



Resources for Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma

What is Military Sexual Trauma (MST)?

Make the Connection, a program of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, explains:

During their service, both female and male Service members sometimes have upsetting, unwanted sexual experiences, including sexual assault or sexual harassment. "Military sexual trauma" or MST is the term used by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to refer to these experiences. The official definition of MST used by VA is given by federal law (U.S. Code 1720D of Title 38). It is:

Psychological trauma, which in the judgment of a VA mental health professional, resulted 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 active duty for training.

Sexual harassment is defined as "repeated, unsolicited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature which is threatening in character."

In more concrete terms, MST includes any sexual activity where you were involved against your will. You may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Or, no physical force may have been used but you were coerced or pressured into sexual activities. For example, you may have been threatened with negative consequences for refusing to cooperate. Or it may have been suggested that you would get faster promotions or better treatment in exchange for sex. These are all signs of MST.

Military sexual trauma also includes sexual experiences that happened while you were not able to consent to sexual activities, such as if you were intoxicated. Other MST experiences include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing, threatening, offensive remarks about your body or your sexual activities, and threatening and unwelcome sexual advances. If these experiences occurred while you were on active duty or active duty for training, they are considered to be MST.

<https://www.maketheconnection.net/conditions/military-sexual-trauma/>

Local VA Resources:

MST Coordinators

- Every VA health care facility has an MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues and who can assist Veterans in accessing care.
- **South Carolina VA MST Coordinator:**
 - **Dr. Shantel Edmonds, 803-776-4000 ext 7329**

The VA provides free treatment for any physical or mental health conditions related to a Veteran's experiences of MST. No documentation of the MST experience or VA disability compensation rating is required. Some Veterans can receive this free MST-related care even if they are not eligible for other VA care.

Former service members with an Other Than Honorable discharge and current service members can also receive certain MST-related services. Contact the MST Coordinator.

MST-related outpatient services are available at every VA medical center and many VA community-based outpatient clinics. Services are organized differently at different facilities and MST-related care is available even if a facility does not have a specific “MST treatment team.” Mental health services include psychological assessment and evaluation, medication evaluation and treatment, and individual and group psychotherapy.

For Veterans needing more intensive treatment and support, VA also provides MST-related mental health treatment in residential or inpatient settings.

Vet Center

MST-related outpatient counseling is available at no cost.

Address: 3 Caledon Court, Suite B, Greenville, SC 29615

Phone: 864-271-2711

Other Local Resources:

Julie Valentine Center

Julie Valentine Center advocates for and supports survivors of sexual assault and child abuse in Greenville County. We ensure that survivors are respected, valued and their voices are heard. Some of our core values include trust, compassion, empowerment, accountability, and inclusion.

- JVC offers therapy and survivor support groups
- **24-hour Rape Crisis Hotline - 864-467-3633**
 - Any survivor, at any time, for any reason
 - You can call immediately after an assault, years, or decades after an assault or abuse

Address: 2905 White Horse Road, Greenville, SC 29611

Phone: 864-331-0560

Safe Homes Rape Crisis Coalition

Provides services to survivors of sexual assault in Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties.

Their mission is to use collective voices to address the impact of domestic and sexual violence by providing quality services to those affected and to create social change through education, training, and activism.

- SHRCC offers crisis counseling, individual, and family therapy
- Support groups are offered
- **24-hour Crisis Hotline – 864-583-9803, toll free Cherokee and Union Counties - 800-273-5066**
 - Any survivor
 - Seeking support, resources, hospital accompaniment, and/or shelter
 - Whether you need immediate assistance or are working to heal

Address: 236 Union Street, Spartanburg, SC 29302

Phone: 864-583-9803

Pickens County Advocacy Center

The purpose of the Pickens County Advocacy Center is to provide immediate 24-hour response to sexual assault victims and their families in Pickens County.

- PCAC offers counseling and survivor advocacy
- **24-hour Crisis Hotline – 864-442-5500**
 - Seeking support, resources, or information

Easley Location

Address: 5190 Calhoun Memorial Highway, Suite A & B, Easley, SC 29640

Phone: 864-442-5500

Clemson Location

Address: 105 Wall Street, Suite 10-A, Clemson, SC 29631

Phone: 864-722-5353

Foothills Alliance- Sexual Trauma Center

The Sexual Trauma Center provides multiple services to respond to the needs of child and adult sexual trauma survivors in Anderson and Oconee counties. The center provides free support for survivors, family members and others involved in the survivor's recovery.

- Offers individual and family therapy
- Support groups for survivors of sexual assault, their families, and others affected by the trauma
- **24-hour Crisis Hotline – 1-864-231-7273 or 1-800-585-8952**
 - Any survivor, any time, for any reason
 - Seeking support, resources, or information

Anderson County Location

Address: 216 East Calhoun Street, Anderson, SC 29621

Phone: 864-231-7273

Oconee County Location

Address: 102 Lura Lane, Walhalla, SC 29691

Phone: 864-261-6111

Crisis Hotlines:

These can be used to talk and have someone listen, to get resources, or if you are in a crisis. 24/7, 365 days a year. Confidential.

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 then press 1

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

Local Crisis Line: 864-271-8888

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255