

Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 2025

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Executive Summary

Established in 2020, the Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct (DAC-PSM, or the “Committee”) is a federal advisory committee created to provide the Department of Defense (DoD, or the “Department”) and Congress with independent advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the prevention of sexual misconduct within the DoD. Section 550B of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) directs the Committee to submit an annual report no later than March 30 on the activities of the Committee during the preceding year. This report meets that requirement with an overview of Committees activities for Calendar Year 2024.

The DAC-PSM held three public meetings in 2024 to support studies directed by the Department. At its April meeting, the Members met with representatives from the Office of People Analytics (OPA) and the Military Services to discuss requests for information related to the Committee’s work on metrics as well as on prevention instruction within professional military education (PME). At the June meeting, the Committee heard details of DoD’s FY23 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military. Members also met with DoD representatives to discuss two study topics assigned to the DAC-PSM by Congress: database anonymity, and exit interviews and the Catch a Serial Offender Program (CATCH). At its November meeting, the Committee voted to accept recommendations related to the studies on metrics and prevention instruction within PME. The Committee also received an overview of the FY25 Integrated Prevention Research Agenda.

The Committee’s 2024 efforts resulted in the delivery of the study reports listed below:

- *Measurement of Selected Risk and Protective Factors Related to Harmful Behaviors in Military Environments* (Submitted December 2024)
- *Preparation of Instructors Delivering Prevention Content in Professional Military Education* (Submitted March 2025)

Looking ahead to 2025, the DAC-PSM plans to finalize its discussions related to two studies initiated in 2024 (database anonymity and recruit screening) and, if appropriate, provide the Department its recommendations on those topics. The DAC-PSM’s original five-year term expires in November 2025, so if approved by the Department to renew its operations into 2026 and beyond, the Members look forward to continuing to provide their unique insights and expertise to assist DoD’s efforts to prevent sexual misconduct across the DoD community.

A. Introduction

The Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct (referred to herein as “DAC-PSM” or “the Committee”) is a federal advisory committee established in 2020 to provide the Department of Defense (referred to herein as “the Department” or “DoD”) and Congress with independent advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the prevention of sexual misconduct within the DoD.

Section 550B of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) directs the Committee to submit a report no later than March 30 of each year on the activities of the Committee during the preceding year. This report meets that obligation by providing an overview of Committee activities for Calendar Year 2024.

B. Background

The DAC-PSM was established in 2020 per the FY20 NDAA and operates in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Chapter 10 of Title 5, U.S.C.). The DAC-PSM has a mandate to provide the Secretary of Defense with independent advice and recommendations on matters relating to the prevention of sexual misconduct in the DoD. The William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for FY21 expanded the DAC-PSM’s scope to include the United States Coast Guard Academy.

On January 30, 2021, the Secretary of Defense called for the suspension of all advisory committee operations, and with that, the conclusion of all member appointments. However, since the DAC-PSM had only recently been established on November 30, 2020, Members had not yet been approved, so no membership cancellations were required. On September 30, 2021, the DAC-PSM was authorized to resume operations, and following the onboarding of new members appointed by the Secretary of Defense, the DAC-PSM held its first public meeting on August 22, 2022.

Establishment of Subcommittees

In January 2023, the Committee’s sponsor, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), approved the establishment of two DAC-PSM subcommittees: Metrics and Performance, and Prevention Training and Activities. Below is an overview of each subcommittee’s scope of work.

- **Metrics and Performance Subcommittee**

Scope: The Metrics and Performance Subcommittee analyzes DoD and Military Services’ approaches to assessing the effectiveness of prevention efforts, including training, and offers recommendations for improvement to achieve Department goals, as well as recommendations on approaches used outside the Department that might be relevant. The Subcommittee also determines if training metrics are standardized across the Department.

- **Prevention Training and Activities Subcommittee**

Scope: The Prevention Training and Activities Subcommittee explores study topics and develops recommendations related to activities undertaken with Service members to advance prevention efforts, including the content of training.

C. Membership

Per the FY20 NDAA, the Committee can be composed of no more than 20 Members, and in 2024, the Committee had as many as 14 Members. The Members are appointed by the Secretary of Defense for terms of one-to-four years and must have prevention expertise appropriate for the DAC-PSM work, such as expertise in the continuum of harm, adverse behaviors, or prevention implementation science.

Committee Members serve as individuals, not as official representatives of any affiliated group or organization. DAC-PSM Members may be current federal employees; however, per the FY20 NDAA, membership may not include active-duty members of the Armed Forces.

Throughout 2024, DAC-PSM Members were provided opportunities to enhance their knowledge and awareness on the Department’s current efforts to address prevention of sexual misconduct. The Members received numerous resources (e.g., reports and policies) and were briefed by policy offices and Service representatives to build upon their knowledge of current DoD efforts in the prevention space. For example, Members received briefings on key Department reports such as the DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military for FY23, as well as the Integrated Prevention Research Agendas for FY24 and FY25.

*See Appendix A
for list of 2024
DAC-PSM Members.*

Drawing on insights from these sessions, the Members were better able to offer informed and relevant recommendations and observations to the Department, in keeping with the DAC-PSM’s statutory mission.

D. 2024 Public Meeting Overviews

Per the DAC-PSM Charter, the Committee is required to hold an estimated two public meetings each year. However, to address the needs of its assigned studies, the Committee held three public meetings in 2024: April 10, June 27, and November 14. Below is a short summary of each meeting.

*See Appendix B for
full agenda of each
2024 DAC-PSM meeting.*

April 10 Public Meeting

The purpose of the DAC-PSM’s April 10 public meeting was to engage the Office of People Analytics (OPA) and the Military Services to discuss requests for information in support of the Committee’s directed studies (For details, see Sections E and F on Committee Work directed by Congress and by the Department). At this meeting, Members received an overview on the

Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) to build their knowledge on current risk and protective factors measured by OPA. Additionally, representatives from each Service’s training and education command provided an overview of professional military education (PME) instructor preparation and their approach to preparing instructors to deliver prevention content. The discussions and outcomes helped inform next steps of the assigned studies. Finally, the Members received an update on DoD’s FY24 Integrated Prevention Research Agenda and then they offered the Department additional ideas to consider in the future.

June 27 Public Meeting

On June 27, the Committee heard a briefing from the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) on the Department’s FY23 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military. The FY21 NDAA directed DAC-PSM to undertake four studies, and at the June 27 meeting, the Committee was provided background on two of those topics: Exit interviews and Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) Program, and Database anonymity. (See Section E for detail on the FY21 NDAA assigned studies plus the Committee’s efforts relative to these topics.)

November 14 Public Meeting

On November 14, the Committee held a public meeting to discuss several key issues and vote on proposed recommendations on two studies. The Committee met with DoD representatives to build an understanding of Department efforts related to recruit screening. The DoD provided an overview of the FY25 Integrated Prevention Research Agenda, followed by discussion on possible topics for the FY26 edition. The meeting also included a recap of Committee efforts on studies related to PME and the measurement of risk and protective factors for harmful behaviors. During the meeting, the Members discussed the merits of each recommendation and observation tied to both studies, followed by a vote to accept all recommendations and observations as finalized. (See below for details on each study.)

Lastly, the DAC-PSM met with representatives of the Defense Advisory Committee on Investigation, Prosecution, and Defense of Sexual Assault in the Armed Forces (DAC-IPAD). In the legislation establishing the DAC-PSM, Congress directed the DAC-PSM to “consult and coordinate” with DAC-IPAD. At the November 14 public meeting, Members heard an initial review of findings of closed cases involving allegations of sexual assault as documented in the 2020 DAC-IPAD report, titled *Report on Investigative Case File Reviews for Military Adult Penetrative Sexual Offense Cases Closed in Fiscal Year 2017*. DAC-IPAD representatives also shared prevention-related insights from DAC-IPAD discussions with Service members collected during the DAC-IPAD’s 16 site visits. The closing discussion identified possible topics of shared interest for a potential 2025 session.

DAC-PSM Public Meeting materials can be found at:
<https://www.dhra.mil/DAC-PSM/Public-Meetings/>

E. Committee Work: Directed by Congress

Ideas for studies that the DAC-PSM might consider can come from a variety of sources; however, all finalized study guidance is provided by Congress or the Department of Defense. This section will review the DAC-PSM's 2024 efforts on studies directed by Congress, with the next section discussing 2024 work assigned by the Department.

In section 534 of the FY21 NDAA, Congress directed the DAC-PSM to assess the four topics listed below:

- 1. Exit Interviews and CATCH Program:** "Feasibility of conducting exit interviews of members of the Armed Forces upon their discharge release from the Armed Forces in order to determine whether they experienced or witnessed sexual assault or harassment during military service and did not report it, and an assessment of the feasibility of combining such exit interviews with the Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) Program of the Department of Defense."
- 2. Professional Military Education:** "Extent and effectiveness of the inclusion by the Armed Forces of sexual assault prevention and response training in leader professional military education (PME), especially in such education for personnel in junior noncommissioned officer grades."
- 3. Recruit Screening:** "Feasibility of (A) the screening before entry into military service of recruits who may have been the subject or perpetrator of prior incidents of sexual assault and harassment, including through background checks; and (B) the administration of screening tests to recruits to assess recruit views and beliefs on equal opportunity, and whether such views and beliefs are compatible with military service."
- 4. Database Anonymity:** "Whether the sexual assault reporting databases of the Department are sufficiently anonymized to ensure privacy while still providing military leaders with the information as follows: (A) The approximate length of time the victim and the assailant had been at the duty station at which the sexual assault occurred; (B) The percentage of sexual assaults occurring while the victim or assailant were on temporary duty, leave, or otherwise away from their permanent duty station; (C) The number of sexual assaults that involve an abuse of power by a commander or supervisor."

As noted at the start of this report, on January 30, 2021, the Secretary of Defense directed a zero-based review of all DoD advisory committees, and so the DAC-PSM was not functional for the remainder of 2021 and into the first half of 2022. Since becoming fully operational in the Fall of 2022, the Committee has been working to address these four topics. In 2024, the assessments for Topics 1 and 2 listed above were completed, with efforts to address Topics 3 and 4 fully underway. Details on these four efforts are offered below.

1. Exit Interviews and CATCH Program

As required by Congress, the DAC-PSM considered the Department's stance on asking questions of Service members during the military separation process to determine whether they experienced or witnessed sexual assault or harassment during military service and did not report it. To build its understanding on issues related to this topic, the DAC-PSM invited DoD subject matter experts from DoD SAPRO and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs to brief the Committee at its June 27, 2024, public meeting. (See detailed meeting minutes at <https://www.dhra.mil/DAC-PSM/Public-Meetings/>)

In the discussions that followed, the DAC-PSM supported the Department's current approach of not asking such questions during exit interviews due to the potential negative impact on transitioning Service members. While it is likely feasible to ask the questions, the DAC-PSM agreed with DoD experts who noted that such questioning could have a potentially re-traumatizing impact on Service members as they look forward to the next phase of their lives. However, in the course of its review, the DAC-PSM learned there is no specific DoD-wide policy preventing this questioning, which led to the approval of the following recommendation:

- **Recommendation:** The DAC-PSM recommends the implementation of a DoD-wide policy preventing transitioning Service Members from being asked during exit interviews whether they experienced or witnessed sexual assault or harassment during military service and did not report it.

The DAC-PSM also considered the "feasibility" of combining such information gathered during exit interviews with the CATCH Program. However, as of June 30, 2023, DoD policy allows Service members, including those being processed for discharge from military service, to connect with a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator to submit a CATCH entry without having to make an official report of sexual assault. Given this 2023 DoD policy, which went into effect after the direction of the FY21 NDAA DAC-PSM study requirement, the Committee did not see the need for any additional recommendations regarding the role for the CATCH Program in such situations.

That said, the Committee did encourage sharing as much information as appropriate on this 2023 policy with those going through the military separation process, which led the Committee to approve the following recommendation:

- **Recommendation:** Any informational materials provided to Service members separating from the Service should clearly reflect the 2023 DoD policy allowing Service members to submit a CATCH report without having to make an official report of sexual assault.

Based on the Committee's findings, the DAC-PSM sees no further action necessary on this topic and closes its review of the FY21 NDAA study topic on "Exit Interviews and CATCH." These approved recommendations will be provided to DoD for its consideration.

2. Professional Military Education

As directed by Congress, the DAC-PSM undertook a study to assist DoD in strengthening its efforts to incorporate sexual assault prevention into the PME provided to its leaders. Given the breadth of that directive, the DAC-PSM sought the insights of DoD prevention experts regarding the types of study recommendations that would be most useful to the Department. Those discussions led the Committee to learn that there are extensive DoD efforts underway to identify prevention content requirements for training. In order to avoid the duplication of efforts, the Committee (through its Prevention Training and Activities Subcommittee) focused its study on DoD's approach to the preparation of instructors to deliver prevention-related content within PME, as well as to consider the unique needs of instructors delivering content to junior leaders. The thinking was that – regardless of the final decisions on the specifics of prevention training content – those delivering that content would need to be appropriately trained.

The Subcommittee conducted a literature and policy review, considered submissions from the Services, and met with topic experts from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The Subcommittee identified opportunities for DoD to ensure that those presenting prevention content in a PME setting are ready for the task. Separate from the detailed recommendations related to preparing instructors to teach prevention within PME, the Committee identified core policy challenges, such as:

- Current DoD policy lacks needed specificity on the requirements for the instruction of prevention material in PME.
- Junior leaders are not consistently receiving PME across the Services; if PME is offered to junior leaders, those sessions include limited/no prevention content.

At the DAC-PSM's June 27, 2024, public meeting, the Subcommittee shared its initial findings. At the November 14, 2024, public meeting, the Subcommittee presented its final findings and proposed recommendations for discussion, after which, the Committee voted to approve all proposed recommendations. The study report, titled *Preparation of Instructors Delivering Prevention Content in Professional Military Education*, was delivered to the Department in March 2025.

***See Appendix C for
Executive Summary.***

3. Recruit Screening

At its November 14 public meeting, the Committee heard from the Department on its current approach to recruit screening. The Office of Military Personnel Policy (Accessions Policy) provided an overview of the existing processes and policies for recruit screening, with several elements already in place during the accession process that help identify and review a potential recruit's background information. Qualification standards for enlistment and factors that would

make an applicant ineligible for service are detailed in Department of Defense Instruction 1304.26, "Qualification Standards for Enlistment, Appointment, and Induction."

The Committee also learned about DoD's military compatibility research related to personnel security. This research is focused on how existing personnel security data may be used to help understand an applicant's potential future conduct and whether that data can be used to assess military compatibility, with the initial research phase expected to be concluded by Summer 2025. The Committee identified follow-up questions to address in early 2025, after which, the Committee will determine its way ahead on this topic.

4. Database Anonymity

At the Committee's June 27 public meeting, Department representatives provided information about DoD's current approach to ensuring its sexual assault reporting databases are sufficiently anonymized to ensure privacy, as well as identifying what routes (other than a reporting database) could be available to a commander to learn about the additional factors mentioned in the NDAA study requirement (e.g., approximate length of time the victim and the assailant had been at the duty station at which the sexual assault occurred).

DoD SAPRO provided the Committee with an overview of DoD's relevant policies and the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID). SAPRO noted that DSAID serves as the DoD system to capture, record, and manage information relating to allegations of sexual assault reported to DoD authorities, and that the Department has extensive systems in place to collect data relevant to sexual assault allegations. With specific access and usage guidelines laid out in DoD policy, SAPRO explained that access to personal identifiable information is limited to only those with an official need-to-know.

The Committee submitted additional questions to the Department, and following its review of those responses, in 2025 the Committee will work to identify additional questions and/or finalize its recommendation(s) back to Congress regarding this database anonymity topic.

F. Committee Work: Directed by the Department

In October 2023, DoD directed the Committee to undertake an additional study effort on metrics associated with risk and protective factors at the organizational and community levels. The report on this study was presented to DoD in December 2024; see study details below.

Measurement of Risk and Protective Factors Related to Harmful Behaviors

The DoD FY24 Integrated Prevention Research Agenda, a key driver of DoD's prevention research portfolio, identified a priority area to be the definition of "risk and protective factors beyond the individual level contributing to harmful behaviors in military settings." Research shows that lowering risk factors and increasing protective factors present at each level of the social ecological model minimizes the opportunities for sexual violence to take place.

In support of this research priority, the Committee’s sponsor directed the DAC-PSM to conduct a study with two objectives:

1. Identify and define community and organizational level risk and protective factors contributing to harmful behaviors in military settings.
2. Recommend metrics that could be used as measures of performance and measures of effectiveness.

Aligning its work with these two objectives, the Committee’s initial study phase involved the identification of appropriate risk and protective factors. The Committee then shifted its attention to developing recommendations for how those factors could best be measured. These efforts led the Committee to identify a total of 24 risk and protective factors and to offer recommendations on their measurement, as well as five general observations and recommendations regarding DoD’s measurement efforts.

In addition, the DAC-PSM recognized that some study recommendations have higher levels of existing evidentiary support than others. While the research on certain factors may still be emerging, the Committee stressed that it could be beneficial for DoD to explore and develop metrics to effectively measure these emerging factors in the future. In order to account for this variance in available evidence, the DAC-PSM sorted its recommendations into three categories:

- Established recommendations: Well-defined, validated metrics previously used in military populations which are ready to use as-is
- Emerging recommendations: Existing metrics, perhaps validated in another environment or population (e.g., college or university) that may require DoD modification before using
- Exploratory recommendations: Factors likely to be of importance in military environments, but the Subcommittee could not identify a suitable existing metric to recommend; DoD is strongly encouraged to identify or develop appropriate metrics for future measurement of these factors.

The Committee advised immediate implementation consideration of the Established metrics and provided a longer-term view of how to potentially utilize the metrics and/or factors captured in the Emerging and Exploratory recommendations.

See Appendix D for Executive Summary.

Full details of the Committee’s approach to this study and its recommendations can be found in the study’s final report titled *“Measurement of Selected Risk and Protective Factors Related to Harmful Behaviors in Military Environments”* submitted to the Department in December 2024.

G. Status of Previous Recommendations

As of the end of 2024, the DAC-PSM had approved a total of 55 recommendations for submission to the Department. In 2025, the Committee will continue to follow-up with the

Department regarding submitted DAC-PSM recommendations and will include further updates in the 2025 DAC-PSM Annual Report.

H. Conclusion

In 2024, the DAC-PSM continued its focus on providing the Department with prevention recommendations supported by research. As laid out in this report, the Committee has provided the Department with unique insights on both the measurement of risk and protective factors and prevention training within PME. The work on these two studies, coupled with the discussions and/or recommendations on the Department's research agenda, exit interviews, database anonymity, and recruit screening, offered the Committee the opportunity to again demonstrate its invaluable role in DoD's efforts to advance sexual misconduct prevention.

Looking ahead to 2025, the DAC-PSM plans to finalize its discussions related to database anonymity and recruit screening, and if appropriate, provide the Department with recommendations on those topics. The DAC-PSM's original five-year term expires in November 2025, and if approved for renewal of operations into 2026 and beyond, the Members look forward to continuing to provide their unique insights and expertise to DoD's efforts to prevent sexual misconduct across the DoD community.

APPENDIX A

Membership List

Gina M. Grosso (Lt. Gen. USAF (Ret)), *DAC-PSM Co-Chair*

- Director, CornerBrooke, LLC

Lindsay M. Orchowski, PhD, *DAC-PSM Co-Chair*

- Professor (Research Scholar), The Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Antonia Abbey, PhD, *DAC-PSM Metrics and Performance Subcommittee Chair*

- Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Wayne State University

Clement Coward (MG, USA (Ret.))

- Vice President, Global HR Strategy, General Dynamics Land Systems

Dorothy J. Edwards, PhD, *DAC-PSM Prevention Training and Activities Subcommittee Chair*

- President, Alteristic, Inc.

Armando X. Estrada, PhD

- Professor of Policy, Organizational and Leadership Studies, Temple University

Stephanie Gattas

- CEO/Founder, The Pink Berets

Sharyn Potter, PhD

- Executive Director of Research and Co-Founder, Prevention Innovations Research Center and Professor, University of New Hampshire

John B. Pryor, PhD

- Emeritus Distinguished Professor, Illinois State University

Jennifer M. Silva

- Chief Program Officer, Wounded Warrior Project

Amy M. Smith-Slep, PhD

- Professor, New York University

Glorina Y. Stallworth

- Branch Head, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Public Health

Michele Ybarra, PhD

- President and Research Director, Center for Innovative Public Health Research

APPENDIX B

2024 Public Meetings *Agenda for each session*

April 10, 2024
Public Meeting Open
Brief: DoD Office of People Analytics on Measurement of Risk and Protective Factors for Harmful Behaviors
Brief: DoD Violence Prevention Cell on Prevention Research Agenda
Panel: Military Service Representatives on Professional Military Education Instructor Preparation
Public Meeting Close

June 27, 2024
Public Meeting Open
Brief: DoD Prevention Updates
Brief: SAPRO Annual Reports
Brief: Database Anonymity (NDAA Study Topic)
Brief: Exit Interviews and CATCH Program (NDAA Study Topic)
Discussion: Subcommittee Updates
Public Meeting Close

November 14, 2024
Public Meeting Open
Discussion: Exit Interviews and Database Anonymity (NDAA Study Topics)
Discussion: Defense Advisory Committee on Investigations, Prosecution, and Defense of Sexual Assault in the Armed Forces on Insights from Closed-Case Data Analysis and Site Visits
Brief: Final FY25 Integrated Prevention Research Agenda
Brief: NDAA Study Topic: Recruit Pre-Screening
Discussion: 2024 Studies' Recommendations
Public Meeting Close

APPENDIX C

Executive Summary of DAC-PSM Report

***Instructing Prevention in PME:
Preparing Instructors to Deliver Prevention Content
in Professional Military Education (PME)***

The full report can be found at <https://www.dhra.mil/DAC-PSM/Completed-Studies/>

Executive Summary of DAC-PSM Report

Instructing Prevention in PME: Preparing Instructors to Deliver Prevention Content in Professional Military Education (PME)

Introduction

As directed by Congress, the Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct (DAC-PSM, or “Committee”) undertook this study to assist the Department of Defense (DoD, or “Department”) in strengthening its efforts to incorporate sexual assault prevention into the professional military education (PME) provided to its leaders.

The DAC-PSM was established in 2020 as mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20 NDAA). The DAC-PSM is tasked with providing independent advice and recommendations on the prevention of sexual misconduct involving members of the Armed Forces, as well as the sexual misconduct prevention policies, programs, and practices of each Military Department and Military Service Academy, including the Coast Guard Academy. Given that the Committee is comprised of members with expertise in prevention research and implementation in both military and civilian settings, including training design and development, the DAC-PSM is uniquely qualified to address this study topic.

Study Focus and Methodology

As part of the FY21 NDAA, Congress directed the DAC-PSM, through its Prevention Training and Activities Subcommittee, to examine PME relative to the prevention of sexual misconduct. Given the breadth of this directive, the DAC-PSM sought the insights of DoD prevention experts regarding the types of study recommendations that would be most useful to the Department and, as a result, learned of the extensive efforts currently underway to identify prevention content requirements for training. To avoid the duplication of existing DoD efforts and ensure compliance with the laws governing the activities of federal advisory committees, the Subcommittee elected to focus the study on DoD’s approach to the preparation of instructors to deliver prevention-related content within PME, as well as to consider the unique needs of instructors delivering content to junior leaders (i.e., those in grades O1-O3 and E4-E6).

To meet the information needs of this study, the Subcommittee conducted a literature and policy review, considered submissions from the Services, and met with topic experts from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). At the DAC-PSM’s June 27, 2024, public meeting, the Subcommittee shared its initial findings, and at the November 14, 2024, public meeting, the Subcommittee presented its final findings and proposed recommendations for discussion. Following deliberation, the Committee voted to approve all recommendations presented in this report.

Study Findings and Recommendations

While developing its proposed study recommendations, the Subcommittee leaned on several key observations to ensure that recommendations offered to DoD address areas of demonstrated need:

- **Instruction matters:** The content, nature, and quality of instruction all have direct impact on learning transfer, and ultimately, on the ability of leaders to demonstrate competencies in the prevention of sexual misconduct, as well as to establish a healthy climate and military culture.
- **Impact of leaders on unit climate:** Leaders are responsible for establishing healthy unit climate and military culture, and yet are often not being adequately equipped with knowledge of the problem or the prevention strategies and skills they need to address it.
- **Prevention as a critical leadership skill:** To ensure optimal military readiness and warfighting capacity of individual Service members and their units, prevention knowledge and skills-building must be effectively incorporated into leadership training at all levels.

Building off these three high-level observations, the Subcommittee identified a series of opportunities for the Department to ensure that those who present prevention content in a PME setting are ready for the task. As illustrated in Figure 1, the Committee’s recommendations suggest three broad areas of action for the Department to consider, framed within the process typically used by the Department and Services in the roll out of any new initiative: Policy, Implementation, and Evaluation and Oversight.

Figure 1: Actions to Address Study Recommendations

Action Area	Action Step	Associated Study Recommendations*
Policy Note: Clear policy <u>must</u> be in place to effectively guide the standardization of Implementation and Evaluation & Oversight.		
Establish clear policy requirements for the provision of prevention-related content in PME. Owning Party: DoD	Further define requirements for the incorporation of prevention-related content in PME.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and continue to confirm alignment between policy and learning requirements, starting with Department prioritization of prevention competencies as integral components of effective leadership. • Revise training policies and applicable guidance to establish the "who" and the "how" for the provision of prevention instruction within PME. • Identify and establish key topics and minimum requirements for the incorporation of prevention content into PME, as well as processes to standardize and oversee its delivery.
	Define requirements and processes that ensure content is delivered by appropriate and well-prepared staff.	
Implementation		
Define leaders' prevention competency needs by career band.	Customize the various levels of PME to incorporate grade-appropriate prevention content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and continue to confirm alignment between policy and learning requirements, starting with Department prioritization of prevention competencies as integral components of effective leadership.

Owning Party: DoD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take intentional steps to institutionalize prevention as a critical leadership skill at all levels.
Utilize instructors who are intentionally selected and prepared to deliver prevention content. Owning Party: Services	Determine who will deliver prevention content in PME. Develop model to ensure that instructors have the necessary skills and prevention expertise to deliver PME content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise training policies and applicable guidance to establish the "who" and the "how" for the provision of prevention instruction within PME. • Identify and establish key topics and minimum requirements for the incorporation of prevention content into PME, as well as processes to standardize and oversee its delivery. • Establish a selection, training, and performance model that ensures consistent instructor competencies in the delivery of prevention training material. • Develop training content, instructor skills, and subject matter expertise, based on effectiveness and outcomes associated with lessons learned from other DoD prevention efforts.
Evaluation & Oversight		
Establish processes to ensure that prevention-related PME content delivery follows policy and has desired impact. Owning Party: DoD and Services	Develop oversight approach to ensure that prevention-related PME content is being delivered appropriately and as required by policy. Collect data to determine the effectiveness of the delivery of prevention content within PME, as well as the impact of training on desired outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and establish key topics and minimum requirements for the incorporation of prevention content into PME, as well as processes to standardize and oversee its delivery. • Establish processes for the evaluation of and accountability for the instruction of prevention in PME. • Collect data on the effectiveness of learning transfer and the impact of training on outcomes.

* See Ch.2 and 3 of this report for a fuller discussion of these recommendations and the study findings that led to them.

Highlighted Study Finding – Core Policy Challenge

The Subcommittee began this study assuming that prevention-related training for junior leaders was present in PME across the Services and that it was being delivered by instructors with subject matter expertise or other prevention qualifications. However, the Services’ submissions demonstrated that neither assumption was accurate. Upon learning of the dearth of dedicated prevention-related PME for junior leaders, the Subcommittee directed its attention toward the policies governing PME. Examination of these policies revealed that current policy guidance lacks needed specificity on the requirements for the instruction of prevention material in PME. The Subcommittee found that DoD policy outlines prevention learning requirements for PME audiences (the “what”) but does not provide guidance on the role best positioned to deliver this content (the “who”) or establish requirements or processes for optimization of prevention instructor development and content delivery. The absence of more detailed guidance on the

requirements for effective delivery of prevention instruction within PME leads to inconsistencies in opportunity for leaders to master these important competencies.

Further, the Subcommittee found that junior leaders are not consistently receiving PME across the Services, regardless of topic area, and in the instances where PME is provided, those courses do not include specific prevention content taught by instructors with expertise in prevention. This training gap is especially troubling since junior leaders often supervise the Service population most affected by sexual violence: those in junior enlisted grades (E1-E4). Because of the far-reaching effects of sexual misconduct on both individual Service members and entire units, the Committee urges the Department not to wait until leaders are receiving mid-career PME to address key prevention concepts.

The DAC-PSM appreciates the opportunity to consider this critical issue and stands ready and willing to address questions from the Department and/or Services on any findings and recommendations. This report highlights opportunities for DoD to further institutionalize its advancing prevention efforts within the Services' learning communities and, in doing so, to equip its leaders with the critical prevention competencies needed to keep Service members safe and ready to meet the mission.

APPENDIX D

Executive Summary of DAC-PSM Report

*Measurement of Selected Risk and Protective Factors
Related to Harmful Behaviors in Military Environments*

The full report can be found at <https://www.dhra.mil/DAC-PSM/Completed-Studies/>

Executive Summary of DAC-PSM Report

Measurement of Selected Risk and Protective Factors Related to Harmful Behaviors in Military Environments

This report provides recommendations associated with a study undertaken by the Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct (DAC-PSM) to assist the Department of Defense (DoD, or the “Department”) in its efforts to measure risk and protective factors related to harmful behaviors in military environments. The DAC-PSM was established in November 2020 by the Secretary of Defense, as mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020. The DAC-PSM (the “Committee”) provides DoD and Congress with independent advice and recommendations on the prevention of sexual assault involving members of the Armed Forces, as well as the sexual assault prevention policies, programs, and practices of each Military Department and Military Service Academy, including the Coast Guard Academy.

The Department’s Fiscal Year 2024 Integrated Prevention Research Agenda includes a priority to identify “risk and protective factors beyond the individual level contributing to harmful behaviors in military settings.” Research shows that lowering risk factors and increasing protective factors present at each level of the social ecological model (SEM) minimizes the opportunities for sexual violence to take place. Risk factors are characteristics that may increase the likelihood of negative outcomes (e.g., experiencing or perpetrating sexual violence), while protective factors are characteristics that reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor’s impact, though in both instances, there may or may not be a direct causal link.

