



Annex 1: Men's SAPR Communication Campaign Department of Defense Safe Helpline Evaluation



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Purpose

Civilian and military research underscores the fact that men are far less likely to report an experience of sexual assault than women. In 2021, the Department of Defense (DoD) estimated that only 10 percent of active-duty men reported their experience of sexual assault to a DoD authority, compared to about 29 percent of active-duty women.¹

To encourage greater access by men to resources and support, the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) launched the Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men in 2016.² The Plan involved research that identified a need for outreach directed towards men who experience sexual assault. In Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), SAPRO released a Men's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Communication Campaign (hereafter referred to as the "Men's Campaign") to increase awareness that men are victims of sexual assault and to encourage men impacted by the crime to access available resources and support.

This evaluation attempts to quantify the impact of the Men's Campaign by reviewing a sample of usage data from the DoD Safe Helpline (SHL) from FY21 and FY22 and comparing use of the resource by gender before and after the launch of the Men's Campaign.

Key Findings

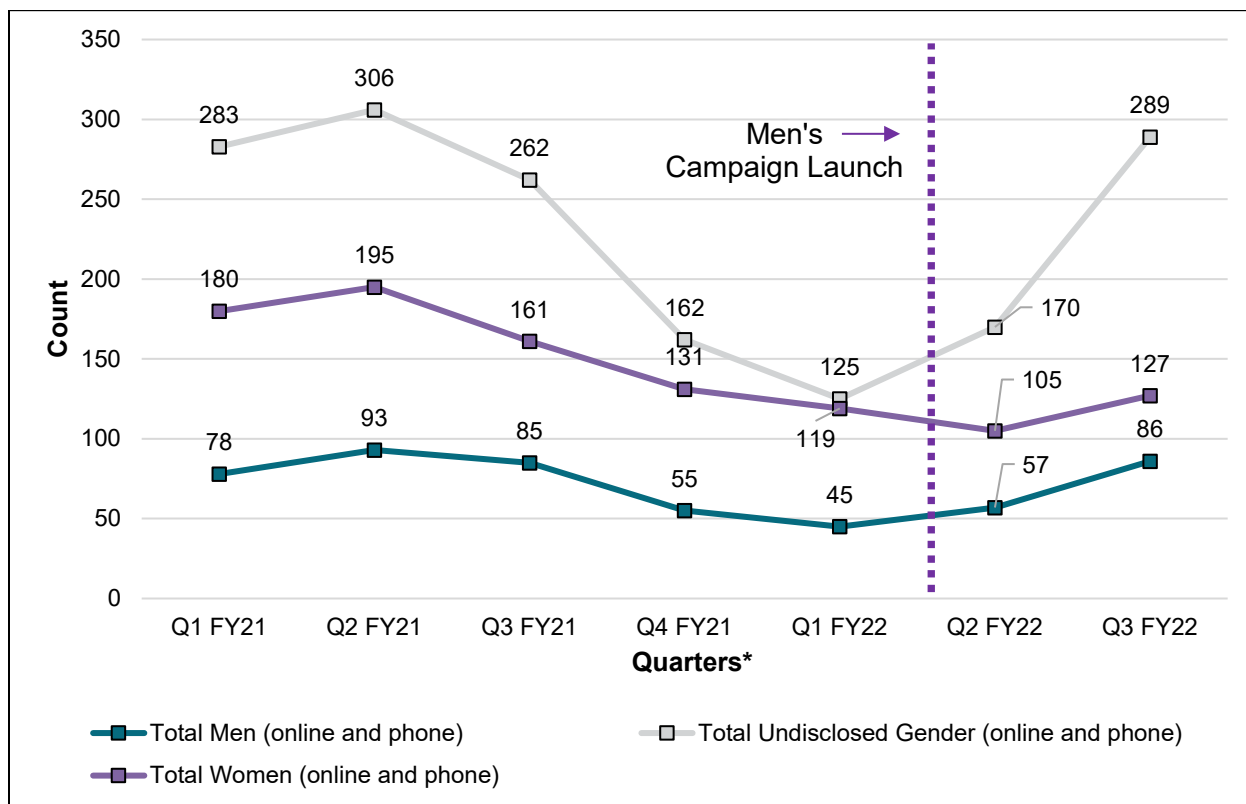
The Amount of Sampled SHL Users Increased Following the Launch of the Men's Campaign

Prior to the launch of the Men's Campaign, the SHL saw a decrease in use by all genders in the sample since Q2 FY21. The subsequent increase in sampled users of all genders aligns with the launch of the Men's Campaign during Q2 FY22. In addition, there is an overall increase associated with Men's Campaign social media push from Q1 to Q3 FY22. While the increase was most notable in the data sample among men and users of an undisclosed gender, the increase was also seen among women in Q2 to Q3 FY22. This can be seen in Figure 1, demonstrating an increase in sampled SHL users of all genders after the launch of the Men's Campaign.

