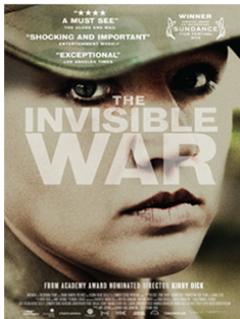


DOCUMENTARY SCREENING: THE INVISIBLE WAR UNDERSTANDING MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

As part of NO MORE Day on March 13th, domestic violence and sexual assault programs are hosting screenings of the documentary, *The Invisible War*, within their communities. The purpose of this handout is to provide sexual assault and domestic violence victim advocates and trainers with contextual information and resources to understand Military Sexual Trauma (MST) as the core subject matter of the documentary; identify the progress that has been and is currently being made within the military to respond to this issue; and learn how your program can help support and be a part of that change.

Programs are strongly encouraged to partner with a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) or Family Advocacy Program (FAP) Advocate to host these screenings and to facilitate discussion of its content. A listing of screenings of *The Invisible War* is available here: <http://www.notinvisible.org/screenings>.

SAPRO is responsible for oversight of the Department of Defense's (DoD) sexual assault policy, and works hand-in-hand with Military Services and civilian community to develop and implement innovative prevention and response programs. FAP aims to prevent domestic abuse and child abuse/neglect within military families. FAP is responsible for ensuring victim safety and access to support and advocacy services, as well as ensuring that offenders receive appropriate intervention and treatment services. To search for the SAPRO or FAP near you, go to **MilitaryINSTALLATIONS** at <http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil>. This is the official DoD source for installation and state resources available to active duty, Guard and Reserve service and family members.



ABOUT THE FILM

The Invisible War, by Oscar®- and Emmy®-nominated filmmaker Kirby Dick, features interviews with veterans from multiple branches of the US Armed Forces who recount the events surrounding their sexual assaults. Their stories show many common themes, such as the lack of recourse to an impartial justice system, reprisals against survivors instead of against perpetrators, the absence of adequate emotional and physical care for survivors, the unhindered advancement of perpetrators' careers, and the forced expulsion of survivors from service.

Interspersed with these first person testimonies are interviews with advocates, journalists, mental health professionals, active duty and retired generals, Department of Defense officials, and members of the military justice system. The film also includes footage, often shot by the veterans themselves, which documents their lives and continuing struggles in the aftermath of their assaults. [THE INVISIBLE WAR: DISCUSSION AND RESOURCE GUIDE](#) provides a series of discussion questions for various audiences (general public, survivors, Veterans, and active-duty military), a screening checklist and additional resources. For additional information about the filmmakers and documentary participants, [download the press kit](#).

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MST

Also known as MST, Military Sexual Trauma is the term used by the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) to describe experiences of sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment experienced during military service (active duty or active duty for training).

MST includes any sexual activity where someone is involved against his or her will — he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities (for example, with threats of negative consequences for refusing to be sexually cooperative or with implied faster promotions or better treatment in exchange for sex), may have been unable to consent to sexual activities (for example, when intoxicated), or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Other experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and/or threatening or unwelcome sexual advances ([Department of Veterans Affairs, 2012](#)).

- According to the latest [Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military](#) for fiscal year 2011, the Military Services received a total of 3,192 reports of sexual assault involving Service members as either victims or subjects.
- Research indicates that victims only report a small fraction of sexual assaults to law enforcement. This civilian reporting behavior is mirrored in the military. Only about 14% of the 19,000 Service members who are estimated to have experienced some form of sexual assault in FY10 reported the matter to a DoD official ([Department of Defense, 2012](#)).

DOD RESPONSE & PROGRESS TO END MST

The DoD has taken a multi-level approach to addressing MST, beginning with the [DoD Sexual Assault Task Force](#) that included civilian anti-sexual violence advocates. The task force reviewed policies, programs and the effectiveness to provide the best care to victims of sexual assault, and as a result they submitted their recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. Implementation of these recommendations included immediate action to long term and sustained actions. As a result, response and prevention efforts are included in the National Defense Authorization Act and include changes to reporting options available to victims. Lastly, the partnerships between military and civilian were strengthened through formal Memorandums of Understanding between military installations and rape crisis centers.

The military is a microcosm of society and creating institutional change requires a shift in culture and commitment from the leadership. Because leadership changes, partnerships between the military and civilians are invaluable to ensure accountability and ongoing commitment to changing the culture to prevent sexual violence and provide victim-centered care for survivors.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Partnerships between the military and civilians are invaluable to ensure accountability and ongoing commitment to changing the culture to prevent sexual violence and provide victim centered care for survivors. A wealth of resources related to MST, including handouts, articles, fact sheets, reports and videos, is available to support civilian and military efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence in the military.

[Sexual Violence in the Military](#) by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center for VAWnet, The National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women

This Special Collection addresses sexual violence against military service members, defines MST, and offers resources (including information on current policy, procedures, legislation, and litigation) to support the prevention of and response to sexual violence as it impacts service members and veterans in the US. Also included is a listing of organizations serving as partners, collaborators, advocates, or allies for service members and veterans impacted by sexual violence.

