

Department of Defense

# Report to the President of the United States on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Retaliation Excerpts from POTUS Report



2014

**FACT SHEET:**  
**Report to the President of the United States on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

This fact sheet summarizes the Department of Defense's Report to the President on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response delivered Dec. 1, 2014, and highlights new initiatives to eliminate sexual assault in the military.

**SUMMARY**

- Following significant Congressional interest and debate over the military's handling of sexual assault crimes in Fall 2013, President Obama directed the DoD to deliver a comprehensive report detailing progress in the prevention of and response to sexual assault in the military, including reforms to the military justice system. The report includes quantitative and qualitative research findings from an independent Military Workplace Survey conducted by the RAND Corporation, as well as a Survivor Experience Survey and military focus groups conducted by DMDC.
- The report documents substantive, comprehensive progress since Fiscal Year 2012 – the last year for which survey data is available – ignited by unprecedented leadership engagement:
  - Forty one Secretary of Defense Initiatives, many codified in law, have fundamentally changed how the military works to prevent, respond, and effectively adjudicate sexual assault crimes.
  - Prevalence of sexual assault is down significantly, but continued focus is needed to further reduce the occurrence of these crimes.
  - An unprecedented 50 percent increase in victims choosing to report their crime in 2013 was followed by even more choosing to report in 2014; we now receive a report from 1 in 4 victims – up from 1 in 10 in 2012.
  - Military justice system reforms have significantly elevated oversight of commanders' discretion over these cases, raising decision-making authority to more experienced levels of command, while expanding legal representation and protections for victims' interests, rights, and privacy.
- While other reforms will continue to enhance the military response system, the Department's approach – mirrored by White House efforts to improve college sexual assault response – pairs a prevention focus with an unparalleled commitment to helping victims heal and have a voice in the justice process.

**EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS**

- The White House and the Department of Defense agreed upon a set of 12 metrics and 6 “non-metrics”<sup>1</sup> in February 2014 to demonstrate progress in sexual assault prevention and response. Ten of twelve metrics show evidence of progress across the response system.
  - The Department has made notable progress in several areas:
    - The vast majority (87%) of surveyed Service members reported taking action to prevent a sexual assault when they saw a situation at risk for sexual assault.
    - Most surveyed Service members highly rate their commanders' efforts to promote a healthy climate and discourage inappropriate gender-based behavior.
    - A representative survey indicates that past-year prevalence of unwanted sexual contact is significantly down for women and trended downward for men, but further action and attention is required to continue the decrease in coming years.
    - Underreporting, while still a problem, has lessened, with estimates indicating that about 24% of military victims chose to report in 2014, up from 11% in 2012.
    - The Department has more than 1,000 full-time certified response coordinators and victim advocates, as well as more than 17,000 collateral-duty advocates and volunteers to assist victims.
    - Surveyed victims expressed great satisfaction with the assistance from response personnel and the Special Victim Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel representing them.
    - Ten percent of accused service members – down from 17 percent in 2010 – could not be held appropriately accountable in 2014 because the victim filed a restricted report, which provides victim assistance but does not trigger a criminal investigation.
    - The vast majority of victims surveyed indicated they were kept regularly informed of the military justice process.

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<sup>1</sup> “Non-metrics” describe aspects of the military justice system that should not be manipulated to produce a change in outcome, in that doing so may be considered unlawful command influence and prohibited by military law.

- Service members rate highly unit leadership efforts to advance sexual assault prevention and response.
  - Sexual assault reporting in 2014 exceeded record levels of reporting in 2013, with nine percent of Service member reports being made for an incident that occurred prior to entering active duty.
- One metric demonstrates the Department must take focused action to produce the kind of progress seen in other areas:
  - Of the women who experienced unwanted sexual contact and made a report to a DoD authority, 62% reported experiencing some kind of retaliation, with most perceiving social retaliation from co-workers or peers.
  - Other research indicates that most victims are satisfied with support from commanders, but response from others down the chain is not rated as highly.
- Other policy and program changes have substantively improved how the Department prevents and responds to sexual assault:
  - The unit climate assessment process enacted in 2013 drives organizational change by employing Service member feedback to hold commanders accountable for a climate of dignity and respect.
  - The Special Victim Investigation and Prosecution Capability provided fact finders with the knowledge and skills to conduct investigations minimizing the risk of re-traumatization and promoting continued victim engagement in the justice process.
  - Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel now represent victim interests and give victims a voice in military justice.
  - Professional, certified victim advocates assist victims in person with reporting or accessing care, but since 2011 victims have had the option to anonymously contact the DoD Safe Helpline for crisis support and help 24/7.

### **SAPR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS**

- The Department continues to identify, share, and implement the best policies and practices in a coordinated effort among the entire DoD community. Services have responded by demonstrating an unparalleled commitment to helping victims heal and have a voice in the justice process.
  - Prevention: Published Prevention Strategy and initiated climate assessment process
  - Investigations: Fielded Special Victim Investigation and Prosecution Capability to equip Service personnel with the knowledge and skills to conduct investigations that minimize the risk of re-traumatization, launched advanced sexual assault investigations training, and engaged DoD Inspector General in active oversight of DoD criminal investigations
  - Accountability: Expanded Special Victims' Counsel / Victims' Legal Counsel, a groundbreaking legal resource giving victims a voice in the military justice process, and implemented reforms of the military justice process to inspire victim confidence, including elevation of initial disposition authority to Special Court Martial Convening Authority in penetrating crimes
  - Advocacy / Victim Assistance: Launched DoD Safe Helpline, required professional victim assistance for SAPR responders, leveraged commanders to drive key victim assistance activities, involved SVC/VLC in response system
  - Assessment: Each year, DoD integrates data from sexual assault reports, scientifically conducted surveys, and research to provide a fully transparent review of DoD SAPR program progress.

