

Breaking the Silence: Healing the Shame of The Male Veteran's Sexual Trauma

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Who am I?

Who are you?

Agenda

- Intro
- Defining the issue & Statistics
- Exploring the truths and debunking societal myths & acknowledging impact of military culture
- Common emotional after-effects and dynamics of male survivors
- Understanding the blocks to reporting and seeking help
- Specific challenges MST survivors face in the military
- What can the U.S. Army do? What can individual survivors do?
- MaleSurvivor Resources
- Wrap-Up

How many survivors in this picture?



Thank You for joining the MaleSurvivor Community!

- Our needs are great: research has established *at least 1 in 6* boys is overtly sexually victimized before the age of 16 *. There were about 154 million males in the US in 2012. This means there are approximately **25 million male survivors of sexual abuse in the US.**
- **Nearly 1 in 4 males will be sexually victimized in their lifetimes, according to the most recent report by CDC**
- **1 in every 8* rape victims is male.** About 3% or 2.78 million men have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.
- Most recent study, National Crime Victimization Survey, found that **38% of incidents of rape and sexual violence were against men** (survey of 40,000 households)
- Yet only 1 in 10 men reported inappropriate noncontact sexual activity by age 16 *, *this is without question not truly reflective of the numbers of young males who are abused.*
- The 1997 ACEs Study reports that over 20% of respondents reported a history of sexual abuse, with males reporting a 16% rate (n=7,970), and over 60% of males report at least 1 form of Adverse Childhood Experience [<http://www.cdc.gov/ace/prevalence.htm>].

*stats from www.jimhopper.com/male-ab

An Invitation for Self Care

- What you hear today may be emotionally challenging for some of you
- Some of you based on these statistics may know someone personally in the military who also has experienced some form of sexual victimization in their lives
- Remember to breathe

Defining the Issue for Today's Training

- Men with a history of sexual victimization prior to enlisting; no victimization while serving in the military (could be as high as $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{6}$ of all enlisted men—if 155,000 recruits a year—over 25,000 have a history
- Men sexually victimized while serving in the military; no prior history of victimization
- Men with a history of sexual victimization prior to enlisting who are subsequently sexually victimized while serving in the military

Definition: Sexual Victimization/Betrayal

- **Sexual victimization/betrayal** consists of any overt and / or covert sexual behavior(s) by which the abuser **chooses** to take advantage of a power differential with a dependent or vulnerable victim in order to satisfy the abuser's needs.
- Important implication: Victimization does not “happen”
Hurricanes & Tsunamis happen...abuse is a choice made by one person to inflict harm
- Sexual Betrayal: Violation of implicit and explicit trust
– Source: Gartner, R (1999) Betrayed As Boys
- ***Sexual victimization is not “an act of sex”***

Definition: Incest

- Is a form of sexual betrayal
- Different from other types of sexual victimization or betrayal because the perpetrator is believed and trusted to be in the role of a protector of the victim or a family member
- Military personnel who are fellow soldiers or in chain of command are family

Definition: Covert Abuse/Covert Incest/Enmeshment

- Can be as damaging or more damaging as overt abuse—often both forms are present
- Covert or emotional incest or enmeshment refers to times when a parent/caretaker turns to the child for intimacy, companionship, romantic stimulation or substitution for an adult partner, problem solving, emotional fulfillment;
- Covert abuse can also include sexual acts which don't include actual insertion, such as touching the victim's genitals, making sexual comments about the victim's genitals or body, showing pornographic images to the victim or taking sexually explicit or erotic pictures or movies of the victim
- Sexual harassment is a form of covert abuse

Definition: Rape

- A form of sexual victimization that involves “any penetration, no matter how slight, of a man’s mouth or anus by a object or penis without that person’s consent” Source: Scarce, Male on Male Rape, 1977
- Recently FBI has changed their definition of rape so that the gender of the perpetrator and the gender of the victim are not specified
- At least 1 in 8 rape victims are male
- Perhaps the most underreported and unaddressed violent crime
- Gay men (or men perceived to be gay) and African American male rape survivors are overrepresented relative to population percentages
- Weapons frequently used; some use of force or threat of force is almost universal
- Anal penetration is most common form of men with men
- Men & women who rape men do so almost exclusively out of anger or an attempt to overpower, humiliate or degrade their victims
- The United Nations Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict recognizes that rape of men as a war crime.

