

SHARP Transformation: A Victim-Centric Perspective

Transcript: U.S. Army Resilience Directorate Outreach Webinar

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Presenters:

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Sergeant First Class Chatonna Spicer, *Senior Drill Sergeant and former Sexual Assault Response Coordinator*

Lytaria Walker: [00:00:07](#) Welcome to the Army Resilience Directorate Outreach Webinar for April. At this time, all participants are in listen-only mode. However, you may ask questions at any time by placing them in the Q&A box. There will be several opportunities for questions throughout the webinar, and we should have some time at the very end as well. Today's webinar has been approved for 1.5 hours of live continuing education units. Participants must obtain CEU certification through their local commanders by downloading the webinar presentation slide as attendance verification. This slide will be posted in the chat box at the end of the webinar and emailed to registered participants.

Lytaria Walker: [00:01:03](#) Please note that the views of ARD outreach webinar presenters are their very own and are not endorsed by the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense. This month our guests are Ms. Andrea Bryant, Ms. Jill Londagin, and Sergeant First Class Chatonna Spicer. Andi Bryant is the Acting Deputy Director and Chief Strategy Officer at the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. She joined the office in December of 2022 and oversees the Director's Action Group leading strategic initiatives, communications, and long-term operational planning. Previously, Bryant was Deputy Director at the Department of the Air Force's Integrated Resilience Directorate. Her experience also includes nearly a decade at the Department of the Navy's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office from 2011 to 2020. She began her work in the SAPR program with the Marine Corps in June of 2010. Bryant holds a bachelor's in psychology from James Madison University and a master of education in human resource development from the University of Illinois. Ms. Londagin has served as the SHARP Program Director since September of 2020. Previously, she was the program director for Substance Use Disorder Clinical Care and Suicide Risk Management at the Office of the Surgeon General. In addition, she served on a behavioral health

Red Team. Currently a public administration doctoral student at Liberty University, Londagin earned her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Fayetteville State University and her Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Liberty University with a special focus on military sexual trauma.

Lytaria Walker:

[00:03:15](#)

Our third presenter, Sergeant First Class Chatonna Spicer, a Senior Drill Sergeant and former Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, enlisted in the Army in January of 2011 and completed basic combat training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and advanced individual training at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. Her military assignments include tours with the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade at Fort Mead, Maryland; Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion 2nd ID at Camp Red Cloud South Korea; Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion 4th ID at Fort Carson, Colorado; the 715th Military Intelligence Battalion at Scofield Barracks, Hawaii; and the 305th Military Intelligence Battalion at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Georgia Southern University and is pursuing a master of science degree in criminal justice from Liberty University. Ladies, thank you so much for joining us today. Let's start with Ms. Jill Londagin. Ms. Londagin, please tell us your story as a victim and a survivor.

Ms. Jill Londagin...:

[00:04:58](#)

Thank you so much. First thing I want to say is good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to everybody calling from all over the world. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to hear from us today. We hope that this will be an enlightening conversation and show where we're going, where we really want to focus on the victim within our program. So, as a survivor of sexual assault in the military, I sit before you today to share my story and shed light on the pervasive issue of sexual assault within our armed forces. My experience has left me with lasting physical and emotional scars, and I know that I'm not alone. My first sexual assault occurred when I was a young private.

Ms. Jill Londagin...:

[00:05:50](#)

My platoon sergeant, a man in a position of power over me, pressured me to engage in sexual acts with him. He told me that this was the way that things were in the military, and he told me that all women in my unit experienced the same treatment. My second assault came from my medical team leader who forced himself upon me after a night of heavy drinking. I was helpless to stop him. The emotional trauma stayed with me long after the physical scars have healed, and the assaults didn't stop there. I was also targeted by a high ranking command sergeant major who called me into his office and expressed his sexual desire for me and would continue to harass me and forced

himself upon me while we were deployed to Iraq. The constant harassment and abuse took a severe toll on my personal and social life. I was unable to maintain healthy relationships and often turned to excessive drinking to numb the pain, which often involved drinking a couple beers in my closet barracks room before work because I didn't want to get caught by my roommate. I suffered with bouts of depression and anxiety and was even prescribed medication to cope with the trauma.

- Lytaria Walker: [00:07:11](#) Ms. Londagin, thank you for sharing your story. Let's move on now to Sergeant First Class Spicer.
- Sergeant First ...: [00:07:19](#) Hi, good morning, good afternoon, wherever you are around the world. My sexual assault happened when I was at my very first duty station which was Fort Mead, Maryland. I was a young specialist, bright in the Army, and it was a CW2, and he took me under his mentorship. The way that started was it was more of a religious-type guiding. We had similar backgrounds with our Christianity, and he used that as a way to get close to me, and he would put pressure on me with biblical scriptures. He made me feel as though this is what, as he would say, God was telling him needed to happen. And at the time, my platoon sergeant noticed that the CW2 kept coming around this young specialist, and he did confront him at the time.
- Sergeant First ...: [00:08:11](#) The rebuttal was, "There's nothing wrong. I'm just mentoring her. I'm her pastor." And when my platoon sergeant asked me if this warrant officer was making me feel uncomfortable, at the time, not really understanding what the grooming process was, I just responded, "No, he's my mentor. He's a pastor of mine." And so as time went on, months went on, and this person continued to mentor me, as a pastor at that new location. He forced himself on me one day when he came by my barracks room to talk about some things. That was unusual. Normally we would talk at work, but this particular day he had an encounter with me at work, and it made me feel really uncomfortable. And I left. And I think that scared him.
- Sergeant First ...: [00:09:03](#) So, during lunch, he asked if he could come by to talk with me about it and pray about it. And so I said, "Okay, that's fine." My roommate wasn't there at the time. She worked shift. And when he came over, again using scriptures, and asking if I would pray with him, he forced his way on me. I remember that time going to a dark place because I was confused. I didn't know why this person that I had grown to trust would violate me in such a way. And even after the fact, I never said anything right away. I remember there was a Simpson session that was held at Fort Mead, and at the end, there was an option for you to write

something down on a piece of paper and you could turn it in anonymously.

- Sergeant First ...: [00:09:53](#) And so I wrote his name on this paper, and I said that he should be looked at and looked into. And a couple months later, there was a 15-6 that happened at my unit—that's an investigation for non-military folks. And it was because there were some other ladies in the unit, civilians that had come forward to say that he had been sexually harassing them. And there was a major who was in charge of the investigation. She happened to see me walking by. She was about to close out her investigation, and she called me in and she said, "I'm doing this investigation, and I just thought as though you may fit that type." So she asked me about him, and I didn't want to talk about it. I had never told anyone about it.
- Sergeant First ...: [00:10:39](#) I asked her if it could be in confidence. And she, at the time, I guess not really familiar with SHARP, agreed that, yes, anything you tell me will just be between you and I. I told her what happened, unbeknownst to her, I'm confessing to a sexual assault. So when she reported it, it was automatically an unrestricted report because I had reported to someone outside of the SHARP chain. And then my story began. And at the beginning, I was very adamant that I did not want to participate in investigation. I didn't want anyone to know. I was embarrassed that I allowed someone to take advantage of me. I didn't want my leaders to know that I was weak in that point. So it took a lot of encouragement. Then as the SHARP program developed, and we'll talk about this a little later, with having a Victim's Counsel, it definitely helped me through my journey.
- Lytaria Walker: [00:11:35](#) Well, thank you very much for sharing your story. So, let's switch back to Ms. Londagin for a minute. Ms. Londagin, tell us about your experience prior to the existence of the SHARP and SAPR program, if you can enlighten us a bit on that.
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:11:56](#) Yes, I'd love to. While I didn't feel comfortable reporting at the time, now that I am part of the SHARP program, I really want to be here to empower and encourage other people to report, especially because I feel that we have so many dedicated response personnel that are standing by. Twenty years ago, when I had these experiences, we didn't have a SHARP program, much less the numerous other response assets we see today, such as the ones that Sergeant First Class Spicer will talk about with the Special Victims Council Program. One of the reasons that I really didn't report at the time, like I said, was that we didn't have a SHARP program and there was this power dynamic within the military. Many of the people who assaulted me, as

you heard from my story, were in positions of authority over me which made me feel helpless and made me feel trapped in the entire process.