¹ For more information, see the DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, FY 2021 available at www.sapr.mil/reports.

² For more information on the DoD Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault of Military Men, see www.sapr.mil/mens-sapr-campaign.

Figure 1. Total Count of Sample SHL Users by Gender from Quarter to Quarter



*Note: SHL data is reported at the end of each quarter.

SAPRO analyzed the change in percentage of sampled users each quarter and found a measurable increase in users who identify as men, women, and users of undisclosed gender from Q1 to Q2 FY22. These percent changes in SHL usage are shown in Table 1. From Q1 to Q2 (January to March 2022), SHL sampled usage increased 21 percent among men and 26 percent among users of an undisclosed gender. An even greater increase is apparent among sampled users from Q2 to Q3 FY22 (April to June 2022), as those who were men increased 34 percent and those who were of an undisclosed gender increased 41 percent.

Data for SHL sampled users who identify as women show a different trend than that of SHL users who identify as men or as an undisclosed gender. From Q1 to Q2 FY22 (January to March 2022), SHL sampled usage among women decreased 13.33 percent, whereas usage for both men and of undisclosed genders increased during that time. From Q2 to Q3 FY22 (April to June 2022), SHL sampled usage increased 17.32 percent among women. The sample of men and of users of an undisclosed gender also increased during this time and had a significantly greater increase than the sample of women (33.72 percent, 41.18 percent and 17.32 percent respectively). The NB/GNC population was first recorded in Q2 FY22 and given the small sample size saw a 400 percent decrease from Q2 to Q3 FY22.

Table 1. Percent Changes in SHL Usage of the Sample from Q1 FY21 to Q3 FY22

	% Change Q1 FY21 to Q2 FY21	% Change Q2 FY21 to Q3 FY21	% Change Q3 FY21 to Q4 FY21	% Change Q4 FY21 to Q1 FY22	% Change Q1 FY22 to Q2 FY22	% Change Q2 FY22 to Q3 FY22
Men (Online and Phone)	+16%	-9%	-55%	-22%	+21%	+34%
Women (Online and Phone)	+8%	-21%	-23%	-10%	-13%	+17%
Undisclosed Gender (Online and Phone)	+8%	-17%	-62%	-30%	+26%	+41%

Men's Campaign Launch →

Most Sampled SHL Users Utilize the Online Chat Option and Do Not Disclose Their Gender

Figure 2 breaks down the SHL sample data by means of contact and gender. Most sampled users contact SHL through the online chat option, and do not disclose their gender. Sampled users of an undisclosed gender using the SHL online chat option also saw the most significant increase in count after the launch of the Men's Campaign.

The count for sampled men or women using the SHL online chat option, sampled men or women calling the SHL number, and sampled users of an undisclosed gender calling the SHL number are all significantly lower than sampled users of the SHL online chat option of an undisclosed gender.

