DoD Safe Helpline
Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community

Follow-Up Support Services

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DoD Safe Helpline Info Paper

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What is DoD Safe Helpline?

The Department of Defense (DoD) Safe Helpline is the Department's sole secure, confidential, and anonymous crisis support service specially designed for members of the DoD community affected by sexual assault. Safe Helpline is available 24/7, worldwide. The DoD Safe Helpline staff provides live, one-on-one support to survivors, their families, and other DoD stakeholders. It is operated by RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), a national anti-sexual violence organization, through a contract with the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (DoD SAPRO).

What is Follow-Up Support?

Safe Helpline staff provide an option to Safe Helpline users to receive follow-up calls. These check-ins allow Safe Helpline staff to answer any further questions the user may have regarding the resources provided. Follow-up Support is entirely optional, and is offered to users who are eligible to make a report with a military authority, as well as those who have already made a report.

Goals of Follow-Up Support:

1. Improve access to long-term support and resources discussed during Safe Helpline sessions, such as a Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/Victim Advocates, Special Victims Counsel/Victims Legal Counsel, local civilian sexual assault service providers and Veterans Benefits Coordinators.
2. Address concerns and potential obstacles to connecting with on-base resources to help facilitate reporting.

Who is Eligible for Follow-up Support?

The services provided by Safe Helpline are available to the DoD community consistent with DoD SAPR policy, including:

- Adult Service members in the Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Component as well as Coast Guard and Transitioning Service members, and their dependents 18 years of age and older.
- DoD civilian employees and their family dependents 18 years of age and older when they are stationed or performing duties outside of the United States; and
- U.S. citizen DoD contractor personnel when they are authorized to accompany Armed Forces in a contingency operation OCONUS and their U.S. citizen employees.

Safe Helpline adheres to state mandatory reporting laws concerning persons under the age of 18 and the elderly. Adult military dependent sexual assault victims who are assaulted by a spouse or intimate partner and military dependent sexual assault victims who are 17 years of age and younger are supported through the Family Advocacy Program (FAP).

Any individuals eligible to make a report with a military authority, as well as those who have already done so, are eligible to use Follow-up Support Services.

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What Information is Collected and How is it Kept Safe?

Safe Helpline staff will collect certain information from every user that chooses to receive Follow-up Support Services:

- A name of the user's choosing (does not need to be a user's real name).
- User's duty status (Active duty, Dependent, Transitioning Service Member, DoD Civilian, DoD Contractor, etc.).
- The user's preferred phone number(s).
- Resources and referrals provided to the user.

In addition, if voluntarily shared during the session, Safe Helpline staff may record additional non-personally identifying information including:

- Branch of Service.
- Length of time in Service.
- Location of incident (including base/installation if known).
- City or base/installation.
- Gender.
- Age.
- When the incident occurred.

To protect the user's privacy and maintain confidentiality, this information will be stored in a secure, online database known as the Follow-Up Support Recording System (FSRS). This database compiles with related DoD policy requirement and meets mandatory security requirements established under the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA).

Also, communication between a victim and Safe Helpline staff are protected from disclosure in cases arising under the Uniform Code of Military Justice in accordance with Military Rules of Evidence (MRE) 514 - Victim-Victim Advocate Privilege. This means that a victim may refuse to disclose information shared between the victim and Safe Helpline staff, and may prevent staff from sharing the information without the victim's consent. Certain exceptions to this privilege may apply.