



Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

# 2014 Department of Defense Report of Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response



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This report presents findings from the 2014 Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (2014 FGSAPR) study, which collected qualitative feedback from military members through focus groups using trained moderators to facilitate discussion on these topics. The 2014 FGSAPR was generated in response to ongoing National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requirements and guidance from a Secretary of Defense Directive (Secretary of Defense, 2014). The Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC) within the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) was tasked with this effort. The goal of the 2014 FGSAPR effort was to engage in small group discussions with military members across DoD on issues related to sexual assault. These structured discussions were designed to better understand how recent changes in sexual assault policies and programs have impacted military members and their workplace environment, as well as address the military's climate of sexual assault response and prevention.

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**2014 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REPORT OF  
FOCUS GROUPS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT  
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

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DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office officials contributing to the development and administration of this assessment include Dr. Nathan Galbreath and Dr. Allison Greene-Sands. Service/National Guard officials contributing to the development and administration of this assessment include Dr. Paul Garst (Department of Navy SAPRO), Mr. Paul Rosen (Navy), Dr. Maryam Allahyar (Army), Dr. Lauren Boyatzi and Major Shontre McFarlin (Air Force), Ms. Melissa Cohen (Marine Corps), and Ms. Jane Lux and Colonel Rita Whitmire (National Guard). We would like to thank all of the Services and National Guard representatives at each installation who assisted us in organizing the focus groups.

DMDC's Survey Design, Analysis, and Operations Branch, under the guidance of Dr. Elizabeth P. Van Winkle, Deputy Branch Chief, is responsible for the development and oversight of questionnaires and focus groups in the survey program. The lead analysts on this assessment were Dr. Lindsay Rock and Dr. Paul Cook, SRA International, Inc.

A team consisting of Dr. Lindsay Rock, Dr. Elizabeth P. Van Winkle, Ms. Natalie Namrow, SRA International, Inc., Dr. Maia Hurley, and Ms. Kimberly Williams completed quality control for this report.

# 2014 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOCUS GROUP REPORT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

## Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the *2014 Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (2014 FGSAPR)* study, which collected qualitative feedback from military members through focus groups using trained moderators to facilitate discussion on these topics. The *2014 FGSAPR* was generated in response to ongoing National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requirements and guidance from a Secretary of Defense Directive (Secretary of Defense, 2014). The Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)<sup>1</sup> within the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) was tasked with this effort. For over 25 years, RSSC has been DoD's lead organization for conducting impartial and unbiased scientific survey and focus group research on a number of topics of interest to the Department, including focus groups related to sexual assault prevention and response at the Military Service Academies (MSAs; DMDC, 2013a).

The goal of the *2014 FGSAPR* effort was to engage in small group discussions with military members across DoD on issues related to sexual assault. These structured discussions were designed to better understand how recent changes in sexual assault policies and programs have impacted military members and their workplace environment, as well as address the military's climate of sexual assault response and prevention. Participants in the study were asked not to discuss any personal experiences of sexual assault, but rather to share their insights and perspectives on these issues as they relate to their Service. This is the only formal qualitative assessment in 2014 on these topics across DoD active duty and National Guard members.

### ***Focus Group Methodology***

DMDC-RSSC follows standard, scientific methods that are widely used in the survey industry for data collections across a variety of domains. DMDC-RSSC focus group methodology employs these standards for qualitative research to collect subjective information from participants on a limited number of topics. The methods are similar to those that have been successfully used by DMDC-RSSC for a number of years to conduct Congressionally-directed focus groups related to sexual assault issues at the three MSAs (DMDC, 2013a). The methodology for the *2014 FGSAPR* was consistent across locations. Although the results cannot be generalized to the full military population, they provide insights into issues and ideas for further consideration.

***Selection of Participants:*** Participation in the *2014 FGSAPR* was voluntary. Each installation supplied DMDC-RSSC with a roster of all Service and National Guard members which was then randomized within clusters defined by gender and paygrade group. Service and National Guard members were contacted in order by their installation lead and asked if they would voluntarily participate in the focus group. Additional members were selected from the

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to 2014, RSSC was called Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program (HRSAP). In 2014, DMDC reorganized and renamed the RSSC to better encapsulate the scope of research conducted by this group.

randomized lists as necessary to achieve ten to twelve committed members for each focus group session.

Randomly selected members received notification of their initial selection for the focus groups from their installation lead. The notification informed them that they had been selected to participate in a DoD-directed focus group addressing issues of sexual assault as part of the effort to understand issues and provide constructive feedback to senior DoD leadership. The notification made it clear that the study was a non-attributable, voluntary data collection where they would be asked to share their perspectives on questions related to sexual assault, with a focus on conduct, training, and policies. The members were told that the sessions would not ask questions about any personal experiences of sexual assault.

**Development of Questions:** Focus group questions were developed in collaboration with DoD SAPRO and each of the Services/National Guard. Based on input received, seven topic areas<sup>2</sup> with detailed investigative questions were presented to focus group participants. The six topic areas addressed in this report include:

- Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact
- Options for Reporting Sexual Assault
- Changes in SAPR Policy
- Command Climate/Culture
- Training
- Bystander Intervention

Additional detail and examples for each topic area are included in the later chapters of the report. The focus group protocol and handouts are included in the Appendices.

**Conducting the Focus Groups:** The focus groups were designed to elicit insight from active duty and National Guard members in various paygrades at training installations (i.e., advanced technical training schools), and operational installations. Focus groups were conducted between 21 July and 8 August 2014 at six operational and four training installations. Additional details about locations and gender/paygrade groupings of participants are included in the introduction of the report.

Number of Participants By Service <sup>3</sup>	
Army	97
Navy	157
Marine Corps	126
Air Force	144
National Guard	123
Total	647

<sup>2</sup> The last topic area was “Additional Recommendations” and is not presented as a separate chapter in this report. Information gleaned from this section of the protocol is embedded within the six chapters of the report.

<sup>3</sup> An equal number of members were invited to participate at all locations; however, because of the voluntary nature of focus group participation, some members who initially committed to participate chose not to attend.

Each focus group session was scheduled for 90 minutes. DMDC-RSSC provided a facilitator, assistant facilitator, and court reporter. The professional court reporter took verbatim transcription, which was provided to DMDC-RSSC to review and redact any information that could reveal a respondent's identity. Audio and video recordings were not conducted, and there were no individually identifiable records. No link between an individual respondent and their responses was possible. Only selected comments that have had identifiers removed have been included in the report to illustrate findings.

Participants were encouraged to provide general information but not to specify personal experiences, names, or other identifying details. They were also advised not to share information discussed within the focus groups after the session concluded.

***Analysis Methodology:*** Data from the focus groups were analyzed qualitatively for major themes and ideas conveyed across the sessions. Themes are only presented if there was support across all of the Services and National Guard.

The results in this study are based on qualitative analysis and cannot be generalized to all military members. Findings should be viewed as illustrations of situations and themes for consideration by DoD officials as they review their programs. Findings may also be viewed as a general perspective on participants' views of sexual harassment and assault at their base/installation, but they do not portray a statistical report on incidence rates or quantitative evaluation of response and prevention programs.

***Categorization of Topics:*** Focus group analysts reviewed transcripts to identify major themes. DMDC-RSSC analyzed over 60 hours of transcripts from 57 focus groups.<sup>4</sup> All comments were grouped into themes during initial review. Analysts used a combination of topical coding and repeated reviews to gather specific comments that supported the emerging themes. An iterative review process was used to extract and classify comments that included multiple reviewers who verified that themes were supported by comments across all Services and the National Guard. Where applicable, included in the report chapters are references to DoD SAPRO's "Lines of Effort (LOEs)" which were established to guide and focus strategic planning efforts (DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Strategic Plan, 2013).

***Organization of Findings:*** Findings are presented in separate chapters of the report for each of the six topic areas. Within chapters, the major themes are presented with specific findings and supporting comments from the participants. This Executive Summary only highlights high-level findings; supporting comments and additional details are included in the chapters of the full report.

### ***Perceptions of Unwanted Sexual Contact***

The 2014 FGSAPR devoted time to topics designed to gather members' perceptions on unwanted sexual contact (USC) and their recommendations for reducing its prevalence. USC includes a number of unwanted sexual behaviors ranging from unwanted sexual touching to completed sex. The Department uses the term "unwanted sexual contact" because it captures a

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<sup>4</sup> Each focus group was approximately 90 minutes in length including introductory, privacy, and informed consent information. This introductory text was not recorded.

range of unwanted sexual behaviors that are punishable by the Uniform Code of Military Justice that is broader than the criminal offense of rape.

As a result of the *2012 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members* (DMDC 2013b) results, in conjunction with high-profile cases in the media at the time, a great deal of attention was placed on sexual assault in the military. In the months that followed, the Department and SAPRO instituted a number of policy changes to address sexual assault within the ranks. The Department was interested in what military members thought of the media attention and if they felt there were positive or negative implications.

### ***Awareness of Rates in the Media***

- Some focus group participants indicated they were not aware of any media or Congressional attention on the DoD USC rates, while others indicated that they were aware of the rates and the media's attention and were also aware of high-profile sexual assault cases in the military.
- Focus group participants indicated the media often overemphasized the problem of sexual assault in the military.

### ***Media Attention Resulted in Both Positive and Negative Changes in the Military***

- Some focus group participants indicated the media's attention resulted in positive changes. Some of these positive changes include increased general awareness of the seriousness of the issue, leadership visibly addressing the issue, and an increased level of comfort in coming forward to report sexual assault experiences.
- Some focus group participants indicated the media's attention resulted in negative changes. Some of these negative changes include negative interactions between members, overtraining resulting in desensitization, a decrease in the level of interest to join the military (whether real or perceived), and a negative perception of the military by outsiders.

### ***Changes in the Way DoD and/or the Services/Guard Handle Sexual Assault***

- Focus group participants indicated there has been a positive shift in DoD's handling of sexual assault and harassment.

### ***Additional Recommendations for Preventing Sexual Assault***

- Some focus group participants provided diverse recommendations for preventing sexual assault including more stringent screening criteria for joining the military, increased publication of incidents and consequences, and consistent punishments across paygrades.

## **Reporting**

The Department offers military survivors two types of reporting options: restricted and unrestricted. Understanding the impact of sexual assault on readiness and the benefit of

resources/counseling, the Department offers restricted reporting options in order to allow a survivor the ability to remain anonymous and gain access to resources without initiating an investigation.

### ***Awareness of Reporting Options***

- Focus group participants indicated they were familiar with restricted and unrestricted reporting options.
- Focus group participants indicated they might be more likely to make a *restricted* report because of privacy concerns and because survivors can still receive medical/mental health care.
- Some focus group participants indicated that survivors might choose to make an *unrestricted* report because they believe that their report would be handled appropriately, and the perpetrator would be held appropriately accountable.
- Focus group participants indicated, often regardless of the type of report made, that if a sexual assault were to occur on their installation/base, other members would know about it and assurances of confidentiality might be breached.

***Reasons for Increased Reporting of Sexual Assault:*** For the 2014 FGSAPR, the Department was interested in what members felt might have contributed to the recent increase of about 50% in official reports of sexual assaults (e.g., unrestricted and restricted) as seen in 2013.<sup>5</sup>

- Focus group participants indicated that increased awareness within DoD might have led to more sexual assaults being officially reported.
- Focus group participants indicated that increased *media* attention on sexual assault in the military might have also led to an increase in official reports of sexual assault.
- Focus group participants indicated that training about reporting options and sexual assault prevention and response resources might have led to an increase in official reports of sexual assault.

***Retaliation:*** The Department prohibits retaliation of any kind as a result of making a report of sexual assault and is interested in understanding more about the types of retaliation survivors perceive and whether leadership takes this issue seriously.

- Professional Retaliation:
  - Focus group participants indicated that survivors who make an unrestricted report might experience professional retaliation including lower performance evaluations.
  - Focus group participants indicated that issues related to professional retaliation are currently being addressed by policy.

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<sup>5</sup> In 2013, there was about a 50% increase (from 3,374 to 5,061) in official reporting from 2012 (Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, 2013.)