Ms. Jill Londagin...:

[00:12:53](#)

Just like Sergeant First Class Spicer said, I worried about potential backlash coming from reporting, especially because some of the perpetrators were well liked and obviously high ranking. And again, I was in an engineer battalion with 500 guys and 10 females. Every day I was told, "You're lucky you're here. We didn't used to have females, so don't cause any trouble for us. You just do your job and just move out of our way." That was the environment that I was in. Another reason that I didn't report was the fear of not being believed or taken seriously. I was afraid that people would judge me, just like Sergeant First Class Spicer said, or blame me for what happened. I think despite my own experiences, I do want to make it clear, especially as we're focusing more and moving our program from a command-centric approach to a victim-centric approach, that reporting sexual assault is important.

Ms. Jill Londagin...:

[00:13:56](#)

I think it can help future events from occurring. I think even if people are at the point where they're not ready to make a report, I think there are so many personnel within our organization that can at least support you and help you in your recovery. We have chaplains, we have behavioral health. There are people that can help you with the traumatic impact that you experience from a sexual assault. Again, I know that I lead a group of dedicated response personnel who are trained to handle these incidents and situations with sensitivity as well as professionalism and who prioritize the needs of our survivors. I see it every single day. I hear from victims currently within the force. And again, they are pleased with the services and the advocacy that they're receiving from Sexual Assault Response Coordinators like Sergeant First Class Spicer used to be, as well as our victim advocates.

Ms. Jill Londagin...:

[00:14:52](#)

I think it's important for people to remember that you're not alone and there are people that are out here to help you and that want to care for you. So I really do encourage anyone who's experienced sexual assault to consider reaching out for support. I think together we can really make a difference and make the military a safer and more supportive environment for all of our service members. And though I refuse to be defined by this specific experience alone, as I stand before you, again, as a survivor. I'm determined to bring the attention of the issue of sexual assault in the military and to hold those people responsible and accountable for their actions. I don't think that anybody should have to endure the kind of abuse that I and

Sergeant First Class Spicer and countless others have experienced.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:15:43](#) If you have heard me speak to any other senior leaders, you know that I'm a very vocal advocate in this area. I think it's time for our military to take action to prevent sexual assault and provide better support for survivors. I think we really do have to work on creating this culture of respect and accountability that values safety and obviously the wellbeing of all Soldiers. I think we have to listen to survivors and take their experiences seriously, providing them with resources they need to heal and to move forward. I'm a huge advocate, especially when it comes to behavioral health, medical services, and specialty care, and working really hard with the Defense Health Agency to make sure that our victims, our survivors, have the resources that they deserve to help them with their recovery.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:16:37](#) My pledge today is to call on everybody to stand with me in this fight to demand change to make our military safer and a more respectful place for all. I am looking back at my experiences and thinking about them as I told you a little bit of my story. Today I am grateful for this opportunity that I get to hear from Sergeant First Class Spicer as well as my colleagues within the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Office, who are also very committed to preventing sexual assault and supporting survivors. As the current Army SHARP Director, it really gives me hope, and I could not be more proud of the work that our dedicated prevention workforce does daily. I know they're dedicated to centering the needs of survivors and helping them recover in these traumatic experiences. Thank you.

Lytaria Walker: [00:17:40](#) Thank you Ms. Londagin. Thank you so much for sharing and for your transparency and your bravery and your courage in taking on this feat. Thank you for that. One important thing that I'd like to note: you mentioned you're not alone, and I think that's very important for everybody on this line to just remember that we're never alone. We can always tell somebody or relay our story to somebody. Thank you for that. Now, please share your experience, Sergeant First Class Spicer, on what occurred after the establishment of SHARP and the SAPR program. And offer recommendations please, to make the SHARP program or victim advocacy better or a stronger program.

Sergeant First ...: [00:18:30](#) Like I mentioned, when my assault happened, I did not initially report it to anyone, and I didn't really have intentions to report it. I did the anonymous tip at the Simpson session, and then when I was approached, just by happenstance, by the officer

that was investigating a 15-6 for my unit, I spoke with her in what I thought to be in confidence because unfortunately, like a lot of young Soldiers, I didn't really understand the SHARP program. And, it was still something that was developing early on back in 2011, 2012. It was revamping a little bit and, I'll admit that I was guilty, where yes, I had briefs, and I saw the slides, but I never really asked questions to understand it. And so when everything came about, and I was forced into having to do my report again, I was very adamant I did not want to do it.

Sergeant First ...: [00:19:30](#)

I was embarrassed, and I had some pushback. I had a victim advocate assigned to me at the time for my unit. But then something that was really great that happened around this time, we got the Special Victims Counsel because at the beginning I was having to talk to Legal. I was having to talk to my victim advocate, another victim advocate, and the SARC. And so it was many people that wanted to talk to me and then investigating officers. I remember feeling so frustrated that I had to talk to so many people and have to retell what was happening when I didn't want to. I just remember just feeling a lot of pressure, and I didn't understand why I had to speak with all these people, go over everything, and didn't have anyone to advocate for me.

Sergeant First ...: [00:20:21](#)

And so when I got assigned my Special Victims Counsel, that took so much pressure off because she handled all that, everything went through her. All these multiple people couldn't contact me directly. They would go through my Special Victims Counsel, and my SVC would contact me. So therefore I didn't have all these people I was reporting to. If I had to go in person back to CID, or if the prosecution team wanted to talk to me in preparation for the court-martial, my Special Victims Counsel was there with me. So I didn't feel as though I was alone when this first started happening. I questioned who was really going to be my voice because, when you go through a court-martial, the prosecution, which is the government, they're working for the government.

Sergeant First ...: [00:21:10](#)

Not everything may be how you may want it to be, as a victim. Because at the end they're stuck by regulation. They're trying to ensure that they can secure that win. But sometimes some of the things they do can make you uncomfortable as a victim. But having my SVC, she was my voice. So she was able to advocate for me directly with these people. And I don't want anyone to be confused and think that my victim advocate at the time wasn't doing so because she was, the SARC was also, but it was just so many people involved. And so it really helped to have a Special Victims' Counsel because that person was for me, that

person was to be there to answer my questions, to literally hold my hand when I needed it if I felt a lot of pressure.

Sergeant First ...: [00:21:58](#) I remember I used to have a really hard time talking about this in uniform. I remember I used to always ask, "Can I take my uniform top off, or can I take my rank off when I'm talking about it?" Because, in uniform we are expected to have this persona that we're Soldiers at the end of the day. I felt that this situation weakened me, and I didn't want to talk about it in uniform because I felt as though it made me not like a Soldier. And I remember my SVC, literally holding my hand one day and she said, "This makes you a stronger Soldier because you're able to talk about it. You want to hold this person accountable. Never feel as though this weakens you."

Sergeant First ...: [00:22:41](#) So she really helped me. I remember going through that court-martial and having that SVC there with me. The court-martial was very difficult for me and to have to be on that stand, but having her there with me to advocate made the process easier for me. I don't know how I may have been able to get through it because I went through a period of depression and a lot of anxiety. But having a Special Victims Counsel definitely helped me go through the process. And even afterwards, she checked on me to ensure that I was doing okay with follow up. I got the notification when this person was released from Fort Leonard Wood, just making sure I was okay with that. So I think that the implementation of a Special Victims Council was huge.

