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# **I felt so betrayed.**

- Dawn Thomson

O'Hara, J., Branswell, B., Geddes, J., Deziel, S., Driedger, S. D., & Nolen, S. (1998, May 25). Rape in the military. *Maclean's*.  
<https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/rape-in-the-military/>

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# MILITARY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA IN CANADA: A PATHWAY TO UNDERSTANDING AND ACTION

## THE EVOLVING DISCUSSION ON MILITARY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA: AN INTRODUCTION



DEPARTMENT  
OF PSYCHIATRY  
AND BEHAVIOURAL  
NEUROSCIENCES



Centre of Excellence – PTSD



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Co-hosted by:



CANADIAN  
**MST CoP**  
MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA  
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



DEPARTMENT  
OF PSYCHIATRY  
AND BEHAVIOURAL  
NEUROSCIENCES



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With support from:



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Veterans Affairs  
Canada

Anciens Combattants  
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# CANADIAN MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE – MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



**CIMVHR | ICRSMV**  
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Public Health  
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Servicewomen's Salute  
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C A N A D A

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT  
Response Centre (SMRC)**



Veterans Affairs  
Canada

Anciens Combattants  
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**Western**  
UNIVERSITY • CANADA

## ACRONYMS

MST = Military Sexual Trauma

MSM = Military Sexual Misconduct

## PURPOSE OF THE SYMPOSIUM SERIES

- To convene organizations and individuals working to improve the well-being of currently-serving military members and Veterans impacted by MST;
- To increase understanding of MST;
- To share knowledge from research findings, emerging clinical best practices, policy learnings and priorities, and lived experience expertise; and
- To influence practice and policy action to improve outcomes for those impacted by MST.



## TODAY'S SESSION

**OBJECTIVE:** To help improve knowledge, understanding, supports and treatment for MST and MSM in Canada.

**INTENDED AUDIENCE:** Service providers; sector leaders; researchers; and individuals impacted by MST.

- Over 300 registrations, from across Canada and abroad!

## BRIEF HOUSEKEEPING INFORMATION

- We received your questions and we will try our best to answer them today or in future sessions.
- Explore BrandLive page for additional information (speaker bios, downloadable documents), available below video player

## TRIGGER WARNING & SUPPORT LINE INFORMATION

*This webinar includes content on topics such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, physical violence, and identity-based discrimination and harassment. This content may be difficult to listen to and may bring up a range of emotions. We encourage you to care for your safety and well-being.*

*If you need to reach out for support, please contact:*

**Veterans Affairs Canada** (VAC Assistance Service and Services for Families)

Call 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (available 24/7)

**Canadian Armed Forces** (Member Assistance Program)

Call 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (available 24/7)

**Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC)**

Call 1-844-750-1648 (available 24/7) | [DND.SMRC-CIIS.MDN@forces.gc.ca](mailto:DND.SMRC-CIIS.MDN@forces.gc.ca)

***or dial 911 if it is an emergency.***

*Additional supports can be found here (<https://veteransmentalhealth.ca/resources/find-support/>)*

- 
- **Crisis Services Canada** (Crisis services for all Canadians) - Call 1-833-456-4566 (available 24/7), Text 45645 (available 4pm to Midnight Eastern Time Zone). Residents of Quebec: Call 1-866-APPELLE (1-866-277-3553)
  - **VAC and Canadian Armed Forces** (Member Assistance Program & Assistance Services for Families) - Call 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (available 24/7)
  - **Canadian Forces Morale & Welfare Services** (Family Information Line) - Call 1-800-866-4546 (available 24/7)
  - **The Hope for Wellness Help Line for all Indigenous peoples** - Call 1-855-242-3310 (available 24/7)
  - La prévention du suicide et le soutien **Service d'aide en situation de crise pour tous les Canadiens** - Tél. : 1 833 456-4566 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7), Texto : 45645 (de 16 h à minuit, HE). Pour les résidents du Québec: 1 866 APPELLE (1.866.277.3553)
  - Anciens Combattants Canada et Forces canadiennes **Programme d'aide aux membres et services d'aide aux familles** - Tél. : 1 800 268-7708, ATS 1 800 567-5803 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7)
  - Services bien-être et moral des Forces canadiennes **Ligne d'information pour les familles** - Tél. : 1 800 866-4546 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7)
  - **La Ligne d'écoute d'espoir pour tous les peuples autochtones** - Tél.: 1-855-242-3310 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7)

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**I've asked to be posted off this base. And they're, 'Nope, no money in the budget'. And I'm like, 'You know what's going on, right?', and they're like, 'Yeah, but there's no money in the budget.' So I am forced every day on the base with my attacker...**

- Anonymous Female Junior Non-Commissioned Member, Regular Force

Silins, S., & Leblanc, M. (2020). *Experiences of CAF members affected by sexual misconduct: Perceptions of support* (Report No. DRDC-RDDC-2020-L046). Defence Research and Development Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/op-honour/drdc-rddc-2020-l046-scientific-letter-en.pdf>



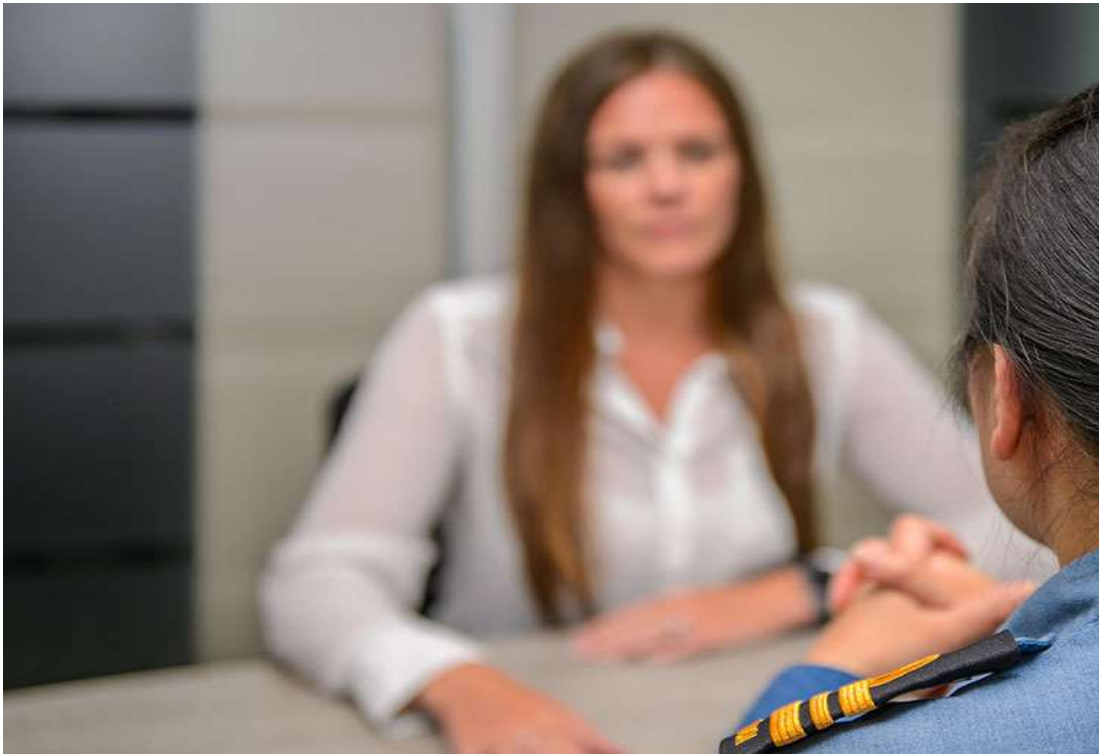
**DR. ALEXANDRA HEBER, MD FRCPC CCPE**

Chief of Psychiatry, Veterans Affairs Canada

Co-Chair of Canadian Military Sexual Trauma Community of Practice

# ▼ Definitions: A Pathway to Understanding and Action

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## **Military Sexual Trauma Military Sexual Misconduct**

by

**Alexandra Heber**

Chief of Psychiatry, Veterans Affairs  
Canada

Co-Chair, Canadian Military Sexual  
Trauma Community of Practice

## ▼ Purpose of this presentation:

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- *Not to prescribe:*
- *Not* providing an “official” definition or description of these terms
- *Not* stating what will become the government of Canada definition, or official definition of any other group or organization
  
