Department of the Navy
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
Strategic Plan
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1 Oct 2017

Sexual assault has absolutely no place in the Department of the Navy and its component Services – the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps. All forms of this destructive behavior are fundamentally incompatible with our common core values. Every occurrence injures those among us, poisons unit cohesion, and undermines mission readiness.

Our vision is straightforward. The Department of the Navy, the United States Navy, and the United States Marine Corps are together committed to a culture of dignity and respect, where sexual assault is never tolerated and ultimately eliminated, where all survivors receive coordinated support and protection, and where offenders are held appropriately accountable.

Eliminating sexual assault requires more than words – we must act. Zero-tolerance is an all-hands effort whose foundations include respect, integrity, and visible leadership engagement at every level. Nothing less is acceptable. Every Sailor, Marine, and civilian is responsible for their own actions and for intervening to protect others from harm. Together we have accomplished much, but there is more to do. We accept the challenge of breaking new ground to overcome barriers and achieve success.

The following plan serves to clarify and align our major goals and priorities. It also serves as a guide to help shape our overlapping actions and interactions, across unique environments, as partners in combatting sexual assault.

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“One sexual assault is too many, but let’s know that the job of the Navy-Marine Corps team is to inflict pain to the enemy, unsustainable pain to the enemy. When I see that we’re inflicting pain upon ourselves, it's an anathema to me, and it must be stopped.”

Secretary of the Navy  Richard V. Spencer  Confirmation Hearing July 11, 2017
Primary Goals

Our efforts focus on two primary goals of equal importance. While they appear to overlap in some respects, each involves fundamentally distinct activities and skill sets. In both endeavors, we benefit from a foundation of established core values and respect for the power of effective leadership.

Prevent Sexual Assault. We seek to reduce the frequency of sexual assault Department-wide. By this, we mean to demonstrably reduce the true number of sexual assaults involving Sailors and Marines, as either victims or offenders, whether the incident is reported or not. There are no simple solutions or easy precedents that are directly relevant to our world-wide scale of operations. Our own experience suggests that success will require a sustained commitment to multiple simultaneous efforts, active leadership engagement at all levels, candid and objective assessments of our progress, and course changes as necessary. In particular, we expect that important adjustments will be necessary as our insight and experience grow in such a complex human endeavor.

Support Survivors of Sexual Assault. We seek to ensure comprehensive support and protection for sexual assault survivors. By this, we mean to develop and assess processes that protect survivors from further harm, foster their healing, promote longer-term resiliency, and enable both personal and career success. Victims of sexual assault deserve rapid access to responsive support. Important elements include facilitated access to forensic exams, conscious protection from retaliation and re-victimization, and coordinated case management. Processes must be flexible enough to address the diverse perspectives and priorities of actual survivors. In addition, we must systematically assess key processes and make changes as necessary to continuously refine them. Sustained improvement in sexual assault reporting is strong evidence of progress in this arena.
Organizational Alignment

The Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps work collaboratively and with shared priority to combat sexual assault throughout the Department. Each conducts separate but overlapping Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) activities whose overall impact exceeds the sum of their individual parts.

Secretariat Engagement. The Department of the Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (DON-SAPRO) operates under the immediate supervision of the Secretary of the Navy. On behalf of the Secretary, DON-SAPRO provides Navy and Marine Corps leadership with expert insights from locations worldwide on specific SAPR policy questions or issues – capturing the unique perceptions and realities of local Commanders, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, and other stakeholders with regard to SAPR program performance, policy implementation, and challenges at the field and deck-plate level, as well as the needs and concerns of Sailors and Marines as they pertain to toxic behaviors, training assessments, and victim support. They periodically plan and implement special research studies and pilot prevention projects to support our primary goals of preventing sexual assault and supporting its survivors across diverse Departmental environments. Activities also include efforts to explore and initially develop modern training tools for potential Service-wide use. In coordination with the Services, DON-SAPRO develops Department of the Navy policy guidance on SAPR matters, shares insights and assessments on sexual assault prevention, establishes common priorities, coordinates responsibilities and resources across Departmental and Service-level entities, and coordinates an integrated DON-wide SAPR Strategic Plan.

