

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Services Available to Veterans and Active Duty Service Members who Experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

- MST is the term used by VA to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment experienced by a Service member during military service. It involves **any unwanted sexual activity** in which the Service member was involved against his or her will or unable to say “no.”

VA Services for MST

- VA offers **free counseling and treatment** for mental and physical health conditions related to MST.
- Veterans and active duty Service members **do not** need to have reported the experience to anyone, and **do not** need to have any documentation of the experience to get MST-related care.
- **VA’s community-based Vet Centers** offer confidential MST-related counseling services. Vet Centers use a separate system of health care records that cannot be accessed or released (including to DoD) without the Veteran’s or Service member’s signed authorization.
 - Vet Center services are available both to Veterans and to active duty Service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve. Active duty Service members **do not** need a referral to receive these services.
- **VA health care systems** offer a range of mental health and medical services, including outpatient, inpatient, residential treatment, and medications. Every VA health care system also has an **MST Coordinator** who can provide information about VA services and programs.
 - **Veterans** can receive MST-related care even if they are not enrolled with VA, and do not need to have a VA disability rating (i.e., be “service connected”) to receive these services.
 - **Active duty Service members** (including National Guard and Reserve) can receive MST-related services at VA health care systems with a TRICARE referral.

How can Veterans and Service Members get help?

- For more information, Veterans and active duty Service members can speak with their existing VA health care provider, contact the MST Coordinator at their nearest VA health care system, or contact their local Vet Center. A list of VA and Vet Center facilities can be found at www.va.gov and www.vetcenter.va.gov.
- Veterans and active duty Service members can also learn more about VA’s MST-related services online at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp.