraged to open up about their struggles to on-base counselors, even though doing so can have an immediate detrimental effect on their career.

### Next Steps:

- 3 months remaining in original pilot
- 375 AES reviews retention, annual Command Climate Surveys and other data to assess additional value added by Happy's frictionless service
- 2nd pilot already underway with Sexual Assault Prevention and Reduction Office

### Example of Multiple Engagements with One Service Member (Excerpts from Notes)

- Service Member asked to be called back in about two hours and I called back. Service Member had some questions about the service itself but asked if I could call back tomorrow morning at 9:00 AM CST.
- I called Service Member back, and they asked a lot of questions about confidentiality, stating that some of their colleagues have concerns that the information they share with us will be used against them. I assured Service Member that we are here for them, and that our conversations are completely confidential. Service Member appreciated that and said they would be grateful for a “check in” every month or so. I told Service Member we take confidentiality extremely seriously. Service Member seemed much more comfortable with the discussion and was glad they were able to get some answers. I told them to call or text me back if there were any other questions or concerns. Service Member said they would let their colleagues know that Happy is a great resource and that we are simply here to support them.
- Service Member shared they were doing great, and that they love these monthly check ins.
- Service Member reached out and asked if I could speak today at 5:30 PM CT. I called Service Member back as requested and was asked if I could call tomorrow at the same time.
- Called Service Member back. They disclosed a lot of information in a short amount of time. Topics of discussion included dealing with the death of a family member, the aftermath of the death and the processing of grief; family dynamics and anticipating changes; feelings about deployment; and high amounts of stress related to work and large amounts of responsibility, managing feelings that are sometimes too much to process. Service Member reflected on their love of family and the joys of parenting. Service Member would like a call back in two weeks and asked me to text them when it gets close to the two weeks mark. **Service Member repeatedly thanked me for being there for them, and said they couldn't believe how good it felt to share their stress with me — everything they have been going through. The member said they truly appreciated me.**