- Social Retaliation:
  - Focus group participants indicated that sexual assault survivors who make a report might experience negative reactions from their peers including gossiping about them, judging them, and being ostracized.
- Social Media and Retaliation:
  - Some focus group participants believed that members might use social media to retaliate against sexual assault survivors.

### ***Changes in Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Policy***

The Department recognizes the legal process following a sexual assault report can be difficult for survivors to navigate and has implemented policies and support in recent years to assist survivors through it. The Department is interested in members' awareness of these policies/support and whether participants believe these policies/support were useful resources for survivors and useful tools for commanders.

***Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel (SVC/VLC):*** In 2011, the Services/Guard were directed to provide legal advocates for survivors of sexual assault. These individuals, SVC/VLC, act as legal counsel for the survivor, provide advocacy and support, and act as the intermediary between prosecutors and survivors.

- Many focus group participants had not heard of SVC/VLC, while a few had.
- Focus group participants indicated SVC/VLC would be a helpful resource for sexual assault survivors.

***Expedited Transfer:*** In 2012, the Department enacted the capability of "expedited transfers" for survivors. After a survivor makes an unrestricted report, they can request a transfer to another base/installation or another duty assignment on the same base/installation. The request for an expedited transfer can be made for a variety of reasons (e.g., concerns of retaliation), and the survivor is to have a decision on that request within 72 hours of making their report. Commanders are now also authorized to transfer the accused perpetrator in certain circumstances.

- Some focus group participants indicated hearing about this option through training/briefings; other participants were unaware of this policy.
- Focus group participants indicated both positive outcomes (e.g., fresh starts) and negative outcomes (e.g., moving families, no real option for a clean slate in the military) of expedited transfers.
- Focus group participants indicated transferring the accused perpetrator was a useful tool for commanders to have.
- Some focus group participants indicated concern about transferring the accused perpetrator including concerns about transfer before guilt is established and the perception of transferring a problem from one command to another.

***Review of Cases by a Senior Officer (Paygrade O6 or Higher):*** The Department mandated a new policy in which unrestricted reports of sexual assault will be reviewed by a senior officer (an O6 or higher) who has special court-martial convening authority. This change is to ensure that more experienced commanders objectively assess these cases.

- Some focus group participants indicated that review by an O6 was an objective review; others expressed concern that objectivity might not occur if the investigation remains in the chain of command of the individuals involved.
- Focus group participants indicated that senior officers might not have the qualifications or expertise/to review a case.

***Awareness and Use of Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)/Unit Victims' Advocate/Victims' Advocate (UVA/VA):*** In 2005, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) were created as a part of a cadre of trained first responders (other responders included chaplains, lawyers, and law enforcement).

- Focus group participants indicated they knew about, or knew how to contact, their SARC or UVA/VA.
- Most focus group participants indicated they would go to their SARC or UVA/VA for help and trusted they would handle a report properly.

### ***Command Climate/Culture***

Another area of investigation in the 2014 FGSAPR centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their active engagement in preventing sexual assault/sexual harassment and creating a climate of dignity and respect. Questions were also asked about members' use of social media.

### ***Perception of Unit and Senior Leadership's View on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault***

- Focus group participants indicated their unit and senior leadership encourage an environment of dignity and respect; they inform their personnel that sexual assault and sexual harassment are not tolerated.
- Some focus group participants indicated their unit leaders lead by example or say something when witnessing inappropriate behavior; other participants indicated that it would depend on the unit leader.
- Focus group participants indicated they thought their senior leadership would protect a victim's privacy, ensure their safety, and treat them with dignity.

### ***Relationships Among Sexist Behavior, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Assault***

- Focus group participants indicated there might be a relationship between unwanted gender-related behaviors and sexual assault. Specifically, someone who commits a sexual assault might initiate this with prior unwanted gender-related behaviors.

### ***Crude Language as a Part of Military Culture***

- Some focus group participants indicated that crude language is a part of military culture, but it is typically not focused at a specific person and can often be redirected.
- Some focus group participants indicated that crude language is a part of general American culture, apart from the military.

### ***Improving Military Culture***

- Focus group participants indicated they see improvements in the military environment where there is more dignity and respect among members.

### ***How Culture Change Starts***

- Focus group participants indicated there needs to be an investment at all paygrade levels within the military to create culture change with regard to sexual assault.

### ***Use of Social Media***

- Some focus group participants indicated that members do not use social media because they want to protect their privacy, the media sites are policed by leadership, and they do not have time to use them.
- Some focus group participants (in specific Services) indicated social media is a problem.

## ***Training***

Training on sexual assault prevention and response was also a topic of interest for the Department. Military members receive a variety of training on these topics, often many times throughout the year. This section provides information on when trainees received their first training on topics related to sexual assault, how often members receive training, and the types of training they receive. Members also offered recommendations for future training.

### ***Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Training (Trainees Only)***

- Focus group trainees indicated they first received SAPR training in boot camp, basic training/recruit training.
- Focus group trainees indicated they typically receive repetitive training.
- Focus group trainees described the various training received on topics related to sexual assault as mainly PowerPoint presentations with some discussions.

### ***Most Effective Training***

- Focus group participants indicated the most effective SAPR trainings were typically from guest speakers, small group discussions/interactions, videos, and skits.

### ***Whether Members Learned New Information in SAPR Training***

- Many focus group participants indicated they had not learned anything new this year through training.
- Participants indicated they would like to learn more about updates on SAPR policies and other topics of interest (e.g., spousal rape).

### ***Perceptions of Whether Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Trainings Are “Just Another Requirement”***

- Focus group participants indicated they received too much training on topics related to sexual assault and that members may get desensitized unless there is variety.

### ***Recommendations for Future SAPR Training***

- Focus group participants indicated it would be beneficial to hear from sexual assault survivors, legal professionals, and/or perpetrators convicted of sexual assault.

## ***Bystander Intervention***

Some unwanted gender-related behaviors occur in environments where people have an opportunity to step in to prevent a potential sexual assault. Bystander intervention is a training tool used by the Department to raise awareness among members that they should step in if they see a situation that could potentially lead to a sexual assault. The Department is interested in understanding what members might do to address inappropriate behaviors witnessed in the workplace or in social situations. Members were also asked to indicate at what point, if any, they would step in and address the issue if they witnessed inappropriate behaviors (e.g., sexual harassment or sexist comments).

### ***Intervening in a Social Situation***

- Many focus group participants indicated that they would step in to prevent potential sexual assaults in a social situation (e.g., a bar) if they saw a “red flag;” others indicated that stepping in would depend on the person and the situation.
- Focus group participants indicated members are willing to step in regardless of how they are perceived.

### ***Intervening in a Professional Situation***

- Many focus group participants indicated they would also step in if they witnessed inappropriate workplace behaviors.

## ***Summary***

The goal of the focus groups was to gather additional details on sexual assault prevention and response, thereby providing insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the current SAPR program. Results in this report address views on the perceptions of unwanted sexual contact in

the military, reporting of sexual assault, changes in SAPR policies, command climate/culture, training, and bystander intervention. Based on information obtained through the focus groups, some opportunities might exist for the Department to continue addressing issues related to professional and social retaliation for survivors who report their sexual assault, publicizing all new SAPR resources that are available to survivors (e.g., Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel, expedited transfer), emphasizing continued culture change particularly within peer-to-peer interactions, and diversifying SAPR training.

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# 2014 DOD FOCUS GROUP REPORT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

## Introduction

Section 577 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 required the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive policy for the Department of Defense on the assessment of DoD's response to sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces. The subsequent policy established the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) and provided the Secretary of Defense a recurring assessment of the services and resources provided to military members who have reported sexual assault to DoD authorities.

One means for evaluating the effectiveness of these programs and for assessing the gender relations environment in the military involves quantifiable feedback from members through a representative survey (DMDC, 2013b). Another source of information involves qualitative feedback from military members through focus groups with a moderator who is trained to facilitate discussion on these topics. This report presents findings from the *2014 Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (2014 FGSAPR)* study. This introductory chapter provides background on why this study was conducted, a description of the focus group methodology, analysis methods and limitations, and a brief overview of subsequent chapters.

The *2014 FGSAPR* was generated in response to guidance from the Secretary of Defense Directive (Secretary of Defense, 2014). The Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)<sup>6</sup> within the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC; DMDC-RSSC) was tasked with this effort. For over 25 years, RSSC has been DoD's lead organization for conducting impartial and unbiased scientific survey and focus group research on a number of topics of interest to the Department. The goal of the focus group effort was to engage in structured, small group discussions with military members across DoD on issues related to sexual assault. These discussions were designed to better understand how recent changes in sexual assault policies and programs have impacted military members and their workplace environment, as well as address the military's climate of sexual assault response and prevention. Results of this report will be shared with the Services, the Secretary of Defense, Congress, and the White House. Participants in the study were asked not to discuss any personal experiences of sexual assault, but rather share their insights and perspectives on these issues as they relate to their Service. This is the only formal qualitative assessment in 2014 on these topics across DoD active duty and National Guard members.

### ***Focus Group Methodology***

DMDC-RSSC follows standard, scientific methods that are widely used in the survey industry for data collections across a variety of domains. DMDC-RSSC focus group methodology employs these standards for qualitative research to collect subjective information from participants on a limited number of topics. The methodology for the *2014 FGSAPR* was

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<sup>6</sup> Prior to 2014, RSSC was called Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program (HRSAP). In 2014, DMDC reorganized and renamed the RSSC to better encapsulate the scope of research conducted by this group.

consistent across locations. Although the results cannot be generalized to the full military population, they provide insights into issues and ideas for further consideration.

### **Selection of Participants**

Participation in the 2014 FGSAPR was voluntary. Participants were selected at random at each installation, within clusters defined by gender and paygrade, and offered the opportunity to participate. The rosters were then returned to each respective installation, and it was the responsibility of each installation to use their randomized list to identify the first 15 Service or National Guard members who were available (e.g., did not have a prior commitment, medical appointment, or scheduled leave during the scheduled focus group) to attend the focus group appropriate for their gender and paygrade group. Additional Service members were selected from the randomized lists as necessary to achieve ten to twelve committed members. In some cases, Service members who agreed to participate did not show up at their scheduled session. For that reason, session sizes varied. For mixed-gender focus groups at operational installations, similar procedures were used, but the rosters were not separated by gender. Hence, men and women were selected in the order they appeared on the randomized combined list for each operational installation.

Number of Participants By Service <sup>7</sup>	
Army	97
Navy	157
Marine Corps	126
Air Force	144
National Guard	123
Total	647

Randomly selected members received notification of their initial selection for the focus groups from their installation lead. The notification informed them that they had been selected to participate in a DoD-directed focus group addressing issues of sexual assault as part of the effort to understand issues and provide constructive feedback to senior DoD leadership. The notification made it clear that the study was a non-attributable, voluntary data collection where they would be asked to share their perspectives on questions related to sexual assault, with a focus on conduct, training, and policies. The members were told that the sessions would not ask questions about personal experiences of sexual assault. Overall, there were 57 focus groups conducted with 647 participants.