Military Sexual Trauma

- **Military Sexual Trauma** encompasses sexual assault and sexual harassment. It is physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment (repeated, unsolicited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, which is threatening in character), which occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty or active duty for training (Guard and Reserves). It is the VA term used for patient screening and treatment purposes.
- **NOTE:** All the previous slides describe MST.

In Debate Over Military Sexual Assault, Men Are Overlooked Victims



In Debate Over Military Sexual Assault, Men Are Overlooked Victims



More men are victims...

- **the majority of service members who are sexually assaulted each year are men**
- In its latest report on sexual assault, the Pentagon estimated that 26,300 service members experienced unwanted sexual contact in 2012, up from 19,300 in 2010. Of those cases, the Pentagon says, **53 percent involved attacks on men (13,780), mostly by other men.**
- *¼ of perpetrators were in the victim's chain of command*
- Source: NY Times.com, 6/23/13, RAND review, Farris, Schell, and Tanielian, 7/15/13, and SAPRO Report 2012

Of 1007 graduating cadets in 2013, how many experienced some form of sexual harassment or sexual assault?



SAPRO Report 2013-2014

- 10% of Academy men indicated they perceived some form of sexual harrassment in 2013-2014 at the Academy
- Another 1.1 % experienced unwanted sexual contact
- ANSWER: of 1007, possibly 112! What is the impact on the US Army?

Statistics from Latest RAND study

- RAND Researchers Estimate That, as of Early Fall of 2014, Approximately 20,000 of the U.S. Military's 1.3 Million Active-Duty Members Experienced One or More Sexual Assaults in the Past Year
- This figure includes assaults by other service members, civilians, spouses or others. It represents 4.9 percent of active-duty women and 1 percent of active-duty men.

Statistics from Latest RAND study

- An Estimated 26 Percent of Active-Duty Women and ***7 Percent of Active-Duty Men Experienced Sexual Harassment or Gender Discrimination in the Past Year***
- We estimate that in the Army, almost 1 in 12 men experienced such a violation in the past year
- ***For men, the largest source of problems stem from sexually hostile work environments***, not gender discrimination or sexual quid pro quo.

The Financial Cost:

- \$10,880 on healthcare costs per military sexual assault survivor. Adjusting for inflation, this means that in
- 2010 alone, the VA spent almost \$872 million dollars on sexual assault-related healthcare expenditures.
- \$40,000 average legal expense cost per MST case; 481 courts-martial totaled \$19,000,000+
- **Source:** Service Women's Action Network (SWAN); April 2011 and 2012; Brittany L. Stalsburg

Violated

What gives a man
The right to violate
Another man
So shamefully
To take something away
That cannot be replaced
To destroy a man's future
To take away his manhood
The act seems so small
So insignificant

Violated

- But the burden it has brought
- Is more than I can bear
- Anger
- Rage
- Frustration
- All part of what I feel
- Suicidal
- Over what I lost
- Pain always there
- I don't know how to put this in the past
- Where it belongs
- How to stuff it back
- Deep
- Forever
- *poem by Gregory A Helle, , US Army, SP5, www.pstdalliance.biz
- Republished and used with permission, *Honor Betrayed*, by Mic Hunter

Commonly Reported Acts of MST by Male Survivors

1. Oral rape: Forced to give oral sex (fellatio)
2. Oral rape: Forced to receive oral sex
3. Anal rape (sodomy)
4. Foreign object anal rape (sexual torture)
5. Forced to perform anal sex on perpetrator
6. Forced to masturbate perpetrator or to be masturbated on
7. Physical torture /handcuffed/tied up while the above acts done to the victim
8. Hazing-related abuse-simulated/actual rape
9. Sexual harassment & stalking
10. Gang rape