- *Instead :*
- Explore background of these terms
- Currently accepted definitions
- Considerations when defining MST, MSM, and related terms for the future



# Military Sexual Trauma is Not a Diagnosis

- So doctors do not diagnose their patient with MST
- “Military Sexual Trauma” is a descriptive term
- Compare to “Operational Stress Injury”
- Those who experience MST may suffer from a number of diagnosable mental health conditions:
  - PTSD
  - Anxiety Disorder
  - Major Depression
- As well as diagnosable physical conditions

## Although These Are Not Diagnoses, Military Sexual Trauma and Military Sexual Misconduct are Important Terms

### *Some Considerations:*

- We need agreed-upon definitions so that when we discuss, we have a shared understanding
- For validation and acknowledgement
- To what and to whom are we referring when we use these terms?
- Questions of reporting, including after release from the military
- The use of terms like OSI and MST
- Who is the perpetrator?
- Situating MST within a larger understanding of violence in our culture and our society

## Use of The Terms Military Sexual Trauma and Military Sexual Misconduct in Canada:

- Military Sexual Misconduct describes acts committed
- Military Sexual Trauma describes effects, outcomes or suffering, as a result of these acts
- In the US, the term “Military Sexual Trauma” used to describe both the misconduct, and the traumatic effects

- **Sexual Misconduct** is defined, in Canada, as “conduct of a sexual nature that can cause or causes harm to others”. Sexual misconduct includes:
  - Actions or words that devalue a person or group of persons on the basis of their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression;
  - Jokes of a sexual nature, sexual remarks, advances of a sexual nature or verbal abuse of a sexual nature in the workplace;
  - Harassment (DAOD 5012-0) of a sexual nature, including initiation rites of a sexual nature;
  - Viewing, accessing, distributing or displaying sexually explicit material in the workplace; and
  - Any *Criminal Code* offence of a sexual nature
- Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/conflict-misconduct/operation-honour/orders-policies-directives/operation-honour-manual/use-of-terminology.html>

## Potential Service Offence



- **Military Sexual Trauma**, defined by the USVA, refers to **sexual assault** or **harassment** experienced during military service. MST includes any sexual activity that you are involved with against your will. Examples include:
  - Being pressured or coerced into sexual activities, such as with threats of negative treatment if you refuse to cooperate, or with promises of better treatment in exchange for sex
  - Someone having sexual contact with you without your consent, such as when you were asleep or intoxicated
  - Being physically forced to have sex
  - Being touched in a sexual way that made you uncomfortable
  - Repeated comments about your body or sexual activities
  - Threatening and unwanted sexual advances
- USVA: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/msthome/index.asp>

# Military Sexual Trauma: Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

- **Sexual Harassment: 2 types:**

- “*Hostile environment*” sexual harassment
- “*Quid Pro Quo*” sexual harassment

- **Sexual Assault:**

- Unwanted sexual contact involving some type of *coercion*
  - *Overpowered by physical force (the one we usually think of)*
  - *Unable to consent (eg intoxicated, unconscious)*
  - ***Coerced by threats of harm—to one’s **body**, one’s **reputation**, one’s **career*****

- **Coercion:**

- Individuals may *comply* for understandable reasons: to increase chances of survival, to prevent physical harm, to preserve reputation, to protect career longevity

## Consent vs Compliance

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**Consent vs Compliance:** To understand the issues of Military Sexual Misconduct and Military Sexual Trauma, we must clearly understand the difference between *consent* and *compliance*, and that in relationships where there is a power differential, *compliance* may occur, but true *consent* is not possible.



## What CAF Reports starting to do wrt use of terms:

- From a statement released on April 29, 2021 entitled: “New Initiatives to advance culture change for Canada’s Defence Team”
- *It is important to name and acknowledge the harm that results from experiencing sexual harassment and violence during service and that this harm has distinct aspects. To clearly define sexual trauma in connection with military service, initial discussions are underway with stakeholders including survivors, academics, and the sexual misconduct response centre.*

## One More Question on Terms

Another question related to use of terms, that is sometimes asked is:

“Why do we need to separate out and focus on *Military* Sexual Trauma and *Military* Sexual Misconduct? Because we know that this happens not only in the military, but in many workplaces.”

Why?

- To provide validation
- To provide forthright acknowledgement
- This is a **service-related condition**

**In conclusion.....**

Thank-you all so very much for your kind attention today. I hope you find benefit in the rest of our Symposium.

*And please everyone,  
take good care of yourselves and each other*



## DR. PATRICK SMITH

President & CEO, Centre of Excellence – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and  
Related Mental Health Conditions

# **Military Sexual Misconduct and Military Sexual Trauma: From concepts and constructs to context and culture**

**Dr. Patrick Smith  
President & CEO  
Centre of Excellence on PTSD  
& Related Mental Health Concerns**

Founding Member of Canadian Military Sexual Trauma  
Community of Practice



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# Acknowledging those who've come before us



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# Sexual Violence

*No one deserves to work and live - free from sexual violence – more than those individuals who have chosen to serve their country.*



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*“If the frogs in a pond started behaving strangely, our first reaction would not be to punish them or even to treat them. Instinctively, we’d wonder what was going on in the pond.”*



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# Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- **Gender-based violence (GBV)**
  - Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females.
  - Violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex OR gender identity.
    - Includes:
      - Physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, and economic or educational deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life.



# Sexual Violence

“Because sexual harassment and sexual assault are more closely intertwined in the military than in most civilian contexts, it’s important to understand the complex interplay between sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military”.

(Stander & Thomsen, Military Medicine, 2016)



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# Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault

- Military environment: Overlap of SH and SA is much greater than in most civilian contexts;
  - Broad boundaries; at the extreme, workspace and life space merge completely during an operational deployment.



# Military “Culture”

- Military environment includes a broad and diverse range of “sub-cultures” that vary by branch, active duty vs. reserve, etc.



# MST Misconduct & Military Sexual Trauma

- Comprehensive transformation of organizational culture to decrease/eliminate incidents
  - Comprehensive supports for those who report and disclose incidents of sexual violence
    - Organizational response can mitigate trauma or exacerbate the trauma (secondary trauma)
- 
- Full continuum of specialized services and supports
    - For still-serving members and Veterans



## Potential Service Offence



## US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

“Because similar clinical considerations are relevant for victims of both severe harassment and sexual assault, most VA research has assessed both types of victimization together as part of a broader category labeled military sexual trauma (MST), defined as:



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## US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

“Psychological trauma, which in the judgment of a mental health professional employed by the Department, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the Veteran was serving on active duty or active duty for training.”



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# Lessons from Workplace Sexual Harassment

- Left unchecked, SH in the workplace has the potential to escalate to violent behaviour.
- Employers that do not take preventative steps to prevent face major implications:
  - Decreased productivity
  - Low morale and increased absenteeism
  - Health care costs/potential legal expenses.

- Ontario Humans Rights Commission



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## Ontario Human Rights Commission (cont'd)

- Sexual harassment occurs across occupations and industry sectors: it may be more common in certain types of employment, including:
  - . Male-dominated work environments (military, policing, construction work)
  - . Jobs that are thought to be “subservient” (nursing, massage therapy, waitressing, sex trade)
  - . Work done in isolation (live-in caregivers)



# Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment

Labour legislation across Canada deals with employers having to create safe workplaces free of toxicity and otherwise...



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# Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment

Has the employer met its obligation?

- ✓ Procedures in place at the time to deal with discrimination and harassment
- ✓ How quickly the organization responded to the complaint
- ✓ How seriously the complaint was treated
- ✓ The resources made available to deal with the complaint
- ✓ If the organization provided a healthy environment for the person who complained
- ✓ How well the person who complained was told about the action taken.