### **Development of Questions**

To begin the collaborative effort of developing focus group questions, DMDC-RSSC analysts drafted potential questions by reviewing comments and findings from the 2012 *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (2012 WGRA)* and 2012 *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Reserve Component Members (2012 WGRR)*. Specifically, analysts looked for follow-up topics which might clarify or expand upon findings from the surveys. A list of preliminary questions was generated and provided to DoD SAPRO. A revised set of questions incorporating comments from SAPRO was compiled and then

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<sup>7</sup> An equal number of members were invited to participate at all locations; however, because of the voluntary nature of focus group participation, some members who initially committed to participate chose not to attend.

submitted to each of the Services/National Guard and the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for comments. Based on feedback from SAPRO, the Services/National Guard, and OGC, six topic areas with detailed, investigative questions were presented to focus group participants. The focus group protocols and handouts are included in the Appendices. The six topic areas addressed were:

1. Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact—Discussion of the incidence rates for men and women from the 2012 WGRA and 2012 WGRR surveys, awareness of media attention on sexual assault in the military, whether the media attention has resulted in positive or negative changes in the military, how issues of sexual assault have been handled over time, and recommendations for preventing sexual assault in the military.
2. Reporting—Understanding the two reporting options for reporting sexual assault, potential reasons for the increase in actual reports made to SAPRO, types and impact of perceived or real, if any, professional and social retaliation on reporting sexual assault, and the use of social media for social retaliation.
3. Changes in SAPR Policy—Awareness of specialized attorney positions (Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel and Special Victim Prosecutors), expedited transfers, review of unrestricted reports by a senior officer, and awareness and use of SARC/Victims' Advocate.
4. Command Climate/Culture—What unit and senior leadership say to their members about sexual harassment and sexual assault, perceived relationship between unwanted gender-related behaviors (sexist behaviors and sexual harassment) and sexual assault, use of crude language, awareness of DoD's emphasis in improving culture, perceptions of how culture change starts, and the use of social media.
5. Training—Discussion of training received, examples of most effective training, whether members learned anything about sexual assault in training this past year that they did not know before, perceptions of sexual assault and sexual harassment training as just another training requirement, and recommendations for future SAPR trainings.
6. Bystander Intervention—Whether members would intervene in a *social* situation when they saw potential “red flags” leading to a potential sexual assault, and whether members would intervene in a *workplace* situation when they witnessed inappropriate workplace behaviors.

### ***Conducting the Focus Groups***

The focus groups were designed to obtain responses from active duty and National Guard members in various paygrades at training installations (i.e., advanced technical training schools) and operational installations. Focus groups were conducted between 21 July and 8 August 2014 for the following groups at the specified locations:

<b>Operational Installations</b>	
<b>Locations:</b>	<b>Sessions:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army: Fort Riley (KS)</li> <li>• Navy: Norfolk Naval Base (VA)</li> <li>• Marine Corps: Camp Lejeune (NC)</li> <li>• Air Force: Joint Base Lewis-McChord (WA)</li> <li>• Guard: Army – Camp Shelby (MS); Air Force – Allen C. Thompson Field ANG Base, Jackson (MS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Junior Enlisted (E3–E4<sup>8</sup>): Two sessions (1 male, 1 female)</li> <li>• Mid Enlisted (E5–E6): Two sessions (1 male, 1 female)</li> <li>• Senior Enlisted (E7–E9): One session (mixed gender)</li> <li>• Junior Officer (O2–O3): Two sessions (1 male, 1 female)</li> </ul>
<b>Training Installations</b>	
<b>Locations:</b>	<b>Sessions:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army: Fort Gordon (GA)</li> <li>• Navy: Naval Air Station Pensacola (FL)</li> <li>• Marine Corps: Camp Johnson (NC)</li> <li>• Air Force: Sheppard AFB (TX)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainees (E1–E2<sup>9</sup>): Four sessions (2 male, 2 female)</li> </ul>

Each focus group session was scheduled for 90 minutes. All focus group sessions were governed by a number of ground rules, most notably that they were non-attribution, voluntary sessions. DMDC-RSSC provided a facilitator, assistant facilitator, and professional court reporter. Installation staff members, such as SARCs or Victims’ Advocates, were excluded from the room, although they were available if a participant became disturbed during a session or wanted to follow up on a matter after the session. Service headquarters representatives attended some focus groups as observers; however, no uniformed representative attended sessions in order to minimize the risk of making participants uncomfortable and potentially biasing their responses. In addition, all observers signed confidentiality agreements which included nondisclosure of group feedback. The court reporter took verbatim transcription, which was provided to DMDC-RSSC to review, and redacted any information that could reveal a respondent’s identity. Audio and video recordings were not conducted, and there were no individually identifiable records. No link between an individual respondent and their responses was possible. Only selected comments that have had identifiers removed have been included in the final report to illustrate findings.

DMDC-RSSC moderated focus groups with trained focus group facilitators leading single- or dual-moderated sessions. Facilitators followed a structured, approved script to ensure consistency of questions across Services and the Guard, topics were covered in an adequate amount of time, and conversations were appropriately contained. A female facilitator led the all-

<sup>8</sup> Paygrade designations represent enlisted (E) and officers (O) in paygrades that range E1-E9 for enlisted members and O1-O10 for officers.

<sup>9</sup> While trainees are predominantly E1-E2, some trainees are E3-E4s and were eligible to participate.

female focus groups. DMDC-RSSC also provided a female court reporter who used a stenographic machine to transcribe all comments from participants and the facilitator(s). As noted, no audio or video recording was made of any focus group session to assure participants' anonymity.

Participants were encouraged to provide information generally but not to specify personal experiences, names, or other identifying details. They were also advised not to share information discussed within the focus groups after the session concluded.

### ***Analysis Methodology and Limitations***

Data from the focus groups were analyzed qualitatively for major themes and ideas conveyed across the sessions. Themes are only presented if there was support across all the Services and National Guard. The order of presentation does not imply that any one theme is more important than any other. For each theme, supporting comments from the focus group participants are included. The supporting comments do not include every comment made on a particular theme; rather, they illustrate the theme in the words of the participants. No attempt was made to quantify the number of comments made on a specific theme. While this approach does not provide quantitative, scientific estimates, the *2014 FGSAPR* serves as a post-survey data collection effort that compliments the *Workplace and Gender Relations Surveys (WGRs)*. The *WGRs* are conducted by DMDC-RSSC for DoD and provide scientifically constructed estimates of gender-related experiences and opinions (DMDC, 2013b).

The results in this study are based on qualitative analysis—findings cannot be generalized to all military members. Findings should be viewed as illustrations of situations and themes for consideration by DoD officials as they review their programs. Findings may also be viewed as a general perspective on participants' views of sexual harassment and sexual assault at their base/installation, but they do not portray a statistical report on incidence rates or quantitative evaluation of response and prevention programs.

### ***Categorization of Topics***

Focus group analysts reviewed transcripts to identify major themes. DMDC-RSSC analyzed over 60 hours of transcripts from 57 focus groups.<sup>10</sup> All comments were grouped into themes during initial review. Although findings tended to cluster around the main questions asked in the sessions, categorization based on the questions was not a set requirement. Analysts were sensitive to themes that emerged from the discussions as a whole. Analysts used a combination of topical coding and repeated reviews to gather specific comments that supported the emerging themes. Where participants differed in their opinions on a topic, both perspectives are presented in separate findings. Analysts used an iterative review process to extract and classify comments that included multiple reviewers who verified that themes were supported by comments. Where applicable, text boxes in chapters include DoD SAPRO's "Lines of Effort (LOEs)" which were established to guide and focus strategic planning efforts (DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Strategic Plan, 2013). The LOEs include Prevention, Investigation, Accountability, Advocacy/Victim Assistance, and Assessment. The focus group

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<sup>10</sup> Each focus group was approximately 90 minutes in length including introductory, privacy, and informed consent information. This introductory text was not transcribed.

project, as a whole, is part of the Assessment LOE as it provides a measure of the SAPR program progress.

### ***Organization of Findings***

Findings are presented in separate chapters for the six major topic areas and a summary chapter. Within chapters, the major themes are presented with specific findings and supporting comments from the participants. Each comment identifies the gender and paygrade of the military member. Caution must be exercised in reviewing these findings and comments should not be viewed as representative of all participants.

## Chapter 1: Perceptions of Unwanted Sexual Contact

The 2014 FGSAPR devoted time to topics designed to gather members' perceptions on unwanted sexual contact (USC) and their recommendations for reducing the prevalence of USC. USC includes a number of unwanted sexual behaviors ranging from unwanted sexual touching to completed sex. The term "unwanted sexual contact" is used because it captures a range of unwanted sexual behaviors that are punishable by the Uniform Code of Military Justice that is broader than the criminal offense of rape.

The discussions began by sharing with the participants the USC rates from the 2012 WGR<sup>11</sup> surveys and asking whether members had seen those results. The USC rate for active duty was 6.1% for women and 1.2% for men; for Reserve/National Guard, it was 2.8% for women and 0.5% for men (DMDC, 2013b; DMDC, 2013c). Members were asked to discuss the rates, as well as provide insight into trends across years. Additional questions were posed about their awareness of the attention paid to these rates in the media and from Congress, as well as whether the attention has resulted in any positive or negative changes in the military. Members were also asked to discuss their perception of how sexual assault issues have been handled over time and to provide recommendations for other changes that could help prevent sexual assault in the military.

### ***Familiarity With USC Incidence Rates from the 2012 WGR***

- **Focus group participants did not recall hearing about the specific results of the 2012 WGR.**
  - “We've never been given numbers.” (E1-E4 Male)
  - “Not these specific numbers.” (O2-O3 Female)
  - “I haven't seen these before.” (E5-E6 Male)
- **Some focus group participants heard about the sexual assault rates in their training and briefings.**
  - “I think they [the numbers] were brought up in a brief we had a couple months ago.” (O2-O3 Male)
  - “Yes, at training they talked about the percentages.” (E1-E4 Male)
- **Overall, focus group participants had differing views of the 2012 WGR USC rates. Some indicated the specified rates seemed lower than expected because some survivors do not want to report that they experienced a sexual assault.**

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<sup>11</sup> Members were presented with results from the 2012 WGR surveys, which included trend information from the 2006, 2010, and 2012 WGR surveys of active duty members and trend information from the 2008 and 2012 surveys for National Guard members.

- *“I think it's probably lower than the amount that actually happens. They don't come forward because they're too afraid or embarrassed, so that number is probably a lot higher.”* (E1-E4 Male)
- *“I think it seems pretty low actually.”* (E3-E4 Female)
- **Some indicated the specified rates seemed lower than expected because the emphasis placed on sexual assault prevention and response (i.e., in training) made it seem worse than WGR rates.**
  - *“It seems low, because in our briefings with the SARC, they put it to us in a way where it's like an epidemic...but these numbers compared to how they put it in the briefings seem low in comparison.”* (E3-E4 Male)
  - *“With how much they go over UVA/VA and sexual assault I'm surprised that they [the rates] are as low as they are.”* (E1-E4 Female)
- **Some members indicated the specified rates seemed higher than expected because members were unaware of any incidents occurring.**
  - *“Surprisingly high. I only say this because we always have sexual assault classes, whether it's train the trainer, NCOs, officers. I know in our command we're taking it seriously.”* (E5-E6 Female)
  - *“I'd say that's kind of high.”* (O2-O3 Male )
- **Focus group participants indicated their leadership discusses the seriousness of the issue.**
  - *“Yeah. [Leadership discusses the] importance of the issue, but not the specifics.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“[Leadership] always put it out they will not tolerate it and they'll go through all the means to punish the ones who do it.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)

### **Awareness of Rates in the Media**

As a result of the 2012 WGR survey results, in conjunction with high-profile cases in the media at the time, a great deal of attention was placed on sexual assault in the military. In the months that followed, the Department and SAPRO instituted a number of policy changes to address sexual assault within the ranks. The Department was interested in what military members thought of the media attention and if they felt there were positive or negative implications.

