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CANADIAN
ARMED FORCES

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

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Experiences of sexual misconduct in the CAF

1. Unique features of CAF culture:

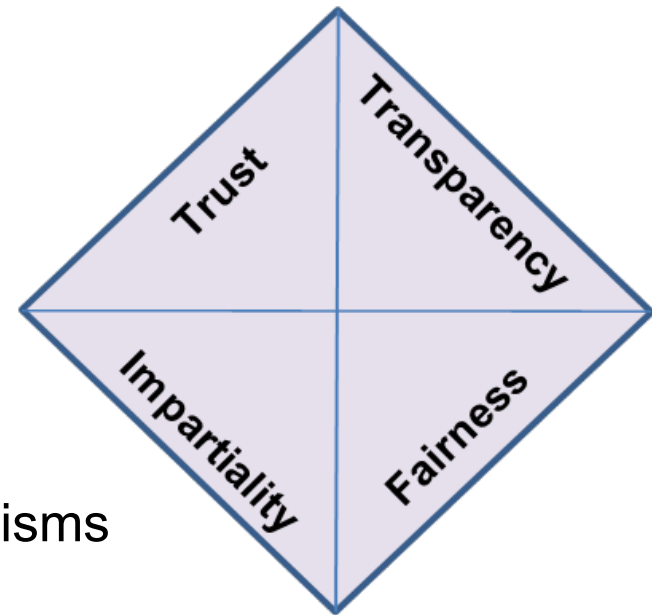
- Masculinity/warrior culture
- Shared social networks
- Rank structures
- Occupational policies

2. Gaps in support

- Specific gaps identified
- Recurring themes across support mechanisms

3. Widespread impacts:

- Health and mental health
- Psychosocial impacts
- Occupational impacts

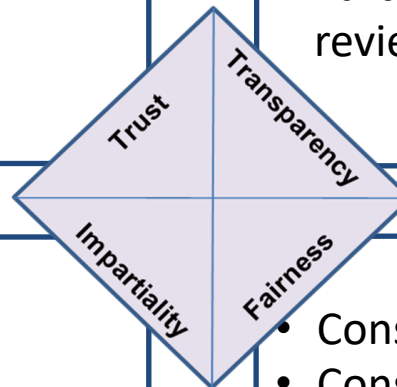




Common issues across support systems

- Affected by
 - Personal experiences
 - Anecdotes
- Challenges:
 - Structure of CAF (i.e. power imbalances)

- Lengthy processes
- Not given details of investigations or rationale for decisions
- Particular focus on administrative reviews and legal proceedings



- Bias in legal proceedings
- Bias in administrative reviews
- Lack of independent authoritative bodies
- Personal conflicts in CoC

- Consequences of trauma
- Consequences of coming forward
- Sacrifices for accommodations
- Lack of accountability and/or consequences for perpetrators

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

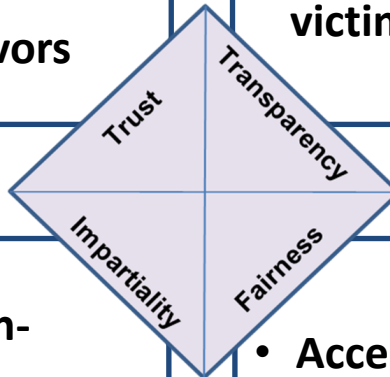
- F.C.F., Junior NCM, RegF



Addressing concerns and improving responses

- Protecting privacy
- **Autonomy/control in reporting**
- Consistent treatment during transitions (e.g., postings)
- **Advocacy for victims and survivors**

- **Access to information on decisions/proceedings**
- **Facilitating connection with other victims/survivors**



- **Unbiased/independent decision-makers**
- Options for different processes (Mil/Civilian; admin/other?)
- Access to representation for victims/survivors

- **Access to specialized MH care**
- **Accountability for perpetrators**
- **Career protections**
- Timely investigative processes
- Support for reservists



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>

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