

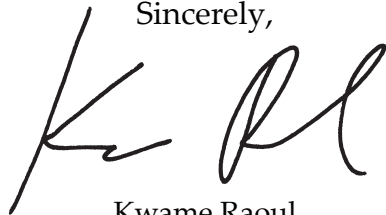
A Message from
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL
KWAME RAOUL

Some service members have experienced sexual trauma from events that took place while serving. Those experiences can affect one's mental and physical health beyond active-duty service, with ramifications of sexual trauma lasting years after separation from the military.

If you are a veteran confronting the impact of military sexual trauma, you have rights and may be entitled to benefits. There are laws that ensure your right to receive the care you require. Whether the event was reported or not, it is vital veterans know about and have access to necessary care and resources so they can live happy, healthy and productive lives.

If you need help or believe your rights may have been violated, I urge you to contact my office's Military and Veterans Rights Bureau at 1-800-382-3000. Your wellness is important and you deserve all of the resources we can make available.

Sincerely,



Kwame Raoul
Illinois Attorney General

RESOURCES FOR HELP

Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs
www2.illinois.gov/veterans/pages/default.aspx

Illinois Joining Forces
www.illinoisjoiningforces.org
1-833-INFO-IJF (463-6453)

National Association of County Veterans
Service Officers
www.nacvso.org

The National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-SAFE (7233)

National Intimate Partner Violence Hotline
800-897-LINK (5465)

The National Sexual Assault Hotline
800-656-HOPE (4673)

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org

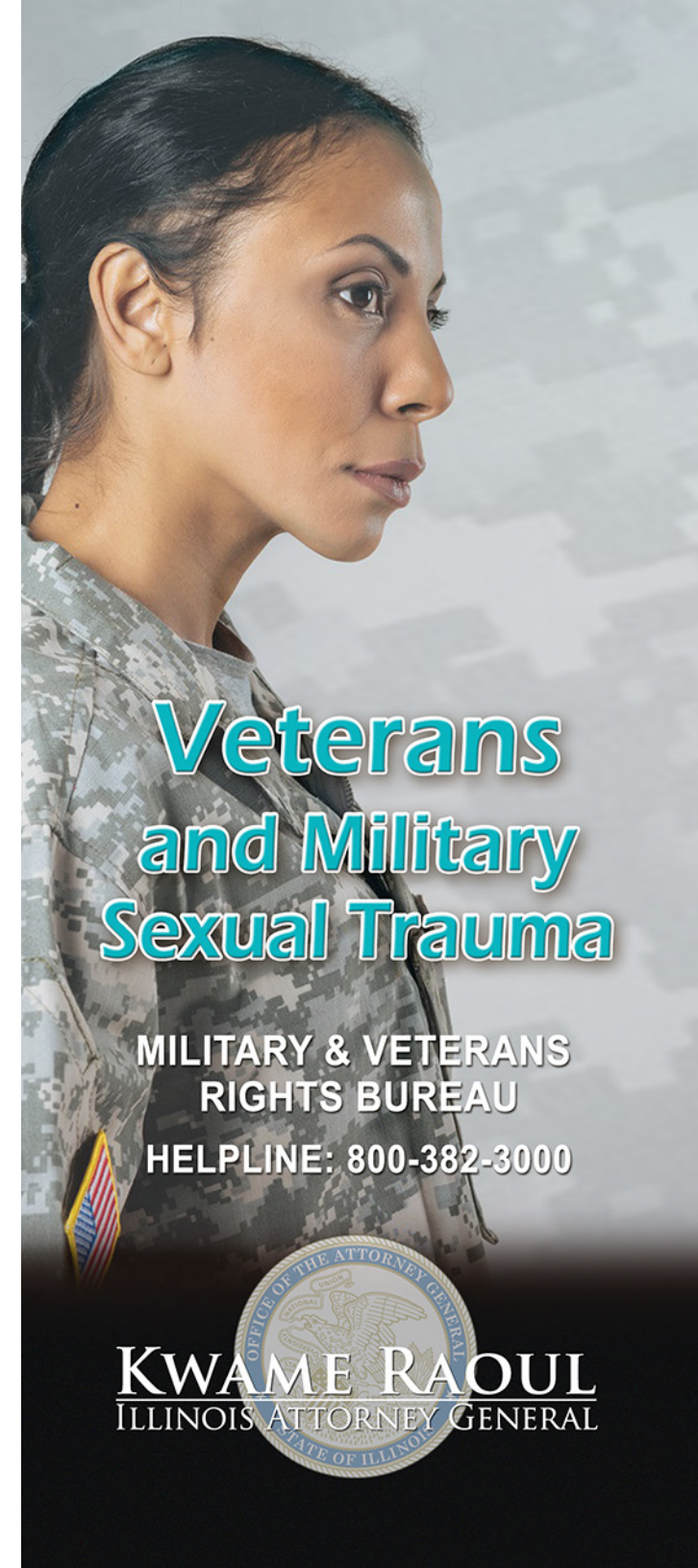
National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-8255 (Press 1 for Veterans Crisis Line)

Protect Our Defenders
www.protectourdefenders.com

Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)
www.servicewomen.org

USDVA
www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome

USDVA MST Coordinator/Women
Veteran Program Manager
www.vetcenter.va.gov/Military_Sexual_Trauma.asp



Veterans and Military Sexual Trauma

MILITARY & VETERANS
RIGHTS BUREAU
HELPLINE: 800-382-3000



What is Military Sexual Assault?

Military Sexual Assault, as defined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), refers to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred while an individual was serving in the military.

What is Military Sexual Trauma?

The definition of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) given by federal law (U.S. Code 1720D of Title 38) and used by the VA is: psychological trauma resulting from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty or serving on orders for training.

Who Can Receive Help?

All active duty service members, National Guard and Reservists – as well as military veterans, regardless of gender, era of service, discharge status, or if the crime was reported to law enforcement/military.

Help for Survivors of MST

If you (or someone you know) are currently serving or served in the military and are a survivor of sexual assault or harassment, help is available.

In addition to the resources listed in this brochure, please call Attorney General Raoul's Military and Veterans Helpline at 1-800-382-3000 to be connected to the resources near you.

Signs of Military Sexual Trauma

MST can affect survivors, mentally and physically, long after the traumatic incident occurs. Following are just some signs to watch for – in yourself and others.

- Strong emotions (anger, irritability)
- Feelings of numbness
- Difficulty feeling safe
- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble with attention, concentration or memory
- Problems with alcohol or other substances
- Memories or nightmares
- Trouble with intimate and non-intimate relationships
- Physical health problems
- Eating disorders
- Suicidal behaviors

Facts About MST

- You do not need a VA service-connected disability rating, and no documentation is required to be eligible for free MST-related treatment through the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- There is a wide array of free services available to MST survivors – through the military, the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as nonprofit organizations.
- Post-Traumatic Stress is the most common mental health diagnosis related to experiencing a personal assault or MST.
- Veterans can apply for disability compensation for any current difficulties related to their service, including MST.
- To apply for disability compensation, contact an MST specialist and/or Women Veterans Coordinator at your local VA Regional Office.
- MST is a major health care issue that warrants necessary care and treatment.

Sources:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/serviceconnected/MST.pdf>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/US-CODE-2011-title38/html/USCODE-2011-title38-partII-chap17-subchapII-sec1720D.htm>

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/types/sexual_trauma_military.asp

