



Defense Health Agency (DHA) Clinical Communities Speaker Series

October 2021 CCSS: Promising Practices in Military Health Care

S02: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Program Insights for Medical Personnel

Resource List

The issue of sexual assault in the U.S. military is problematic and prevalent. All military branches have undertaken an effort to develop and implement sexual assault prevention programs (SAPPs), yet these programs lack a rigorous and independent evaluation process, limiting an understanding of effectiveness. The authors of the article [Sexual assault prevention efforts in the U.S. Air Force: A systematic review and content analysis](#) (2018) examined the four official SAPPs that have been used within the U.S. Air Force (USAF) over the past decade by comparing their content and process with best practice suggestions for SAPPs. Most notably, the authors concluded that evidence of an objective program evaluation system is lacking.

Data suggests that sexual assault and harassment continue to be significant concerns within the U.S. military. Given such findings, the Department of Defense and the component military services have recently developed several initiatives aimed at preventing sexual violence within their ranks. A number of these programming efforts are modeled after prevention initiatives in other communities such as college campuses. The article [Sexual assault prevention in the military: Key issues and recommendations](#) (2018) highlighted major issues that are important for the military as they move forward to augment their sexual assault prevention efforts. Previous prevention work both within and outside of the military will be discussed in the context of the reviewed issues. The authors concluded with a list of recommendations.

The prevention of sexual assault (SA) in the U.S. military is a significant priority. The study [Evaluations of sexual assault prevention programs in military settings: A synthesis of the research literature](#) (2018) applied the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to a literature search that identified research evaluating SA prevention programs conducted within military settings. Only six studies published between 2005 and 2016 met criteria for inclusion in the review. Studies demonstrated high heterogeneity in the: (1) conceptual framework of the prevention approach; (2) target population and timing of administration; (3) study recruitment methods; (4) methodological design; (5) method of delivery, program dosage and theory of change; and (6) outcome administration and efficacy. Taken together, further research is needed to enhance the evidence base for SA prevention in the military, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches currently being conducted with service members.

Sexual violence (SV) is a serious problem that can have lasting, harmful effects on victims and their family, friends, and communities. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\)](#) (2021) goal is to stop SV from happening in the first place. The solutions are just as complex as the problem. In order to prevent SV, we must understand and address risk and protective factors at the individual, relational, community, and societal levels. The CDC developed a resource, [STOP SV: A technical package to prevent sexual violence](#) (2016) to help communities take advantage of the best available evidence to prevent sexual violence.



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References

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