



VETERANS:

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

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

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

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

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

WHAT KIND OF SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

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

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

HOW CAN I GET HELP?

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

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