- **Some focus group participants indicated they were not aware of any media or Congressional attention on the DoD USC rates, while others indicated that they were aware of the media's attention and were also aware of high-profile sexual assault cases in the military.**

- *“I didn't hear anything in the news, I just hear our Generals push out to us at meetings.”* (E3-E4 Female)
- *“I was aware that Congress, certain senators had taken action but I didn't know it stemmed from this survey.”* (O2-O3 Female)
- *“I think it really started with the Invisible War, the documentary that came out. And from the time that was released, the Generals were called on the carpet to respond to the allegations, I think that was really the tipping point when SAPR training just lit up.”* (O2-O3 Female)
- *“Usually, what I hear about [in the press] is a commanding officer being inappropriate with their members. The smaller junior enlisted usually is not covered or in the press.”* (E3-E4 Male)
- **Focus group participants indicated the media overemphasized the problem of sexual assault in the military.**
  - *“It makes it seem more rampant when it's covered in the news. I've never witnessed anything like that happening, but the way the news reports, it's just like a common day thing and it just hasn't been like that in my experience.”* (E3-E4 Male)
  - *“I think the press is going to sensationalize just about anything to get viewership if it's TV or readership if it's newspaper... So, with that being said, it's still unacceptable but, they want viewers, they want to sell papers...”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *“I think the military gets more flak from it and it looks bad when some of our senior leadership [is] getting in trouble for inappropriate sexual relationships. So everybody is ‘oh, well if the leadership is doing it, then what else is going on?’”* (O2-O3 Female)

### **Media Attention Resulted in Changes in the Military, Positive or Negative**

- **Some focus group participants indicated the media’s attention resulted in positive changes. Some of these positive changes include increased general awareness of the seriousness of the issue, leadership visibly addressing the issue, and comfort in coming forward to report sexual assault experiences.**
  - *“I think it would be positive. There might actually be units that might not be doing as much as they could to prevent it... even if the media is making it bigger than it actually is, it actually makes it more aware to some units and some leadership and then [they] actually [start] taking [it] a little bit more serious when they see those big numbers.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“I think that with the media's attention it definitely lit a fire under leadership's tails to get something started.”* (E3-E4 Female)

- *“It's really helped the guys because guys have too much pride to tell [someone that] something happened to them, like if they got raped by another guy. It's probably made them feel like it's okay to say that that happened to them and that it's not their fault.”* (E1-E4 Female)
- **Some focus group participants indicated the media’s attention resulted in negative changes. Some of these negative changes include negative interactions between members, overtraining resulting in desensitization, potential decrease in the level of interest to join the military (whether real or perceived), and a negative perception of the military by outsiders.**
  - *“People are a little more careful about things they say to certain people, how to interact with certain people. Things you would definitely say if you're home or even speaking with a civilian, it's more scrutinized when you're talking to another Service member because of this. So definitely people pretty much walk on thin ice even when you talk to a person.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“It's probably the reason we get so much training on it. We had a SAPR meeting last week and we talked about the fact that we have so much training on this that sometimes it feels like you get desensitized to the issue.”* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *“Keeps people from joining. They hear about it and don't want to join.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“Negatively because of the fact that’s the way the rest of the world sees us now...”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“That's the main reason why my parents didn't want me [to join]—if you go in there you're going to get raped.”* (E1-E4 Female)

### **Changes in the Way DoD and/or the Services/Guard Handle Sexual Assault**

- **Focus group participants indicated there has been a positive shift in DoD’s handling of sexual assault and harassment.**
  - *“Across the board, we get inspections, EO [Equal Opportunity] officers who’ve been put into place that help us understand SARC training, where, in the past, that didn't happen.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *“Our last leader said, ‘anything like this happens, it’s going up to the General/Admiral level and it's going to be a court martial situation.’ I see all over the media, they're afraid things are just getting swept under the rug in-house with commanding officers. But that's kind of the policy now is it goes up, it's going to be above him so he doesn't make that decision.”* (E5-E6 Male)

### ***Additional Recommendations for Preventing Sexual Assault***

- **Some focus group participants provided diverse recommendations for preventing sexual assault.**
  - *“I think they should screen people more. This sounds ridiculous, but it's really easy to get into the military.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“I would say publicize the consequences more. You can do it without names.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“Treat all ranks equally. If an E5 or an E9 does it, he needs to be treated like any E1, not moved to a different leadership position—if an E4 blew it, they'd be out of the Service thirty days later.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“I would say continue the training.”* (E1-E4 Male)



## Chapter 2: Reporting

The Department offers military survivors two types of reporting options: restricted and unrestricted. Restricted reporting allows survivors to access medical care, mental health care, and advocacy services without initiating a criminal investigation or notification of command. An unrestricted report allows survivors to access the same care as those who file a restricted report, but the report is also referred for investigation to a Military Criminal Investigative Office (MCIO) and command is notified of the incident. Survivors may initially make a restricted report, but may later convert this report to an unrestricted report in order to initiate an investigation. Conversely, once a respondent makes an unrestricted report, he/she cannot convert this to a restricted report. Understanding the impact of sexual assault on readiness and the benefit of resources/counseling, the Department offers restricted reporting options in order to allow a survivor the ability to remain anonymous while still initiating a report and gaining access to resources. This chapter investigates members' awareness of the two reporting options, reasons why the number of official sexual assaults reported to DoD has increased, and the potential impact of both professional retaliation (i.e., performance evaluations or chance for promotion would suffer) and social retaliation (i.e., negative treatment by peers), and the use of social media on retaliation.

### LINE OF EFFORT (LOE)

- ◆ This chapter addresses DoD SAPRO's LOE, "Advocacy/Victim Assistance," which includes providing sexual assault survivors with support, response, and reporting options. One of the goals is to instill confidence and to inspire survivors to report.

### ***Awareness of Reporting Options***

- **Focus group participants indicated they were familiar with restricted and unrestricted reporting options.**
  - “*Chorus of ‘Yeses.’*” (E1-E4 Males)
  - “*Yes.*” (E3-E4 Females)
- **Focus group participants indicated they would be more likely to make a *restricted report* because of privacy concerns and because survivors can still receive medical/mental health care.**
  - “*It's a private issue and I can keep it here, I don't have to worry about it.*” (E1-E4 Male)
  - “*It takes a lot of strength to survive sexual assault, but it takes a whole different level of strength to prosecute your abuser... Because then you also open yourself up to investigations and public knowledge of what happened to you.*” (E1-E4 Female)
  - “*It still gives you the same medical care and counseling. Taking care of yourself first would be the priority.*” (O2-O3 Female)

- **Some focus group participants indicated that survivors might choose to make an *unrestricted report* because they believe that their report would be handled appropriately and the perpetrator would be held accountable.**
  - *“I think especially with all the awareness, people are more confident that their reports are going to be taken seriously. If you go report something, it's going to be taken seriously and seen through the end and thoroughly investigated.”* (O2-O3 Male)
  - *“They're also being held accountable for what they did. Maybe that can help you feel better... The perpetrator is actually going to go through punishment and will have consequences for what he/she did.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“I think restricted is like putting a lid on it. I think everything should be unrestricted.”* (E5-E6 Male)
- **Focus group participants indicated, often regardless of the type of report made, that if a sexual assault were to occur on their installation/base, other members would know about it.**
  - *“It's no more different than a college campus or a high school. Once you say unrestricted, it might have been behind closed doors, but someone just can't seem to keep their mouth shut...”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“Word is going to get around and people are going to say what they want. Because an incident can happen where somebody is sexually assaulted, that's going to be on everybody's mouth for maybe a few weeks, maybe a month or two. Like I said, it's just like high school. You just got to wait for the storm to freakin' pass.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“I just think it's unprofessional how if you tell one of your superiors or you ask to get help, all of a sudden all of your seniors know about your problems... I feel like that would be embarrassing because a lot of times when you get sexually assaulted you feel shameful and it's like all of a sudden everybody knows and everybody is trying to talk to you about it, when that's not what you wanted.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“Everyone knows when you call SAPR. Everyone finds out. How, I don't know, but everyone finds out.”* (E1-E4 Female)

### ***Reasons for Increased Reporting of Sexual Assault***

The Department recognizes that more sexual assaults happen than are reported. In 2013, the Department saw about a 50% increase (from 3,374 to 5,061) in official reports (unrestricted and restricted) from 2012 (Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, 2013). The Department was therefore interested in what members felt may have contributed to this increase.

- **Focus group participants indicated that increased awareness within DoD might have led to more sexual assaults being officially reported.**
  - *“I think the more everyone talks about it the easier it is for people to get help.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“It could be that people are realizing that this is wrong and if this happens they could feel safe enough to report it.”* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *“It's not some hush-hush topic anymore and I believe that a lot of the commanders are moving in a positive way with actually protecting the individual instead of making them feel as if they're like a troublemaker or they put unnecessary action or unnecessary paperwork or attention towards the unit.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  
- **Focus group participants indicated that increased *media* attention on sexual assault in the military might have also led to an increase in official reports of sexual assault.**
  - *“It would be like a snowball effect, increased media putting pressure on our chain of command to fix things which is the reason we're getting two briefs a year, which is kind of making people [report].”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“I think the victimology mentality a lot of times provides people with a sense of guilt for what's happened to them and I think this high news coverage makes them realize that it's not their fault and they weren't the only ones to have done it and gives them more a sense of entitlement to corrective action in that regard.”* (E3-E4 Male)
  - *“Well, if it's the public side getting out there more, somebody could be watching, say ‘hey, that happened to me’ and may get the courage up to come forward.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *“Well, it's just an expression of you're not alone. Because I know that part of the issue with sexual assault is that victims feel isolated. And the more attention it gets in the media, the less likely they are to feel as though they are the first person that this has ever happened to.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  
- **Focus group participants indicated that training about reporting options and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response resources might have led to an increase in official reports of sexual assault.**
  - *“I think during sexual assault prevention briefings, we're teaching others to not judge people if something did happen to them. We're making sure that people start reporting, that they're more open about it, and that people around them, like their peers, can get them help if they need it and get them to the right person to report if they want to.”* (E1-E4 Male)

- *“Education on their options as well as unit responsibility for making sure that those people get the proper treatment or actions happen. So there's a better network to support those people.”* (E3-E4 Female)
- *“Probably more understanding on reporting procedures [as a result of training].”* (E5-E6 Female)
- *“And what services are available to them, like chaplain, medical, SAPR representatives.”* (E1-E4 Male)

### **Professional Retaliation**

The number of official reports received in 2013 by the Department represents only about 15% of the reports that could have been made based on the survey results from the 2012 WGRA. According to this survey, some members who experienced unwanted sexual behaviors might not have reported it officially to the Department because they feared some sort of professional retaliation from their chain of command (for example, their performance evaluations or chance for promotion would suffer; DMDC, 2013b). The Department prohibits this type of retaliation (punishable under section 892 of Title 10, United States Code) and intends to explore in more depth the types of retaliation survivors may experience, if any, and how leadership may address this issue.

- **Focus group participants indicated that survivors who make an unrestricted report might experience professional retaliation.**
  - *“If [the perpetrators] are in charge of you or if they have any say in what goes into your proficiency and conduct marks, that could go down.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“It's not just what they can do to your career but it's also... when I leave the new command could call this command and it spreads. Then when I got to the next unit, the stories just continue.”* (E5-E6 Female)
  - *“Alienate them, trying to force them out possibly, transferring them... to a different command structure where they're not going to be able to gain rank as quick.”* (E5-E6 Male)
- **Focus group participants indicated that issues related to professional retaliation are currently being addressed by policy.**
  - *“So I think there are steps to handle that that are already in place, because it's not something that anybody would tolerate because it's a definite violation of an article.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *“It's already been addressed under UCMJ. [If the] commander retaliates because of that, then he's facing UCMJ actions against him for that action he pulled.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)

## **Social Retaliation**

- **Focus group participants indicated that sexual assault survivors who make a report might experience negative reactions from their peers.**
  - *“[Y]our peers would judge you by thinking that you're like scandalous or that you brought it onto yourself.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“It would be like the scarlet letter. Nobody's going to want to talk to her or him and [there would be a] breakdown in communication between that person and the rest of the unit.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)

## **Social Media and Retaliation**

- **Some focus group participants believed that members may use social media to retaliate against sexual assault survivors.**
  - *“I feel like it's just another venue to harass or belittle or single out the victim.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“They [are] going to spread rumors just like the real world and Twitter, Facebook, you get something started and it goes all the way across. Those that have Facebook, Twitter, it will work across the whole base in a day, no problem.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)



## Chapter 3: Changes in Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Policy

The Department recognizes the legal process following a sexual assault report can be difficult for survivors to navigate. In 2004, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators were created as a part of a cadre of trained first responders (other responders included chaplains, lawyers, and law enforcement; Under Secretary of Defense, 2004). In 2013, after approving an Air Force pilot program that assigned special counsel to victims who reported a sexual assault, the Secretary of Defense directed the Secretaries of the Military Departments to implement the program in their respective Services. (Secretary of Defense, 2013). Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel (SVC/VLC), act as legal counsel for the survivor, provide advocacy and support, and act as the intermediary between the prosecutors and the survivor. Additionally, in 2011, the Department enacted the capability of "expedited transfers" for survivors (Deputy Secretary of Defense, 2011). After a survivor makes an unrestricted report, he/she can request a transfer to another base/ installation or another duty assignment on the same base/installation. The request for an

expedited transfer can be made for a variety of reasons (e.g., concerns of retaliation), and the survivor is to have a decision on that request within 72 hours of making their report. Commanders are now also authorized to transfer the accused perpetrator instead of the victim to maintain good order and discipline. In 2012, the Department mandated another new policy in which unrestricted reports of sexual assault will be reviewed by a senior officer (an O6 or higher) possessing special court-martial convening authority regarding initial disposition authority. This change is to ensure that more experienced commanders objectively assess these cases. This chapter examines members' awareness of these policies/support and whether they believe these policies/support are useful resources for survivors and useful tools for commanders. Members were also asked whether they knew their Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) or Unit Victims' Advocate/Victims' Advocate (UVA/VA), whether they would talk to them about an incident of sexual assault, and whether they would trust them to handle a report properly.