Service Programs. The U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps each directly operates coordinated Service-wide SAPR victim support programs. A partial list of key elements includes local Case Management Groups, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, networks of full- and part-time SAPR Victim Advocates, Victims Legal Counsels, and mechanisms for expedited transfers of sexual assault victims. Service representatives work extensively with DON-SAPRO and others in developing responses to various inquiries, taskings, and data calls from DoD and elsewhere. On a continuous basis, Service SAPR managers develop and implement SAPR training programs relevant to their unique cultures and operating environments. In addition, they conduct their own program and site assessments, data analyses, and prevention initiatives.
Coordinating Forum. The Department of the Navy Sexual Assault Advisory Council (DON-SAAC) is a senior-leader forum for coordinating SAPR insights and activities across the Secretariat and each Service. It augments ongoing staff-level communication and collaboration.

“The United States Navy is a high-performing combat team that strives to be its best, in both competence and character, every day. We push ourselves and our shipmates to perform at the highest levels of operational and warfighting proficiency, and we demonstrate our Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment in everything we do.” “We are at our best when we intervene and prevent bad behaviors before they happen. This is the sign of a high-performing team. Be your best. Be expert operators and warfighters. Be people of integrity, accountability, initiative and toughness. In everything you do, live a life of Honor, Courage, and Commitment.”

Chief of Naval Operations
ADM John M. Richardson
March 17, 2017
Major Strategies

Top-Down Leadership Engagement. Our greatest weapon against sexual assault is engaged and concerned leadership. One core element of our strategy is the progressive dissemination of a strong, clear, and consistent leadership message of intolerance for sexual assault. Leaders at all levels also must actively manage command climates and visibly exemplify high standards of personal behavior.

Demonstration Projects. There is no documented precedent or proven road map for preventing sexual assault. One of our strategies involves demonstrating new approaches, applied either singly or in combination, based on credible foundations of knowledge, in settings where it is possible to make candid outcomes-based assessments of their overall impacts on Sailor attitudes, behaviors, and the incidence of reported and unreported sexual assault.

Modern Training Tools. Effective training requires the right message, presented in the right form, tailored to the right audience, and delivered with the right frequency. Programs focused on sexual assault prevention also differ from curricula on sexual assault awareness and survivor support resources.

Build Credible Insights. Many sexual assaults go unreported, and our knowledge is incomplete regarding their circumstances and contributing factors. Equally incomplete is our insight into the perspectives and priorities of sexual assault survivors. As a learning organization, we continuously seek to explore numerous sources of information, including survey results, records reviews, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and others. Resulting insights, considered together, provide the most credible foundation for evolving Sexual Assault Prevention and Response processes and initiatives.

Monitor Progress. We are committed to combating sexual assault, and we believe that our strategies as described above will help lead us to success. We are committed to continuously assessing our progress with credible metrics validated by systematic subjective observations.
Specific Objectives and Activities

The respective attachments that follow serve to briefly outline specific objectives and planned activities during this fiscal year and the next by the Department of the Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (DON-SAPRO), the U.S. Navy 21st Century Sailor Program, and U.S. Marine Corps Marine and Family Programs.

“We are all teammates. Brothers and sisters. Marines. We are seen by our fellow citizens as men and women of honor and virtue, possessing an unbreakable commitment to each other and to the nation. What we say and do each day represents who we are, and there is no time off for Marines. We are all-in 24/7. And if that commitment to excellence interferes with your ‘me-time,’ or if you can’t or are unwilling to commit 100 percent to our Corps’ warfighting ability by being a good teammate and improving cohesion and trust, then I have to ask you: Do you really want to be a Marine?”

