

Sexual Assault in the Military

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Objectives

- To discuss prevalence rates and effects of military sexual assault
- To discuss the military's response to military sexual assaults
- To share implications for social worker practice

MST and Mental Health

- More likely to receive a mental health diagnosis
- PTSD and MST
 - Women vs. men
 - Leading cause
- MST, substance abuse, and homelessness
 - 53% of homeless women

(Brown, 2013; Kimerling et al. 2010; Service Women's Action Network, 2013; Washington, 2010)

Rape

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2013)
 - Rape is the “unlawful penetration of a person against the will of the victim, with use or threatened use of force, or attempting such an act. Rape includes psychological coercion and physical force, and forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender” (p. 2)

Women, Rape, and the Military

- Women in the military
 - Women make up 15% of active duty military population
- Military Sexual Trauma
 - 20% of female veterans
 - More common than death
 - 19,000 vs. 3,158
 - 500,000

(Department of Defense, 2012b; Ellison, 2011; Ziering, Barklow, & Dick, 2012; Protect our Defenders, 2013)

Military's Response to MST

- Military Commanders
 - Play a significant role in regulating military justice within their own ranks
 - Commanders can dispose of offenses
 - 19,000 **→** 96
- Impact on Reporting
 - Support
 - System of punishment
 - Retaliation

(Department of Defense, 2012c; Lawrence & Peñaloza, 2013; Protect our Defenders, 2013; Steinhaur, 2013; Tsongas, 2012)

Implications for Social Work Practice

- Theoretical explanations for violence against women (Jasinski, 2001)
 - Feminist theory
 - Exchange theory

Implications for Social Work Practice

- Policy change
 - H.R. 1517: Accountability
 - Senate Bill 1581: Support services
 - H.R. 1864: Retaliation
 - H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013: Prevention and Response
 - Senate Bill 967: Chain of Command
- Societal change (Turchik & Wilson, 2007):
 - Hypermasculinity
 - Sexual promiscuity
 - Rape myth acceptance
 - Acceptance and use of sexualized violent language and behavior
 - Sex-role stereotyping

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