



# SUPPORTING MILITARY-CONNECTED SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

AN ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL



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## ABOUT NOVA

Founded in 1975, The National Organization for Victim Advocacy (NOVA) is the oldest national victim assistance organization of its type in the U.S., and is a recognized leader in victim advocacy, education, and credentialing. NOVA advocates for victims by connecting them with services and resources, provides skill-based training to victim advocates and crisis responders, ensures the highest standards and professional competencies are met and maintained by those working directly with crime victims through credentialing programs, and promoting public policy initiatives that protect the rights of crime victims and serve as the national voice for victims.

NOVA's mission is to champion dignity and compassion for those harmed by crime and crisis.

Learn more about NOVA at <https://www.trynova.org/>.

## ABOUT SOTERIA SOLUTIONS

Soteria Solutions is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping practitioners reduce incidents of sexual and interpersonal violence and harassment. Soteria Solutions provides innovative approaches to prevent sexual and interpersonal violence and harassment, and is committed to fostering collaborations that leverage individual and organizational strengths to build safe and respectful learning, working, and living communities via training, consultation, and the implementation of proven prevention and response strategies.

With their customized evidence-based solutions, they work closely with their clients to ignite change so our clients can carry the torch and maintain an environment of safety and respect for all.

Learn more about Soteria Solutions at [www.soteriasolutions.org](http://www.soteriasolutions.org).

Have questions about this self-assessment, or need more support before you begin? For more information about resources to better serve military-connected survivors, visit NOVA's *Advocating for Military-Connected Survivors Project* page: <https://trynova.org/initiatives/military-advocacy/> or for additional questions or Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) contact [MilitaryTTA@trynova.org](mailto:MilitaryTTA@trynova.org).

# INTRODUCTION

The most recent data from the Department of Defense (2021) estimates there are “over 1.33 million active duty members, 1.01 million reservists and national guard members, 2.55 million family members, and approximately 16-19 million veterans throughout the United States and U.S. territories.”<sup>1</sup> While domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking (DVSAS) impact all communities, military-connected survivors of DVSAS often face unique barriers and complex dynamics that impact help-seeking, navigating both military and civilian systems, safety-planning, and support. When military-connected survivors seek support from civilian agencies, it is essential that these professionals have a working knowledge of these barriers. Additionally, these professionals can best serve military-connected survivors when they have established working relationships and partnerships with military services in their region, and have created an organizational culture that is military-supportive.

The term “**military-connected**” refers to any active-duty service members, reservists, national guard members, veterans, and their current or former spouse, intimate or dating partners, dependents, or someone who has shared a home or child with the aforementioned service members. “**Survivor**” refers to individuals who have experienced domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking (DVSAS). While this document most frequently uses the term ‘survivor,’ the term ‘victim’ is often used interchangeably by survivors and/or those supporting them.

This self-assessment tool was created as part of NOVA’s *Advocating for Military-Connected Survivors Project*, Award No. 15JOVW-22-GK-04039-MUMU, funded by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). This self-assessment tool was created in 2023 with feedback from members of NOVA’s Communities of Practice to Support Military-Connected Survivors and is intended for any civilian agency wishing to enhance their response to military-connected survivors of DVSAS.

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<sup>1</sup> Data retrieved from:

Military One Source, “2021 Demographics, Profile of the Military Community” <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2021-demographics-report.pdf>

The Pew Research Center, “The Changing Face of America’s Veteran Population” (2021) <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/04/05/the-changing-face-of-americas-veteran-population/>

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This tool is a starting point for civilian criminal justice professionals, community advocates, and organizations to generate discussion, assess readiness and strengths, identify areas for growth, and provide goal-setting opportunities to improve service for military-connected survivors in their communities. This tool is not designed to be comprehensive to all areas of learning, partnership, and sustainability, but rather as an organizational check-in that should be revisited over time.

The first step to take as an organization is to determine the process that you will use to complete the self-assessment. Some ideas are outlined below:

- One or two individuals at your organization complete the self-assessment questions and share the results with other staff to open a dialogue about next steps.
- Multiple individuals at your organization complete the self-assessment questions individually, then convene to discuss answers.
- A group of staff convene to complete the self-assessment questions together, coming to a consensus on answers.
- All staff at your organization convene to complete the self-assessment questions together, coming to consensus on answers.
- Engage in a process with your Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Team in which each member organization completes their own self-assessment, then the CCR Team convenes to discuss results and set shared CCR Team goals.