Common Characteristics of MST Perpetrators

- Male (although some are female)
- Married
- Known to self-identify as heterosexual
- Higher Rank or fellow soldier (s)
- Direct control, or unique relationship with victim
 - Not a stranger to the victim
- Obtains compliance by grooming &/or coercion, *and/or* physical violence
- Existence of belief in stereotypical gender roles for men and women
- Attraction to sexual aggression (rape is exciting)
- Homophobia

In general population, who can be abused or assaulted?

- **Any** boy or man at **any** age
- Average age of first abuse: 10.1 years
- Can occur as early as the diaper changing table
- Use of force, intimidation or threats: 36%
- Covert “seduction”: 43%
- “Participated voluntarily”: 22 %
- Male perpetrators: 61% Female perpetrators: 28% (possibly much higher)
- Both male and female perpetrators: 11%

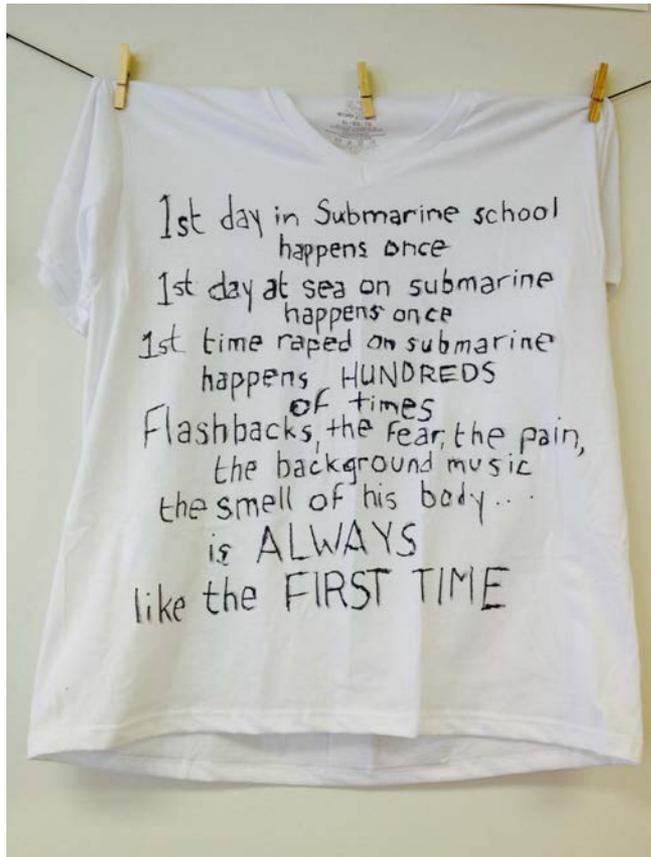
FACTS ABOUT MALE SURVIVORS: DEBUNKING THE MYTHS



What is the image of
a typical male victim of MST
based on what you've heard?

