



Survey of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at the Military Service Academies

Overview Report

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Survey of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at the Military Service Academies

Overview Report

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The Office of People Analytics (OPA) is indebted to numerous people for their assistance on the *2024 Service Academy Gender¹ Relations Survey (2024 SAGR)*, which was conducted on behalf of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. The *SAGR* program is conducted under the leadership of Dr. Rachel Lipari, Director of OPA’s Health and Resilience (H&R) Research Division. The *2024 SAGR* project team included Ms. Lisa Davis, Deputy Director of H&R, Mr. W. Xav Klauberg, Senior Research Psychologist, H&R, and Dr. Austin Lawhead, Senior Applied Anthropologist, H&R, and Ms. Kimberly Hylton, Chief of Survey Operations and Methodology, Data Science, Statistics, and Survey Support (DS4).

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¹ Since 2006, the SAGR survey used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is firmly committed to eradicating sexual harassment and sexual assault in its ranks, including at the military service academies (MSAs). Accordingly, DoD seeks to continually expand, evaluate, and improve sexual assault and sexual harassment programs and resources at the MSAs. In a February 2022 memorandum, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD[P&R]) stated that “sexual assault and sexual harassment have no place at our MSAs, and we must continue efforts to prevent and reduce these behaviors and foster academy climates of dignity and respect...” (Department of Defense, 2022a). More broadly, these commitments serve to further the 2022 National Defense Strategy’s fifth of five dimensions designed to build “enduring advantages” in the Defense enterprise; that of cultivating and investing in the DoD workforce (Department of Defense, 2022b). The *2024 Service Academy Gender² Relations (SAGR) Survey (2024 SAGR)* is a key source of information for evaluating these programs at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA).

In response to the *2022 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* results, then Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin issued a memorandum on March 10, 2023 titled “Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault at the Military Service Academies,” directing the academies to: (1) conduct On-Site Installation Evaluations (OSIE) at the MSAs; (2) develop a MSA implementation plan for the Department’s prevention workforce and leadership requirements; (3) champion the Department’s climate assessment process; (4) broaden the skills of MSA leaders to assess and act on climate factors impacting their cadet/midshipman units; (5) communicate the importance of military justice reforms; (6) implement a “Return to Health” policy; (7) incorporate the latest Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) policies to align with SAPR-related prevention and training efforts, encourage reporting, and improve victim support; and (8) issue policy on the physical separation of cadet and midshipman survivors of sexual assault and alleged perpetrators (Department of Defense, 2023a). Further, in August 2023, Secretary Austin issued the memorandum “Actions to Transform the Climate and Help Prevent Harmful Behaviors at the U.S. Military Service Academies,” directing the MSAs to take transformational actions to reverse recent upward trends of sexual assault and harassment at the MSAs (Department of Defense, 2023b). One of these actions directed the formation of the MSA Climate Transformation Task Force (CTTF). The CTTF is composed of senior military and civilian personnel from each military department and academy, in addition to other members of DoD leadership, with the direction to enhance cooperation on improving the climate and integrated prevention efforts at the MSAs, by focusing on reshaping the culture and addressing root causes of sexual violence at the academies. The *2024 SAGR* provides early insights into the impacts of the implementation of these plans of action.

² Since 2006, the SAGR survey used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

Background

The *2024 SAGR*, conducted by the Health and Resilience Division within the Office of People Analytics (OPA), is the 11th of a series of surveys mandated by Title 10, United States Code, Sections 7461, 8480, and 9461. The survey results include the estimated prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination; students' perceptions of academy culture with respect to sexual assault and sexual harassment; and perceptions of program effectiveness in reducing or preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment. Estimated prevalence rates should not be construed as legal crime victimization rates in the absence of an investigation being conducted to determine a verified outcome.

DoD's weighted response rate for the *2024 SAGR* was 88% (94% for women, 86% for men).³ USMA respondents included 848 women (88% response rate) and 2,526 men (75% response rate); USNA respondents included 1,228 women (96% response rate) and 2,773 men (92% response rate); and USAFA respondents included 1,154 women (97% response rate) and 2,590 men (93% response rate). These response rates are not only very high compared to other survey efforts, but the highest in the history of the *SAGR* project, underscoring not only the accuracy of this report's estimates, but the importance of the *SAGR* data collection methodology in delivering these response rates.

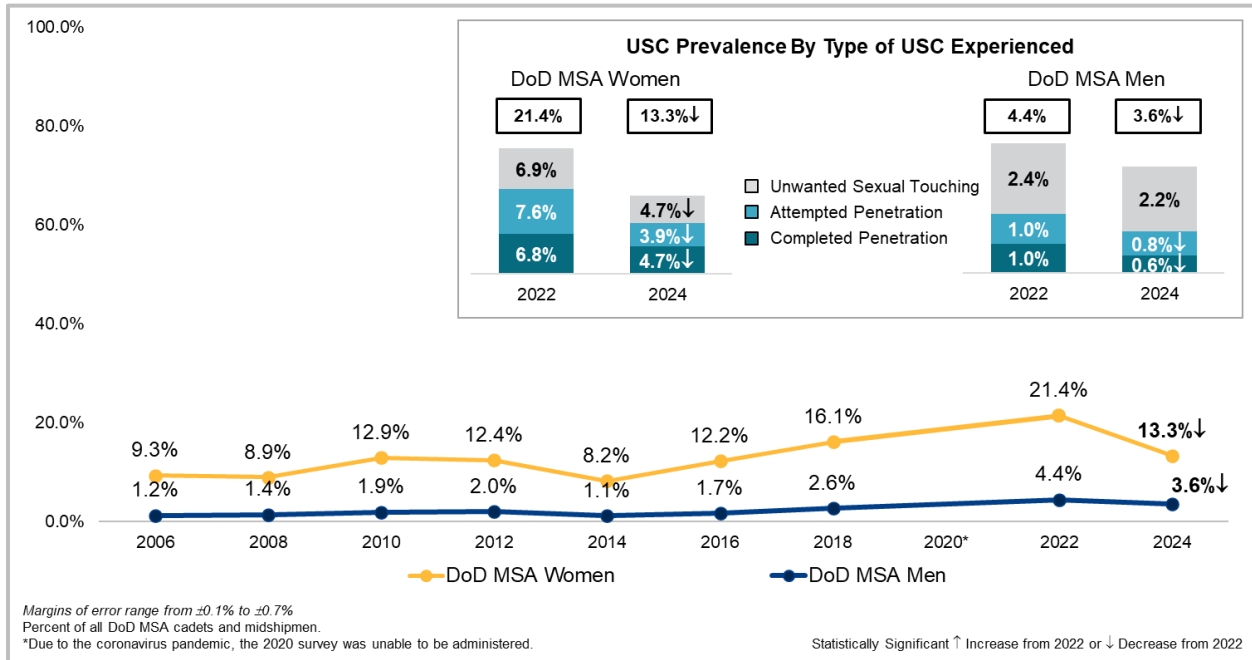
Summary of Topline Results

Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Prevalence Rates

As detailed in chapter 1 of the report, unwanted sexual contact (USC) includes completed or attempted unwanted sexual intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, penetration by a finger or object, or unwanted sexual touching. Students were asked about experiences of USC between June 2023 and the time they took the survey, representing the past academic program year (APY 2023–2024).

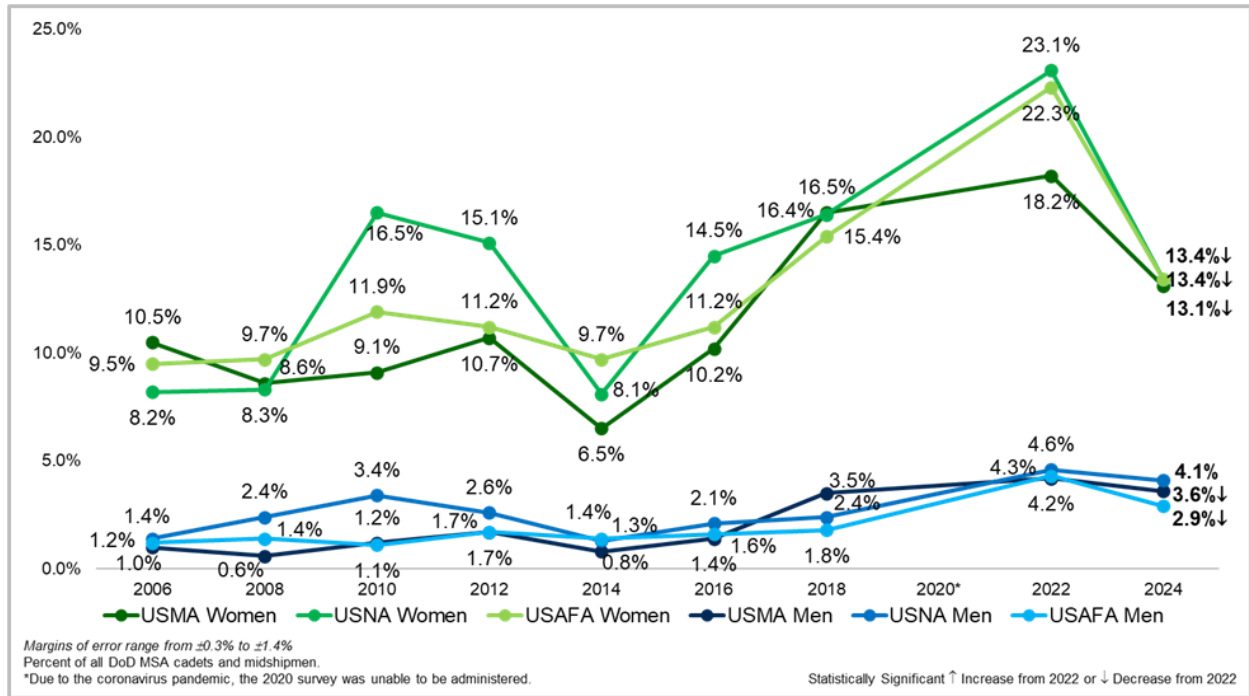
³ Please see chapter 1 for more information on how sex was constructed for these comparison groups (i.e., estimates presented for MSA men and women).

Figure 1.
Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Rate



- An estimated 13.3% of DoD MSA women (457 cadets/midshipmen) and 3.6% of DoD MSA men (327 cadets/midshipmen) experienced USC in the past APY (Figure 1). These estimates reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the rate for women was 21.4% and 4.4% for men.
 - For USMA, an estimated 13.1% of women (126 cadets) and 3.6% of men (124 cadets) experienced USC in the past APY (Figure 2). These estimates reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the rate for women was 18.2% and 4.2% for men.
 - For USNA, an estimated 13.4% of women (172 midshipmen) and 4.1% of men (123 midshipmen) experienced USC in the past APY. These estimates reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the rate for women was 23.1% and 4.6% for men.
 - For USAFA, an estimated 13.4% of women (159 cadets) and 2.9% of men (81 cadets) experienced USC in the past APY. These estimates reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the rate for women was 22.3% and 4.3% for men.

Figure 2.
Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Rate by Academy



Experiences of Unwanted Sexual Contact

To better understand the circumstances involved in their experiences, Academy students who experienced USC⁴ were asked to provide additional information regarding this experience.⁵ In addition to discerning what behaviors occurred in the one worst situation (type of USC involved in the one situation), students were asked to provide details regarding characteristics of the alleged offender(s), when and where the one situation happened, experiences following the one situation of USC, and whether they chose to report the incident.

- The majority of MSA women who experienced USC in the past year described the alleged offender in the one worst situation as a singular person, who was male, an academy student, often in the same class year, and someone they knew from class or another activity. MSA women indicated the one situation of USC often took place on academy grounds in a dormitory or living area, or some other location off academy grounds, and most often after duty hours on a weekend or holiday. Approximately one-third of MSA women were victimized (e.g., sexually harassed, stalked, or sexually assaulted) by the same alleged offender before (33%) or after (34%) the

⁴ Experience of USC is determined by endorsement by the respondent of at least one USC behavior in the past APY as presented on the survey.

⁵ Although some students may have experienced more than one USC event, follow-up questions on details about only one event with the greatest impact were asked to minimize survey burden. The event chosen is regarded as the “worst situation” throughout the report.

USC one situation and 50% of situations involved alcohol use by the victim and/or alleged offender.

- The majority of MSA men who experienced USC in the past year described the alleged offender in the one worst situation as a singular person but equally split between being either male or female, most often an academy student, often in the same class year, and whom they knew from class or another activity. MSA men indicated that the one situation of USC most often took place on academy grounds in a dormitory or living area, followed closely by on academy grounds not in a dormitory or living area, and occurred most often after duty hours on a weekend or holiday. Over one-quarter of MSA men were victimized (e.g., sexually harassed, stalked, or sexually assaulted) by the same alleged offender before (27%) or after (26%) the USC one situation and 39% of situations involved alcohol use by the victim and/or alleged offender.
- USC remains an underreported crime, with an estimated 15% of MSA women and 5% of MSA men indicating they filed an official report.⁶ The majority who reported did so to stop the alleged offender(s) from hurting others. Approximately one-quarter of MSA women (27%) and around one-third of MSA men (36%) indicated they experienced retaliation as a result of reporting their USC event. For those who did not report the USC event, the majority did not think it was serious enough to report.

Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination Prevalence Rates

Sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination violations include behaviors in line with either sexual harassment or sex discrimination as set out by DoD policy. “Sexual harassment” is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that creates an ineffective or hostile work environment and/or changes the conditions of work. “Sex discrimination” is defined as differential treatment based on one’s sex that may negatively impact one’s career.

Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment Prevalence Rates

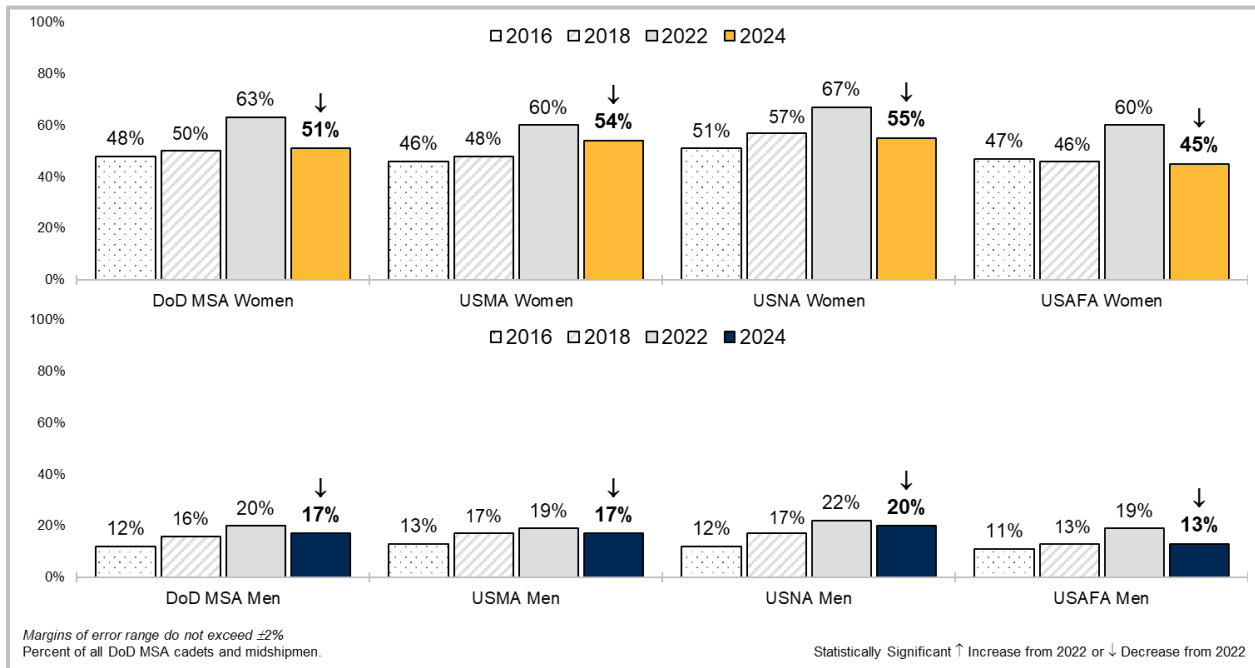
- An estimated 51% of DoD MSA women (1,707 cadets/midshipmen) and 17% of DoD MSA men (1,511 cadets/midshipmen) experienced sexual harassment in the past APY (Figure 3). These estimates reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate for women was 63% and 20% for men.
 - For USMA, an estimated 54% of women (509 cadets) and 17% of men (570 cadets) experienced sexual harassment in the past APY. These estimates reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate for women was 60% and 19% for men.
 - For USNA, an estimated 55% of women (677 midshipmen) and 20% of men (593 midshipmen) experienced sexual harassment in the past APY. These estimates

⁶ Reporting of unwanted sexual contact on the survey is based on self-report data.

reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate for women was 67% and 22% for men.

- For USAFA, an estimated 45% of women (522 cadets) and 13% of men (349 cadets) experienced sexual harassment in the past APY. These estimates reflect a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate for women was 60% and 19% for men.

Figure 3.
Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment Rate

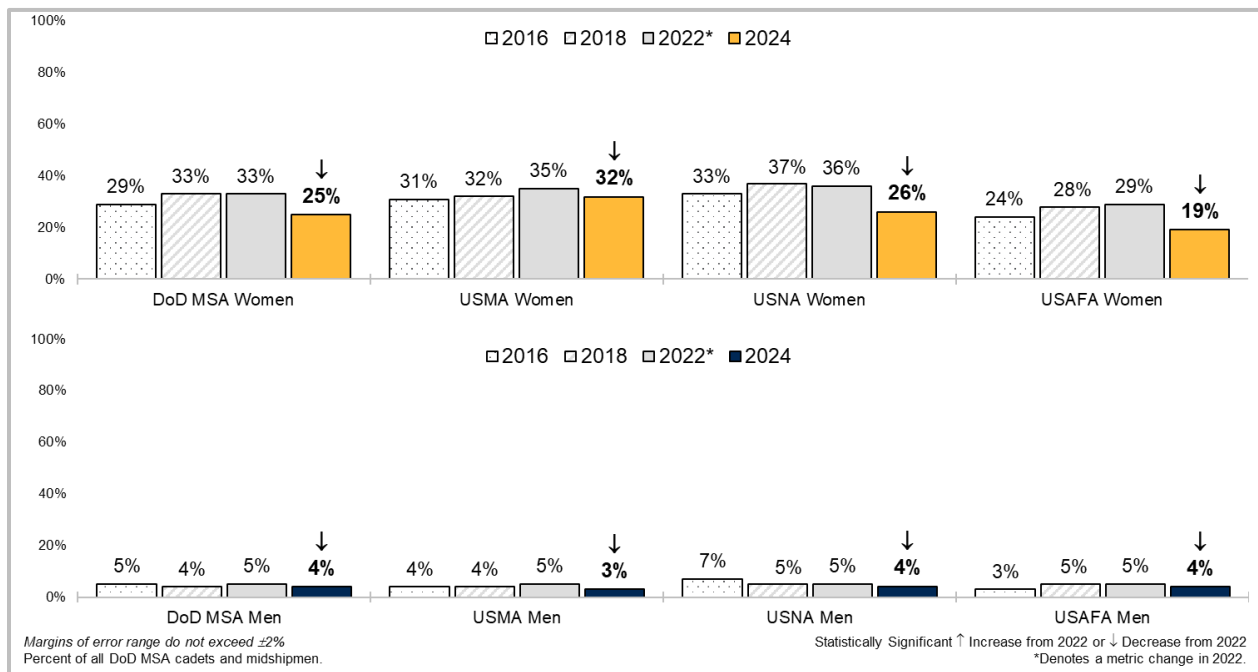


Estimated Past-Year Sex Discrimination Prevalence Rates

- An estimated 25% of DoD MSA women (862 cadets/midshipmen) and 4% of DoD MSA men (367 cadets/midshipmen) experienced sex discrimination in the past APY (Figure 4) which reflects a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate was 33% for women and 5% for men.
 - For USMA, an estimated 32% of women (302 cadets) and 3% of men (117 cadets) experienced sex discrimination in the past APY. This reflects a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate was 35% for women and 5% for men.
 - For USNA, an estimated 26% of women (336 midshipmen) and 4% of men (126 midshipmen) experienced sex discrimination in the past APY. This reflects a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate was 36% for women and 5% for men.

- For USAFA, an estimated 19% of women (225 cadets) and 4% of men (125 cadets) experienced sex discrimination in the past APY. This reflects a significant decrease since 2022, when the estimated rate for women was 29% and the estimated rate for men was 5%.

Figure 4.
Estimated Past-Year Sex Discrimination Rate



Prevalence Estimates by Race/Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation

The following section describes estimated prevalence of USC, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination for students first by race/ethnicity and sexual minority status. Race/ethnicity minority is defined as those who responded to the survey as identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and/or Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.

Prevalence Estimates by Race/Ethnicity

- An estimated 13.5% of racial/ethnic minority MSA women and 12.4% of non-Hispanic White MSA women experienced past-year USC; 50% of racial/ethnic minority MSA women and 52% of non-Hispanic White MSA women experienced sexual harassment; and 27% of racial/ethnic minority MSA women and 24% of non-Hispanic White MSA women experienced sex discrimination. Hispanic MSA women (15.6%) were more likely than women of other races/ethnicities to experience USC, whereas non-Hispanic White (12.4%) women were less likely. Hispanic MSA women (54%) and non-Hispanic White women (52%) were more likely than women of other races/ethnicities to experience sexual harassment, whereas Black (46%),

Asian (47%), and women identifying as another race/ethnicity (49%) were less likely. Finally, Black (28%) and Hispanic (28%) women were more likely to experience sex discrimination, whereas non-Hispanic White women (24%) were less likely.

- An estimated 4.1% of racial/ethnic minority MSA men and 3.2% of non-Hispanic White MSA men experienced past-year USC; 24% of racial/ethnic minority MSA men and 16% of non-Hispanic White MSA men experienced sexual harassment; and 4% of racial/ethnic minority MSA men and 4% of non-Hispanic White MSA men experienced sex discrimination. Black MSA men were more likely to experience USC (5.2%), whereas non-Hispanic White (3.2%) MSA men were less likely. Black (25%) and Hispanic (21%) MSA men were more likely to experience sexual harassment than men of other races/ethnicities, while non-Hispanic White men (16%) were less likely. Finally, Asian men (3%) were less likely than men of other races/ethnicities to experience sex discrimination.

Prevalence Estimates by Sexual Minority Status

The 2024 SAGR asked respondents to identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual or straight, gay or lesbian, bisexual, “I use a different term,” or “Prefer not to answer.” We present prevalence estimates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and those who indicated using a different term (hereafter referred to as sexual minority) MSA students (as a group) and heterosexual MSA students.

- Sexual minority MSA students were significantly more likely than heterosexual MSA students to experience each type of misconduct. An estimated 16.2% of sexual minority MSA women experienced past-year USC; 64% experienced sexual harassment, and 36% experienced sex discrimination. These estimated rates were significantly higher than the estimated rates of USC (12.2%), sexual harassment (48%), and sex discrimination (23%) for heterosexual MSA women, although all significantly decreased since 2022. An estimated 10.9% of sexual minority MSA men experienced past-year USC; 48% experienced sexual harassment, and 6% experienced sex discrimination. These estimated rates were significantly higher than the estimated rates of USC (3.2%), sexual harassment (16%), and sex discrimination (4%) for heterosexual MSA men.

Academy Culture and Climate for Prevention of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

The SAGR survey is one way to track progress of prevention efforts at the academies. As such, this section summarizes prevention-relevant metrics, such as alcohol use, willingness to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, bystander intervention, academy culture related to prevention, and efforts by leaders and students at all levels to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment.

- **Alcohol Use:** The majority of MSA women and men indicated they either abstain from alcohol (42% of women, up from 40% in 2022; 44% of men, up from 40% in 2022) or that their alcohol consumption was minor on a typical day when drinking

(22% of women, up from 20% in 2022; 12% of men, up from 11% in 2022). The proportions of both increased since 2022, while the proportion of MSA men and women consuming five or more drinks on a typical day decreased (10% of women, down from 13% in 2022, and 23% of men, down from 28% in 2022). Although roughly one-third of MSA students indicated they had engaged in binge drinking on at least one or more occasions in the past 30 days, these rates decreased among both men and women since 2022. Just under one-fifth of MSA students (17%) of MSA students indicated that alcohol had impacted their memory at least once in the past year, a decrease compared to 22% in 2022.

- **Bystander Intervention:** In general, the majority of MSA students indicated they were willing to stop sexual harassment to a large extent. Specifically, slightly more than half of MSA women (51%) and 56% of MSA men indicated they were willing to point out to someone that they thought had “crossed the line” with sex-related comments or jokes,⁷ which remained statistically unchanged for women (50% in 2022) but increased for men since 2022 (54%). Nearly two-thirds of MSA women (62%, increased from 56%) and nearly three-quarters of MSA men (73%, increased from 69%) were willing to seek help from the chain of command to stop other students who continue to engage in sexual harassment, both of which increased since 2022. Compared to 2022, fewer MSA students witnessed at least one situation in which unwanted behaviors were occurring (76% for women, decreased from 82% in 2022, and 50% for men, decreased from 57% in 2022). The most common situations witnessed by both MSA women and men were observing someone who crossed the line with their sexist comments or jokes (62% for women, decreased from 71% in 2022, and 31% for men, decreased from 36% in 2022) or encountering someone who drank too much and needed help (52% for women, decreased from 63% in 2022, and 37% for men, decreased from 45% in 2022). Although there were decreases in witnessing these behaviors overall, the overwhelming majority of MSA students noted they intervened, which remained statistically unchanged since 2022 (95% for women and 93% for men). The method of intervention was most often speaking up to address the situation (62% for women, increased from 60% in 2022, and 64% for men, increased from 63% in 2022) or by talking to those involved to see if they were okay (66% for women, decreased from 67% in 2022, and 53% for men, decreased from 56% in 2022).
- **Perceptions of Academy Leadership and Peers Setting Good Examples:** Nearly three-quarters of MSA women and over three-quarters of MSA men believed that both their commissioned officers (e.g., Tactical Officers [TAC], Company Officers [CO], and Air Officers Commanding [AOC]) and non-commissioned officers (NCO) in charge of units set good examples in their own behavior and talk (74% and 75% respectively for women, 79% for both for men), an increase among both men and women since 2022 (from 70% for both for women in 2022, and from 77% and 78%

⁷ Survey items were developed prior to the Executive Order 14168 “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government” and used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

respectively, for men). Perceptions that other cadets/midshipmen watch out for each other to prevent sexual assault and the extent to which cadet/midshipman leaders enforce rules both grew since 2022, but could benefit from continued growth. To be specific, approximately two-thirds of MSA men (70%, increased from 64% in 2022) and over half of MSA women (58%, increased from 47% in 2022) indicated other cadets/midshipmen watch out for each other to prevent sexual assault, and over two-thirds of MSA men (68%, increased from 59% in 2022) and over half (58%, increased from 47% in 2022) of MSA women indicated their cadet/midshipman leadership enforces rules. Looking across class years, freshman students (both women and men) tended to report leadership setting good examples, peers enforcing rules, and peers watching out for each other at higher levels, whereas endorsement appears to decline year by year as students progressed through the academy.

- **Efforts to Stop Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment:** Of the various leaders and personnel on campus, MSA students perceived academy senior leadership, commissioned officers in charge of units, and NCOs in charge of units as making the most honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, but perceptions of all types of faculty/staff and cadets/midshipmen making these efforts increased for both men and women since 2022. This is an overall trend reversal compared to 2022, when perceptions had decreased for the majority of academy personnel compared to 2018. MSA women had lower perceptions than MSA men for all categories despite increasing since 2022. Looking across class years, freshman students (both women and men)⁸ tend to report the highest effort to stop sexual assault and harassment by leaders and personnel, with endorsement declining year by year as students progress through the academy.

Academy Culture and Climate for Reporting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

Sexual assault and sexual harassment often go unreported. The culture and climate regarding reporting plays a large role in whether a victim chooses to come forward. To further examine the academy culture and climate related to reporting of these unwanted behaviors, the *2024 SAGR* asked MSA students whether they would trust the academy if they were to experience sexual assault, and about other deterrents for reporting at the academy, such as victim blaming and the role that media plays.

- **Trust in the Academy:** The *2024 SAGR* asked MSA students how they believe the academy would respond if they were to experience USC. Compared to 2022, more MSA cadets/midshipmen indicated they would trust the academy to protect their privacy, ensure their safety, and treat them with dignity and respect if they were to report an experience of sexual assault, with nearly two-thirds to just under three-quarters of MSA men and over one-third to just under one-half of MSA women indicating they would trust the academy to a large extent.

⁸Please see chapter 1 for more information on how sex was constructed for these comparison groups (i.e., estimates presented for MSA men and women).