Sergeant First ...: [00:23:32](#) I'm so grateful that I was able to be one of the early cases to have that. Serving as a SARC when I was in Hawaii, I encouraged my victims to utilize their SVC because this is like your attorney, your counselor, your friend, and your confidant. This is the person that's going to advocate for you. Having the SVC is probably one of the best things that the Army could have done for the SHARP program. Over the years, just going from being a victim to becoming really passionate about the program, serving as a victim advocate of SARC, and then even now being in TRADOC and serving as a senior drill sergeant and having hundreds of first-time Soldiers come through and just reminding them the importance of paying attention.

Sergeant First ...: [00:24:31](#) I was once that specialist that no one ever thinks is going to be them. No one thinks that they'll be a victim, and so too often we'll tune out. I really harp on my Soldiers that, "Even if it's not for you, your battle buddy may need to know who they can talk to." I never want a Soldier to talk to the wrong person outside of that SHARP chain to where they don't have the option to choose which reporting option they want because they've

mentioned the wrong thing. And over the past few years with the developments of who a person can confide in has really helped as well. And so I'm looking forward to the changes. As far as what I think are recommendations I have for the program, I agree, I wish we'd have more SVCs.

Sergeant First ...: [00:25:21](#) I know we're limited because we need more SVCs to come around and make themselves present so that Soldiers know, "Oh, there's a victim advocate, but I also could have an SVC or my battle buddy as an SVC." We need to put that information out because I think sometimes Soldiers aren't aware that an SVC exists until they're going through a case, unfortunately. But I think harping on just the updates and reminding everyone of the changes and having leaders really pay attention and put this information out is important. Don't wait until the annual SHARP training is due, but just at the end of weekly formations, just briefing, reminding people of who their victim advocates are, who their SARCs are, just walking around. Not just in trainings, not only when something happens, but just be a familiar face to let people get to know them. I really do think the Army is moving in the right direction with how things have been changing over the past few years, and I'm eager to see how it continues to change and impact the culture of the Army.

Lytaria Walker: [00:26:29](#) Wow, thank you. So for those that might not be as aware, can you tell us what SVC, SARC, SHARP and SAPR stand for, Sergeant First Class Spicer?

Sergeant First ...: [00:26:59](#) So SVC is a Special Victim's Counsel, and SARC is a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. SAPR is Sexual Assault Prevention Response. And then SHARP is Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Prevention. And so SHARP is only just Army, but SAPR is for all across the board for all services.

Lytaria Walker: [00:27:35](#) Okay, thank you for that. Before we move on to Ms. Andi Bryant, we'll go ahead and take some questions. This webinar is structured a little bit different. This is more like a 90-minute fireside chat, so we'll break for a few questions. If you have questions for Ms. Londagin or Sergeant First Class Spicer, please drop them in the Q&A box, which is different from the chat box. We'll stand by.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:28:16](#) Ms. Walker, if I could just ask Sergeant First Class Spicer while we're waiting for you to give us a question. I wanted to ask Sergeant First Class Spicer a question. We really tried to work hard on these changes when it came to SHARP training, because again, we're all used to death by PowerPoint. We've tried to make it really clear with leaders that it's supposed to be small

group, leader-led because leaders have to get comfortable having these conversations. It can't be a SARC and victim advocate, just like you don't pull other response people such as behavioral health to do suicide prevention training. It has to be leader-led. I'm not sure if you have any other thoughts or ideas of how we can get leaders comfortable having these conversations about reporting options and sexual harassment and sexual assault and what that looks like and how that's not acceptable there.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:29:12](#)

Because I feel like we're not going to make the difference that we want to within the training space if we don't get everybody comfortable having this conversation instead of just passing it over to the SARC and victim advocate. I'll give you a great example. I used to be a combat medic in an engineer battalion, and every time we would have to have classes about sexually transmitted diseases, instead of them feeling comfortable having that conversation with their own Soldiers—how they should protect themselves, what are sexually transmitted diseases—they would just be like, "So, that's a medic's job. Make them do it." Because they didn't want to have this conversation. So I'm just really concerned that we're not going to get to where we need to be in having a universal conversation about this if we don't start getting leaders to lead in this area. Over.

Sergeant First ...: [00:30:05](#)

Yes, ma'am. A good point. I think that leaders are uncomfortable talking about it because they don't really understand it, and they're afraid that if they are talking to Soldiers, their unit, they may say the wrong thing, which may compromise them in that leadership ability. I think if leaders really understood the changes, the updates, and really just made it a mission to understand the program and not just have to know about it when it's time for annual training or when there's a Soldier that needs to make a report, but actually understood and took the time to really know it. We know 670-1, which is the regulation for how we can wear and dress in our uniform, or when it comes to updates on promotions. I think if we really encourage it, and I think also with the possibility of SHARP having its own regulation, then leaders can just go to that one reference to learn about it rather than, digging through AR 600-20, which is Army Regulation 600-20, which is under command policy, but actually having a separate reference for the SHARP program so they can go through and learn it so that when they're talking to Soldiers, they're confident in what they're saying and they're not second guessing themselves of is this the latest update or is this the correct thing?

Sergeant First ...: [00:31:29](#) And the more comfortable they do that, then they can have these conversations and they can be advocates and feel comfortable as they're walking around the PT field or if it's the end of weekly formation or safety brief. Having these conversations, breaking off into small groups, and feeling confident rather than having to have a victim advocate or a SARC there to ask, "Is that right? Am I right? Is that the latest update?" But just showing that confidence, that they know it. I think if leaders really took that time and had a certain reference they can go to for all things sexual harassment and assault, they could be more confident. I think the confidence will draw those conversations more naturally so they're not second guessing themselves. Because one thing you never want to do is put the wrong information out to a Soldier or to your subordinates, because now you've said the wrong information, and that causes them to doubt you.

Sergeant First ...: [00:32:27](#) I think that could be why a lot of leaders tend to push that back on the SHARP professionals, because we are expected to know these things. So to have a company commander or first sergeant or platoon sergeant or squad leader have these conversations in small groups with their Soldiers, if they're not really sure of the latest updates and they're not really sure of what this means, it makes them a little hesitant because they don't want to look as though they don't know what they're talking about to cause doubt, within their formation. So they look to the professionals to do that.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:33:05](#) Thank you so much for that.

Lytaria Walker: [00:33:08](#) Wow. Very good answer. We do have about six questions in the queue. I'll start with the first one here before we move to our next presenter. The first question: there is an increased emphasis on commander involvement in SHARP training. What do you both see as a role of a VA or SARC in SHARP training and engagement?

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:33:40](#) This is Jill. I can definitely start with that one. I think it just actually rolls into the exact conversation that we just had. I feel like the role of the SARC and victim advocate, especially in this new model that we're going to, is still to support commanders with their training requirements. But again, like I just talked about with Sergeant First Class Spicer, is that you don't ask other specialty providers or personnel to come do the training that leaders need to feel comfortable doing. So I think their job is to do outreach, to assist commanders, to assist leaders, but not, again, shove the responsibility over and just say, "I don't feel comfortable having this conversation. We're just going to

let somebody else come in and give you training." It's no different to me than if I need to have a conversation with my Soldiers about some of their money problems, I don't need to call someone over from AER to come in and give them a lesson.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:34:44](#) It is my job, because they're my Soldiers, to have a discussion about, "This is what a checkbook is, and this is what an account is. We're not going to be paying 20% interest on a car from someplace we got right off post." Having those conversations, you don't call an AER person or someone from a bank to have those conversations with them. I'm not saying they can't support it and I'm not saying I can't call AER or a bank and say, "Hey, I've got some young Soldiers. They've never even had a checkbook before. They don't know anything about it. Do you have a pamphlet or something that you could offer me so I could best explain what this is?" You don't, again, call the banker over to be able to do that or someone from AER. Again, hearing the comments, I wrote down a lot of what Sergeant First Class Spicer said because, like I said, I am not going to say that the program isn't complex and the rules and the legality of it isn't difficult and hard for them to keep up with.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:35:43](#) I absolutely understand because I've run the response for two other different types of programs, substance abuse and suicide, and they weren't as difficult and complex. I tell senior leaders all the time, we have 400 federal laws alone that dictate how we address sexual assault response within the military. I don't expect them to be the expert in all of those things. But again, what are those tailored, targeted trainings that we can provide them, that hip pocket training, where they can, again, go over the reporting options, who they need to speak with, and the different parts and pieces of it with, again, not feeling like they have to be the SME in it.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:36:23](#) I really hope that, again, our SARCs and victim advocates provide outreach, provide support, and I really hope that we get to the time where, again, we're supporting them in having these trainings and conversations, but we're not to where we have previously been, which is, "We'll just let them do it. We'll go get some coffee. Let us know when it's done, so we can check the box on this training." Because, again, Soldiers care about what leaders care about. If you are the one out there, out front, teaching this stuff, whether it's about banking and your checkbook and not paying 20% interest on a car, or again, about preventing sexual assault in the military. If you make those things important to your Soldiers, then they're going to take it, I think, with more importance than they have in the past by just, again, putting the responsibility on somebody else. Sergeant