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## **Systemic Inequalities & Workplace Culture:**

- While acknowledging the importance of individual complaints processes, this focus fails to address systemic context of sexual harassment
- Focus on individual complaints tends to reinforce the idea that SH is predominantly one of aberrant individual wrongdoing

( Sheppard, 1995 Canadian Lab & Emp)



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# Systemic Inequalities & Workplace Culture:

“More proactive and systemic approach to sexual harassment requires an understanding of how **domination** is embedded within organizational structures, practices, and work cultures”

( Sheppard, 1995 Canadian Lab & Emp)



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# Sexual Harassment & Military Sexual Assault

Military emphasis on group cohesion and loyalty:,  
Encourages a culture of bystander innocence /  
ambivalence

- Bystander Intervention Model Goals:
  - Educate on the problem of sexual violence in the military and how to recognize signs
  - Explicit training on gender hostility and sexual harassment
  - Encourage everyone to be part of the solution –  
“See something, say something”





# Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault in Military

- Hierarchical structure may increase risk for victimization based on abuse of authority:
  - Hierarchy gives military **leaders** the **ability/responsibility** to change policy and practice
  - To improve programs & environment much more dramatically and quickly than would be possible in most civilian environments.
- Greater “**opportunity**” - greater “**obligation**”



# Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault in Military

- The high value placed on cohesion throughout the force may lead to protectionism and make it difficult for victims to come forward; on the other hand, group loyalty may make prevention efforts more successful when leveraged through the **bystander intervention approach**.
- Incentives - positive and negative (promotions, rewards, reprisals, sanctions, etc.) need to reflect this approach



## **The Time Is Now!!**

*No one deserves to work and live - free from sexual violence – more than those individuals who have chosen to serve their country.*



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It matters what leaders do or don't do

“The culture of any organization is shaped by the worst behavior the leader is willing to tolerate.”

Gruenter and Whitaker



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**Thank you for your participation in this symposium. We all owe a debt of gratitude for the tireless efforts of the many soldiers and Veterans who have experienced this first hand and for their commitment, advocacy, and insistence on accountability, action, and meaningful change.**



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**...my battery sergeant major, a master warrant officer, dragged me into a meeting with another captain and proceeded to tell me that he was friends with the individual and doesn't believe it ever happened and that I had made it up and everybody was going to see that I was a liar.**

- Anonymous Female Junior Non-Commissioned Member, Regular Force

Silins, S., & Leblanc, M. (2020). *Experiences of CAF members affected by sexual misconduct: Perceptions of support* (Report No. DRDC-RDDC-2020-L046). Defence Research and Development Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/op-honour/drdc-rddc-2020-l046-scientific-letter-en.pdf>



**MS. CATHERINE GAGNE, MSW, RSW**

Senior Counsellor, Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC), National  
Defence / Government of Canada



National  
Defence

Défense  
nationale

# **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT** Response Centre **SMRC**

## SMRC 101

To: Military Sexual Trauma Virtual Symposium



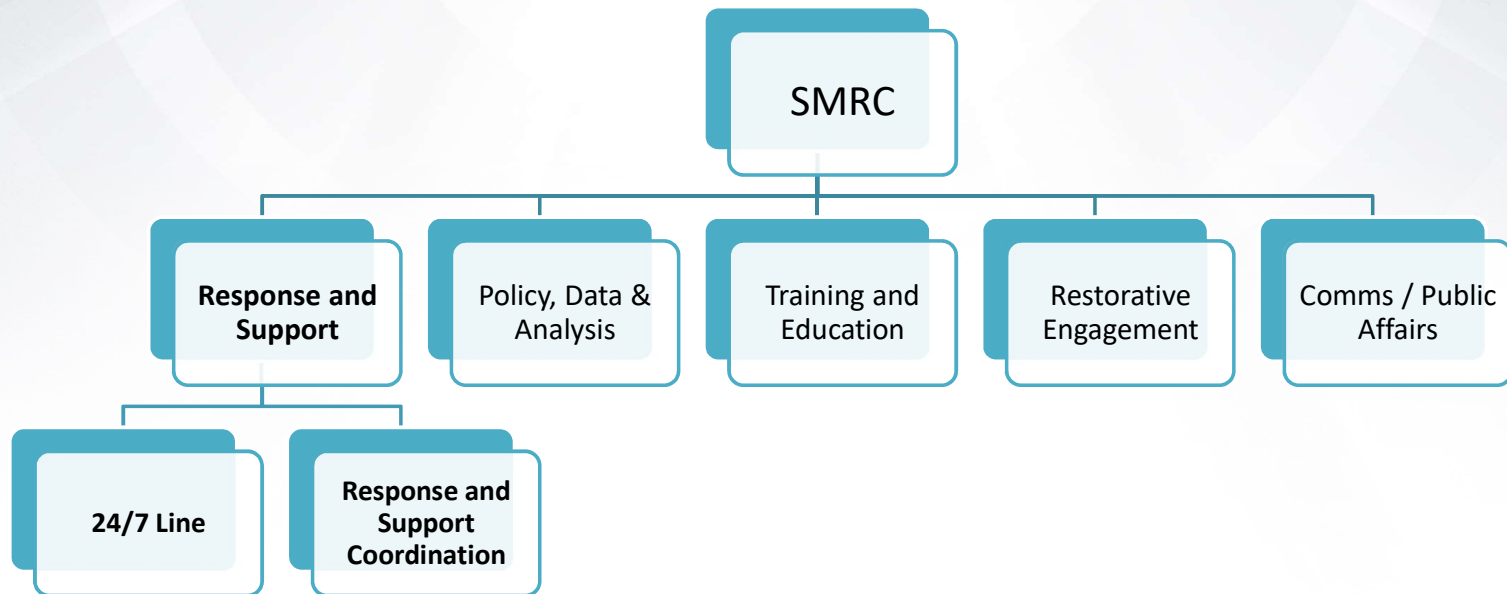
Presented by:

Catherine Gagné MSW, RSW (Senior Counsellor)

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021

Canada 





- Support CAF members who have been affected by sexual misconduct
- Guidance and advice to chain of command
- Provide expert advice and guidance to the CAF on their policies, education, training related to sexual misconduct. Provide independent, external analysis of their efficacy and recommendations for improvement.

- **Unique** mandate focused on sexual misconduct
- **Confidential**
- **Person-centered** approach
- **No duty to report** to chain of command
- **Integrated** military liaison team including a **Military Police Officer**, a **Senior Officer** and a **Senior Non-Commissioned Officer**

**Response & Support  
Coordination Program**

*During regular work hours*



**24 hours/day  
7 days/week**

**Military  
Liaison Team**



**Confidential  
and bilingual**

**Support**



**Information  
and referrals**

## RESPONSE AND SUPPORT COORDINATION



### **Military Police Liaison Officer (MPLO):**

- Information and advice regarding possible criminal sexual misconduct offences
- Information on the complaint, investigation or military/civilian justice processes and facilitates reporting as applicable

### **Military Liaison Officer / Non-Commissioned Officer (MLOs) :**

- Assists the chain of command on interpreting and applying CAF program, policies and procedures
- Responds to CAF members' questions on military processes

## Reasons for Contact

Reasons for Contact		
FY 2020-2021		
Reason for Contacts	CAF	Non-CAF
Sexual assault	156	70
Email/phone follow up	135	99
Inappropriate sexual behaviour	95	13
Sexual harassment	68	17
Sexual Misconduct - Unspecified	67	71
Information request	25	13
Outside mandate	13	21

# Impacts of Sexual Misconduct

## Member

- No one typical response or reaction
- Short- and long-term effects
- Sense of betrayal and shock
- Physical, psychological and behavioural impacts
- Strain on inter-personal relationships
- Impacts of reporting can be worse than the incident

## Unit

- Breakdown of team cohesion
- Gossip: everyone has an opinion, but almost no one has all of the facts
- Increased absenteeism

