Male Sexual Assaults and the Military

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DISCLAIMER

Objectives

1. Attendees will learn about barriers experienced by male victims of sexual assaults, that are not necessarily encountered by female victims.

2. Discover what the military has done to increase reporting of sexual assaults by male victims, while at the same time decreasing the overall number of males who are sexually assaulted.

3. Explore what agencies outside of the military can do to increase outreach to male victims of sexual assault in their communities.

Poll Questions

1. When did we start to recognize males as being victims of rape or sexual assault in our society, and when did we begin providing advocacy services to male victims?

2. How extensive is the issue of male sexual assaults?

3. What types of services does your agency offer for male victims?

4. How many male victims have you, or your agency, provided services for over the last year?

5. How do you, or your agency, conduct outreach to male victims?

National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010

- The survey report was published in November 2011
- Approximately 1 in 71 men reported having been raped his lifetime (1.4% or approximately 1.6 million men)
- Nearly 1 in 5 men (22.2%) experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point in their lives - or an estimated 25,130,000 Men
  - Made to penetrate
  - Sexual coercion
  - Unwanted sexual contact
  - Non-contact unwanted sexual experiences

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf

More National Statistics

- 1 in 4 men have experienced physical violence, rape and/or stalking by a partner

- 1 in 7 men aged 18 or older have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime

- 48.8% or about half of all men have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime

How many male victims are there in the military?

Congress wanted to know the extent of the problem being faced by the Department of Defense (DoD) after directing them to establish the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program in 2004. The DoD determined to find out the extent of the issue through survey tools and research.

How many male victims are there in the military?

- One in six men report being sexually abused during childhood
- How does this affect the military?
- This means that over 8,000 men enter the Army every year having already been sexually abused

Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente

- One review found that male Veterans who experienced sexual violence in military perceive their health is more damaged relative to female peers with these experiences (Morris et al., 2014).

How many male victims are there in the military?

- In a 2006 survey of active-duty troops, 6.8% of women and 1.8% of men said they had experienced unwanted sexual contact in the previous 12 months

- Since there are far more men than women in the services, that translated into roughly 22,000 men and 14,000 women

- According to a 2007 study by a team of VA researchers, a nationwide screening of veterans seeking VA services turned up more than 60,000 veterans who had experienced sexual trauma. More than half of those - nearly 32,000 - were men

Sizemore, B. (2009). Military men are silent victims of sexual assault.
The Virginian-Pilot. http://hamptonroads.com/2009/10/military-men-are-silent-victims-sexual-assault

Military Victims

As the DoD continued to conduct anonymous surveys on a biannual basis, they continued to find more males who were victims of sexual assault each year than females.