- **Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault:** Compared to 2022, progress was made in 2024 regarding whether participants perceived “to a large extent” that high-profile cases, media scrutiny, and negative peer reactions would impact whether a victim would report a sexual assault. However, MSA women still hold many of these perceptions at higher rates than do MSA men, most notably when asked to what extent potential negative reactions from academy peers would impact a victim’s willingness to come forward and report. Students’ beliefs regarding whether “crying rape” to avoid punishment after making a regrettable decision and victim blaming occur at the academy have declined since 2022 but remain prevalent. Similar to the barriers to reporting discussed above, MSA women were more likely than MSA men to perceive that victim blaming occurs at the academy and that a victim’s reputation affects whether they will be believed.
- **Psychological Climate for Sexual Harassment:** Students were asked to describe their company/squadron at the academy regarding how seriously sexual harassment is treated as an issue and how risky it would be for them to make a complaint about sexual harassment. Both men and women reported a more positive psychological climate than in 2022, where the majority of women and men (84% and 91%, respectively) perceived their company/squadron as intolerant of sexual harassment.
- **Workplace Hostility:** Students were asked how often they experienced six different instances of workplace hostility including peers who gossip/talked about them, or did not provide information or assistance when they needed it. Although rates remain high among academy students, significant decreases were found on every item compared to 2022, for both men and women, although women rated every aspect of the workplace climate as significantly less healthy than did men. Peers who gossiped/talked about them and who used insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate them were among the most highly endorsed for both men and women.
- **Responsibility and Intervention:** This metric examines to what extent participants witnessed company/squadron peers promoting a climate based on mutual respect and trust, refraining from sexist comments and behavior, encouraging bystander intervention, and correcting incidents of sexual harassment. Endorsement of these four indicators increased for both men and women since 2022, although MSA men indicated higher levels of each behavior within their company/squadron than did MSA women. When examining responses of those who witnessed these behaviors to a large extent, just under three-quarters of MSA women (73%) and over three-quarters of MSA men (84%) indicated witnessing peers in their company/squadron promote a climate based on mutual respect and trust, whereas over half of women (55%) and three-quarters of men (75%) indicated people in their company/squadron recognize and immediately correct incidents of sexual harassment.

Conclusion

The results of the 2024 SAGR are mixed; the main positive takeaway being that estimated rates of USC, sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination, and culture/climate items generally moved in desirable directions. The decrease in overall estimated USC prevalence for MSA women and

men is the first in a decade of SAGR administrations. These changes are not only inherently positive (fewer people experiencing USC) but also suggests that efforts at the academies may be affecting desirable change. On the other hand, despite these desirable changes, the overall prevalence rate estimates appear approximate to levels seen in prior SAGR efforts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

The Health and Resilience Research Division of the Office of People Analytics (OPA) has conducted congressionally mandated surveys of cadets and midshipmen at each of the Department of Defense (DoD) military service academies (MSA) since 2005. The chief purpose of these surveys has been to generate estimated prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC), sexual harassment, and sex discrimination at the MSAs. The survey also assesses attitudes toward, and perceptions of, the programs and policies designed to reduce the occurrence of these unwanted behaviors at the academies. The *2024 Service Academy Gender⁹ Relations Survey (2024 SAGR)* was the 11th survey conducted to address these purposes.

DoD Sexual Assault Programs and Policies

The current assessment cycle at the academies, which consists of a biennial, alternating administration of surveys and focus groups, is mandated by Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), Sections 7461, 8480, and 9461. This requirement applies to the DoD academies: the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). More broadly, this effort also supports the element of cultivating and investing in the DoD workforce, one of the five key “enduring advantages” of the 2022 U.S. National Defense Strategy (Department of Defense, 2022b).

DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Policy

Program Oversight

DoD Directive (DoDD) 6495.01 charged the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness (USD[P&R]) with implementing a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program and monitoring compliance with the directive through data collection and performance metrics (Department of Defense, 2021). It established the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) within the Office of the USD (P&R) in 2006 to address all DoD sexual assault policy matters, except criminal investigations and legal processes, which are the responsibility of the Military Criminal Investigative Organization (MCIO), the Offices of the Judge Advocates General of the Military Departments, and the Offices of Special Trial Counsel respectively. DoD SAPRO requires data to continually assess the estimated prevalence of sexual assault at the academies and the effectiveness of the programs and resources they implement.

Defining Sexual Assault

DoDD 6495.01 defines “sexual assault” as any “intentional sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot

⁹ Since 2006, the *SAGR* survey used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

consent” (Department of Defense, 2021). Under this definition, sexual assault includes rape, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, forcible sodomy (forced oral or anal sex), or attempts to commit these acts. In Section 552 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2006, Congress amended the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) to consolidate and reorganize the array of military sex offenses. These revised provisions took effect on October 1, 2007. Article 120, UCMJ, was subsequently amended in FY 2012. Additional amendments to the UCMJ were made in in the FY17 NDAA via the Military Justice Act of 2016.

The term “unwanted sexual contact” or “USC” used throughout this report refers to a range of activities prohibited by the UCMJ, including uninvited and unwelcome completed or attempted sexual intercourse, sodomy (oral or anal sex), penetration by an object, and the unwanted touching of genitalia and other sexually related areas of the body. The *2024 SAGR* measures USC using a comprehensive, behavioral list of items. The resulting prevalence rate provides an estimated proportion of students who experienced any of these behaviors, referred to as “unwanted sexual contact” or “USC” in the prior year. The estimated prevalence rates should not be construed as legal crime victimization rates in the absence of an investigation being conducted to determine a verified outcome.

DoD Equal Opportunity, Sexual Harassment, and Sex Discrimination Policies

Program Oversight

The Office for Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Policy (OCREOP) is the primary office within DoD that develops policy and conducts oversight regarding sexual harassment prevention and response in the Armed Forces. OCREOP monitors the prevention and response of sexual harassment and sex discrimination by overseeing multiple programs, including the Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) program. The overall goal of the MEO program is to “ensure that Service members are treated with dignity and respect and are afforded equal opportunity in an environment free from prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, or sexual orientation” (Department of Defense, 2022c).

Defining Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination

DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1020.03 (Department of Defense, 2025), “Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces,” establishes the Department’s comprehensive harassment prevention and response program and defines “sexual harassment” as “A category of harassment that is sexual in nature, including, but not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and repeated deliberate offensive comments of gestures of a sexual nature. Conduct that constitutes an offense at Paragraph 107a of Part IV of the Manual for Courts-Martial is punishable under Article 134 of the UCMJ.”

Prohibited discrimination is defined in DoDI 1350.02, “DoD Military Equal Opportunity Program,” and includes “disparate treatment, of an individual or group on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, or sexual orientation that is not otherwise authorized by law or regulation and detracts from military readiness”

(Department of Defense, 2022c). MEO refers to “the right of all Service members to serve, advance, and be evaluated based on only individual merit, fitness, capability, and performance in an environment free of prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.”

Measurement of Constructs

Construction of estimated rates of USC, sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination, and retaliatory behaviors are described in detail below. These rates should not be construed as legal crime victimization rates in the absence of an investigation being conducted to determine a verified outcome.

Unwanted Sexual Contact

USC refers to a range of activities prohibited by the UCMJ, including uninvited and unwelcome completed or attempted sexual intercourse, sodomy (oral or anal sex), penetration by an object, and the unwanted touching of genitalia and other sexually related areas of the body.¹⁰ In the 2024 SAGR, USC is measured using a comprehensive, behavioral list of items (Q49; Figure 5). The resulting prevalence rate provides an estimated proportion of individuals who experienced any of these behaviors, referred to as “unwanted sexual contact” or “USC” in the past academic program year (APY); in other words, between June 2023 and the time of data collection in April 2024.

Figure 5.
Unwanted Sexual Contact Prevalence Rate Metric

Unwanted Sexual Contact	Since June 2023, have you experienced any of the following intentional sexual contacts that were against your will or which occurred when you did not or could not consent in which someone... Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually touched you (for example, intentional touching of genitalia, breasts, or buttocks) or made you sexually touch them? • Attempted to make you have sexual intercourse, but was not successful? • Made you have sexual intercourse? • Attempted to make you perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object, but was not successful? • Made you perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object?

As originally developed, the goal of the USC question was to act as a proxy for sexual assault while balancing the emotional burden to the respondent. The intention of the USC item was not to provide a crime victimization rate but to provide DoD with information about MSA cadets and midshipmen who experienced sex-related behaviors prohibited by the UCMJ that would qualify the individual to receive SAPR support services. This behaviorally based measure captures

¹⁰ The UCMJ includes several provisions prohibiting sexual misconduct. For the purposes of this report, the term “unwanted” includes certain sexual offenses punishable under the UCMJ.

specific behaviors experienced and does not assume the respondent has expert knowledge of the UCMJ or its definition of sexual assault. The vast majority of respondents would not know the differences among the UCMJ offenses of “rape,” “sexual assault,” “aggravated sexual contact,” and “abusive sexual contact” as defined in Article 120 of the UCMJ. As such, using behaviorally based questions allows for more accurate estimation of prevalence rates (Fisher & Cullen, 2000). The 2024 SAGR specifically asks about behaviors that were against the respondent’s consent (either when they did not or could not consent) or against their will, including completed and attempted sexual intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by an object or finger, as well as unwanted sexual touching. The latter is specific to unwanted touching of sexual regions of the body (i.e., genitalia, breasts, or buttocks) and does not include unwanted touching of nonsexual regions of the body or behaviors that are harassing in nature. The terms and definitions of USC have been consistent throughout the SAGR surveys since 2006 to provide DoD with comparable data points across time. These rates should not be construed as legal crime victimization rates in the absence of an investigation being conducted to determine a verified outcome.

Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination

In 2014, the RAND Corporation developed new measures of sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination for the *RAND Military Workplace Survey (2014 RMWS)* that were designed to align with criteria for a DoD-based MEO violation. This measure was fashioned to be consistent with military law and policy that outline criteria for an MEO violation of sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination; the measure incorporates behaviors and follow-up criteria to derive rates. The categories of behaviors include sexual harassment (i.e., sexually hostile work environment and sexual *quid pro quo*), and sex discrimination. The measure was tailored for use at the academies, including minor changes (e.g., the items ask about “someone from your Academy” instead of “someone from work” and “most cadets/midshipmen” instead of “most men/women in the military”) and two substantive changes: (1) separate items from the 2014 *RMWS* on someone repeatedly telling about their sexual activities and making sexual gestures/body movements were combined into a single item, and (2) an item on whether someone intentionally touched them in a sexual way when they did not want them to was removed, as this behavior falls under USC. Otherwise, the measure was consistent with the measure used for Active and Reserve Component members.

Behavioral Definition

Following the 2014 *RMWS* guidelines, OPA used a two-step process to determine estimated sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination rates. First, we asked questions about whether students experienced behaviors prohibited by MEO policy by someone from their academy and the circumstances of those experiences. Second, we categorized those reported behaviors into two types—sexual harassment and sex discrimination—to produce estimated rates for these two categories.

The sexual harassment and sex discrimination measures include two requirements intended to identify conduct violating DoD policy as defined in DoDI 1350.02 (Department of Defense, 2022c). First, the student must endorse an experience consistent with the violations specified by DoDI 1350.02. These include indicating experiencing either sexual harassment (e.g., sexually

hostile work environment or sexual *quid pro quo*) and/or sex discriminatory behaviors by someone from their academy. Second, the student also had to have indicated “yes” to one of the follow-up items that assess persistence and/or severity of the behavior (Figure 6).

Figure 6.
Construction of Estimated Past Year Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination Rates¹¹

Sexual Harassment	① Experienced at Least One Behavior	
	<p>Sexually Hostile Work Environment Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeatedly told sexual “jokes” that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset Embarrassed, angered, or upset you by repeatedly suggesting that you do not act like a cadet/midshipman of your gender is supposed to Displayed, showed, or sent sexually explicit materials like pictures or videos that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset Repeatedly told you about their sexual activities or made sexual gestures/body movements (for example, thrusting their pelvis or grabbing their crotch) in a way that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset Repeatedly asked you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset Made repeated sexual comments about your appearance or body that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset Took or shared sexually suggestive pictures or videos of you when you did not want them to that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset* Made repeated attempts to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship with you that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset Repeatedly touched you in any other way that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset <p>Sexual Quid Pro Quo Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made you feel as if you would get some benefit in exchange for doing something sexual Made you feel like you would get punished or treated unfairly at your Academy if you did NOT do something sexual 	
Sex Discrimination	② Met Follow-Up Criteria	
	<p>Sexually Hostile Work Environment Follow-Up Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They continued this unwanted behavior even after they knew that you or someone else wanted them to stop, or This was severe enough that most cadets/midshipmen at your Academy would have been offended <p>Sexual Quid Pro Quo Follow-Up Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person(s) who did this unwanted behavior were in a position of authority/leadership over you, and They told you that they would give you a reward or benefit for doing something sexual, or would be punished or treated unfairly for NOT doing something sexual, or They hinted that you would get a reward or benefit for doing something sexual, or would be punished or treated unfairly for NOT doing something sexual, or Someone else told you they got benefits from this person by doing sexual things, or was punished or treated unfairly for NOT doing something sexual 	
	① Experienced at Least One Behavior	② Met Follow-Up Criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said that your gender is NOT as good as the opposite gender as a future officer, or that someone of your gender should be prevented from becoming a future officer Mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted you because of your gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This treatment/their beliefs about your gender harmed or limited your cadet/midshipman career, and The person(s) who did this unwanted behavior were in a position of authority/leadership over you
*Only required the criteria of being severe enough that most cadets/midshipmen at the participant’s Academy would have been offended		

Time Reference

When surveys ask about experiences within a set time frame, there is a risk that respondents might include experiences that fall outside of that specific time frame, a bias known as “external telescoping.” For the 2024 SAGR, the survey contains an inherent “anchor” via the APY.

¹¹ Survey items were developed prior to the Executive Order 14168 “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government” and used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

Students are instructed in a verbal briefing before the survey administration only to consider experiences that have occurred within that APY, beginning in June 2023. This time frame is reiterated on the survey instrument in the USC question and sexual harassment and sex discrimination-based questions as well as the subsequent questions about the “one situation” that had the greatest effect on the respondent. Research and theory on telescoping suggests that time frames anchored with highly salient events, called landmarks, can be effective in reducing telescoping bias (Gaskell et.al, 2000). To be maximally effective, landmarks should avoid two potential problems: (1) susceptibility of the landmark itself to telescoping forward in respondents’ memories and (2) inequivalent salience of the landmark for all respondents (Gaskell et al., 2000). The landmark used in the *2024 SAGR* appears resistant to both potential problems. The beginning of the current APY for academy students marked several important changes for students, such as change in class rank, opening of new opportunities, and expansion of privileges. This moment in time was unlikely to be mentally telescoped forward by respondents; moreover, this landmark should be equally salient for all respondents. Given the repeated time frame instructions and the strong salient landmark given by the APY, the risk of telescoping for the reference period in the *2024 SAGR* is likely to be very small.

Negative Outcomes Associated with Reporting a Sexual Assault

DoD strives to create an environment where military members feel comfortable and safe reporting a potential sexual assault to a military authority. One area that DoD has been monitoring is the experience of repercussions as a result of reporting sexual assault. Specifically, three forms of repercussions have been defined and measured on the *2024 SAGR*: professional reprisal, ostracism, and other negative behaviors.

Construction of Rates for Negative Outcomes Associated with Reporting Unwanted Sexual Contact

OPA worked closely with the military departments and DoD stakeholders to design behaviorally based questions to capture perceptions of a range of outcomes resulting from reporting sexual assault. The resulting battery of questions was designed to measure negative behaviors a student may have experienced as a result of making a report of USC, and to account for additional motivating factors, as indicated by the student, consistent with the prohibition of retaliation in the UCMJ and military policies and regulations.

Survey questions are only able to provide a general understanding of the self-reported outcomes that may constitute reprisal, ostracism, or other negative outcomes.¹² Ultimately, only the results of an investigation (which considers all legal aspects, such as the intent of the subject of the investigation) can determine whether self-reported negative behaviors meet the requirements of prohibited negative behaviors. The estimates presented in this report reflect the students’ perceptions about a negative experience associated with their reporting of sexual assault and not necessarily a reported or legally substantiated incident of retaliation. Construction of rates of professional reprisal, ostracism, and other negative outcomes are based on general policy

¹² Because the SAGR assessment does not assess the relationship between the alleged perpetrator and the respondent to determine whether the behavior constitutes maltreatment, no definitive conclusions can be made regarding whether these alleged other negative behaviors are retaliatory or constitute maltreatment.

prohibitions. These reported perceptions should not be construed as legal crime victimization rates in the absence of an investigation being conducted to determine a verified outcome.

Professional Reprisal. “Reprisal” is defined in DoDD 7060.06 as “taking or threatening to take an unfavorable personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, for making, preparing to make, or being perceived as making or preparing to make a protected communication” such as report of a crime (DoDD 7060.06; Department of Defense, 2020).¹³ Per its definition in law and policy, reprisal may only occur if the actions in question were taken by leadership with the intent of having a specific detrimental impact on the career or professional activities of the student who reported a crime. As depicted in Figure 7, the estimated professional reprisal rate in the 2024 SAGR is a summary measure reflecting whether students indicated they perceived experiencing a behavior consistent with professional reprisal as a result of reporting USC, (i.e., the action taken was not based on conduct or performance). Further, the student must believe leadership took these actions for any one of a specific set of reasons: because they were trying to get back at the student for making an official report (restricted or unrestricted), because they were trying to discourage the student from moving forward with their report, or because they were angry at the student for causing a problem for them.

Figure 7.
Construction of Estimated Professional Reprisal Rate

Professional Reprisal	① Experienced at least one behavior from leadership in line with potential professional reprisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denied you or removed you from a leadership position • Denied you a training opportunity that could have led to a leadership position • Rated you lower than you deserved on a performance evaluation • Denied you an award or other form of recognition you were previously eligible to receive • Assigned you new duties without doing the same to others • Assigned you to duties that do not match your current class year or position within the company/squadron • Made you perform additional duties that do not match your current class year or position within the company/squadron • Transferred you to a different company/squadron without your request or agreement • Ordered you to one or more mental health evaluations • Disciplined you or ordered other corrective action
	② Belief that the leadership actions experienced were ONLY based on their report of sexual assault (i.e., not based on their conduct or performance)
	③ Belief that leadership took action for one of the following reasons:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get back at you for making a report (unrestricted or restricted) • To discourage you from moving forward with your report • They were mad at you for causing a problem for them

¹³ Military Whistleblower Protection Act (10 U.S.C. § 1034); Section 1709(a) of the NDAA for FY 2014 requires regulations prohibiting retaliation against an alleged victim or other member of the Armed Forces who reports a crime and requires that violations of those regulations be punishable under Article 92, UCMJ.

Ostracism. Although the interpretation of ostracism varies slightly,¹⁴ in general, ostracism may occur if retaliatory behaviors were taken either by a member’s military peers (such as fellow students in the context of the academies) or by leadership. Examples of ostracism include improper exclusion from social acceptance, activities, or interactions; denying privilege of friendship due to the reporting or planning to report a crime; and/or subjecting the student to insults or bullying due to reporting or planning to report a crime. As depicted in Figure 8, this is a summary measure reflecting whether, as a result of reporting USC, the student perceived at least one behavior consistent with ostracism. To be included in this estimated rate, the student also needed to indicate that they perceived at least one person who took the action knew or suspected the student made an official (unrestricted or restricted) sexual assault report and that the student believed that the person(s) was (were) trying to discourage them from moving forward with their report or discourage others from reporting.

Figure 8.
Construction of Estimated Ostracism Rate

Ostracism	① Experienced at least one behavior from cadet/midshipman peers or leadership (including those in their cadet/midshipman chain of command) in line with potential ostracism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made insulting or disrespectful remarks or made jokes at your expense in public • Excluded you or threatened to exclude you from social activities or interactions • Ignored you or failed to speak to you despite your attempts to communicate (for example, gave you “the silent treatment”)
	② Belief that at least one individual knew or suspected the respondent made an official sexual assault report (unrestricted or restricted)
	③ Belief that the action was taken to discourage you from moving forward with your report or discourage others from reporting

Other Negative Outcomes.¹⁵ This is a summary measure reflecting whether, as a result of reporting USC, respondents indicated experiencing negative behaviors from cadet/midshipman peers or leadership that occurred without a valid military purpose, and may have included physical or psychological force, threats, or abusive or unjustified treatment that results in physical or mental harm. Figure 9 shows the behaviors and two follow-up criteria required to be included in the metric. To be included in this estimated rate, the student also needed to indicate that at least one person who took the action knew or suspected the student made an official (unrestricted or restricted) sexual assault report, and the student believed that either the person(s) was (were) trying to discourage them from moving forward with their report or others from reporting, or that the person was trying to abuse or humiliate them.

¹⁴ The military departments crafted policies that implement the regulation of these prohibitions against ostracism outlined in section 1709(a) of the NDAA for FY 2014.

¹⁵ Because the SAGR does not assess the relationship between the alleged perpetrator and the respondent to determine whether the behavior constitutes maltreatment, no definitive conclusions can be made regarding whether these alleged other negative behaviors are retaliatory or constitute maltreatment.

Figure 9.
Construction of Estimated Other Negative Outcomes Rate

Other Negative Outcomes	① Experienced at least one behavior from cadet/midshipman peers (including those in their cadet/midshipman chain of command) in line with potential other negative outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made insulting or disrespectful remarks or made jokes at your expense to you in private • Showed or threatened to show private images, photos, or videos of you to others • Bullied you or made intimidating remarks about the assault • Was physically violent with you or threatened to be physically violent • Damaged or threatened to damage your property
	② Belief that at least one individual knew or suspected the respondent made an official sexual assault report (unrestricted or restricted)
	③ Belief that the action was for one of the following reasons:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discourage you from moving forward with your report or discourage others from reporting • They were trying to abuse or humiliate you

Retaliation. This is a measure reflecting whether cadets and midshipmen indicated they experienced either professional reprisal, ostracism, and/or other negative outcomes by leadership and/or fellow cadets for reporting USC. The estimates presented in this report reflect the respondents’ perceptions about any negative experiences associated with their reporting of USC and not necessarily a reported or legally substantiated allegation of retaliation as defined in Article 132, UCMJ. Only the results of an investigation that considers all legal aspects, such as the intent of the subject of the investigation, can determine whether self-reported adverse experiences meet the requirements of prohibited retaliation. As such, rates presented in this report should not be construed as a legal crime victimization rate due to the absence of official information regarding an investigation.

Survey Methodology

OPA uses industry-standard scientific survey methodology to control for bias and allow for generalizability to populations. For more than 30 years, OPA¹⁶ has been DoD’s lead organization for conducting impartial and unbiased scientific survey and focus group research on a number of topics of interest to the DoD. OPA uses standard scientific methods to conduct cross-component surveys that provide DoD with fast, accurate assessments of attitudes, opinions, and experiences of the entire DoD community. Although OPA has used industry-standard scientific survey methodology for many years, it is important to clearly describe how the scientific practices employed by large survey organizations control for bias and allow for generalizability to populations. Specifically, OPA’s survey methodology meets industry standards that are used by government statistical agencies (e.g., the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS]), private survey organizations, and well-known polling organizations. OPA adheres to the survey methodology best practices promoted by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).¹⁷ In addition, the scientific

¹⁶ Although OPA was officially formed in 2016, it has existed in some form for over 30 years.

¹⁷ AAPOR’s “Best Practices” state that, “virtually all surveys taken seriously by social scientists, policy makers, and the informed media use some form of random or probability sampling, the methods of which are well grounded in

methods used by OPA have been validated by independent organizations (e.g., RAND, Government Accountability Office [GAO]).¹⁸

Appendix A contains frequently asked questions (FAQ) on the methods employed by government and private survey agencies, including OPA.

Statistical Design

The population of interest for the *2024 SAGR* consisted of all students at USMA, USNA, and USAFA.¹⁹ The entire population of male and female students were invited to take the survey.²⁰ This census of all students was designed for maximum reliability of results in cases where the survey questions applied to only a subset of students, such as those questions asking details of a USC, especially among men. It should be noted that although all students were invited, the survey was voluntary, and students were not required to participate.

The target survey frame consisted of 12,607 students drawn from the student rosters provided to OPA by each of the three MSAs. OPA received a final dataset containing 12,504 returned questionnaires. Surveys were completed by 11,119 students, yielding an overall weighted response rate for respondents at the DoD academies of 88% (94% for MSA women, 86% for MSA men—the highest response rate seen yet in the SAGR portfolio.²¹

Using an industry-standard process, data were weighted to reflect each academy's population as of April 2024. The estimated number of students, the number of respondents, and the portion of total respondents in each reporting group are shown in Table 1.

statistical theory and the theory of probability” (<https://aapor.org/standards-and-ethics/best-practices/>). OPA has conducted surveys of the military and DoD community using stratified random sampling for more than 25 years.

¹⁸ The GAO reviewed OPA's (then Defense Manpower Data Center's [DMDC]) survey methods in 2010 and determined OPA uses valid scientific survey methods (GAO, 2010). In 2013, the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) confirmed OPA's scientific weighting methods were appropriate. In 2014, an independent analysis of the methods used for a 2012 survey on sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Active Duty force, which aligns with methods used in the *2024 SAGR*, determined that “[OPA] relied on standard, well accepted, and scientifically justified approaches to survey sampling and derivation of survey results as reported for the *2012 WGRA*” (Morrall, Gore, & Schell, 2014).

¹⁹ Three groups of students were excluded: visiting students from other academies, foreign nationals, and those under 18 years old at time of data collection.

²⁰ Starting in 2014, SAGR included all female and male service academy students to better understand the specific experiences of men who indicate unwanted sexual contact. In previous survey years, all women at all service academies and a statistically constructed sample of men were included in the study in order to produce reliable results.

²¹ “Completed” is defined as answering at least one of the questions asked of all participants, at least one response from the sexual harassment and sex discrimination questions (Q4, Q7, Q10, Q13, Q16, Q19, Q22, Q25, Q29, Q32, Q34, Q36, or Q39), and a valid response to Q49 on USC.

Table 1.
2024 SAGR Counts and Weighted Response Rates

	Population	Survey Respondents	Weighted Response Rate
DoD MSA Total	12,607	11,119	88%
Men	9,182	7,889	86%
Women	3,425	3,230	94%
USMA	4,341	3,374	78%
Men	3,382	2,526	75%
Women	959	848	88%
USNA	4,306	4,001	93%
Men	3,026	2,773	92%
Women	1,280	1,228	96%
USAFA	3,960	3,744	95%
Men	2,774	2,590	93%
Women	1,186	1,154	97%

Weighting produces survey estimates of population totals, proportions, and means (as well as other statistics) that are representative of their respective populations. Unweighted survey data, in contrast, are likely to produce biased estimates of population statistics. The standard process of weighting consists of the following steps:

- Adjustment for selection probability—OPA typically adjusts for selection probability within scientific sampling procedures. However, in the case of the *2024 SAGR*, all students were selected to participate in the survey. Therefore, although adjustment for selection probability is usually performed as the first step in the weighting process, in this instance, the selection probability is 100%, hence the base weights are calculated to be 1.
- Adjustments for nonresponse—Although the *2024 SAGR* was a census of all students, some students did not respond to the survey, and others responded or started the survey but did not complete it (i.e., did not provide the minimum number of responses required for the survey to be considered complete). OPA adjusts for this nonresponse by creating population estimates by first calculating the base weights as the reciprocal of the probability of selection (in the *2024 SAGR*, the base weights take on the value 1 since the survey was a census). Next, OPA adjusts the base weights for those who did not respond to the survey, then adjusts for those who started the survey but did not complete it.
- Adjustment to known population values—OPA typically adjusts the weights in the previous step to known population values to account for remaining bias. In the case of the *2024 SAGR*, the weights in the previous step were adjusted to known

population values using the three known demographic variables (academy, class year, and sex). The poststratification adjustments all have the value 1 because the three demographic variables were already accounted for in the previous step.

Although the 2024 SAGR was a census of students, not everyone responded to the survey; hence, the weighting procedures described above were required to produce population estimates to account for survey nonresponse and known population totals (e.g., percentage female). Because of the weighting, conventional formulas for calculating margins of error overstate the reliability of the estimate. For this report, variance estimates were calculated using SUDAAN PROC DESCRIPT (Research Triangle Institute, Inc., 2013).²² Variance estimates are used to construct margins of error (i.e., confidence interval half-widths) of percentages and means based on 95% confidence intervals.

Survey Administration

The SAGR was administered in-person and on-site in April 2024 at each of the academies using an anonymous paper-and-pen survey. The academies scheduled survey sessions for all students in groups of no more than 100 cadets/midshipmen with separate sessions for female and male students. After checking in with the survey administration team, composed of OPA staff, each student was handed a pen and an envelope containing a paper survey and an academy-specific information sheet. The information sheet included details on where students could obtain help if they became upset or distressed during or after administration of the survey. Students were then briefed on the purpose and details of the survey and the importance of their participation. Completion of the survey itself was voluntary, and was emphasized in the pre-survey briefing. If students did not wish to take the survey, then they could leave the session at the completion of the mandatory briefing. Students returned completed or blank surveys (depending on whether they chose to participate) in sealed envelopes into a bin as they exited the session; this process was monitored by the survey proctors as an added measure for protecting students' anonymity. The survey procedures were reviewed by the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA) Component Office of Human Research Protections (COHRP) as part of the DoD survey approval and licensing process and was determined to not be human subjects research. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviewed and cleared the data collection in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).

Statistical Comparisons

The SAGR surveys are scheduled to field in the spring of even-numbered years. Historically, OPA reports make statistical comparisons to results of the last survey iteration. Comparisons to the 2022 *Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (2022 SAGR) are presented in this report.

Results of the 2024 SAGR are presented at various levels within this report and are reported for each academy by sex²³ (where applicable) and class year. When the 2024 SAGR questions are comparable to questions in the previous 2022 survey, an analysis of comparisons between survey years is presented for statistically significant changes overtime. Although we only statistically

²² As a result of differential weighting, only certain statistical software procedures, such as SUDAAN, correctly calculate standard errors, variances, or tests of statistical significance for stratified samples.

²³ As defined above under "Male and Female Cadets/Midshipmen."

trend back to the most recent survey (2022), we present prior results that have been consistently measured on the SAGR surveys over iterations to show results as far back as the data are available.

For the categories of academy and sex, OPA relied on data recorded by the data collection team during the survey administration. For class year, respondents were classified by self-reported data from the survey. Definitions for reporting categories follow:

- *Academy*—USMA, USNA, and USAFA.
- *Class Year*—Seniors (Class of 2024), Juniors (Class of 2025), Sophomores (Class of 2026), and Freshmen (Class of 2027).
- *Sex*—Men or women.

