

Marine Corp Suicides



“He had just talked to his mother six hours before he died. He was going to be here for 23 days before he was deployed and he wasn’t afraid of being deployed.” [April Holm](#)

What are the perception in Miramar and Pendleton Base Camps toward recent Marine Corp suicides?

Situation

Recent suicides at West Coast Marine Corp bases and the proliferation of social media posts (e.g. Viral Tik Tok videos) have raised concern, increased the urgency to address mental health issues—particularly among young recruits, and generated nationwide attention over the rising levels of suicides among Marines.

Key Findings

- Marine suicides in California are symbolic of widespread national mental health issues faced by Marines everywhere
 - Four suicides in the last 24 months in [MCAGCC Twentynine Palms](#), MCAS Miramar, and [Camp Pendleton](#)
- Current USMC suicide prevention strategies are ineffective
 - Official USMC social media responses are reactive
 - Specialized units do not have an active suicide prevention strategy (e.g. Wounded Warrior Battalion at [Camp Pendleton](#))
- Suicide news spreads instantaneously to other bases
 - Close-knit Marine community

Recommendations

- Create a suicide prevention strategy tailored for each location and target group
 - Vulnerable / high-risk individuals (e.g., young recruits)
- Partner with social media influencers to broadly disseminate suicide prevention resources (e.g., [@NotInMyMarines](#))

Data Analytics

ENODO conducted topic modeling and measured public sentiment concerning online discussions around USMC Bases Miramar and Pendleton. Analysts collected and analyzed over 260,000 data points between February 24, 2020 and February 24, 2021, which included 102,654 Twitter posts, 63,502 Facebook posts, 42,870 Instagram posts, 23,317 YouTube comments, 14,278 news websites, 9,097 Tik Tok videos, 5,034 Parler posts, and 1,174 blogs.

“He really wasn't the same person when he came back.” [Stefani Case](#)

Topic Modeling: MCAS Miramar

Analysts employed a topic model to identify and classify the most relevant and discussed topics concerning suicides at MCAS Miramar:

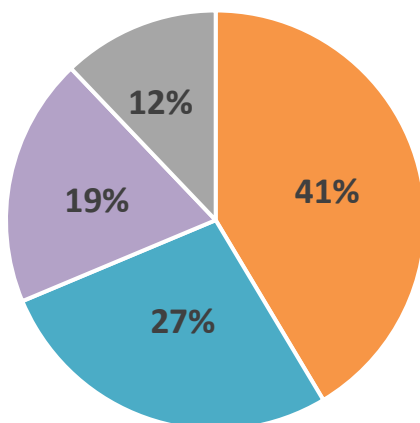
- **Tik Tok Video:** 41% commented on the viral Tik Tok video of a female Marine claiming sexual abuse [posted](#) on Twitter by NotInMyMarines
- **Navy Medic Death:** 27% discussed the newly released Snapchat video [related](#) to the death of Navy corpsman at Twentynine palms
- **COVID-19 Restrictions:** 19% were interested in the restrictions [imposed](#) by COVID-19 during the Miramar exercise “Winter Fury”

Sentiment Analysis: MCAS Miramar

Measured public sentiment associated with MCAS Miramar topics:

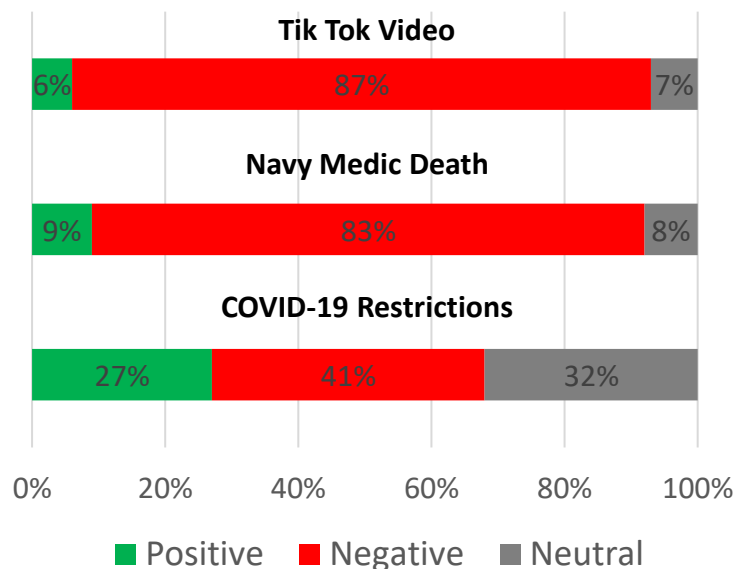
- **Tik Tok Video:** 87% negative sentiment signifies the impact of viral videos that contain personal stories posted by active duty members
- **Navy Medic Death:** High negative sentiment (83%) is primarily due to [ambiguity](#) with the case involving Navy medic Vincent De Leon
- **COVID-19 Restrictions:** Negative sentiment (41%) is primarily linked to frustrations in daily routines due to restrictions

