



## Overview

### *Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community*

#### **Introduction**

Victim care is a key component of the Department of Defense (DoD) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Policy. As part of victim care, in April 2011 the Department launched DoD Safe Helpline as a crisis support service for members of the DoD community who are victims of sexual assault. The services provided by Safe Helpline are available to adult Service members in the Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Component consistent with DoD SAPR Policy as well as Coast Guard and Transitioning Service members. Available 24/7 worldwide, users can “click, call or text” for anonymous and confidential support.

#### **Goals**

Underreporting poses a serious challenge to military readiness as the potential costs and consequences of sexual assault are extremely high. The first goal of Safe Helpline is to provide additional channels for adult Service members of the DoD community to seek one-on-one sexual assault assistance and crisis support securely and anonymously. The second goal is to increase victim reporting. Research indicates when sexual assault victims receive care, system confidence builds, which increases the likelihood victims will report to law enforcement.

#### **Services Offered**

Users have three ways -- “click, call or text” -- to get confidential support.

- ▶ **CLICK:** Logging on to [www.SafeHelpline.org](http://www.SafeHelpline.org) allows users to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault. This service can also be accessed via a format for mobile phones.
- ▶ **CALL:** Calling 877-995-5247 allows users to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for personalized advice and support. Safe Helpline staff can transfer callers directly to installation-based Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/ On-call SAPR Victim Advocates, civilian rape crisis centers, Military OneSource, or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The “warm hand-off” process personally connects the user with a resource representative for further assistance. Staff will transfer the caller to any resource at the location of the caller’s choice. For example, a caller may want to speak to the SARC at the location where their unit is based, not where they are currently located. If the contact is unavailable at the time of the “warm hand-off,” the Safe Helpline staff will offer contact information to the caller to follow-up with support personnel at a later time.
- ▶ **TEXT:** Texting a location or zip code to 55-247 in the U.S. and 202-470-5546 outside the U.S. allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC; medical, legal, spiritual, and military police personnel; and Department of Veterans Affairs personnel at their installation or base.

#### **Service Operator**

Safe Helpline is administered by the Department of Defense via a contract with the non-profit Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization. Safe Helpline staff has been trained on the unique needs of those living and working in the DoD community and are knowledgeable on military and civilian resources worldwide.

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*Current as of April 2012*