



National  
Defence

CANADIAN FORCES HEALTH SERVICES GROUP

GROUPE DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ DES FORCES CANADIENNES



# Canadian Armed Forces Services and Programs Supporting Victims of Military Sexual Trauma

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## Overview

- Available services and programs supporting the victims of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)
- When to seek help and what resources to use
- Importance of confidentiality when seeking services from Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS)
- Myths about seeking help



Canadian Forces Health Services provides medical and mental health care for actively serving members.

Spouses may be seen for couples counselling with the service members or for Pre-deployment Screenings, OutCan Screening or Social Work Report assessments.



## What supports are offered to CAF members who have experienced MST?

- **Mental Health Services** – multidisciplinary teams with psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, mental health nurses, addiction counsellors, mental health chaplains
- Walk-in, self-referral and referral from primary care clinicians
- Referral to community providers if requested
- Choice of gender of the clinician/ therapist
- Choice of language



## What supports are offered to CAF members who have experienced MST?

- Members would also be linked with their **Primary Care Clinicians** as required for medical assessment, referral for secondary level MH care and medical leave if required.
- **Social Work Reports** – sometimes Compassionate Postings are requested for a member who was a victim of MST to relocate away from the perpetrator and/or have access to family supports while healing.



## What happens when to a dual service couple when MST occurred within this family unit?

- Individual services would be provided by different therapists with appropriate risk assessments, safety planning and mandatory reporting (if required). Situation dependant, services may be provided by therapists external to the MH Dept.
- When services such as couples counselling are offered, there are individual sessions conducted as part of the assessment process. If family violence/MST is identified, couples counselling would not be provided, but individual services and appropriate risk assessments and safety planning would take place.



## When is time to seek help?

**HEALTHY**

**REACTING**

**INJURED**

**ILL**

Watch for:

- Duration of reaction
- Intensity of reactions
- Level of functioning



HEALTHY

REACTING

INJURED

ILL

**Friends/Family/Unit/Leadership**Primary Preventions

Resources enhancing resilience and keeping CAF members healthy:

- *Alternative Dispute Resolution*
- *Road to Mental Readiness*
- *Strengthening the Forces*

Supportive Interventions

For early, short term challenges:

- *Psychosocial Services*
- *SMRC*
- *Canadian Forces Members Assistance Program*  
*1-800-268-7708*
- *Chaplains*
- *Family Resource Centers*

Clinical Interventions

For more serious mental health conditions specialized resources:

- *Mental Health Services – multidisciplinary approach*
- *Primary Care Services*



**HEALTHY****REACTING****INJURED****ILL**

Friends/Family  
Military Family Resource Centre  
Family Information Line 1-800-866-4546

Primary Preventions

Resources enhancing resilience and keeping CAF members healthy:

- *Road to Mental Readiness*
- *Strengthening the Forces*

Supportive Interventions

Early, short term intervention:

- *Canadian Forces Members Assistance Program*  
*1-800-268-7708*
- *Chaplains*
- *Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP)*
- *Family Physician*
- *Psychosocial Services*

Clinical Interventions

For more serious mental health conditions

specialized resources:

- *Primary Care Clinician*
- *Community Services and Hospitals*



## Confidentiality is a Cornerstone of Canadian Forces Health Services.

When clients access services they are assured that their personal information will be kept private and not disclosed without their knowledge and consent.

CAF Clinicians *do not have the duty to report* to the proper authorities when members in the clinical setting share their experiences as being victim of military sexual trauma.



## Confidentiality - How does it work?

- When members come to access services through the Mental Health Department, at the outset of services they are informed about the limits of confidentiality and informed consent obtained before proceeding with services.
- The encounter will be documented in their electronic medical record and information may be shared amongst the clinicians who are *part of their care team*.
- When spouses, colleagues or any other person asking for the member's personal medical information, it would not be provided by the Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS).



## Confidentiality - How does it work?

- Chain of Command has no access to members' medical file and the Chain of Command is not informed of the members medical conditions/treatments.
- Chain of Command could be provided proof of attendance of a medical appointment without specifying what type of services were attended.
- Medical Employment Limitations will also be provided by the primary care provider but no further medical information is shared without the member's consent.



## Myths about seeking help

- If I seek help everyone will know why I am seeking help...
- If I seek help, my career is over...
- No one will believe me, so seeking help is a waste of time...

**Don't wait until release from the CAF, seek help when you need to!**



“Early intervention for military sexual trauma is key in mitigating the entrenchment of symptoms, development or worsening of comorbid mental health conditions, years of suffering in silence and shame, and possibly, early medical release. “

*Psychologist providing treatment for CAF members*



## Review of Resources

- 911 for Emergencies only
- 24/7 SMRC Counsellors - confidential counselling and emotional support: 1-844-750-1648
- 24/7 Counselling Family Information Line: 1-800-866-4546
- 311 for local non-emergency resources
- **Canadian Forces Health Services Units across Canada** – 07:30-16:00 on working days
  - Primary Care
  - Psychosocial Services (Walk-in, self-referral, referral)
  - General Mental Health Services
- **CAF 24-hour resources:**
  - CFMAP: 1-800-268-7708
  - Military Police
  - Duty Chaplain



**THANK YOU!**

***QUESTIONS?***