MCAS Miramar Topics



■ Tik Tok Video ■ Navy Medic Death
■ COVID-19 Restrictions ■ Other

MCAS Miramar Sentiment



“We need to stop the problem before it occurs. It’s not enough to do it post discharge. It’s too late. The damage has been done.” [Esther Leibfarth](#)

Topic Modeling: Camp Pendleton

Analysts employed a topic model to identify and classify the most relevant and discussed topics concerning suicides at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

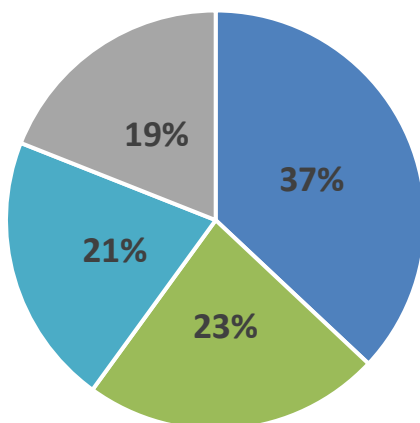
- **Tik Tok Video:** 37% discussed the viral Tik Tok video of a female Marine claiming sexual abuse posted on Twitter by NotInMyMarines
- **Riley Schultz Suicide:** 23% commented on the [ongoing](#) investigation of the 2019 suicide of Lance Cpl. Riley Schultz
- **PTSD:** 21% were interested in CWO Cooper Williams’ [story](#) of battling PTSD

Sentiment Analysis: Camp Pendleton

Measured public sentiment associated with Camp Pendleton topics:

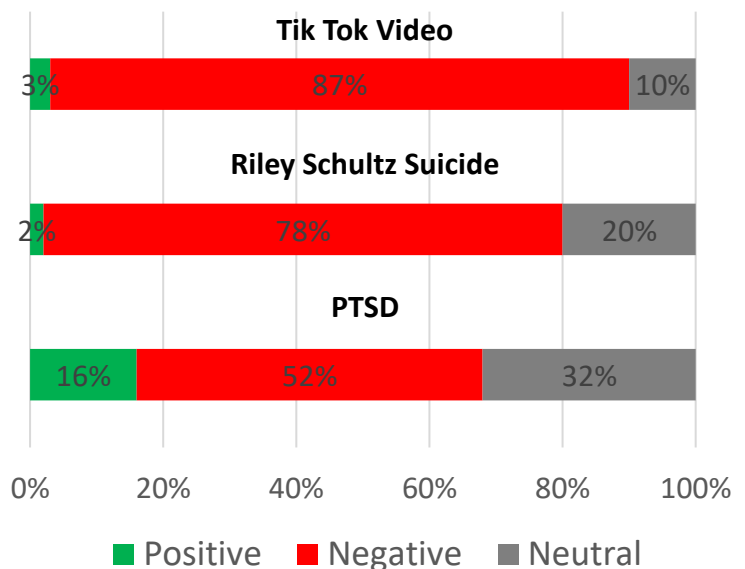
- **Tik Tok Video:** Negative sentiment (87%) was primarily due to concern with poor management of sexual assault cases
- **Riley Schultz Suicide:** 78% negative sentiment was linked to uncertainty with the suicide case
- **PTSD:** 52% negative sentiment was linked to poor action to mitigate PTSD among Marines

Camp Pendleton Topics



■ Tik Tok Video
■ PTSD
■ Riley Schultz Suicide
■ Other

Camp Pendleton Sentiment



■ Positive ■ Negative ■ Neutral



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