

## Resources from the MVFI/VHWF Lived Experiences Series: Military Sexual Trauma

**Date: Tuesday February 9, 2021**

**Disclaimer:** Thank you for joining us for MVFI/VHWF Lived Experiences. Our session today, Substance Misuse will be recorded for both the MVFI and VHWF websites.

Please note, this event **will be recorded** for the sponsoring organizations website. We encourage interaction but do note if your camera is on your may be recorded. We ask that all participants who plan to participate with their video on to please fill out [THIS Consent Form](#). Thanks for your support in sharing our important series with others who may benefit from our discussion. Please feel free to view

**Coming Soon MVFI Archival recordings, Available on the [MVFI Recorded Event Site](#).**

### **Guest Panelists:**

**Patti Gerhauser (She/Her/Hers):** Post 9/11 veteran, wife, mom of two, community organizer and veteran advocate. Patti is a U.S. Navy veteran who served as an AEGIS spy radar tactician on the USS Gettysburg, and deployed to the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden in support of the Global War on Terror and UN Task Force 151. As a civilian, Patti has pursued a career in the non-profit sector, including roles in outreach, adult education, community organizing, advocacy and community development. She currently serves as the Executive Director for the veteran service organization RISE: Rank & File. Patti holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a Master of Arts degree in Intercultural Communication and Conflict Management.

**Aryanna Hunter (She/Her/Hers):** Iraq War veteran, mom of three, author, and veteran advocate. Enlisting just weeks after the terror attacks of 9/11, Aryanna served in the United States Army with the XVIII Airborne Corp on the front-lines during Operation Iraqi. In 2017, Aryanna ran for Lt. Governor against an incumbent, and co-founded a political action committee with a mission to level the financial playing field in politics, called Fight the Power PAC. Currently, Aryanna is the Director in the Office of Veterans Services for the University of Pittsburgh. She also serves as the Chief Operations Officer for the veteran service organization RISE: Rank & File. Aryanna holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, an MBA, and a Master's degree in Public Administration, Aryanna is now pursuing her Ph.D. in Community Engagement at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA.

**Michael D. Levy, Ph.D (He/Him/His):** Michael D. Levy, Ph.D. is a graduate of New York University's Counseling Psychology Program. Clinically, Dr. Levy is trauma-focused and completed his psychology internship at the VA St. Louis Healthcare System delivering evidence-based psychotherapies (CPT/PE) to a diverse group of Veterans who have experienced various forms of trauma (military sexual trauma, child abuse, intimate partner violence, combat, and race-based trauma). He is currently completing a PTSD-focused fellowship at the Baltimore VA where he continues this work, with a specialization in the provision of care to Veterans affected by MST. Paramount to Dr. Levy's approach to his scholarly and clinical work is a contextual consideration of intersectionality and the role that majority culture/systems play in perpetuating oppression of marginalized groups.

Dr. Levy obtained his Bachelor's degree in Psychology from New York University, and later received his Masters degree from Columbia's Teachers College in Clinical Psychology.

### **Additional Information:**

For more information on the presenters and to find out about upcoming events, please visit their websites:

### **Presenters/Guest Panelist Sites:**

- [The Military, Veterans, & Families Initiative](#)
- [Veterans Health and Wellness Foundation:](#)

### **Additional Resources:**

VA Resources – all resources below can be found on [VA MST Sharepoint](#)

- [VA's Health Care Services for Military Sexual Trauma \(MST\)](#)
- [Top 10 things all healthcare and service professionals should know about VA services for Veterans with MST](#)
- [Women and MST](#)
- [Strength and Recovery – Men Overcoming Military Sexual Trauma](#)
- [You're not alone in recovering from Military Sexual Trauma \(English\)](#)
- [You're not alone in recovering from Military Sexual Trauma \(Spanish\)](#)
- [MST Factsheet](#)
- [Disability Compensation for Conditions Related to MST](#)

### **Non-VA Resources**

- [Cohen Veteran Network](#)
  - For predominantly post-9/11 servicemembers (regardless of discharge status) as well as their family members
  - Free, short-term
  - Individual, couple, and family therapy services.
- [Me too MST](#)
- [RISE: Rank and File Facebook Page](#)
- [Rise: Rank and File](#)



## FACTS ON UNITED STATES MILITARY SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Statistics from the 2016 DoD SAPR Annual Report and its appendices/annexes, unless otherwise noted  
[www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/rmws/publications.html](http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/rmws/publications.html) [www.sapr.mil/index.php/annual-reports](http://www.sapr.mil/index.php/annual-reports)  
Updated January 2018

### Sexual Violence Remains Pervasive

- **14,900** members (8,600 women and 6,300 men) were sexually assaulted in 2016. Rates of penetrative assault were unchanged from 2014.
- Most victims were sexually assaulted more than once, resulting in over **41,000** assaults in 2016 alone.
- Over **1 in 4 women** and **1 in 3 men** were assaulted by someone in their chain of command.

