

Building Hope & Resiliency: Addressing the Effects of Sexual Assault

A self-guided educational program

What is *Building Hope & Resiliency: Addressing the Effects of Sexual Assault*?

Building Hope & Resiliency: Addressing the Effects of Sexual Assault is a self-guided, online, educational program that seeks to help individuals begin to recover, heal and build resiliency after a sexual assault. The development of this educational program was directed by the Secretary of Defense in 2015 in order to meet the needs of the Department of Defense (DoD) community, including cadets and midshipman, who may have been victims of sexual assault or abuse prior to entering military service. Recognizing the impact that trauma can have on an individual, this program is part of a comprehensive effort to enhance individual and collective resilience and improve readiness across the Total Force. The program is designed to be completed at the user's pace and features definitions, helpful information about coping mechanisms, practical relaxation exercises, and links to resources and referrals for on-going support. Also included is a brief, optional self-assessment for users to gauge how effective their current coping strategies are and whether they may benefit from additional support and resources.

Background

Research shows that some Service members, including cadets and midshipmen, have experienced sexual abuse and sexual assault prior to joining the military¹. According to the *DoD Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*, approximately 10% (556 reports) of Service member victim reports involved incidents that occurred prior to military service.² In order to support these individuals, the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), via a contract with the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), developed and deployed this anonymous, self-guided educational program.

Building Hope & Resiliency leverages RAINN's 20 years of experience in providing direct services to survivors and incorporates current research on resilience and strengths-based perspectives to support those using the program as they work to restore resiliency and hope.

Goals of the Program

The instructional goals of *Building Hope & Resiliency* include:

- Validate the struggle and adversity that individuals who have experienced sexual assault face.
- Empower users in their healing journey.
- Build knowledge of exercises that can enhance a user's ability to cope with the short- and long-term effects of sexual assault.

¹ Blossnich, J. R., Dichter, M. E., Cerulli, C., Batten, S. V., & Bossarte, R. M. (2014). Disparities in adverse childhood experiences among individuals with a history of military service. *JAMA psychiatry*, 71(9), 1041-1048.

² Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. (2017). *Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*. Retrieved from http://www.sapro.mil/public/docs/reports/FY15_Annual/Appendix_B_Statistical_Data_on_Sexual_Assault.pdf

- Increase awareness and understanding of, and access to, available mental healthcare resources.
- Inspire hope for continuing personal growth.

What can a user expect when participating in the program?

The program consists of five self-paced modules. The user can decide when they want to access the program and how long they wish to spend on each module. The entire course will take approximately one hour to complete. The program is accessible via the [Safe Helpline website](http://www.safehelpline.org) (www.safehelpline.org) and the [Safe Helpline App](#) to ensure that anyone in the worldwide DoD community can easily access the content. In order to protect a user's anonymity, no personally identifiable information will be collected or stored, so users can feel safe and secure accessing the program. After completing the course, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates credentialed through the Defense Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP) can complete the course completion survey and provide their contact information in order to receive a certificate for one (1) hour of continuing education credit.

Module 1 – What Does Sexual Assault Look Like?

Individuals who have experienced sexual assault may have difficulty labeling what happened to them. This module provides examples and information of what sexual assault may look like to help users find language to describe their own story.

Topics include:

- Understanding sexual assault
- Defining consent
- Resources

Module 2 – What Are the Effects of Sexual Assault?

This module provides information that describes the body's response to trauma and explains different symptoms that survivors may experience. This information is intended to normalize and validate the user's individual experience, in order to help them develop a greater understanding of their personal triggers, and to deepen their self-awareness as they begin the healing process.

Topics include:

- Potential responses to trauma
- Emotional and physical symptoms a survivor may experience
- Behavior changes that may occur after trauma
- Triggers and how they can impact a survivor's healing process

Module 3 – How Can I Heal?

Trauma can affect an individual in profound ways. Sometimes, it can impact their relationships with others. This module highlights the characteristics of healthy relationships and equips users with tools to examine their personal boundaries within their own interpersonal interactions. The lesson also introduces realistic and practical coping mechanisms to help users gain control of their recovery. Users have the option to take a brief assessment to determine the effectiveness of their current coping strategies and whether they might benefit from additional support and resources.