First Class Spicer, I'm not sure if you had any additional thoughts. Over.

- Sergeant First ...: [00:37:16](#) No ma'am. It's similar to what we led into that question with, just ensuring that these leaders receive the training ahead of time and they feel comfortable with it. But I think the more they do it, the more they'll get more comfortable and used to it and then always have the option to reach back with those SARCs and VAs, for questions prior to or afterwards. And then, being okay with following up with the formation and saying, "Hey, I know I mentioned this yesterday, but there's a correction. It's actually this." And not being afraid to admit that, "I gave you the wrong information, but here's the right information."
- Lytaria Walker: [00:37:53](#) Very good points. Thank you. Our next question: have either of you shared with your family what happened to you? I have yet to tell my whole story of what I went through.
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:38:08](#) I guess I'll start on this one too. That's a really tough one for me. My husband is a former Soldier, spent all of his time in special operations, so he has a different personality than I do. I'm built more emotionally based. He's a very direct and straightforward guy. So I've shared parts and pieces of my story without going into specific details with him because I'm concerned how he would not take it against me, but obviously, how he would feel about the things that were done to me by other people in positions of power. So he knows, again, the more general aspects of my story. I think different people are different. Like my mother, obviously, I told her more of my story because we're, again, more emotionally based, more have that connection, and can share some other details that you may not feel comfortable sharing with your spouse as an example.
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:39:16](#) And like I said, I know my spouse the best, and how much detail I need to go into and how much I don't, but just so that he's aware of what I've experienced and that it happened on multiple occasions and that it was from people in position of power. Because I think that has a dynamic on the job that I have now and some of the experiences that I have, again, trying to carry the water of making these changes to focus on victims. I have an 11-year-old daughter and a 16-year-old daughter. I've talked a little bit to my 16 year old daughter, because unfortunately in high school, she's had some of the same harassing behavior. She actually just got a job, and there is a gentleman that's a lot older than her that started harassing her.
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:40:03](#) She reported it immediately. She actually, believe or not, feels more comfortable talking to her dad about it at this time. But

again, she knows that I'm aware of what's happening, but she really wants to be able to handle it on her own. And maybe it is intimidating to her about what I do, but again, I think what is so unfortunate to me is the fact that she is also experiencing harassment within the workplace just like our Soldiers and civilians do, day in and day out. That's how I shared my story. With the 11-year-old, I'm obviously not ready to tell her more specific details yet. But I shared more on the surface stories, and then more personal with some of the people that are closest to me. Sergeant First Class Spicer?

Sergeant First ...: [00:40:54](#) So yes and no, to answer that question. When I was going through the court-martial portion of my assault back at Fort Mead, I had just gotten guardianship of my sister. So my sister was living with me and she was about to graduate high school, and then she was going to go on to college at Bowie State there. She's always looked up to me as a strong person, so I did not have the courage to tell her what I was really going through. So, even though I was going through this depression and anxiety, I had to try to mask it as best I could for her because I had to be her strong person. It wasn't until a few years ago, actually. She's in the military now; she got promoted to staff sergeant.

Sergeant First ...: [00:41:41](#) A few years ago, I had a conversation with her because she was talking to me about some of the behaviors with some of her coworkers at work and some of the comments that were being made. And there was a senior leader that was showing interest in her. So I talked to her about the whole grooming process, and I mentioned to her a synopsis of my story, but I have never gone in detail with her. Unless she's watching it today, then she knows more. I've never gone in detail with her to give the ins and outs of what happened. I just gave her a synopsis.

Sergeant First ...: [00:42:14](#) Even with sharing, for the past few years, when I've talked to other victims, I've never really gone in full detail about what all led up to it, the things that happened, and I don't know if that's because I've tried to forget some of that, or if it's a defense mechanism, or if it's because I'm in survivor mode now, so I don't want to let this affect me anymore. I'm not ashamed of it anymore because it's definitely empowered me to really be an advocate for the program. But no, I never have shared that with anyone in my family, outside of my sister. I guess it wasn't until now when I thought about why I haven't done it. So maybe that'll be my next TED talk.

Lytaria Walker: [00:43:06](#) Absolutely. Ladies, thank you for your transparency. Our next question, I am an educator and mentor for high school Enlistees. What words of preventive advice for sexual assault do

you have for those who are brand new to military service?
Thank you for sharing your stories.

- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:43:33](#) Sergeant First Class Spicer, do you want to go first on this one and I definitely can follow up?
- Sergeant First ...: [00:43:37](#) Sure. What words of?
- Lytaria Walker: [00:43:42](#) Preventive advice would you give to high school Enlistees who are brand new to military service?
- Sergeant First ...: [00:43:50](#) So one thing that we really harp on here in the training environment for AIT students, which are Soldiers who are right from basic training, and now they're here to learn their job before they go to their first duty station. So they're brand new, they're right off the street, a lot of them from high school. We really preach on bystander intervention. Because with that, as a bystander, a lot of times you're going to notice things. I think back on when my platoon sergeant noticed the person that violated me was grooming me. Because sometimes we don't recognize some of those signs, but an outsider can. So if you see someone that's constantly coming around, or if you hear comments, and you may notice a shift in body language. You are a bystander.
- Sergeant First ...: [00:44:38](#) You intervene, whether you're talking to your battle, whether you approach that person and ask them directly, "Hey, is this what you're meaning to do? This is how it's coming off." Just being there and just having someone with you. We really try to encourage bystander intervention. Never putting yourself in harm's way, obviously, but really just being those eyes and those ears and being that voice of reason for your battle buddy, for that person to the left and right of you. Because, again like I said, sometimes we may not recognize some of the signs, but my battle buddy may say, "Hey, he made this comment. Did that make you feel uncomfortable? Did it make you feel uncomfortable? Are you okay with the comments he or she is making to you?"
- Sergeant First ...: [00:45:19](#) Which will give me a chance to say, "You know what? Actually, no, I'm not okay with it." And then being able to approach it from there. So I think just encouraging these young high schoolers who are becoming Soldiers to really take pride and to not feel that they're stepping on someone's toes or they're being nosy, but they're really just being a great support system from someone. Having that courage for bystander intervention can really affect the program in a great way.

Lytaria Walker: [00:45:52](#) Thank you for that. Ms. Londagin?