LINE OF EFFORT (LOE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ This chapter addresses DoD SAPRO's LOE, "Advocacy/Victim Assistance," which includes providing sexual assault survivors with support from the initiation of the report through case disposition. One of the tasks for this LOE is to develop policies to ensure victims are provided appropriate rights, protections, and services.</li><li>◆ This chapter addresses DoD SAPRO's LOE, "Accountability," which includes providing a fair and equitable system of accountability that promotes justice. Some of the tasks for this LOE are to elevate initial disposition authority in certain sexual assault cases to commanders (O-6 or higher) who possess Special Courts Martial Convening Authority and to conduct an assessment of DoD Pilot Program for Special Victims' Counsel.</li></ul>

### ***Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel***

- **Many focus group participants had not heard of the SVC/VLC, while a few had.**
  - *"I didn't know about those."* (E5-E6 Female)
  - *"I thought just JAG."* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *"I've heard it... I don't know too much about it, though."* (E5-E6 Male)

- *“I have... If anything new comes out, we hear about it. We have to do our training. We’ll get a list of things to go through and we have to make sure that we take the class... That’s the only reason I know about it”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
- **Focus group participants indicated SVC/VLC might be a helpful resource for sexual assault survivors.**
  - *“Because they have somebody to talk to and understand and help them through it legally and emotionally. Somebody that’s on their side regardless.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“I think it will help people from feeling lost because there’s someone there that can answer those questions legally. The emotional support is a great thing, but if you decide to prosecute, you’re going to have so many questions, you’re going to have so much there that is unanswered and how stressful that could be. And just to have someone there dedicated to answering those questions, tell you where this could go or could not go is a great resource.”* (E3-E4 Male)
  - *“I think the lawyers, that’s a really good thing to know. If something happens, you’re scared, you don’t know where to go to, you don’t know what to do. And now there’s lawyers to hear what happens to somebody...”* (E1-E4 Female)

### **Expedited Transfer**

- **Some focus group participants indicated hearing about this option through trainings/briefings; other participants were unaware of this policy.**
  - *“In boot camp they gave a brief and told us about it.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“Yes... From all the meetings and briefings and the handout, pamphlets that came out, reading.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *“No.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“I don’t think I’ve heard that.”* (E5-E6 Male)
- **Focus group participants indicated both positive outcomes (e.g., fresh starts) and negative outcomes (e.g., moving families, no real option for clean slate) of expedited transfers.**
  - *“If they feel uncomfortable in the environment they’re in, they can just go somewhere else and start fresh, nobody else knows about it, you can just act like it never happened.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“It gives people tools to deal with the situation. It opens up possibilities to fix problems, which is a step in the right direction.”* (E3-E4 Female)

- *“Especially if you're in a small unit, people are going to find out. At a certain point you really can't stop people from finding out, especially if it's within a command. You're going to get the pity or the distrust.”* (E1-E4 Female)
- *“You have to uproot your entire life in the past year.”* (E1-E4 Male)
- *“[The Service is] too small, there's no such thing as a clean slate.”* (O2-O3 Female)
- *“I think the [Service] is small enough that I think you can follow that individual and they may have something attached to them when they go to their new unit.”* (O2-O3 Male)
- **Focus group participants indicated transferring the accused perpetrator was a useful tool for commanders to have.**
  - *“I like that one better.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“I think the other person should have to be transferred. Why do I have to uproot my entire life because you did something to me? If we could keep the report so my peers, the people with me, didn't know about it and that person had to leave, I feel like that's better than me having to go to another base to, get over it.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“If you're the one that had it happen to you, then the person that did it to you should be the one that has to leave, because you're comfortable where you are, you might have a family where you are. If it's another job, you've got to refamiliarize yourself. I think that other person should be punished, not you.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“Get him out of this environment so the two of you aren't together. That's just common sense.”* (E3-E4 Male)
  - *“The accused person should be the one that should leave because if their accuser is there, then you got a whole ship full of guys that know this dude.”* (E5-E6 Male)
- **Some focus group participants indicated concern about transferring the accused perpetrator (e.g., transfer before guilt is established, perceived as transferring a problem at one command to another).**
  - *“What if it's confirmed that the prosecuted isn't guilty of what he's being charged for?”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“But if the accused leaves, they're going to be somewhere new where people don't know about it, so they could be doing it again.”* (E1-E4 Female)

## **Review of Cases by an O6 or Higher**

- **Some focus group participants indicated that review by an O6 was an objective review; others expressed concern that objectivity might not occur if the investigation remains in the chain of command of the individuals involved.**
  - *“Then you're putting it in the hands of somebody who doesn't really know the [members]... But then again, it could be a positive because it could give a fresh set of eyes on it and [be] unbiased....”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“... it keeps the commanders at some level in control of what's going on.”* (O2-O3 Male)
  - *“Here's I think the inherent problem with this. The higher you climb in altitude, the fewer people there are. And they know one another. They're personally attached. It should be an independent body with completely removed, call it a blue ribbon commission...”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *“I think they should be in a different chain of command so they would not know the people involved, so they can have an unbiased view.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“I also think it should be more than just one person that makes the decision, because what if that person has a biased opinion towards one way or the other?”* (E1-E4 Male)
- **Focus group participants indicated that senior officers might not have the qualifications or expertise/to review.**
  - *“I don't think that it really matters what rank you are. I think that it matters how much you know about the program and how well you can assess the situation.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“... maybe if you had somebody designated to review these cases that was neutral.”* (O2-O3 Female)

## **Awareness and Use of Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)/Unit Victims' Advocate/Unit Victims' Advocate (UVA/VA)**

- **Focus group participants indicated they knew about or knew how to contact their SARC or UVA/VA.**
  - *“We know who our SAPR person is...”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“Yeah. The number's on the posters and the cards.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“It's pretty much all over the place, your UVA contacts.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“No, but if they don't, they've got a pen that has their number.”* (O2-O3 Female)

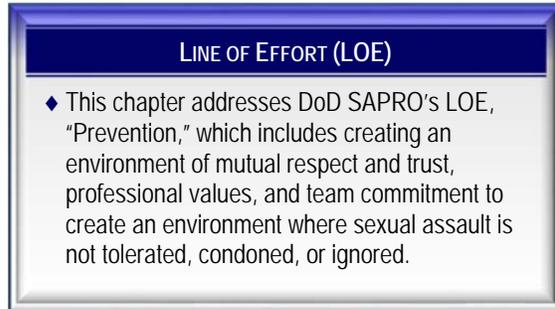
- **Most focus group participants indicated they would go to their SARC or UVA/VA for help and trusted they would handle a report properly.**
  - *“[Their SARC is] Very approachable.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“I think as comfortable as you can be, as I don't think it's a comfortable situation in general.”* (O2-O3 Female)



## Chapter 4: Command Climate/Culture

Another major area for investigation in the 2014 FGSAPR focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to engagement in preventing sexual assault/sexual harassment and creating a climate of dignity and respect. The presumption was that programmatic aspects of sexual assault prevention and response are in place but require continual emphasis. Leadership involvement is necessary at all levels to make programs maximally effective.

Members were asked about what their unit/senior leaders say to them about sexual assault/sexual harassment; whether their unit leaders lead by example; and whether they would trust their senior leaders to protect a victim's privacy, ensure a victim's safety, and treat the victim with dignity and respect. Questions about military culture were included as well, specifically asking whether crude language is used and ways that social media might play a role in perpetuating sexist attitudes. Members were also asked about the Department's push to create an environment of dignity and respect, their perception of how culture change starts, and the use of social media.



### **Perception of Unit and Senior Leadership's View on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault**

- **Focus group participants indicated their unit and senior leadership encourage an environment of dignity and respect, and inform their personnel that sexual assault and sexual harassment are not tolerated.**
  - *"I think along the same lines of a culture of dignity and respect, it kind of encompasses all of that. It's not just sexual assaults or anything, it's just general respect of people."* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *"It's not tolerated. No matter what pay grade you're at, it's not tolerated."* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *"We actually had our leadership read off what everyone in the past month had been sent home for, and that really opens up what you see and what's going on. So it makes it more real."* (E1-E4 Male)
- **Some focus group participants indicated their unit leaders lead by example or say something when witnessing inappropriate behavior; other participants indicated that it would depend on the unit leader.**
  - *"Well, in terms of just the leading by example, when they're speaking to us they're professional -- you don't get a lot of the locker room talk or maybe the things that*

*the good old boys, the things you think about service members saying back in the day, the good old days...” (E1-E4 Male)*

- *“Our E9 doesn't stand for it, but he's very straightforward. Every time I'm around him or talking to him, he's very professional. He's more of an advocate than I think some of our other leadership is. He doesn't stand for it, he [says] ‘don't do that [expletive] because I'll be mad at you and it's not going to be a good day.’” (E3-E4 Female)*
- *“It just depends on the person and how they feel about it. A lot of it has to do with if they're a male or female too.” (E3-E4 Female)*
- *“It depends who we're talking about.” (E1-E4 Female)*
- **Focus group participants indicated they thought their senior leadership would protect a victim's privacy, ensure their safety, and treat them with dignity.**
  - *“I trust mine... it is a personal thing. I trust my chain of command.” (E1-E4 Female)*
  - *“I think they would... keep it private. I think they would keep it professional and keep it quiet.” (O2-O3 Female)*

### ***Relationship Between Sexist Behavior, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Assault***

- **Focus group participants indicated there might be a relationship between unwanted gender-related behaviors and sexual assault. Specifically, someone who commits a sexual assault might initiate this with prior unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
  - *“Yeah. One leads to the other...they're grooming them. They're testing their limits to see how far they can get.” (E1-E4 Female)*
  - *“You probably would harass people if you sexually assaulted them. But not the other way around.” (E1-E4 Male)*
  - *“I believe that a sexist attitude leads to sexual harassment, which leads to sexual assaults. They're all steppingstones. Sexist attitude sets a tone. Sexual harassment allows you to feel out the reaction, and then that leads to sexual assault.” (E1-E4 Male)*
  - *“I think the relationship between two is maybe the idea of gender dominance. If you think your gender is more dominant, you're more likely to dominate the opposite sex...” (E1-E4 Male)*

## **Crude Language as a Part of Military Culture**

- **Some focus group participants indicated that crude language is a part of military culture, but it is typically not focused at a specific person and can often be redirected.**
  - *[Do you agree that crude language is just part of the military culture?] “Yeah.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“I'm not saying that it's okay that we make those jokes or that it's part of our culture at all, but there's a definite line... that if you cross it, you know it's wrong, and the people that you're joking with know it's wrong. And another part of our culture is that we'll call each other out on things in an instant.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“I've seen it before. If somebody feels uncomfortable, 'hey, that kind of bothered me,' and we won't do it again.”* (E1-E4 Male)
- **Some focus group participants indicated that crude language is a part of general American culture, apart from the military.**
  - *“I wouldn't say the military, just culture in general.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“It's a part of human culture at this point.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“I think it's more generational.”* (O2-O3 Female)