Fact #1: Men are raped by other men

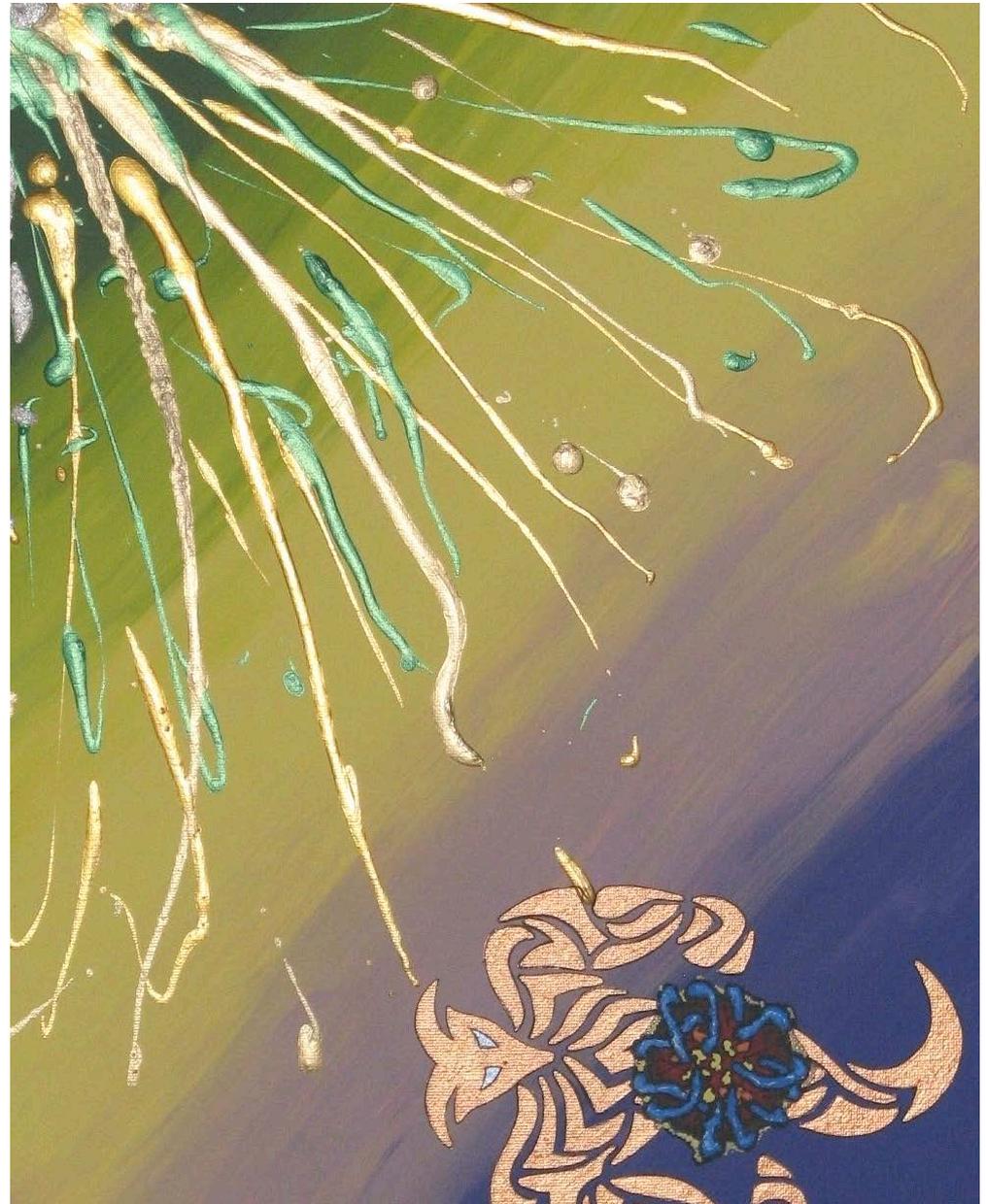
- ***Myth: Boys & men can't be victims***



- Males are able to protect themselves, especially military men!
- *“If you didn't want it, why didn't you stop it?”*

Fact #2

- ***Arousal or ejaculation is a physiological response***
- ***—the myth: pleasure means that he was a willing participant or that he enjoyed the experience***



Fact #3

Most male survivors do not become offenders; a majority of offenders have sexual victimization history

- Myth: Males who are sexually abused will become sexual offenders

-The “Vampire Syndrome”



Fact #4

Fact: Sexual orientation is not determined by sexual abuse

MYTH: Boys who are sexually abused will become gay



dreamstime

Other Important Facts

- **Males Are Traumatized By The Experience Of Sexual Abuse**
- **Most Sexual Abuse Of Males Is Perpetrated By Heterosexual Men**

Other Important Facts



- **Boys Can Be Sexually Abused By A Female, and many are**



For any male who has been sexually abused, and for any institution struggling with a high incidence of sexual victimization, becoming aware of these facts and free of these myths is a necessary first step for healing AND for prevention

What makes MST different from other forms of sexual victimization?