In order to best understand how experiences of USC, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination differ between cadets and midshipmen, we also examine these rates by race/ethnicity and sexual minority status. For these demographics, respondents were classified by self-reported data from the survey. Definitions for these reporting categories follow:

- *Race/Ethnicity*—Non-Hispanic White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Other (includes those who indicated more than one race/ethnicity).
- *Sexual Minority Status*—Sexual minority (includes those who indicated they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, “I use a different term,” or “Prefer not to answer”) and heterosexual.

Only statistically significant comparisons are discussed in this report. Two types of comparisons are made in the 2024 SAGR: between survey years (comparisons to the previous survey year) and within the current survey year (2024) by class membership (i.e., senior, junior, sophomore, and freshman) and sex (where applicable). Class comparisons within the current survey year are made along a single dimension by academy and sex. In this type of comparison, the responses for one group are compared to the weighted average of the responses of all other groups in that dimension (i.e., the total population minus the group being assessed). For example, responses of senior women at USAFA are compared to the weighted average of the responses from junior, sophomore, and freshman USAFA women (e.g., women in all other classes at USAFA). In some cases, the same value of an estimate for two different classes is significantly higher or lower for one class but not the other. This may be due to rounding (both 12.7% and 13.4% are displayed as 13%) or differences in margins of error. When comparing results across survey years (e.g., 2024 compared to 2022), statistical tests for differences between means (i.e., average scores) are used. For all statistical tests, OPA uses two-independent-sample *t*-tests where differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. Because the results of comparisons are based on weighted estimates, results are generalizable to the population.

Presentation of Results

The tables and figures in the report are numbered sequentially. Unless otherwise specified, the numbers presented are percentages. Margins of error are shown when more than one estimate is displayed in a table or figure. The margin of error represents the precision of the estimate, and the confidence interval coincides with how confident one is that the interval contains the true population value being estimated. For example, if it is estimated that 55% of individuals selected an answer and the margin of error was ± 3 , then we are 95% confident²⁴ that the “true” value being estimated in the population is between 52% and 58%. Because the results of comparisons are based on weighted results, the results generalize to the academy’s populations within an acceptable margin of error.

The annotation “NR” indicates that a specific result is “not reportable” due to not having a sufficient number of respondents (fewer than five), an effective number of respondents (fewer than 15), or a relative standard error (greater than 0.3). The effective number of respondents considers the finite population correction and variability in weights. An “NR” presentation protects both DoD and the reader from drawing potentially inaccurate conclusions due to instability of the specific estimate. The cause of instability is due to high variability (large relative standard error) usually associated with a small number of respondents contributing to the estimate. Additionally, some estimates might be so small as to appear to approach a value of zero. In those cases, an estimate of less than one percent (<1%) is displayed.

Report Content Overview

This report provides an overview of the topline estimates from the *2024 SAGR* related to USC, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination, and supporting data related to the characteristics of these experiences, reporting, and perceived retaliation, and the culture and climate for preventing and reporting these unwanted behaviors at the MSAs overall.

Survey Content by Chapter

- Chapter 2 covers findings related to USC, including the estimated prevalence rates of USC in the past APY presented by sex and class year. Additionally, results of the single worst experience (referred to as “the one situation”) of USC are explored, including what unwanted behaviors took place, who the alleged perpetrators were, where and when the one situation occurred, the impact of experiencing USC, whether the experience was reported, reasons for (not) reporting, and outcomes of reporting.
- Chapter 3 details the estimated prevalence rates of sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination by sex and class year. Like chapter 2, this section includes details of the one worst situation of sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination such as what behaviors occurred, who engaged in those harassing/discriminatory behaviors, if the victim filed a complaint, and reasons for (not) filing a complaint.

²⁴ We used a 95% confidence interval for all significance testing in this report.

- Chapter 4 discusses elements of academy culture and climate related to USC, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination, especially their prevention and reporting. Specifically, this chapter has more information on alcohol use by cadets/midshipmen, bystander intervention, peers' perceptions of academy personnel setting good examples and making efforts to stop USC and sexual harassment, trust in the academy after a report, barriers to reporting, psychological climate for sexual harassment, and unit peer responsibility and intervention.
- Chapter 5 discusses the findings overall and draws conclusions in key insights for the reader.

Chapter 2: Unwanted Sexual Contact

This chapter presents the estimated prevalence of unwanted sexual contact (USC) among U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) military service academy (MSA) cadets and midshipmen. The following sections also describe the characteristics of the one USC incident experienced in the past year that was the worst or most serious as indicated by the cadets and midshipmen and whether they chose to report their USC incident and why or why not.

The results presented here include statistically significant differences between estimates from the *2022 Service Academy Gender²⁵ Relations Survey (2022 SAGR)* compared to the *2024 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey (2024 SAGR)*, where applicable. This report does not provide a comprehensive review of all statistically significant differences. Rather, we discuss salient, statistically significant results between estimates from the *2022 SAGR* compared to the *2024 SAGR* and those between students of different class years. Some estimates are not reportable (indicated as NR in figures and tables) due to instability of estimates. Statistical comparisons against NR estimates cannot be calculated.²⁶ When data are not reportable for MSA men, only results for MSA women are discussed.

As described in chapter 1, the DoD uses the SAGR survey to assess experiences of prohibited behaviors that align with certain Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) offenses, herein referred to as “unwanted sexual contact” or “USC.” This measure is based on objective behaviors and does not assume the respondent has intimate knowledge of the UCMJ or the UCMJ definition of sexual assault, nor does it require the participant to label the incident as sexual assault. The USC rate reflects the estimated percentage of MSA students who experienced behaviors prohibited by the UCMJ between June 2023 and the time of the survey in April 2024 (Academic Program Year [APY] 2023–2024). The terms and definitions of USC have been consistent across all SAGR surveys since 2006 to provide DoD with comparable data over time.

Many experiences of USC involve a combination of behaviors. Rather than attempt to provide estimated rates for every possible combination of behaviors and because behaviors may co-occur, responses were coded to create three hierarchically constructed categories:

- *Completed penetration*—Includes those respondents who marked “yes” indicating they were made to have unwanted sexual intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object.
- *Attempted penetration*—Includes those respondents who marked “yes” to experiencing attempted unwanted sexual intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, or penetration

²⁵ Since 2006, the SAGR survey used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

²⁶ Further details are provided in chapter 1.

by a finger or object, but did not indicate that they experienced *completed penetration*.

- *Unwanted sexual touching*—Includes only those respondents who marked “yes” to experiencing unwanted, intentional touching of sexual body parts such as genitalia, breasts, or buttocks and did not indicate that they also experienced *attempted penetration* and/or *completed penetration*.

For more information regarding the USC measure and how the estimated prevalence rate was constructed, see chapter 1.

Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Prevalence Rate

An estimated 13.3% of MSA women (an estimated 457 MSA women) experienced USC in the past APY, a significant decrease from 21.4% in 2022 (Figure 10). This rate includes an estimated 4.7% of all MSA women experiencing completed penetration, 3.9% experiencing attempted penetration, and 4.7% experiencing unwanted sexual touching. As with USC overall, each USC type significantly decreased since 2022 for MSA women.

An estimated 3.6% of MSA men (an estimated 327 MSA men) experienced USC in the past APY, a significant decrease from 4.4% in 2022 (Figure 10). This rate includes an estimated 0.6% of MSA men having experienced completed penetration, 0.8% having experienced attempted penetration, and 2.2% having experienced unwanted sexual touching. Unlike USC rates for women, the rate of unwanted sexual touching was unchanged from 2022, whereas completed and attempted penetration rates significantly decreased.

Figure 10.
Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Prevalence Rates

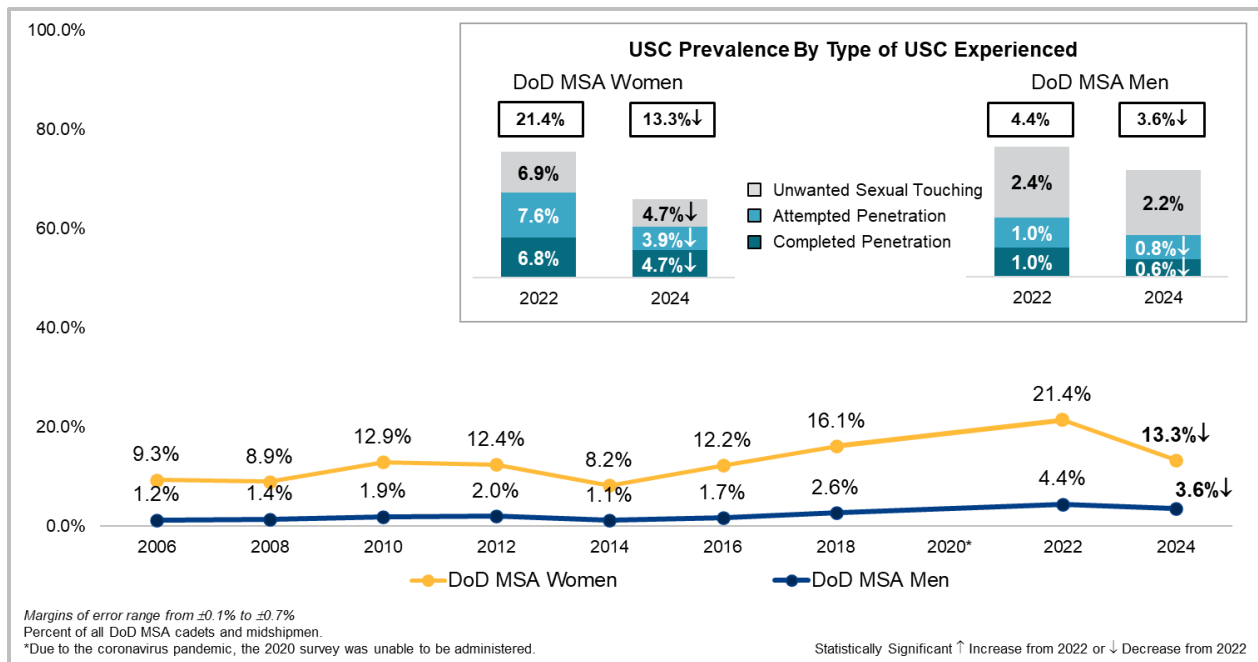
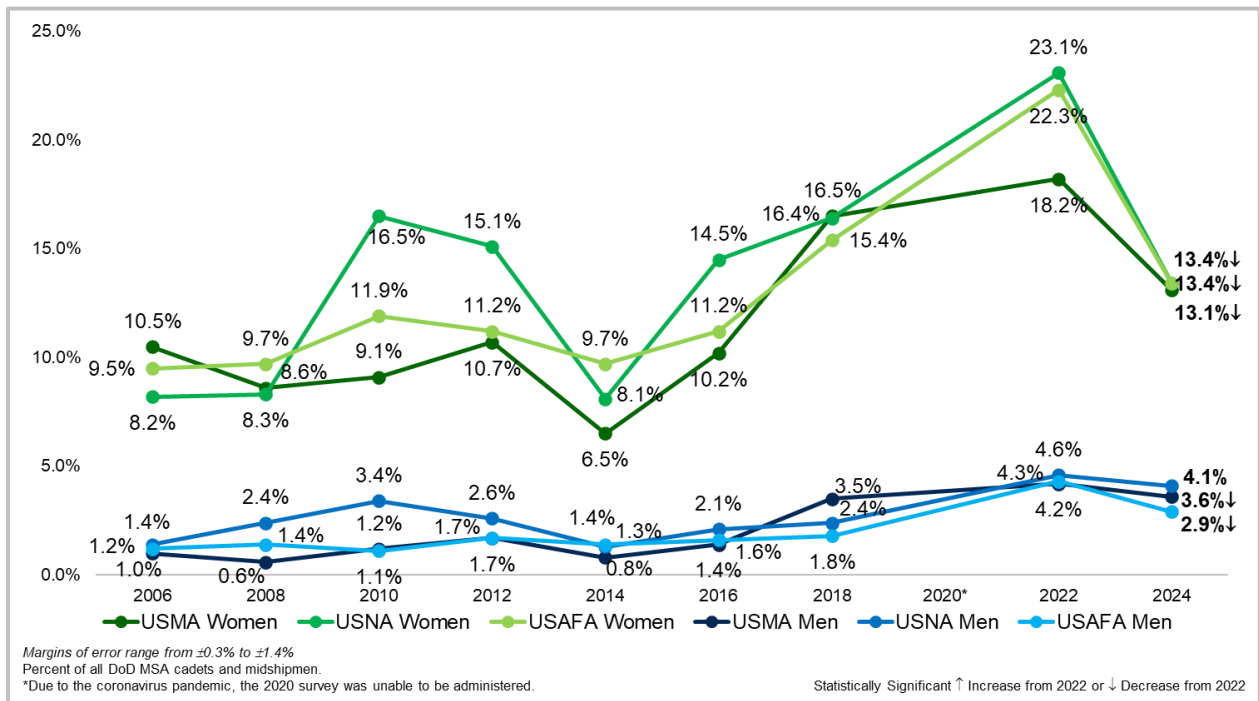


Figure 11 presents the estimated prevalence of past-year USC by academy. For USMA, an estimated 13.1% of women (126 cadets) and 3.6% of men (124 cadets) experienced USC in the past APY. These estimates reflect a significant decrease compared to 2022, when the rate for women was 18.2% and 4.2% for men. For USNA, an estimated 13.4% of women (172 midshipmen) and 4.1% of men (123 midshipmen) experienced USC in the past APY. These estimates reflect a significant decrease compared to 2022, when the rate for women was 23.1%, but the rate remained statistically unchanged among USNA men. For USAFA, an estimated 13.4% of women (159 cadets) and 2.9% of men (81 cadets) experienced USC in the past APY. These estimates reflect a significant decrease compared to 2022, when the rate for women was 22.3% and 4.3% for men. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the DoD MSAs overall.

Figure 11.
Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Prevalence Rates by Academy

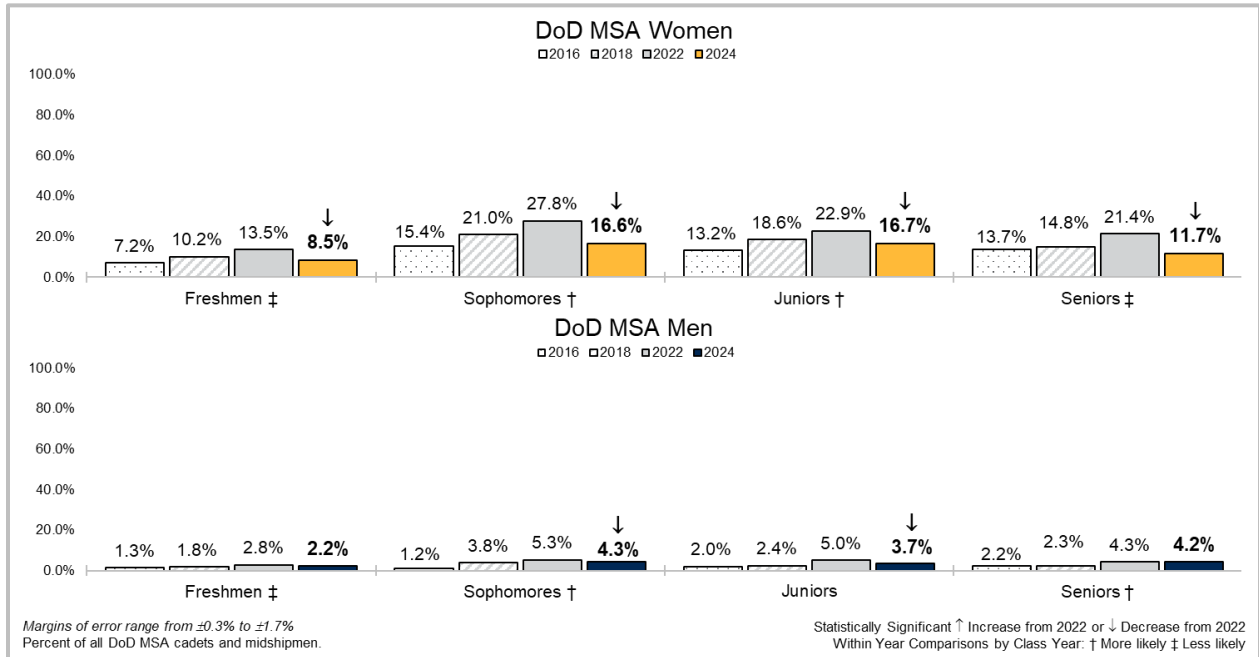


Differences by Class Year

The 2024 decrease in USC among MSA women overall was reflected in decreases in these experiences by women of all class years (Figure 12). However, among MSA men, the USC rate decreased only for sophomore and junior men since 2022. Consistent with prior years, sophomore men and women were more likely than cadets/midshipmen in other class years to experience USC in the past APY. Additionally, MSA women in their junior year and MSA men in their senior year were also more likely than same-sex peers in other class years to experience USC. Academy rules and regulations regarding fraternization may contribute to the consistent finding that freshman men and women experience USC less often, but sophomore men and women experience USC more often. Some academy regulations explicitly restrict relationships between fourth-class and upper-class cadets and midshipmen (freshman students vs.

sophomores, juniors, and seniors), potentially resulting in greater protection from USC among freshmen, which then lifts as students become sophomores (United States Military Academy, 2012; United States Naval Academy, 2022). Prior focus groups have highlighted the role of “shark week” as a potentially vulnerable period for students; this being the period of time when freshmen officially transition to sophomores and fraternization rules are eased and additional free time and liberties are gained (Barry et al., 2017; Barry et al., 2019).

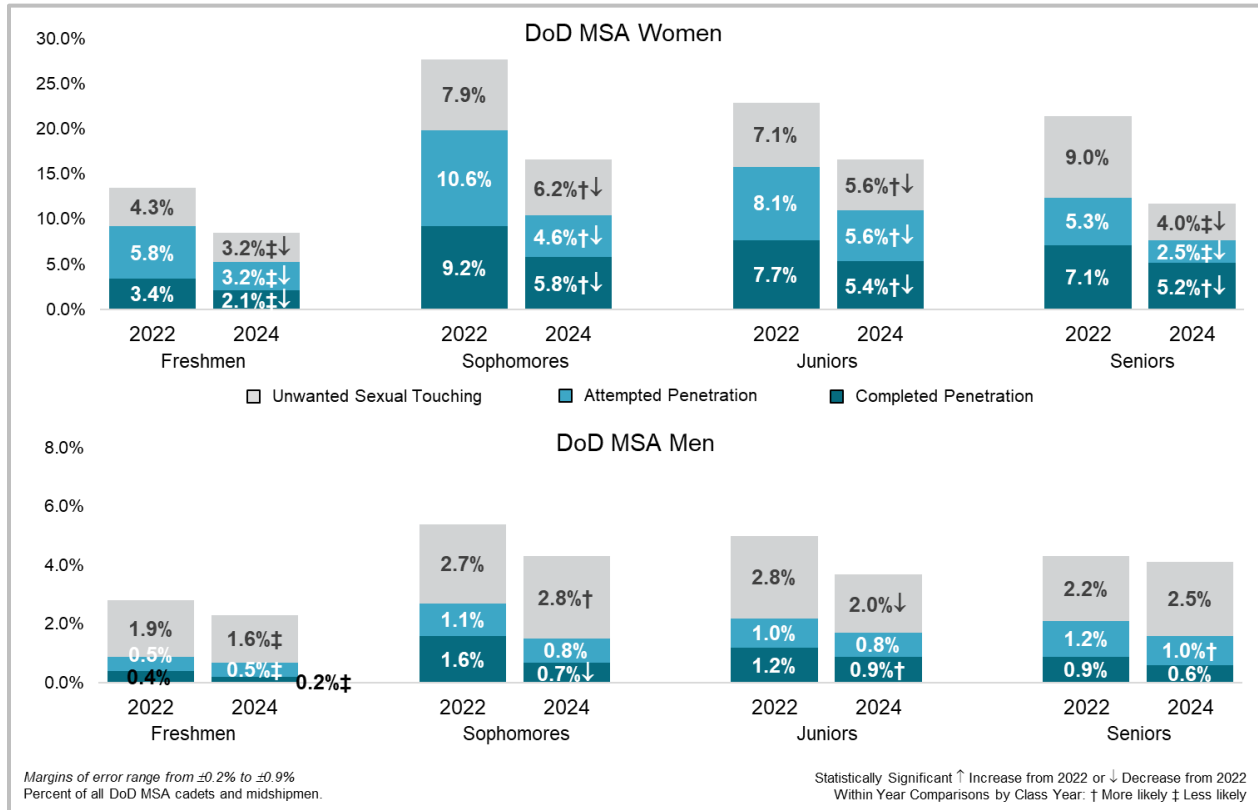
Figure 12.
Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Prevalence Rates by Class Year



Differences between class years were found for types of USC experienced by MSA women (Figure 13). Similar to USC overall, sophomore and junior women were more likely than women in other class years to experience all types of USC, whereas freshman women were less likely to experience all types. Despite these differences, the rates for all types of USC decreased for women of all class years since 2022.

Fewer differences were observed among men by class year. Like women, freshman men were less likely to have experienced all types of USC compared to men in other class years (Figure 13). Sophomore men were more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching, senior men were more likely to have experienced attempted penetration, and junior men were more likely to have experienced completed penetration compared to men in other class years. With regard to changes in rates since 2022, junior men showed a decrease in experiences of unwanted sexual touching, and sophomore men showed a decrease in completed penetration. No types of USC statistically increased since 2022 for MSA men.

Figure 13.
Estimated Past-Year Unwanted Sexual Contact Prevalence Rates by Type and by Class Year



Estimated Rates of Unwanted Sexual Contact by Race/Ethnicity and Sexual Minority Status

As in the 2022 SAGR, we collected demographic information that can serve to further inform the DoD’s prevention and response efforts. The following section describes prevalence of USC for cadets and midshipmen first by race/ethnicity and then, separately, by sexual orientation (hereafter referred to as sexual minority status). Although prior research has examined the role of race/ethnicity and sexual orientation in risk for sexual violence among other military populations (see Buchanan et al., 2008; Morral et al., 2021; Breslin et al., 2022a; Breslin et al., 2022b for recent examples), to our knowledge, this is the second study to examine prevalence of USC by race/ethnicity and sexual orientation using a weighted census of academy students, with the 2022 SAGR being the first.

Unwanted Sexual Contact by Race/Ethnicity

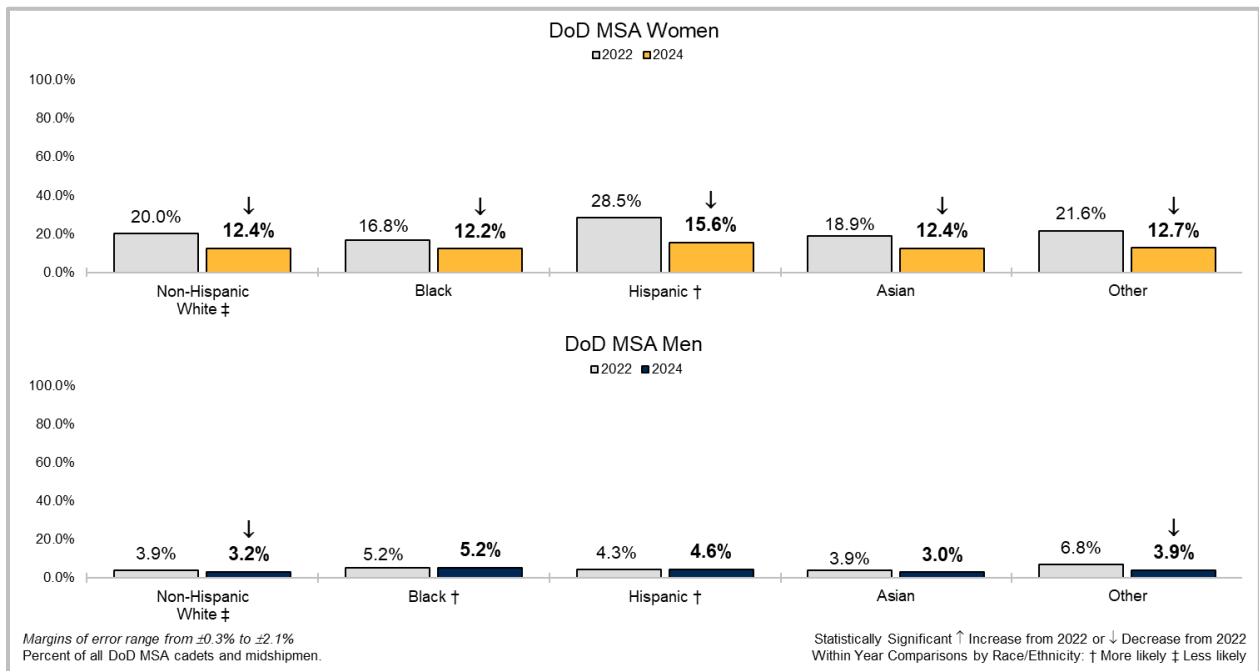
Figure 14 presents the estimated past-year USC prevalence rates by race/ethnicity²⁷ for MSA women and men. Overall, non-Hispanic White women were less likely than racial/ethnic

²⁷ Race/ethnicity data were constructed using survey responses to two items. One question assessed ethnicity by asking participants if they were “Spanish/Hispanic/Latino,” and a second item asking what race(s) the participant

minority women to have experienced USC in 2024. However, rates of USC for both of these groups decreased since 2022. When we examine the data by detailed race/ethnicity categories, Hispanic women were significantly more likely than women of other races/ethnicities to have experienced USC, a salient finding since 2022.

MSA men’s experiences followed the same pattern as women. Non-Hispanic White men were significantly less likely than racial/ethnic minority men to experience USC, but rates have decreased since 2022. More specifically, Black men and Hispanic men were significantly more likely to have experienced USC. Non-Hispanic White men and men of an “other” race/ethnicity each saw decreases in estimated rates of USC since 2022.

Figure 14.
Estimated Prevalence Rates of Unwanted Sexual Contact by Race/Ethnicity



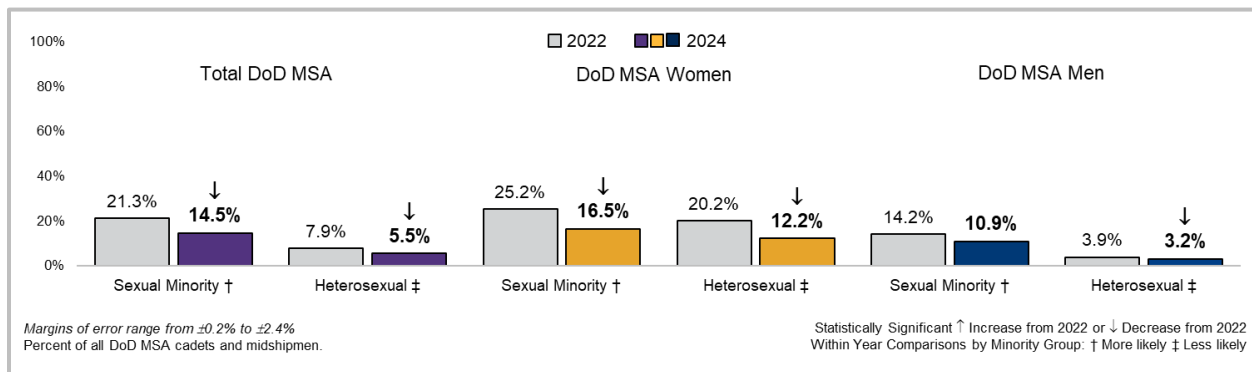
Unwanted Sexual Contact by Sexual Minority Status

To gain a better understanding of the experiences of sexual minority cadets and midshipmen, the 2024 SAGR asked respondents to identify their sexual minority status. Sexual minorities include respondents who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or marked “I use a different term.” Overall, an estimated 7.0% of cadets and midshipmen enrolled at the DoD MSAs identified as a sexual minority (16.1% of DoD MSA women and 3.4% of DoD MSA men). The proportion of those identifying as a sexual minority decreased overall (from 8.0% in 2022), as well as when examined by women (18.7% in 2022) and men (3.9% in 2022). Figure 15 presents past-year

considered themselves to be, allowing multiple selections between “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Asian (for example, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese),” “Black or African American,” “Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (for example, Samoan, Guamanian, or Chamorro),” and “White.”

USC prevalence rates by sexual orientation. In general, cadets and midshipmen who identified as a sexual minority were more likely to have experienced USC than their heterosexual peers, regardless of sex. The estimated rate of past-year USC decreased since 2022 for sexual minority and heterosexual women, and heterosexual men, but remained statistically unchanged for sexual minority men.