Note: It is not recommended that a CCR Team complete one self-assessment together, as there will be a lot of variability in practices and structure within each individual organization.

This document is a fillable PDF format. To complete the assessment digitally, download and save the file to your device. Editable answer options will appear highlighted in light blue.

Regardless of approach, we recommend that the summary and goal setting sections be completed collaboratively to best encourage diverse perspectives and increase accountability toward determining and reaching goals. The ideal approach will depend on several factors such as, the size of your organization, staffing structure, staff and programmatic capacity, history, and buy-in of intentional work to serve military-connected populations.

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## KEY ACRONYMS

**CCR:** Coordinated  
Community Response

**DoD:** Department of Defense

**DVSAS:** Domestic Violence, Dating  
Violence, Sexual Assault, and  
Stalking

**FAP:** Family Advocacy Program

**MOU:** Memorandum of  
Understanding

**MP:** Military Police

**MPO:** Military Protective Order

**POC:** Point of Contact

**SAPR:** Sexual Assault Prevention  
and Response

**SARC:** Sexual Assault Response  
Coordinator

**SHARP:** Sexual Harassment/Assault  
Response and Prevention (Army  
Only)

**SVC:** Special Victims' Counsel (Army,  
Air Force, Space Force, National  
Guard, and Coast Guard)

**VLC:** Victims' Legal Counsel (Navy  
and Marine Corps)

# SELF-ASSESSMENT

## CORE AREA 1: ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

### Staff Training

Does your organization provide training for staff and/or volunteers on the following topics?

*Check all that apply. If your organization does not have volunteers, leave that column blank.*

Topic	Included in Staff Training	Included in Volunteer Training	Don't Know	N/A
Defining who military-connected survivors are				
Unique dynamics and barriers for military connected survivors of DV/SAS				
Victims' rights and reporting options for military-connected survivors				
Military agencies in area (Veterans Affairs Health, Vet Centers, Military Installations) and developing partnerships				
Military Protection Orders; Risk and lethality assessment for military-connected survivors				
Advocacy services for military-connected survivors (such as FAP and SAPR/SHARP)				
Best practices for civilian organizations supporting military-connected survivors				

## When training is provided on topics related to supporting military-connected survivors, how frequently is it offered?

*Check all that apply. Where indicated, list the individuals and/or departments in the relevant frequency of training.*

Audience	Frequency of Training				
	Part of Onboarding	One Time/Special Training Outside of Onboarding	One Time/Special Training Outside of Onboarding	Don't Know	N/A
All Staff					
Certain Staff (list individuals and/or departments in relevant frequency box)					
All Volunteers					
Certain Volunteers (list individuals and/or departments in relevant frequency box)					

**Does your organization have the required skills and expertise to facilitate effective outreach and advocacy on behalf of military-connected survivors with the goal of increased disclosures and/or referrals?**

We have established effective relationships with all of the military partners in our region and know how to help survivors access needed services and resources

We have established effective relationships with some military partners, but have identified gaps in our knowledge regarding how to best support military-connected survivors

We do not know where to start to build effective relationships with military partners, but we have some basic knowledge about supporting military-connected survivors

We know this work is important, but have not initiated it yet

**Does your organization engage in cross-training between military and civilian advocacy organizations?**

We train military partner organizations, and they train our staff and/or volunteers as well

We participate in our military partners' trainings, but they do not participate in ours

Military partners participate in our training, but we do not participate in theirs

We do not participate in any cross training with military partner organizations



## Identifying Military-Connected Clients

**Does your organization screen clients to identify whether they are a military-connected survivor?**

Yes, this is done consistently within intake protocol across all service areas

Yes, this is included within intake protocol, but only for certain service areas

There is no formal protocol, but some staff ask questions related to this topic

No, this is only noted if a client brings it up first

I don't know if we do this

**Does your organization have a system for tracking how many military-connected survivors are served and, if so, in what ways?**

