

SEXUAL ASSAULT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who do I contact to report a sexual assault?

Contact your local SAPR Victim Advocate (SAPR VA) or SARC.

From on base 645-HOPE (4673)

From off base 098-970-HOPE (4673)

Or visit our main office located on Camp Foster, building 5677 room 208 (Sexual Assault & Response)

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault is any sexual act that is unwanted and that no consent has been given in which a person is threatened, coerced, forced to comply against their will or unable to give consent to the activity.

What is consent?

Everyone has the right to say 'no' to sex, to withdraw or withhold their consent for any sexual act, on any occasion and under any circumstances, regardless of whether they've given consent to sex with that person in the past and regardless of whether they're in a relationship with the other person. Sex without consent is rape.

There are no grey areas when it comes to consent for example:

- If someone is asleep or unconscious, they don't have the **capacity to consent**.
- If they've been kidnapped or held against their will, they don't have the **freedom to consent**

Was it my fault?

Any type of sexual assault is against the law and it is considered a sexual offence. Nobody has the right to force someone into sex, or any unwanted act of sexual nature without their consent, and it is important for the victim to understand that it was not their fault if this happened to them.

Many people believe that in some cases they contributed to the abuse and they are to blame, even partially, for what happened. This frequently happens when the person had been drinking alcohol or taking drugs at the time of the abuse; are in a relationship with the perpetrator or have had a sexual relationship, including kissing or touching, with them prior to the abuse; were with people of the same sex and don't want to report such detail to the police or friends and family; were not able to say no, did not fight back or left the relationship; cannot really remember what happened due to different reasons, including trauma.

No matter what happened, **only one person makes the choice to perform sexual violence, and it is the abuser**, not the victim. It is never the victim's fault and there are no excuses for sexual violence.

Someone has disclosed to me about their experience of sexual assault, what should I do?

It is not always easy to know how to respond to someone who has told you they have experienced or have been experiencing a form of sexual violence, and you may not know how best to respond. It is important for you to acknowledge that there is no right reaction to hearing that someone you care about has been affected by sexual assault.

Your first aim should always be that of supporting the victim, but you also need to be careful in not pushing them into doing what you think it would be best for them to do. *Listening* is the most valuable and important thing you can do at first, as well as trying to understand the support the victim might need.

As a Marine am I a mandatory reporter?

Service Members who **observe** a sexual assault are mandatory reporters and therefore must immediately report the incident to the Provost Marshal's Office/law enforcement and the chain of command.

As a Civilian working with the military who can I make a report to?

As a civilian you can contact your unit's SAPR Victim Advocate (SAPR VA) or SARC whether uniformed or civilian, or call 645-HOPE (4673) if on base and 098-970-HOPE (4673) if off base. Or visit our main office located on Camp Foster, building 5677 room 208 (Sexual Assault & Response)

What is Unrestricted Reporting?

Unrestricted reporting includes all suspected, alleged, or actual sexual assaults made known to the command or law enforcement for formal investigation. In unrestricted reporting, only "need to know" information regarding the sexual assault will be disclosed to the Battalion, Squadron or Regiment Commanding Officer (CO), supporting SAPR VA, and law enforcement personnel to enable a formal investigation. Marines and Sailors who have the courage to report they have been sexually assaulted must feel confident they will be treated with sensitivity, dignity, and respect.

What is Restricted Reporting?

Restricted reporting affords victims of sexual assault the option to make a confidential report to specified individuals, including the SARC, VA, counselors, and health care providers. Under these circumstances, the victim's report and any details provided to specified individuals will not be reported to Provost Marshal's Office (PMO), Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), or to the command to initiate any official investigation. Victims are cautioned to only disclose sexual assault to specified individuals to avoid third party reporting.

Am I eligible for SAPR services if I was sexually assaulted prior to military service?

Yes, Active Duty service members are eligible for SAPR services even if the event occurred prior to service.