

Table of Contents

18. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Outreach Coordinator	2
Introduction.....	2
Initiated Date.....	2
a. Purpose.....	2
b. Overview.....	2
c. MST Outreach Coordinator Definition	3
d. MST Outreach Coordinator Duties.....	3
e. MST Outreach Coordinator Responsibilities	3
f. VHA MST Coordinators	4
g. Procedures for Telephone Contact with the Veteran	5
h. Outreach and Coordination.....	6
i. Reporting MST-Related Outreach.....	8
j. MST Outreach Coordinator Poster	8
k. Required MST-Related Training	8
l. MST-Related Resources	9
m. References and Regulations.....	10

18. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Outreach Coordinator

Introduction This topic provides procedural guidance on the roles and responsibilities of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Outreach Coordinators.

Initiated Date August 21, 2020

a. Purpose The goal is to provide MST Outreach Coordinators with information to assist MST survivors with navigating the process of filing a claim related to MST as well as:

- Guidance for initiating contact with the Veteran
 - Customer service and soft skills integration
 - Providing outreach
 - VA benefits and services
-

b. Overview The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has seen an increase in the filings of claims based on MST. Although the initial VA response was influenced by claims for women Veterans, male Veterans also experience MST. According to the [Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\)](#), of the population of Veterans screened at its health care facilities, about one in four women and one in a hundred men state that they have experienced an in-service stressful MST event.

VA is aware that, because of the personal and sensitive nature of MST stressors in these cases, it is often difficult for the Veteran to report or document the event when it occurs. Reasons for this may include fear of reprisal, feelings of shame or guilt, or the perception of an unresponsive chain of command. As a result, if the MST ultimately leads to post-service PTSD symptoms and the Veteran files a claim, the available evidence is often enough to establish occurrence of the stressor. To remedy this, VA developed regulations and procedures that provide for a liberal approach to evidentiary development and adjudication of these claims.

VBA established the MST Program to educate, empower and spread awareness about increased benefits and special services that may be available to this targeted population. The goal is to disseminate information VA, conduct outreach, and provide personal assistance in submitting claims for benefits.

18. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Outreach Coordinator,

Continued

c. MST Outreach Coordinator Definition

An MST Outreach Coordinator (Coordinator) is the designated point of contact (POC) assigned by the regional office (RO) Director to assist Veterans and service members who may have experienced MST.

Each RO will appoint one female and one male Coordinator. This provides Veterans and service members the choice to correspond with or speak to either Coordinator based on personal preference.

d. MST Outreach Coordinator Duties

MST Outreach Coordinator duties are listed below.

- Interact with MST Claims Coordinators, also known as MST Claims Processors
 - Serve as the Veteran's primary POC for his/her MST-related claim
 - Serve as the subject matter expert (SME) for all Veteran, service members and RO staff questions about MST
 - Connect Veterans, service members and family members to MST-related resources and/or services available within VA and the community
 - Document contact with Veterans and documented powers of attorney (POAs) about an MST-related claim
 - Provide case management by tracking claim progress to update the Veteran as requested
 - Establish and maintain a network amongst community service providers and share information about MST-related claims processing with Women Veteran Program Managers (WVPCs) and MST Coordinators at VA Medical Centers (VAMCs), Vet Center staff, and other community organizations
 - Participate in MST-related trainings, briefings, projects and conferences, including those hosted by VA Central Office, the VAMC, Vet Centers, Department of Defense (DoD) and community organizations.
-

e. MST Outreach Coordinator Responsibilities

Coordinators must maintain broad and detailed knowledge about VA benefits and services, as well as the MST-related claims process. It is important for Coordinators to consider how his or her interaction impacts the Veteran's experience. Coordinator responsibilities are listed below.