Figure 15.
Estimated Rates of Unwanted Sexual Contact by Sexual Minority Status

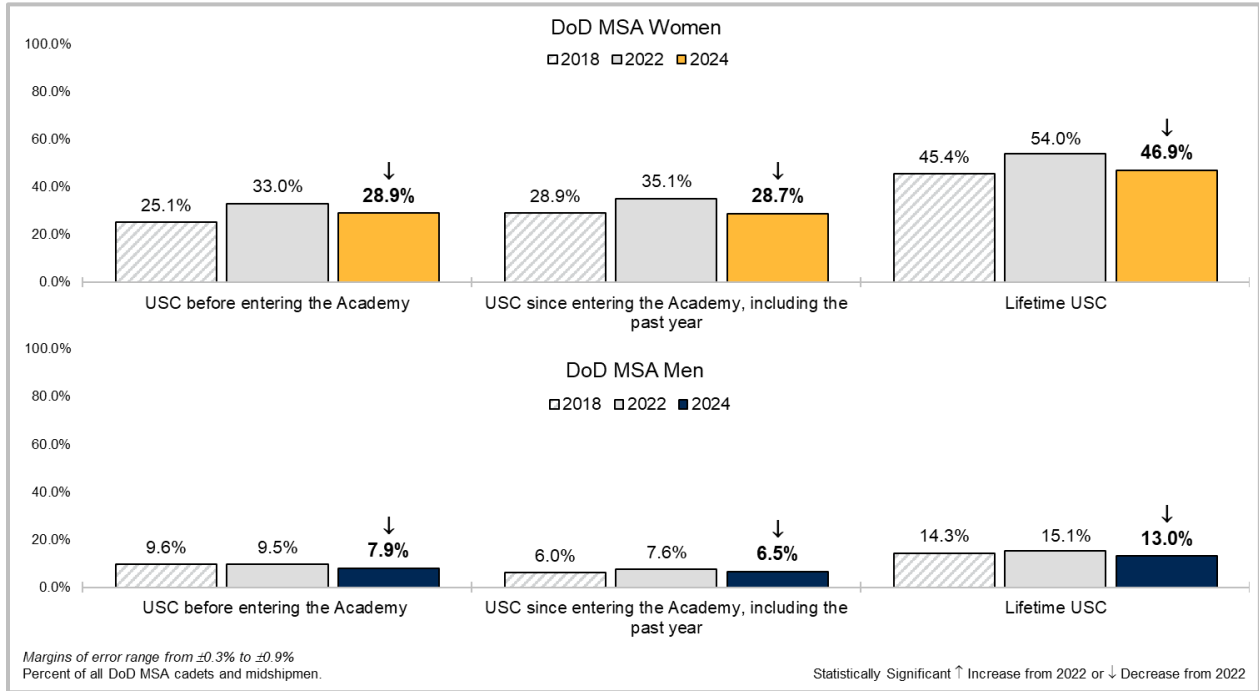


Estimated Rates of Unwanted Sexual Contact Prior to Past APY and Lifetime

Unwanted Sexual Contact Prior to Past Academic Program Year

The 2024 SAGR also collected data on prevalence of USC experiences among MSA cadets/midshipmen prior to the June 2023 to April 2024 time frame. Using survey responses to these questions, USC prevalence is calculated in three ways: experiences *before entering* the academy, *since entering* the academy (including between June 2023 and April 2024), and *lifetime* USC (combining experiences before entering the academy and since entering the academy). Those who indicated experiencing USC in the respective time frame as noted above (see chapter 1 for a list of behaviors) were included in these rates. As seen in Figure 16, rates of estimated USC prevalence for MSA women and men prior to entering the academy, since entering the academy (including in the past year), and in their lifetime all decreased since 2022.

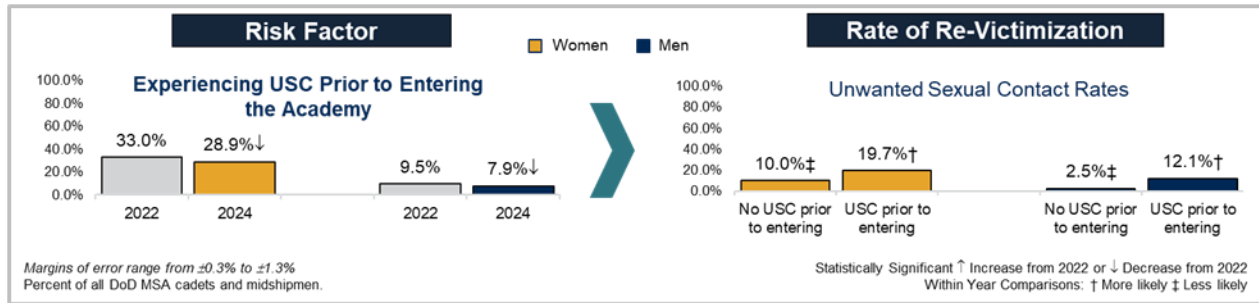
Figure 16.
Estimated Rates of Unwanted Sexual Contact Prior to Entering the Academy, Since Entering the Academy, and Lifetime



Risk of Re-Victimization

Research has shown re-victimization is an important element of understanding sexual violence; namely that victims of one form of violence are more likely to be victims of other forms of violence, victims are at a higher risk for perpetrating violence, and perpetrators of one form of violence are more likely to commit other forms of violence (Wilkins et al., 2014). To understand the risk of potential re-victimization at the academies, rates of USC in the past APY were examined separately by whether cadets and midshipmen had experienced USC before entering the academy. As shown in Figure 17, both MSA women and men who experienced USC before entering the academy were more likely to experience USC in the past APY compared to those who did not experience USC before entering the academy. Responses for MSA women showed a decrease in USC prevalence regardless of prior USC experiences, but a similar decrease was only found for men who had not experienced USC in the past, suggesting further inroads could be made with men entering the academies with a history of USC.

Figure 17.
Risk of Unwanted Sexual Contact Re-Victimization for MSA Cadets and Midshipmen



One Situation of Unwanted Sexual Contact with the Biggest Effect

Among cadets and midshipmen who experienced USC in the past APY, the majority experienced multiple events. In 2024, nearly two-thirds of MSA women and over two-thirds of MSA men who experienced USC in the past APY indicated experiencing more than one instance of the unwanted behavior(s). To better understand the circumstances involved in their experiences, the 13.3% of MSA women and 3.6% of MSA men who experienced USC in the past APY²⁸ were asked to provide additional information regarding their worst or most serious experience of USC, hereafter referred to as the “one situation.”²⁹ In addition to discerning what behavior(s) occurred (i.e., the type of USC involved in the one situation), cadets and midshipmen were asked to provide details regarding characteristics of the alleged offender(s), timing and location of the situation, experiences following the situation, and whether they chose to report the incident.

What: Behavior Experienced in the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation

Cadets and midshipmen who experienced USC were asked to identify the behavior(s) involved in their most serious experience in the past APY. These USC types were coded hierarchically as described in the prior section, with experiences of completed penetration taking precedence over experiences of attempted penetration, which in turn take precedence over unwanted sexual touching.³⁰

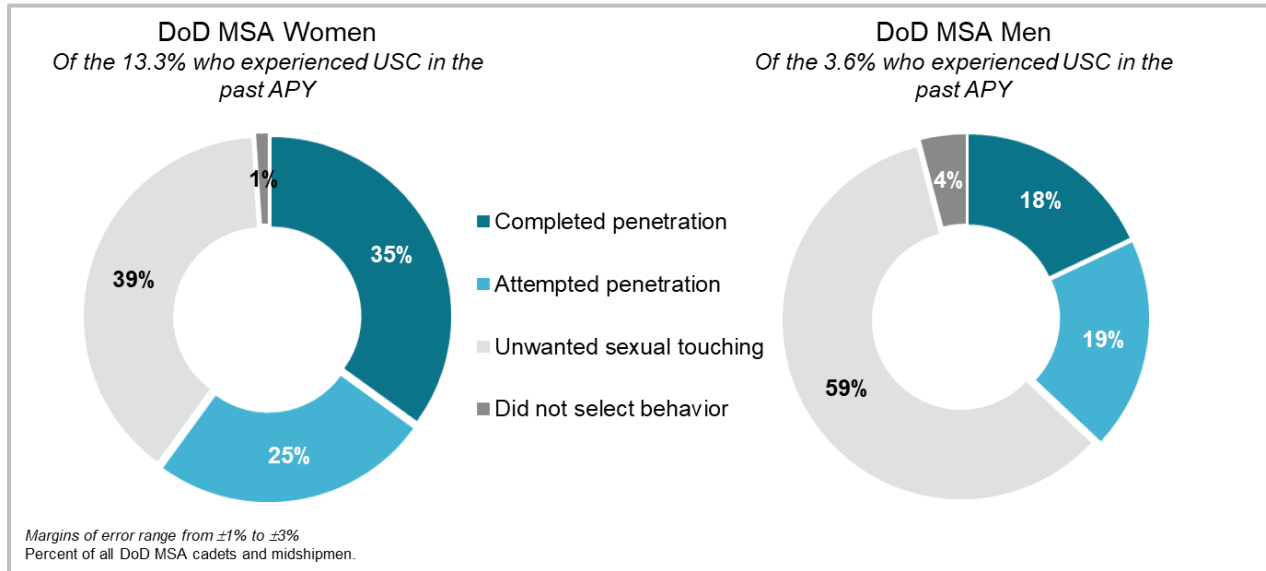
As shown in Figure 18, of the 13.3% of MSA women who experienced USC in the past APY, over one-third experienced completed penetration, one-quarter experienced attempted penetration, and over one-third experienced unwanted sexual touching in the most serious experience within the past APY. Of the 3.6% of MSA men who experienced USC in the past APY, less than one-fifth experienced completed penetration, nearly one-fifth experienced attempted penetration, and over half experienced unwanted sexual touching within the most serious experience within the past APY.

²⁸ Experience of USC is determined by endorsement of at least one USC behavior in the past APY as presented on the survey.

²⁹ Although some cadets/midshipmen may have experienced more than one USC event, follow-up questions on details were asked about only one event to minimize survey burden.

³⁰ Some cadets/midshipmen chose not to indicate the most serious experience within the one situation. Those who did not select a behavior were categorized as “Did not specify.”

Figure 18.
Behaviors Experienced in Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation



Who: Reported Demographics and Characteristics of the Alleged Offender(s) in the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation

To better understand the context of these incidents, the 2024 SAGR asked cadets and midshipmen to provide information on the alleged offender(s) involved in the one worst situation of USC. Specifically, questions included the sex of alleged offender(s), the number of persons involved, the nature of any pre-existing relationship with the alleged offender(s), and the alleged offender(s) role at the academy.

The majority of MSA women indicated the one situation involved one alleged offender, although just under one-quarter said it involved multiple alleged offenders, a decrease since 2022. Nearly all MSA women indicated the alleged offender(s) was/were male, and alleged offenders were very often affiliated with the academy in some way, most commonly as a fellow academy student in the same class year, and most often someone they knew from class or another activity. The proportion of women indicating the alleged offender(s) was some kind of intimate partner (currently or had previously dated or had a casual relationship with) increased since 2022. Finally, although uncommon, the proportion of MSA women indicating the alleged offender was not affiliated with DoD, or that they were an unknown person, significantly increased since 2022. An overview of the alleged offender(s) characteristics in the one situation is highlighted for MSA women in Table 2.

Table 2.
Reported Characteristics of the Alleged Offender(s) in the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation for MSA Women

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	MSA Women	
	2022	2024
Sex of Alleged Offender(s)		
Men	97%	95% ↓
Women	2%	3% ↑
A mix of men and women	1%	1%
Number of Alleged Offender(s)		
One person	74%	76% ↑
More than one person	26%	22% ↓
Status of Alleged Offender(s)		
Higher class year	24%	25%
Same class year	72%	68% ↓
Lower class year	7%	10% ↑
Higher in cadet/midshipman chain of command	14%	13%
Member of intramural or club sports team	21%	18% ↓
Member of NCAA/Division I sports team	24%	24%
Academy military/uniformed faculty or staff	1%	1%
Academy civilian faculty or staff	1%	1%
DoD person not affiliated with the Academy	4%	5%
A person not affiliated with the DoD	4%	8% ↑
Unknown person	5%	7% ↑
Relationship to Alleged Offender(s)		
Someone you were currently dating	13%	18% ↑
Someone you had previously dated	5%	6% ↑
Someone you had a casual relationship with	24%	21% ↓
Someone you knew from class or other activity	59%	57%
Someone you had just met	22%	18% ↓
A stranger	5%	6% ↑

Margins of error range from 1% to ±2%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA women who experienced USC since June 2023.

Like women, the majority of men indicated that one alleged offender was involved in the one situation, but unlike women, men were nearly evenly split regarding the sex of the alleged offender(s): although men most often indicated the incident involved only women, nearly half involved only men (an increase since 2022) whereas few involved both men and women. Further, although men also most often identified the alleged offender(s) as affiliated with their academy, this increased— but decreased for women—since 2022. MSA men who experienced USC most often indicated they knew their alleged offender from class or another activity, an

increase since 2022, and most men indicated the person(s) were in the same class year, which also increased since 2022 (Table 3).

Table 3.
Reported Characteristics of the Alleged Offender(s) in the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation for MSA Men

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	MSA Men	
	2022	2024
Sex of Alleged Offender(s)		
Men	37%	44% ↑
Women	55%	46% ↓
A mix of men and women	6%	9% ↑
Number of Alleged Offender(s)	2022	2024
One person	75%	69% ↓
More than one person	22%	30% ↑
Status of Alleged Offender(s)	2022	2024
Higher class year	13%	21% ↑
Same class year	62%	67% ↑
Lower class year	12%	11%
Higher in the cadet chain of command	8%	11% ↑
Member of intramural or club sports team	10%	19% ↑
Member of NCAA/Division I sports team	14%	16%
Academy military/uniformed faculty or staff	2%	4% ↑
Academy civilian faculty or staff	<1%	3% ↑
DoD person not affiliated with the Academy	1%	4% ↑
Person not affiliated with the DoD	18%	12% ↓
Unknown person	12%	8%
Relationship to Alleged Offender(s)	2022	2024
Someone you were currently dating	4%	7% ↑
Someone you had previously dated	6%	2% ↓
Someone you had a casual relationship with	17%	14%
Someone you knew from class or other activity	59%	70% ↑
Someone you had just met	22%	16% ↓
A stranger	14%	11% ↓

Margins of error range from 1% to ±3%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA men who experienced USC since June 2023.

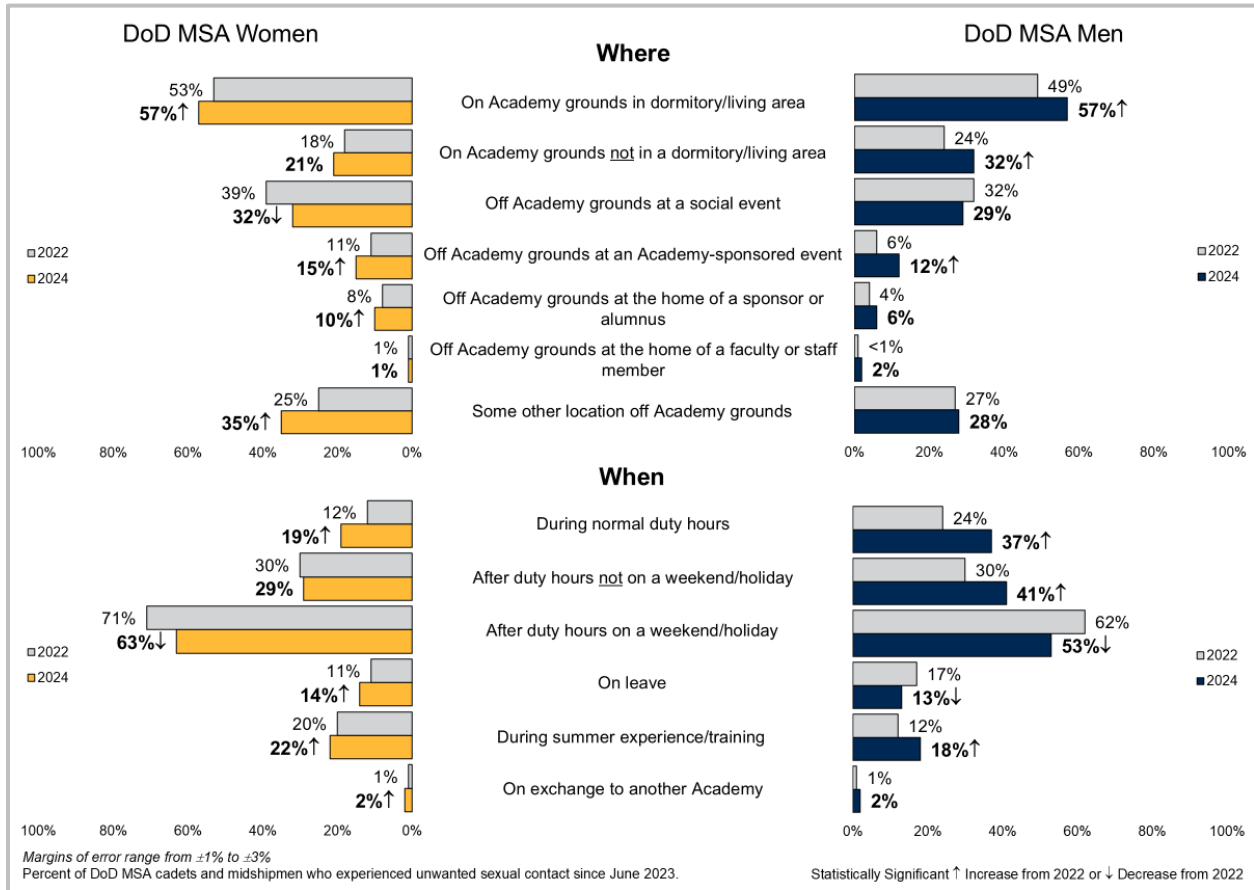
Where and When: Location and Context of the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation

Because there is no single “characteristic” of alleged USC perpetrators, there is also not a singular context that leads to victimization. Understanding the various patterns of time and place involved in USC is key to developing and implementing tailor-made prevention and response resources at the academies.

Nearly two-thirds of MSA women who experienced USC indicated it occurred on academy grounds (64%). More specifically, as shown in Figure 19, the one situation most frequently happened in a dormitory or living area, but the second most-common location was “some other location” off academy grounds (an increase since 2022). This replaced the second most-common location of 2022, off academy grounds at a social event, which decreased since 2022. As for time frames in which the USC occurred, the majority of MSA women indicated it occurred after duty hours on a weekend or holiday, but this decreased since 2022. However, the proportion of women indicating their experience of USC happened on summer experience/training/sea duty, normal duty hours, on leave, or on exchange to another academy increased since 2022.

As with MSA women who experienced USC, over two-thirds of MSA men indicated their one situation of USC occurred on academy grounds (69%), most commonly in a dormitory or living area (an increase since 2022). Over half of MSA men who experienced USC specified it occurred after duty hours on a weekend or holiday, although this decreased since 2022. Other common times where men indicated experiencing USC include after duty hours not on a weekend or holiday, and during duty hours, both of which increased since 2022.

Figure 19.
Location and Context of the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation



How: Circumstances of the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation

Finally, cadets and midshipmen were asked to further contextualize the one situation by sharing their perspective of the incident; this includes whether they characterized the situation as hazing and/or bullying, whether the person(s) involved in the one situation had victimized them before and/or after the one situation, whether there was another cadet/midshipman present who did or did not help them, and describing the involvement of alcohol. The involvement of alcohol is an important factor regarding experiences of USC, especially in younger populations where alcohol use is more likely a novel experience and tends to result in over-consumption. The survey also contained language reminding participants that even if they had been drinking, they were not to blame for the incident. The results of these questions are visualized in Table 4 below.

Relatively few MSA women who experienced USC considered it hazing or bullying.³¹ Although roughly the same proportion of victims experienced stalking, sexual harassment, or sexual assault before the one situation, compared to 2022, fewer women experienced at least one of these before the one situation of USC, but more women experienced at least one *after* the one

³¹ Hazing and bullying were not defined on the survey, therefore, these results should be interpreted as the respondents’ own categorization of these behaviors as such but may not meet definitions set in policy.


situation. Those most at risk for being stalked, sexually harassed, or sexually assaulted before and/or after the USC were freshman women, over one-third of whom indicated experiencing these behaviors before or after the one situation of USC. Despite the higher likelihood of freshman women to have experienced at least one of these behaviors before the one situation, this decreased since 2022.

Bystander intervention training is arguably one of the most important elements of USC prevention because it can provide cadets and midshipmen, along with other academy personnel, basic tools to recognize and stop potential sexual assaults. Yet approximately one-quarter of victimized women indicated there was a fellow cadet/midshipman present in the one situation who could have stepped in to help but did not.³² Although this remains relatively high, it decreased since 2022, suggesting continued focus on bystanders' ability to perceive, recognize, and effectively intervene in imminent or ongoing sexual assaults remain a valuable method of decreasing USC at the academies.

Finally, cadets and midshipmen were asked whether alcohol was present in the USC one situation, though they were not asked the extent of the alcohol use in the situation (i.e., they were not asked their own or the alleged perpetrators' *level* of intoxication). Exactly half of USC situations for women involved alcohol (either on the part of the victim, the alleged offender, or both), a significant decrease since 2022. Alcohol involvement varied greatly by class year as expected, such that alcohol involvement was higher among victimized senior and junior women, and lower among victimized sophomore and freshman women. As with the overall proportion of alcohol involvement, fewer victimized senior, junior, and sophomore women indicated alcohol was involved compared to 2022. When victims were drinking at the time of the event, just over one-quarter said the alleged offender had bought or given them alcohol, a substantial decrease from nearly two-thirds in 2022.

³² Like all survey responses, this is based on the perception of the respondent. It is unclear whether bystanders perceived or understood what was occurring, could have intervened, and/or why they did not intervene in some way.

Table 4.
Circumstances of the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022		MSA Women		MSA Men	
		2022	2024	2022	2024
Hazing/Bullying	Hazing	7%	6%	4%	9%↑
	Bullying	7%	7%	7%	11%↑
Sexual Harassment, Stalking, or Sexual Assault Before or After the Situation	Sexually harassed before	26%	22%↓	20%	19%
	Stalked before	11%	10%	7%	8%
	Sexually assaulted before	21%	18%↓	10%	15%↑
	Experienced any before	38%	33%↓	27%	27%
	Sexually harassed after	22%	21%	18%	20%
	Stalked after	13%	16%↑	8%	8%
	Sexually assaulted after	12%	13%	7%	11%↑
	Experienced any after	31%	34%↑	23%	26%
Cadet(s)/Midshipmen Present	Stepped in to help victim	15%	13%↓	14%	14%
	Could have stepped in but didn't	34%	28%↓	31%	36%↑
Alcohol Use	Victim was drinking	50%	40%↓	46%	33%↓
	 Alleged offender bought/gave drinks	63%	27%↓	40%	17%↓
	Alleged offender was drinking	49%	43%↓	46%	30%↓
	<i>Alcohol use by victim/alleged offender</i>	61%	50%↓	58%	39%↓

Margins of error range from ±1% to ±3%

Note. Percent of DoD MSA cadets and midshipmen who experienced USC since June 2023.

As shown in Table 4, relatively few MSA men who experienced USC considered the one situation either hazing or bullying; however, unlike women, rates of MSA men categorizing the incident as either hazing or bullying significantly increased since 2022. Over one-quarter of MSA men who experienced USC were also stalked, sexually harassed, or sexually assaulted before and/or after the one situation. The most frequent behavior experienced before and after the one situation was being sexually harassed. Those most at risk for experiencing these

behaviors before and/or after the USC were sophomore men, approximately one-third of whom experienced these behaviors before and/or after the one situation.

Bystander intervention plays an equally important role for MSA men as it does for women and similar results were found. Approximately 1 in 7 MSA men who experienced USC said there was a fellow cadet/midshipman present in the one situation who could have helped and did so, and just over one-third said there was a fellow cadet/midshipman present who could have stepped in to help but did not. Not only did the proportion of victimized men indicating the latter increase since 2022, but it is also significantly higher than that of women, suggesting that additional education and training focus on bystander intervention where men are victimized may benefit prevention efforts. Of note, freshman men were significantly more likely than other MSA men to say a fellow cadet/midshipman was present and stepped in to help, further underscoring the protected status of those newest to the academies.

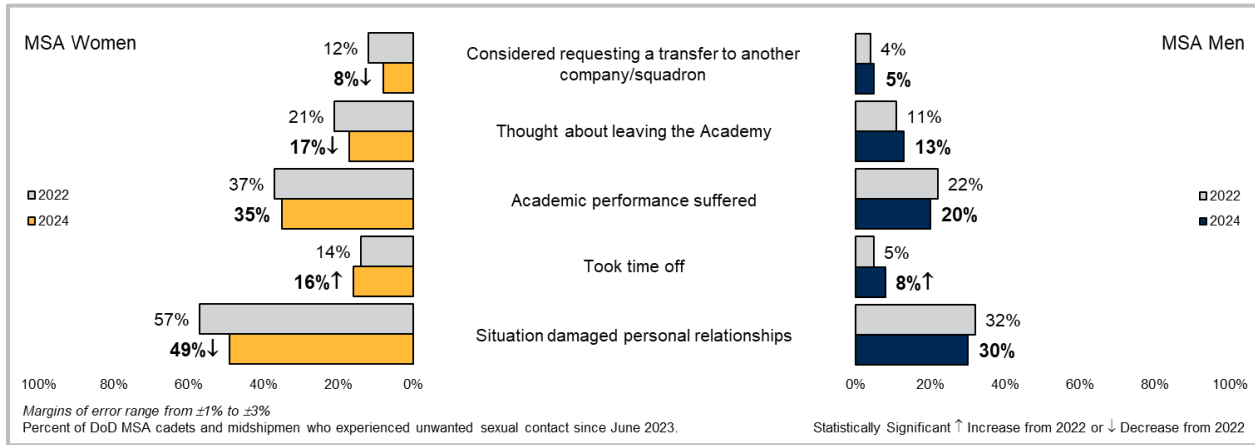
Finally, just over one-third of MSA men who experienced USC indicated alcohol was involved in the situation, a decrease from over one-half in 2022. This reduction in alcohol use during the one situation was driven by fewer victimized men indicating they had been drinking *and* the alleged offender(s) had been drinking. As with victimized women, fewer men than in 2022 indicated the alleged offender(s) bought or gave them alcohol just prior to the incident. Differences by class year were as expected, and again, similar to those of women, with senior and junior men more likely to indicate either they or the person(s) involved in the one situation had been drinking, whereas sophomore and freshman men were less likely. Despite this difference, the overall decrease in alcohol involvement by either party was seen in victimized men of all class years since 2022.

Impact of Experiencing Unwanted Sexual Contact

Experiencing USC can be an emotionally significant event that can impact the victim's relationships, academic performance, and desire to remain in their company/squadron, or at the academies in general. Those who experienced USC in the past APY were asked to indicate to what extent this event impacted them.

As shown in Figure 20, the largest impact to both victimized MSA women and men after the one situation was damage to their personal relationships. This remains the most common impact as seen in 2022, but for MSA women, nearly all types of impacts decreased since 2022. The single impact that increased since 2022 for both MSA women and men was taking time off.

Figure 20.
Impact of the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation



Reporting the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation

The DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) focuses not only on preventing sexual assault, but also encourages reporting to facilitate victim recovery and hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable. Of the 13.3% of MSA women who experienced USC in the past APY, an estimated 12% indicated on the survey they had reported this incident, a significant decrease since 2022, when an estimated 15% of victimized women indicated reporting the USC.³³ Women were also more likely than men to have reported their USC. When it comes to class year, senior men were less likely than men of other class years to report their USC whereas freshman men were more likely. The top reason indicated by more than half of MSA women as to why they reported their USC was to stop the person(s) from hurting others.

Several reasons for reporting fell since 2022 for MSA women, notably someone encouraging the victim to report, the victim reporting to get mental health assistance, and the victim reporting to get medical assistance. Because the rate of reporting and the rate of prevalence each fell since 2022, a continued emphasis on the importance and value of reporting sexual assaults regardless of the type of USC (and thereby, perceived severity of the event) may support increased reporting over time. Although the overall rate of reporting was statistically unchanged between women of different class years, significant differences exist in the reasons for reporting by class year. The most common reasons that freshman women gave for reporting included it being their civic/military duty to do so, because someone they told encouraged them to report, to stop the person who did it from hurting others, and to stop the person who did it from hurting them again, all of which were more common than among women of other class years. These data can be seen in Table 5.

³³ In order to obtain more information on what actions were taken as a result of reporting USC, the survey asks respondents to indicate whether or not they filed an official report. These survey estimates are distinct from the actual reporting data maintained within the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID).

Table 5.***Reasons for Reporting the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation for MSA Women***

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	2022	2024
Someone else made you report it or reported it themselves	14%	11%
To stop the person(s) from hurting you again	32%	45%↑
To stop the person(s) from hurting others	62%	55%
It was your civic/military duty to report it	21%	39%↑
To punish the person(s) who did it	20%	32%↑
To discourage other potential offenders	18%	23%
To get medical assistance	19%	9%↓
To get mental health assistance	52%	32%↓
To stop rumors	10%	6%↓
Someone you told encouraged you to report	60%	47%↓
Raise awareness that it occurs at the Academy	51%	40%↓
Other	16%	4%↓

Margins of error range from ±2% to ±5%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA women who experienced USC since June 2023 and made an official report. Respondents were able to select multiple reasons for reporting.

Of the 3.6% of MSA men who experienced USC, an estimated 4% indicated on the survey that they reported it. MSA men noted different reasons for reporting the incident, most commonly because someone encouraged them to report, to get mental health assistance, to stop the person from hurting others, and to stop the person from hurting them again. The two most common reasons for reporting rose substantially since 2022, and a significant decline since 2022 was found for those indicating that someone else made them report it or reported it themselves. These results are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6.
Reasons for Reporting the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation for MSA Men

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	2022	2024
Someone else made you report it or reported it themselves	25%	<1%↓
To stop the person(s) from hurting you again	35%	51%
To stop the person(s) from hurting others	51%	51%
It was your civic/military duty to report it	26%	31%
To punish the person(s) who did it	19%	31%
To discourage other potential offenders	13%	21%
To get medical assistance	13%	20%
To get mental health assistance	38%	69%↑
To stop rumors	6%	10%
Someone you told encouraged you to report	35%	71%↑
Raise awareness that it occurs at the Academy	53%	41%
Other	NR	10%

Margins of error range from ±5% to ±31%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA men who experienced USC since June 2023 and made an official report. Respondents were able to select multiple reasons for reporting. NR = Not Reportable.

