**Newsletter Blurb**

**Support MST Survivors on Their Path Toward Healing**

Military sexual trauma, or MST, is the term VA uses to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment that occurred during military service. Healing after MST can take time; for some survivors, the experience affects their [physical and mental health](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/index.asp), work, relationships, or everyday life, even many years later. You can help survivors navigate their own path toward healing, no matter how long it’s been since they experienced MST or how it’s affecting them now.

MST affects more people than you may think. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has helped MST survivors of all service branches, ages, races, gender identities, and sexual orientations by providing compassionate care. VA’s MST-related services are free for Veterans and former Service members who experienced MST.

Because everyone is unique, VA offers flexible treatment options tailored to meet each survivor’s needs and preferences. Eligibility for VA’s MST-related care is expansive, and no documentation of the MST experience is required. Survivors do not need to have reported the experience at the time it occurred, to have sought care within a certain time frame, or to have applied for service connection.

With the message “We believe you, **and we believe in you**,” VA is reaching out to survivors and their families, friends, and supporters throughout Sexual Assault Awareness Month this April. To help VA raise awareness, visit [www.MentalHealth.va.gov/SAAM](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/SAAM/index.asp), where you’ll find helpful resources and materials you can explore and share with others. By spreading the word and learning more about this topic, you can help MST survivors move forward on their healing journey.

If you or someone you know experienced MST and is interested in learning more, contact your [local VA medical center](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/) and ask to speak with the MST Coordinator, a professional who specializes in connecting survivors with the care and services that are right for them.

***VA believes in MST survivors***,*and we believe your support and ours can help them heal.*