



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION  
AND RESPONSE OFFICE**



## **2018 SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH**

### **2018 THEME: *PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE PROTECTS OUR MISSION***

SAPR Colleagues,

In April 2018, the Department will again observe Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). April offers us the opportunity to continue to improve outreach and support to victims while also expanding prevention efforts.

Since 2012, the Department's annual reports on sexual assault in the military have reported regular declines in the prevalence rates of sexual assault among the force. We can do more to build a culture that will not tolerate sexual assault. Together, we can work to further reduce, with the goal to eliminate, sexual assault from the armed forces. Our military is the most trusted institution in America and our Service members have signed a blank check to the American people, payable with their lives. This crime must not threaten those who have volunteered to serve.

In 2018 we will continue with the theme "Protecting Our People, Protects Our Mission." This allows us to continue our messaging that, regardless of rank, grade, or job specialty, we all can take action to "protect our people." The theme's tie to "protecting our mission" supports the Department's priorities to enhance our readiness and lethality.

As you prepare for SAAPM, please consider ways to announce to your commanders and communities the vision to reframe SAAPM activities and messaging from just awareness- and knowledge-based campaigns to also include more action-oriented, skill-building activities. Traditionally, the vast majority of activities held as part of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month have focused on building awareness of the problem and knowledge of the response systems put in place to take care of victims of the crime. This is important and we know reporting is a critical part to holding offenders appropriately accountable. Research has shown, however, that awareness events and messaging are not enough to prompt the change in attitudes and behaviors needed to advance prevention efforts to stop the crime from occurring in the first place.

On December 6, we conducted a webinar, "SAPR Event Planning Through a Prevention Lens," which was facilitated by Dr. Dorothy Edwards, DoD's Prevention Expert, and Ms. Julia Strange, CNIC, U.S. Navy. The recording and material for webinar can be found on SAPR Connect at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/dod-sexual-assault-prevention-team>, and may be a helpful resource for those did not have an opportunity to participate.

We talked at our Prevention Capacity Building Sessions on near term ways we can move forward with a prevention lens. This is a great opportunity to build on that momentum and put it into practice, while we simultaneously work on the Prevention Plan of Action and addressing ways to optimize the prevention system.

Together, we can advance the Department's mission by creating an environment where negative behaviors are not tolerated, condoned, or ignored, and offenders are held appropriately accountable. Thank you for your continued collaboration and commitment!

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office

If you have any questions on the SAAPM theme or SAPR Connect, please contact Ms. Josephine C. Montoya at [josephine.c.montoya.civ@mail.mil](mailto:josephine.c.montoya.civ@mail.mil).

Vr/Ann

RADM Ann M. Burkhardt, USN, SPHR

Director, DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO)

4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 07G21

Alexandria, VA 22311-8000

Office: 571-372-2636

Cell: 703-717-3463

[www.sapr.mil](http://www.sapr.mil)

"Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission"



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
**SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION  
AND RESPONSE OFFICE**



## **2018 SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH**

### ***PROTECTING OUR PEOPLE PROTECTS OUR MISSION***

#### **Introduction**

Since 2012, the Department's annual reports on sexual assault in the military have reported regular declines in the prevalence rates of sexual assault among the force. That said, we can do more to build and sustain a culture that will not tolerate sexual assault. DoD's observation of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM) during April is an opportunity to continue to improve outreach and support to victims while also expanding prevention efforts.

Together, we can work to further reduce, with the goal to eliminate, sexual assault from the armed forces. Our military is the most trusted institution in America and our Service members have signed a blank check to the American people, payable with their lives. The crime of sexual assault must not threaten those who have volunteered to serve.

#### **2018 SAAPM Theme**

Our 2018 theme is "Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission." This theme allows us to create messaging that, regardless of rank, grade, or job specialty, we all can take action to "protect our people." In addition, the theme's tie to "protecting our mission" supports DoD's priorities to enhance our readiness and lethality.

#### **Planning Suggestions and Resources**

Traditionally, most SAAPM activities focused on building awareness of the problem and knowledge of response systems to care for victims. While important, a focus on just awareness building is not always enough to change attitudes and behaviors needed to stop the crime.

As you prepare for SAAPM, please consider ways to reframe activities and messaging from just awareness- and knowledge-based campaigns to also include more action-oriented, skill-building activities. To strengthen prevention in events, you might:

- Consider events that encourage skills targeting sexual assault risk or protective factors;
- Build in opportunities to practice new prevention skills...not just learn about them;
- Determine what the target audience already knows about prevention and plan accordingly;
- Integrate target behaviors into existing routines rather than requiring attendance at a new event; and
- In planning, consider the dosage for each audience throughout the year, not just in April, and what prevention behavioral goals can be targeted.

For more on these ideas, visit SAPR Connect, DoD's online prevention community of practice. In addition to prevention research, SAPR Connect users can find helpful planning resources such as the recent webinar titled "SAPR Event Planning Through a Prevention Lens." Visit [www.sapr.mil](http://www.sapr.mil) to access SAPR Connect, if not already a member.

#### **Questions?**

If you have any questions on the SAAPM theme or SAPR Connect, contact the OSD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office at [whs.mc-alex.wso.mbx.SAPRO@mail.mil](mailto:whs.mc-alex.wso.mbx.SAPRO@mail.mil).