Yes, across all service areas

Yes, across some service areas

No, there is no way to formally track this information

I don't know if we do this

**Does your screening ask about specific military affiliation (Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve, Veteran, Civilian Dependent or Intimate Partner)?**

Yes, we ask specifically about affiliation

No, we do not ask for specific affiliation

N/A, we do not screen for military-connected survivors as part of our intake process

I don't know if we do this

# CORE AREA 1: SUMMARY

After completing the questions in the above section, please complete the following:

**What strengths have you identified regarding your organization’s knowledge and/or training related to military-connected survivors?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What gaps have you identified in your organization’s knowledge and/or training related to military-connected survivors?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think your organization should prioritize moving forward with respect to improving your knowledge and/or training related to serving military-connected survivors?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Why have you identified these as priorities for your organization?**

## CORE AREA 2: COLLABORATION & CAPACITY-BUILDING QUESTIONS

### Relationship-Building and Collaboration

How frequently does your organization meet with the following military partners in your area?

Select one answer per row.

Military Partners	Never	Rarely	Regularly Scheduled Meetings	N/A This Type of Partner Does Not Exist in My Area	I Do Not Know if This Type of Partner Exists in My Area
Veterans Affairs Health and/or Veteran Centers					
Military Victim Advocacy Services (FAP, SAPR/SHARP)					
National Guard/Reservists Advocacy POCs (if applicable)					
Military Legal Services (VLC/SVC)					
Military Law Enforcement/ Military Police (MP) and Military Investigative Units					
Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) and Installation Mental Health					
Military Chaplain or Religious Services					
Other Military Partners Not Listed Above					

Do you have a formalized MOU with any military partners?  
If so, list partners:

## In what ways is your organization currently partnering with military agencies to provide outreach and/or direct services to military-connected survivors?

*Please check all that apply and circle the frequency that those activities take place.*

Rarely

Sometimes

Regular/  
Ongoing

---

We make direct referrals/warm handoffs to military partners

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Military partners make direct referrals/warm handoffs to us

---

We include information about military advocacy resources in our web and/or print materials

---

We co-facilitate support groups

---

We send military partners outreach materials about our services and resources

---

We send military partners outreach materials about our community events and programming

---

We attend and/or participate in events sponsored by military partners

---

We include military-related resources on our web and/or print materials

---

We engage in joint programming with military partners

---

We collaborate to develop strategies for assessing the needs of military-connected survivors in the community

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Other:

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## Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Teams

### Does your organization facilitate or serve on a CCR Team?

Yes, and that CCR Team includes at least one military partner

Yes, but that CCR Team does not include a military partner

No, our organization doesn't serve on a CCR Team

I don't know

### Does your organization serve on a military installation-led CCR Team?

Yes, and that CCR Team includes at least one military partner

No, we are not part of a military installation-led CCR Team

I don't know

**To what degree do you agree with the following statement: Our CCR Team is effective at meeting regularly to plan, monitor, and evaluate the following: prevention and outreach; treatment and care; offender accountability; and reporting systems to serve military-connected survivors.**

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

N/A: we do not serve on a CCR Team

**Why did you select that answer?**

## CORE AREA 2: SUMMARY

After completing the questions in the above section, please complete the following:

**What strengths have you identified with respect to your organization's skills in serving military-connected survivors and building effective relationships with military partners?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What gaps have you identified in relation to your organization's skills in serving military-connected survivors and building effective relationships with military partners?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think your organization should prioritize moving forward with respect toward improving skills to better serve military-connected survivors and build effective relationships with military partners?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Why have you identified these as priorities for your organization?**

# CORE AREA 3: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & SUSTAINABILITY QUESTIONS

## Organizational Culture

How does your organization indicate to military-connected survivors that you are inclusive and knowledgeable about their unique experiences and needs?

Select one answer per row. Write-in any additional ways that your organization indicates inclusivity for military-connected survivors in the box(es) labeled 'Other.'