### **PREVALENCE & REPORTING RESULTS**

- **Decrease in prevalence rates**: The RAND Military Workplace Study indicates that military members experienced fewer sexual assaults in 2014 than in 2012
  - At the request of the leadership of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Department externalized its 2014 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of the Active Duty (WGRA) to the RAND Corporation. The Department requested that RAND review and, if indicated, improve how the Department asks its members about sexual assault and sexual harassment. The Department also requested that the survey be conducted to allow for comparison of results to prior years' trend data.
  - RAND invited more than 560,000 service members to take the survey, and received a weighted response rate of about 29%.
  - RAND fielded two survey forms to assess past-year prevalence: The WGRA form contained the same measures of unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment that the DoD has used in previous years' surveys. A new form developed by RAND used newly developed measures of

sexual assault and sexual harassment that were designed to more closely align with language from military and federal law, and more precisely identify criminal behavior.

- o Between FY12 to FY14, rates of unwanted sexual contact, as measured by the WGRA form, decreased significantly for women (from 6.2% to 4.3%, respectively) and trended downward for men (from 1.2% to 0.9%, respectively).
- o The RAND sexual assault measure found statistically similar rates for women (4.9%) and men (1%), and also provided a more precise measure of the types of crimes experienced in the military. Additional information about the RAND Military Workplace Study will be available in the Spring, and will accompany the Department's Annual Report to Congress.

	2006	FY10	FY12	FY14	
	WGRA Form	WGRA Form	WGRA Form	WGRA Form	RAND Form
% USC Prevalence – WOMEN	6.8%	4.4%	6.1%	4.3%	4.9%
% USC Prevalence – MEN	1.8%	.9%	1.2%	.9%	1.0%
Population estimate (% prevalence weighted up to the total population)	~34,200	~19,300	~26,000	~19,000	~20,000
# Prevalence – WOMEN	13,500	8,600	12,100	8,500	<i>Data not yet available</i>
# Prevalence – MEN	20,700	10,700	13,900	10,500	<i>Data not yet available</i>

- **More victims chose to report in FY14:** Survivors continue to report the crime in record numbers. Preliminary data indicates women reported at about a 40% rate; men reported at about a 10% rate. Restricted Reports (RR) connect victims to medical and legal support. Unrestricted Reports (UR) engage the military justice process in the form of an independent MCIO investigation.

	2006	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
Estimated reporting rate (Using WGRA Form)	~7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	~13%	N/A	~11%	N/A	~24%
# Service Member Reports in for incidents occurring during military service**	2,289	2,223	2,340	2,454	2,532	2,639	2,828	4,113	4,608
Total Reports Received *	2,947	2,846	3,109	3,472	3,327	3,393	3,604	5,518	5,983
Unrestricted Reports	2,277	2,243	2,466	2,758	2,579	2,640	2,788	4,225	4,501

Remaining Restricted at the end of year	670	603	643	714	748	753	816	1,293	1,482
Converted to Unrestricted in the year	11%	14.5%	14.6%	14.7%	15.2%	14.1%	16.8%	13.9%	18.8%

### NEXT STEPS

- While these accomplishments are encouraging, the mission is far from complete, as leadership and Service Members alike acknowledge the need for continued growth, persistence, and innovation in the elimination of sexual assault from the military.
  - The Department is currently working to meet policy mandates in the FY14 National Defense Authorization Act and looks forward to ongoing collaboration with our Congressional partners.
  - The Department is also working to align and implement a number of the 132 recommendations offered by the independent Response Systems Panel (RSP), a year-long, Congressionally directed panel review of alternative measures to enhance the DoD response system. While the RSP provided numerous recommendations, it did NOT recommend removing commanders from the legal process, as such an action lacked any evidence of being a “silver bullet” of change – the kind of change the Department is already achieving with intensive leadership involvement at every point in the system.
  - Finally, the Department will continue to implement current Secretary of Defense initiatives, as well as the new initiatives announced today:
    - **Installation Prevention Study:** To advance our knowledge and understanding of successful intervention policies, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chiefs of the Military Services, and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness will conduct a multi-year initiative to customize prevention efforts at select military installations. This effort will identify installation and community risk factors for sexual assault and develop associated actions leadership can take to mitigate sexual violence.
    - **Enhance First Line Supervisor Skills and Knowledge:** To further advance a climate of dignity and respect, and prevent the potential for retaliation associated with reporting, the Chiefs of the Military Services and the National Guard Bureau will augment all supervisor training to address the role of the supervisor in unit sexual assault prevention and response programs. This training will apply to all junior officers, junior enlisted supervisors, and civilian employees that supervise military members. Curriculum will emphasize the importance of engaging with subordinates on sexual assault prevention and response, recognizing the signs of possible acts of retaliation, and provide the opportunity to practice leadership skills to promote a healthy command climate.
    - **Engage Command to Prevent Retaliation:** To enhance victim safety and recovery, the Chiefs of the Military Services and the National Guard Bureau will develop new procedures for installation commanders who serve as the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Case Management Group Chair. These procedures will require installation commanders to regularly assess, and refer for appropriate corrective action, all reports from a victim, witness, or first responder of retaliation, ostracism, maltreatment, or reprisal in conjunction with a report of sexual assault.
    - **Provide Feedback to the Force:** To encourage greater victim reporting and demonstrate Department and Service progress, the Secretaries of the Military Departments will provide the findings in the Report to all Service members in an interactive manner.

## Excerpts from the POTUS Report Executive Summary & Introduction (P.23, 114-119)

### *Metrics Overview*

This report includes provisional results for 12 metrics and six non-metrics that were developed in collaboration with the White House for the purpose of analyzing specific aspects of the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program (available in their entirety in Appendix B). Encouragingly, the Department clearly demonstrates indicators of progress in the areas of:

- Prevalence
- Reporting
- Bystander Intervention
- Command Climate
- Victim Support
- Perception of Leadership's Efforts

However, the Department was unable to identify clear progress in the area of perceived victim retaliation. Despite significant efforts by the Department, military victims continue to perceive social and/or professional retaliation. Retaliation, in any form, is unacceptable in the Department of Defense. Addressing this issue will be a top priority moving forward for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response programs across the Military Services.

### *F. Preventing Retaliation and Ostracism of Victims Making Sexual Assault Reports*

**Rationale:** Victims who are considering filing an Unrestricted Report of sexual assault often look to the experiences of other survivors as an indicator of how they will be treated. In order to encourage continued reporting and engagement with the response system, victims must be confident that they will be treated with respect and not blamed or retaliated against as a result of reporting a sexual assault.

