



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



TALKING PAPER ON EVALUATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION

OCTOBER 30, 2019

Purpose

Preventing sexual assault and harassment and promoting safe, respectful, and supportive military climates is a priority for the Department of Defense. In 2019, the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) is substantively changing its oversight methods for prevention activities at the Military Service Academies (MSAs) and throughout the Services.

Background

The prevention evaluation framework employs a standardized method to evaluate the elements of a prevention approach, such as whether a prevention activity matches the targeted problem, how it was implemented, and the means by which progress is measured. The framework builds on the best available evidence for effective sexual assault and harassment prevention and enables systematic, objective assessment of sexual assault and harassment prevention activities. For consistent oversight and recommendations, the framework will be used in 2019 and subsequent sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention assessments.

The evaluation framework focuses on the key tenets of effective prevention at both the system level, such as at the Academy or Service, as well as examining aspects of a specific prevention activity. These tenets are outlined in the 2019-2023 Prevention Plan of Action (PPoA), the Department's comprehensive approach to optimizing prevention systems and supporting and sustaining an effective prevention process. The prevention system elements that are crucial for effective prevention include human resources, collaborative relationships, and infrastructure. Human resources refers to leadership and the prevention workforce and knowledge and skills they require, collaborative relationships refers to the networks and interactions that help build prevention capacity within and across organizational entities, and infrastructure refers to structures like data, policy, and resources that are necessary for success.

Elements of the prevention process represented in the evaluation framework and PPoA and important for ensuring an effective prevention approach include the following: 1) understand the problem, the risk and protective factors that contribute to it, and local needs; 2) develop a comprehensive approach using research-based activities in an integrated way that employs the full range of prevention activities, such as policies, programs, and practices; 3) implement a comprehensive approach with fidelity in supportive climates, and 4) continuously evaluate the comprehensive approach for changes in contributing factors and other short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes.

The evaluation framework uses multiple items to assess each of the elements of the prevention system and prevention process. By using a multimodal assessment, SAPRO will have a clear understanding of the quality of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention at the MSAs and Services and will provide specific, constructive feedback on ways to improve and enhance prevention at all levels.

Conclusion

Using a data driven process to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive prevention approaches that meet the unique needs of each military setting increases the likelihood that sexual assault and sexual harassment will be effectively prevented. SAPRO is employing a rigorous evaluation framework to assess progress towards effective prevention and offer recommendations to strengthen efforts.