



# DoD Safe Helpline

## Privacy Overview

### Introduction

Victim support is a key component of the Department of Defense's (DoD) sexual assault prevention and response policy. As part of victim care, in April 2011 the Department launched DoD Safe Helpline as a new crisis support service for adult Service members of the DoD community affected by sexual assault. Available globally 24/7, users can "click, call or text" for anonymous and confidential support. Safe Helpline is owned by DoD and operated by the non-profit Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization, through a contractual agreement with SAPRO.

### User Protection Key Component

Safe Helpline is built on an innovative communications infrastructure from the ground up that integrates security and anonymity at every level. Several features have been built in to provide this unique support, including:

- ▶ The online function of Safe Helpline does not capture the IP address of users, which means that no records will ever be kept of the online chat session.
- ▶ Transcripts of the online chat sessions are never saved, so once the user closes the chat window, that text is not retrievable.
- ▶ All data is encrypted to ensure that the online chat text cannot be intercepted and read while in transition.
- ▶ The online function of Safe Helpline uses anonymous routing methods to obscure the connection between the user and the online hotline staff member through the use of unique codes.

Before using the online Safe Helpline services, users are provided an easy-to-read statement of the privacy policy and terms of service. Users are required to "Accept" this statement before entering the site.

### Captures Only Voluntarily Offered User Information

Every precaution possible has been taken to protect users' privacy. Safe Helpline does not ask for any information that can be used to identify a user, such as name or address. Online sessions or telephone calls will not be recorded or stored. Any information that is volunteered will be aggregated and provided to DoD to assist in program evaluation.

If Safe Helpline staff feels the user is in danger of committing suicide, under the age of 18, or otherwise required by law, Safe Helpline staff may have to provide the information that was given by a user to the appropriate authorities.

### Confidentiality Protection

Prior to entering into an online hotline chat session, users are provided detailed instructions on additional steps they can take to ensure they are operating under the highest of security measures and can clear private data from their computers after ending their online chat session. Several innovative technologies were utilized to help protect users.