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:45:59](#) Thank you so much, Sergeant First Class Spicer. I definitely want to echo your comments. The other things that I think about too is there was a research study that was done a while ago, but it really looked at Navy recruits coming in and found out that I think almost 50% of the people who came into the military had a previous sexual assault experience. I know that we all know that re-victimization, especially within our organization, unfortunately, is high. So I think what I would talk to high schoolers about coming in is really about speaking up for yourself. I had this general conversation with my daughter the other day about, again, her experience she's having within the workplace.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:46:51](#) It was just really sad to me to hear from her of how this person was, not going so far to say, maybe they were grooming her, but "I'm getting surgery, I'm going to need someone to come take care of me. Why don't you give me your phone number, and I'll give you a call?" So some of this behavior was completely inappropriate, especially for a 16-year-old from someone who was almost 40 years older than her. But just listening to her story and hearing her response. She was like, "Mom, I was just trying to be nice, and I didn't want to offend him and stuff like that. I'm new to the job, and I didn't want to get in trouble." It really took me aback because then I thought about, "Wow, this is what I experienced in the military too." Especially because, again, the unit I was in had 500 males and 10 females. So it was, "Hey, if someone comes onto you or does something, just be nice and polite. Don't cause any waves, don't say anything."

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:47:45](#) Instead of really speaking up for yourself. Because again, you have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, whether it's my 16-year-old daughter in her job, Sergeant First Class Spicer and what she's experienced, and then what I experienced. We have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and we shouldn't have to be seen as, "I need to just be nice. I don't want to hurt the person's feelings when they're doing this to me." When, again, we should really be empowering ourselves, empowering the people around us to really speak up for ourselves. I definitely, without a doubt in my mind, know that that's a lot easier said than done. But I just think until we all start lifting our voices and telling people that this is not okay and it's not acceptable in more unified fashion, then I don't think we're going to get as far as we hoped. Over.

Lytaria Walker: [00:48:38](#) Wow. Very good points. Thank you. Our next question, what do you suggest for a SHARP rep on how to communicate to

command leadership or supervisors about sexual assault when leaders have the belief that sexual assault does not happen in their command? Sexual harassment and sexual assault are minimized to inappropriate jokes.

Sergeant First ...: [00:49:04](#)

Do you want to go first, ma'am?

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:49:07](#)

No, you can go. Go ahead.

Sergeant First ...: [00:49:10](#)

So I ran into this when I was in Hawaii. There were a few leaders who had come in towards end of retirement, and sometimes were referred to as "the old Army." They didn't have a SHARP program when they were going up and through the ranks, and so a lot of it was still really new. There's a saying that it's hard to teach an old dog new tricks. So I think that some of them were in the disbelief because it wasn't broadcasted, it wasn't publicized, when they were younger in the ranks of the military. So to hear these victim survivors coming forward and wanting to see these people held accountable, it was like, "Where is all this coming from? We didn't have this back in the day. This wasn't a problem. If it's a joke, it's just a joke. Everyone's from a different background."

Sergeant First ...: [00:50:10](#)

But it all comes down to perception. Everyone has different backgrounds. Something that may offend me may not offend you, but at the end of the day, we have to respect everyone. So I've had to encourage leaders, "Hey, I understand this may not have been something when you first came in, but it is now. The military is constantly changing, and so we have to be adaptable, and we have to also change with that." If something that wasn't offensive yesterday is offensive today, that means that we stop it. It's not a debate where we say, "Well, it was fine all these years. Why is it a problem now?" It's a problem now, so we'll address it as that. So I think just reminding leaders that we have to always be adaptable. We have to be welcome to change, and that's what we're supposed to be advocates for, and if we're not doing that, then we're not being an effective leader.

Lytaria Walker: [00:51:02](#)

Excellent.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:51:07](#)

Yeah. Great points. Even being in this job too, I have an additional perspective. I agree with Sergeant First Class Spicer, but, I think one of the best things that the Independent Review Commission that the Secretary of Defense put together. I tell people all the time, the very first memo that the Secretary of Defense published when he got into office was not on China, was not on Russia, and was not on cybersecurity. The very first memo he published was three immediate actions to get after

sexual harassment and sexual assault, and then to establish the 90-day Independent Review Commission. If you guys have not taken the time to read that report, again, it's a very nice letter that they do at the beginning to victim survivors, that we hear you and that this report really is for you.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:51:58](#) One of the good things that they highlighted within that report was the fact that what senior leaders think is happening and what is actually happening to people on the ground could not be farther than the East is to the West. I can attest to that firsthand because I sit in a lot of these meetings with senior leaders where I get told things such as, "Jill, your data's wrong. There's no way it happens this often. Your prevalence data is outdated, and unwanted sexual contact doesn't happen this often." I had another senior leader tell me before, which is a little crazy, considering that I am a female and I am a combat vet. But he said to me, "Jill, we didn't have these problems in the military before we started letting females in."

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:52:44](#) And I was just like, "I cannot believe you actually said that to somebody like me." But again, those are still the comments, just like Sergeant First Class Spicer said, it's this old mentality of, "This is just a female problem." Which we know by our own numbers, that that's not the case whatsoever. This isn't because we brought females into the military or we put females in certain units. I think that's just the hard part about changing some of that mindset with some leaders. When I tell people, "Hey, we get reporting that it happens 11 times a day. Based on our reporting numbers and based on prevalence, it actually happens 33 times a day." Again, not saying that I don't think that number is actually higher, but again, sexual assault or unwanted sexual contact happens 33 times a day.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:53:30](#) You have to just imagine the look on some of those senior leaders' faces where they're like, "That's not true. It doesn't happen this often." So I think that's the tough part is, again, trying to change some of this mentality that just may be some of this old school thinking of this wasn't a problem before, or we didn't hear about it, or people just under-reported or didn't come forward. You can definitely hear from myself who served over 20 years ago and Sergeant First Class Spicer who's serving now, and we have a lot of the same experiences. I have people call me from the seventies and eighties when they served in the military, and their stories are fairly similar to myself and Sergeant First Class Spicer. So I think we just have a lot of work to do of changing the mindset. Again, research says culture change takes over 10 years. I hope that it doesn't take that long,

but again, this is not something that we can immediately change the hearts and minds of people. Over.

- Lytaria Walker: [00:54:28](#) Absolutely. Very good points. I have a comment here. The participant says, "While I shared part of my story to explain why I became a victim advocate, I was told they do not have a problem and what happened to me should stay with me. I am not the type of person that sits down and says okay. I was told not to tell anything about me or anything in regards to my sexual assault." Did you guys want to comment on that?
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:55:02](#) Yeah, I think it always depends on the audience. Like I said, most people who have even worked for me, I'm sure my own folks that are on the line who work for me now are saying, "I did not even know any of this stuff about you." Because I think I am very protective about who I share my story with. When is the right time, when is not the right time? I shared a little bit of my story during a professional forum last year because of what I experienced, especially with my abuse with alcohol, I was able to develop a program in my previous job where people could voluntarily seek care for alcohol problems and not be mandatorily enrolled in a substance abuse treatment program.
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:55:46](#) I did that because I didn't understand when I was a victim and I was abusing alcohol, why I could go to behavioral health and get treatment for my mental disorder, and if I was using alcohol to cope, that could be kept confidentially, per se. But then if I went to ASAP at the time and went and sought treatment for alcohol problems, even if it was caused by my mental health condition, then my commander was automatically notified. It didn't make sense to me because substance abuse is a mental health disorder. So that led me to, obviously, come up with that voluntary care. But I share just, again, a small part of my story to try to really get after the why I developed this program in my previous job. Even in this job, like I said, I don't share my story often. You people on the line, the 271 of you, have heard more of my story than my own leadership has.
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [00:56:46](#) Even some of the people that actually work for me because I'm protective in telling it. Because you can tell even by telling it, I've just told generals around it and stuff like that. I'm just very protective. So I think it really just depends on the audience and what you're utilizing it for. I think as a counselor too, just based on, again, that experience working in that field, with your clients and with your patients, it's not about you in that scenario and telling your story of, "Oh, I experienced that too. Oh, your boss is mean to you. So is mine. Let me tell you what I experienced." Again, you're there to listen. You're there to provide support. So

I think sometimes in some of those contexts, you just have to know when. I'm not saying that there's a perfect right answer, but sometimes you just have to understand when is the right time to share your story and to whom and the purpose that you're doing it for. Again, even with victims, because it is about them and about supporting them. That's not the time, especially when I was treating Soldiers who had military sexual trauma, I didn't share my story because, again, it was really about me providing a service to them and support to them versus what I experienced myself.