## CAF

- Loss of trust
- Impact on retention
- Risk to operational effectiveness



**24 hours /7 days**



1-844-750-1648 (North America)  
613-996-3900 (collect call)



[DND.SMRC-CIIS.MDN@forces.gc.ca](mailto:DND.SMRC-CIIS.MDN@forces.gc.ca)



[canada.ca/defence-sexual-misconduct-response-centre](http://canada.ca/defence-sexual-misconduct-response-centre)

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**And I think that also ties into the whole feeling of being let down by the chain and having serious trust issues [because], you know, I can't blame them for what happened, but I can expect them to hold those responsible accountable, and to follow their own flippin' rules, because otherwise, I don't know who to trust.**

- Anonymous Female Senior Officer, Regular Force

Silins, S., & Leblanc, M. (2020). *Experiences of CAF members affected by sexual misconduct: Perceptions of support* (Report No. DRDC-RDDC-2020-L046). Defence Research and Development Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/op-honour/drdc-rddc-2020-l046-scientific-letter-en.pdf>



**DR. LORI BUCHART**

Operations Coordinator, It's Not Just 700

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**They just couldn't accept that that happened to a man and they said they'd heard about this happening to other men in the forces but the correct course of action would be to take that to my grave and that I shouldn't have told anybody.**

- Colten Skibinsky

Gallant, J. (2021, April 24). 'I was going to get raped': Former soldier speaks out about his being sexual assaulted in Canada's military. *The Toronto Star*. <https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2021/04/24/i-was-going-to-get-raped-former-soldier-speaks-out-about-his-being-sexually-assaulted-in-canadas-military.html>

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# 5 MINUTE BREAK



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**I know of women who have difficulties admitting it to themselves, admitting it to other people, because there's a culpability that you think that maybe you got yourself into that position...And when you're in that situation, you can't get out — it's your boss.**  
- Kellie Brennan

Stephenson, M., Cossette, M-A., & Connolly, A. (2021, February 21). In her words: One of the women behind Vance allegations tells her story. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7651910/jonathan-vance-investigation-kellie-brennan/>



## DR. STACEY SILINS

Defence Scientist, Director Research Personnel and Family Support / Director  
General Military Personnel Research and Analysis / Military Personnel  
Command, Department of National Defence / Government of Canada



National  
Defence

Défense  
nationale

COMMANDER MILITARY PERSONNEL COMMAND

Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis  
Defence Research and Development Canada



# ***“The organization has to do better”:*** **Gaps in support after sexual misconduct, and their impacts on individuals and the institution**

Stacey Silins, PhD  
 Defence Scientist  
 Director General, Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA)

Presented for: Canadian MST Community of Practice Symposium Series

3 June, 2021





# Experiences of sexual misconduct in the CAF

## 1. Unique features of CAF culture:

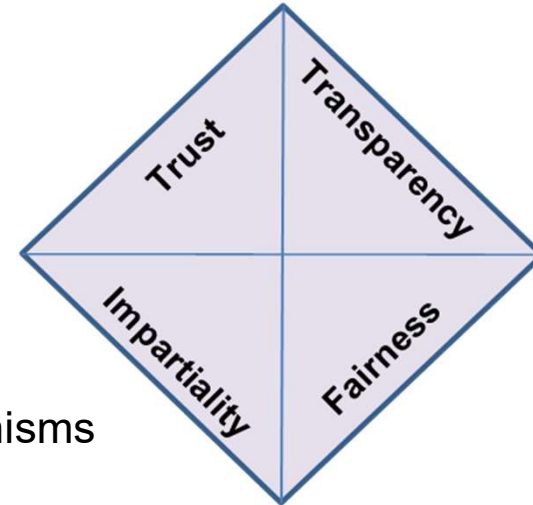
- Masculinity/warrior culture
- Shared social networks
- Rank structures
- Occupational policies

## 2. Gaps in support

- Specific gaps identified
- Recurring themes across support mechanisms

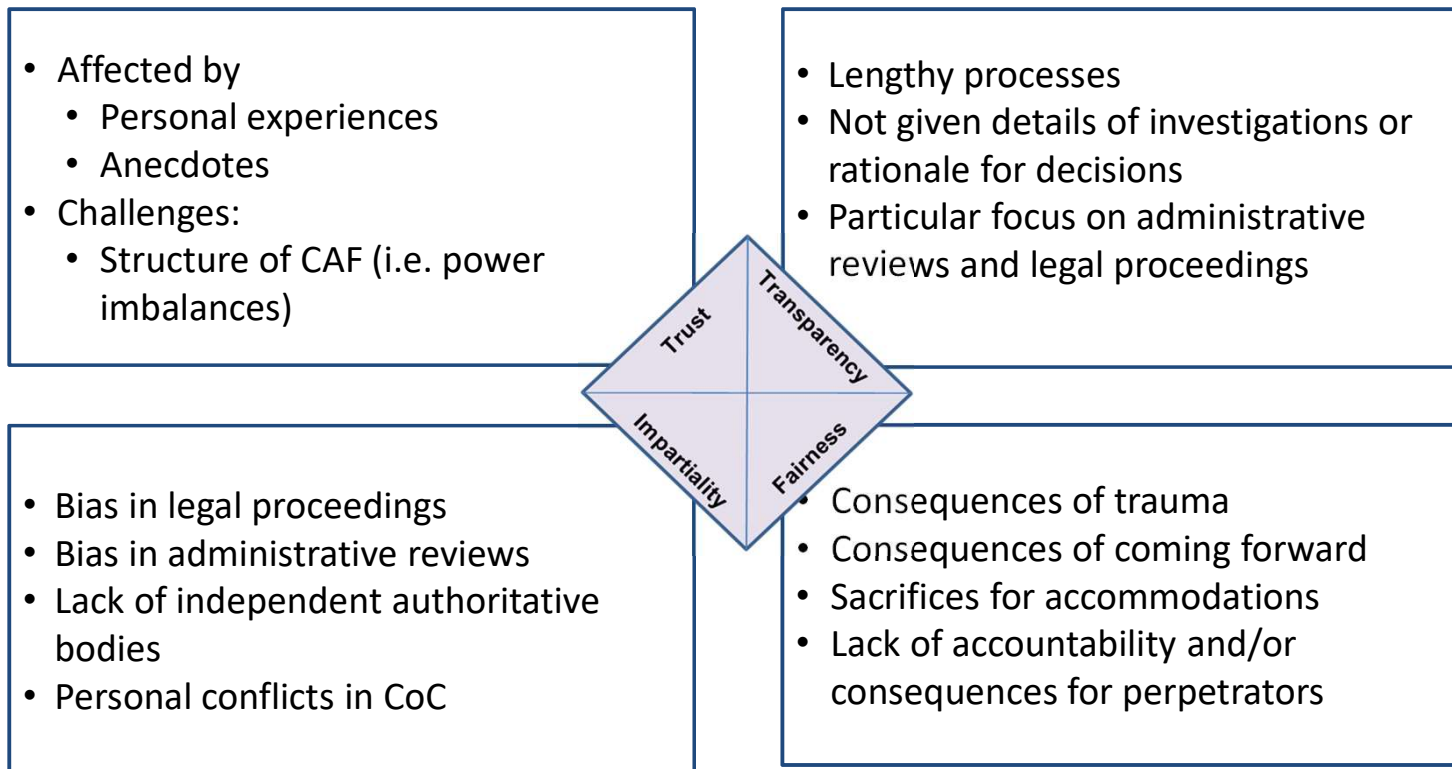
## 3. Widespread impacts:

