**SAAM 2021 Sample Newsletter Content**

**Free Help and Support for Veterans Who Experienced****Military Sexual Trauma**

In recognition of [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mst) every April, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) enhances its ongoing outreach efforts with a special campaign to show our support for survivors of military sexual trauma (MST).

Many Veterans are fighting quiet battles all around us as they cope with the aftermath of MST, a term used by VA to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment that occurred during military service. Many MST survivors do not want to tell others about their experiences. Some may worry about being judged or not believed. Others can’t imagine how treatment could truly help with healing, so they suffer alone.

At VA, we know that Veterans of all service eras, branches, backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, and physical sizes have experienced MST. We also know that MST can affect survivors’ [physical and mental health](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/index.asp), sometimes even many years later. The effects can include strong emotions, sleep disturbances, relationship and trust issues, and unsafe coping behaviors.

Our aim is to let all MST survivors know about VA’s free MST-related services to support their healing and recovery.

**You can help us tell them.**

As a part of this special campaign, VA will be conducting outreach to MST survivors and their families, friends, fellow Veterans, and supporters throughout April, and we want everyone to help spread the word. All of us have a role in making sure every Veteran knows [about MST](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/index.asp) and VA’s [free services for coping with related mental and physical health difficulties](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/index.asp).

Eligibility for VA’s MST-related care is expansive. No documentation of the MST experience is required. Veterans do not need to have reported the MST experience at the time, to have sought care within a certain time frame, or to have applied for service connection for an MST-related condition to get care.

To learn more, Veterans may contact their [local VA medical center](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/) and ask to speak with the MST Coordinator, a professional who specializes in connecting survivors with the MST-related care and services that are right for them. They can also speak with a VA health care provider.

Find resources and materials to share during Sexual Assault Awareness Month at <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mst>.