The Intersection of Domestic Violence and the Military: Working Across Disciplines by National Resource Center on Domestic Violence for VAWnet, The National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women

This collection examines co-occurring issues experienced by veterans (PTSD, TBI, MST) and provides information related to best practices when addressing these co-occurring issues through a multi-systems approach. Challenges experienced by female service members and veterans are explored through the lens of violence against women.

Kitfield, James. “[The Enemy Within.](#)” *Defense. National Journal*, 15 Sept. 2012. Web. 25 Feb. 2013.

Nearly 20,000 service members are raped or sexually assaulted each year by predators who often evade punishment. How can the Pentagon stop them? This article examines the recent developments related to sexual assault awareness and response within the military through the dynamics and outcomes of specific cases. Possible reform measures are also discussed.

SURVIVOR SERVICES: WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP

Provided below are several resources that are best positioned to offer assistance regarding military service members’ abuse-related needs. More information about programs and services available by the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) for MST survivors, please see [Top 10 Facts about VA Services for MST](#).



The DoD Safe Helpline is a crisis support service for members of the DoD community affected by sexual assault. Safe Helpline provides live, one-on-one support, and information to the worldwide DoD community. The service is confidential, anonymous, secure, and available worldwide, 24/7 by click, call, or text — providing victims with the help they need, anytime, anywhere.

- **Click onto <http://www.safehelpline.org>** to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through secure instant messaging.
- **Call 887-995-5247** (inside the U.S. or via the Defense Switched Network) to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for personalized advice and support.
- **Text your location** (zip code, installation/base name) **to 55247** (inside the U.S.) or **001-202-470-5546** (outside the U.S.) to receive contact information for the SARC; medical, legal, spiritual, and military police personnel; and Department of Veterans Affairs personnel at the specified installation or base.
- **Download the app:** <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dod-safe-helpline/id536773115?mt=8>.



Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN)

Toll-Free: 1-800-656-4673 (HOPE)

Website: <http://rainn.org/>

The Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN) is the nation’s largest anti-sexual assault organization. Trained advocates at RAINN can be reached via phone at 1-800-656-4673 (HOPE) or via secure, online chat at online.rainn.org. This nationwide partnership of more than 1,100 local rape treatment hotlines provides victims of sexual assault with free, confidential services around the clock.

Military OneSource

Toll-Free: 1-800-342-9647

Website: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

Military OneSource is a free service provided by the DoD to active duty, Guard and Reserve service members, and their families, with comprehensive information on every aspect of military life including deployment, reunion, relationships, grief, spouse employment and education, parenting and child care, and more. Military OneSource offers personal non-medical counseling services online, via telephone, or face-to-face. Service members and their families can receive non-medical, short-term counseling, as well as assistance with financial management, taxes, career services, health and wellness, among others. This personalized support is available **24/7** no matter where service members live or serve.

WomensLaw - Military-Related Information

Website: <http://www.womenslaw.org>

Among the wealth of resources available on WomensLaw.org, information that is specifically related to the military is detailed. Visit <http://www.womenslaw.org> and click on the “Know the Laws” tab (upper portion of the page), then click on “Military” under “Federal Laws.” The Military page includes the basics of military law, as well as information about the Family Advocacy Program (FAP), confidentiality, military protective orders, removal of guns, and finding help.

NATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS FOR VICTIM ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Provided below are resources to assistance victim advocacy programs in their provision of services, prevention and awareness events, and legislative advocacy activities.



Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP) Military-Civilian Advocate Resource Network

The Military-Civilian Advocate Resource Network includes information about the DoD, Reserves, National Guard, and Department of Veterans Affairs systems and the response to intimate partner violence (IPV). This Wikispace includes pertinent articles and research on IPV and co-occurring conditions such as combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as links to related websites and materials. A discussion component allows advocates to network and share information. Visit BWJP's [Spotlight on the Military](#) for a complete resource list.



National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Website: <http://endsexualviolence.org/>

Its mission: to provide a missing voice in Washington for state coalitions and local programs advocating and organizing against sexual violence and for survivors. The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence educates the policy community about federal laws, legislation and appropriations impacting the fight to end sexual violence. Its team of experts and advocates, donating time away from their state and local groups, publish written analysis, track legislation, provide media interviews, and advise members of Congress and the executive branch.



National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Website: <http://nsvrc.org/>

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) collects and disseminates a wide range of resources on sexual violence including statistics, research, position statements, statutes, training curricula, prevention initiatives and program information. With these resources, the NSVRC assists coalitions, advocates and others interested in understanding and eliminating sexual violence. The NSVRC does not provide direct services to sexual assault victims but rather supports those who do, such as coalitions, rape crisis centers, national, state and local agencies and allied programs.



Resource Sharing Project

Website: <http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/>

The Resource Sharing Project (RSP) was created to help state sexual assault coalitions across the country access the resources they need in order to develop and thrive as they work to support survivors and end sexual assault. The project is designed to provide technical assistance, support, and the dissemination of peer-driven resources for all state and territorial sexual assault coalitions.

“To that end, [The Invisible War](#) is a call for our civilian and military leadership to listen. And to act.” (Press Kit)