**Synopsis of Progress:** In FY 2014, each Service implemented new regulations against retaliation and ostracism associated with reporting crime.<sup>114</sup> Retaliation includes taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member made a protected communication (e.g., filed a report of sexual assault). Additionally, retaliation includes social ostracism and such acts of maltreatment committed by peers of the victim or by other persons because the member made a protected communication.

Violation of Service regulations could result in criminal prosecution under the UCMJ under *Article 92 - Failure to Obey Orders or Regulation*. In addition, victims can avail themselves of the following resources to report retaliation or ostracism:

- Report to their commander, facilitated by SARC or SVC
- Request an Expedited Transfer
- Request a Safety Transfer, if they fear violence
- Request a Military Protective Order
- File a Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Complaint
- Report to a SARC at a different installation, facilitated by DoD Safe Helpline
- Report to a commander outside their Chain of Command
- Report to the DoD IG, invoking whistle-blower protection

**Involuntary Separation.** In 2013, the Department updated instructions for enlisted and officer separations that allow a victim, who made a report of sexual assault and is subsequently recommended for involuntary separation, to request GO/FO review of the circumstances of and grounds for the involuntary separation. This affords victims with a thorough explanation for why they are being removed from military service, a matter of particular importance for victims who believe their involuntary separation was initiated in retaliation for making a report of sexual assault.

**Evidence of Progress:** DoD Surveys of Active Duty Personnel. In FY 2012, the Workplace and Gender Relations survey found that of the women who experienced USC and reported it to a military authority, 62% indicated they perceived some form of retaliation as a result of reporting the situation. Specifically:

- 31% perceived social retaliation only
- 26% perceived a combination of professional retaliation, social retaliation, administrative action, and/or punishments
- 3% perceived professional retaliation only
- 2% perceived administrative action only
- 38% did not perceive any retaliation

In FY 2014, the RMWS found that of women who experienced a sexual assault and reported it to a military authority, 62% indicated they perceived some form of retaliation as a result of reporting the situation (Figure 26). Specifically:

- 53% perceived social retaliation
- 32% perceived professional retaliation
- 35% perceived administrative action
- 11% perceived a punishment for infraction
- 38% did not perceive any retaliation

The Department is extremely concerned about the persistent high rate of perceived retaliation endorsed by these survey respondents. Because the survey is confidential and the identities of the respondents are not known to the Department, there is no way to determine if the behavior being perceived by respondents is in fact directly related to the reporting of a sexual assault or for some other reason not known to the respondent. Nevertheless, these results indicate that even though the Department has taken specific action to assess and address this problem, more must be done to prevent retaliation.

**[Survivor Experience Survey] SES.** The Department continues to express concern over the potential for retaliation against survivors who make reports of sexual assault, the Department fielded several questions on this topic in the SES. Respondents were asked about their experiences with two types of retaliation: social retaliation (e.g. ignored by coworkers, blamed for situation) and professional retaliation<sup>117</sup> (e.g., loss of privileges, transferred to less favorable job) (Figure 27).<sup>118</sup> Of the 80% of respondents who made an Unrestricted Report, 59% indicated they *perceived social retaliation* and 40% indicated they *perceived professional retaliation* since they reported their sexual assault<sup>119</sup>o However, despite a large portion of survivors perceiving either social or professional retaliation, nearly three quarters of all respondents (73%) indicated, based on their overall experience of reporting, that *yes*, they would recommend others report their sexual assault, whereas 14% of respondents indicated *no* and 13% were *unsure* if they would recommend others report their sexual assault.

While the results of the SES cannot be generalized to all victims of sexual assault, there is considerable consistency between these results and the findings from the RMWS, noted previously. These findings are further evidence that despite significant effort from the Department, social and professional retaliation remain an area of concern for survivors. As this appears to be an aspect of the SAPR program that has not improved over the past few years, the Department will take specific action to address this problem more fully in FY 2015.

# Provisional Metrics on Sexual Assault Fiscal Year 2014

Retaliation Excerpts (prepared by JPP Staff)

## Metric 8: Percentage of Subjects with Victims Declining to Participate in the Military Justice Process

The Services reported that DoD commanders, in conjunction with their legal advisors, reviewed and made case disposition decisions for 2,419 subjects in FY 2014. However, the evidence did not support taking disciplinary action against everyone accused of a sexual assault crime. For example, disciplinary action is precluded (not possible) when victims decline to participate in the military justice process. In FY 2014, 10 percent of accused subjects whose cases were presented to command for consideration of action did not receive disciplinary action because their victims declined to participate in the justice process. As illustrated in Figure L, the percentage of subjects with victims declining to participate remained steady from FY 2009 to FY 2014, with the exception of a small increase in FY 2010. Although the majority of victims participate in the justice process, the Department continues to seek avenues for greater and sustained victim involvement in the justice system. Recent initiatives, such as the Special Victims' Counsel/Advocacy Program, are expected to encourage greater victim participation and engagement with the military justice process.