### Vast Majority of Cases Go Un-Reported

- **83%** of victims did **not** report the crime in 2016.

### Retaliation Is the Norm

- **58% of women** and **60% of men** who reported a sexual assault face retaliation.
- **77%** of retaliation reports alleged that retaliators were in the reporter's chain of command.
- A **third** of victims are discharged after reporting, typically **within 7 months** of making a report.<sup>i</sup>
- Victims received **harsher discharges**, with 24% separated under less than fully honorable conditions, compared to 15% of all service members.<sup>ii</sup>

### Low Trust and Satisfaction in System

- **1 in 10** victims dropped out of the justice process—a rate unchanged since 2013.
- Over **1 in 4** victims who did not report feared retaliation from their command or coworkers.
- Nearly **1 in 3** victims who did not report feared the process would be unfair or nothing would be done.
- **1 in 3 women** and **over half of men** were dissatisfied with their treatment by their chain of command.

### Sexual Assault is More Common in a Military Context

- In 2014, rates were **50%** higher among active-duty women, and over **100%** higher among men, than in the Reserves.

### Conviction and Prosecution Rates

- Prosecution and conviction rates fell dramatically from prior years.
- In 2016, of cases where the military could take action, only **13%** (389) were prosecuted and just **4%** (124) of offenders were convicted of a sex offense.

### High Demand for VA Care

- **1,307,781** outpatient visits took place at the VA for Military Sexual Trauma (MST)-related care in 2015.<sup>iii</sup>
- **1 in 4** female and **1 in 100** male veterans who use the VA screen positive for MST.<sup>iv</sup>
- **40%** of woman homeless veterans have faced MST.<sup>v</sup>

### Sexual Harassment is Alarming High

- **128,000** service members (1 in 4 women, 1 in 15 men) faced severe and persistent sexual harassment or gender discrimination in 2016.
- **Most victims** were harassed or discriminated against by someone in their chain of command.

### Good Order and Discipline at Risk

- Service members who are sexually harassed are at **significantly greater risk** of sexual assault.
- **1 in 4** survivors of either sexual assault or sexual harassment/discrimination took steps to leave the military as a result.

---

Definitions: **Sexual assault** in the survey corresponds to crimes defined by Uniform Code of Justice (UCMJ) Article 120 (rape & sexual assault) and Article 80 (attempts). **Sexual harassment** is defined in federal law and military regulations, and includes a pervasive and severe sexually hostile work environment that interferes with the ability to do one's job and/or sexual quid pro quo. **Gender discrimination**, also defined in law and regulations, refers to gender-based mistreatment that results in harm to one's career.

---

<sup>i</sup> Department of Defense (DoD) Inspector General, *Evaluation of the Separation of Service Members Who Made a Report of Sexual Assault* (2016), <http://goo.gl/qUjZmm>

<sup>ii</sup> DoD IG report; Veterans Legal Clinic, Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School, *Underserved: How the VA Wrongfully Excludes Veterans with Bad Paper* (2016), <https://goo.gl/ZMXAPq>

<sup>iii</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, Patient Care Services, Mental Health Services, MST Support Team, *FY 2015 Summary of MST-Related Outpatient Care* (2016)

<sup>iv</sup> "Military Sexual Trauma," Department of Veterans Affairs, last modified May 2015, <https://goo.gl/EBKTck>

<sup>v</sup> J Pavao, JA Turchik, JK Hyun, et al., "Military Sexual Trauma Among Homeless Veterans," *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 28 Suppl 2 (2013)



Counseling and Psychological Services

# SURVIVING TO THRIVING

with Shereen Ayoubi and Nicole Hedrick

Receive support in your journey towards healing after  
having survived sexual assault that occurred during  
adolescence and/or adulthood

CALL (703) 993-2380 TO SCHEDULE AN  
INITIAL CONSULTATION

**FRIDAYS, 1-2:30PM**  
**VIA WEBEX**

# FREE POST TRAUMATIC STRESS THERAPY GROUP FOR FEMALE VETERANS

Are you bothered by...

- Flashbacks?
- Feeling on guard or on edge?
- Feeling detached from family and friends?
- Experiencing nightmares and difficulty sleeping?

**IF YES, PLEASE CONSIDER SIGNING UP FOR GMU CENTER  
FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES'S POST TRAUMATIC  
STRESS THERAPY GROUP BASED ON THE LATEST  
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH!**

Groups meet weekly via telehealth for 12 consecutive weeks, beginning approximately March 1st. Sessions will be **Mondays from 6:00-7:30PM**. There is no cost associated with the therapy group.

For more information about this and other groups contact: GMU Center for Psychological Services **(703)-993-1370** OR **<http://psyclinic.gmu.edu/>**