- The Military as a Culture
- Gender Identity and the Military
- Military Cultural Norms about Masculinity

Military Culture

- Boot camp/indoctrination
- Culture and language – sexual and neutral
- Acceptance of violence
- Ability to objectify other humans
- Wartime mentality
- Concept of acceptable loss
- Organization is protected even at the cost of the individual
- Separate worlds – it's a military thing you wouldn't understand
- Obedience to chain of command
 - Is lack of protest consent?

The Military as a Culture

- When a male is raped in the Military:
 - Likely continued contact with the perpetrator—sleep, eat, work, relax
 - No Safe Haven: Sleeping quarters with same gender as the perpetrator (if male)
 - Increases level of fear
 - Threat of death is real:
 - Everyone carries a weapon
 - Trained to kill in combat
 - “Accidents happen” – “killed in crossfire”, “disappear” off ship
 - Career limiting/ending administrative action

Additional Norms Within Military Culture

- ▶ Value placed on secrecy
 - “Classified information”
 - “Need to know basis”
- Value placed on staying “in control”
 - Regardless of stressor
- Family-based Hierarchy
 - Value placed on unit cohesion – e.g., families “stick together no matter what”
 - Do not discuss issues “outside the family”
 - Do not question authority

Military Norms (Cont.)

- Pain is good – a necessary part of becoming more manly
 - Pain is weakness leaving the body
 - No pain, no gain

Gender Identity and the Military

The Military Culture Taps into Cultural and Gender Prototypes:

1) The Good Soldier

2) The “Real” Man

Military Cultural Norms About Masculinity

- Men receive implicit and explicit messages that “A Good Soldier” is:

Military Cultural Norms About Masculinity

- Similar to a good soldier, men receive messages that a “Real Man” is:

Being a “good soldier” & a “good man”

- Military Sexual Trauma shatters both categories for men:
 - They lose their status as a good soldier
 - They lose their status as a man

Dynamics and Lasting Effects of Sexual Trauma For Males

The Influence of BETRAYAL



- Many boy victims – and most MST victims - know their offender
- Remember: Being sexually assaulted by a fellow service member is betrayal of trust and a violation of the code of protecting each other

Dynamics of sexual betrayal/victimization in general

- Multiple acts of violation by the same person or a # of different perpetrators is very common-although even one instance is enough
- Grooming is common
- Most perpetrators are known to victim and his family (in military, all are “family”)
- For those abused in childhood, all children normally seek and need attention
- Submitting is very different than consenting
- Men typically frame abuse done to them when they were younger as when they were initiated or taught about sex

Other Dynamics of Sexual Betrayal/Victimization

- Men's bodies normally react to genital stimulation: men can be aroused and anxious or scared
 - a boy or man having an erection or orgasm can feel like his own body betrayed him;
 - AND perpetrators use this “evidence” to convince victims they “wanted” it;
- Men often are threatened to have the abuse told to others, which can be terrifying
 - boys/men should be in control – if a male offender, they are weak; if perpetrator is a female, there is great shame

Other Dynamics of Sexual Betrayal/Victimization

- Threatening if a man thinks he is gay or different and he was abused by a male (his secret will be exposed and he will face certain rejection)
- Threatening if a man believes he is heterosexual and has any sensation of pleasure, he then may be even more embarrassed, confused, shame-filled and/or angry
- Responses based on fearful thinking
 - I am bad or dirty or sinful or
 - I will be labeled weak or a sissy or queer, regardless of sexual orientation
- Males are led to believe if abused, they will become abusers
- SHAME and SECRECY are universal outcomes