- Health and mental health
- Psychosocial impacts
- Occupational impacts





## Common issues across support systems

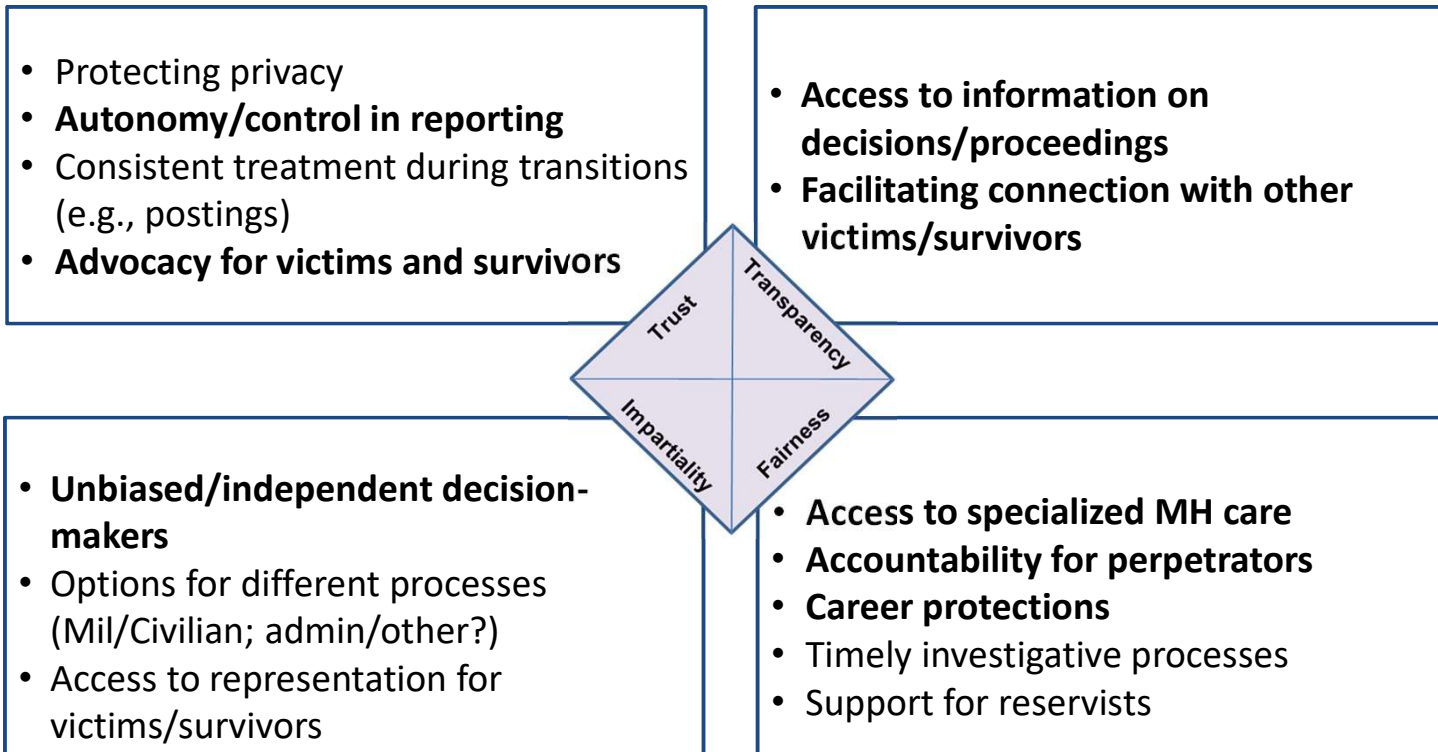


*“Given my experience, no, I would never tell anyone to come forward, ever.”*

- F.C.F., Junior NCM, RegF



# Addressing concerns and improving responses





## Future research directions

- **Sexual misconduct research program**
  - Leadership responses to sexual misconduct
  - Socialization and leadership: sub-cultural analyses
  - Expanded/targeted findings of victim and survivor experiences
- **Restorative Engagement**
  - Focus on research that's collaborative, meaningful, and action-oriented
  - Added focus on role of the institution
- **Possible (needed) areas of inquiry**
  - Veteran experiences
  - Needs of specific sub-groups (reservists, LGBTQ2+, racialized individuals)
  - Specialized mental health supports for MST (application in CAF)
  - Tracking outcomes after sexual misconduct



*Thank you to the participants of this study, including both serving and retired CAF members, who shared their experiences to raise awareness and help improve the CAF's response to sexual misconduct.*

**Study findings are published on the Operation HONOUR website:**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/conflict-misconduct/operation-honour/research-data-analysis/op-honour-research-program/perceptions-support.html>

**Questions?** [Stacey.Silins@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Stacey.Silins@forces.gc.ca)



**DR. ANDREA BROWN**

Research Associate, McMaster University



# Gendered Experience of Operational Deployment

Andrea Brown, PhD  
June 3, 2021



**HEALTH SCIENCES**  
Psychiatry & Behavioural  
Neurosciences



CANADIAN  
**MST CoP**  
MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA  
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

## ***Land Acknowledgement***

*McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish with One Spoon” wampum agreement.*





# Project Team

Lcol (Ret'd) Alex Heber, MD FRCPC

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Funded by



# Background

- CAF is committed to attracting, recruiting and retaining more women
- Aim to have 25% representation by 2026
- Women's deployment experiences not well known
- NOT a study on SM



# Demographics

Force

Army – 7; Navy – 2; Air  
Force - 5

Branch of Service

Regular Forces = 14  
Reserves = 8

Highest Rank

Senior Officer = 9

Service Years

1980s - 2021

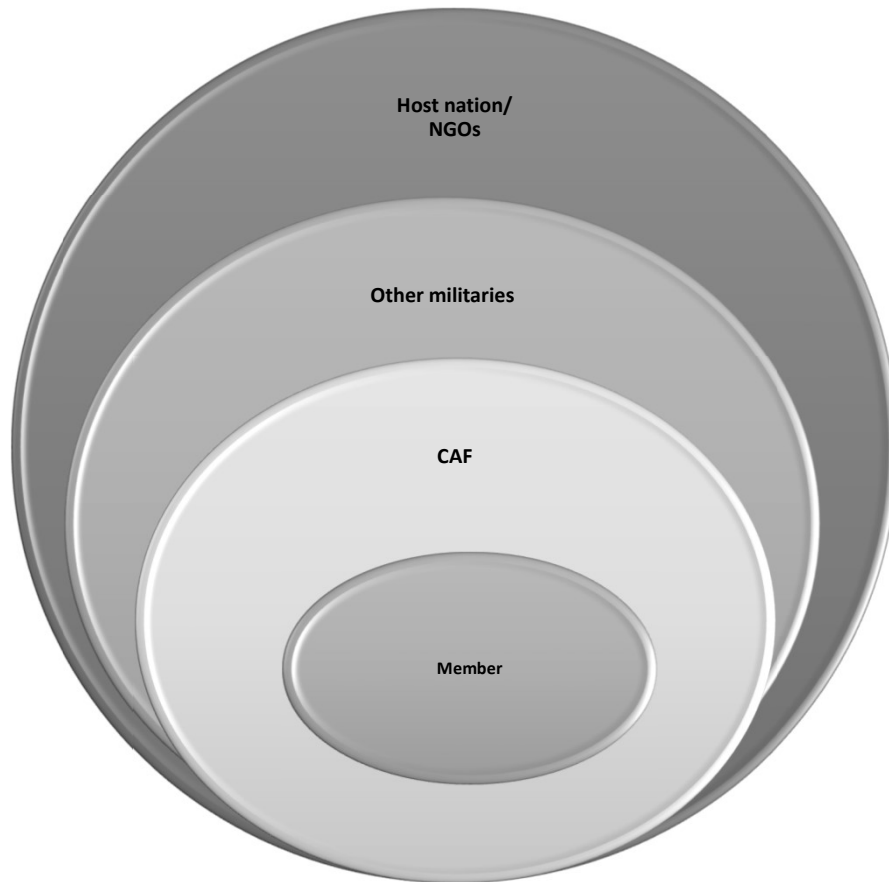
Average Age

52 years

Descent

78% of European descent

# Factors the Impact SM



Accept  
Integrate  
Value

# Accept

## Lack of Acceptance

*When I interacted with the [country] I always felt like I was at risk. I always felt like there was danger. I always felt like they didn't respect me. I always felt a sense of they saw me in a way that was ugly, like sexual, and not based on what I was there to do. – Air Force*