- Demonstrate professional, empathetic, and open-minded advocacy for the Veteran and their beneficiary
- Build and maintain a trusting relationship with the Veteran

- Use discretion to protect the Veteran’s privacy
- Explain and assist Veterans with the process of applying for related benefits
- Educate and assist Veterans with gathering information needed for the claim application
- Use a calm and composed tone when speaking with the Veteran
- Provide an experience that is positive and reassuring by responding to emotional situations, and sensitively engaging with the Veteran
- Explain the use of VA and DoD forms such as but not limited to those listed below.
 - [VA Form 21-0781a, Statement in Support of Claim for Service Connection for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\) Secondary to Personal Assault](#)
 - [DD Form 2910, Victim Report Preference Statement](#)
 - [DD Form 2911, DoD Sexual Assault Forensic Examination \(SAFE\) Report](#)
 - [DD Form 2910, Victim Report Preference Statement](#)
 - [DD Form 2910-1, Replacement of Lost DD Form 2910, Victim Reporting Preference Statement](#)
 - [DD Form 2910-2, Retaliation Reporting Statement for Unrestricted Sexual Assault Cases](#)
 - [DD Form 2911, DoD Sexual Assault Forensic Examination \(SAFE\) Report](#)

Reference: For information on claims processing as related MST due to personal trauma, see:

- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv.3.A., Examination Requests Overview](#)
- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv.4.O., Mental Disorders](#)
- [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii.1.D., Claims for Service Connection for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)

f. VHA MST Coordinators

MST Outreach Coordinators will liaise with VHA MST Coordinators at VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) in the RO’s jurisdiction. VHA MST Coordinators assist Veterans with obtaining treatment and health care related to experiences of MST.

The VHA MST Coordinator directory can be found at:
<https://vaww.vashare.vha.va.gov/sites/mst/contacts/mst-coordinators>

18. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Outreach Coordinator Outreach Coordinator, Continued

g. Procedures for Telephone Contact with the Veteran

MST Outreach Coordinators are no longer required to perform the initial review of the MST-related claim or make a telephone call to the Veteran for the purposes of obtaining a summary of the personal trauma incident or confirming if he/she completed DoD forms and/or other documents in response to the incident. This will avoid overdevelopment, delaying claim processing timeliness, and/or unintentionally creating a negative experience for Veterans and employees assisting MST survivors.

The RO will designate one or more employees as necessary to assist specialized claims processor, also known as an MST Claims Coordinator, with contacting the Veteran by telephone when there is insufficient primary evidence to order an examination and/or medical opinion(s) and if the alleged stressor is from 2006 or after to determine if the Veteran completed DoD forms.

The reasons MST Outreach Coordinators will contact Veterans by telephone include but are not limited to the list below.

- Share and receive information with the Veteran as well as Military and/or Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs). For available VSO contact information, see the [Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans and Military Service Organization Directory](#)
- Provide updates to the Veteran and/or Power of Attorney (POA) on file in the Veteran's record for claims based on MST, as requested
- Discuss claim decisions as requested by the Veteran
- Provide instructions and assistance associated with filing a claim based on MST
- Relay generalized claims information from the specialized MST claims processing team

Note: Service members going through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) and Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) processes may receive a proposed rating. Although service members are encouraged to contact the Military Services Coordinator (MSC) to discuss IDES updates or claims decisions, they may also speak with an MST Outreach Coordinator about their MST-related claim.

Coordinators will document all telephone contact with Veterans to provide a method of tracking and documenting Veteran contact. This also includes instances where the Veteran does not answer the phone.

MST Outreach Coordinators will follow local procedural guidance for documenting and routing telephone contact with Veterans on [VA Form 27-](#)

[0820, \(Series\)](#). Send VA Form 27-0820 for uploading in the Veteran's electronic record.

Reference: For more information about the definition of the term marker, see [M21-1, Part IV., Subpart ii.1D.5.d., Procedure for Reviewing For Credible Evidence of a Personal Trauma Stressor](#)

**h. Outreach
and
Coordination**

The MST Coordinator will maintain an effective network and referral system with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Department of Defense, and other sexual and domestic violence advocacy groups such as but not limited to:

- Military and Veterans Service Organizations
- Readjustment Counseling Services (RCS) or Vet Center staff
- State Department of Veterans Affairs
- VHA Social Work Service (SWS)

MST Outreach Coordinators at each RO will conduct no less than 12 hours of MST-related outreach per quarter during the fiscal year. MST-related outreach efforts will focus on disseminating information about MST, resources, and the MST-related claims process to Veterans, service members, family members, beneficiaries, and stakeholders.