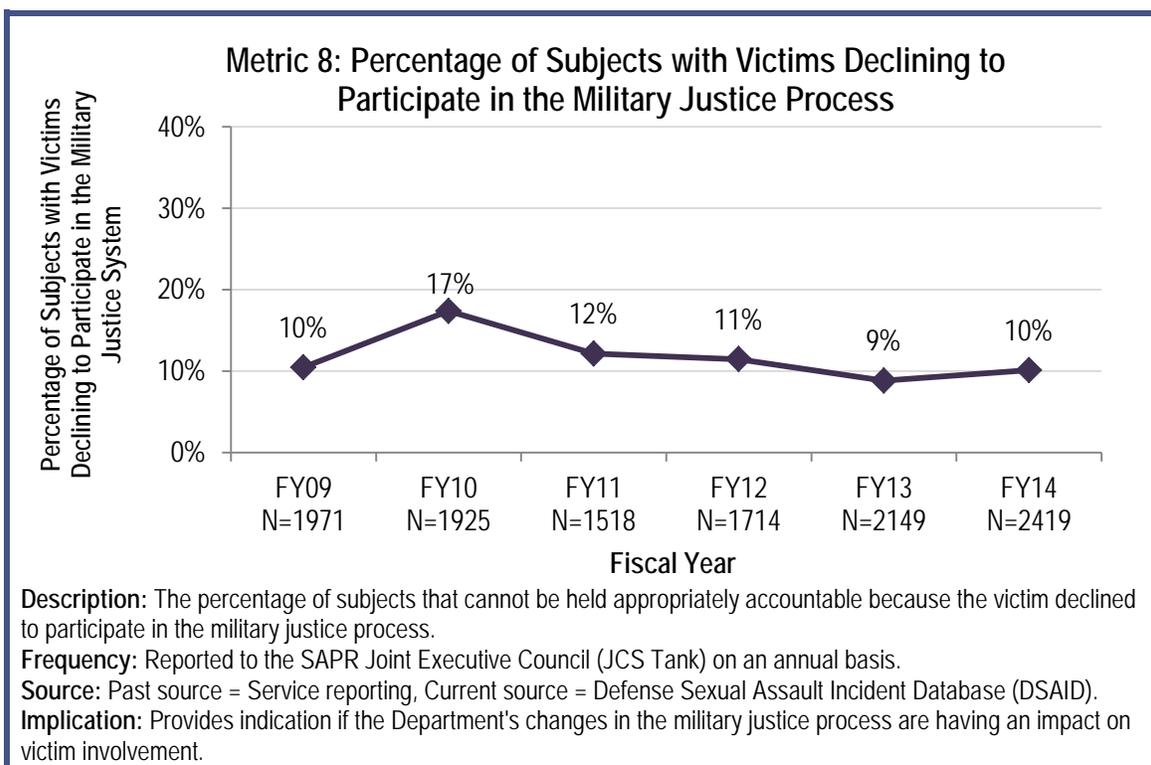


Figure L- Metric 8: Subjects with Victims Declining to Participate in the Military Justice Process

## Metric 9: Perceptions of Retaliation

It is the goal of the Department to have climate of confidence where victims feel free to report sexual assault, without any concern of retaliation or negative repercussions for doing so. It should be noted that for the following data, the Department did not conduct any follow-up or verification of the perceptions reported. As a result, someone who indicates that they perceived retaliation may not actually know why people are behaving

in a particular way towards him or her. It could be because the victim made a report of sexual assault or because of some other reason unknown to the victim.

Given the challenges associated with interpreting this data, the Department sought to sample a number of domains to get as full a picture of this phenomenon as possible:

- A. Command Climate Perspective
- B. The RAND Military Workplace Study
- C. The Survivor Experience Survey

#### *A. Command Climate Perspective*

The DEOCS survey included six items to assess command climate indicators that victims may be retaliated against for reporting. The items used a four-point scale ranging from “Not at all likely to “Very likely.” The responses to the items listed below were reverse coded such that a high score indicates a more favorable climate and combined into a four-point index:

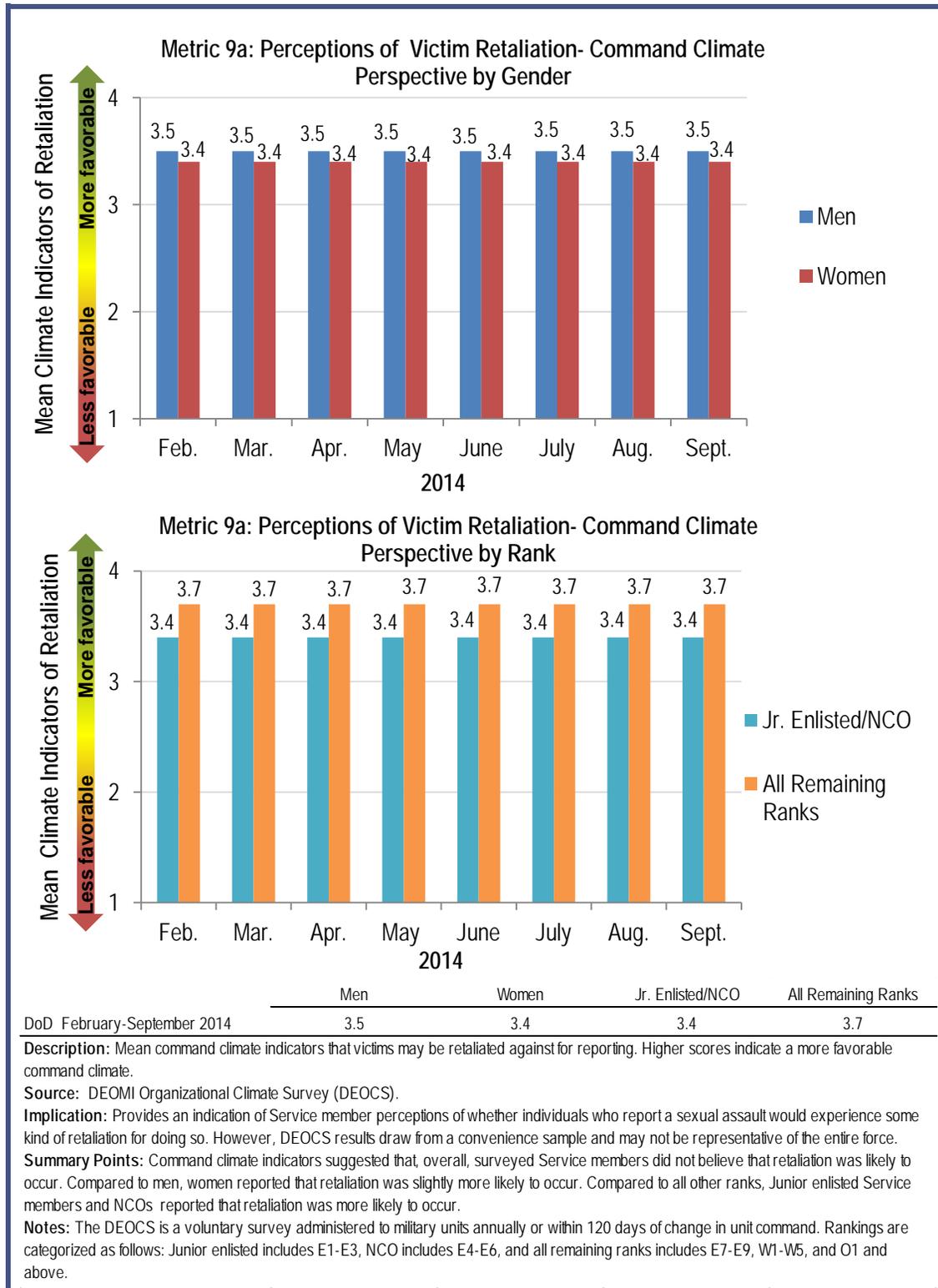
If someone were to report a sexual assault to your current chain of command, how likely is it that:

1. Unit members would label the person making the report a troublemaker.
2. Unit members would support the person making the report.
3. The alleged offender(s) or their associates would retaliate against the person making the report.
4. The chain of command would take steps to protect the safety of the person making the report.
5. The chain of command would support the person making the report.
6. The chain of command would take corrective action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault.