Negative Outcomes as a Result of Reporting Unwanted Sexual Contact

Experiencing USC is often innately physically and psychologically harmful, but those who experience it may also experience secondary effects through others' reactions to these events. Classmates, faculty, or friends may act differently toward someone who has reported experiencing USC, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Three major categories of these secondary experiences are professional reprisal, ostracism, and other negative outcomes as a result of reporting.

Measures of *perceived retaliation, professional reprisal, ostracism, and other negative outcomes*³⁴ are used to capture outcomes experienced as a result of reporting USC (see chapter 1 for details on rate construction). Recall data in this section are out of cadets/midshipmen who experienced USC in the past year and reported it (an estimated 12% of the 13.3% of MSA women who experienced USC and 4% of the 3.6% of MSA men who experienced USC).

As shown in Figure 21, the estimated rate of perceived retaliation is a summary measure reflecting whether cadets and midshipmen indicated they experienced either professional reprisal, ostracism, and/or other negative outcomes³⁵ by leadership and/or fellow cadets/midshipmen for reporting USC. Nearly two-thirds of MSA women (61%) and over half of MSA men (54%) who reported their USC incident perceived experiencing retaliation,

³⁴ Because the *SAGR* does not assess the relationship between the alleged perpetrator and the respondent, we cannot definitively assess whether the alleged perpetrator's behavior violated law or policy.

³⁵ See chapter 1 for a comprehensive description of the definitions of professional reprisal, ostracism, other negative outcomes, and perceived retaliation.

including 31% of MSA women and 11% of MSA men who experienced behaviors that may be prohibited by punitive policies (the estimated rate of perceived retaliation). This represents a significant decrease among men compared to 2022, when the estimate rate of perceived retaliation was 36%.

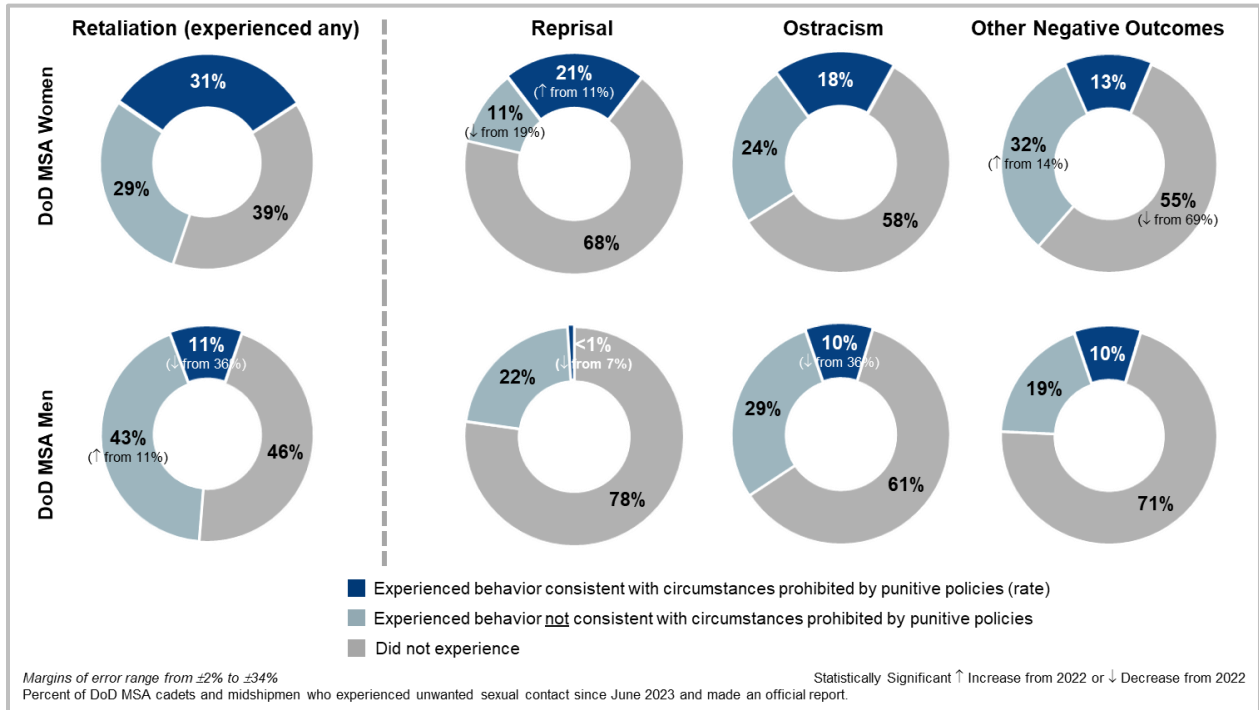
The *estimated rate of professional reprisal* is a summary measure reflecting whether cadets and midshipmen indicated they experienced unfavorable actions taken from leadership (or an individual with the authority to affect a personnel decision) as a result of reporting USC (not based on conduct or performance). As shown in Figure 21, 32% of MSA women and 22% of MSA men who reported their USC incident perceived experiencing behaviors consistent with professional reprisal, including 21% of MSA women and less than 1% of MSA men who experienced behaviors that may be prohibited by punitive policies (the estimated rate of professional reprisal).³⁶ This represents a significant increase among women compared to 2022, when the estimate rate of perceived professional reprisal was 11%.

The *estimated rate of ostracism* is a summary measure reflecting whether, as a result of reporting the incident of USC, cadets and midshipmen experienced being excluded or ignored. As shown in Figure 21, 42% of MSA women and 39% of MSA men who reported their USC incident perceived experiencing behaviors consistent with ostracism, including 18% of MSA women and 10% of MSA men who experienced behaviors that may be prohibited by punitive policies (the estimated rate of ostracism). This represents a significant decrease among men compared to 2022, when the estimate rate of ostracism was 36%.

The *estimated rate of other negative outcomes* is a summary measure reflecting whether, as a result of reporting USC, cadets and midshipmen experienced negative behaviors from MSA peers or leadership that occurred without a valid military purpose and may have included physical or psychological force, threats, or abusive or unjustified treatment that resulted in physical or mental harm. As shown in Figure 21, 45% of MSA women (a significant increase from 31% in 2022) and 29% of MSA men who reported their USC incident perceived experiencing behaviors consistent with other negative outcomes, including 13% of MSA women and 10% of MSA men who experienced behaviors that may be prohibited by punitive policies (the estimated rate of other negative outcomes).

³⁶ See chapter 1 for details on rate construction.

Figure 21.
Estimated Rates of Negative Outcomes as a Result of Reporting Unwanted Sexual Contact



Reasons for Not Reporting Unwanted Sexual Contact

The vast majority of MSA cadets and midshipmen who experienced USC chose not to report their experience (an estimated 88% of MSA women and 96% of MSA men who experienced USC in the past APY), consistent with findings that sexual assault often goes underreported (Tapp & Coen, 2024). When asked why they chose not to report the incident, the top reason was that they thought it was not serious enough to report. Other top reasons for not reporting included taking care of the problem themselves, specifically by forgetting about it and moving on and avoiding the person who did it, which decreased for MSA men since 2022 (Table 7 and Table 8).

Table 7.
Reasons for Not Reporting the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation for MSA Women

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	2022	2024
Thought it was not serious enough to report	67%	67%
Took care of the problem yourself by avoiding the person who assaulted you	57%	55%
Took care of the problem yourself by confronting the person who assaulted you	24%	26%
Took care of the problem yourself by forgetting about it and moving on	57%	56%
Did not want more people to know	58%	48%↓
Felt uncomfortable making a report	49%	45%↓
Thought reporting would take too much time and effort	40%	36%↓
Did not want people talking or gossiping about you	52%	48%↓
Felt shame/embarrassment	49%	45%↓
Other	12%	12%

Margins of error range from ±1% to ±2%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA women who experienced USC since June 2023 and did not make an official report.

Table 8.
Reasons for Not Reporting the Unwanted Sexual Contact One Situation for MSA Men

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	2022	2024
Thought it was not serious enough to report	65%	65%
Took care of the problem yourself by avoiding the person who assaulted you	45%	39%↓
Took care of the problem yourself by confronting the person who assaulted you	26%	29%
Took care of the problem yourself by forgetting about it and moving on	45%	48%
Did not want more people to know	36%	35%
Felt uncomfortable making a report	29%	35%↑
Thought reporting would take too much time and effort	30%	32%
Did not want people talking or gossiping about you	34%	37%
Felt shame/embarrassment	27%	29%
Other	12%	13%

Margins of error range from ±2% to ±3%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA men who experienced USC since June 2023 and did not make an official report.

Chapter 3: Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination

This section examines cadet and midshipman experiences of sexual harassment and sex discrimination. As described in chapter 1, sexual harassment and sex discrimination are military equal opportunity policy violations and are defined as prohibited behaviors committed by someone from an academy. In the survey, participants were asked about sex-related behaviors they may have experienced during the academic program year (APY) that may have been upsetting or offensive. To be included in the estimated prevalence rate for sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination, two requirements must have been met:

1. The student must have indicated they experienced a behavior consistent with sexual harassment (which includes sexually hostile work environment or sexual *quid pro quo*) and/or sex discrimination behavior(s) in the past APY, and
2. The student must have indicated that they met at least one of the follow-up items that assess persistence and/or severity of the behavior for sexual harassment and/or the behavior either harming their career/being done by an authority figure for sex discrimination.³⁷

Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination Rates

This section provides the estimated rates for sexual harassment and sex discrimination. The estimated prevalence rates are presented by sex and by class year, with significant changes since 2022 noted where applicable.

Sexual Harassment

The Service Academy Gender³⁸ Relations Survey (SAGR) characterizes sexual harassment as including two types of unwanted behaviors: sexually hostile work environment and sexual *quid pro quo*. We define a “sexually hostile work environment” as “unwelcome sexual experiences that are pervasive or severe so as to interfere with a person’s work performance, or that create a work environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive.” Sexual *quid pro quo* behaviors are those used to control, influence, or affect one’s job, career, or pay. Instances of sexual *quid pro quo* include situations in which job benefits or losses are conditional on sexual cooperation. The estimated rate for sexual harassment includes those cadets and midshipmen who met criteria for sexually hostile work environment and/or sexual *quid pro quo*.

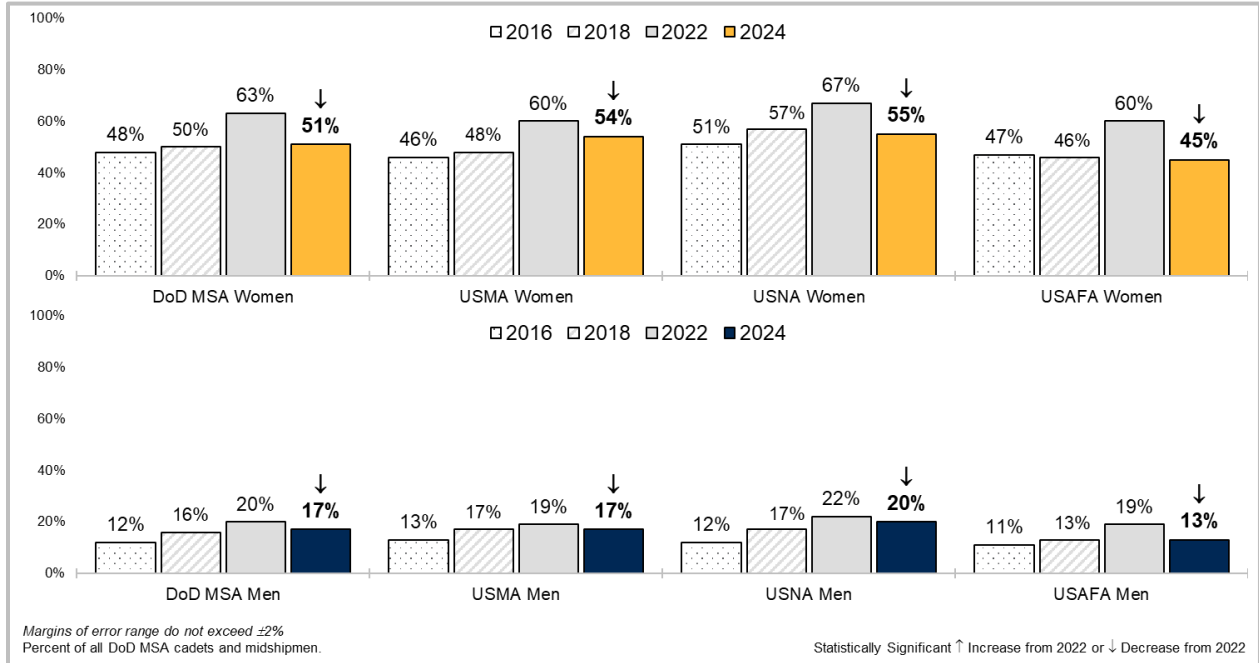
As shown in Figure 22, an estimated 51% of MSA women indicated experiencing sexual harassment in the past APY, which decreased from 63% in 2022. When examining by academy, estimated rates of sexual harassment significantly decreased for women at the U.S. Military

³⁷ See chapter 1 for details on the metric used and construction of estimated rates.

³⁸ Since 2006, the SAGR survey used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and, therefore, references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

Academy (USMA), the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). An estimated 17% of MSA men indicated experiencing sexual harassment in the past APY, which decreased from 20% in 2022. Like women, estimated rates of sexual harassment for men at USMA, USNA, and USAFA decreased since 2022. The remainder of this section focuses on the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) MSAs overall.

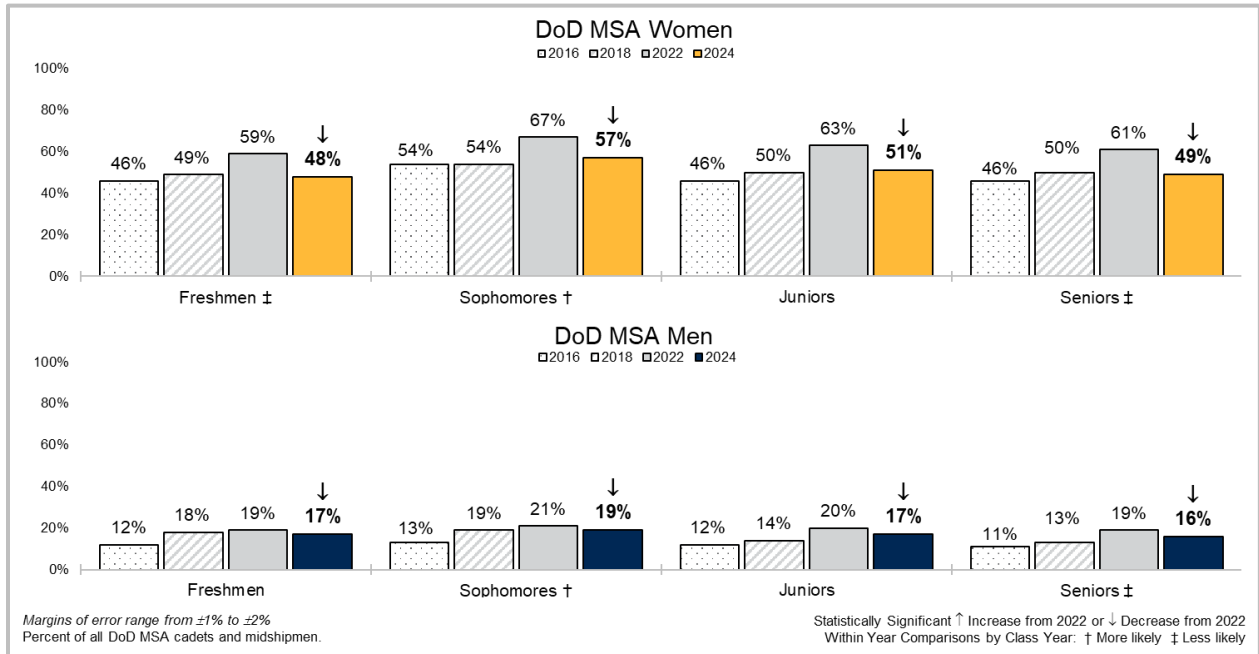
Figure 22.
Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment Prevalence Rates



Since 2022, MSA women of all class years showed a significant decrease in experiencing sexual harassment, but sophomores were more at risk for experiencing sexual harassment compared to women in other class years (Figure 23). Conversely, senior and freshman women were less likely than women of other class years to experience sexual harassment. MSA men’s results by class year present many similarities to those of MSA women. Like MSA women, a decrease in prevalence of sexual harassment was found for MSA men of all class years compared to 2022. Additionally, sophomore men were more at risk than men of other class years for experiencing sexual harassment, whereas seniors were less likely.

Notably, although the senior men were significantly less likely than men of other class years to have experienced sexual harassment, they were also *more* likely than men of other class years to have experienced unwanted sexual contact (USC). Given the relationship between experiences of sexual harassment and USC, it is worth noting that the results for senior men do not appear to follow the typical pattern.

Figure 23.
Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment Prevalence Rates by Class Year

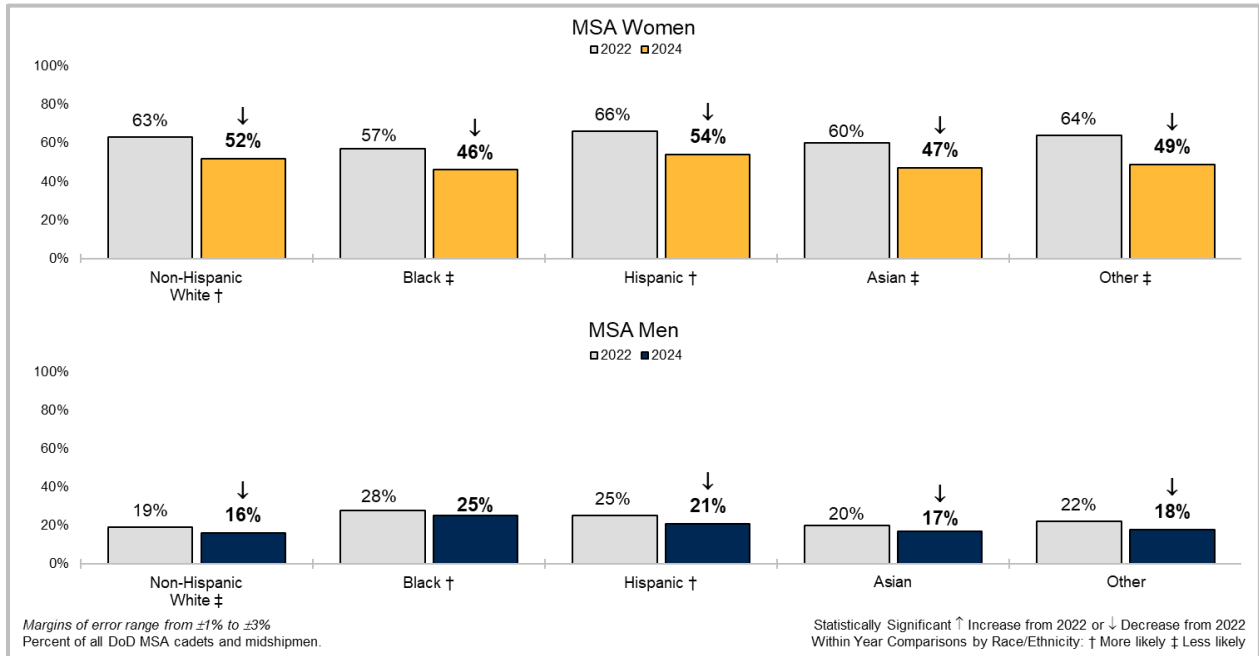


Sexual Harassment by Race/Ethnicity

Overall, non-Hispanic White MSA women were more likely than racial/ethnic minority women to experience sexual harassment in the past APY, although the overall prevalence of sexual harassment for both groups of women decreased since 2022. Specifically, more than half of non-Hispanic White women (52%) experienced sexual harassment in the past APY, higher than the 50% of racial/ethnic minority MSA women who experienced it (Figure 24). When we examine by specific race/ethnicity, Hispanic (54%) and non-Hispanic White women (52%) were significantly more likely than women of other races/ethnicities to experience sexual harassment, whereas women of all other races were less likely (Black, Asian, and those identifying as “Other”). Finally, the decrease in sexual harassment since 2022 as seen for the broad categories of race/ethnicity for MSA women was also seen in each specific race/ethnicity category.

To the contrary, racial/ethnic minority MSA men (20%) were significantly more likely than non-Hispanic White men (16%) to experience sexual harassment. Specifically, Black and Hispanic MSA men (25% and 21% respectively) were significantly more likely to experience sexual harassment, whereas White men (16%) were less likely. Also noteworthy is that the rate of sexual harassment decreased since 2022 for men of all races except for Black men, which remained statistically unchanged.

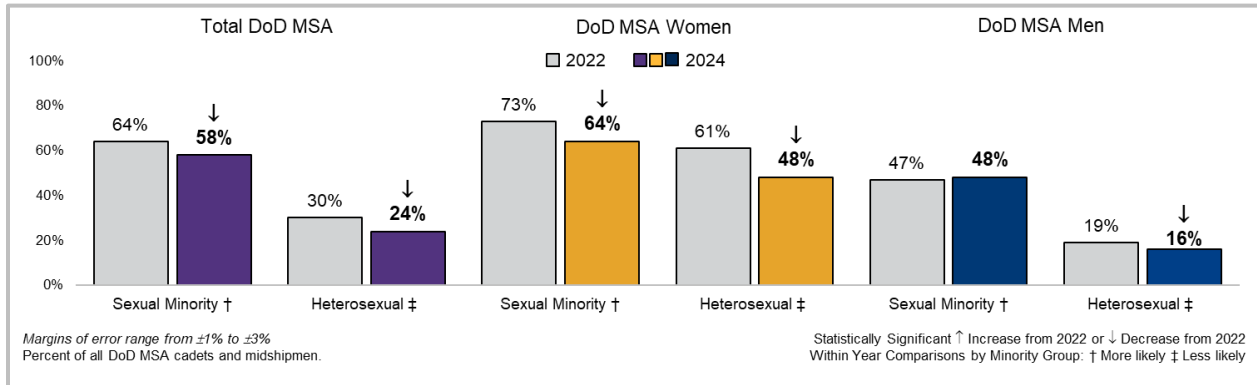
Figure 24.
Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment Prevalence Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Sexual Harassment by Sexual Minority Status

As noted in chapter 1, sexual minorities include respondents who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or marked “I use a different term.” Overall, an estimated 7.0% of cadets and midshipmen enrolled at the DoD MSAs identified as a sexual minority (16.1% of DoD MSA women and 3.4% of DoD MSA men). As seen in Figure 25, MSA men and women who identify as sexual minorities were more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience sexual harassment in the past APY. Specifically, 64% of MSA sexual minority women experienced sexual harassment in the past APY, significantly higher than for heterosexual women (48%). MSA sexual minority men were significantly more likely (48%) than heterosexual men (16%) to experience sexual harassment. Although sexual harassment decreased since 2022 for sexual minority and heterosexual women as well as for heterosexual men, there was no commensurate decrease in these experiences for sexual minority men.

Figure 25.
Estimated Past-Year Sexual Harassment Prevalence Rates by Sexual Minority Status

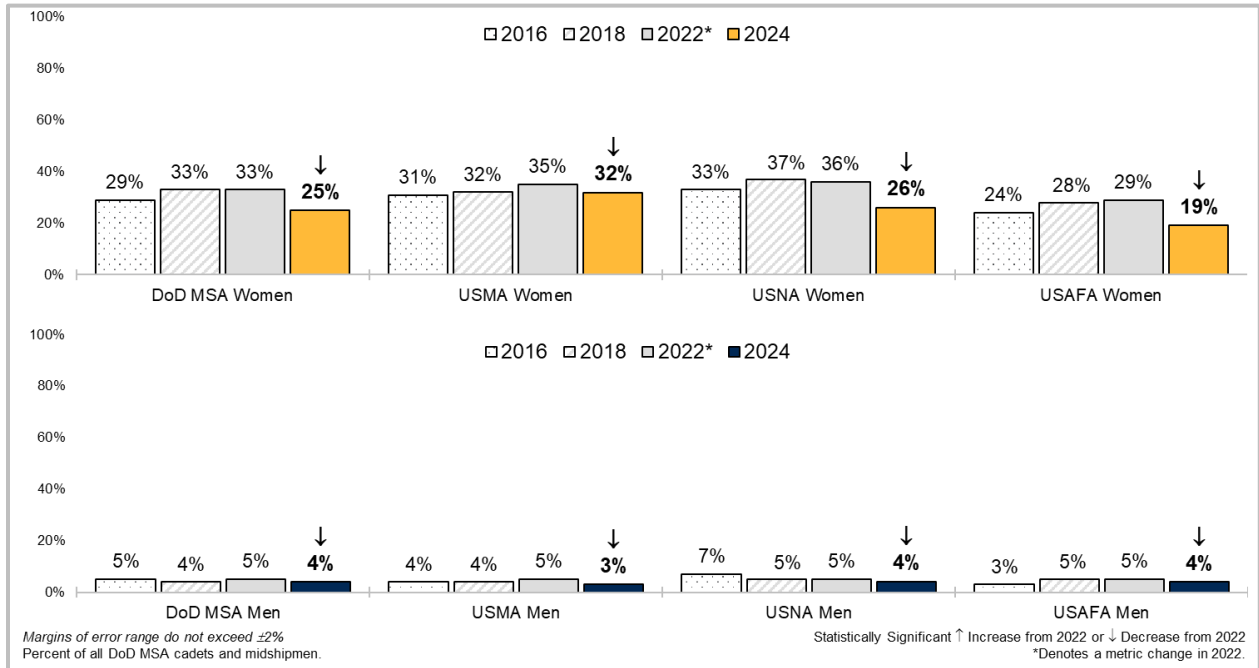


Sex Discrimination

Sex discrimination is defined as behaviors or comments directed at someone because of their sex that harmed or limited their career or was done by a person in a position of authority. To be included in the estimated prevalence rate for sex discrimination, cadets and midshipmen must have indicated experiencing at least one of the behaviors *and* at least one corresponding follow-up item that the behavior harmed their career, or that the person doing the behavior was an authority figure.

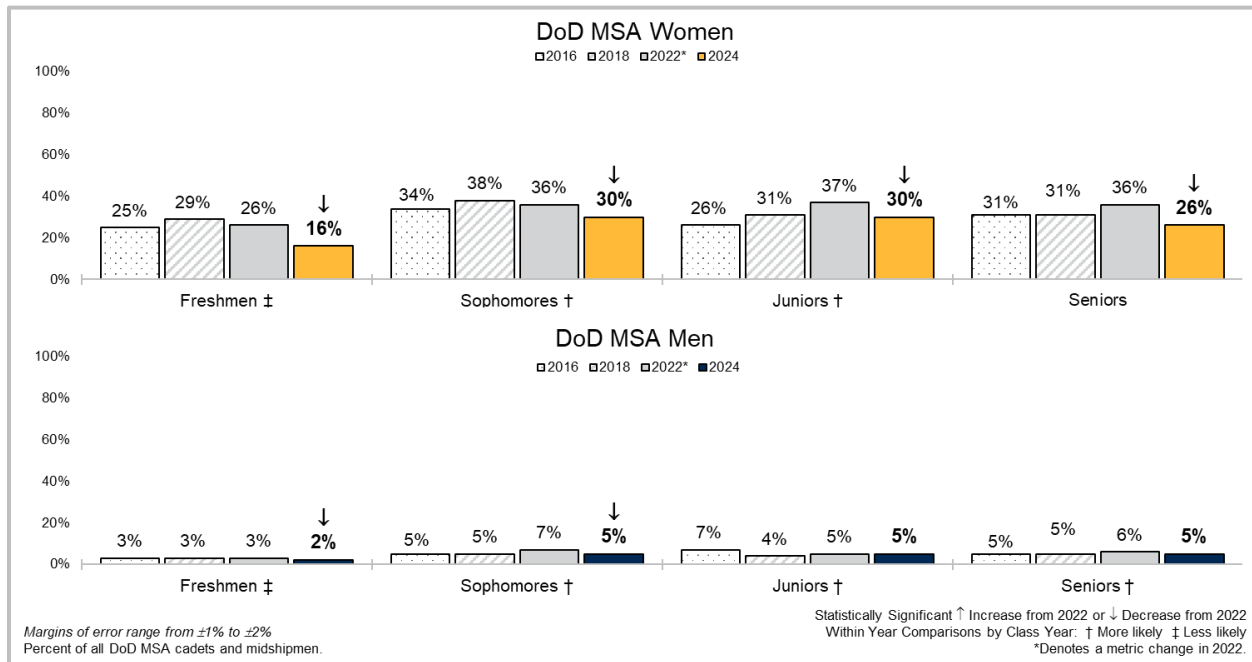
An estimated one-quarter (25%) of MSA women experienced sex discrimination from leadership, a significant decrease from one-third in 2022 (Figure 26). When examining by academy, estimated rates of sex discrimination significantly decreased for women at USMA, USNA, and USAFA. An estimated 4% of MSA men experienced sex discrimination from leadership, which decreased from 5% in 2022. Like women, estimated rates of sex discrimination for men at USMA, USNA, and USAFA decreased since 2022 (Figure 26). The remainder of this section focuses on the DoD MSAs overall.

Figure 26.
Estimated Past-Year Sex Discrimination Prevalence Rates



The decrease in sex discrimination was seen for women in all class years. Despite this decrease across the board, junior and sophomore women were more likely than women of other class years to have experienced sex discrimination, whereas freshman women were less likely (Figure 27). For men, freshmen and sophomores saw a significant decrease, whereas the rates for junior and senior men remained statistically unchanged. As with female peers, freshman men were less likely than men of other class years to have experienced sex discrimination, whereas sophomore, junior, and senior men were more likely.