Action	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	N/A
Our website, social media, and/or newsletters include military-specific resources, pictures, spotlights, etc.				
Our print materials include military-specific resources, pictures, etc.				
Our physical office includes signage specific to military-connected survivors (pictures, resources, events, etc.)				
We acknowledge military holidays (in office space, on websites, social media, etc.)				
We engage in visible collaboration with military partners (ex: events on website, social media)				
Our intake process asks about military affiliation				
We have staff, volunteers, and/or board members with military affiliation				
Other				

## How would you describe your organization's internal culture in relation to serving military-connected survivors?

*Select all that apply.*

There is buy-in at all levels about the importance of intentionally serving military-connected survivors

Our leadership is committed to better serving military-connected survivors and establishing relationships with military partners

Our staff talks regularly about the unique needs of military-connected survivors and how to better serve them

Our organization is open to learning about military-connected survivors, but there have not been intentional efforts to do so

There are some staff that are passionate about intentionally serving military-connected survivors, but the topic is not broadly talked about at an organizational level

There is not much buy-in on discussing or adjusting any of our practices to specifically improve service toward military-connected survivors

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**What are your organization's mission and values? How are they communicated externally? Are there any explicit or visible anti-military, anti-war, anti-firearm, and/or politically leaning statements on your organization's website, social media, or in the office space?**



## Has your organization experienced a sense of distrust within your relationship(s) with military partners?

This was an issue in the beginning, but we have worked through it to establish trust

We are currently experiencing this issue with one or more of the military partners in our area

We have not experienced this issue thus far

We have not begun establishing relationships with military partners in our area, so do not know if this will be an issue

## Organizational Sustainability

### Who in your organization has knowledge/expertise related to serving military-connected survivors?

*Select all that apply.*

All staff and volunteers are trained regularly and have at least basic knowledge

The majority of staff have all the required knowledge/skills to serve military-connected survivors

There are multiple staff with this knowledge/expertise, and **it is** included within their formal job descriptions

There are multiple staff with this knowledge/expertise, but **it is not** formally included within their job descriptions

There is one person with this knowledge/expertise, and **it is** part of their formal job description

There is one person with this knowledge/expertise, but **it is not** formally part of their job description

No one in the organization has this knowledge/expertise at this time

# CORE AREA 3: SUMMARY

After completing the questions in the above section, please complete the following:

**What strengths have you identified related to your organization’s culture and sustainability in serving military-connected survivors?**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What gaps have you identified related to your organization’s culture and sustainability in serving military-connected survivors?**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think your organization should prioritize moving forward with respect to improving the culture and sustainability to better serve military-connected survivors?**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Why have you identified these as priorities for your organization?**

# SELF-ASSESSMENT: NEXT STEPS AND GOAL SETTING

In reviewing your strengths, gaps, and priorities for each of the Core Areas of this assessment, identify one primary goal that your organization should prioritize:

Why have you identified this goal?

List the necessary action items to achieve this goal:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

List the people and/or resources needed to achieve this goal:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Identify a realistic timeline and date by which this goal will be completed:

# CONCLUSION & RESOURCES

Congratulations! You have taken an important step toward improving your organization's knowledge and skills to support and advocate for military-connected survivors.

The goal of this self-assessment is to generate discussion and to help your organization assess strengths, areas for growth, and goal-setting opportunities to better serve military-connected survivors. Perhaps more than anything, this self-assessment reiterates the important role that civilian providers and community professionals have in supporting military-connected survivors. This self-assessment is meant to be revisited over time as your organization takes action steps toward the goal(s) that you have set.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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There are many resources available to help you as you begin your next steps related to your organizational goals.

NOVA's *Advocating for Military-Connected Survivors Training & Technical Assistance (TTA) Project* is here to help. This project provides TTA to community advocates and civilian criminal justice professionals serving military-connected survivors of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking (DVSAS). **Visit NOVA's Military Project Linktree for additional tip sheets, tools, and external resources:** <https://linktr.ee/novamilitary>.

The **Toolkit for Advocating for Military-Connected Victims**, created in partnership between NOVA and the National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI), contains a variety of tools and resources to help practitioners provide survivor-centered, trauma-informed, and collaborative advocacy for military-connected victims. Learn more and register for free access to the Toolkit here: <https://ncvli.org/what-we-do/advocating-for-military-connected-victims/military-members-families-project/>.

**For all other inquiries, please reach out to the technical assistance team at the National Organization for Victim Advocacy (NOVA) at [MilitaryTTA@trynova.org](mailto:MilitaryTTA@trynova.org).**

