



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE OFFICE



FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT PERPETRATED AGAINST MEN

Military men experience sexual assault perpetrated by men and women

Perpetrators of sexual assault are most often men. However, in a 2016 force-wide survey, about a third of military men indicated that a woman was involved as a perpetrator of their sexual assault.ⁱ

Men are more likely than women to experience sexual assault in the form of hazing or bullying

According to a 2016 force-wide survey, when compared to military women, military men are more likely to characterize their sexual assault as hazing or bullying, indicate the incident occurred at work during duty hours, and experience multiple incidents in the past year. Additionally, men are less likely to indicate that they or their alleged offender used alcohol at the time of the incident.ⁱ

Men of all sexual orientations are sexually assaulted

Men of all sexual orientations may experience sexual assault.ⁱⁱ However, evidence indicates that anti-gay violence leads some perpetrators to target other men, even if those targets aren't necessarily gay.ⁱⁱⁱ

Men can have unexpected reactions during traumatic events

Anyone who experiences a traumatic event can encounter unexpected and surprising physiological and psychological reactions. Typically, these changes prepare us to cope with the event, which is often interpreted as a threat to our safety. Sometimes when people feel trapped or restrained, they find themselves unable to move or speak during the event.^{iv} Men can experience erections or even ejaculate in response to unwanted physical stimuli, including sexual assault.^v None of these physical reactions is an indication of consent.

Men and women alike can experience difficulties after a sexual assault

As a consequence of sexual assault, both men and women may experience depression, intimacy issues, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, anger, shame, embarrassment, and guilt. Men also face unique challenges reconciling their masculine identity after a sexual assault.^{vi,vii}

Men are less likely than women to report sexual assault

According to DoD statistical estimates, only 17% of military men reported their sexual assault in fiscal year 2016, compared to 43% of military women.^{viii} Furthermore, when military men reported their sexual assault, they indicated experiencing less satisfaction than women with the services they received and their leadership's response.^v

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