Lytaria Walker: [00:58:05](#)

Sergeant First Class Spicer?

Sergeant First ...: [00:58:08](#)

Yes. Thank you for that, ma'am. Yes, when I'm speaking with a victim or a survivor, I don't automatically go into, "Oh, let me tell you about my experience." Because I feel as though, like Ms. Londagin said, there's a time and a place for you to choose when you are a little more candid. One thing that I do, that I am very candid about, is when I have a case that's going to go to a court-martial, because to me that was probably the most traumatic experience was going through the court-martial, even thinking back to the actual assault just because of the matter of how it can go. So I'm very transparent with victims and survivors about, "Hey, this is something that can happen." Because I feel as though the more prepared they are for that mentally, the better they can just see themselves through it.

Sergeant First ...: [00:58:58](#)

Even with an SVC, a special victims council, because I wish that I would've had a little more preparation for the court-martial portion of it just because of how. If you've never sat through a court-martial, that is like the Army or military's version of like a court trial. It can be pretty gruesome. As a victim, the defense can tear you apart. So when I'm talking to victims and survivors, I have shared a little background of how a court-martial can go, just so they can see or have an expectation of what may happen. I use my own experience in that to give some insight on, "These are some things that can happen because I've seen it. Because I was a part of that."

Sergeant First ...: [00:59:45](#)

I think that also lets that victim or survivor know, "Oh, okay, you can relate to me. You're not just someone that's in this position because you went to school and now you have the credentials to do it, and you're just saying, 'Oh, I understand.' But you really do understand because you've been on the other side of this, so you know what I'm going through." I don't think that every detail should be shared with that victim or survivor, but I think sometimes, depending on the case, it can show a little more relatability, which may get that person to open up more and

trust because they now know that you're not just saying what sounds good to say, "I understand, or I know what you're going through." You really do know what I'm going through. Now I know that you're here to give me the best advice and help me get those resources. So I think sometimes, case by case, that can really be beneficial for that victim or survivor.

Lytaria Walker: [01:00:41](#)

Well, thank you. Our next question. Please keep the questions coming. These are very good discussion points. The next question says, can you comment about any special challenges arising from military sexual assault cases that occur in a joint multi-component and/or a multinational environment?

Sergeant First ...: [01:01:04](#)

Oh ma'am, if you don't mind, I'd like to go first on this. In Hawaii, where I was stationed, I was in a joint environment, and inside the building, you have all branches of services, even foreign services that are there. One thing that we really stressed was that, because of our schedule, we didn't see some of our Soldiers daily, because if we're on shifts and the Soldiers are on different shifts. It was really hard for Soldiers, our service members to know who their SHARP reps were, their victim advocates were. So we used to ask, "Is there any way we can have some patch that we could wear on our uniform, like a colored patch?" They can know, okay, this person we can go and talk to.

Sergeant First ...: [01:01:49](#)

Also, the gray areas. If you're working with different services, which they have different regulations governing them. So if someone in the Navy makes this comment towards me or they assault me, the confusion of who takes the case? Does the Navy take it? Is it the Army that's going to take it? What is classified under the Navy protocol or the Air Force protocols to where this is harassment versus assault? I remember having a lot of these questions when I was in Hawaii because it was a joint environment. And asking, if it's a foreign national that makes a sexual harassment comment to one of the Soldiers, who do we go to? Is that the EEO? Who do we bring this up to?

Sergeant First ...: [01:02:36](#)

I feel as though there needs to be a little more fine-toothed when it comes to these joint environments to know this is who would take it, this is what we refer to. It could be that I'm just not that educated on some of the policies that may already be in place, but this is something that I did deal with just a few years ago when I was in Hawaii at a joint environment from all the branches of service to having foreign entities that worked in the building and running into some of these issues and not really knowing exactly who to go to. Who would take it? How do we report it if the person that did it is another branch or if

they're a civilian from another country? I think this is something that does need to be fine-toothed more and established so there's no ambiguity or gray areas there.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:03:36](#) Thank you. Sergeant First Class Spicer. I'm really glad you went first on that one because it's really good to hear what you experienced at the ground level, especially within a joint environment. Especially when we think about it in a joint environment, it's not just the SARC and victim advocate portion, but it's medical as well. Investigations. All of those different things can also occur outside of someone who's wearing the Army uniform. The folks doing the forensic exam could be somebody in a different service now that we have a lot of military hospitals that have multiple services there. So I think you bring up such a great point about how we've really have to figure this out in a joint environment. One of the things that the Independent Review Commission directed to us, or actually recommended, and then obviously the Secretary of Defense directed implementation of all the IRC recommendations.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:04:35](#) So again, if people have not taken the chance to read that, please look at it. Again, all of the recommendations in there were accepted by the Secretary of Defense, and then he published an implementation plan to say, "This is exactly how you're going to implement all of these recommendations." So they're no longer recommendations. We'll do things across the services. I know we're still having a lot of debates in various different areas, and people believe that just because the IRC recommended it, that it's still a recommendation. It's not. When the Secretary of Defense approved all the recommendations and directed implementation, it no longer became a recommendation across the services. So there are things in there that we are doing. But Sergeant First Class Spicer brings up a great point, that one of the things that they've directed within the implementation guidance is whoever is the lead senior commander on that installation, and that person's lead SARC, is going to be the one person in charge of sexual assault response, or assist the senior commander in overseeing sexual assault response for the installation.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:05:43](#) Where this becomes difficult for the Army is because everybody knows our program is dual-hatted in the fact that we've used sexual harassment and sexual assault. So what I've worked out with my other service members is that I'm not going to not put a lead SARC on JBER. I'm going to put a lead SARC on Joint Base San Antonio. We're the senior commander for Joint Base Lewis-McChord. But some of those places where normally I would say, "Well, it's the senior commander's job—in some of these cases,

the Air Force's job—to provide the sexual assault response. So it's not my issue to worry about. I've decided differently and said, no, because then you're going to leave a gaping hole in our reporting and advocacy because we do sexual harassment and you don't have anybody to do sexual harassment other than EEO.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:06:36](#)

But then again, you're not executing it the way that the program does. So what we decided is, again, there's going to be a lead SARC on those joint bases where we may be the senior Army element, but we're not the senior commander, and then we're also working on an MOA between all of us of what that would look like. What support do we have to provide as the Army element on that installation—in this case, I use Joint Base San Antonio—to the Air Force lead senior commander that works for the senior commander of the installation? So we're still having initial talks about that. Everybody at least concurs with the Army's approach of still having lead SARCs at some of these locations because of our dual-hatted program. But we're just going to work together what a generic MOA should look like at the local level so that it is clear compared to in the past, where we don't know who's supposed to be responding for what.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:07:33](#)

Who does the 24-hour response? Is that us? Is that us supporting the Air Force? Again, it's definitely tricky. I think one of the other things that is really going to help us is, previously you're talking about trying to have awareness and understanding and support across the thousands of brigades that we have within the Army. And the good thing is, is that across the services, we're consolidating all of the SARCs and victim advocates under the lead SARC. The Air Force will do it at Joint Base San Antonio. We'll obviously do it there as the Army. So it's going to be a lot easier to provide area coverage and area support and an environment where you control the assets of SARCs and victim advocates versus before where they fell underneath the senior commander, so you really didn't have the ability to make somebody do anything or provide some support.

Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:08:31](#)

So I just think as we go into this new victim-centric approach, this new approach that, again, is aligned underneath the senior commander and the lead SARC, I have hope that some of these issues that we've seen in the past are going to be addressed. But again, we are working on that MOU/MOA with our service counterparts of how we're going to operate in joint environments so that it can be clear to everybody what that

should look like. But I agree, we've fallen short in the past in this area. Over.