Figure 2. Count of Sample SHL Users by Gender and Means of Contact

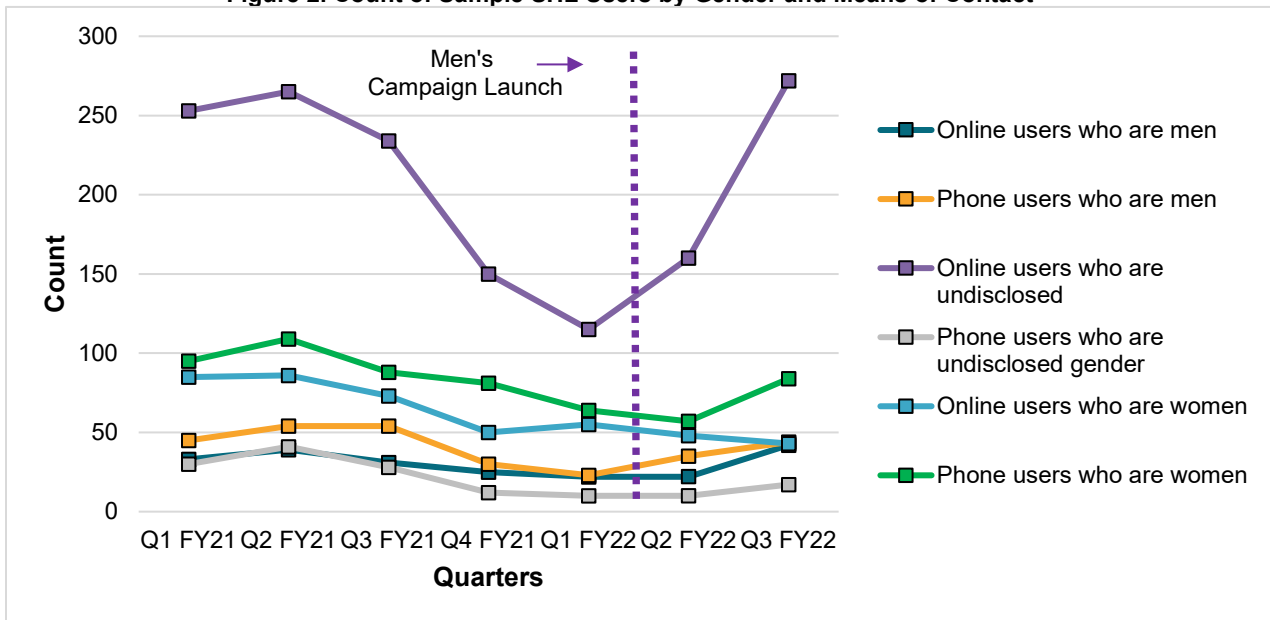
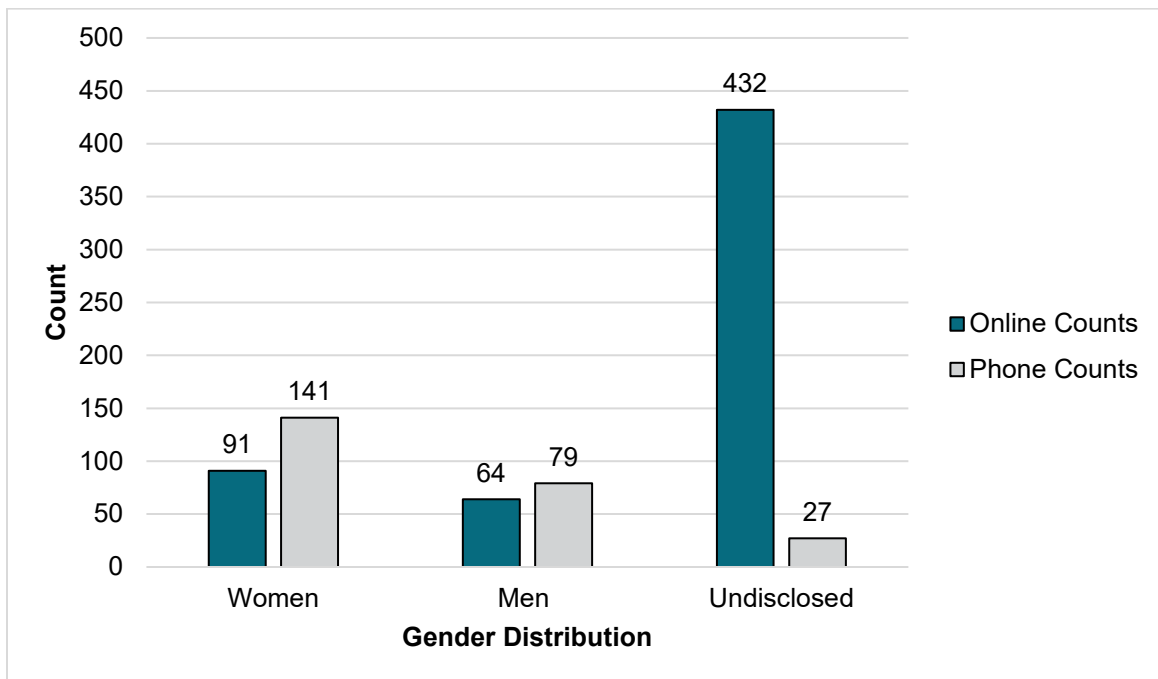


Figure 3 shows SHL online and phone sample usage broken down by gender in Q2 to Q3 FY22, the quarters following the launch of the Men’s Campaign. For sampled men and women, both ways of contacting the SHL are similarly utilized with slightly more people using the phone option. In contrast, a significant majority of sampled users of an undisclosed gender contact the SHL via the online chat option. The high use of the online chat option by those not disclosing their gender may speak to a greater sense of anonymity and comfort in accessing a resource where they are able to use text chat instead of a verbal option. As discussed in a previous section, men are less likely to report an experience of sexual assault than women due to male-specific stigma and myths surrounding sexual assault. Having the online chat option for general users not wanting to disclose their gender may make the SHL an accessible first step in receiving support for their experience of sexual assault for all members of the military.

