

Quick Facts About VA's Health Care Services for Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) uses the term “military sexual trauma” (MST) to refer to experiences of **sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment** experienced while on federal active duty or active duty for training.
- The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has a range of **outpatient, inpatient, and residential services** available to assist Veterans in their recovery from MST. At many VHA facilities, Active Duty personnel can also receive these MST-related services.
- All treatment for conditions related to MST is provided to Veterans **free of charge**. This includes outpatient, inpatient, residential, and pharmaceutical treatment.
- To receive this free MST-related care, Veterans do not need to be service connected (that is, have a VA disability rating*) – **eligibility for MST-related health care is independent of receipt of other VA benefits**. Veterans may be able to receive free MST-related care even if they are not eligible for other VA care. For example, there are no length of service or income requirements to receive MST-related care. Veterans do not need to have reported the incident(s) when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred.

Specific MST-Related Services Available Through the Veterans Health Administration

- Every VA health care facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person can help Veterans find and access VA services and programs.
- Every VA medical center has providers knowledgeable about MST and provides MST-related mental health outpatient services. Services available include formal psychological assessment and evaluation; psychiatry; and individual and group psychotherapy. Specialty programs target problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance use disorders, depression, and homelessness. VHA's community-based Vet Centers have specially trained sexual trauma counselors.
- For Veterans who need more intensive treatment, many VHA facilities offer residential programming. A number of these residential programs focus specifically on MST or have specialized MST tracks.
- VHA also has inpatient programs available for acute care needs (e.g., psychiatric emergencies and stabilization, medication adjustment).

For more information, please contact the MST Coordinator at your nearest VA Medical Center or visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp.

A list of VHA facilities can be found at www.va.gov.



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century



*Note: the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) handles claims for compensation for injuries or disabilities that began or got worse during military service. More information about filing an MST-related disability claim is available at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/serviceconnected/MST.pdf>