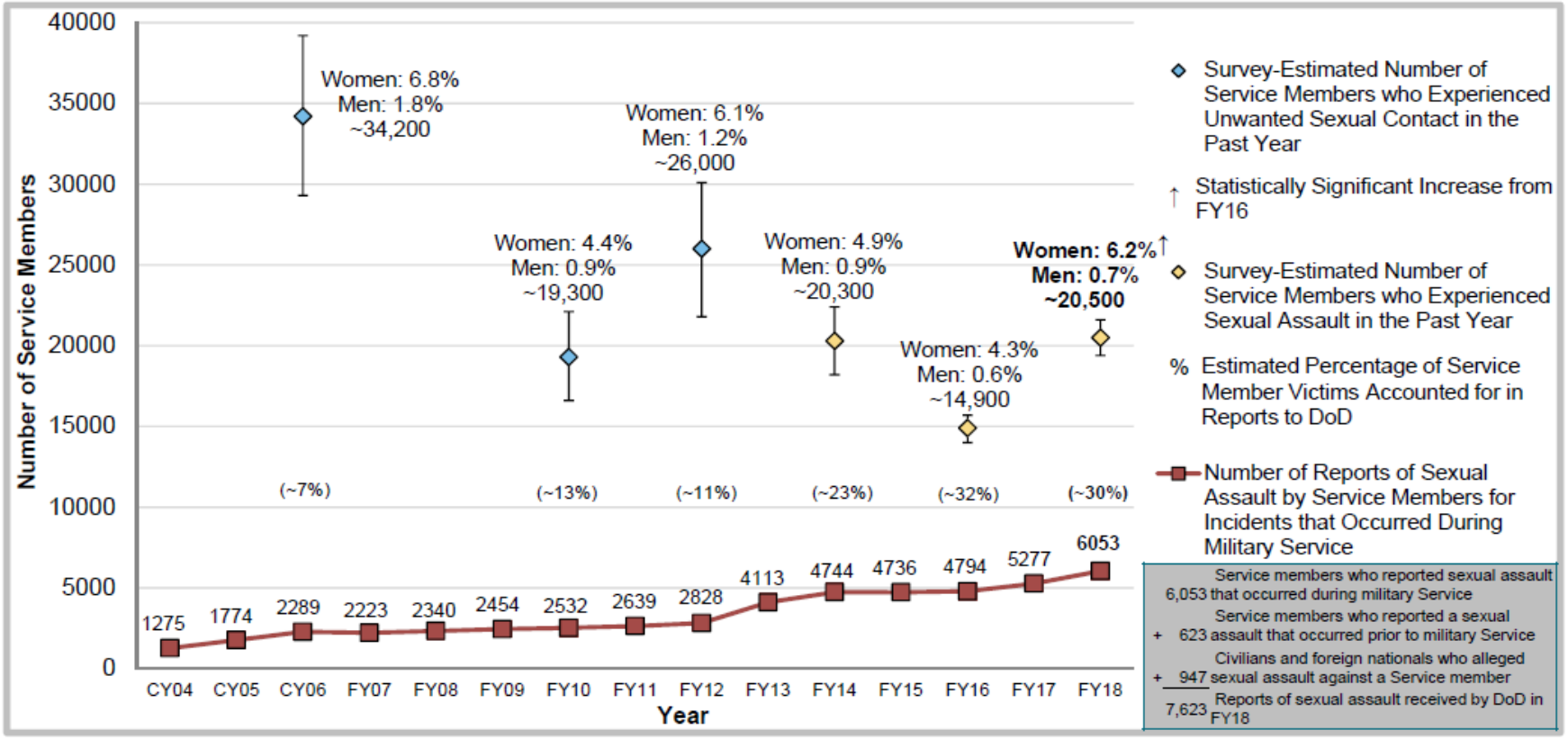
- The 2012 survey found an estimated 14,000 male and 12,000 female victims of sexual assault (26,000 total)
- The 2014 survey found an estimated 10,600 male and 9,600 female victims of sexual assault (over 20,000 total)
- The 2016 biannual survey identified something never seen before in the military survey……
  - 6,300 men and 8,600 women were identified as victims

DoD Annual Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Report to Congress for years 2012, 2014, and 2016 including the WGRA and RAND Surveys.

How many male victims are there in the military?

- In the 2018 WGRA survey of active-duty troops, 6.2% of DoD women (12,927) and 0.7% of DoD men (estimated 7,546) said they had experienced a sexual assault in the previous 12 months
- This was a statistically significant increase, from 4.3% in 2016 for DoD women, and no significant change for DoD men
- For the male victims, alleged offenders were more often all men (52%), with a sizeable minority being all women (30%)

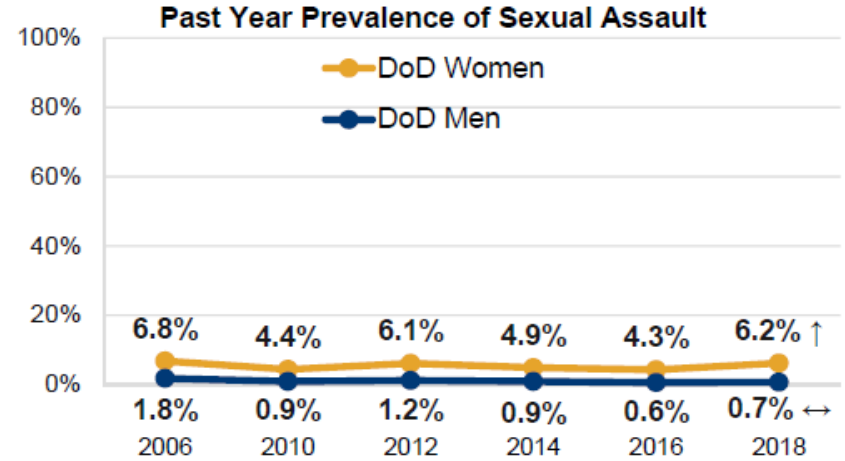
DoD: Sexual Assault Prevalence and Reporting Rates

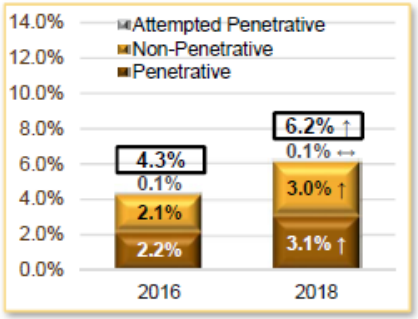


About **1 in 3** Service members reported their sexual assault to a DoD authority - roughly the same as in FY16