Overall, Service members who completed the DEOCS perceived that the potential for retaliation from their command and unit members to be unlikely (i.e. they perceived a favorable climate). However, men (3.5 out of 4.0) perceived a slightly more favorable climate with a lower likelihood of retaliation compared to women (3.4 out of 4.0; Figure M). Moreover, senior enlisted Service members and officers (E7-E9, W1-W5, and O1 and above, respectively; 3.7 out of 4.0) perceived a more favorable climate and that retaliation was less likely to occur compared to junior enlisted Service members and non-commissioned officers (E1-E3 and E4-E6, respectively; 3.4 out of 4.0). While between 100,000 and 200,000 personnel take the DEOCS each month, the respondents may not be completely representative of the force as a whole. The consistency indicated in monthly results is notable, given that each month represents a different group of respondents.<sup>9</sup>

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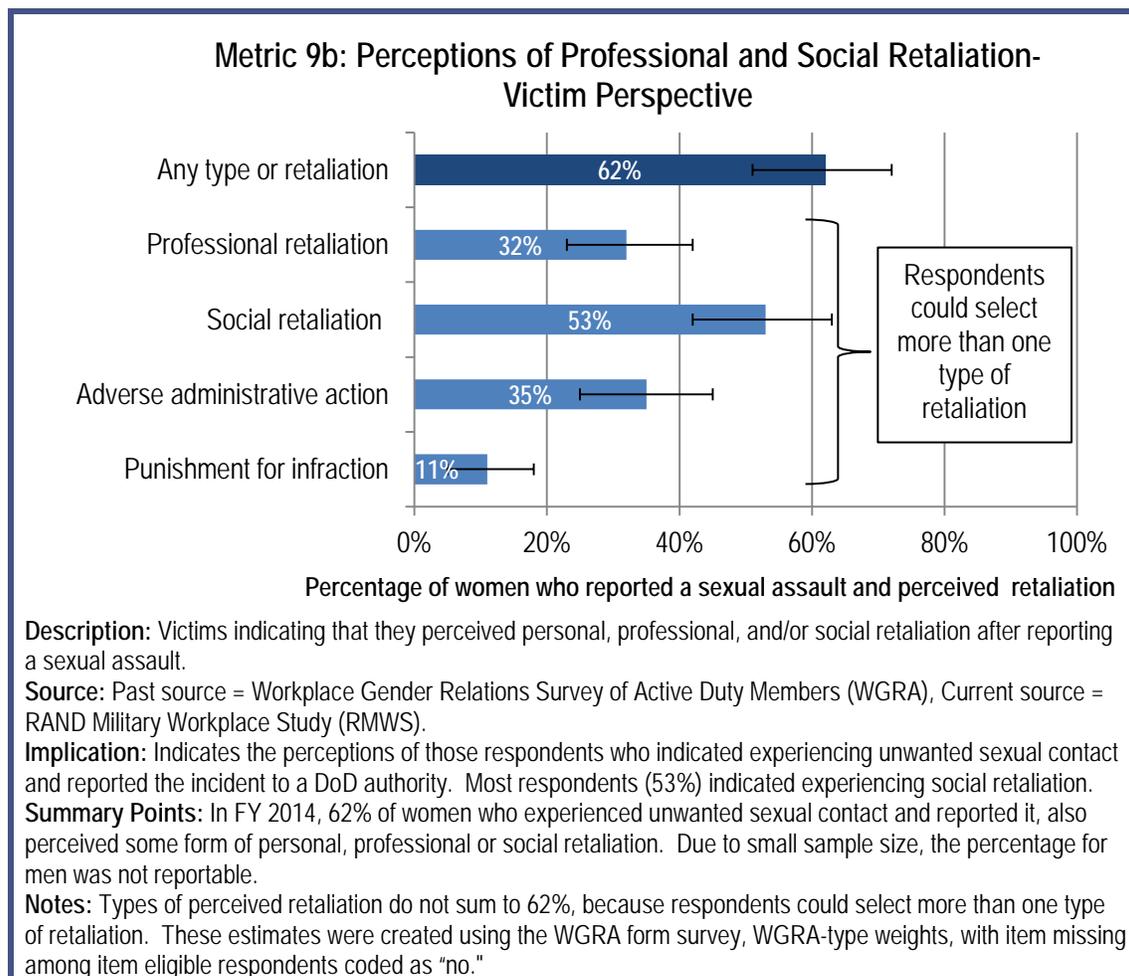
<sup>9</sup> As stated earlier, this is the first year that the DEOCS results have been used in this way, and the data have not been fully analyzed to determine scientific reliability and validity, representativeness, and sensitivity to changes in the military population. The DEOCS remains a valuable tool to assess climate on the unit level. However, the inferences that can be made in combining the data of many units for a DoD-wide or Service-wide picture of climate are subject to limitations. The Department will be reviewing its metric methodology in the forthcoming year to identify strengths and areas for improvement.



