

FACILITATOR'S
GUIDE

Aftermath of a Sexual Assault: Peer Responses

DEOMI SAPR Snapshots



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE USE

This facilitation guide is intended to be used alongside the “Aftermath of a Sexual Assault: Peer Responses” Snapshot Video. The goal of this guide is to generate and support discussion of key topics related to Sexual Assault Prevention and Response climate. The information contained within this guide will provide the facilitator with background knowledge of the topic, as well as information and questions to share with participants. Specifically, this guide outlines the:

- *Learning objective* of the video and corresponding discussion;
- key terminology and definitions;
- discussion questions tailored to the scenarios depicted in the video;
- supporting information on the concepts of *self-awareness* and *empathy*;
- discussion questions to enhance participants’ *self-awareness* and *empathy*;
- key take-aways; and
- available resources.

ICON GLOSSARY

Icon	Meaning
	Information
	Question for Discussion
	Key Take-Away



Learning Objective: To promote awareness of our behaviors and how they may be interpreted by a survivor of sexual assault.

Sexual assault not only impacts the victim, but also the unit as a whole. The video depicts unit members' responses after an individual makes an Unrestricted Report of sexual assault. Specifically, this video (a) targets some common or likely behaviors (e.g., avoiding the victim because of uncertainty regarding what to say/how to act around him/her) with unintentional consequences for the victim and (b) illustrates how unit members can put effort into maintaining work relationships with the victim, thus maintaining a healthy work climate.



Key Terminology and Definitions: Although this video depicts peer responses that consist of behaviors with unintentional consequences, unit members may have further questions about retaliation. This video does *not* illustrate actual retaliation, and facilitators should prepare to make that distinction clear.

Retaliation¹ is an umbrella term encompassing illegal, impermissible, or hostile actions taken by the chain of command or peers/coworkers as a result of making or being suspected of making a protected communication (e.g., a report of sexual assault or a complaint of sexual harassment).

Types	Examples
<p>Reprisal¹ is taking or threatening to take an unfavorable personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, for making or preparing to make a protected communication (as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 1034).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion interference • unwarranted disciplinary or other corrective action • punitive transfer or reassignment • unfavorable performance evaluation not supported by performance • unfair decision on pay, benefits, awards, or training • non-indicated referral for mental health evaluation • other significant downgrades in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with the military member's grade
<p>★ Ostracism² involves exclusion from social acceptance, privilege or friendship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the intent to discourage someone from reporting of a criminal offense or otherwise discourage the due administration of justice. • Because the individual reported a criminal offense or was believed to have reported a criminal offense.³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exclusion from social acceptance, activities or interactions • denying privilege of friendship • blaming • subjecting to insults or bullying

Other related behaviors include acts of **cruelty, oppression or maltreatment**¹ committed against an individual because the individual reported a criminal offense or was believed to have reported a criminal offense, when such acts are taken by those to whose orders the individual is subject.⁴ Cruelty, oppression, and maltreatment are acts that occur without a valid military purpose, and may include physical or psychological force or threat or abusive or unjustified treatment that results in physical or mental harm.

¹ Definitions described in the forthcoming *DoD Retaliation Prevention and Response Strategy*, v 6.0 (expected January 2016).

² Ostracism definitions vary slightly by service. Refer to Air Force Guidance Memorandum 2015-01 to Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2909; Secretary of the Navy Instruction (SECNAVIST) 5370.7D; and Army Directive 2014-20 for specific verbiage.

³ This portion of the definition applies to the Army only (as defined in the Army Directive 2014-20).

⁴ See paragraph 17c(2) of Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, Part IV Punitive Articles, 2012 Edition.



Video Questions for Discussion & Anticipated Responses

Questions consist of general questions (in bold) followed by more precise probing questions to drive introspection.

Question for Consideration & Discussion	Anticipated Responses
What did you observe in this video?	Two situations: (a) the group going to lunch and not inviting Beckson and (b) the friend playing basketball and asking Beckson to join.
How might the lunch conversation have made Beckson feel?	Responses should indicate that this conversation would have a negative impact on Beckson due to her feeling excluded/left out without understanding why.
How might the basketball interaction with Beckson have made Beckson feel?	Responses should indicate that this conversation would have a positive impact on Beckson because she is being included and given the opportunity to engage in her normal routine with her social group.
What were the differences in approaches the coworkers took in the lunch scenario and the basketball scenario?	The lunch coworkers' approach was avoidant and left Beckson not understanding why she was being left out. The basketball friend <i>communicated</i> with Beckson and remained inclusive, which showed support (in terms of remaining a friend/part of her social network).
What are some of the reasons why the lunch individuals may have acted that way?	The friends may have acted that way due to their own feelings of awkwardness and uncertainty about encountering the situation. They assumed giving Beckson space was the correct thing to do. Ultimately, their intentions were not bad; however, due to the lack of communication, their actions were perceived negatively.
If Beckson was your coworker, how would you have treated her?	Responses may vary. The goal here is to establish that neither approach is concretely <i>wrong</i> ; however, some approaches may be more favorably received. The key here is to be mindful and self-aware, and to consider the other person's perspective when you act.



Self-Awareness

Sometimes we are comfortable talking to or comforting someone we know; however, we may be uncomfortable if the individual is not a close friend or

is only an acquaintance. In these instances of discomfort, there can be uncertainty about how to interact or approach the situation. This uncertainty can lead to awkwardness and ultimately avoidance of the individual or interaction altogether. Be aware that you may experience these feelings of awkwardness and uncertainty, and although they may be common, they do not necessarily need to be a roadblock for interacting with the individual.



Think of a time when someone you knew had experienced a trauma.

Did you feel confident or certain as to how to approach them?

What do you think led to that feeling?



Awareness of your own feelings is the first step to maintaining relationships and open communication.



Empathy

Sexual assault is a traumatic event that can completely disrupt an individual's life. The feelings that can occur afterwards can vary. Survivors may experience some or all of the following:

- feeling powerless
- lowered self-confidence
- lowered self-esteem
- depression
- anger
- anxiety
- fear
- embarrassment
- guilt or shame
- feeling emotionally numb
- denial
- flashbacks
- difficulty sleeping

As a survivor cycles through different feelings and sometimes experiences multiple feelings at the same time, it is difficult to manage these feelings and not disrupt his or her life. In addition to the impact on the survivor's emotions, the struggle to readjust to life after sexual assault may lead to feelings of alienation or isolation.



Understanding and showing empathy for this experience will prevent feelings of alienation.



Tips to Take Away:

Being afraid to say the wrong thing should not turn into saying nothing at all. Sometimes simply not changing your behavior sends a clear message that the current situation does not change your relationship. Other times, it helps to talk. Below are some simple phrases that communicate a message of support for a unit member who experienced the trauma of sexual assault, when the conversation is warranted. Remember, if the survivor comes to you to talk, sometimes the best action is to simply listen.



What will your approach be if a coworker is going through a traumatic experience?

What you can say:	How this can translate:
I'm so sorry.	Showing that you care
There is no wrong way to feel.	Reassuring and reducing self-blame (often propagated by society)
How can I help? or, Can I do anything for you?	Empowering and providing choice to a survivor (not telling them what they should do) and showing support
I'm always here if you want to talk.	Showing that you are a friend and supporter

Resources

<http://www.sapr.mil/>

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office's (SAPRO) official website is the source for policy, information, research, news articles, and resources about prevention and response programs in the DoD.

<https://www.safehelpline.org/>

The Safe Helpline website provides live and anonymous support, can identify sources of help available near you, and provides valuable information about understanding the effects of sexual assault.