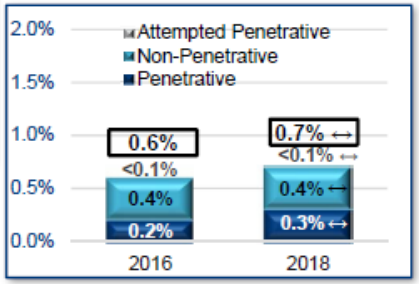
- Reporting rate for women decreased slightly between FY16 and FY18, from 43% to 37%
- Reporting rate for men stayed the same between FY16 and FY18, at 17%

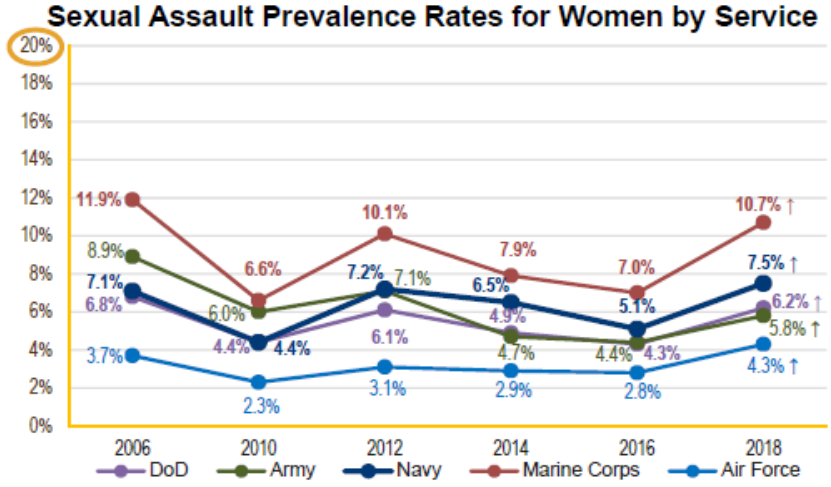
2018 WGRA Survey Results: Sexual Assault Prevalence Rates

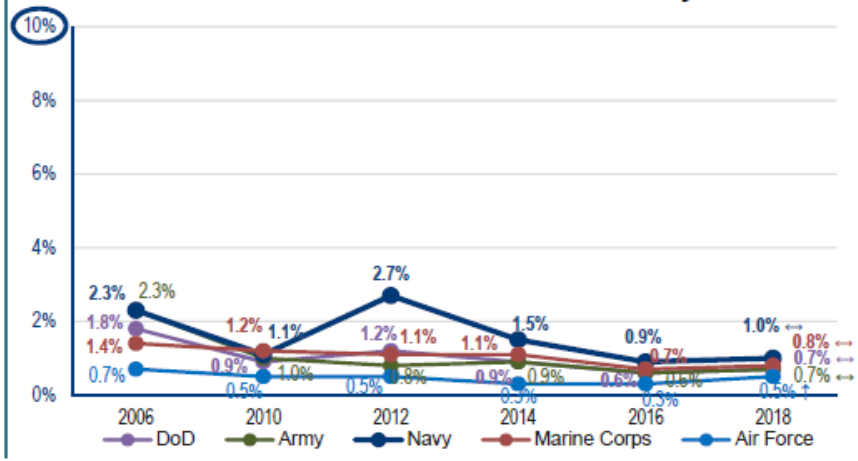




DoD Women







2018 Trend Comparisons: ↑ Higher than 2016 ↓ Lower than 2016 ↔ No Change

Military Best Practices for Improving Male Services

What did the military do that decreased the numbers of males being sexually assaulted each year?

- Professionalizing the field of victim advocacy
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Lines of Efforts
- Targeted outreach along with addressing perceptions and myths pertaining to male sexual assaults
- Identifying where a majority of male sexual assaults stemmed from, and targeting those identified issues
- Alcohol
- Hazing, bullying, and related behaviors
- Retaliation

Military Improvements Still Needed

Though progress has been made, there is still plenty of room from improvements as is evidenced by research.

- Reports still show males reporting at lower rates than females
- Research reported in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence pertaining to Servicemen's Perceptions of Male Sexual Assault in the Military (SAIM) show work is still needed
- Myths and barriers still exist inhibiting male victims from reporting and receiving the help and support they need

How do we translate the improvements seen in the military's program, to those in our communities?

Why do males not seek help?