## Acceptance

*And it was quite interesting because even once we started to interact with the guerrillas, the combatants – there were a lot of females in their ranks. So, I was feeling very much at ease when interacting with the guerrilla units because they saw me, I saw them, they were cool with women being part of their structure. – Air Force*



# Integrate

## Lack of Integration

*I reported it to the camp SGM... and she says "Oh ma'am, he was probably just confused." I said "Fine, you know I reported it to you, but really think you need to turn that shower thing around so the door is facing into the camp." "Oh, no, no it's fine, the girls like their privacy." I had to go back a few months later and the camp SGM came and talked to me and she said "You were right. That guy went in and assaulted a woman who was in the shower." - Army*

## Integration

*At that point, we switched from segregating the women and the men because too many women are getting raped. There's a known feature that when you segregate all the women, it's like leaving the chicken coop open, they're available and the is door open. So now they switched it off, so that now they didn't say, "You are women" and "you are men", it was just luck of the draw who went where. - Army*



# Value

## Lack of Value

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*I'm sitting next to these guys where the ship is being driven...and they are having a conversation. One guy looks at the other guy and seriously he says, "Have you ever had a fantasy about shoving a knife in a women's chest and fucking the hole in her chest?" And I was like, "Did I just hear you say that?" He goes, "It's just a fantasy." I'm like, "That is the most disturbing thing I've ever heard in my life." - Navy*



## Value

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*There was already built-in diversity, and that made a really good opportunity for women to shine. And women did shine, and when they did – when they shone, it was not seen as a fluke, it was seen as the norm, right? And I listened to these men talk about the brigadier who was so damn good, and it wasn't because, "Oh, wow, she's a woman and she's so damn good," it was just that brigadier is so damn good, she just happened to be a woman, right? - Army*



## Observations

- SM was discussed more for deployments prior to 2010s
- CAF influences other militaries

## Next steps

- Include service members
- Include NCMs



So to finally get on the ground there and do what I had been trained to do for however many years, that was rewarding in and of itself. I would say that's probably the most important thing. Secondly, you know we were Canada, the little flag on your shoulder right – to me it's hugely meaningful. And so we were there in this international coalition of whatever we were doing in [Country] and with the flag on your shoulder. And everywhere you went you were a representative of our country and we were doing what our government was asking us to do. And so that was deeply meaningful to me. - Army

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<http://rcmf-arc-images.forces.gc.ca/site/index-eng.asp>

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**No matter how much we want to say that it doesn't  
affect your career or it doesn't affect your life, it does...**

- Kellie Brennan

Stephenson, M., Cossette, M-A., & Connolly, A. (2021, February 21). In her words: One of the women behind Vance allegations tells her story. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7651910/jonathan-vance-investigation-kellie-brennan/>

**When I left the military, I had no self-respect, no self  
worth and no self-value...**

- Emily Tulloch

Brewster, M. (2021, April 20). MPs hear harrowing account of sexual assault in the military. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/military-sexual-misconduct-1.5995295>



## MS. CHRISTINA HUTCHINS

Senior Director, Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans at Department of  
Veterans Affairs

# Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans

Presented by:  
Christina Hutchins, Senior Director  
June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021



## Overview:

- Introduction to the Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans
- Our role regarding military sexual misconduct and military sexual trauma
- What we are hearing – Victims and Survivors of military sexual misconduct
- Changes to VAC policies and practices
- Key Takeaways

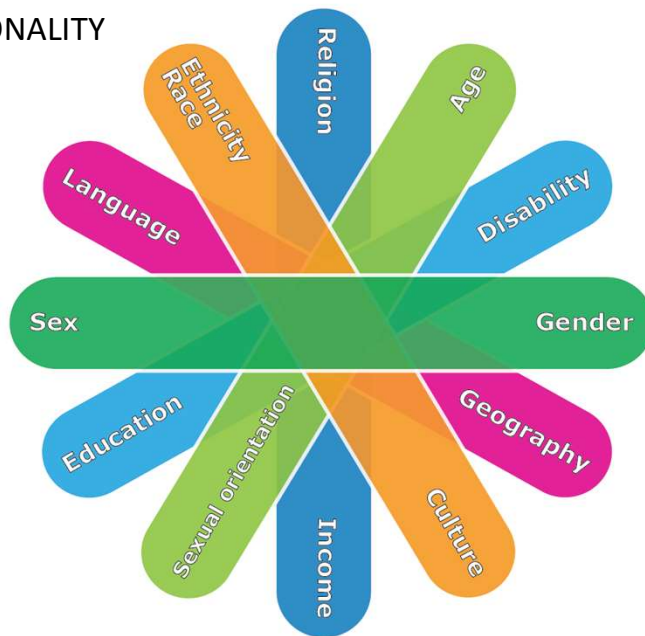


## Introduction to the Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans

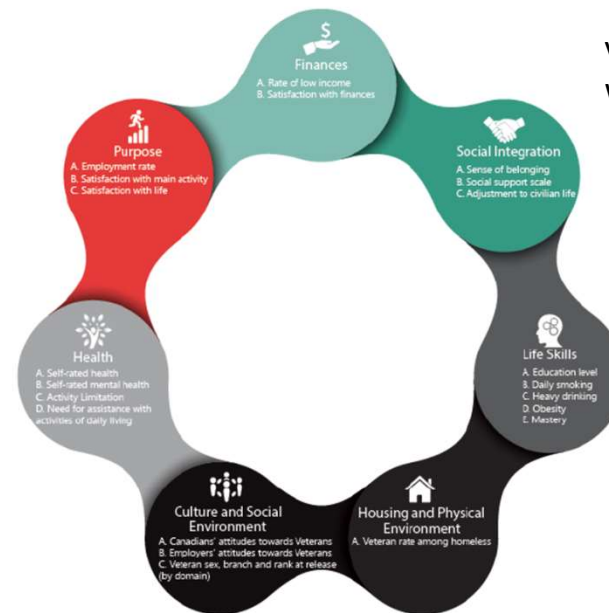
### Mandate:

- Identify and work to address systemic barriers specific to women and gender diverse Veterans and their families, and
- Fulfill key federal government commitments to advance gender equality, diversity and inclusion for Veterans.

INTERSECTIONALITY  
WHEEL



VETERANS  
WELLBEING FRAMEWORK





## Introduction to the Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans

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### Key Objectives:

1. Raising **awareness and respect** for diverse living and lived military experiences and accomplishments,
2. Understanding the **unique impacts** of military service on well-being,
3. Facilitating ongoing **consultation and collaboration** through multidisciplinary human-centric group engagements,
4. Identifying potential research, policy, program and/or service **gaps/barriers/challenges**,
5. Promoting a more collaborative **solution space**, and
6. Supporting sex and gender equality within VAC.

## ▼ Our Role regarding Military Sexual Misconduct and Military Sexual Trauma 96

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### Participation in:

- Gender-based Violence Strategy and National Action Plan led by Women and Gender Equality Canada,
- First LGBTQ2 Federal Action Plan led by LGBTQ2 Secretariat under Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Youth at Heritage Canada,
- External Advisory Council, Sexual Misconduct Response Centre, Department of National Defence,
- Joint working group between CAF/Transition Group, SMRC and VAC to support survivors of sexual misconduct linked to their military service; particularly the Joint Peer Support initiative,
- Military Sexual Trauma Community of Practice, and
- Targeted engagement with Veteran Stakeholder Groups i.e. Women Veterans Forum, LGBTQ2 Veterans Roundtable events.



