



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION  
AND RESPONSE OFFICE**



## **FACT SHEET: DoD PLAN TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MILITARY MEN**

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### **Overview**

Sexual assault destroys unit cohesion and threatens the readiness of our troops by eroding bonds of trust that make our military strong and effective. The *DoD Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men* is the culmination of Secretary of Defense-directed initiatives to address sexual assault prevention and response for military men. It meets Congressional mandates outlined in Section 538 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The Plan will guide development of research-informed, gender-specific techniques to increase Service member understanding of how sexual assault affects men; ensure DoD response services meet the needs of Service men; and encourage Service men's engagement with the response system.

Military men experience sexual assault differently than military women. In many cases, military men indicate their sexual assault occurs in the context of hazing incidents, during duty hours, and in their workplace. Stereotypes about masculinity sometimes deter men from coming forward to receive supportive care and participate in the justice system. Therefore, few men in either the military or the civilian sector report sexual assault. It is not uncommon for Service men to ignore, repress, or avoid disclosure and help-seeking for years – sometimes even decades. When men do report, an uncompassionate reaction by friends, family, and the community can compound the harm men experienced from the initial sexual assault.

The DoD recognizes its unique role in developing approaches that reduce the occurrence of sexual assault, improve support, and hold offenders appropriately accountable. The *DoD Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men* will significantly expand what the Department can do to prevent and respond to the sexual assault of men.

### **Objectives**

The *DoD Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men* describes four objectives that align to mandates in the FY16 NDAA:

1. Develop a unified communications plan to extend outreach to military men
2. Improve Service member understanding of sexual assault against men
3. Ensure existing support services meet the needs of male Service members who experience sexual assault
4. Develop metrics to assess prevention and response efforts pertaining to men who experience sexual assault

### **Implementation**

The Department convened a working group of subject matter experts during the first quarter of FY17 to develop implementation action plans for each of the Plan's objectives. Implementation actions will commence during the second quarter of FY17 and continue over the next few years.