

**Product 8--Booklet:
Coping with Sexual Assault
For Military Victims, English Version (62 pages)**

***Coping with Sexual Assault:
A Resource Guide and Overview of SAPR Policies for Military Victims***

This resource is intended for victims of sexual assault in the military--women and men whose lives have been affected by sexual assault in the military, including: active duty service members, their dependents or anyone sexually assaulted by a US service member. This guide was developed to assist victims of sexual assault with information about the recovery process, medical concerns, reporting and legal options as well as information about Department of Defense policies and available resources. It will also serve as a useful quick-reference guide for professionals and service providers who work with military victims of sexual assault.

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Chances are, you are reading this because you or someone you care about has been raped. This booklet is for anyone who has ever been the victim of sexual assault. It is also a good resource for family members, friends and other professionals to learn more about how to support you

through this difficult time and as a quick-reference guide to the sexual assault prevention and response policies as directed by the Department of Defense. In addition, the booklet provides an overview of the many aspects of sexual assault including the recovery process, victims' concerns, reporting barriers, medical issues and the criminal justice process. To begin, let's start with a few important facts that you should know about sexual assault.

Many different people are affected by sexual assault. Victims of sexual assault include women and men, young and old, enlisted and officers, heterosexuals and homosexuals as well as persons from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Sexual assault can happen to anyone--no matter what your background or situation. Persons who are in more vulnerable situations (e.g. new recruits) are at a greater risk of sexual assault due to the power differential and potential for abuse of power (and rank).

Sexual assaults occur in different types of situations. No matter what—it is never the victim's fault that the assault happened--never. You may decide to leave your window open on a summer night, go for a walk alone, get drunk at a party, go home with someone you just met, or say no to your date or your boyfriend about sex. None of these actions or decisions gives anyone the right to take advantage of you. Many rape victims do blame themselves for what happened. It is important to remember, just like any other crime, the offender is responsible AND to blame. You did not cause this to happen by anything you did or said.

Everyone deserves support after a sexual assault. You do not have to deal with this alone. There are many resources and people who want to help. This booklet gives you some general information about the medical, emotional and legal issues. This resource can be useful if you were recently assaulted or if it happened a long time ago. We hope this will answer some of your questions or address some of your concerns. Since military services and state laws are sometimes different, you might want to contact the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) at your installation, or a civilian rape crisis program in your area if you need more information or support. Remember, there are many people who can help you and answer your questions.

Survivors of sexual assault should be treated with respect when trying to get help. You have the right to be informed about your choices in medical care, the military and civilian justice systems, your legal rights, and counseling options. With this information you will be able to make the decisions that are best for you. Remember, as a victim of crime, you are entitled to specific rights under federal law which are addressed later in this booklet.

“Even though there may be times when you think you are alone in this, remember, you are not alone... Even though there may be times when you will wonder if you will ever move beyond this, remember that you will survive and thrive and go on with your life.”

---from a Vet, but no longer a victim

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