



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION  
AND RESPONSE OFFICE**

# **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office**

## ***Update***

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Director, SAPRO

**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT  
IS EVERYONE'S DUTY.**



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## My Goals

- Clear, timely guidance
- More collaboration with the Services (bi-monthly meetings)
- Responsive to Congress, White House, Services, DACOWITS
- All must be done within current fiscal realities: What can we do to improve the program AND save dollars?
  - Are there redundancies we can eliminate?
  - Share same “pool” of expert speakers—one contract vehicle?
  - Streamline research efforts so we have consistency?
  - Develop common metrics to assess progress?
  - Consolidate and standardize training across the Services?



## Pending Policy Revisions

- Include but are not limited to:
  - Requires victims be given priority as emergency cases at Military Treatment Facilities
  - Establishes Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID)
  - Enhances training requirements for commanders and military responders
    - Law enforcement, criminal investigators, judge advocates, trial counsel, medical personnel and chaplains
  - Outlines expedited transfer options
  - Provides access to legal assistance
  - Makes active duty service members sexually assaulted prior to enlistment eligible for SAPR services
  - Offers victims assistance of SARC and/or VA who is nationally credentialed
  - Requires longer retention of sexual assault evidence and documents



## Efforts Extend Outside DoD

- DoD sharing best practices and learning with organizations within and external to the United States
  - Contributing to National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 (“Women, Peace and Security”)
    - Signatories developing national plans for ensuring women can work and live in safety
    - Working with Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development
  - Met with Peace Corps representatives to share insights on DoD efforts in victim care, prevention, and oversight
  - Briefed Lynn Rosenthal, White House Advisor on Violence Against Women
    - White House and Congress have clear interest in investigations and commander accountability



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## DoD Safe Helpline

- Provides secure and anonymous worldwide 24/7 capability for Service members to get assistance and crisis support
  - Via online and telephone hotlines and texting services
  - Operated by Rape Abuse Incest National Network which runs national civilian hotline
- Launched in Feb 2011 and as of 31 Aug, we have had:
  - 18,898 unique visitors to website and 1,106 people helped
- Initial 90-day analysis of approx 200 users suggests:
  - One-third who self-identified were men
    - Of that one-third, 50% discussed a sexual assault that took place 5 years ago or more and that it impacts their current functioning and relationships
    - More men are visiting SHL compared to RAINN's National Hotline
  - Majority of visitors self-identified as Active Duty and as victim
  - Topics included legal and police issues, impact on family and relationships, anxiety and depression
  - 8% discussed self harm and 5% suicide



## **My Focus: Command Climate**

- The right command climate is key to preventing, reporting and prosecuting sexual assault crimes
  - **Clear messaging on responsibility**
    - Sexual assault is a crime and will not be ignored, excused or condoned
  - **Inherent confidence in the system**
    - Victim allegations taken seriously and victims assisted through entire process
    - Allegations quickly investigated and appropriate action taken
- The right command climate will ensure victims of sexual assault feel confident enough to report and seek the help they need
  - Increase in the number of reports may indicate an increased level of confidence



## *You Asked:*

# How is command climate evaluated?

- Results on command climate related to sexual assault likely to offer insights into other areas as well
- Do NOT want to evaluate by number of actual reports tied to a commander
  - May discourage Service members from reporting
  - Assault may have occurred elsewhere but reported at new location...is that “good” or “bad”?
  - Don’t judge a commander’s performance on just one topic
- Bottom line: Commanders need to be held accountable for the climate within their unit
  - And if not doing what is needed, THEIR Commander must step in



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## Starting to Understand the Climate

- In DEOMI's existing Organizational Climate Survey, sexual harassment questions get at:
  - Type (remarks, "jokes", etc) and whether personally experienced
- DEOMI is drafting sexual assault questions for SAPRO review
  - Will get at knowledge of how to report, satisfaction with training, etc.
  - To be fielded in Organizational Climate Survey by January 2012
- In DMDC survey, women who had experienced "unwanted sexual contact" and made unrestricted report asked of any impact:
  - 62% perceived repercussions (professional, social or administrative)
- DMDC and Air Force Gallup survey asked reasons for not reporting
  - Didn't want superiors to know
  - Did not want to cause trouble
  - Don't trust reporting process
  - Didn't want "troublemaker" label
  - Thought perf eval might suffer
  - Not clear anything could be done





## Issue: Improvements Needed at Joint Bases?

- **Challenge:** SAPR services are co-located at Joint Bases, but appear to operate independently and may not be coordinated
- **Next Steps:** SAPRO will lead working group comprised of Service representatives and Base POCs to determine scope of problem and develop solutions
- **Potential Topics of Discussion:**
  - Ensure Joint presence at monthly Case Management Group to facilitate communication and process review
  - Pool SARC and SAPR Victim Advocate resources to offer on-call assistance
  - Provide standard Joint SAPR training with Service-specific break-outs
  - Use DoD Safe Helpline as the only hotline, to include referral to first available SARC and other first responders, regardless of Service



## **Issue: Ensure Quality Continuum of Care**

- **Challenge:** Need to care for victims of sexual assault beyond active duty
  - Some victims may wait to come forward until they are under the care of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)
- **Our Efforts:**
  - SAPRO staff included in training program for incoming Recovery Care Coordinators
    - Provides situational awareness and opportunity to discuss what to do if Service member or veteran talks about a sexual assault
  - Working now with DVA
    - Create procedures for a “warm handoff” from SARCs to DVA resources
    - Pursue efforts that remind Service members of sexual assault resources during transition
    - Discuss how to capture reports of sexual assaults after transition
    - Improve sexual assault documentation sharing and victim access



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*You asked:*

## **Do you publicize case outcomes?**

- Answer: DoD does not have policy preventing this and it is up to the installation commander, keeping in mind concerns for confidentiality of victim and accused
  - Could lead to unintended consequences
    - E.g., Acquittal may be interpreted as victim lied or puts a chill on unrestricted reporting
- Disposition of cases provided at end of annual report which is publically available
- Commanders make decisions on this at base level
  - Many base papers carry listing of court outcomes
- Results of closed cases can be FOIAed and courts are open to public



## Going Forward: *Help spread our message*

- “Sexual assault is a crime. We will not ignore it, condone it or excuse it.”
  - Everyone within DoD needs to hear this message....again and again
- Emphasize to Service members that they have the right to live and work in a safe environment
  - Do not operate in fear of a sexual assault
  - Know that victims will get needed care, be listened to and treated with respect
  - Perpetrators will be held accountable
- Let me know what you hear so we can continue to improve and be responsive