



April 2017
Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month



"Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission"

April is recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM) across the country by both civilian and military communities. The month is an opportunity to highlight robust efforts to care for victims and innovative ways we are working to infuse prevention practices into our daily mission.

What can we do? This year's theme offers numerous opportunities to deliver messages which relate to how we care for each other while ensuring we are ready to accomplish our mission.

- **"Protecting our People..."** Each of us has a role in ensuring the men and women around us can live and work free from the threat of sexual assault.
 - *Each Service member – regardless of rank -- must know, understand and adhere to Service values and standards of behavior in order to eliminate sexual assault and other inappropriate behavior.*
 - *Addressing sexual harassment in a unit is an important step to preventing sexual assaults, since many victims of sexual harassment, especially men, later experience a sexual assault.*
 - *Understanding how to recognize opportunities for intervention is vital to stopping unsafe behavior, to include any form of retaliation.*
- **"...Protects our Mission."** In addition to the devastating impact on an individual, a sexual assault can severely impact a unit's readiness to perform its mission.
 - *We must encourage positive behaviors by recognizing acts that contribute to a supportive command climate.*
 - *We can protect our mission by ensuring everyone within DoD is committed to advancing an environment where sexist behaviors, sexual harassment, hazing, bullying, and sexual assault are not tolerated, condoned, or ignored.*

Potential SAAPM Initiatives: Every echelon of DoD has a role in fighting sexual assault and other crimes. Activities such as these below can be started during SAAPM and sustained all year.

Echelon	Initiatives
US Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with local advocacy, care and response organizations to increase prevention efforts and maintain robust victim care.
DoD Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host a workshop to address healthy relationships, social skills, and coping mechanisms to foster resiliency and reduce potential impact on readiness.• Develop an MOU with area bar/restaurant owners on protocols for assisting Service members who have had too much to drink.
Installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feature Service members and civilians in ads and posters with them completing the statement "I'm protecting our mission by ..."• Develop month-long calendar of announcements and visits by officer and enlisted leadership across the installation laying out clear commitment to prevention and response.
Military Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designate topics for small group discussions within the unit on key SAPR topics, such as prevention, male assaults, and retaliation, with call to identify approaches to address.• Solicit and recognize Service member-driven ideas for innovative prevention initiatives.• Discuss with unit leaders if/how SAPR messaging needs to be tailored for unique groups.
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share phone numbers within a unit of those who could pick up a peer "no questions asked" if they have had too much to drink.• Develop a signal for letting fellow Service members know a peer would like to be interrupted in an uncomfortable situation at a bar or party.
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make known your commitment to step in if a dangerous situation is unfolding.• Offer ideas to unit leaders on what could be done work to advance prevention.• Volunteer at a local school or college (with ROTC units) to educate our future leaders about expectations of their role in fighting sexual assault.• Review personal social media postings to ensure consistent with values of dignity and respect.