Figure 27.
Estimated Past-Year Sex Discrimination Prevalence Rates by Class Year

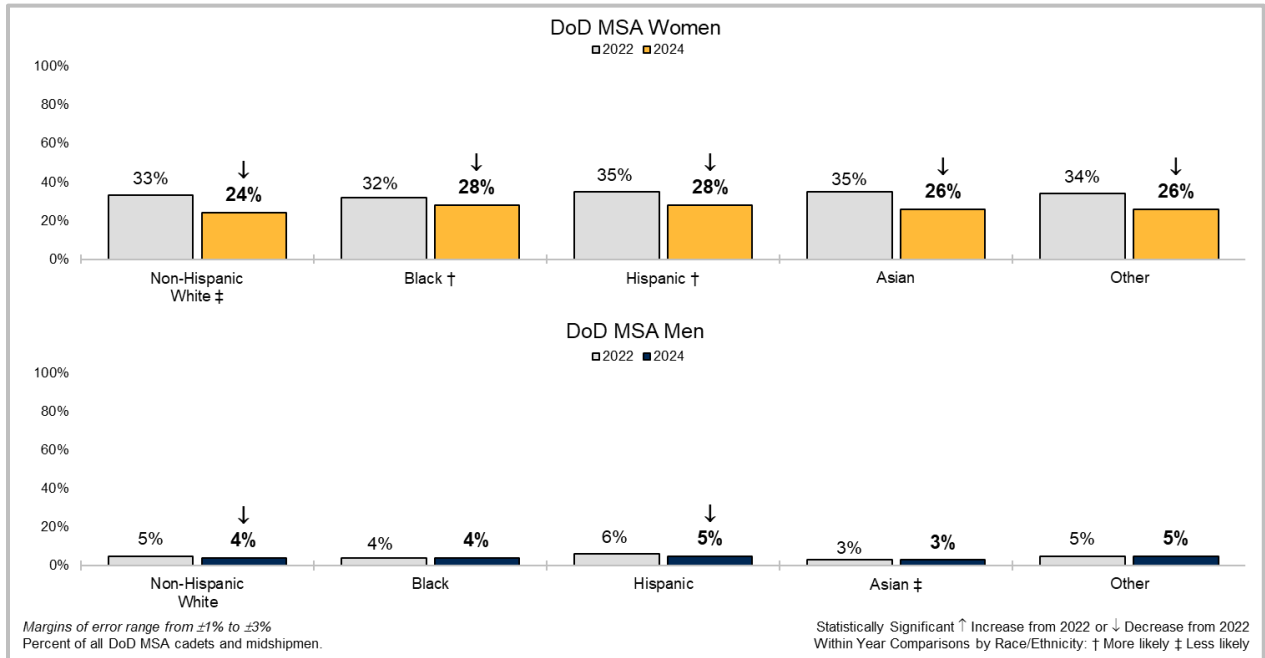


Sex Discrimination by Race/Ethnicity

Similar to experiences of sexual harassment, racial/ethnic minority (27%) MSA women were more likely than non-Hispanic White women (24%) to experience sex discrimination in the past APY. Hispanic and Black (28% each) MSA women were significantly more likely than women of other races/ethnicities to experience sex discrimination, whereas rates of sex discrimination were lowest for non-Hispanic White female cadets and midshipmen (Figure 28). As with rates of sexual harassment, a decrease was seen since 2022 for women of all races/ethnicities.

However, for MSA men, non-Hispanic White men (4%) were equally likely as minority men (4%) to experience sex discrimination in the past APY. When we examine by specific race/ethnicity, different patterns emerged for MSA women and men. For MSA men, Asian men (3%) were significantly less likely than men of other races to experience sex discrimination. Additionally, the rate of sex discrimination decreased since 2022 for non-Hispanic White and Hispanic men but remained statistically unchanged for men of all other races/ethnicities.

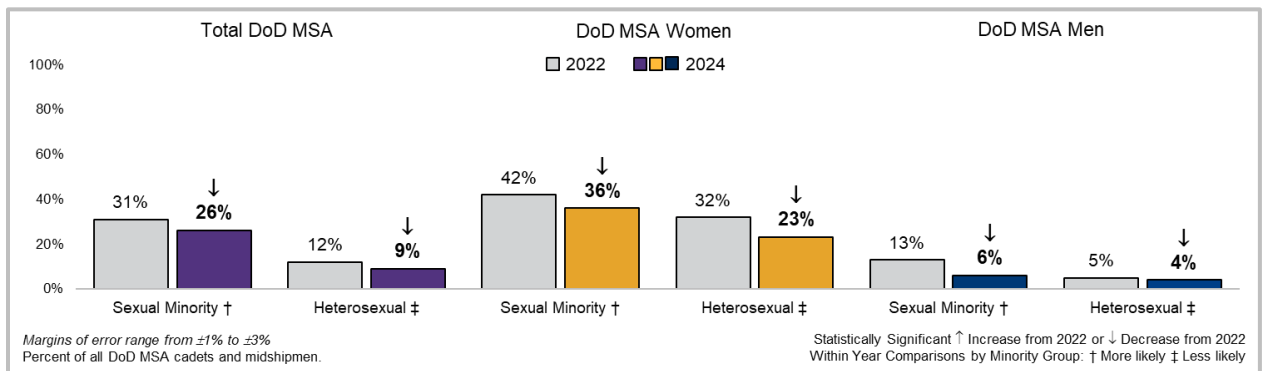
Figure 28.
Estimated Past-Year Sex Discrimination Prevalence Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Sex Discrimination by Sexual Minority Status

As seen in Figure 29, MSA cadets and midshipmen who identify as sexual minorities were more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience sex discrimination in the past APY. Specifically, 36% of sexual minority MSA women experienced sex discrimination in the past APY, which was significantly higher than heterosexual women (23%). As with sexual harassment, the rates of sex discrimination for both sets of women decreased since 2022. A similar pattern was also found for men: sexual minority MSA men (6%) were significantly more likely than heterosexual men (4%) to experience sex discrimination. As with those for women, each of these decreased since 2022.

Figure 29.
Estimated Past-Year Sex Discrimination Prevalence Rates by Sexual Minority Status



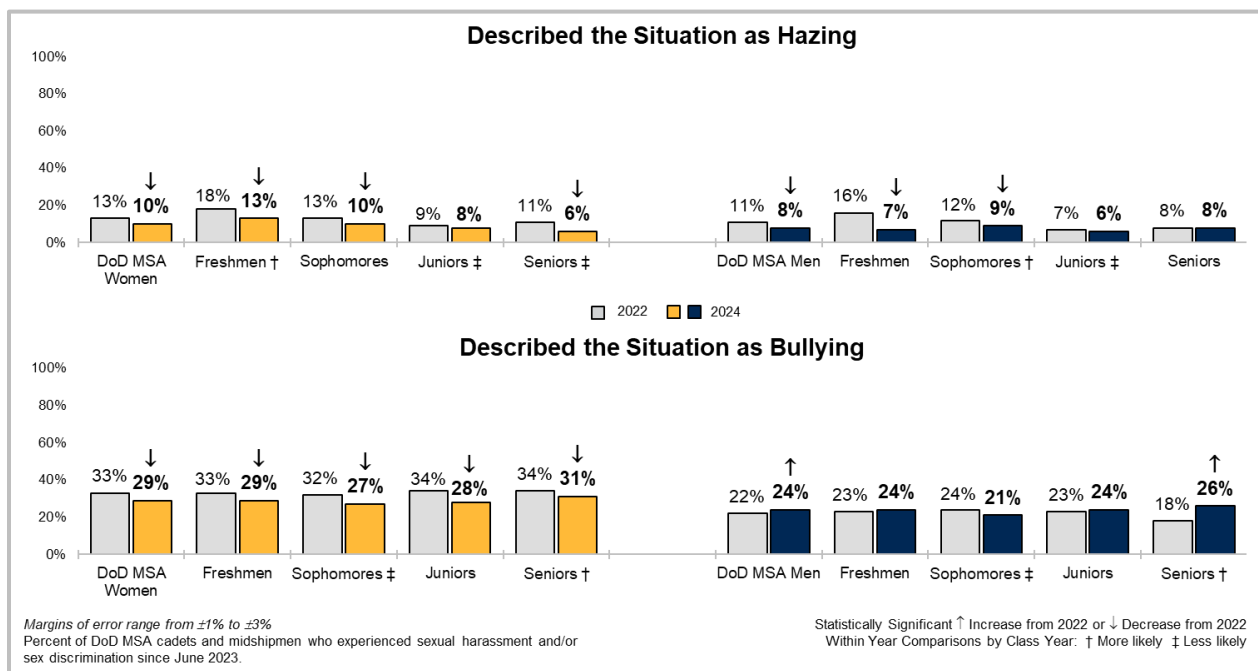
One Situation of Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination With the Biggest Effect

To better understand the circumstances involved in their experience, the 57% of MSA women and 19% of MSA men who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY (either sexual harassment and/or leader-based sex discrimination) were asked to provide additional information as to what they considered to be the worst or most serious experience (hereafter referred to as the “one situation”). With this one situation in mind, cadets and midshipmen were asked to provide details of the behaviors, how they characterized the behaviors, who the alleged offender(s) were, and whether they discussed or filed a complaint regarding this violation.

What: Characterization of Behaviors Experienced in the Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination One Situation

Over one-quarter of MSA women who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination considered the one situation to be bullying, whereas approximately one-tenth considered the behavior to be hazing—each of these having decreased since 2022. Characterization as hazing decreased for senior, sophomore, and freshman women, and characterization as bullying decreased for women of all class years (Figure 30). Sophomore women were less likely than women of other class years to consider the event bullying, whereas senior women were more likely. Freshman women were more likely than women of other class years to consider the event hazing, whereas senior and junior women were less likely.

Figure 30.
Characterization of Behaviors Experienced in the Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination One Situation



Although less than one-tenth of men who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination considered it hazing, approximately one-quarter considered it bullying. Additionally, although the proportion of men who considered the event to be hazing decreased, the proportion considering the event bullying *increased* since 2022. The decrease in characterization as hazing was driven by sophomore and freshman men, however, sophomore men were more likely than men of other class years to consider the event to be hazing. The increase in men perceiving the event as bullying was driven by senior men; men of all other class years showed no statistical change over time.

Who: Reported Demographics of the Alleged Offender(s) in the Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination One Situation

As seen in Table 9, most MSA women who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY indicated the alleged offender(s) were more than one person, most often male peer(s) in the same class year. Of note, since 2022 there were decreases in alleged offenders who were in a position of power (i.e., higher class year, higher in the cadet/midshipman chain of command, or academy military/uniformed faculty or staff), with the exception of offenders who were academy civilian faculty or staff, which saw a slight increase. More than one-quarter (26%) of senior women experienced violations from alleged offender(s) who were academy military/uniformed faculty or staff, more often than women of other class years. Despite this greater likelihood, this decreased for senior women since 2022.

Table 9.
Characteristics of the Alleged Offender(s) in the One Situation of Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination for MSA Women

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	2022	2024
Sex of Alleged Offender(s)		
Men	85%	83% ↓
Women	1%	2% ↑
A mix of men and women	12%	13%
Number of Alleged Offender(s)		
One person	26%	31% ↑
More than one person	68%	64% ↓
Status of Alleged Offender(s)		
Higher class year	55%	51% ↓
Same class year	85%	83% ↓
Lower class year	20%	18% ↓
Higher in cadet/midshipman chain of command	41%	38% ↓
Member of intramural or club sports team	25%	24%
Member of NCAA/Division I sports team	26%	25%
Academy military/uniformed faculty or staff	20%	18% ↓
Academy civilian faculty or staff	8%	10% ↑
DoD person not affiliated with the MSA	5%	5%
Person not affiliated with DoD	4%	4%
Unknown person	6%	5% ↓

Margins of error range from ±1% to ±2%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA women who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY.

As seen in Table 10, the majority of men who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY indicated the alleged offender(s) were male academy students, most often in the same class year. Like women, there was a decrease since 2022 in alleged offenders who were in a higher class year, but the proportions of alleged offenders in other positions of power were statistically unchanged. Senior and junior men were more likely than other men to indicate the alleged offender(s) were academy military/uniformed faculty or staff, whereas freshman men were less likely. Additionally, the proportion of alleged offender(s) who were a member of a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)/Division I sports team remained steady from 2022 for men overall, but were higher among freshman men than men of other class years.

Table 10.***Characteristics of the Alleged Offender(s) in the One Situation of Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination for MSA Men***

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	2022	2024
Sex of Alleged Offender(s)		
Men	55%	52%↓
Women	20%	18%↓
A mix of men and women	20%	26%↑
Number of Alleged Offender(s)		
One person	45%	47%↑
More than one person	46%	45%
Status of Alleged Offender(s)		
Higher class year	36%	31%↓
Same class year	77%	81%↑
Lower class year	15%	13%↓
Higher in cadet/midshipman chain of command	24%	24%
Member of intramural or club sports team	20%	20%
Member of NCAA/Division I sports team	20%	21%
Academy military/uniformed faculty or staff	18%	16%
Academy civilian faculty or staff	7%	8%
DoD person not affiliated with the MSA	2%	2%
Person not affiliated with DoD	3%	2%↓
Unknown person	4%	4%

Margins of error range from ±1% to ±2%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA men who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY.

Discussing/Filing a Complaint of the Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination One Situation

Cadets and midshipmen who experience sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination have resources available to them should they want to discuss their situation or file a complaint with/to any authority or organization. Out of the 57% of MSA women and 19% of MSA men who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY, the majority spoke with at least one person about it. Both MSA women and men most often reached out to those closest to them: their family or friends outside their company/squadron, or someone in their company or squadron. Over one-third of MSA women and nearly half of men discussed the violation with the alleged offender(s), consistent with their training to handle these situations at the lowest interpersonal level (Barry et al., 2017). Very few MSA women and men discussed the situation with support personnel and/or offices such as chaplains, counselors, Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) program officers, or Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) or Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) officers. In fact, the percentage

of women who discussed the incident with support staff decreased since 2022, although increased for men since 2022.³⁹

Table 11.
Discussing/Filing a Complaint of the One Situation of Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	MSA Women		MSA Men	
	2022	2024	2022	2024
Discussed with anyone ⁴⁰	91%	92% ↑	76%	80% ↑
The person(s) who did this to you	35%	38% ↑	37%	45% ↑
Someone in your company/squadron	67%	68% ↑	48%	50% ↑
Your friends or family outside of your company/squadron	70%	70%	41%	40%
A chaplain, counselor, or medical person	12%	10% ↓	5%	6% ↑
An MEO, SARC, or SHARP Officer	7%	5% ↓	2%	3%
Filed a complaint with/to any authority or organization	11%	11%	4%	5%

Margins of error range from ±1% to ±2%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA cadets and midshipmen who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY.

Of the 11% of MSA women who filed a sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination complaint, more than half of MSA women who filed a complaint experienced at least one negative outcome as a result of filing the complaint, the results of which can be seen in Table 12. Notably, less than half indicated the situation was/is being investigated, which decreased compared to 2022. Additionally, “negative outcomes” includes administrative action being taken against the person filing the complaint, which increased for women compared to 2022. However, fewer women were ridiculed or scorned as a result of filing a complaint. Finally, there was a significant increase in respondents indicating that some other action was taken, at over one-quarter of women who filed a complaint. Although a large proportion of women who filed a complaint experienced at least one negative outcome, more than two-thirds of women who filed a complaint had at least one positive outcome, suggesting the act of filing a complaint often results in a mix of desirable and undesirable experiences. Specific positive results included the situation being corrected, or that disciplinary action was taken against the alleged offender, both of which increased compared to 2022.

Similar to women, a high proportion of MSA men indicated experiencing negative outcomes as a result of filing a sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination complaint. Unlike women’s

³⁹ In order to obtain more information on what actions were taken as a result of filing a sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination complaint with any authority, the survey asks respondents to indicate whether they filed a complaint. These are not to be confused with the actual complaints the academy received during the APY.

⁴⁰ “Discussed with anyone” is a constructed metric assessing participants who indicating discussing with any category on the survey.

results, this increased since 2022. Of the 5% of MSA men who filed a sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination complaint, less than a third indicated the situation was/is being investigated (a notable decrease from 2022) and/or that they were kept informed of what actions were being taken. Additionally, half of MSA men reported that their situation was not being taken seriously, over half were encouraged to let it go or tough it out, more than a third of men also reported that they were ridiculed or scorned as a result of their filing a complaint, and a little less than one-fifth reported that administrative and/or disciplinary action had been taken against them as a result of their reporting. Each of these involved a nearly double-digit percentage increase from 2022. Only 16% of MSA men who reported their situation said disciplinary action was taken against the offender, a significant decrease to less than half the percentage indicating this in 2022. Nearly two-thirds of MSA men who reported on their situation said they did not know what happened and/or some other action was taken, both of which increased since 2022.

Table 12.
Outcomes of Filing a Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination Complaint With an Authority

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	MSA Women		MSA Men	
	2022	2024	2022	2024
Positive Outcomes				
The situation was corrected	32%	39%↑	35%	34%
Your situation was/is being investigated	49%	44%↓	39%	29%↓
You were kept informed of actions being taken	38%	37%	37%	29%
Disciplinary action was taken against the [alleged] offender(s)	24%	29%↑	36%	16%↓
Some other action was taken	22%	27%↑	16%	31%↑
Negative Outcomes				
You were encouraged to let it go or tough it out	48%	51%	44%	52%
Your situation was discounted or not taken seriously	47%	47%	38%	50%↑
Disciplinary action was taken against you	13%	13%	10%	19%↑
Administrative action was taken against you	5%	9%↑	7%	18%↑
You were ridiculed or scorned	34%	30%↓	27%	38%↑
You don't know what happened	27%	28%	19%	33%↑

Margins of error range from ±2% to ±7%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA cadets and midshipmen who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY and filed a complaint.

Reasons for Not Discussing/Filing a Complaint of the Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination One Situation

Sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination often go unreported and/or are handled by the victim at the lowest interpersonal level (handling issues at the lowest interpersonal level being consistent with cadet and midshipman training; Barry et al., 2017). To understand more about why incidents of sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination are underreported, cadets and

midshipmen who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination were asked why they chose not to file a complaint about the situation; the top reason for both MSA women and men was that they thought it was not important enough to make a complaint (Table 13). Additional reasons MSA cadets and midshipmen choose not to discuss or file a complaint include forgetting about the issue and moving on, or fundamentally feeling uncomfortable making a complaint. Notable changes among reasons for not filing a complaint among MSA women and men are depicted in the table below.

Table 13.
Reasons for Not Discussing or Filing a Sexual Harassment and/or Sex Discrimination Complaint With an Authority

Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	MSA Women		MSA Men	
	2022	2024	2022	2024
Thought it was not important enough to report	74%	74%	72%	74% ↑
Did not know how to make a complaint	15%	14% ↓	10%	10%
Felt uncomfortable making a complaint	61%	57% ↓	39%	41%
Took care of the problem themselves by avoiding the person who harassed them	59%	57% ↓	36%	32% ↓
Took care of the problem themselves by confronting the person who harassed them	29%	30%	34%	39% ↑
Took care of the problem themselves by forgetting about it and moving on	62%	63% ↑	51%	47% ↓
Did not think anything would be done	50%	50%	33%	33%
Thought making a complaint would take too much time and effort	49%	50%	37%	37%
Thought would be labeled a troublemaker	37%	39% ↑	21%	25% ↑
Thought evaluations or chances for leadership positions would suffer	30%	29% ↓	20%	19%
Did not want people talking or gossiping about them	57%	57%	33%	34%
Thought it would hurt their reputation and standing	45%	45%	31%	34% ↑
Did not want to hurt the career of the person(s) who did it	30%	30%	23%	27% ↑
Did not want to bring undue attention or discredit on the Academy	16%	12% ↓	13%	11% ↓

Margins of error range from ±1% to ±4%

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA cadets and midshipmen who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination in the past APY and did not file a complaint.

Chapter 4: Academy Culture and Climate Regarding Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

Organizational culture is a set of shared cognitions and behaviors, including values, behavioral norms and expectations, fundamental assumptions, and larger patterns of behavior (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Broadly, culture is the “way of doing business” that an institution follows on a regular basis, which may differ from officially stated policies and standards. Organizational culture involves the attitudes and actions of all members of each academy’s community: leaders, faculty, staff, and cadets/midshipmen. As such, organizational culture sets the context within which policies and programs are implemented.

Research suggests that an organization’s environmental characteristics are associated with the prevalence of, and response to, sexual assault and sexual harassment, including norms around dating and sexual behaviors, harassment, and leadership tolerance (Sadler et al., 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Newell et al., 1995; Williams et al., 1999). These studies do not establish causation, but do provide evidence that sexual assault, sexual harassment, and various aspects of climate and culture frequently co-occur.

The following section addresses general culture at the academies pertinent to the prevention of and response to sexual assault and sexual harassment, such as cadet/midshipman alcohol use, bystander intervention, academy culture related to prevention, academy culture related to reporting sexual assault and sexual harassment, and the climate related to relations between men and women.

Academy Culture and Climate for Prevention of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is committed to preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment from happening across the Total Force, including at the military service academies (MSA). In a February 2022 memorandum, the then Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD[P&R]) stated that “sexual assault and sexual harassment have no place at our MSAs, and we must continue efforts to prevent and reduce these behaviors and foster academy climates of dignity and respect.”⁴¹ The Service Academy Gender⁴² Relations Survey (SAGR) is one way to track progress of prevention efforts at the MSAs. As such, this section will cover prevention-related metrics, such as alcohol use, willingness to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, bystander intervention, academy culture related to prevention, and efforts by leaders and students at all levels to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment.

⁴¹ Obtained on September 10, 2024 from:

https://www.sapr.mil/sites/default/files/public/docs/reports/MSA/APY20-21_Actions_to_Address.pdf

⁴² Since 2006, the SAGR survey used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and, therefore, references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

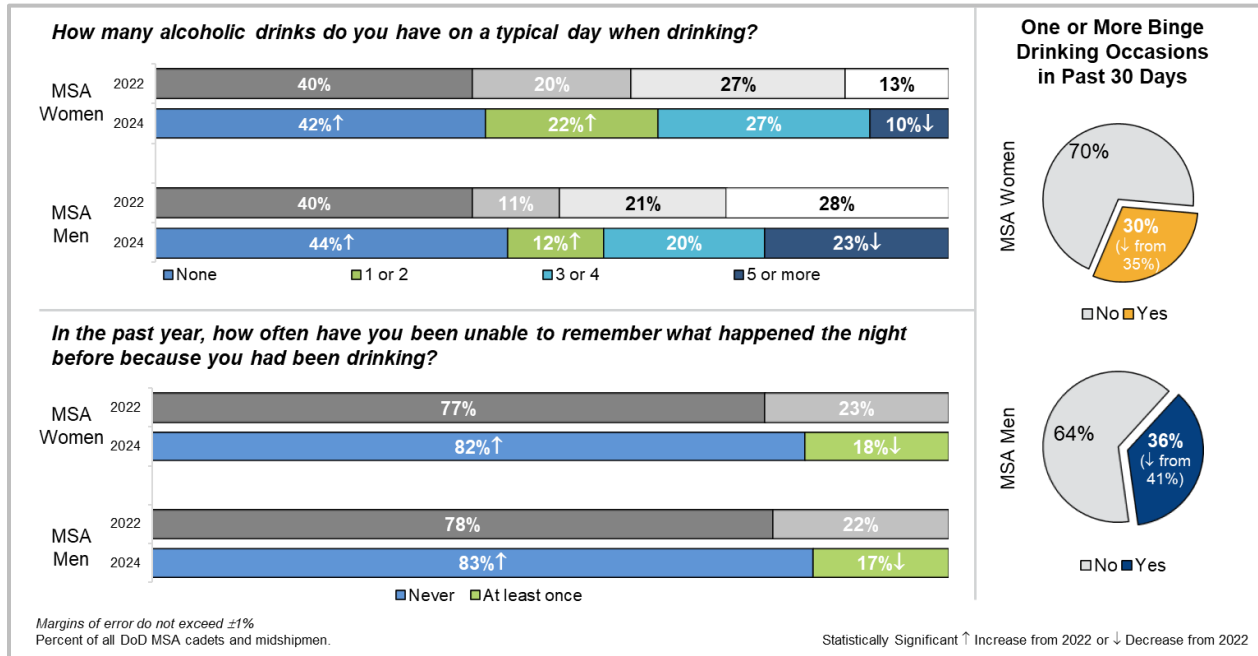
Cadet and Midshipman Alcohol Use

In addition to alcohol use's relationship with sexual assault and sexual harassment as an important topic related to prevention of these unwanted behaviors, monitoring alcohol use is intrinsically useful to understanding the health of MSA students. Cadets and midshipmen were asked about the frequency of their alcohol consumption, the volume of their typical alcohol consumption, and frequency of alcohol-induced memory impairment.

The majority of MSA women and men indicated alcohol abstinence (42% and 44%, respectively) or only minor alcohol consumption on a typical day when drinking (22% and 12%, respectively), both of which grew significantly since 2022. Likewise, the proportion of those indicating consuming five or more drinks on a typical day when drinking decreased since 2022 for both men and women (Figure 31). For MSA women, the increase in alcohol abstinence *and* decrease in heavy drinking was driven by sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Although sophomore, junior, and senior men exhibited the same pattern (i.e., increase in alcohol abstinence, decrease in heavy drinking), the proportion of freshman men abstaining from drinking altogether decreased since 2022. Additionally, although approximately one-third of MSA men and women met the criterion for binge drinking in the 30 days prior to data collection,⁴³ this decreased since 2022. As with overall alcohol consumption patterns, sophomore, junior, and senior men and women meeting criteria for binge drinking decreased since 2022. However, the proportion of freshman men having met this criterion significantly increased since 2022. It is unclear whether this is a pattern unique to freshman cadets/midshipmen, or to the class of 2027 who were freshmen at the time of data collection. Finally, episodes of transient loss of consciousness (i.e., blacking out) in the past 12 months became less common since 2022 for both MSA men and women.

⁴³ Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more alcoholic beverages for men, four or more for women on the same occasion.

Figure 31.
Cadet and Midshipman Alcohol Use



Cadet and Midshipman Bystander Intervention

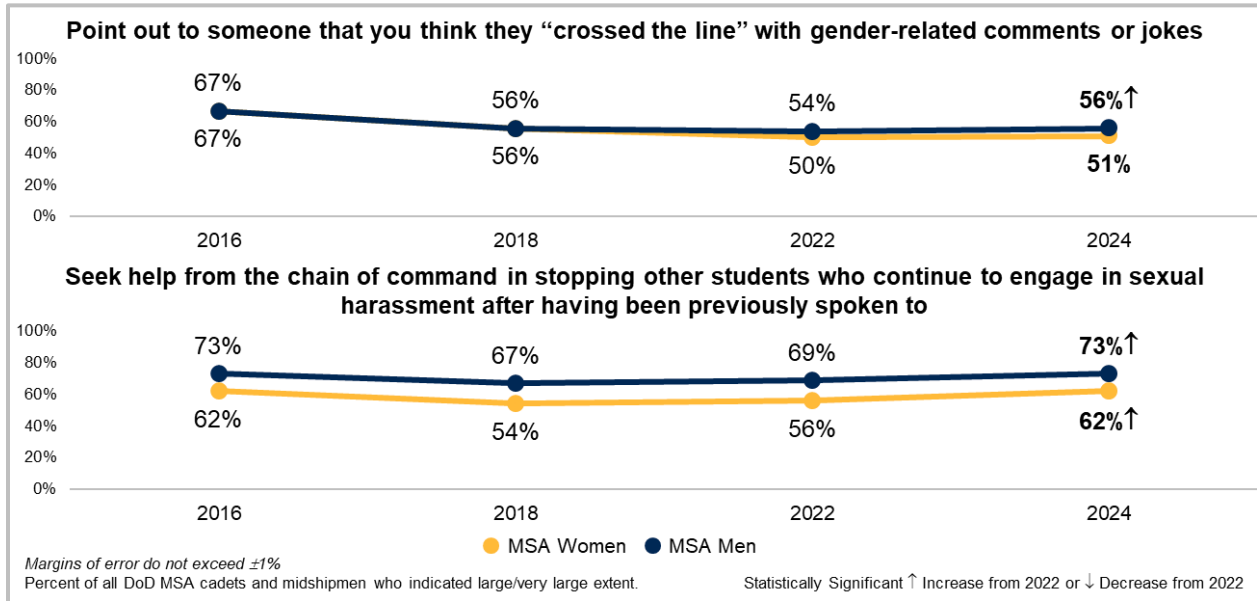
Pursuant to the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office’s (SAPRO) goal of eliminating sexual assault in the military, the academies encourage and train their students to be active observers of potentially unwanted behaviors and intervene if they witness them. However, sexually harassing behaviors may be difficult to identify, and students who do correctly identify these behaviors as they occur may not feel confident intervening to stop them (Barry, et al. 2017, Barry et al., 2019). To better understand the perspective of MSA cadets and midshipmen, the 2024 SAGR asked questions about their theoretical willingness to step in and stop potential sexual harassment, as well as whether they had actually observed situations in the past academic program year (APY) in which potential unwanted behaviors were occurring, such as observing someone “crossing the line” with sexist comments/jokes or encountering an intoxicated person requiring help, and how they responded to those situations.

Willingness to Stop Sexual Harassment

In general, the vast majority of MSA cadets and midshipmen are willing to point out that someone “crossed the line” with sex-related comments or jokes to at least a small extent (Figure 32), and willingness to a large/very large extent increased since 2022 for both men and women. Further, just under two-thirds of MSA women and approximately three-quarters of MSA men were willing to seek help from the chain of command to stop other students who continued to engage in sexual harassment after already having been spoken to, both of which increased since 2022.