**Figure M- Metric 9a: Service Members Perceptions of Victim Retaliation – Command Climate Perspective**

**B. The RAND Military Workplace Study – WGRA Responses**

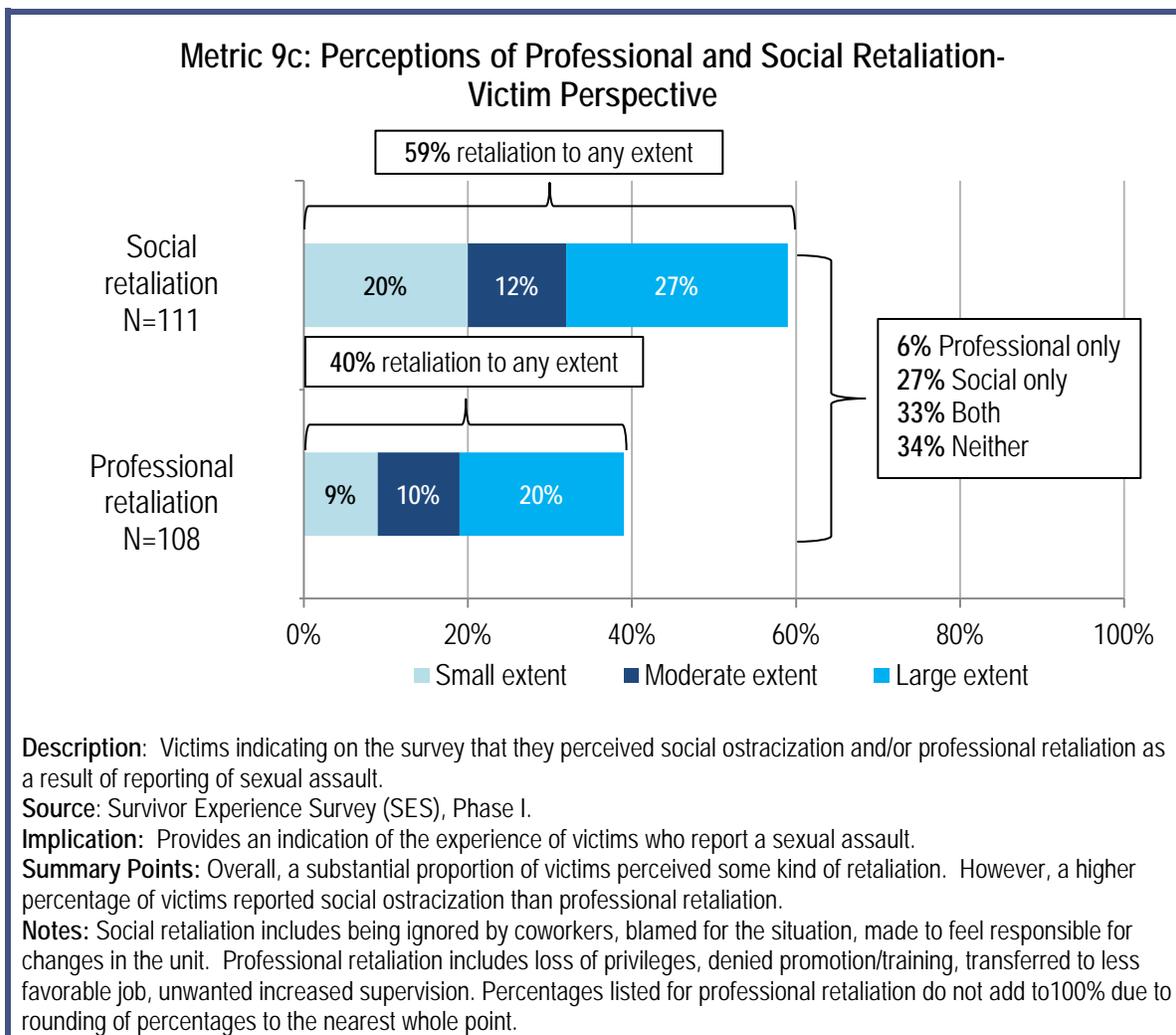
Of the 4.3 percent of women who indicated experiencing Unwanted Sexual Contact in the year preceding the survey, and who reported the matter to a military authority or organization, 62 percent perceived some form of retaliation, administrative action, and/or punishment. Specifically, the types of retaliation experienced are shown below in Figure N:



**Figure N- Metric 9b: Perceived Retaliation – Victim Perspective**

**C. Victim Perspective: Survivor Experience Survey (SES)**

In the SES, a similar pattern was observed, with 59 percent of respondents perceiving social retaliation and 40 percent perceiving professional retaliation (Figure O). The SES involves a convenience sample of victims who responded to a SARC’s invitation to take the survey. Nonetheless, the results on this item were within the margins of error associated with the similar item from the WGRA form, administered by RAND (Figure N), giving a good indication that the respondents to the SES had similar experiences as those respondents in the more representative RMWS.



**Figure O- Metric 9c: Perceived Retaliation – Victim Perspective**

That there is retaliation perceived of any kind is concerning, however additional information from the SES gives a greater understanding of the overall impact of those experiences on the individual. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a number of items that described their experience with their unit commander/director. Of the 64 percent of respondents who made an Unrestricted Report and spoke to their unit commander/director in response to the sexual assault, more than two-thirds agreed the unit commander/director *supported them* (82 percent), *took steps to address their privacy and confidentiality* (80 percent), *treated them professionally* (79 percent), *listened to them without judgment* (78 percent), and *thoroughly answered their questions* (70 percent). Across these items, less than one-fifth (between 14 and 18 percent) of respondents indicated they disagreed with those statements. Of the 64 percent of respondents who made an Unrestricted Report and spoke to their unit commander/director in response to the sexual assault, almost three-quarters (73 percent) indicated that overall they were satisfied with the unit commander/director’s response to the report of sexual assault, whereas 16 percent indicated they were dissatisfied.