Figure 3. Gender Distribution of Sampled Online and Phone Sessions from Q2-Q3 FY22



Methodology

The SHL is an anonymous and confidential 24/7 hotline operated by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) through a contract with the Department of Defense, to assist members of the DoD community affected by sexual assault.³ When a SHL staff member provides support to a user, the staff member logs the support provided and other information about the user in a session assessment tool. In the session assessment tool, the staff member selects the gender the user disclosed or selects “undisclosed” if the user did not disclose their gender. Assessment data are based on information that SHL users volunteer during a session. SHL staff do not solicit information from users for research purposes.⁴

³ For more information on SHL, see www.safehelpline.org.

⁴ FY21 Safe Helpline Annual Report 1.31.22

SHL data is compiled quarterly to show users by gender, including users of an undisclosed gender.⁵ SAPRO analyzed a sample of these data to compare the number of users before and after the launch of the Men's Campaign.

Campaign Timeline

In January 2022, DoD launched the Men's Campaign among SAPR personnel. In February 2022, DoD launched the Campaign across the Military Services, including YouTube videos and opportunities for trainings. From May to September 2022, DoD released a social media push to increase exposure to the Men's Campaign. To align with quarterly SHL data, SAPRO defined the "Launch of the Men's Campaign" as occurring between Q1 FY22 and Q2 FY22.

Sample Inclusion

During the timeframe of data collection, SHL staff utilized the session assessment tool to document all online and telephone sessions. Rigorous inclusion criteria were applied for analysis of session assessment data to ensure that cases analyzed provided adequate information. A number of conditions excluded session assessments from the sample. Throughout the findings below, the phrase "sampled users" describes the users included in the sample due to adequate data collection by SHL staff in the session assessment tool.

Conditions that excluded a session from the sample include:

- Sessions where it is clear there is no military affiliation for the user, victim or alleged perpetrator⁶
- Sessions based on simple referral or off target contacts⁷
- Incomplete sessions due to users calling the wrong number or abrupt/early disconnections before 10 minutes⁸
- Online chat sessions where the user never spoke, joined, or was labeled inactive⁹
- Prank calls¹⁰
- Sessions that were incoherent or impossible to understand¹¹
- Sessions where the user was "just curious"¹²

The following Key Findings section is based on findings from the sample, not findings from all SHL sessions. The sample only represents a percentage of SHL users, and therefore may not

⁵ Although non-binary and gender nonconforming (NB/GNC) selections were included as options in the SHL session assessment tool in FY22, DoD SAPRO cannot measure the impact of the Men's Campaign on NB/GNC user engagement as NB/GNC data was not collected prior to the Men's Campaign launch. The impact of the Men's Campaign on NB/GNC populations may be different than the impact on users who are men or women. Prior to the creation of the NB/GNC option in the SHL log in FY22, SHL staff may have selected the "undisclosed gender" option for NB/GNC users if those users did not disclose their gender. Therefore, responses and analysis results for the "undisclosed gender" category are unclear.

⁶ SHL FY22_Q1_Brief 3.15.22

⁷ FY22 Safe Helpline Annual Report 1.31.23

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

accurately represent the impact of the Men's Campaign on SHL usage or on service members more broadly.

Limitations

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Men's Campaign, this report focused on a sample of user data from the SHL based on gender and methods of contacting SHL. The sample only represents a percentage of SHL users, and therefore may not accurately represent the impact of the Men's Campaign on SHL usage. DoD SAPRO is also not able to identify a direct correlation between the two factors.

Another important limitation to note is the lack of trending data for NB/GNC individuals accessing SHL.

While there was a measurable increase in sampled users following the launch of the Men's Campaign, it is not possible to isolate the Men's Campaign as the only factor or cause of increased users. Regarding the specific initiatives within the Men's Campaign schedule, the impact of the social media push on SHL data is unclear because its date range spanned from Q1 to Q3 FY22. Other factors, such as improved training for leadership to spread awareness on resources or current events that increased awareness of sexual assault, could also impact the number of users. The SHL data is also a DoD-wide perspective, which obscures differences between the Military Services.