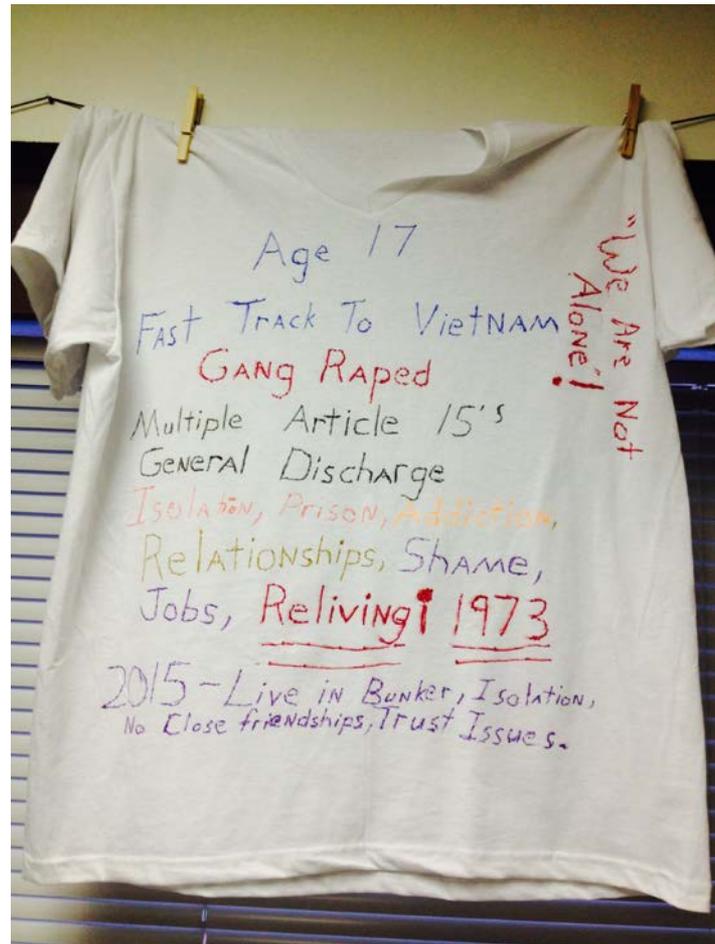
Lasting Effects



Lasting Effects

- Damaged self-esteem, depression, suicidality, and problems with compulsive and addictive behaviors
- Problems with feeling anything
 - being numb
 - problems with having control over one's and other people's feelings
 - over-controlling of emotions
- Cognitive consequences:
 - tendency to minimize
 - tendency to view self negatively
 - self-blame

Lasting Effects



Lasting Effects

- Pervasive problems/confusion around gender comfort/security—
 - Hyper-masculinity
 - sexuality and sexual orientation confusion
 - problems with sexual functioning
 - confusion about the role of sex in intimacy
 - body image problems
- Interpersonal problems:
 - isolation
 - alienation
 - troubles trusting ANYONE
 - avoidance or sabotage of intimacy

Association of Sexual Trauma with PTSD Prevalence

- Women more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD overall (across all traumas)
- *But*, 65% of men & 46% women develop PTSD following adult sexual assault
- Some evidence to suggest that **assaulted men tend to report more trauma symptomology than women**

Association of Sexual Trauma with PTSD

Prevalence:

Probability of Developing PTSD

- Sexual trauma is a particularly toxic stressor for men

	Rape	Combat	Molestation	Physical Abuse
Women	45.9%	--	26.5%	48.5%
Men	65.0%	38.8%	22.2%	22.3%

(Kessler et al, 1995)

Association of Sexual Trauma with PTSD

Prevalence:

Study of Gulf War Veterans

Probability of Developing PTSD

Sexual trauma is a particularly toxic stressor for men (cont.)

