



DISABILITY COMPENSATION

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR PERSONAL ASSAULT OR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

Some Veterans may have experienced personal assault or sexual trauma while serving in the military. These kinds of experiences can sometimes affect Veterans' mental and physical health, even many years later. Veterans can apply for disability compensation for any current difficulties that are related to their service, including difficulties related to personal assault or military sexual trauma (MST). You do not need a VA service-connected disability rating to be eligible for free MST-related treatment through VA. No documentation is required to receive MST-related treatment.

How Does VA Define Personal Assault and Military Sexual Trauma (MST)?

VA defines personal assault as physical or psychological violence, domestic battering, or stalking. One type of personal assault is MST, which is defined by Title 38 U.S. Code 1720D as "psychological trauma...resulting from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the Veteran was serving on active duty or active duty for training." Sexual harassment is defined as "repeated, unsolicited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature which is threatening in character."

Can You Develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Other Mental Health Disorders as a Result of Personal Assault or Military Sexual Trauma?

Yes. Exposure to any trauma can potentially result in PTSD or another mental health disorder. PTSD is the most common mental health diagnosis related to experiencing a personal assault or MST.

What Evidence Can Support a Disability Claim for PTSD as a Result of Personal Assault or Military Sexual Trauma?



Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Career Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance and/or Dependents and Survivors' Benefits.



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Department of Defense forms used in reporting incidents of sexual assault or harassment, as well as investigative reports during military service, are direct evidence to support these claims. However, VA knows that events involving personal assault or sexual trauma are not always officially reported. Therefore, VA has relaxed the evidentiary requirements and looks for “markers” (i.e., signs, events, or circumstances) that provide some indication that the traumatic event happened, such as

- Records from law enforcement authorities, rape crisis centers, mental health counseling centers, hospitals, or physicians.
- Pregnancy tests or tests for sexually transmitted diseases.
- Statements from family members, roommates, fellow Servicemembers, clergy members, or counselors.
- Request for transfer to another military duty assignment.
- Deterioration in work performance.
- Substance abuse.
- Episodes of depression, panic attacks, or anxiety without an identifiable cause.
- Unexplained economic or social behavioral changes.
- Relationship issues, such as divorce.
- Sexual dysfunction.

How Can You Apply for Disability Compensation?

You can apply for disability compensation by completing [VA Form 21-526, Veteran's Application for Compensation and/or Pension](#). You may also apply online at www.ebenefits.va.gov. MST specialists and/or Women Veterans Coordinators are available at every VA Regional Office to assist male and female Veterans filing claims related to personal assault or MST. You can find a list of VA Regional Offices by calling 1-800-827-1000 or visiting <http://www.va.gov>. For more information about MST-related treatment, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp.

For More Information, Call Toll-Free 1-800-827-1000 or Visit Our Web Site at <http://www.va.gov/>