## **Improving Military Culture**

- **Focus group participants indicated they see improvements in the military environment where there is more dignity and respect among its members.**
  - *“Some of the guys that I run into, they're old school, they're old dogs, they're not going to change. They will never change. Get them out. They will never change. But as the young crew gets older and more rank, they tend to change a little bit. You have some males that turn around and they will put you underneath their wing, they will talk to you, they will associate with you, they will respect you because they grew up [at] the [same] time you were growing up.”* (E5-E6 Female)
  - *“The big push was more like a year, year and a half ago was when you started seeing things, seeing pictures being taken off the walls and things being thrown away.”* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *“I think the biggest positive impact is that it's made command climate in the command support work the way it's supposed to, it's made it to where females specifically have more opportunity, have more equal opportunity, and they don't feel boxed in as much.”* (E5-E6 Male)

- *“Think of just 20, 30 years ago it was free to call somebody of a different race 'hey, you, something something.' And that's no longer okay. And now we've gotten to the point where we're saying you can't call somebody 'that's homosexual,' you can't call them a 'something something.' So it's just not good to espouse those different things and we're gradually catching up to it, and so as society changes once again the [Service] changes.”* (O2-O3 Male)

### **How Culture Change Starts**

- **Focus group participants indicated all paygrade levels within the military create culture change.**
  - *“I think it does start up top, because in order for it to get pushed to the junior level, it had to come from somewhere else, because most of us didn't come in here with all these new ideas about how we are going to change the United States military.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“Can I say it works both ways? I feel like top down sets direction of a culture, of a desired culture change. If you set a policy and you have people who are enforcing that policy... and it sets an expectation. And then you have people underneath [who] are policing each other to make sure that they respect them.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“It's got to be collaborative. I think the top has got to change their old ways of thinking, and then the new people have to know what is not acceptable and they have to meet in the middle.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“I think it starts at the bottom. What is it, like 80 percent of the military is E1 through E4? It has to start at the bottom. You can have people tell you what to do and tell you how to act all day. But if those 80 percent of junior enlisted members are not doing it, then it's never going to happen.”* (E1-E4 Female)

### **Use of Social Media**

- **Some focus group participants indicated that members do not use social media because they want to protect their privacy, the media sites are policed by leadership, and they do not have time to use them.**
  - *“I think people are protecting their private lives now, especially in the military. I think a lot of service members are aware that their social life doesn't need to be posted online, especially if you wear a uniform.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“The military, at least with social media, they're pretty good about policing it, at least within my unit.”* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *“We don't have time for that.”* (E1-E4 Female)

- **Some focus group participants (in specific Services) indicated social media is a problem.**
  - *“If you were to go onto Facebook and type in [SOCIAL MEDIA SITE] or any of the other thousands of bash pages that are on Facebook, you can scroll through and you can pick out a thousand female Service members. Like ‘oh, look at this slut.’ ‘Get back in the kitchen.’ ‘Go make a sandwich.’ It’s just the most ridiculous things in the world. It’s a bunch of immature people. [SERVICE] is filled with children, immature children that don’t know how to grow up and don’t know how to be mature about any situation at all.” (E5-E6 Female)*
  - *“If you are a male you can put [how] you got promoted to corporal/petty officer/senior airman [on Facebook].... If you are a female just in your dress blues with [your new rank shown]...they’re like ‘oh, blew your way to that [promotion], didn’t you?’” (E1-E4 Female)*
  - *“It’s moved to social media because they know they can’t say it to our face because they’re not on the same level as we are.” (E5-E6 Female)*



## Chapter 5: Training

Training on sexual assault prevention and response was also a topic of interest for the Department. Military members receive a variety of training on these topics, often many times throughout the year. This section provides information on when trainees received their first training on topics related to sexual assault, how often they received training, and the types of training they received. All participants were asked to describe the most effective training they received, whether they learned anything new in the past year's SAPR training, and whether they thought that the prevention of sexual assault/sexual harassment was just another training requirement. Some themes were applicable to trainees only as they have had more recent experiences with SAPR training. This is indicated in the themes below. Members also offered recommendations for future training.

### LINE OF EFFORT (LOE)

- ◆ This chapter addresses DoD SAPRO's LOE, "Prevention," which includes developing core competencies and learning objectives for all SAPR training.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Training (Trainees Only)**

- **Focus group trainees indicated they first received sexual assault prevention and response training in boot camp or basic training/recruit training.**
  - “*Boot camp... every day.*” (E1-E4 Male)
  - “[*At Basic Training, received training*] *at least weekly. And I don't think a week went by that there wasn't something on it.*” (E1-E4 Male)
- **Focus group trainees indicated they received repetitive training.**
  - “*Once a week for like five weeks.*” (E1-E4 Female)
  - [*Number of times seen training*] “*A Million.*” (E1-E4 Female)
- **Focus group trainees described the various training received on topics related to sexual assault.**
  - “*I liked... the videos [because] they show literally real life scenarios of things that happened.*” (E1-E4 Female)
  - “*It was mainly PowerPoint in a classroom.*” (E1-E4 Female)
  - “*I've had various trainings. I've had the discussion groups where they go over possible different scenarios that you might come across, how would you respond, what's appropriate. I've had the PowerPoint where they tell you exactly what you need to do, what exactly is not appropriate and appropriate and what you can do to help your fellow member in a situation like that. And then I've had classroom discussions that aren't discussion groups, where the instructor themselves share a little bit more personal experiences without names.*” (E1-E4 Female)

## **Most Effective Training**

- **Focus group participants indicated the most effective SAPR trainings were typically from guest speakers, small group discussions/interactions, videos, and skits.**
  - *“I really enjoyed the civilians that came for the training. I felt that was an actual good discussion on the topic. I feel like you have to change the way people think, and address it in a manner like they did. I feel like that opened doors.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“We had a group of people come and they did skits, and that was pretty good.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“... We would do skits... where they would show what was sexual harassment. Then, after a skit was over, we would discuss why it was sexual harassment so people that are ignorant can learn how to be proper and not treat people incorrectly.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“They had all the information out there. They had police tape recordings so you could listen to calls. And they had an actual victim come out, very, very brave of her, and speak about her experience. It was really good. The second one was very good too, they had a video.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“What really had an impact [was] when they showed us films of actual victims and we listened to their side of the story... Showing something like that when you see real life, it makes you think sometimes.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“The best training I've had was they broke the divisions in the department down to smaller groups and did a focus group session instead of doing a lecture type training.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“It's the emotion behind [it] have a speaker come... who's actually had an experience, you feel that person's emotions through it.”* (E3-E4 Female)

## **Whether Members Learned New Information in SAPR Training**

- **Many focus group participants indicated they had not learned anything new this year through training.**
  - *“It just seemed like a lot of repeat information to me.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“I personally didn't learn anything more.”* (E3-E4 Male)
  - *“They need to diversify the training. We're beating a dead horse, in my opinion.”* (E1-E4 Female).

- **Participants indicated they would like to learn more about updates on SAPR policies and other topics of interest.**
  - *“Well, I want to see more things about spousal rape; I want to see more things about the stranger rape. I want more training on how to defend ourselves, how to deal with what's happened...”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“I think they need to clarify that sexual assault is not just military-military. It's also spouses and people in the military. That's the way a lot of people don't really understand, just because you're a civilian and their spouse is military they really don't count.”* (E5-E6 Female)

### **Perceptions of Whether Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Trainings Are “Just Another Requirement”**

- **Focus group participants indicated they received too much training on topics related to sexual assault.**
  - *“There needs to be a balance between creating that desire to make the changes [and not] beating a dead horse the way it is now.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“I think the way that it's presented makes a difference, because I know when we did the small groups, I think that was beneficial. But if it's just mass briefing after mass briefing, that's not the most effective.”* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *“That's where we get desensitized, where we do a Computer Based Training, where you have to watch a video or watch a person. Like it's a lot better when we can hear real examples of what's actually happened, because that's a lot more realistic to us.”* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *“I think that's why it's become a joke though. I would say they do too much [training]... with SAPR... It literally has become a running joke...”* (E1-E4 Female)

### **Recommendations for Future SAPR Training**

- **Focus group participants indicated it would be beneficial to hear from sexual assault survivors, legal professionals, and/or perpetrators convicted of sexual assault.**
  - *“I think a variety would be good – people are unique in their own ways, so I think having different resources and just a variety would target different people.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“... It's the military members [who] have been actually been convicted and they're sitting there in their orange suits and [they got] ten years. No pay, down to private. It's the one that's a reality that just smacks you in the face...”* (E5-E6 Female)

- *“... If you actually had a live real sexual assault victim come and tell you that perspective face to face...” (E5-E6 Male)*
- *“So if you see a man come in and he's personally testifying of getting sexually assaulted, then it would be ‘wow, this happens to us too.’ Because that is the majority of the military, men. It's ‘wow, this happens to us too,’ so maybe we should take the females more serious with their cries for help.” (E1-E4 Female)*
- *“[Hearing from victims or lawyers] can give you more insight on how the case went, what kinds of fines, penalties, jail time comes with that.” (E3-E4 Male)*
- *“Having the legal counsels come to the basic training unit so that members can ask questions. A lot of times when you know the legality of certain situations, it's a deterrence when you hear it from an attorney.” (E1-E4 Female)*

## Chapter 6: Bystander Intervention

Some unwanted gender-related behaviors occur in environments where people have an opportunity to step in to prevent a potential sexual assault. This chapter addresses this bystander intervention, or more specifically, how members perceive their roles with respect to preventing sexual assault in a social situation. Bystander intervention is a topic used in training by the Department to raise awareness among members that they should step in if they see a situation that could potentially lead to a sexual assault. Members were asked to provide details about “red flags,” or situations that could be construed as potentially vulnerable to sexual assault. Members were asked if they would intervene if they saw one of those “red flags.” This chapter includes information on what members might do to address inappropriate behaviors witnessed in the workplace or in social situations. Members were also asked to indicate at what point, if any, they would step in and address the issue if they witnessed inappropriate behaviors (e.g., sexual harassment or sexist comments).

### LINE OF EFFORT (LOE)

- ◆ This chapter addresses DoD SAPRO’s LOE, “Prevention,” which includes developing core competencies and learning objectives for all SAPR training.

### ***Intervening in a Social Situation***

- **Many focus group participants indicated that they would step in to prevent potential sexual assaults in a social situation (e.g., a bar) if they saw a “red flag;” others indicated that stepping in would depend on the person and the situation.**
  - *“If the person looks uncomfortable, you can come up and say, ‘hey, are you ready to go?’ and act like her boyfriend.” (E1-E4 Male)*
  - *“Most of us would. If we see a fellow Service member [who] does not want the attention he or she is receiving, most of us would step in and help.” (E1-E4 Male)*
  - *“Any situation that is unfit and wrong... it's your job to step up and do something about it.” (E1-E4 Female)*
  - *“I will say one thing, the uniform protects the uniform. They take care of their own.” (E3-E4 Female)*
  - *“I think it depends on the situation. Depends on what type of person you are, if you're going to step in or not.” (E7-E9 Mixed Group)*
- **Focus group participants indicated members are willing to step in regardless of how they are perceived.**
  - *“Some people might think that guy is a [expletive], for lack of a better word, [but] you have to step up and [say] ‘hey, that's wrong.’” (E1-E4 Male)*

- *“At the time I don't think anybody is going to thank you for it. But I think later down the road, especially the next day, they'll be okay.”* (E1-E4 Male)
- *“You could be perceived as a “cock blocker”... And that's perfectly fine, because I'd rather be perceived as the cock blocker than to see a friend get hurt and not having intervened.”* (E3-E4 Female)
- *“I think it's more socially acceptable to be a “cock blocker” these days than it was a few years ago.”* (E3-E4 Female)

### ***Intervening in a Professional Situation***

- **Many focus group participants indicated they would step in if they witnessed inappropriate workplace behaviors.**
  - *“Yeah. I mean as soon as it happens, it should be addressed.”* (E5-E6 Male)
  - *“When I would clearly see that the person that those comments are being said [and]if the [person is] showing signs of clearly being offended or disturbed. If a person is making sexual comments and the person that they're about is laughing or enjoying them, I mean I wouldn't step in.”* (E1-E4 Male)
  - *“Of course.”* (E7-E9 Mixed)
  - *“...I'd like to think that people would stop it.”* (O2-O3 Female)
  - *“I've been in a situation where we've been telling jokes, it's just what we're doing. But that doesn't happen when someone says something personal.”* (E1-E4 Male)

## Chapter 7: Summary

The goal of the focus groups was to gather additional details on sexual assault prevention and response, thereby providing additional insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the current SAPR program. Findings should be viewed as illustrations of situations and themes for consideration by Department officials as they review their programs. This does not mean the views represent DoD as a whole and findings should not be generalized to the entire military. Themes presented in this report were shown if they were voiced by participants in all of the Services/National Guard. For the most part, information included in this report is shown across both genders and all paygrades (there were a few exceptions where questions that were asked of only trainees are shown).