## ▼ What we are Hearing – Victims and Survivors of Military Sexual Misconduct <sup>97</sup>

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### Potential Barriers:

- Identifying as a Veteran,
- Recognizing their symptoms and knowing where and how to seek the right supports and treatments,
- Lack of available programming and supports tailored to meet the unique needs of military sexual misconduct and military sexual trauma victims and survivors, i.e. peer support,
- Difficulty is getting a proper medical diagnosis (related to service),
- Competing commitments/priorities i.e. working/going to school, families/living alone, child care/dependent care, self-care, and now dealing with the added pressures of the pandemic, and
- Potential range of emotions and feelings of betrayal/anger, loss/grief, alone/isolated, stigma/guilt/shame...

## ▼ Changes to VAC Policies and Practices

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- Three policy instruments were updated to better reflect the reality of sexual trauma (sexual harassment or assault):
  - [Disability Benefits in Respect of Wartime and Special Duty Service - The Insurance Principle](#)
  - [Disability Benefits in Respect of Peacetime Military Service - The Compensation Principle](#)
  - [Benefit of Doubt](#)
- VAC continues to conduct reviews and reconsiderations of past disability benefits decisions related to sexual trauma,
- Adjudication Manual was updated to reflect the realities of sexual assault and sexual harassment,
- Dedicated unit was created to facilitate the processing of VAC disability benefit claims related to the Class Action,
- Trauma-informed support training was provided to those adjudicating Disability Benefit claims, and
- Focus Stakeholder Group provided an opportunity for survivors of military sexual trauma to share directly with VAC Senior Management their experiences accessing VAC programs, services and benefits.

Learn more about the settlement, who is included, and your legal rights and options at the [CAF/DND Sexual Misconduct Class Action](#) website.



## Key Takeaways

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- Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans is committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion for Veterans.
- We have listened and heard members affected by military sexual misconduct repeat their truths of lived experiences and recognize the need for change.
- Minister of Veterans Affairs has been given a public mandate letter commitment to:
  - With the support of the Minister of National Defence, work to ensure that women, LGBTQ2, Indigenous, Black and racialized Veterans and Veterans with disabilities who are transitioning out of the Canadian Armed Forces receive support that meets their unique needs. This will include the use of disaggregated research and data to provide tailored programs and services to these Veterans.
- Budget 2021 announced funding to:
  - Pilot online and in-person peer support groups for Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans who experienced sexual misconduct during their service. These will be tailored to military experiences.
- VAC will continue to work in conjunction with DND/CAF, the SMRC and persons with lived experience to address the needs of Veterans in enhancing support services to victims and survivors as well as increasing the availability of resources for recovery.

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**I was proud of who I was, proud to have served my country, helped the people around me. I should have walked out of there holding my head high, and when I wanted. Now I have to go all the way. I have to keep fighting until someone believes me, until someone says, 'Lise, it happened. We're sorry. What can we do to make up for the suffering we have caused'.**

- Lise Gauthier

Mercier, N., & Castonguay, A. (2014, May 16). Our military's disgrace. *Maclean's*.  
<https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/our-militarys-disgrace/>



**DR. RUTH LANIUS, MD, PhD**

Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Harris-Woodman Chair, Schulich School of  
Medicine, Western University of Canada



# **Military Sexual Trauma: Restoring of Hope, Purpose & Identity**

**Ruth Lanius, MD, PhD  
Harris-Woodman Chair  
Professor of Psychiatry  
University of Western Canada**

# MST and Beyond...

- Sexual Assault/Rape
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Coercion
  
- Lack of Promotion



# Military Sexual Trauma

Exploring the Experience of MST on an Individual Level

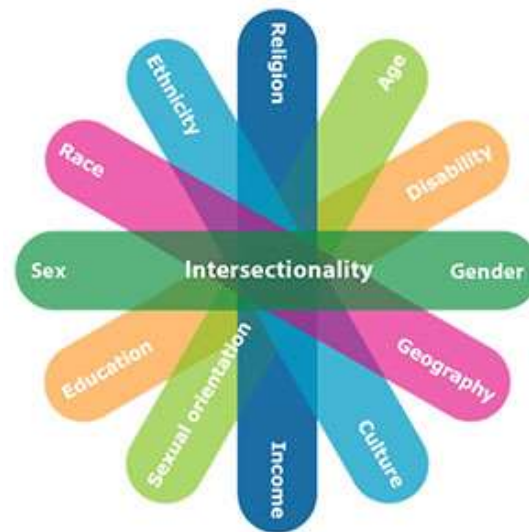




# Intersectionality

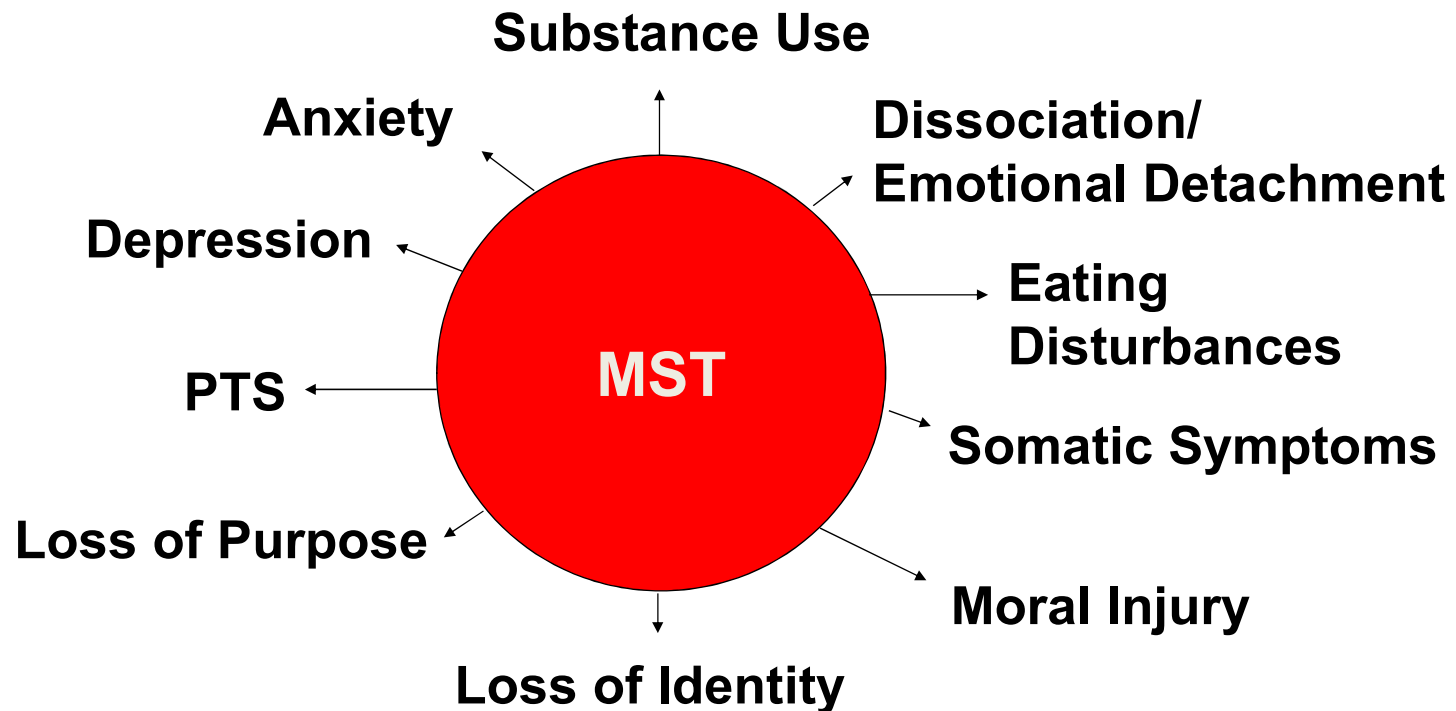
“Our experiences are affected by intersecting parts of our identity, the context we are in, and our lived realities. We all have multiple identity factors that intersect that help make us who we are.”

(Government of Canada)



What was most difficult or  
traumatic for you?

# Effects of MST on Mind, Brain, and Body





But I was never in a combat zone...



Are the Effects of MST Different  
from Battlefield Trauma?