Topics include:

- Post-traumatic personal growth
- Recognizing strengths and positive emotions
- Coping strategies
- Healthy relationships
- Supportive resources and therapy

Module 4 – Relaxation Exercises

This module provides examples of relaxation exercises for users who feel triggered or overwhelmed in the moment. The exercises are just a few of the many that users may explore to determine what works best for them.

Topics include:

- Body awareness
- Muscle relaxation
- Mindful breathing

Module 5 – Resources and References

This module provides both military and non-military related resources to individuals who want to explore on-going support. This section also includes program content references for those who found certain sections particularly helpful and want to learn more. The information provided empowers the user to make the best choices for themselves and their recovery.

Topics include:

- Military resources
- Non-military resources
- All cited work within the program

How can a user access the online program?

Users can learn about and anonymously access the online program both on a computer and on a mobile device. To access the program a user can visit the Building Hope page on the Safe Helpline website <https://www.safehelpline.org/building-hope-and-resiliency>.

Users that use the Safe Helpline app can also access the online program directly through the app page titled Building Hope in the “Learn” section of the app. To learn more about the Safe Helpline app and how to download it to your mobile device visit <https://www.safehelpline.org/about-mobile>.

The program is compatible with all standard browsers and iOS and Android devices, including older versions of Internet Explorer.

From the Building Hope specific webpage or Safe Helpline app, a user can access the program by clicking on the “Get Started” button at the top of the page. The user will then be redirected to <https://safehelpline.rainntrain.org>.

Step 1.

The user will be directed to <https://safehelpline.rainntrain.org> where they will click the “register here” option to create a new account.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the DoD Safe Helpline website. At the top left is the logo with the text "DoD Safe Helpline Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community". To the right, it says "24/7 Secure. Worldwide. Confidential." Below the logo is a navigation bar with "HOME". In the top right corner, it says "You are not logged in. Language: English". The main content area has two paragraphs of text: "If you are registering for a D-SAAPC Continuing Education credit you will need to provide some personal information when registering." and "If you are NOT registering for D-SAAPC Continuing Education credit, do NOT provide any personally identifiable information when registering." To the right of this text is a registration form with fields for "Username:" and "Password (case-sensitive):", a "Login" button, and links for "To create an account, register here." and "I forgot my password."

Step 2.

The user will be asked to provide a first and last name; note that a pseudonym should be used to maintain confidentiality. The user will next create a username and password that does not contain PII. Users should choose a username and password that they will remember so they can return and access the program again at a later date. Once they enter a username and password, the user will click “Create account” at the bottom of the page. Once set, these credentials will allow the user to start, stop, and return to any section of the program at any time.

Language: English ↕



Create User Account

DETAILS



If you are registering for a D-SAACP Continuing Education credit please provide your real name and an email address that you regularly check in order to receive your certificate of completion.

If you are NOT registering for a D-SAACP Continuing Education credit, do **NOT** provide any personally identifiable information. Do **NOT** provide your real name or an email address.

Click **My Account** to see the courses. If you don't see any, wait a few minutes and check again.

Required items are marked with an asterisk ().*

Name: * First Name: Middle Name: * Last Name:

Email:

* **Username:**

- Must be at least 6 characters and no more than 25 characters.
- Cannot contain 'admin' or 'administrator'.
- Cannot contain a social security number.

* **Password:**

- Must be at least 6 characters and no more than 25 characters.
- Cannot contain 'password', '123456', '654321' or contain the username.

Confirm by entering again:

Local Time Zone: (GMT -5:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada) ↕

Company:

Address: Street Address:

City: State/Province: Postal Code:

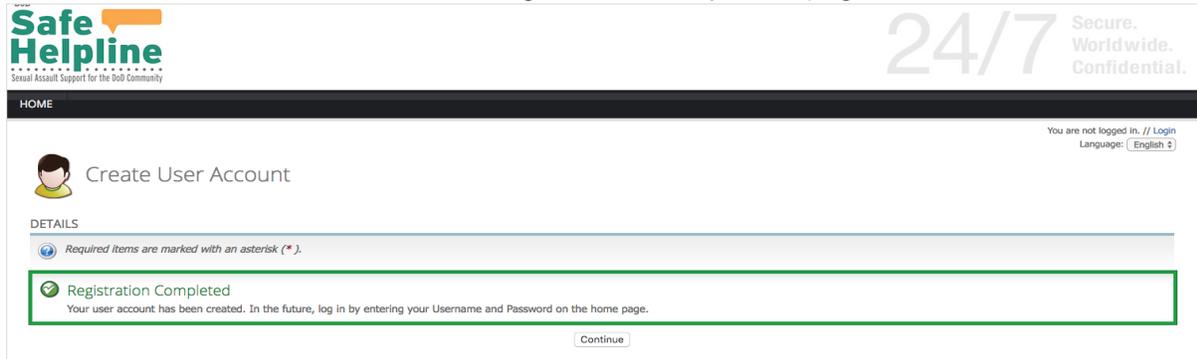
Country: UNITED STATES ↕

Phone Number(s): Primary Phone:

Build 4.15.0700 © 2002-2017 ICS Learning Group

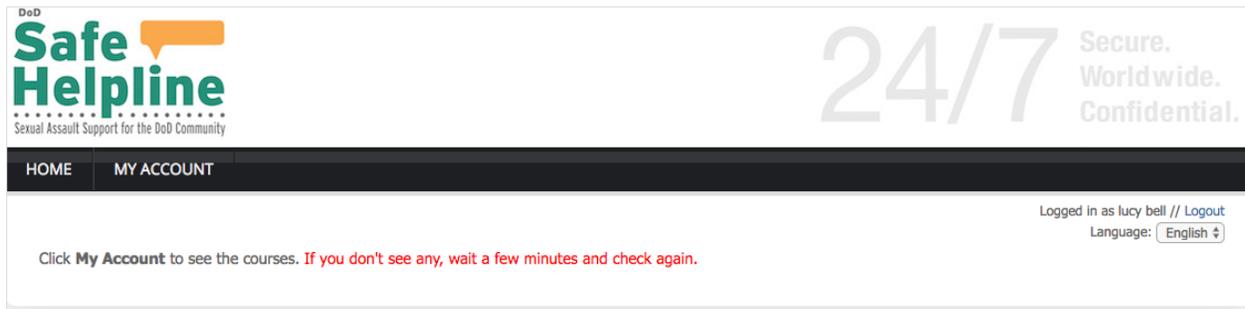
Step 3.

The user will then be directed to the “Registration Completed” page and should click “Continue.”



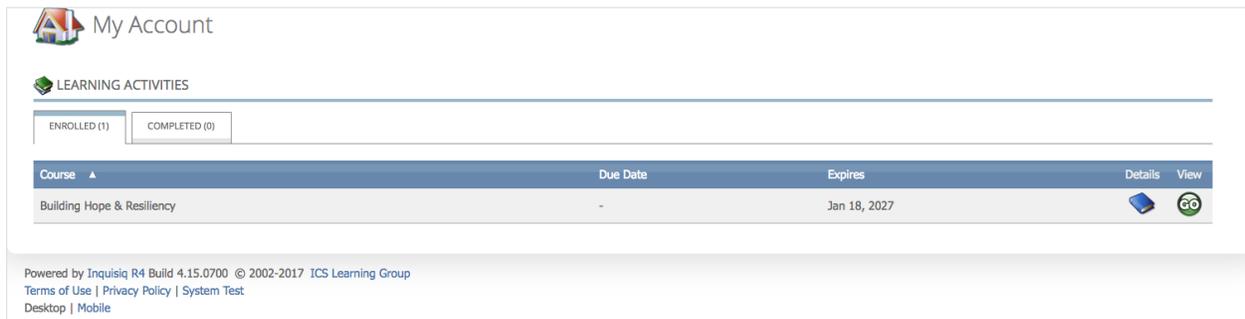
Step 4.

The user may now select “My Account” at the top of the page to view their account details.



Step 4.

From the “My Account” page, the user will click the “Enrolled” tab where the program, *Building Hope & Resiliency*, will be listed. Click the “Go” button to launch a new window and begin the program.



Step 5.

Once an account is created, users can easily come back and access the program as many times as they need by visiting the [Safe Helpline website](#) or app page and signing in with their already created username and password.