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert B. Neller   March 7, 2017
Appendix A: DON-SAPRO Objectives & Activities (thru FY18)

Objectives

- Provide Navy and Marine Corps leadership with expert SAPR insights from locations world-wide
- Plan and implement new studies or pilot projects to reduce the incidence of sexual assault, support victims of sexual assault, and hold perpetrators appropriately accountable
- Promote top-down leadership engagement in a strong message of intolerance for sexual assault
- Explore modern SAPR training tools tailored for specific audiences
- Use objective data sources to assess our progress in preventing sexual assault and supporting its victims

Activities

- Conduct structured site visits to Navy and Marine Corps sites world-wide
- Sustain and expand pilot prevention efforts at NSA Bahrain, including sexual assault survey efforts there
- Develop pilot prevention effort with USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73)
- Revise “Pure Praxis” content to address healthy relationships and social media abuse
- Continue ongoing sexual assault survey program at Navy “A” School sites
- Develop next generation of SAPR training product for leadership development
- Plan and implement a 2018 prevention-oriented symposium for SAPR stakeholders
- Build organic DON-SAPRO capability to explore and analyze DSAID data to identify trends in Service member reporting and alleged offending by Service members
- Use existing SAPR and manpower databases to summarize personal and career outcomes after individuals have received an expedited transfer upon reporting a sexual assault
- Extend coordinating liaison with DOJ and BUMED to assess impacts and feasibility of remote tele-nursing support for Sexual Assault Forensic Exams
- Work with other DON entities including BCNR and NCIS in reviewing materials from SAPR-related cases
Appendix B: U.S. Navy Objectives & Activities (thru FY18)

Objectives

- Eliminate sexual assaults that are perpetrated by Navy personnel
- Pursue research-informed, evidence-based prevention strategies
- Focus on critical middle (E5-O4) to own and drive culture of mutual respect and intervention to counter destructive behaviors
- Implement targeted prevention methodologies to reduce destructive personnel behaviors and incidents including sexual assault
- Increase male victim reporting by better understanding and addressing barriers unique to male victims
- Enable personal and command accountability through consistent training and education focusing on leadership and character development, and development of unit environments of professionalism, safety, dignity, and respect
- Understand and respond appropriately to any allegation of retaliation (reprisal, ostracism, or maltreatment) against service members, first responders and those who intervene on behalf of a victim as a result of reporting sexual assault

Activities

- Deep dive analysis of case and reporting data to identify trends that may lead to targeted training and prevention initiatives
- Build additional personnel data onto the sexual assault incident database to provide a more robust analytic capability and ensure research-informed approaches to current and future prevention plans, programs, and policies
- Review and, as necessary, update policies for Expedited Transfers and Case Management Groups
- Continue studies with RAND and CNA to look at sexual assault risk, and relationships between destructive behaviors at the unit level
- Educate Service members on the different aspects of retaliation, how to recognize it, how to intervene when it occurs, and how to report it
Appendix C: U.S. Marine Corps Objectives & Activities (thru FY18)

Objectives

• Eliminate sexual assaults that are perpetrated by Marine Corps personnel

• Foster a positive environment that eliminates barriers to victim reporting and one that enhances respect and support to victim needs

• Ensure that all commands have a quality SAPR program that is actively engaged in prevention efforts and response to victim needs

• Ensure that Marine Corps programs leverage the best available research evidence related to sexual assault to develop and implement effective prevention and training efforts

• Develop shared prevention messaging across the Marine Corps by collaborating with other Marine Corps readiness impacting programs

• Inform leadership on the nature of sexual assault in Marine Corps using data analysis and special studies

• Ensure that the Marine Corps is using best practices for measuring the success and effectiveness of its SAPR Program

• Enhance Marine Corps readiness by continuously reviewing and updating all policy guidance on SAPR-related materials

Activities

• Work collaboratively with RAND Corporation to inform the development of measures of performance (MOPs) and measures of effectiveness (MOEs) for SAPR program efforts

• Develop studies and conduct data analysis with reporting data to inform and better target prevention and response efforts

• Support the implementation of “Join the Conversation” throughout the Marine Corps

• Conduct seminars with sexual assault subject matter experts at Headquarters Marine Corps SAPR to gather the best available research evidence related to sexual assault and prevention

• Conduct face-to-face engagements and prevention summits across the Marine Corps that focus on identifying and preventing destructive behaviors by reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors

• Revise and promulgate the Marine Corps policy for Expedited Transfers

• Revise and promulgate the Marine Corps Order for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

• Ensure the availability of continuing education training for all SARCs, SAPR VAs, Commanders, etc.

• Conduct continuous evaluation of SAPR program through inspections, engagements, and training to strengthen compliance program