



Appendix H: Child Sexual Abuse



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The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) is the congressionally mandated program within the Department of Defense (DOD) responsible for supplying clinical assessment, support, and treatment services in response to incidents of child abuse and neglect in military families. Child sexual abuse by a parent or other caregiver is a subset of child abuse.

Oversight Responsibilities

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, DOD FAP has broad responsibility for promoting public awareness and prevention of domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect, ensuring mandated reporting of all child abuse and neglect (to include child sexual abuse) by covered professionals and members of the military, and coordinating comprehensive intervention, assessment, and support to victims.

Definition of Child Sexual Abuse

DOD Instruction 6400.01, “Family Advocacy Program,” defines “child abuse” as “...[t]he physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, foster parent, or by a caregiver, whether the caregiver is intrafamilial or extrafamilial, under circumstances indicating the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened. Such acts by a sibling, other family member, or other person shall be deemed to be child abuse only when the individual is providing care under express or implied agreement with the parent, guardian, or foster parent.” DOD Instruction 6400.03, “Family Advocacy Command Assistance Team,” defines “child sexual abuse” as “...[t]he employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.”

As a result of the expanded reporting requirements in Section 575 of Public Law 114-328, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, all individuals within the chain of command of a member are required to immediately report suspected child abuse of any kind to the installation FAP. In addition, all covered professionals, to include FAP staff, are required to report suspected child abuse directly to local civilian child welfare services. On installations, FAP provides comprehensive safety planning, victim advocacy and support, and treatment when appropriate.

Data

Comprehensive data and analysis of all child abuse and neglect is included in the *Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for Fiscal Year 2019*, scheduled for release on April 30, 2020, as required by Section 574 of Public Law 114-328.

Data Collection

FAP incident data are tracked by the Military Services and reported to the Department through the FAP Central Registry maintained by the Defense Manpower Data Center. The FAP Central Registry contains information pertaining to incidents that met criteria for abuse. In this context, “met criteria” means that the incident met the clinical threshold set forth by a standardized

algorithm that indicates the need for more rigorous treatment, intervention, support, safety planning, and protection.

Victim Characteristics

Central Registry data indicates that in FY19, there were 203 unique victims of child sexual abuse who received FAP services. Victims were 87.2 percent female (177 of 203) and 12.8 percent male (26 of 203). The number and age ranges of victims of child sexual abuse were: 7 victims (3.5 percent) ages 0 to 1; 35 victims (17.2 percent) ages 2 to 5; 49 victims (24.1 percent) ages 6 to 10; and 108 victims (53.2 percent) ages 11 to 17. Four victims (2.0 percent) were between the ages of 18 and 24 when the report was made, but in a dependent status when the abuse occurred.

Alleged Offender Characteristics

Of the 168 alleged offenders, 94 (55.9 percent) were Military Service member parents, 28 (16.7 percent) were civilian parents, 24 (14.3 percent) were “other” family member caregivers, and 22 (13.1 percent) were extrafamilial caregivers. Military Service members represented 61.9 percent (104 of 168) of alleged offenders, and civilians represented 38.1 percent (64 of 168) of alleged offenders.

All 104 alleged offenders who were Military Service members were active duty, Regular Component members. Of the 104 Military Service members, 96 (92.3 percent) were enlisted members, 7 (6.7 percent) were officers, and 1 (1.0 percent) was a warrant officer.

Accountability

The mission and scope of FAP is to provide comprehensive clinical assessment and support services to individuals and families impacted by domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect. FAP’s primary focus is to assess the risk to, and safety of, victims and to provide treatment and rehabilitation for the victim or alleged offender when appropriate. By responsibilities set forth in DOD Manual 6400.01, Volume 1, “Family Advocacy Program Standards,” FAP reports all reports of child abuse to civilian child welfare services and law enforcement within 24 hours. As part of the Coordinated Community Response model employed by DOD, first responder law enforcement (military or civilian, depending on jurisdiction) and military criminal investigative personnel have responsibility for investigating reports of child sexual abuse. Investigation, command action, and legal adjudication are addressed by other organizations outside of FAP.

FAP social workers, prevention specialists, victim advocates, and nurses provide critical clinical and support services to families impacted by these often complex incidents and are bound ethically to promote the well-being of clients and support their self-determination foremost. Responsibility for holding alleged offenders criminally accountable and tracking associated outcomes falls to applicable command, law enforcement, and civilian and military justice systems.