Results in this report address views on the perceptions of unwanted sexual contact in the military, reporting of sexual assault, changes in SAPR policies, command climate/culture, training, and bystander intervention. Based on information heard in the focus groups, opportunities might exist for the Department to continue addressing issues related to perceived or real professional and social retaliation for survivors who report their sexual assault, publicizing all of the new SAPR resources that are available to survivors (e.g., Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel, expedited transfer), emphasizing continued culture change particularly within peer-to-peer interactions, and diversifying SAPR training. As changes are implemented to address these concerns, future surveys and focus groups can help determine their efficacy.



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**Appendix A.**  
**Focus Group Protocol**



## 2014 SAPRO Focus Group Guide

### Introduction to the Focus Group

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I represent the Defense Manpower Data Center. My colleagues with me this morning/afternoon are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ also with DMDC. I have provided each of you with a handout. Please turn to page 1. You can follow along while I share with you the purpose for this focus group and the ground rules we will follow.

<b>Time for briefing and introductions: 5 minutes</b>
---

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault prevention and response. In 2012, some members of the active duty and National Guard who were selected at random were asked to participate in a voluntary DoD-wide survey on these topics as part of the Workplace and Gender Relations Survey (WGRA/WGRR). In response, a series of focus groups are being conducted to provide more detailed information to DoD leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at installations across the country.

This is a **voluntary focus group**. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing focus groups. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on in the military, your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders and in turn it helps senior leaders make well-informed policy decisions.
- Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced sexual assault, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues across the military. You're the experts on what it's like to be a member of the armed forces. Whether you *have* or *have not* experienced sexual assault is not a topic of this discussion. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership on the attitudes and opinions of the military force.

I want to thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group and go over a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know this is a very sensitive topic and you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and \_\_\_\_\_ will be helping us to take notes. Also with us today is \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what \_\_\_\_\_ is typing.

- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, we will not share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session, so please do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Any questions?

I have several questions to ask you today, with a few subtopics in each. I will watch the time so we will be able to cover all questions by the end of this session at [give specific end time].

Let's begin our discussion today with some results of the 2012 WGRA and WGRR surveys on sexual assault. Let me explain our use of terms. When we are talking about the results of the WGRA/WGRR, we use the term "unwanted sexual contact." Notice that it includes a number of unwanted sexual behaviors ranging from unwanted sexual touching to completed sex. We use the term "unwanted sexual contact" because it captures a range of unwanted sexual behaviors that are punishable by the UCMJ that is broader than the criminal offenses of sexual assault and rape. Here you will see some of the results from our 2012 survey that we will discuss today. Please turn to page 3 of your handout. You will see the actual question on unwanted sexual contact used in the WGRA/WGRR.

### 1. Perceptions about unwanted sexual contact

- |  |
|--|
| <b>Time for Question 1:<br/>15 minutes</b> |
|--|
- In 2012, the unwanted sexual contact rate from the survey for active duty DoD women was 6.1% and for active duty DoD men was 1.2%. Have you heard these unwanted sexual contact rates before? Do these rates for the Department [explain that Department includes all Services] seem right to you? Too high, too low? Explain why they seem too high or too low. Has your leadership here at [installation] talked about these results? What did they say? Have members in your unit talked about these results? What did they say?
  - There has been a lot of attention in the press and from Congress over the past few months on the DoD unwanted sexual contact numbers reported in the military. Have you seen the articles or heard any news reports? Do you and other members of the military you've spoken to feel like these news articles are accurate in how they portray the military [with respect to unwanted sexual contact]? Why?
  - We just completed a discussion of our WGRA/WGRR results on unwanted sexual contact. For the rest of the session when we refer to the term "sexual assault" we are referring to the "umbrella term" used by DoD and not the term referred to in the media. So for purposes of this discussion, sexual assault means "unwanted sexual contact." Do you feel this attention has resulted in any positive or negative changes in the military? How? Has it helped increase awareness on the issue? Has this attention resulted in any changes in how Service members treat each other [increased respect, encouraging someone to report an incident]? Have you seen or felt a shift in how your leadership deals with this topic? In what way?
  - [For senior level members] Think about your time in uniform and how this issue has been handled over time. Have you noticed any change in the way your Service or the DoD deals with issues of sexual assault? Can you give examples of positive or negative changes? (If

positive changes are mentioned, what has led to the positive change—are leaders more engaged in this issue? Are people more willing to intervene in a potential situation now than they were in the past? When did you notice the positive change occur? Are there any other factors – to include key personnel, such as commanders – that contributed to this change? If negative changes are mentioned, what led to them?)

- e. What other changes do you think would help prevent sexual assault in the military? Describe. Are there any current procedures or policies that should be changed, dropped, or added?

OK, now let's switch gears and talk about reporting sexual assault.

## 2. Reporting

<b>Time for Question 2: 10 minutes</b>
--

- a. A few years ago, the Department expanded the reporting options for victims of sexual assault. There are now two options: restricted and unrestricted reports. Unrestricted reporting includes access to medical treatment and counseling services, and it also triggers an official investigation by a Military Criminal Investigative Organization (CID, NCIS, and OSI). Restricted reporting permits access to medical treatment and counseling services, but does not trigger an official investigation or command notification of the assault. Are you familiar with these two types of reporting options? How did you learn about these two types of reporting? Do you think someone who experienced sexual assault would be more likely to choose restricted or unrestricted reporting? Why?
- b. The Department recognizes that more sexual assaults happen than are reported. However, in the past year, we have seen about a 50% increase in reporting from last year. What do you think is the reason for the recent spike in reporting? Do you think the reporting options we discussed earlier as well as the higher visibility of the issue in the media, by Congress and at the White House, might have helped victims feel more comfortable with coming forward? [If needed to prompt: Have you seen more publicity of the reporting options (restricted/unrestricted reporting)? Do you think people are more aware that sexual assault is a serious problem?]
- c. The number of reports received annually by the Department represent only about 15% of the reports that could have been made based on the survey results. According to our survey, some members who experience unwanted sexual behaviors might not report it officially to the Department because they fear some sort of professional retaliation from their chain of command (for example, their performance evaluations or chance for promotion would suffer). Without speaking about specific incidents, what do you think professional retaliation might look like? Have you ever witnessed this or heard about it (please do not speak about specific incidents)? [If yes] What could the Department do to address the concerns of professional retaliation? Do you believe the heightened attention made a difference? If so, how?
- d. We also hear from these survey respondents that they fear negative treatment or reactions by peers. Again, without mentioning specific incidents that may have occurred, what do you think this might look like? Do you think social media plays a role in these types of incidents? If so, how? [If asked for clarification, ask if people spread rumors over social media or say things about an alleged victim or offender.] Do people say things on social

media that they would not say in a work setting? Why? How do people react to such negative treatment [if needed for prompting: do you think they become more isolated, have lower levels of performance, lash out at those treating them badly, leave the Service at the earliest opportunity]. Do you believe the heightened attention made a difference? If so, how? Would there be any examples of social retaliation by peers?

- e. [If applicable, say we just discussed both professional retaliation and negative treatment by peers as a result of someone reporting sexual assault] What more can be done to stop these negative reactions and encourage reporting? Can you think of any other barriers that could be eliminated? How can the Department encourage people to come forward? Do you believe the recent changes and increased attention by the Department made a difference? If so, how? Could social media be used to dispel rumors or accusations? How? To encourage reporting? How?

Over the past year, there have been new programs established by the SAPR offices in response to the rates and reports of sexual assault. I am going to cover a few of them to find out if you've heard of them, and if so, what you think of them.

### 3. Changes in SAPR Policy

<b>Time for Question 3: 10 minutes</b>
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- a. Recently, all four Services created specialized attorney positions for sexual assault victims. These attorneys are called a Special Victims' Counsel or SVC in the Army and Air Force. [Navy and Marine Corps – this is called “Victims Legal Counsel] These lawyers are available to assist victims with the legal – and emotional – stress involved in a case underway. They are specially trained to provide legal advice and representation to victims of crime. Have you heard of this resource? If you or someone you know were a victim of sexual assault, would this be a resource you'd find valuable or recommend? Why do you think victims would find having their own attorneys helpful? Are you also aware that there are specially trained prosecutors or Special Victim Prosecutors (SVPs) who are lawyers trained to enhance the prosecution of offenders with increased expertise, unique training, and specialization that now works cases? What other legal resources would be helpful based on what you've heard or know about the military legal system?
- b. The DoD now allows victims to request a transfer to another base/installation, or to another duty assignment on the same base/installation when they make an unrestricted report. The request can be made for a variety of reasons including concerns of retaliation, and the victim will receive an answer to their request within 72 hours of making it. Did you know this was an option for sexual assault victims? What do you think about this as an option for victims [probe for both positive and negative aspects]? Commanders are now authorized to transfer the accused Service member in certain circumstances, so the victim may not have to transfer. What do you think of this option? Do you think this is a useful tool for commanders to have? Why?
- c. Unrestricted reports of sexual assault (reports that trigger an official investigation) now have to be reviewed by a senior officer – an O6 or higher. This change is to ensure that more experienced and seasoned commanders objectively assess these cases. Before this change, the decision of what command action or punishment to take could have been made by a less experienced and lower-level commander. Do you feel like this addresses some concerns about how cases are handled in the military? Why do you feel that way?

- d. Do you think any particular policy change has led to noticeable changes in the way Service members and the Service leadership regard sexual assault (for example, how they treat each other, how they react if and when a sexual assault occurs)? If so, which ones and what has the result been of those changes? What other administrative or legal changes would be helpful and should be considered? [If other changes are recommended, ask why they think these changes would be beneficial? How they would be beneficial?]

Let's turn our discussion for the next few minutes to command climate and culture.

#### 4. Command Climate/Culture

<b>Time for Question 4: 10 minutes</b>
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- a. [For non-senior level members] What does your unit leadership say to you about sexual harassment and sexual assault? Can you give an example? [Depending on the response, ask if the discussions are helpful or what they would like their leaders to say to them.] How well does your unit leadership lead by example? Do they say something when they witness a questionable behavior? Do they help set a standard of dignity or respect? [Depending on the responses, probe for good or bad examples.] Do they encourage supervisors to address questionable behaviors? How?
- b. What does your senior leadership [GIVE EXAMPLES] say about sexual harassment and sexual assault? Would you trust them to protect a victim's privacy? Would you trust them to ensure a victim's safety following an incident? Would you trust them to treat a victim with dignity and respect?
- c. Do you know the SARC/victim advocate [tailor to specific Service terminology] for your unit or on your installation? Do you think most people in your unit would know them? Do you think most people would know how to contact them? Would you talk to them about an incident of sexual assault? Why? Would you think most people in your unit would talk to them? Why? Would you trust them to handle a report properly? Why or why not? [If they state concerns, ask "what would make you more likely to talk to them?"]
- d. Let me define briefly a few terms we will be discussing in the next section [give examples of sexual harassment and sexist behaviors.] Do you think there is any relationship between unwanted verbal behaviors such as sexual harassment or sexist behavior and unwanted physical behaviors such as sexual assault? Describe [If needed, probe if they see these as grooming or confidence building steps toward more aggressive physical behaviors, or that unchecked behaviors act as a "green light" for misconduct in the unit.]
- e. Some people would say crude language is just a part of the military culture. Do you agree with this statement? If yes, why? Do you think there is some level of acceptance of these types of verbal behaviors as being part of the military environment? Does the use of social media such as Facebook and twitter play a role in this? Do you believe people might say things on social media sites they wouldn't say in person? Do you think there could be a positive role for social media in addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault?
- f. In an effort to reduce these types of behaviors, the Department has been working hard to improve culture leading to greater respect for each other. Have you noticed any new emphasis on reducing these behaviors? If so, what has been done? Have you seen anything specific that indicates the military as an organization has improved or is improving? [Probe into general perceptions of organizational improvements; ask for tangible examples without specific identifying information.]

