



VETERANS:

- DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY UNWANTED SEXUAL ATTENTION, UNINVITED SEXUAL ADVANCES, OR FORCED SEX WHILE IN THE MILITARY?
- DOES THIS EXPERIENCE CONTINUE TO AFFECT YOUR LIFE TODAY?

Both women and men can experience sexual harassment or sexual assault during their military service. **VA refers to these experiences as military sexual trauma, or MST.** Like other types of trauma, MST can negatively impact a person's mental and physical health, even many years later. Some problems associated with MST include:

- Disturbing memories or nightmares
- Difficulty feeling safe
- Feelings of depression or numbness
- Problems with alcohol or other drugs
- Feeling isolated from other people
- Problems with anger or irritability
- Problems with sleep
- Physical health problems

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HAS SPECIAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO HELP WOMEN AND MEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST).

People can recover from trauma. To help veterans do this, VA provides **free, confidential treatment** for mental and physical health conditions related to experiences of MST. You do not need to have a VA disability rating (be "service connected") and may be able to receive treatment even if you are not eligible for other VA care. You do not need to have reported the incident(s) when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred.

WHAT KIND OF SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

- Every VA healthcare facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person can help Veterans find and access VA services and programs. He or she may also be aware of state and federal benefits, and community resources that may be helpful.
- Every VA healthcare facility has providers knowledgeable about treatment for the aftereffects of MST. Many have specialized outpatient mental health services focusing on sexual trauma. Vet Centers also have specially trained sexual trauma counselors.
- Nationwide, there are programs that offer specialized sexual trauma treatment in residential or inpatient settings. These are programs for Veterans who need more intense treatment and support.
- To accommodate Veterans who do not feel comfortable in mixed-gender treatment settings, some facilities throughout VA have separate programs for men and women. All residential and inpatient MST programs have separate sleeping areas for women and men.
- Veterans should feel free to ask to meet with a provider of a certain gender if it would make them feel more comfortable.

Service connection or disability compensation is not required to receive free treatment for conditions resulting from MST.

HOW CAN I GET HELP?

- Speak with your existing VA healthcare provider
- Contact the MST Coordinator at your local VA Medical Center
- Contact your local Vet Center
- Call 1-800-827-1000, VA's general information hotline

A list of VA and Vet Center facilities can be found online at www.va.gov and www.vetcenter.va.gov.

More information about MST is available at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp.

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