



Sexual Harassment, Assault Impede Diversity, Inclusion

By Kim Ferraro, Army Resilience Directorate

There's no doubt the Army is focused on making its workforce more diverse in race, gender and ethnicity. Case in point: In 2021 the U.S. Army Recruiting Command established the Diversity Outreach and Inclusion Team, whose purpose is to increase the numbers of women and people of different ethnicities within the ranks. But one big obstacle to this effort is an environment plagued by sexual assault and sexual harassment. According to a 2021 Rand Corp. report https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1318-1.html, an estimated 1 in 16 women and 1 in 143 men become victims of sexual assault within the Defense Department. What's more, about 1 in 4 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually harassed. Among the authors' conclusions was that "deterrence alone is insufficient to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment."

Nicole L. Turner, who runs a management consulting firm in the Washington, D.C., area that helps transform companies with toxic work environments, points to a few factors that make diversity difficult and harassment and assault common in the military. Because men account for the majority of service members deployed (in 2021, women made up just 17.3 percent of the active-duty force, according to Defense Department statistics), and many Soldiers are stationed in isolated areas, Turner says, it is more difficult for victims to seek help. "Those being harassed or assaulted feel like they don't have a safe place to go to even discuss what has happened to them, and/or there is little to no consequences for the assailant if they do report—you see ongoing inappropriate behavior."

But the norm of shutting up, instead of speaking

up, is changing. As Turner notes, "The executive order issued by President Biden last year that added sexual harassment to the Uniform Code of Military Justice is a start, as it relates to changing the culture within the military." She also noted the decision to have independently trained investigators replace military commanders in prosecuting cases of sexual assault, overseen by the new [Office of Special Trial Counsel](#)—is a win for victims, as experienced criminal law experts outside of the Army chain of command will handle their complaints.

At Fort Benning in Georgia, the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program updated its training to better connect with recruits bred in the social media age, says Sgt. First Class Tricia Kennedy, sexual assault response coordinator. So instead of explaining sexual harassment and assault through a dry, technical PowerPoint presentation, Kennedy says, actors from an outside agency come to the base to perform skits in which they engage in bawdy banter and behaviors like butt slapping to make Soldiers aware of the type of locker-room talk that is contrary to Army culture and actions that constitute abusive sexual contact.

"Fear can motivate action and inaction alike," Kennedy says. "One important goal of SHARP is to counter fear with knowledge—whether that's how to recognize and address inappropriate behaviors, the process for reporting sexual harassment and sexual assault, or obtaining resources for victims."

Sammie McCall, SHARP program manager at the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command, believes that these issues have their roots in American culture. "I see the Army as a

portion of American society—sexual harassment and assault are an American problem. As a force, we are required to maintain an environment of safety, discipline, dignity and respect." To do that, he says, commanders must not only speak about the Army's zero tolerance for these crimes but also take immediate action in instances of them.

Getting people to shun previously accepted attitudes and conduct is an Army-size battle that the service must win to ensure successes in war zones and at home. "Changing organizational behavior is key to creating a military that represents and is inclusive of all people," Turner says. "Changing organizational behavior starts with doing a deeper dive into the culture and climate and conducting a root-cause analysis to truly identify where the issues are most prevalent and uncover the causes. Before you can make change happen, you must understand what led to your current state."

A heterogeneous workforce is also essential, Turner believes, because "when you have people who are not only diverse as it relates to their gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation but diverse in their way of being and thinking, you have more people willing to eradicate inappropriate behavior in the military."

Ultimately, though, while the service may instill its values in recruits, McCall says, "every individual is their own person, with combined family and Army values that they will carry for life. Each individual must be able to look deep within and make decisions that positively affect the Soldier and civilian to their left and right."

If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual assault and needs confidential assistance, call the DOD Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247.

New Podcasts Highlight TASP, Leadership

By Lytaria Walker, Army Resilience Directorate

The Army Resilience Round Up podcast is gaining momentum! In December we heard from Sgt. Maj. Sharita Onugha, a nominative senior enlisted adviser for the U.S. Army Resilience Directorate, in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff G-1, at the Pentagon. Onugha offered a detailed view of the Total Army Sponsorship Program and resources for Soldiers to increase their resilience.

She discussed policies, prevention and response in relation to resilience. In this inspiring and uplifting episode, Onugha shared the story of her childhood and her resilient upbringing.

Our January show featured retired Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré, who started the year with a bang, which is nothing new for this fearless leader (also known as the "Ragin' Cajun"). Honoré served as the 33rd

commanding general of the U.S. First Army at Fort Gillem, Georgia. He is best known for serving as commander of Joint Task Force Katrina, which was responsible for coordinating military relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina. Honoré discussed his experience as a disaster management and climate preparedness leader and what it takes to lead through tough times.

As an Army veteran, he shared his beliefs about what it takes to produce Army-strong Soldiers and the ways that leaders can boost their troops' resilience through effective support. Honoré revealed his core leadership principles that commanders and Soldiers alike should consider integrating into their careers. The Army Resilience Round Up offers resources to help Soldiers maintain resilience. Remember, you are resilient!

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