## Military Sexual Trauma vs Civilian Sexual Trauma



## Coping with Stress



# Active Defense versus Passive Defense







Learned Helplessness...

# MST and the COVID-19 Pandemic

## MST

- Unpredictable environment
- Loss of control
- Feeling alone

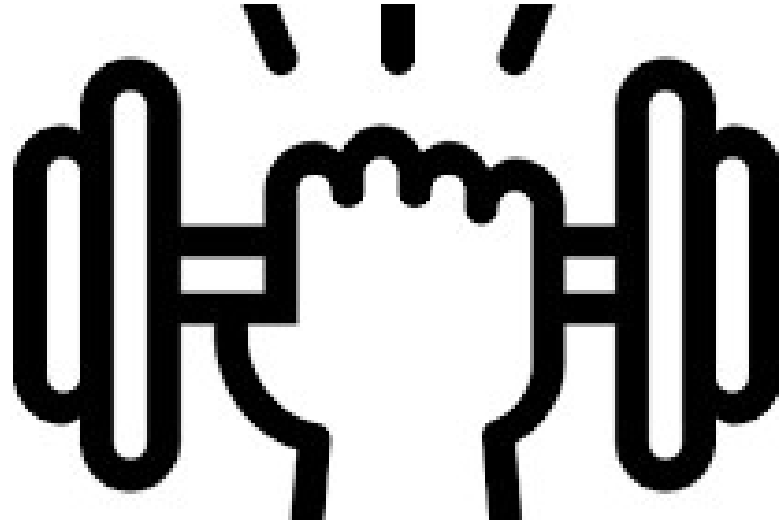
## Covid-19 Pandemic

- Unpredictable environment
- Loss of control
- Feeling alone



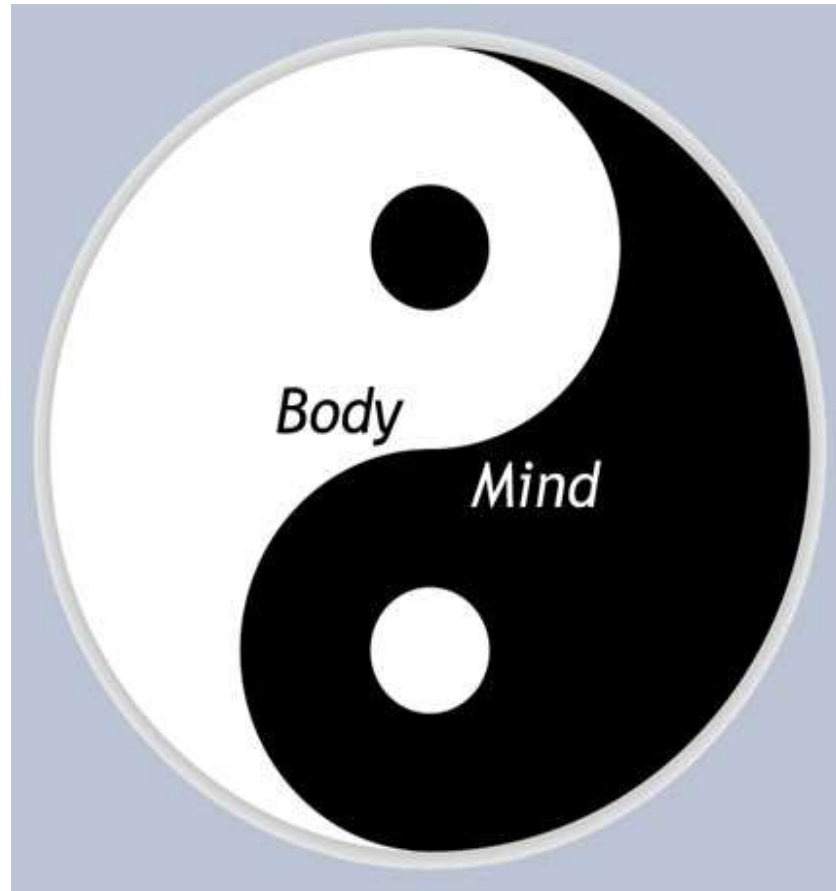


Restoring of Hope, Purpose & Identity  
Through Empowerment



Fostering the Strengths of Each  
Individual

Reconnecting  
Mind and  
Body...





# STOIC WARRIORS

THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY  
BEHIND THE MILITARY MIND



Processing the  
Pain Related  
to the  
Traumatic  
Experience on  
a Cognitive,  
Emotional &  
Bodily Level







**Social and Peer Support**

# ***"IT'S JUST 700"***

DIRECTORY OF SERVICES TO HELP  
CANADIAN MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)  
SURVIVORS

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

# Response Centre

Professional  
counsellors  
to  
**support  
you**

**1-844-750-1648**

**HOURS: Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time**

Voice messaging system available for after hours and on statutory holidays.

[Canada.ca/defence-sexual-misconduct-response-centre](http://Canada.ca/defence-sexual-misconduct-response-centre)



*We offer compassion*

*We explain your options*

*We listen*

*We facilitate access to services*

*We respect confidentiality*

*We support your decision*

Operation **HONOUR**



**Thank You!**

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**...I feel like now is the time for people to rise up and start talking about it, so that the next generation doesn't have to have the same experiences as I did...**

- Alexandra Auclair

Stephenson, M., Cossette, M-A., & Connolly, A. (2021, 14 March). Woman alleges forced co-ed showers, says Canadian military's 'toxic' culture must change. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7694372/canadian-military-sexual-misconduct-investigations/>

## TRIGGER WARNING & SUPPORT LINE INFORMATION

*This webinar included content on topics such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, physical violence, and identity-based discrimination and harassment. This content may have been difficult to listen to and may bring up a range of emotions. We encourage you to care for your safety and well-being.*

*If you need to reach out for support, please contact:*

**Veterans Affairs Canada** (VAC Assistance Service and Services for Families)

Call 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (available 24/7)

**Canadian Armed Forces** (Member Assistance Program)

Call 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (available 24/7)

**Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC)**

Call 1-844-750-1648 (available 24/7) | [DND.SMRC-CIIS.MDN@forces.gc.ca](mailto:DND.SMRC-CIIS.MDN@forces.gc.ca)

***or dial 911 if it is an emergency.***

*Additional supports can be found here (<https://veteransmentalhealth.ca/resources/find-support/>)*

- 
- **Crisis Services Canada** (Crisis services for all Canadians) - Call 1-833-456-4566 (available 24/7), Text 45645 (available 4pm to Midnight Eastern Time Zone). Residents of Quebec: Call 1-866-APPELLE (1-866-277-3553)
  - **VAC and Canadian Armed Forces** (Member Assistance Program & Assistance Services for Families) - Call 1-800-268-7708 | TDD/TTY 1-800-567-5803 (available 24/7)
  - **Canadian Forces Morale & Welfare Services** (Family Information Line) - Call 1-800-866-4546 (available 24/7)
  - **The Hope for Wellness Help Line for all Indigenous peoples** - Call 1-855-242-3310 (available 24/7)
  - La prévention du suicide et le soutien **Service d'aide en situation de crise pour tous les Canadiens** - Tél. : 1 833 456-4566 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7), Texto : 45645 (de 16 h à minuit, HE). Pour les résidents du Québec: 1 866 APPELLE (1.866.277.3553)
  - Anciens Combattants Canada et Forces canadiennes **Programme d'aide aux membres et services d'aide aux familles** - Tél. : 1 800 268-7708, ATS 1 800 567-5803 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7)
  - Services bien-être et moral des Forces canadiennes **Ligne d'information pour les familles** - Tél. : 1 800 866-4546 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7)
  - **La Ligne d'écoute d'espoir pour tous les peuples autochtones** - Tél.: 1-855-242-3310 (24 h sur 24, 7 jours sur 7)

## BEFORE YOU GO

- To be sent following the event:
  - Feedback survey
  - Session summary
- Please join us for our sessions in Fall 2021 – stay tuned for more information!



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# THANK YOU