- Lytaria Walker: [01:09:03](#) Wow, very good information. Thank you, Ms. Londagin. We'll take a few more questions, and then it looks like we may have our next presenter coming into the room here. So our next question: please remember that males are victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment as well. What would you tell your male Soldiers that were victims but didn't want to report it as their peers may look at the incident as a lucky hookup?
- Sergeant First ...: [01:09:40](#) I'm glad that question came about because I do feel that we have a lot of unreported cases for male victim survivors because of that social bias and stigma that a male can't be assaulted. They can be. They can be assaulted by a female; they can be assaulted by a male, or someone that identifies as a different pronoun. However, I will say over the last three or four years, I have seen an increase of males reporting. I think that the climate is changing to where male victims and survivors are moving above what society deems as, "Oh, you're a man, so just be lucky or just feel that it's a privilege." Actually here at Fort Huachuca TRADOC, we have had quite a few cases be reported of males reporting, both of male-on-male and female-on-male.
- Sergeant First ...: [01:10:47](#) So I think the culture in the military is slowly changing to where that's not the perception anymore. I think that we're moving past that, and I think males as they continue to get these briefings, basic, AIT, their units, they're understanding that, "Yes, I can be a victim as well. I didn't give you permission; I did not consent to this. It is not right. I don't care if I am this big, buff male and you are a smaller-framed female, or the same if it's male-on-male. What you did is wrong." I think that, at least me personally, I'm seeing more people report these, more males report it. I think that's a great change, seeing that we're having people not be afraid of what society may deem as unacceptable for the male culture. So I'm glad that these males are starting to utilize the program and to have a voice for themselves and speak up. So I have seen, me personally, more reports come out for males, so I think the culture is changing in the right way.
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:11:57](#) Yeah, I agree, Sergeant First Class Spicer. I think what we've seen in this next annual report that's coming out, even though it's a slight increase, I want to say it's from 0.8% to 1.5% of people that are coming forward to report. But again, I think as we start to look at this idea of treating everybody with dignity and respect, not just a certain group of personnel. And again, talking about, like you said, we also had a RAN report that came

out that talked really about people that are minorities, whether that's racial minorities or sexual minorities, that they have really high rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment as well, within certain special populations. So I'm really encouraged by what Sergeant First Class Spicer said, and seeing some of those reports, like I said, slowly going up so that we have more people reporting.

Ms. Jill Londagin...:

[01:12:51](#)

Because again, when I say that everybody deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and nobody should have to endure what happened to myself, Sergeant First Class Spicer, and many other males and females across our environment. I mean everybody. I'm just, again, encouraged that we're starting to move more in this direction, focused more on certain special populations and certain minority populations that we can start to provide, culturally, more acceptable care. Because we know that providing advocacy to everybody is unique and different. It's tailored, again, on the victim. It isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. I think the more that we professionalize our workforce and are providing this type of culturally competent care is one of the things that we've been directed to do by the IRC because it definitely hit on some of the shortcomings within the past, whether, again, you're talking about sexual minorities, racial minorities, or even again, males that don't always come forward. Again, we're really trying to work hard in this area about providing culturally competent care. So I think, again, we're definitely going to get there. One of the things that we've been directed to do, and you can actually read about some of the stories within the Independent Review Commission report, which is made public on the Secretary of Defense's website, as well as the implementation plan. Over.

Lytaria Walker:

[01:14:22](#)

Well, thank you. Participants, thank you for all the great questions. There's also a very lively discussion going on in the chat. So in between, I hope you're getting an opportunity to read the comments in the chat and comment there as well. For the next 15 minutes, we'll hear from Captain Lori Mathieu on just an overview of where we are and where we're headed with SHARP and the SAPR program in light of the IRC recommendations. Captain Mathieu, are you there?

Captain Lori Ma...:

[01:14:58](#)

Good morning. Yes, I am. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to be pinch-hitting for Ms. Andi Bryant. She's not available today. They're actually working on the report release with Haskin Sass today, so she is definitely tied up on the hill. I appreciate you letting me come on board and do this with everyone. First, I just need to say a thank you to Ms. Londagin and Sergeant First Class Spicer for sharing your experiences, and

then the absolute home run that you both hit on the Q&A session. I'm just so proud to be serving alongside you both and everyone out there that's participating in this webinar. So thank you, I appreciate it. I'm going to leave the video on, but if I become a distraction, please let me know. I have a script from Ms. Bryant, so I want to do her justice, but if I am creating a diversion because I'm reading and looking up and down, just let me know that because I want the words to be important, not my view.

Captain Lori Ma...: [01:16:03](#) If you can just help guide me on that, panelists, I'd appreciate it. So with that, I am Lori Mathieu. I am the Coast Guard SAPR liaison to the DOD SAPRO. I am on a retired recall, so I have the privilege of being brought back into the service after nine years in retirement to fill this position for one year. My one year will be up on 30 June and a regular Coast Guard officer who's upwardly promotable is coming into my position. So I'm happy to have filled the gap. I came into the service in 1981, if that just frames it. So I'm part of the "old guard" and the old service members you were referring to. I can say that we've made drastic improvements, but we still have a long way to go. That's Lori Mathieu's opinion.

Captain Lori Ma...: [01:16:54](#) So with that, I will transfer over to Ms. Bryant's prepared remarks and deliver them to the best of my ability. So first and foremost, thank you for the opportunity to be here today and highlight some of the programs and changes within the SAPR program. For those who are not familiar with DoD SAPRO and SAPRO as Sexual Assault Prevention Response Office, it represents the Secretary of Defense as the central authority charged with preventing sexual assault in the military and facilitating recoveries for survivors. Our mission is to promote military readiness by reducing sexual assault through prevention, advocacy, and execution of SAPR program policy, planning, and oversight across the DoD community. Our approach is prevention focused with an uncompromising commitment to victim assistance. SAPRO works hand-in-glove with the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and the National Guard to standardize prevention and response efforts and institutionalize practices and services across the Force. So there is a saying that the only.

Lytaria Walker: [01:18:12](#) Excuse me, ma'am, you're on mute. I think you switched to mute somehow, maybe?

Captain Lori Ma...: [01:18:20](#) I'm not sure.

Lytaria Walker: [01:18:21](#) You're back. All right.

- Captain Lori Ma...: [01:18:24](#) So I'll start again with, there's a saying that the only constant in life is change, and we've seen a lot of change within SAPR program and DOD SAPRO. In the last year, I've frequently heard the phrase, we are in a time of unprecedented change with the SAPR program, and this is true, but it's also very similar to how SAPR and DoD SAPRO began. Back in 2004, the Secretary of Defense directed a review of DoD processes for treatment and care of victims of sexual assault in military services. The department quickly assembled the Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force and required a report within 90 days with recommendations. One of these recommendations was to establish a single point of accountability for sexual assault policy within the department. That led to the establishment of the SAPR Joint Task Force in October 2004, and a year later, the task force transitioned into a permanent office, DOD SAPRO.
- Captain Lori Ma...: [01:19:25](#) Fast forward to February 2021, and the Secretary of Defense directed the 90 day Independent Review Commission on sexual assault in the military, otherwise called the IRC. In July of 2021, the IRC released their report with 82 recommendations directed to the DoD. The department is fully engaged in implementing the recommendations of the IRC as approved by the Secretary of Defense. At this time, we have 21 recommendations that are either completed or with significant implementation activities undertaken. The remaining recommendations are underway or will begin later this year and are being tracked closely for their progress. I'm going to highlight a few programs and changes in the next few minutes, some underway before the IRC and others that are a direct result. I'm going to begin with the response workforce. So the response workforce is a professional and well-resourced sexual assault workforce, which is vital to the safety, security, and wellbeing of sexual assault victims and survivors.
- Captain Lori Ma...: [01:20:34](#) In FY12, the National Defense Authorization Act, the NDAA, required the establishment of a training and credentialing certification process for a response workforce. The Defense Sexual Assault Advocate certification program was established to standardize and professionalize military victim advocacy, advance the workforce professional requirements, and ensure SARCs and SAPR VAs uphold a high standard of professional and ethical conduct. Certification is valid for two years. At this time, we have over 99,000 applications that have been approved and approximately 23,000 personnel who are currently certified across the DoD. IRC implementation guidance, issued by the department in October 2021, directed the services to conduct a manpower study to realign the response workforces, both the SARCs and the victim advocates, to meet IRC recommendations.