	MST	Combat
Women	5x higher	4x higher
Men	6x higher	4x higher

(Kang et al., 2005)

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SEXUAL ABUSE



The primary difference between male & female victims of sexual abuse emerges from differences in gender socialization & the different response (self & others) to the sexual abuse

Males Are Less Likely to Identify As A “Victim” After Being Sexually Abused



- For many males, “victim” and “male” is an oxymoron

Males Are Inclined to Internalize Responsibility for Their Sexual Abuse

- Upon disclosure of abuse, males are more frequently scrutinized for their potential responsibility in their victimization & accept more self-blame



Males are likely to engage in denial and minimization

Men tend to deny sexual victimization has caused any damage, because of male socialization when they learn to deny pain and suffering

Even if they do seek therapy, they are much less likely to bring up their abuse, and much less likely to want to spend any significant time talking about it

Barriers to Seeking Help and Reporting



Barriers to Help Seeking

- Military men tend not to seek treatment for various reasons:

Limited Awareness

- Qualities and skills reinforced and rewarded as a soldier lower veteran's awareness that help is needed:
 - Suppression of pain
 - Numbing of fear
 - Misrecognition of fear as anger
 - Intolerance of weakness
 - Alcohol abuse /dependency

Barriers to Help Seeking: Disclosure perceived as risky

- Common Responses to Disclosure and fears about disclosure:
 - “Are you gay?” or fear of being labeled gay
 - Fear of being labeled unmanly:
 - A) “Why didn’t you fight him off?”
 - B) “You’re not a real man.”
 - Denial by others/minimization or not being believed
 - Fear of increased sexual victimization/retribution by offender or offender’s comrades (1/4 of perpetrators in chain of command)
 - Offender perceived as “family”; therefore being disloyal to family member, with risky consequences-ie prosecution of offender
 - Fear of being revictimized in the military justice system
 - I won’t have a counselor who will understand or be supportive and might even shame me

Barriers to Help Seeking

It wasn't rape because:

- It was perceived as consensual
 - This argument especially effective if victim asks assailant to wear a condom
 - And some assailants will wear a condom to avoid leaving DNA
- I should have controlled it
 - i.e., protected myself - therefore it was my failure, not an assault
- I experienced sexual pleasure
 - (some offenders seek to get victim to ejaculate->increases sense
- NOTE: sexual arousal and ejaculation CAN be involuntary physiological response

More barriers to reporting

- Fear of retaliation or reprisal (47% in SAPRO Annual Report, 2012)
- Having heard about the negative experiences of other victims who reported their situation
- (43% in SAPRO Annual Report, 2012)
- 60% of males perceived one or more barriers to reporting sexual assault (SAPRO Report, 2012)
- 62% of victims who reported a sexual assault indicated they experienced professional, social or administrative retaliation (SAPRO Report, 2012)

The story of Steve Stovey

- What might have stopped Steve from telling his father?
- What might have stopped Steve from reporting?
- What might have stopped him from seeking help?

What the military can do

- “As leaders of the department of defense, we share a commitment to an environment free from sexual violence and sexual harassment. In order to retain and attract the best people with the best skills, everyone must know that these closely related behaviors have no place in the military. The force of the future is one that leverages our culture of dignity and respect to prevent crime and other improper behaviors, as well as support those who make the difficult choice to report them.”
 - *Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter*

What the Military Can Do

- 1) Address denial of the problem as you are doing today
- EX: Current mandatory SHARP training does not include a single case example of male on male sexual assault-why?
- 2) More visible outreach to male MST victims
- Starting with publicizing that MOST MST victims are men

What the Military Can Do

- 3) Establish easily accessible individual therapy and therapy groups for male MST victims: Healing of shame is best promoted in community
- 4) Males have different needs: important to train all health care and support providers on the unique needs of male MST victims
- 5) Consider offering specialized Weekends of Recovery for male MST survivors

What the Military Can Do

- 6) Ensure the safety of men who do report victimization—ie no opportunity for retaliation
- 7) Give them the option of being reassigned to another position away from the perpetrators that is of equal pay and position to the one they have
- 8) Investigate why the majority of cases never get reported (9.8% in 2012); go to trial; and why conviction rate is dropping (.9% in 2012 according to SAPRO)—can victims get better legal help?

What the military can do

- It must be communicated that it takes courage and strength to ask for help
- It must be communicated that help is readily available from trained, sensitive therapists who can help them feel safe to speak
- It must be communicated that what they share will be kept confidential until they are ready to report

What can male MST survivors do to get the help they need?