Junior and senior men and women were more likely than freshman and sophomore men to point out that someone “crossed the line” with sex-related comments or jokes. Junior and senior men, along with freshman women, were more likely to seek help from the chain of command to stop other students who continued to engage in sexual harassment, whereas senior women and freshman men were less likely. Overall, these two rates increased for men in nearly all class years since 2022, whereas increases were mixed among women across class year.

Figure 32.
Cadet and Midshipmen Willingness to Stop Sexual Harassment⁴⁴



Witnessed Behavior(s) and Action(s) Taken

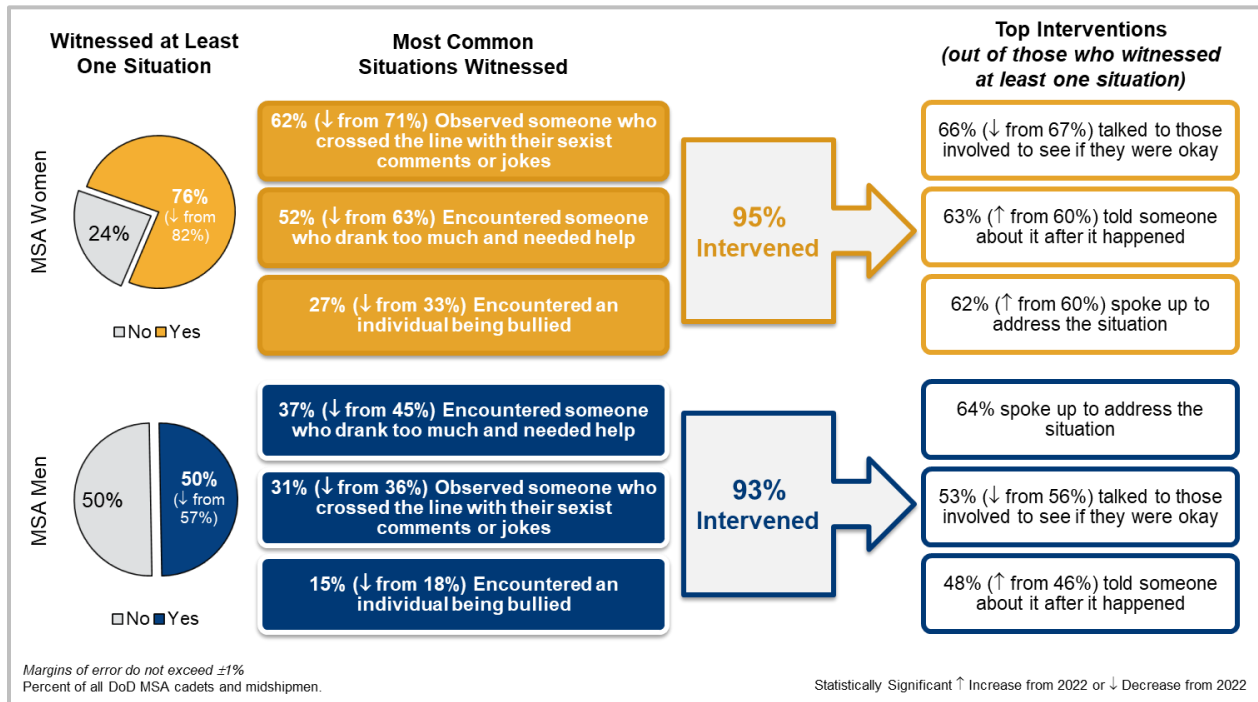
One aspect of sexual assault prevention is encouraging students to be active observers and intervene if they see a risky situation or unwanted behaviors occurring to someone else. To measure the degree to which opportunities to intervene arise, students were asked whether they had observed situations in which potential unwanted behaviors were occurring or could occur. If they indicated that they had observed any of the situations, they were asked how they responded to them.

Compared to 2022, fewer MSA cadets and midshipmen witnessed at least one situation in which unwanted behaviors were occurring or were at risk for occurring (Figure 33). Seniors and juniors were more likely to witness these situations, whereas freshmen were less likely. The most common situations witnessed by both women and men were encountering someone who drank too much and needed help or observing someone who crossed the line with their sexist

⁴⁴Survey items were developed prior to Executive Order 14168 “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government” and used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and, therefore, references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

comments or jokes, although the incidence of these behaviors both decreased compared to 2022. When witnessing these behaviors, the overwhelming majority of MSA cadets/midshipmen intervened, most often by speaking up to address the situation, by talking to those involved to see if they were okay, or by telling someone about it after it happened. Similar to witnessing situations, senior men and women, and junior men were more likely than freshmen and sophomore men and women to intervene.

Figure 33.
Witnessed Behavior(s) and Action(s) Taken



Perceptions of Academy Leadership and Peers Setting Good Examples

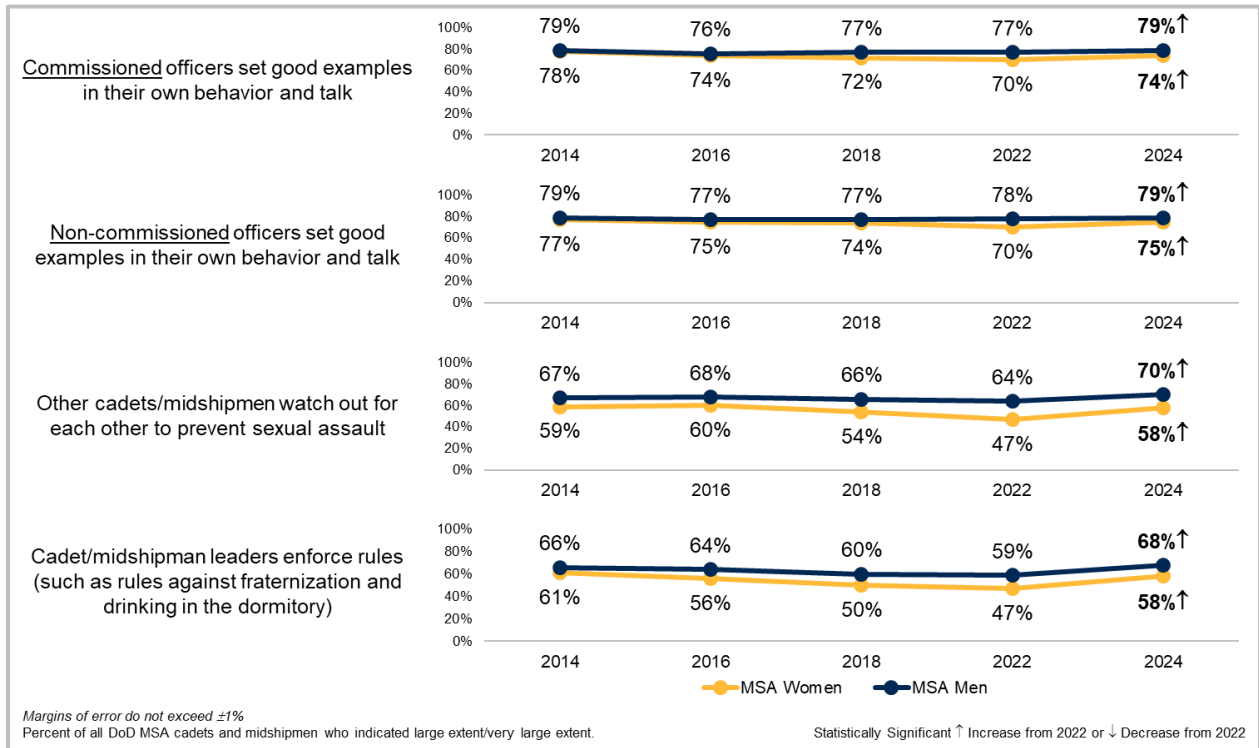
An important aspect of prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment is whether those in the environment are setting good examples and are willing to watch out for such incidents. The 2024 SAGR asked about the behavior of fellow cadets or midshipmen and academy officers to assess to what extent they are engaging in these prevention behaviors.

Over three-quarters of MSA women and men believed that both their commissioned and non-commissioned officers (NCO) set good examples in their own behavior and talk (Figure 34). The rates of these positive perceptions of officers increased for both men and women since 2022. Although these rates increased among men and women in nearly all class years, perceptions of officers setting good examples in their own behavior and talk tended to decrease as students progressed through the academy, with freshmen having the highest level of endorsement and senior women and junior and senior men having the lowest levels.

For both MSA women and men, perceptions that other cadets and midshipmen watch out for each other to prevent sexual assault, and the extent to which cadet and midshipmen leaders enforce rules were noticeably lower than perceptions of officers setting good examples. Over two-thirds of MSA men and over half of MSA women indicated other cadets/midshipmen watch out for each other to prevent sexual assault—both of which increased when compared to 2022.

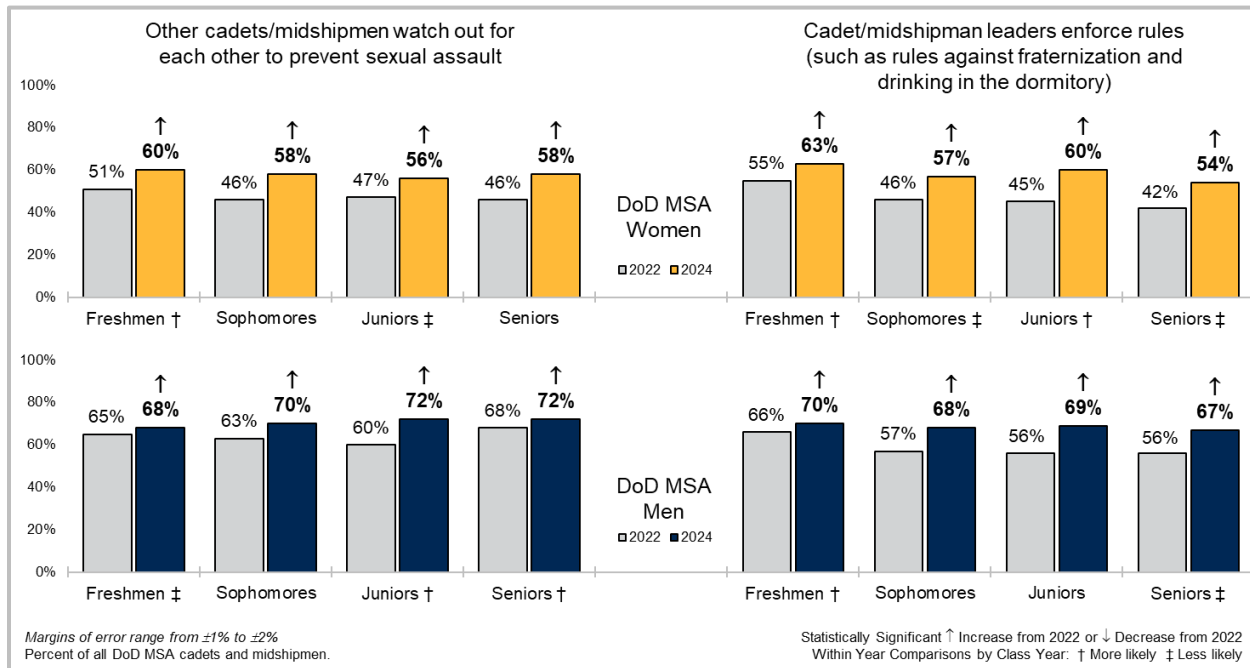
When asked whether cadet and midshipman leaders enforce rules, over two-thirds of MSA men and over half of MSA women indicated they do so to a large extent. Like perceptions of cadets/midshipmen watching out for each other, perceptions increased for both MSA women and men in all class years compared to 2022.

Figure 34.
Perceptions of Academy Leadership Setting Good Examples and Cadets/Midshipmen Taking Preventative Actions



We looked deeper into perceptions of peers by class year, as illustrated in Figure 35. When examining by class year, junior women were less likely than freshmen women to indicate other cadets/midshipmen watch out for each other. A different pattern is seen for MSA men by class year, with seniors and juniors more likely than freshmen men to indicate other cadets/midshipmen watch out for each other. Perceptions of cadet/midshipman peers enforcing rules were most positive among MSA freshman men and women and lowest among senior men and women, as well as sophomore women.

Figure 35.
Perceptions of Cadet/Midshipman Peers Taking Preventative Actions



Efforts to Stop Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

An essential component of eradicating sexual assault from the military is having leaders who can be trusted to make efforts to prevent and to appropriately respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment. Accordingly, the 2024 SAGR asked MSA cadets and midshipmen about their perceptions of individuals' efforts at their academy to make honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual harassment and sexual assault.

MSA cadets and midshipmen perceived that academy senior leadership, officers, and military/uniformed faculty make the most effort to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and those perceptions increased since 2022 (Table 14). MSA women had lower perceptions than MSA men for all academy personnel and cadets/midshipmen making efforts to stop these behaviors, but all perceptions increased since 2022 for both men and women. When examining results by class year for MSA women, sophomores and freshmen generally had more positive perceptions across personnel and cadets and midshipmen, and these perceptions were most favorable for freshmen men. Although freshmen and sophomores had the most positive perceptions, rates increased across all class years since 2022 for both men and women.

Table 14.
Efforts to Stop Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

MSA Women		Statistically Significant ↑ Increase from 2022 or ↓ Decrease from 2022	MSA Men	
2022	2024		2022	2024
40%	51%↑	Cadet/midshipman leaders	63%	74%↑
32%	40%↑	Cadets/midshipmen not in appointed leadership positions	52%	61%↑
56%	66%↑	Commissioned officers directly in charge of unit	76%	83%↑
55%	66%↑	Non-commissioned officers or senior/chief petty officers directly in charge of unit	75%	82%↑
59%	76%↑	Academy senior leadership	76%	86%↑
45%	54%↑	Military/uniformed academic faculty	66%	72%↑
42%	48%↑	Civilian academic faculty	58%	65%↑
35%	44%↑	Intercollegiate (NCAA/Division I) coaches and trainers	52%	63%↑
37%	48%↑	Intercollegiate (NCAA/Division I) officer representatives/advisors	57%	67%↑
36%	46%↑	Club team coaches and trainers	55%	66%↑
37%	49%↑	Club team officer representatives/advisors	58%	69%↑
31%	44%↑	Intramural coaches and trainers	54%	65%↑
32%	44%↑	Intramural officer representatives/advisors	56%	67%↑
32%	43%↑	Physical education instructors	57%	67%↑

Margins of error do not exceed $\pm 1\%$

Note. Percentage of DoD MSA cadets and midshipmen who indicated large/very large extent.

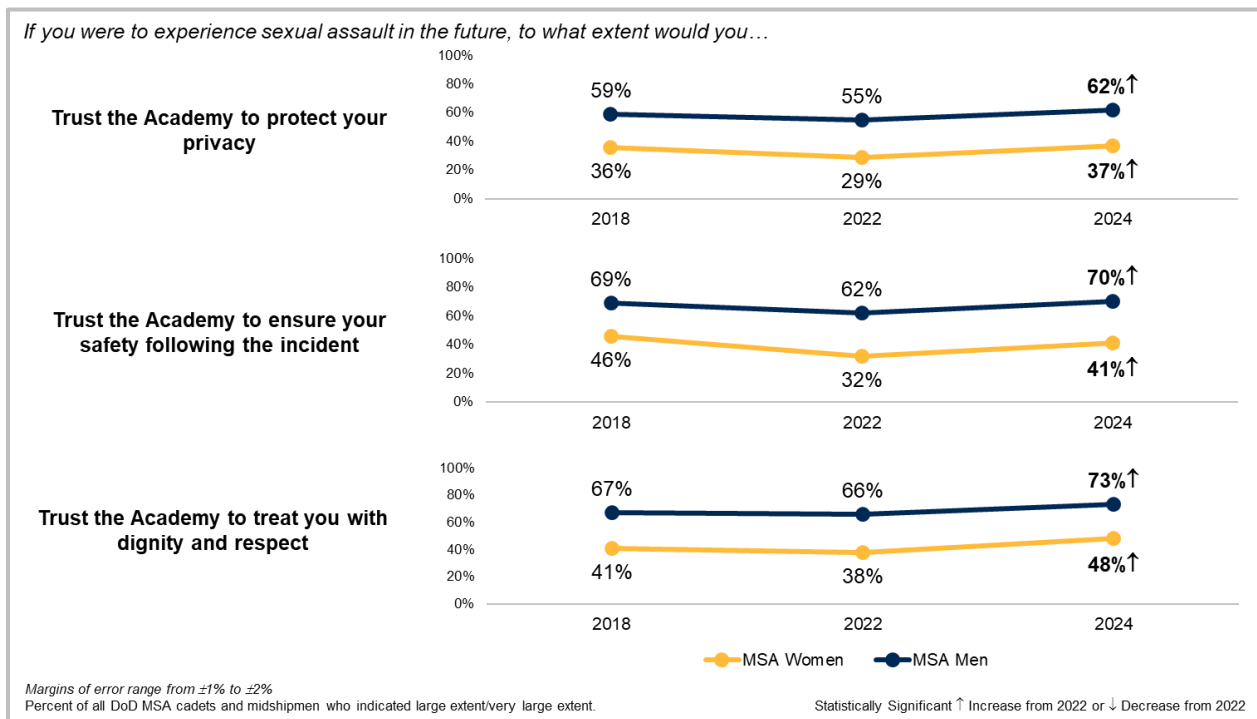
Academy Culture and Climate for Reporting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

Sexual assault and sexual harassment often go unreported and the culture and climate regarding reporting plays a large role into whether a victim chooses to come forward. As discussed in the previous chapters, many victims indicated they chose not to report their experiences because they did not find it important/serious enough, wanted to move on, took care of it by avoiding the person, or did not want others to know to avoid any potential gossip. To further examine the academy culture and climate related to reporting of these unwanted behaviors, the 2024 SAGR asked cadets and midshipmen whether they would trust the academy if they were to experience sexual assault. They were also asked about other deterrents for reporting at the academy, such as victim blaming and the role that the media plays.

Trust in the Academy

The 2024 SAGR asked all cadets and midshipmen how they believed their academy would respond if they were to experience sexual assault in the future. Compared to 2022, more MSA cadets and midshipmen indicated they would trust their academy to protect their privacy, ensure their safety, and treat them with dignity and respect if they were to experience sexual assault, with approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of MSA men and over one-third to nearly one-half of MSA women indicating they would trust the academy to a large extent (Figure 36). Notably, this includes perspectives of all cadets/midshipmen, including those who actually did experience USC in the past year. For MSA men, trust is generally highest when they first enter the academy as freshmen but decreases over time; although, the level of trust in the academy increased across all class years since 2022. For women, level of trust was generally higher for freshmen than women in other class years, but senior women were also more likely than women of other class years to indicate trusting their academy to treat them with dignity and respect following a hypothetical incident. Like responses for men, MSA women also showed an increased across all class years for all elements of trust since 2022.

Figure 36.
Trust in the Academy



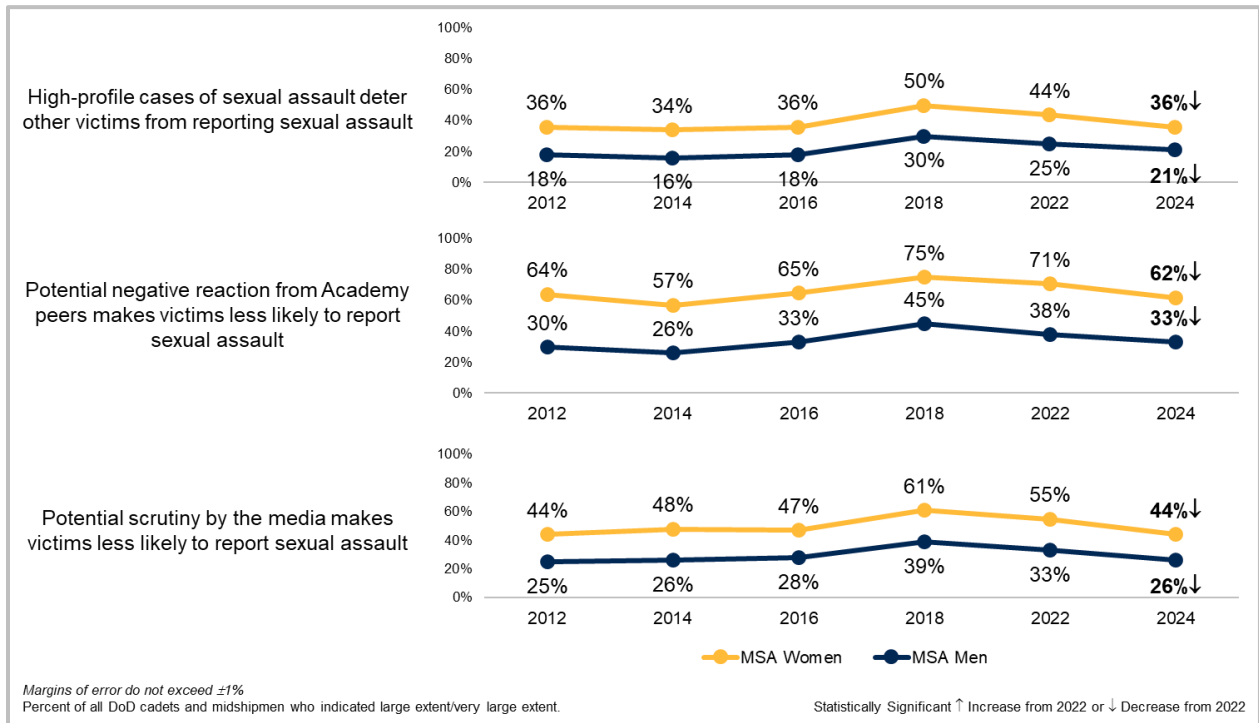
Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault

As noted previously, the vast majority of cadets and midshipmen who experienced USC did not report the incident. The large proportions of those who did not report suggest the presence of substantial barriers to reporting. It is imperative to understand the cultural aspects at the

academies that may dissuade potential victims from coming forward and reporting unwanted behaviors. To that end, the 2024 SAGR asked MSA cadets and midshipmen about the extent to which high-profile cases of sexual assault, the role media plays, potential negative reactions from peers, and beliefs around “victim blaming” may impact whether victims of sexual assault come forward to report their experiences.

Compared to 2022, perceptions that high-profile cases, media scrutiny, and negative peer reactions would impact whether a victim would report a sexual assault to a large extent decreased for both MSA men and women. Across class years, senior women and freshman men were most likely to hold these attitudes (Figure 37). MSA women still hold these perceptions at higher rates than MSA men, most notably when asked to what extent potential negative reactions from academy peers would impact a victim’s willingness to come forward and report should they experience USC.

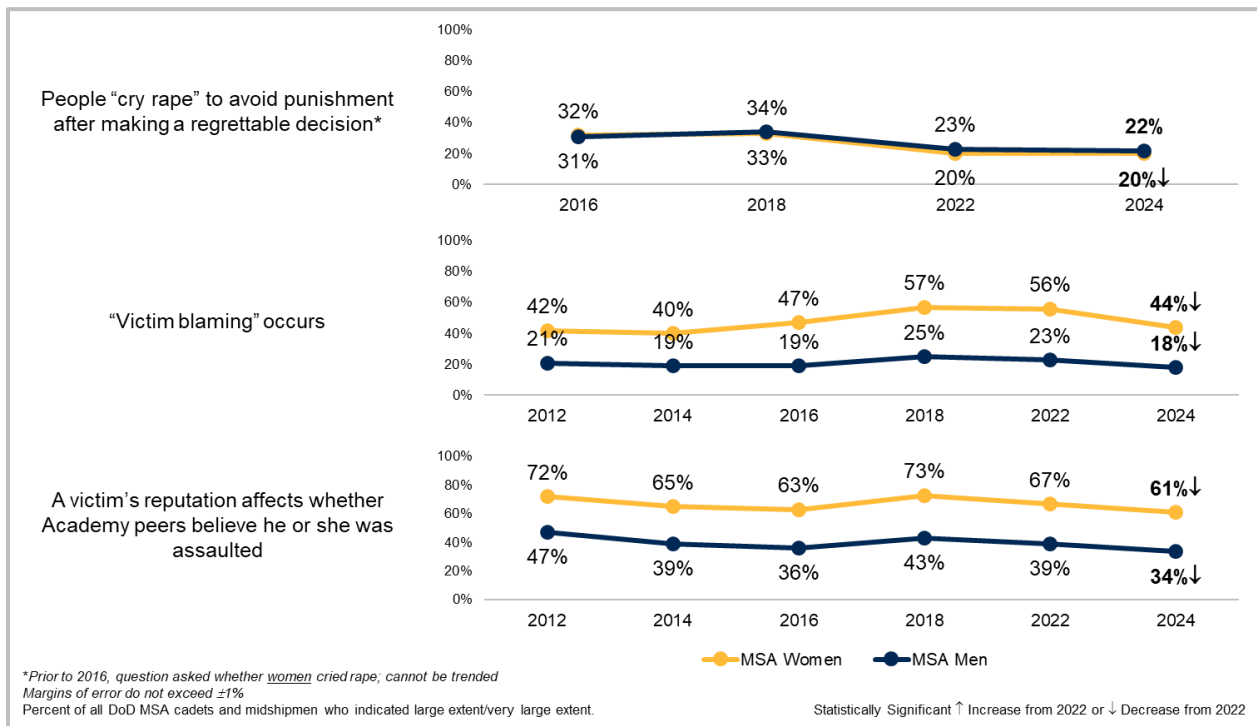
Figure 37.
Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault



Rape myths are negative beliefs held by individuals surrounding many aspects of sexual assault and how victims’ experiences are perceived. Cadets and midshipmen were asked about three major concepts of rape myths: victim blaming, “crying rape” to avoid punishment for another incidental behavior, and the reputation of the victim impacting how they are believed. Many of these factors potentially contribute to the reluctance to report, hindering sexual assault response efforts to provide victims the restorative care they may need after experiencing a sexual assault.

Overall, cadets’ and midshipmen’s beliefs regarding victim blaming and reputation affecting credibility at the academies have declined since 2022 but remain prevalent, while beliefs regarding “crying rape” to avoid punishment after making a regrettable decision have remained statistically unchanged (Figure 38). As with the barriers to reporting discussed above, MSA women were more likely than MSA men to perceive that victim blaming occurs at their academy and that a victim’s reputation affects whether they will be believed. MSA women were also less likely to indicate the occurrence of “crying rape” to avoid punishment after making a regrettable decision. When examining results by class year, freshman women were less likely than women of other class years to perceive victim blaming, reputation affecting credibility, and “crying rape” to avoid punishment occur. MSA women across all class years were less likely to espouse these three beliefs compared to 2022, except for sophomore and senior women who were statistically as likely to perceive “crying rape” occurs as they were in 2022. For MSA men, sophomores were more likely than men in other class years to indicate believing that victim blaming occurs, that a victim’s reputation affects one’s credibility, and that people “crying rape” to avoid punishment. Declines in the beliefs of victim blaming and reputation affecting reporting credibility were found for men of all class years since 2022. However, beliefs around “crying rape” to avoid punishment after a regrettable decision remained statistically unchanged.

Figure 38.
Perceptions of Rape Myths and Victim Blaming



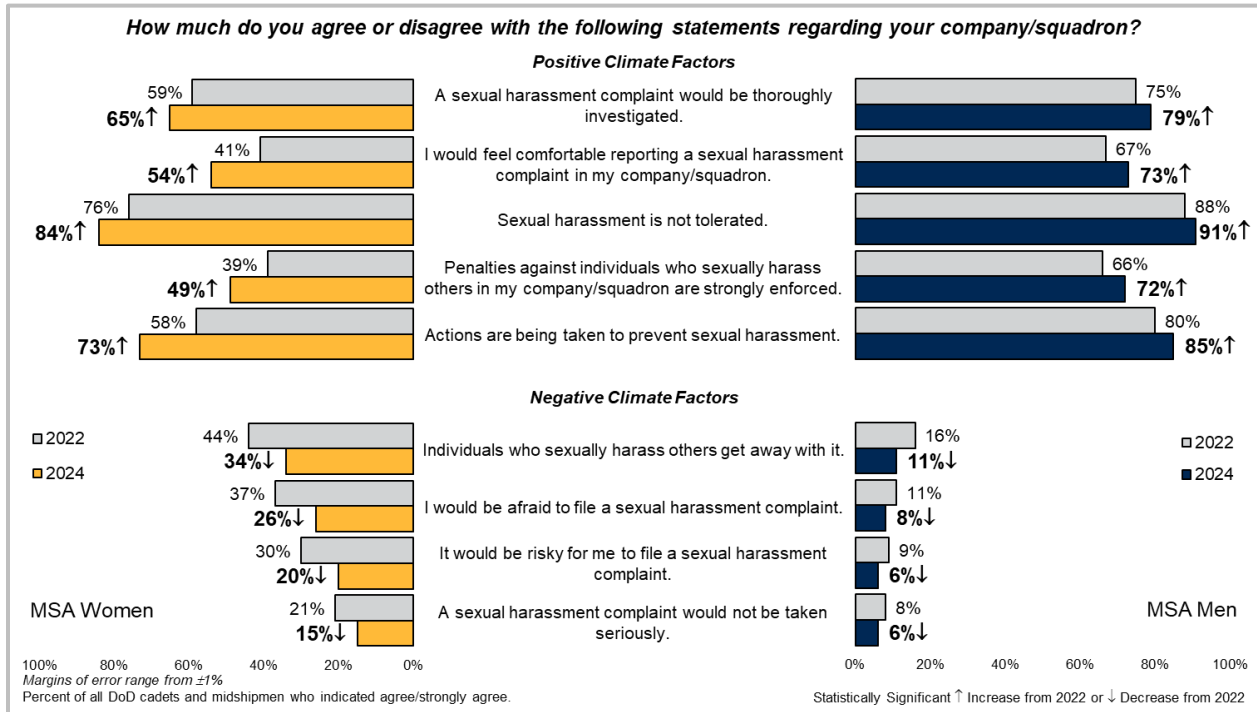
Psychological Climate for Sexual Harassment

The psychological climate for sexual harassment (PCSH) is a nine-item scale that assesses the level of tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace (Estrada et al. 2011).⁴⁵ Cadets and midshipmen were asked to classify how seriously sexual harassment is treated as an issue in their company/squadron, and judge how risky it is for cadets/midshipmen in their company/squadron to make a complaint about sexual harassment. Responses were provided on a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5) with a higher score indicating a company climate less tolerant of sexual harassment. To contrast this with the measure assessing sexual harassment, the individual items of the PCSH are more focused on the respondent's perceptions of others in the unit, or their attitudes toward a hypothetical scenario based on these perceptions. The SAGR metric on sexual harassment, however, is behaviorally based, asking participants about discrete behaviors they may have experienced rather than relying on their understanding of what behaviors constitute sexual harassment. Because the PCSH does not include such explicit anchoring of what behaviors constitute sexual harassment, it is left up to the participant's understanding of sexual harassment training and policy, which may not align. However, because the PCSH also asks about how people in their unit would react to a report of sexual harassment, a more concrete event, their perceptions are valuable to assess the overall climate of reporting these events at a unit level. Further, although the PCSH does not explicitly define "sexual harassment," the aggregate perceptions of the participant's unit are valuable to understand its overall climate regarding these behaviors themselves, irrespective of reporting.