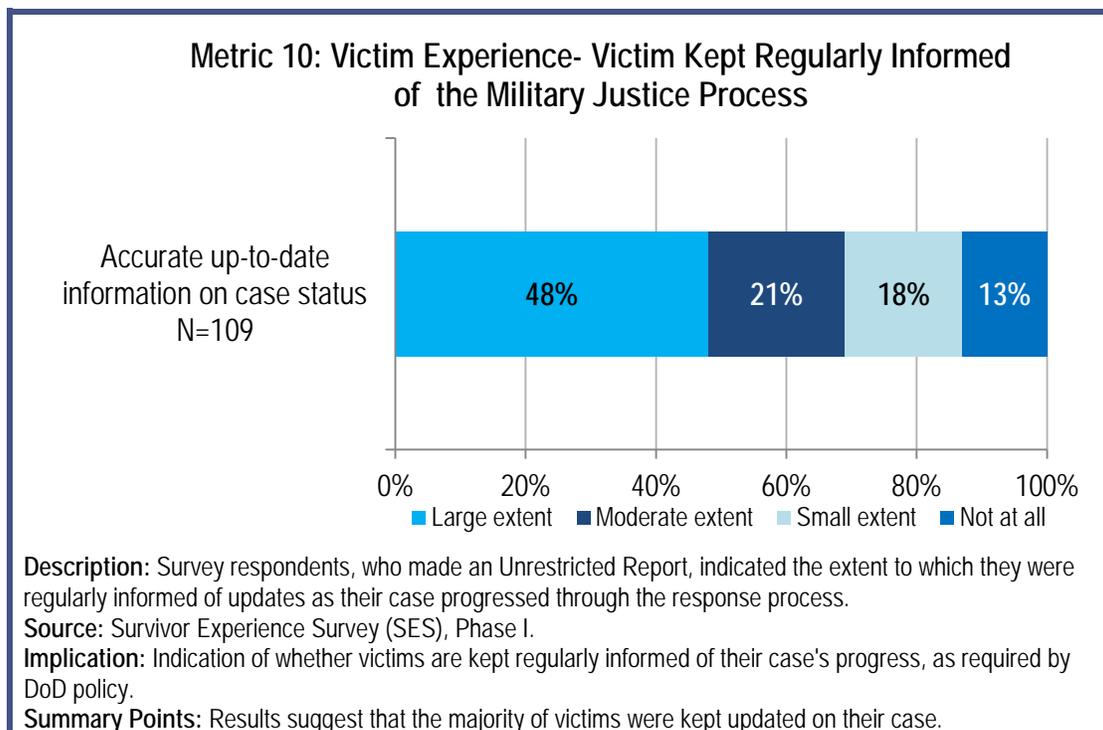
Respondents to the SES were less satisfied with other members of their chain of command. Of the 81 percent of respondents who made an Unrestricted Report and spoke to another member in their chain of command in response to the sexual assault, about two-thirds (61 percent) indicated that overall they were satisfied with the other member's response to the report of sexual assault. More than one quarter (29 percent) indicated they were dissatisfied with the other member's response to the sexual assault. Based on this, respondents to the SES appeared to have a better experience working with their commander than they did with others in their chain. This finding, while limited to the SES, may have broader applicability to DoD training initiatives, in that over the past two years DoD has worked to improve pre-command training for officers and senior enlisted members. This finding suggests that expanded leadership training on the SAPR program for other members of the chain of command may be warranted.

Finally, one last finding from the SES provides additional insight. Given the potential impact of one survivor's experience on the future decisions of others survivors to report, one of the ways the Department measures progress is whether respondents who report a sexual assault would recommend others report as well. In the *2014 SES*, nearly three quarters of respondents (73 percent) indicated, based on their overall experience of reporting, that *yes*, they would recommend others report their sexual assault, whereas 14 percent of respondents indicated *no* and 13 percent were *unsure* if they would recommend others report their sexual assault.

See Annex 2 for a full description of the methodology and results of the SES.

### **Metric 10: Victim Experience – Victim Kept Regularly Informed of the Military Justice Process**

As displayed in Figure P, 69 percent of victims who completed the SES reported that they were, to a large or moderate extent, kept informed of their case's progress. DoD policy requires that victims be kept informed of the legal proceedings against the accused perpetrator of their sexual assault. Commanders hold primary responsibility for informing victims on a monthly basis about the progress on their cases.



**Figure P- Metric 10: Victim Experience – Victim Kept Regularly Informed of the Military Justice Process**

### Metric 11: Perceptions of Leadership Support for SAPR

The DEOCS command climate survey included two questions on leadership support for sexual assault prevention and response. The items listed below used a four-point scale ranging from “Not at All” to “Great Extent.” The responses to the following items were coded such that a high score indicates higher perceived support:

To what extent does your chain of command:

1. Encourage victims to report sexual assault.
2. Create an environment where victims feel comfortable reporting sexual assault.

The responses to these items were combined into an index and averaged across all military respondents to the DEOCS each month. Overall, Service members who completed the DEOCS reported that their command supported sexual assault reporting by victims. While an overall encouraging trend was observed in DEOCS results, there is much work to be done to address observed differences in perceptions of command support for SAPR by gender and rank. Consistent with the pattern of results for previous DEOCS supported metrics, men (3.6 out of 4.0) perceived greater command support for victim reporting compared to women (3.4 out of 4.0; Figure Q). Additionally, senior enlisted Service members and officers (E7-E9, W1-W5, and O1 and above, respectively) perceived greater command support for SAPR (3.7 out of 4.0) compared to junior enlisted members and non-commissioned officers (E1-E3 and E4-E6, respectively; 3.5 out of 4.0).