- Male MST survivors need help in recognizing what was done to them –it may be extremely difficult to deal with on their own
- Male MST survivors need help in accepting that safe help is available, and they are worthy of asking for all the help they need
- Male MST survivors need help in understanding the range of feelings, reactions, and behaviors they are engaging in are normal given what was done to them and the lack of support in the environment

What can male MST survivors do to get the help they need?

- Male MST survivors can reach outside of the military for help; for example, www.malesurvivor.org has a forum /bulletin board for military survivors
- Male MST survivors can be taught about how to discriminate who is a safe person to talk with (R-Y-G)
- Male MST survivors can learn how to offer themselves exquisite self compassion

Programs MaleSurvivor Offers

- www.malesurvivor.org
 - Weekends of Recovery-3 day program
 - Moderated chat room and Healing Circles
 - Bulletin boards—***Special board for military survivors***
 - Resources for support: Therapists listing; listing of support groups; library of articles for professionals, survivors and allies; bookstore
 - Bi-annual conference in NYC (October 31-November 2, 2014)
 - Professional training programs
 - Dare to Dream, our public awareness programs
 - Mini-one day Weekend of Recovery programs

www.malesurvivor.org



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We are committed to preventing, healing, and eliminating all forms of sexual victimization of boys and men through support, treatment, research, education, advocacy, and



Male Survivor is
Committed

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Resources for Sexual Abuse / Assault - US and International Rape Crisis Centers and Hotlines

MaleSurvivor does not provide crisis services or intervention. If you are in immediate danger, or if you know a child is in danger, please call 911. If it is not an emergency situation, contact a local rape crisis center or family services agency in your state. Many times reports can be filed anonymously, if that is a concern. For information on resources please consult our list of state agencies below.

Information provided here does not imply that MaleSurvivor endorses the

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Survivors

You are not alone. Welcome to the MaleSurvivor community, which provides resources and support for men who were sexually victimized as children, adolescents, or young men.

- MaleSurvivor discussion forums provide safe, moderated, online community where survivors can connect to get support for healing
- Chat room on the website hosts “Healing Circles” that allows survivors to access a peer group even if there is not one they can find locally
- A number of subgroups for Military Survivors, Adult Abuse Survivors, GLBTQ & more.

Military Survivors

The purpose of this forum is to give users of this site who have a connection to service in the armed forces a place to come together whether suffered during their time in the military or in their childhood. Please keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. This is a PUBLIC forum. Topics and discussions are viewable to all visitors to the website.
2. This forum is not intended to be a place for political argument. This forum is meant to be a resource for those users with so looking for a safe place to share their stories.
3. If you are currently serving, take care not to disclose any information that would give clues to your location.
4. Please do not disclose your rank, in here all survivors are considered equal.

[New Topic](#) [Forum Options](#) ▼

		Subject / Poster		Replies	Views
		Tips for those struggling w/news coverage of abuse by Chris Anderson		0	8654
		Advice from Dr. Fradkin re: Sandusky Case by Chris Anderson		0	3724
		From new Exec Dir. Chris Anderson (a.k.a tartugas) by Chris Anderson		0	3609
		The Purpose of the Introductions Forum by WalkingSouth		0	7448
		Chat use Guidelines by WalkingSouth		0	19270
		Site use Guidelines by WalkingSouth		0	18404
		New? Familiarize yourself with what we offer by ModTeam		0	16961
		Dept. of Defense/RAINN team up to offer helpline by WalkingSouth		0	284
		About the military system and the Death Penalty... by WayTooConfused		0	68
		US Airforce in the news			

www.malesurvivor.org

Weekends of Recovery

Currently 6 Weekends/Year in locations all over North America



- Unique healing experiences for survivors.
- Staffed by expert team of trained facilitators
- We can work w/groups to create WoR's specifically for individual populations.

Q AND A/WRAP UP