In support of the Department’s research priorities, the Committee, through its Metrics and Performance Subcommittee, was directed to conduct a study with two objectives:

1. Identify and define community and organizational level risk and protective factors relevant to harmful behaviors in military settings.
2. Recommend metrics that could be used as measures of performance and measures of effectiveness.

The Subcommittee began its work by defining how the study fits within the broader context of Departmental efforts to reduce sexual assault and sexual harassment. In both civilian and military settings, efforts to prevent harmful behaviors have historically focused heavily on approaches targeting individuals and relationships, while approaches that focus on change within organizations, communities, and wider society have been less common. The dynamics of how these levels interact is captured in the SEM, a framework that public health scholars have utilized for more than 40 years.

This study focuses on two levels of the SEM: the community level and the organizational level. For purposes of this study, the Subcommittee used the following definitions:

- **Community level:** Includes Service members, DoD civilian employees, and dependents who may live and/or work together in the same geographical area, such as DoD installations, garrisons or ships, or surrounding neighborhoods and towns where military personnel reside
- **Organizational level:** Aspects of DoD/Military Department-level policies, practices, culture, and physical or social environment

The Subcommittee conducted its work in two phases: 1) Identification of risk and protective factors in military environments that are specifically present at the community and organizational levels, and 2) Identification of metrics to assess those factors.

During its Phase 1 efforts, the Subcommittee drew on member expertise, existing publications, and information provided by the Department's Office of People Analytics (OPA) to identify risk and protective factors that might be found at the community and organizational levels in military environments. The Subcommittee worked to identify factors that DoD is not currently measuring, or might be measuring at another level of the SEM. In addition, the Subcommittee sought to uncover new and innovative ways in which the Department could most effectively measure the risk and protective factors ultimately selected for examination.

In its Phase 2 work of identifying appropriate metrics for the identified factors, the Subcommittee sought information from OPA regarding existing metrics the Department might be using to measure these factors. A review of OPA's responses indicated that several of the identified factors are not currently being measured, while others are being measured although at a largely individual level. Ultimately, the Subcommittee recommended the continued use of several of the metrics being used in OPA's current survey efforts; however, for most of the factors identified by the Subcommittee, the Members determined that newly proposed metrics should be recommended.

In order to identify new metrics for consideration, the Subcommittee drew on extant research, as well as its own research expertise. Members identified metrics for each factor, and in making these determinations, discussed the validity, utility in a military setting, ease of implementation, and overall resulting informational value of each metric.

In summary, the Subcommittee identified a total of 24 risk and protective factors and provided a recommendation for the measurement of each one:

- **Community level:** 13 total recommendations (8 risk factors and 5 protective factors)
- **Organizational level:** 11 total recommendations (5 risk factors and 6 protective factors)

Given that published research for some of the identified factors is still nascent, the Subcommittee also considered the level of supporting evidence available for each factor and its proposed metric when crafting recommendations. Some of the identified metrics enjoy far more evidentiary support than others, and therefore, these recommendations are likely to be more immediately actionable by the Department. At the same time, the Subcommittee did not

want to deemphasize the importance of an identified factor or metric whose use might strengthen the Department's data collection efforts, simply because the factor has not yet been examined in a military environment or because there is no validated metric immediately available for use.

In order to account for this variance in available evidence, the Subcommittee sorted its proposed recommendations into one of three categories – Established, Emerging, and Exploratory.

- **Established recommendations:** Well-defined, validated metrics previously used in military populations; ready to use as-is
- **Emerging recommendations:** Existing metrics, perhaps validated in another environment or population (e.g., college or university) that may require DoD modification before using
- **Exploratory recommendations:** Factors are likely to be of importance in military environments, but the Subcommittee could not identify a suitable existing metric to recommend. DoD is strongly encouraged to identify or develop appropriate metrics for future measurement of these factors

The full report and its supporting appendices include greater detail on the study's identified risk and protective factors and associated metrics, as well as the level of evidence underlying each one. In addition, the report offers four over-arching recommendations and one observation/study limitation that may serve to strengthen the Department's future measurement efforts.

On November 14, 2024, the DAC-PSM voted to accept the recommendations provided in this report.

DoD leadership has repeatedly recognized the importance of making data-informed decisions, with questions often arising about whether a program is achieving the desired outcomes. Through effective measurement efforts, the Department can better demonstrate the impact of its prevention activities and identify opportunities for improvement.

The Committee looks forward to the opportunity to discuss its study recommendations with the Department in greater detail in order to help foster continued progress in creating environments safe for Service members.