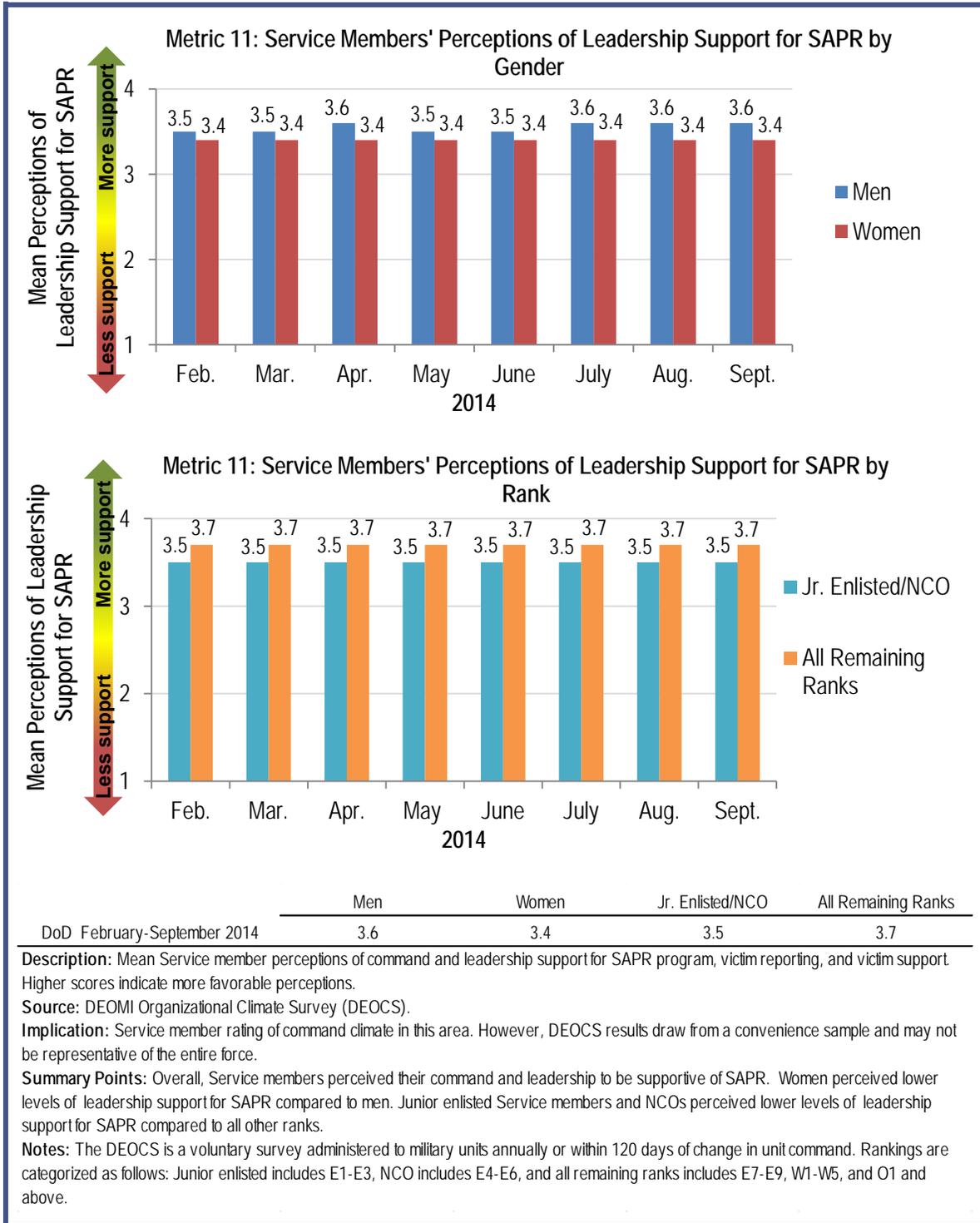


Figure Q- Metric 11: Service Members' Perceptions of Leadership Support for SAPR

# 2014 Department of Defense Report of Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

**Defense Manpower Data Center  
Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center  
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 04E25-01, Alexandria, VA 22350-4000**

*Selection of Participants:* Participation in the 2014 FGSAPR was voluntary. Each installation supplied DMDC-RSSC with a roster of all Service and National Guard members which was then randomized within clusters defined by gender and paygrade group. Service and National Guard members were contacted in order by their installation lead and asked if they would voluntarily participate in the focus group. Additional members were selected from the randomized lists as necessary to achieve ten to twelve committed members for each focus group session.

Randomly selected members received notification of their initial selection for the focus groups from their installation lead. The notification informed them that they had been selected to participate in a DoD-directed focus group addressing issues of sexual assault as part of the effort to understand issues and provide constructive feedback to senior DoD leadership. The notification made it clear that the study was a non-attributable, voluntary data collection where they would be asked to share their perspectives on questions related to sexual assault, with a focus on conduct, training, and policies. The members were told that the sessions would not ask questions about any personal experiences of sexual assault.

## ***Professional Retaliation***

The number of official reports received in 2013 by the Department represents only about 15% of the reports that could have been made based on the survey results from the 2012 WGRA. According to this survey, some members who experienced unwanted sexual behaviors might not have reported it officially to the Department because they feared some sort of professional retaliation from their chain of command (for example, their performance evaluations or chance for promotion would suffer; DMDC, 2013b). The Department prohibits this type of retaliation (punishable under section 892 of Title 10, United States Code) and intends to explore in more depth the types of retaliation survivors may experience, if any, and how leadership may address this issue.

### **Professional Retaliation**

- **Focus group participants indicated that survivors who make an unrestricted report might experience professional retaliation.**
  - *“If [the perpetrators] are in charge of you or if they have any say in what goes into your proficiency and conduct marks, that could go down.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“It's not just what they can do to your career but it's also... when I leave the new command could call this command and it spreads. Then when I got to the next unit, the stories just continue.”* (E5-E6 Female)
  - *“Alienate them, trying to force them out possibly, transferring them... to a different command structure where they're not going to be able to gain rank as quick.”* (E5-E6 Male)
- **Focus group participants indicated that issues related to professional retaliation are currently being addressed by policy.**
  - *“So I think there are steps to handle that that are already in place, because it's not something that anybody would tolerate because it's a definite violation of an article.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)
  - *“It's already been addressed under UCMJ. [If the] commander retaliates because of that, then he's facing UCMJ actions against him for that action he pulled.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)

### **Social Retaliation**

- **Focus group participants indicated that sexual assault survivors who make a report might experience negative reactions from their peers.**
  - *“[Y]our peers would judge you by thinking that you're like scandalous or that you brought it onto yourself.”* (E1-E4 Female)
  - *“It would be like the scarlet letter. Nobody's going to want to talk to her or him and [there would be a] breakdown in communication between that person and the rest of the unit.”* (E7-E9 Mixed Group)

### **Social Media and Retaliation**

- **Some focus group participants believed that members may use social media to retaliate against sexual assault survivors.**
  - *“I feel like it's just another venue to harass or belittle or single out the victim.”* (E3-E4 Female)
  - *“They [are] going to spread rumors just like the real world and Twitter, Facebook, you get something started and it goes all the way across. Those that have Facebook, Twitter, it will work across the whole base in a day, no problem.”*(E7-E9 Mixed Group)