

Military Sexual Violence

mecasa
MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual violence in the military, like sexual violence in civilian life, is not a problem specific to one gender. Both men and women experience sexual violence while enlisted in the military - and at high rates. The most recent available data estimates that approximately 19,000 people in the military were sexually assaulted in 2014.¹ Surveys suggest that victims of sexual assault in the military do not report because they fear retribution, or fear that the military will not prosecute crimes they report.²

Impacts

Impacts of sexual violence in the military - called military sexual trauma by the military and the Veterans' Administration - are similar to those civilian sexual violence victims/survivors experience, but often more acute. The victim/survivor is often in the same unit as the person who raped or assaulted her/him and is forced to remain there unless they request a transfer (which requires disclosing the assault). Experts often liken the impacts of military sexual violence to those of incest, because so many victims/survivors feel as though they have been betrayed by someone they are trained to consider family. Survivors of rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment in the military may suffer from depression, stress, and substance abuse and have difficulty finding employment after discharge from the military.³ Military sexual trauma is the leading cause for post-traumatic stress disorder among women veterans.⁴

Increased Scrutiny & Policy Change

The United States military's handling of sexual assault cases has come under increased scrutiny in recent years, especially with the release of *The Invisible War*, a documentary film which chronicles military sexual violence survivors and their experiences reporting

sexual assault. Suggestions for policy changes have include replacing the current system of handling military sexual assault by taking the cases outside of a victim's chain of command; reducing standards of evidence for tying a veteran's mental health issues to sexual assault (thereby easing sexual assault survivors' ability to get service connected for treatment); and eliminating senior officers' ability to overturn jury findings in sexual assault cases.

MECASA's Work

MECASA works closely with the Maine National Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program and works to connect Maine's sexual assault support centers with other military-based service providers for seamless service provision and support for victims/survivors of military sexual assault.

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Learn More

[Maine National Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program](#)

The Maine Army National Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program is designed to help prevent and respond to sexual assault among members of the military in Maine.

[Safe Helpline](#)

Department of Defense (DoD) Safe Helpline is a groundbreaking crisis support service for members of the DoD community affected by sexual assault. Safe Helpline provides live, one-on-one support and information to the worldwide DoD community. The service is confidential, anonymous, secure, and available worldwide, 24/7 by click, call, or text - providing victims with the help they need anytime, anywhere.

[SWAN: Service Women's Action Network](#)

SWAN's mission is to transform military culture by securing equal opportunity and freedom to serve without discrimination, harassment, or assault; and to reform veterans' services to ensure high quality healthcare and benefits for women veterans and their families.

[Sexual Violence in the Military: A Guide for Civilian Advocates](#)

This guide focuses on the impact of sexual violence in the military. It includes resources for advocates who, through relationships and collaborations with the military, can offer support in responding to the needs of survivors and preventing sexual violence.

[Military Sexual Violence: An Infographic](#)

This infographic, created by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, is a great resource for quick, visual information on the issue of military sexual violence.

[Talking Points for Advocates: Sexual Violence in the Military](#)

This resource highlights what is happening in the military, the aftermath of sexual violence, and prevention developments. See the above guide (A Guide for Civilian Advocates) for more in-depth information.

Sources

1. National Defense Research Institute. (2014). *Sexual assault and sexual harassment in the U.S. military: Top-line estimates for active-duty service members from the 2014 RAND Military Workplace Study*. Retrieved from: http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR870.html
2. Department of Defense. (2013). *Department of defense annual report on sexual assault in the military: Fiscal year 2012*. Retrieved from: http://www.sapr.mil/media/pdf/reports/FY12_DoD_SAPRO_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault-VOLUME_ONE.pdf
3. Skinner, et al. (2000). The prevalence of military sexual assault among female Veterans' Administration Outpatients. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 15(3): 291-310.
4. Street, et al. (2008). Sexual harassment and assault experienced by reservists during military service. Prevalence and health correlates. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development* 45: 409-420.



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Statewide Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Line: 1-800-871-7741/TTY 1-888-458-5599