The DOD has obtained service response workforce study results, and is considering how to best balance the need for a professional victim response capability with worldwide mission responsibilities. In addition, as part of the response workforce analysis underway, we are strategically looking into staffing levels and developing an algorithm to support staffing guidance. We, the DoD, are standardizing the job series numbers, grades, and position titles, as well as updating and creating new competency and proficiency requirements to establish a highly skilled and specialized sexual assault response workforce in accordance with the cross-cutting IRC recommendation number two.

Captain Lori Ma...:

[01:22:27](#)

So there's also unprecedented change that's underway in the creation of the Office of Special Trial Counsel, OSTC, in each military department to prosecute alleged covered offenses, including sexual assault. The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Department of the Air Force have each established an OSTC led by a general or flag officer, an O-7 lead Special Trial Counsel. Each lead has been selected, nominated, confirmed by the Senate, and promoted to O-7. In addition, each military department is implementing a plan for specialized career billets for military justice practitioners and military criminal investigators to include a dedicated group of judge advocates who specifically work on cases involving covered offenses, doing so exclusively and independently from other cases. The separation from other cases will further develop prosecutorial expertise to represent the government in the prosecution of covered offenses, restore trust in the military justice system, and improve the experiences of victims who choose to participate in the justice process. Service Special Trial Counsels are on track to take over prosecutorial decisions for sexual assault and other named offenses from commands starting on December 28th of this year, in 2023.

Captain Lori Ma...:

[01:24:03](#)

Another change in military justice in the SAPR program was the establishment of the Special Victims Counsel program, the SVCs, which we heard about earlier, which began in January of 2013 as a pilot program in the Air Force. It was the first program in the DoD to offer victims legal advice and representation throughout the justice process. The pilot was such a success that the Secretary of Defense generated its establishment to all services in August of 2013. The SVC program is now an invaluable part of military justice. The legal process for prosecuting sexual assault cases can often be daunting and confusing for victims. SVCs are attorneys who form a protected attorney-client relationship with the victim so that they can talk about every concern privately. SVCs represent victims at every

step in the military justice process, delivering victim-centered advice and advocacy to enforce victims' rights to safety, privacy, and to be treated with fairness and respect, with dignity and privacy. Their primary duty is to represent the victim. SVCs engage with base leaders and other decision makers to ensure that the victim's voice and choices are heard. A victim can access the support through their SVC, whether they file a restricted or unrestricted report, or even if they have not made a report yet. Communication between SVCs and victims are confidential and privileged due to the attorney-client relationship established. This gives victims not only a sense of comfort, but also assists in building rapport between the SVC and the victim.

Captain Lori Ma...: [01:25:57](#)

Another resource that has been created is the DoD Safe Helpline. It was established in 2011, and the DoD's Safe Helpline is the DoD's sole hotline for members affected by sexual assault. The Safe Helpline is a completely anonymous, confidential, 24/7, specialized service providing help and information anytime, anywhere worldwide. The Safe Helpline works closely with DoD SAPRO, each of the military departments' SAPR offices, and the installation-based SAPR programs to ensure that all Safe Helpline users receive the information, support, and care they need at every step in their healing process. The Safe Helpline has created a comprehensive set of services to connect with survivors where they are at in any moment. Starting with the telephone and online helplines, services include receiving information about responders such as local SARCs and SAPR VAs and resources nearby.

Captain Lori Ma...: [01:27:04](#)

The Safe Helpline has continuously evolved to meet the needs of survivors and service providers in the DoD community. In 2012, the Safe Helpline developed a mobile app to allow users to access Safe Helpline directly on their mobile devices. Through the app, survivors cannot only access all the Safe Helpline services, but also create a personalized self-care plan and access supportive self-care services. In 2013, the Safe Helpline then created the Safe HelpRoom to provide survivors a safe space to find connection and healing with others. In 2018, additional enhancements to the Safe HelpRoom facilitated the capability for local communities to provide the same support to survivors on their bases by adapting the Safe HelpRoom services to create local Safe HelpRooms. Some quick stats. Since launch, the Safe Helpline has provided support to over 450,000 users. There have been over 5 million visitors to the www.safehelpline.org website. The DOD and the Safe Helpline are committed to offering comprehensive supportive services to meet survivors' needs wherever they are in the healing journey. The FY22 NDAA

authorizes the Safe Helpline as a resource to accept sexual assault reports. Efforts are underway now to determine how to offer the service, ensuring cybersecurity of the DoD reporting forms and victim survivor confidentiality.

- Captain Lori Ma...: [01:28:50](#) Again, thank you for the opportunity to highlight just a few of these programs and activities underway at this time. For more information, I encourage you to go to the DOD SAPRO webpage at sapr.mil. In closing, SAPRO continues to lead the department's effort to transform into action its commitments to sexual assault prevention and response. This undertaking enjoys the support of leaders at all levels, and it will create a climate of confidence and trust where everyone is afforded respect and dignity. So with that, that is the prepared remarks. If you have questions or concerns, I'll try my best to answer them. Otherwise, I will deliver them back to SAPRO, and we will ensure that we get the answers to your questions and we can post them. So with that, I'm open to questions.
- Lytaria Walker: [01:29:47](#) Ma'am, thank you for your presentation this morning. Captain Mathieu, thank you.
- Captain Lori Ma...: [01:29:53](#) Thank you.
- Lytaria Walker: [01:29:55](#) You may put your questions in the chat box, but unfortunately we are out of time and will need to conclude this morning's webinar. I will send the unanswered questions on to the presenters this morning, so certainly please put them in the Q&A box, opposed to the webinar chat box. Please put them in the Q&A box. At this time, we'll share our screen with our resource slide. Mavia, please share the resource slide. Ms. Londagin, did you want to speak briefly to this slide?
- Ms. Jill Londagin...: [01:30:46](#) Yeah. Again, I just want to thank everybody for tuning in today. I really appreciate you guys taking time out of your busy schedules to hear from DOD SAPRO, myself, and Sergeant First Class Spicer. We decided to put this chart together just to show the various resources, whether for leaders, for commanders, frequently asked questions, what are different awareness material, the hip pocket training and reference card, and things that leaders can use and other people within this space. We have a lot of various different leader tools as well as victim support tools. So again, please utilize these things so we can try to get our message out here. But most importantly, again, thank you guys for tuning in today. Thanks.
- Lytaria Walker: [01:31:35](#) At this time, we will drop this slide into the chat box. You may download it to receive credit. Also, if you're a registered

participant, you will receive the slide via email. At this time, I do want to extend a gracious thank you to Captain Mathieu, Ms. Jill Londagin, and Sergeant First Class Spicer for taking the time to provide this great presentation for us today. Thank you participants for joining us today as well. Once the webinar ends, you will be prompted to complete a survey. We appreciate your feedback as this helps us to improve upon future webinars. If you'd like to receive invitations for ARD webinars and receive the latest news and information from the Army Resilience Directorate, please go to ARD's website at armyresilience.army.mil and sign up for notifications there. Please also follow us on ARD's newly launched LinkedIn and Instagram platforms. Again, thank you for joining us today and have a wonderful rest of your day.