The average composite score for MSA women was 3.6, which is a less positive assessment of the climate for sexual harassment than for MSA men, whose average was 4.2; however, scores increased among both men and women compared to 2022 (Figure 39). Less than one-fifth of MSA women (18%) perceived their company as tolerant of sexual harassment, which was more than their male counterparts in their company (6%). Although the majority of MSA women reported that sexual harassment is not tolerated, actions are being taken to prevent sexual harassment, and that a complaint would be thoroughly investigated, women were less likely than men to report a positive psychological climate as indicated on all items. Because cadets and midshipmen often perceived that their company/squadron would not tolerate sexual harassment and a sexual harassment complaint would be thoroughly investigated, emphasizing this unit-level support for victims of sexual harassment in the future may encourage increased reporting.

⁴⁵ The referent point for this scale was modified to the participant's company/squadron to best align with how they are organized at the MSAs.

Figure 39.
Psychological Climate for Sexual Harassment



Workplace Hostility

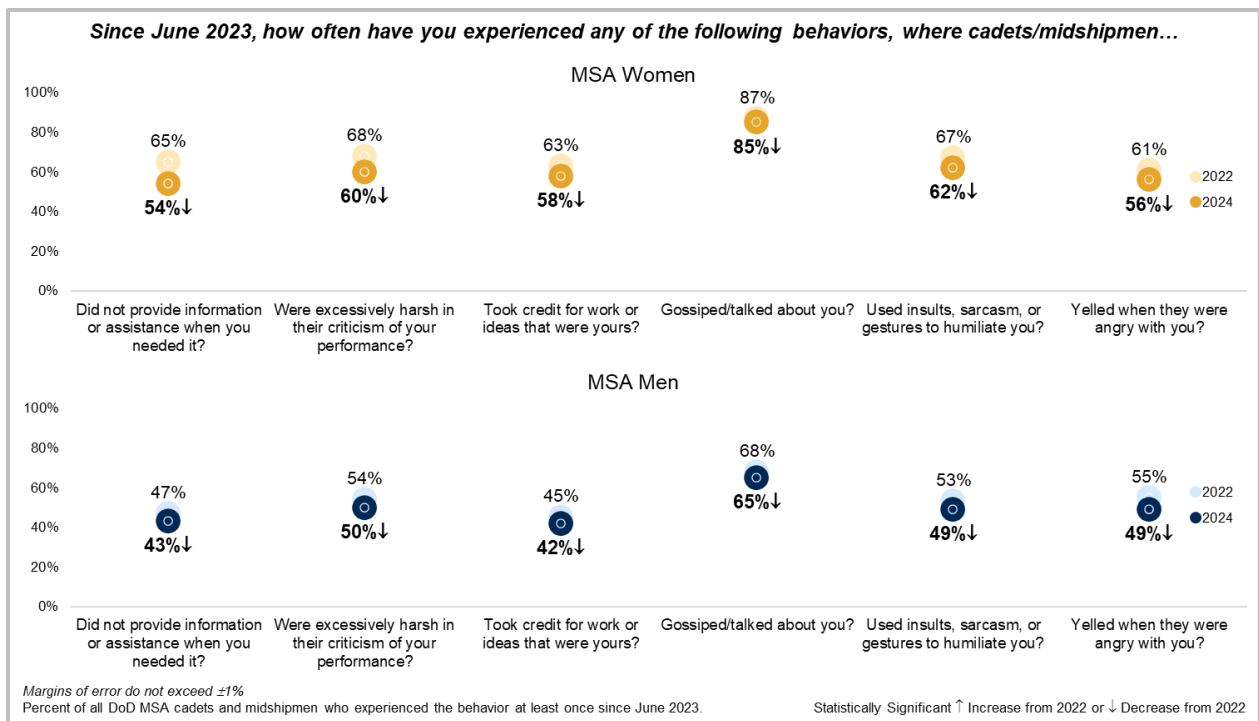
Social support is consistently cited as among the most important factors related to an individual’s ability to recover from or be resilient to traumatic events (Eisen et al., 2014; Han et al., 2014; McAndrew et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2016). This support can come from friends, family, or other loved ones. However, for academy cadets and midshipmen, social support may be of particular importance due to the unique social and educational environment they live within. In 2024, cadets and midshipmen were asked to assess academy climate in general and with regard to sexual assault, as well as their workplace culture. As the word “workplace” is strongly associated with career and occupational settings that may not be most applicable to the military academic setting cadets and midshipmen are immersed in, we measure this construct through behaviorally based questions asking about the frequency of various experiences from academy peers. These experiences include peers not providing information or assistance when needed, being excessively harsh in criticism of performance, taking credit for the participant’s ideas, gossiping/talking about the participant, using insults, sarcasm, or gestures to insult the participant, and yelling when angry with the participant.

Progress was made among MSA men and women in this area, all of whom perceived less workplace hostility than in 2022 (Figure 40). For female cadets/midshipmen, the greatest improvement was regarding peers not providing information or assistance when they needed it, and for men it was peers yelling when they were angry with them. Women experienced each aspect of workplace hostility more frequently than men. Among the largest differences were

regarding other peers who gossip/talked about you, and others who took credit for work or ideas that were yours.

Although rates of workplace hostility decreased overall (21% of women indicating an unhealthy level of workplace hostility, down from 26% since 2022; 14% of men indicating an unhealthy level of workplace hostility, down from 15% since 2022), when looking at specific behaviors across class year, sophomore men had declines in fewer behaviors than men of other class years, with three of the six items showing no decrease since 2022. Specifically, the experiences that remained statistically unchanged included fellow cadets/midshipmen being excessively harsh in their criticism of their performance, taking credit for work or ideas that were theirs, and peers who gossiped/talked about them. Female cadets/midshipmen followed a different pattern, with decreases in workplace hostility consistent across all academic years, except on the measure of peers who gossiped/talked about them, in which results for freshmen and junior women indicated no statistical change since 2022.

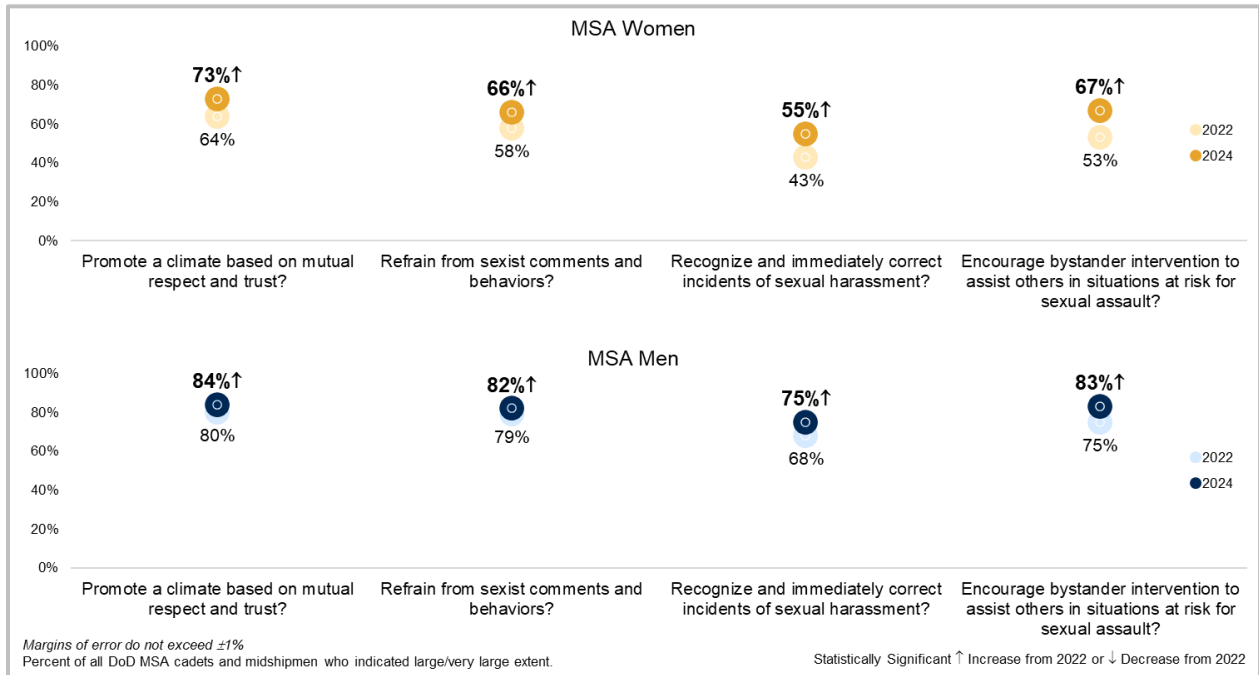
Figure 40.
Workplace Hostility



Responsibility and Intervention

Another important aspect of academy climate and culture is whether people in a cadet’s or midshipman’s company/squadron are engaging in positive behaviors considered to be protective factors for experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The responsibility and intervention metric asked on the 2024 SAGR examines to what extent people in the respondent’s company/squadron embody these positive behaviors: promoting a climate based on mutual respect and trust, refraining from sexist comments and behavior, encouraging bystander intervention, and correcting incidents of sexual harassment. As shown in Figure 41, MSA men indicated higher levels of responsibility and intervention within their company/squadron than did MSA women. Just under three-quarters of MSA women and the majority of MSA men indicated people in their company/squadron promote a climate based on mutual respect and trust, whereas over half of women and three-quarters of men indicated people in their company/squadron recognize and immediately correct incidents of sexual harassment. Responses for these four items have increased among both men and women since 2022. These results provide useful insights into areas to target for prevention, such as character development programs geared toward good order and discipline.

Figure 41.
Responsibility and Intervention



Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The Service Academy Gender⁴⁶ Relations (SAGR) survey allows the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to monitor the prevalence of unwanted sexual contact (USC), sexual harassment, and sex discrimination at the military service academies (MSA), and thereby assess the Department's progress in preventing these unwanted behaviors from occurring, an important factor in the 2022 National Defense Strategy's focus on cultivating and investing in the DoD workforce (Department of Defense, 2022b). The SAGR survey provides information regarding students' experiences with reporting and complaint processes, which allows the Department to assess its progress on encouraging the reporting of incidents and supporting victims. In addition to its primary assessment function, the SAGR provides rich and detailed information regarding students' experiences and academy climate that can further inform data-driven improvements to prevention and response programs.

The results of the 2024 SAGR are complex and suggest that although significant progress has been made to reduce the occurrence of unwanted sex-related behaviors, much work remains to be done to better prevent USC, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination from occurring. On one hand, rates of USC and sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination have significantly and drastically decreased since 2022, indicating improvements on this important front. On the other hand, prevalence of these unwanted behaviors appears to have returned to approximate levels prior to 2022. Long-term continuation of the SAGR will be necessary to establish strategic trends of these experiences.

As noted in chapter 2, an estimated 13.3% of MSA women (approximately 457), and 3.6% of MSA men (approximately 327) experienced USC in the past academic program year (APY), both of which were found to have statistically significantly decreased since 2022, when USC prevalence was at an all-time high since the beginning of the SAGR effort: the 2022 SAGR found 21.4% of MSA women and 4.4% of MSA men indicated experiencing USC in the prior APY.

The prevalence of sexual harassment and sex discrimination also decreased since 2022 for both women and men. Specifically, sexual harassment declined to 51% for MSA women (from 63% since 2022) and 17% for MSA men (from 20% since 2022), and sex discrimination declined to 25% for MSA women (from 33% since 2022) and 4% for MSA men (from 5% since 2022).

The 2024 SAGR results also highlight the challenges that remain with reporting of USC, and in the complaint process for sexual harassment and sex discrimination. Consistent with prior years, the overwhelming majority of USC victims did not report their experience to a DoD authority (either a restricted or unrestricted report), and this is particularly the case for male victims. Among those men and women who did file a sexual assault report, over half experienced negative outcomes as a result of reporting. For sexual harassment and sex discrimination, only

⁴⁶ Since 2006, the SAGR survey used the term "gender" to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for "male" and "female" and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean "sex."

approximately 1 in 10 victims made a complaint to any authority.⁴⁷ Below we summarize high-level patterns emerging from the 2024 SAGR data.

Key Insights

1. Prevalence of USC at the academies decreased from the all-time high in 2022. Of note, the prevalence of USC at the academies remains numerically higher than prevalence among similarly aged members of the Active Component. Specifically, in 2023, for women in the Active Component under the age of 21, the USC rate is 12.2%, and 10.4% for women ages 21 to 24 (compared to 13.3% for academy women). For men in the Active Component under the age of 21, the USC rate is 2.0%, and 2.1% for men ages 21 to 24 (compared to 3.6% for academy men).⁴⁸
2. Decreases in USC occurred for academy women and men in all class years, but the historical pattern of prevalence by class year remains unchanged. As in prior years, freshmen at all the academies experienced the lowest rates of USC. Rates among sophomores are typically highest (with some nuance by academy).
3. Rates of USC declined for women of all races/ethnicities, but were higher among racial/ethnic minorities generally, and Hispanic women specifically. For men, a decrease in USC was only seen for non-Hispanic White men, and men who identified as another race; rates remained statistically unchanged since 2022 for Black men, Hispanic men, and Asian men. Black men and Hispanic men were also more likely than men of other races to have experienced USC in the past APY.
4. Women and men who identify as sexual minorities (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, or those who use a different term) experienced higher rates of USC than did their heterosexual peers. Although USC decreased since 2022 for women regardless of their sexual orientation and for heterosexual men, sexual minority men saw no significant change over time, suggesting additional efforts to address prevention for this group may be beneficial.
5. Prevalence of USC prior to entering the academy decreased among academy women across all class years, and for senior and junior men (rates of prior USC remain statistically unchanged for sophomore and freshman men). However, sophomore and freshman cadets/midshipmen (both men and women) indicated being more likely than men/women in other class years to have experienced USC before entering their academy. Because prior victimization is a risk factor for future victimization,

⁴⁷ Many chose to address the situation with the alleged offender, which is in keeping with policy to handle these situations at the lowest possible level.

⁴⁸ Starting in 2021, the *Workplace and Gender Relations (WGR) Survey of Military Members* employed the same five-item USC metric that is used on the SAGR and hence these estimates are more directly comparable than in prior years but are not statistically compared to each other. The same metric was used on the 2023 WGR. For more on the 2023 WGR results, see: <https://www.opa.mil/research-analysis/health-well-being/sexual-assault-prevention-and-response/2023-workplace-and-gender-relations-survey-of-military-members-c5211883-43a0-44b1-8ef4-7ec3984ed199/>

additional attention to mitigate revictimization may be particularly useful for sophomore and freshman cadets/midshipmen.

6. The characteristics of the alleged offender(s) in USC situations remained consistent with prior years. Alleged offenders are most often fellow academy students, specifically peers in the same class year. For victimized women, alleged offenders are typically men. For victimized men, alleged offenders are nearly equally split between both men and women. USC most often occurred after duty hours (when students are less supervised), either in a dormitory or living area, or at an off-campus social event.
7. The use of alcohol by the victim and/or alleged offender decreased in instances of the one worst situation of USC for both MSA women and men. When paired with the fact that the overall rate of USC decreased, and more specifically for more egregious crimes of completed or attempted penetration, of which alcohol is more likely to be a factor in, this suggests that recent efforts by the academies to address alcohol-related USC is seeing success. Further study is required to best understand the degree academy-level alcohol programs had on this change in prevalence in USC, what changes in programming occurred during this time frame, and a big-picture analysis of trends over time. It's worth noting that the survey does not assess *level* of impairment at the time of the incident. Rather, it assesses *whether* the victim and/or alleged offender had been drinking. Alcohol involvement is most pronounced for USC events in higher class years, which is perhaps unsurprising given the legal drinking age. Students at the academies in higher class years also reported higher rates of binge drinking than did their lower class-year counterparts.⁴⁹
8. Although the overall prevalence of USC decreased, the rate of reporting among USC victims is unchanged for MSA men and actually *decreased* for MSA women, both of which remain quite low; overall, only an estimated 9% of USC victims at the MSAs made an official report of sexual assault of any kind.⁵⁰ Victimized MSA women were more likely to report than were victimized men, and senior men were less likely than men of other class years to report while freshman men were more likely. The top reason for not reporting was thinking it was not serious enough to report, and many victims also preferred to forget about it and move on, or to avoid the person who performed the unwanted behavior. From prior focus groups, we know that cadets and midshipmen do not want a sexual assault report to define their reputation, as well as their academy and post-academy career (Barry et al., 2017, Barry et al., 2019). The reporting process can be thought of in terms of the costs and benefits for victims. There is a real cost of reporting for victims in terms of time and emotional energy; even when the process goes very well and they do not experience retaliation of any kind, most people do not want to be known as “the person who reported a sexual assault.” However, there is also a real cost to the institution when alleged offenders are not held appropriately accountable, particularly in the case of alleged offenders

⁴⁹ An in-depth analysis of the role of alcohol in USC was conducted with the *2018 SAGR* (Klahr & Davis, 2019).

⁵⁰ Ultimately, over half of these reports were unrestricted, whereas nearly half remained restricted at the time of the survey.

who are academy students; these alleged offenders graduate and go on to leadership positions.

9. In addition to the decrease in rates of reporting USC, the estimated proportion of MSA women who experienced professional reprisal, ostracism, or other negative outcomes after reporting their experience of USC remained statistically unchanged. Perhaps most noteworthy is that of the victimized women who reported their experience of USC, more than one-fifth experienced behavior(s) that met criteria for professional reprisal, which *increased* since 2022. Ensuring that those who do report experiences of USC are free from adverse responses from those around them will likely set a good example for others who may want to report in the future.
10. Sexual harassment decreased since 2022 but remains pervasive at the academies. Over half of academy women (51%) were sexually harassed in the past APY. This is notably numerically higher than their similarly aged counterparts in the Active Component, where in 2023, 28.1% of women under 21 and 32.9% of women ages 21–24 experienced sexual harassment in the past year.⁵¹ Although academy men are at lower risk than women, sexual harassment of men is not rare. Specifically, 17% of academy men were sexually harassed in the past APY. These rates are also higher than for men in the Active Component, of whom 6.1% of those under 21 and 7.7% of men ages 21–24 experienced sexual harassment in the past year. As with USC, sexual harassment rates are higher among students who identify as sexual minorities and rates generally peak during sophomore year for women and men at all academies. Conversely, non-Hispanic White women were more likely than racial/ethnic women to have experienced sexual harassment.
11. Rates of sex discrimination also decreased at the academies since 2022. Academy women continue to experience higher rates of sex discrimination than men (25% of women vs. 4% of men), racial/ethnic minority women had higher rates than non-Hispanic White women, and sexual minority men and women had higher rates than their heterosexual peers. As with USC and sexual harassment, academy students experience higher rates of sex discrimination than their Active Component counterparts. Rates of sex discrimination are lowest among freshmen for both MSA men and women.
12. Academy students are very unlikely to have made a complaint to an authority or organization about the sexual harassment or sex discrimination they experienced (11% of women and 5% of men who experienced sexual harassment and/or sex discrimination). However, many victims did discuss the situation with the alleged offender(s) (41%), which is not only an increase since 2022, but also in keeping with training to address violations at the lowest possible level. Even so, when victims do not come forward with complaints of sexual harassment or sex discrimination, this forestalls the ability of the institution to intervene in potentially escalating situations.

⁵¹ For more on the 2023 WGR results, see: <https://www.opa.mil/research-analysis/health-well-being/sexual-assault-prevention-and-response/2023-workplace-and-gender-relations-survey-of-military-members-c5211883-43a0-44b1-8ef4-7ec3984ed199/>

Indeed, over one-fifth of victimized women indicated being sexually harassed before the one situation of USC, and 10% of victimized women said they were stalked before the one situation of USC. Similar results can be found for MSA men, whereas just under one-fifth of victimized men indicated being sexually harassed before the one situation of USC, and 8% of victimized men indicated being stalked before the one situation of USC. Encouraging those who experience seemingly minor behaviors like sexual harassment or sex discrimination to come forward and ensuring these complaints are effectively handled is an area where improvements might go a long way toward improving overall climate and reducing USC.

13. Various measures of the broader social climate regarding prevention improved since 2022, including increases in confidence regarding whether leaders at the academy from various levels of authority are making honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. These changes in climate are highly correlated with USC prevalence, and thus it is unsurprising to see climate improve in kind with USC. Additional focus on measures of academy climate outside the SAGR such as the *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)* may prove especially useful for more frequent surveillance of the known risk factors for unwanted sexual contact, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination.
14. Broadly, many measures of social climate relevant to the reporting of unwanted experiences improved at the academies since 2022. Consistent with the results from the Active and Reserve Components on a comparable survey item, perceptions of whether one can trust their academy if they were to report being sexually assaulted increased, although further work is to be done to bolster the trust of MSA women; between less than half and one-third of MSA women would trust the academy to protect their privacy, safety, or dignity/respect in a hypothetical report of sexual assault. Again, additional areas showed broad signs of improvement. For example, endorsement of rape myths and belief that negative consequences to reporting incidents occur both became less common than in 2022.

Conclusion

As stated in the executive summary of this overview report, the main takeaways from the 2024 SAGR findings are mixed. Most evident is that the key prevalence rates the SAGR is designed to measure (USC, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination) have decreased overall since 2022. This is an intrinsically positive finding indicative of fewer cadets and midshipmen having experienced these harmful behaviors in the past APY. Further, this may also suggest that prevention programs at the academies may be having the desired effect of reducing prevalence, although more study is required to confidently support this proposition. While we see the estimated prevalence rates of USC, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination have decreased for MSA men and women since 2022, it is equally important to recognize that these estimated prevalence rates appear approximate to levels seen in prior SAGR efforts.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

DATA
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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Office of People Analytics (OPA) Health and Resilience Research Division has conducted surveys for the service academies since 2005. OPA uses scientific state-of-the-art statistical techniques to draw conclusions from the military service academy (MSA) population to construct estimates for the *2024 Service Academy Gender⁵² Relations Survey (2024 SAGR)*. OPA used industry-standard weighting procedures to ensure accuracy of estimates to the full MSA population. The following details some common questions about our methodology as a whole and the *2024 SAGR* specifically.

1. Why was the SAGR not fielded in 2020?

The *2020 SAGR* was intended to be administered in-person at the MSAs starting in March of 2020. However, the Department of Defense's (DoD) suspension of non-essential travel in response to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the OPA research team from administering the survey at the intended time. Because the scope and duration of the pandemic was unknown at that time, the *2020 SAGR* was initially postponed. As 2020 drew to a close and the appropriate window of data collection to make commensurate comparisons to 2018 responses came and went, the OPA research team considered the *2020 SAGR* canceled.

2. What was the population of interest for the 2024 SAGR?

The population of interest for the *2024 SAGR* consisted of cadets and midshipmen at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) in class years 2024 through 2027.⁵³ The entire population of students (all cadet/midshipman men and women) was selected for the survey, except those on exchange from another MSA, foreign exchange students, and those under 18 years old. Students on exchange from another MSA were excluded because they were accounted for in the statistical weighting of participation at their home academy, and not at the exchange academy. Foreign exchange students were excluded because they are not members of the MSA populations. Those under 18 years old were excluded to match historical precedent and provide the cleanest year-to-year statistical comparisons. This census of all students was designed for maximum reliability of results in the sections where the survey questions applied to only a subset of students, such as those questions asking details of an unwanted sexual contact experience. A census of students at the MSA Preparatory Schools was also included in the *2024 SAGR*, the results of which will be presented in a separate report.

The target survey frame consisted of 12,607 DoD MSA students drawn from the student rosters provided to OPA by each of the Service Academies. OPA received a final data set containing 12,504 returned questionnaires, of which 11,119 were considered complete, yielding an overall

⁵² Since 2006, the *SAGR* survey used the term “gender” to describe men and women. These groups have been defined using survey items and/or administrative data categories for “male” and “female” and therefore references to gender should be understood to mean “sex.”

⁵³ OPA also surveyed a census of students at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA). Results for those Academies are presented in separate reports.

weighted response rate for respondents at the DoD MSAs of 88% (94% for MSA women and 86% for MSA men).

3. What was the survey question used to measure unwanted sexual contact?

The measure of unwanted sexual contact for the 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, and 2024 SAGR surveys includes the five specific behaviors listed below. In 2024, respondents were asked to indicate “Yes” or “No” to the following question for each behavior:

Since June 2023, have you experienced any of the following intentional sexual contacts that were against your will or occurred when you did not or could not consent in which someone...

- *Sexually touched you* (for example, intentional touching of genitalia, breasts, or buttocks), or made you sexually touch them?
- *Attempted* to make you have sexual intercourse, but was not successful?
- *Made you* have sexual intercourse?
- *Attempted to* make you perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object, but was not successful?
- *Made you* perform or receive oral sex, anal sex, or penetration by a finger or object?

4. The term “unwanted sexual contact” does not accurately represent certain offenses in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Why is this? Is unwanted sexual contact different than “sexual assault?”

The measure of unwanted sexual contact used by the 2024 SAGR is behaviorally based. That is, the measure is based on specific behaviors experienced and does not assume the respondent has expert knowledge of the UCMJ or the UCMJ definition of sexual assault. The estimates created for the unwanted sexual contact estimated prevalence rate reflect the percentage of Academy students who experienced behaviors prohibited by the UCMJ.

The term “unwanted sexual contact” and its definition were created in collaboration with DoD stakeholders to help respondents better relate their experience(s) to the types of sexual assault behaviors addressed by military law and the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program. The vast majority of respondents would not know the differences among the UCMJ offenses of “rape,” “sexual assault,” “aggravated sexual contact,” and “abusive sexual contact” as described in the UCMJ. As a result, the term “unwanted sexual contact” was created so that respondents could read the definition provided and readily understand the behaviors covered by the survey. There are three broad categories of unwanted sexual contact that result: penetration of any orifice, attempted penetration, and unwanted sexual touching (without penetration). Although these unwanted behaviors may be analogous to UCMJ offenses, they are not meant to be exact matches. Many respondents cannot and do not consider the elements of a crime when being victimized by an alleged offender. Consequently, forcing a respondent to categorize accurately which offense they allegedly experienced would not be productive. The

terms and definitions of unwanted sexual contact have been consistent throughout all of the *SAGR* surveys since 2006 to provide DoD with reliable data points across time.

5. OPA uses “sampling” and “weighting” for their scientific surveys. Why are these methods used and what do they do?

Simply stated, sampling and weighting allow for data based on a sample to be generalized accurately up to the total population. In the *2024 SAGR*, OPA was able to generalize to the full population of academy students who met the criteria listed above. This methodology meets industry standards used by U.S. government statistical agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Agricultural Statistical Service, National Center for Health Statistics, and National Center for Education Statistics. OPA subscribes to the survey methodology best practices promoted by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

6. Were sampling and weighting used in the *2024 SAGR*?

The *2024 SAGR* was a census of all cadet/midshipman women and men at each Academy; the survey was offered to all students in the population of interest as detailed in FAQ. For that reason, sampling from the population was not necessary. However, even though all were offered a survey, not all students took the survey for a number of reasons (e.g., conflicts in schedules, refusal to participate, sick in quarters, etc.). To ensure estimates were generalizable to each Academy, OPA used weighting to represent accurately the total population. Data were weighted using an industry-standard process to reflect each Academy’s population as of time of survey administration. Differences in the percentages of respondents and population for the reporting categories reflect differences in response rates. Weighting produces survey estimates of population totals, proportions, and means (as well as other statistics) that are representative of their respective populations. Unweighted survey data, in contrast, are likely to produce biased estimates of population statistics.

7. Does crime data typically fluctuate over time as we see in the *SAGR* results?

As we continue to survey this population, we will gain a better understanding of the trends that exist within this population and what factors impact fluctuations. In general, these types of surveys often see similar fluctuations; however, over time, the visual impact of these fluctuations is less dramatic.

8. Some of the estimates provided in the report show “NR” or “Not Reportable.” What does this mean?

The estimates become “Not Reportable” when they do not meet the criteria for statistically reliable reporting. This can happen for a number of reasons including high variability or too few respondents. This process ensures that the estimates we provide in our analyses and reports are accurate within the margin of error.

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