- i. At what level have you seen these changes? For example, have you seen changes among peers? Immediate leadership? Senior leadership?
  - ii. [If there are groups above that are not demonstrating change] How could the Department help [group] understand the importance of these issues?
  - iii. [For examples of positive change] Do you feel that this is a lasting change?
  - iv. Do you, as individuals, feel responsible for this issue? In other words, what role, if any, do you see yourself playing in stopping disrespectful behavior?
  - v. What more can be done?
- g. How do you think culture change starts? Do you think change needs to come from leadership or from the members themselves – or both? What has been the reaction to these changes from your fellow Service members?
  - h. In general, do you think the military emphasis on eliminating sexual assault has had positive impact? For example, have you heard about [describe one or two recent programs]? What have you heard? Has it been effective in motivating people to step into situations? What more can be done?
  - i. Some people feel that prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment are just another training requirement. Do you agree with this? [If so] How can the Department encourage people to take these issues more seriously?

We've just talked a little about training. Now let's discuss training in more detail.

## 5. Training

<p><b>Time for Question 5: 10 minutes</b></p>
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- a. When did you first receive training on sexual assault prevention and response?
- b. [For Trainees] Thinking about your experience at Basic Training – did you receive SAPR training during Basic? If so, how many times? What kinds of SAPR training did you receive? Was one more effective than the other? Have you had any recent training on sexual assault? Is it different from the training you first received? How so? How effective was that first training in helping you understand the resources available to you? Has training improved over the years? If so, how?
- c. Overall, what training did you consider to be the most effective this year? Why? What training did you consider the least effective? Why? In general, what kinds of training are most helpful? What kinds of training are least helpful? How would you improve it?
- d. Did you learn anything about sexual assault in training this past year that you did not know before? Describe. Is there something you would like to know more about? Did your training change your mind or perspective on the topic? If yes, in what way?
- e. [For senior level members] What do you tell your personnel about these topics? What do you often hear about this topic from the other members of your units? Are there topics that the training does not adequately address?
- f. [For trainees only] Who would you go to here at [installation] if you wanted to report an incident of sexual assault? Do you feel prepared to deal with issues of sexual assault when

you leave this training school? What training was the most helpful? What could be done better to prepare you?

One of the campaigns the Department and the Services have implemented in preventing the problem of sexual assault is active bystander intervention. As you're probably aware, this campaign encourages Service members who see a risky situation or something that might potentially lead to a sexual assault and to take steps to prevent it.

## 6. Bystander Intervention

**Time for Question 6:  
10 minutes**

- a. Thinking about a social situation (e.g., in a bar, at a celebration where alcohol may be involved), what types of behaviors would be considered to be a red flag leading to a potential sexual assault [if needed, provide potential red flags]? Do you think most military members would be willing to step in and stop a situation if they saw one of those red flags? How would they be perceived by those who are with them for stepping in? In the past we have heard that people don't want to step in for fear the people they are with will think of them as a "buzz killer," or as someone who interferes with someone's efforts to hook up. Has there been a change in this perception so that those who intervene are viewed more positively? Please describe. How do you think he or she would be perceived by leadership for stepping in?
- b. Now let's think about a workplace situation where people may witness inappropriate workplace behaviors (like sexual harassment or sexist comments). At what point, if any, would someone feel like he/she needed to step in or say something to indicate that the behavior is unacceptable? If a person stepped in or said something to address the behavior, how do you think he/she would be perceived by others in the workplace? How do you think he or she would be perceived by leadership for stepping in?

I would like to wrap up our session today with several final questions.

## 7. Additional recommendations for addressing sexual assault

**Time for Question 7:  
10 minutes**

- a. Is there anything you wish someone had told you about dealing with issues of sexual assault when you first came in to the military?
- b. What more can your Service do to help prevent sexual assault?
- c. What else can you tell us about sexual assault in your Service?
- d. One final set of questions has to do with your perceptions about military service.
  - i. How do your friends and relatives feel about you being in the Service with regard to the attention sexual assault has received? [If they have raised concerns or questions about your safety?] How do you typically respond? What could the Department do to help overcome these perceptions? How does the media attention impact you and your fellow Service members?
  - ii. How safe do you feel from sexual assault in the military? Do you know of anyone who feels differently?
  - iii. Do you think the military is serious about preventing sexual assault?

- iv. Do you think the military is better or worse than other civilian organizations or institutions in dealing with sexual assault? Why?
- v. Is there anything we didn't ask today that we should have?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. As I mentioned at the beginning, we will treat all of your comments anonymously. There is no attribution to any of you for the specific comments you made today. Please also respect that non-attribution when you leave here today. Our goal is to provide the best data possible and you have helped us greatly today with your comments and insights.

One last comment – on the last page of the handout you will see a list of resources available to you if you would like to follow up with us or have any questions. It also lists Department resources if you would like to talk further to someone about this study or any experiences you might have had with unwanted behaviors.

Thank you again for your participation.

**Appendix B.**  
**Focus Group Participant Handout**



**2014 Focus Group on  
Sexual Assault Prevention  
and Response**

**Handout for Participants**



## **Purpose**

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault prevention and response. In 2012, some members of the active duty and Reserve component who were selected at random were asked to participate in a voluntary large DoD-wide survey on these topics as part of the Workplace and Gender Relations Survey (WGRA/WGRR). In response, a series of focus groups are being conducted to provide more detailed information to DoD leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at installations across the country.

This is a **voluntary focus group**. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing focus groups. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on in the military, your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders and in turn it helps senior leaders make well-informed policy decisions.
- Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced sexual assault, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues across the military. You're the experts on what it's like to be a member of the armed forces. Whether you *have* or *have not* experienced sexual assault is not a topic of this discussion. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership on the attitudes and opinions of the military force.

## ***Ground Rules for Discussion***

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, we will not share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session, so please do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Any questions?

## ***Discussion Resources***

On the next page are results from the survey that we will use as part of the discussion today. Please note that the results I will share with you come from the *2012 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey*. This survey was conducted in 2012 with results reported to DoD Service leadership as well as the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in 2013.

To assure the statistical reliability of the survey results, we conduct a stratified random sample of military men and women.

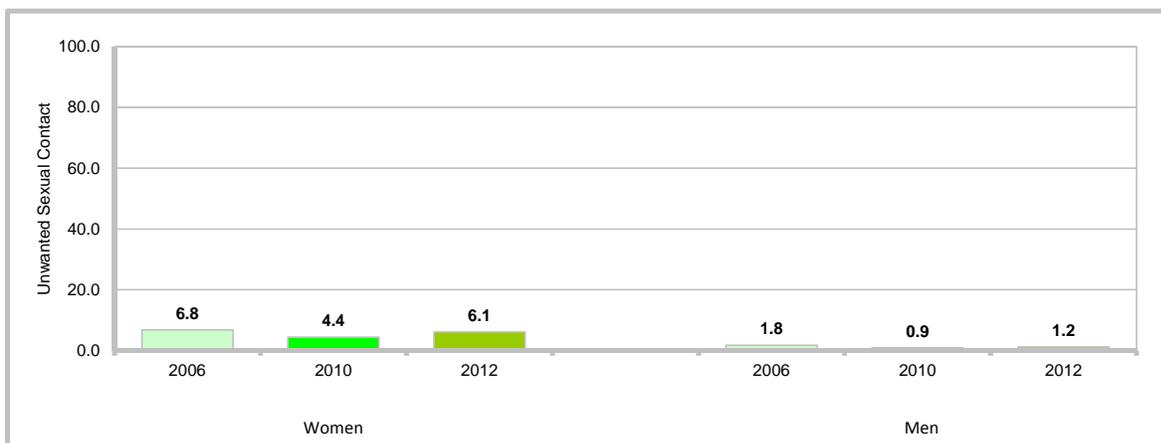
## Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex. The question text is below:

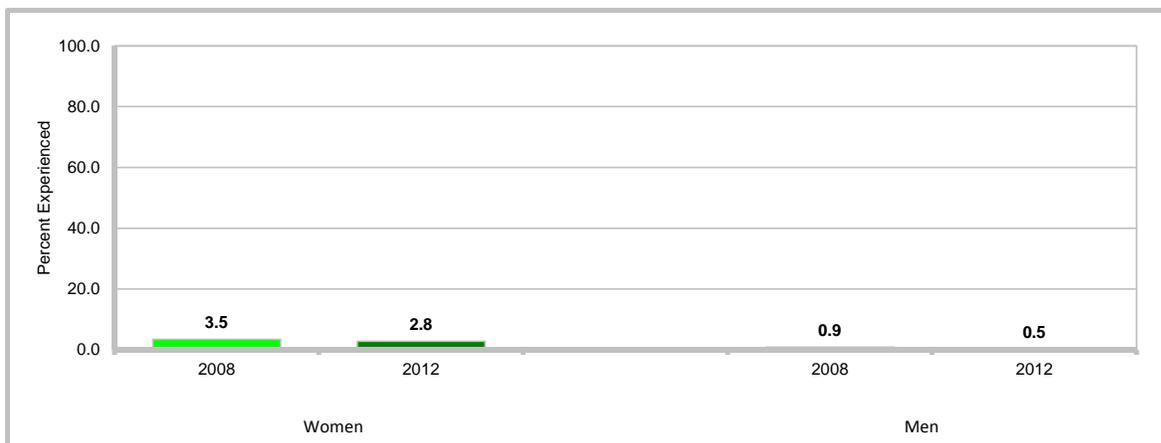
“In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following intentional sexual contacts that were against your will or occurred when you did not or could not consent where someone...

- Sexually touched you (e.g., intentional touching of genitalia, breasts, or buttocks) or made you sexually touch them?
- Attempted to make you have sexual intercourse, but was not successful?
- Made you have sexual intercourse?
- Attempted to make you perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object, but was not successful?
- Made you perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object?”

### 1. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for Active Duty Members



### 2. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for Reserve/National Guard Members





We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Military Academy, please contact Ms. Kristin Williams at 571-372-1033 or DSN 372-1033.

If you wish to provide feedback regarding the focus group process or the focus group content, please send us an e-mail at: SA-Survey@mail.mil. If you know of others who might like to contact a member of the DMDC team, please share this information with them. You may also use the Department of Defense SAFE Hotline at 877-995-5247 to report abuse of authority, mismanagement, fraud, and waste.

In April 2011, the Department of Defense launched the DoD Safe Helpline to provide confidential, live, one-on-one expert advice to victims of sexual assault. Available 24/7, users can click, call or text to access Safe Helpline services:

◦CLICK: Logging on to [www.SafeHelpline.org](http://www.SafeHelpline.org) allows users to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault.

◦CALL: Calling the telephone hotline 877-995-5247 allows users to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for personalized advice and support. Safe Helpline staff can also transfer callers to installation or base Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/On-call SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs), civilian rape crisis centers or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

◦TEXT: Texting their location to 55-247 (inside the U.S.) or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC at their installation or base.

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to Contact the Sexual Assault Response Team:

USCC Sexual Assault Response Coordinator  
845-938-7479; 24/7 cell 845-401-3476

Center for Personal Development (CPD)  
845-938-3022; 24/7 cell 845-591-7215

Military Police Desk  
845-938-3333

West Point Duty Chaplain  
845-401-8171

Garrison Sexual Assault Response  
Coordinator  
845-938-3369; 24/7 cell 914-382-8041

Installation Victim Advocate  
845-938-5657; 24/7 cell 914-382-8180

West Point Diversity Officer  
845-938-0508; 24/7 cell 845-590-1249

Medical Attention  
Keller Army Community Hospital  
Emergency Room: 845-938-4004  
Behavioral Health: 845-938-3441

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

*Form Approved  
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