What keeps male survivors of sexual assault from seeking services through our programs?

Could one of the reasons be that we have historically failed to even recognize that males could be victims?

Why do males not seek help? Is it something we are doing?

Sexual assault of males is something our society has not recognized until recent times, with few studies having been conducted to determine the true extent of the problem. Society and laws have historically failed to acknowledge men can be victims of rape, with it taking until very recently for these laws to change.

Changing of laws and definitions pertaining to rape

It took until 2012 for the FBI to update its definition of rape to include male victims, which was done in an effort to get more accurate statistics on rape in the United States.

- **Pre-2012 FBI definition**: "The Carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will."

- **2012 FBI definition**: "The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person without consent of the victim."

https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013/violent-crime/rape

Changing of laws and definitions pertaining to rape

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- 6 states still use a definition of rape that defines it as requiring “vaginal intercourse” or happening to a “female”

Changing of laws and definitions pertaining to rape

Laws have also identified men as the perpetrator, without acknowledging women could also be perpetrators (see current laws in Kentucky as an example).

- KRS 510.040 – Rape in the first degree. A person is guilty of rape in the first degree when: (a) **He** engages in sexual intercourse with another person by forcible compulsion

- KRS 510.070 – Sodomy in the first degree. A person is guilty of sodomy in the first degree when: (a) **He** engages in deviate sexual intercourse with another person by forcible compulsion

Changing of laws and definitions pertaining to rape

Some people will say that the use of **He** reflects both genders and is used in a gender neutral manner. However, some laws were updated to reflect either gender.

- KRS 510.110 – Sexual abuse in the first degree. (1) A person is guilty of sexual abuse in the first degree when: (a) **He** or **She** subjects another person to sexual contact by forcible compulsion.

Language used, either in laws, by agency personnel, in published literature, or other uses, can create a barrier to males be willing to report sexual violence.

Barriers for Male Victims

What type of barriers do male victims experience?

- Gender
- Socialization
- Gender Socialization
- Gender Stereotypes
- masculinity issues
- sexual dysfunction
- sexual orientation confusion
- gender confusion
- homophobia
- little public awareness
- little acceptance of males as victims of sexual and family violence
- societal outlook/rigid gender role expectations
- male identity/values say it is weak to: share vulnerable feelings
- need/seek help

Consider the male's experience

What experiences do males have in intimate partner sexual violence?

<u>opposite gender partner</u>

- emasculation
- provider responsibility
- children as blackmail
- unable to deny sex
- use gender stereotype

<u>same gender partner</u>

- unhealthy/violent
- straight passing partner
- outing partner
- unable to deny sex

What do males experience when seeking services?

What type of barriers/experiences do male victims experience when seeking services at rape crisis centers?

- First interactions with community drives perceptions
  - Training in schools
  - Initial advocacy
  - Word of mouth
  - Tabling/information tables
  - How are outreach dollars spent
  - How much information is provided about male sexual assaults
- Historically identified as providing services to women only
- The name itself can be a barrier

How do other agencies improve services?

Where do we start to improve outreach and services to male victims?

- Conduct focus groups with male survivors – prepare for targeted outreach to selected group/s

Outreach Considerations Exercise

Adult Mal Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Gay/Bisexual/Queer male survivors

Male Survivors who are Sex Workers

Male survivors who have been incarcerated

Male survivors of female perpetrators

Male survivors with limited proficiency

Male survivors who are later in life

Male survivors who are undocumented

Transgender male survivors

Male survivors living in poverty

Male survivors on campus

Male survivors of faith

Male survivors with disabilities

Male survivors of color

Male survivors in the military

Male survivors of incest

How do other agencies improve services?

Where do we start to improve outreach and services to male victims?

- Conduct focus groups with male survivors - targeting
- Use gender specific advertisement when reaching out to male victims/survivors
- Identify locations where males are or hang out; put advertisements in these areas
- Look at the staff in your agency; does it represent the group you are reaching out to? How about gender specific meeting areas?
- Use non-traditional methods of outreach such as hiking, biking, and other methods males may be more inclined to participate in

What are some resources available for males, and what are some resources available for service providers?

- Identify local resources for men and have the resources available
- Identify national resources for men and what services they offer
- If services are not available, consider what other options may be used, or how services can be started

Conclusion

- It is important to remember it will take a targeted approach when conducting outreach to male survivors

- Perceptions play a key role in willingness for male victims to come forward and report sexual violence

- Though advocacy is mostly gender neutral, if you can’t get males in through your agency’s doors, you won’t be able to provide them the help they need and services you offer

Questions?

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