Examples of MST-related outreach events include but not limited to activities such as:

- briefings and presentations due to personal sexual trauma
- campaigns promoting sexual assault awareness
- claims clinics
- conferences, expositions, and symposiums
- health fairs
- lunch and learns
- tele-town halls
- town halls

Reference: For information on outreach and suggestions on conducting outreach, see [M27-1, Part II, Chapter 1., Outreach Services](#).

To assist RO staff and stakeholders with efficiently and effectively delivering services to Veterans, it is important for Coordinators to:

- Collaborate with VHA MST Coordinators and staff at the VAMCs to:
 - Provide training on VBA benefits related to MST to local VAMC MST Coordinators and mental health staff annually

- Develop and establish local procedures for MST-related mental health and other exam appointments as well as warm handoffs between Veteran Service Center (VSC) and VAMC staff for Veterans
- Establish and maintain a working relationship with other agencies and community service providers to obtain referrals and assist MST survivors
- Collaborate with other RO outreach coordinators for other special emphasis programs, such as Justice-Involved; LGBT (lesbian/gay/bi-sexual/transgender); and Women Veterans Coordinators to:
 - Coordinate outreach efforts for Veterans being discharged or released from an institution after inpatient psychiatric care, substance abuse treatment, or imprisonment
 - Contact, provide outreach materials and/or visit prisons, domestic violence shelters and homeless shelters within the local jurisdiction no less than three times per quarter
- Coordinate with State Departments of Veterans Affairs (SDVAs) to provide resources and services
- Attend reoccurring meetings and events within the RO's jurisdiction on sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, cyber-stalking and other locally sponsored programs and services targeting Veterans that may have experienced personal trauma related to MST, i.e. VSOs, non-profit organizations, etc.
- Provide reports based on frequency specified by the needs of the RO and requests from VA Central Office (VACO)
- Develop and maintain a local resource directory of MST-related service providers, advocacy groups and community organizations

MST Outreach Coordinators will develop and maintain an electronic resource directory to distribute to VA personnel and those assisting Veterans experiencing a personal trauma related to MST. These include nonprofit programs and organizations within the state, region, and community that provide resources and services to Veterans. The coordinator will update the directory every quarter the last week of December, March, July, and September.

Coordinators will develop and maintain an electronic coordinator toolkit to assist with managing its local MST program.

Important: Ensure the resource directory and toolkit are saved in one convenient location and made available for distribution.

During the fiscal year, Coordinators will verify and provide updates at the end of March and September. The Coordinator Toolkit includes but is not limited to the items listed below.

- Directories
 - Directory of VHA MST and Suicide Prevention Coordinators
 - Directory of VHA Women Veteran Program Managers
 - Directory of State Vet Centers
 - Directory of accredited VSOs, to include State Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Directory of local and state non-profit organizations providing services, resources and/or assistance to sexual assault survivors
- DoD points of contact
 - DoD Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) points of contact
- Listing of regional homeless and domestic violence resources that provide aid and assistance to Veterans
- Approved outreach plan outlining MST-related events and activities
- Procedural guidance chapters for MST Outreach Coordinators, PTSD, and the claims process related to MST
- Monthly and quarterly RO outreach data

Coordinators will develop an annual outreach plan that outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies to deliver outreach services to special emphasis populations for the following fiscal year.

Reference: For more information on the components of the outreach plan, see [M27-1, Part II, Chapter 1., Outreach Services](#).

**i. Reporting
MST-Related
Outreach**

MST Outreach Coordinators will enter MST-related outreach events and activities in the [Outreach Reporting Tool Plus \(ORT+\) Portal](#). Coordinators will complete the [ORT+](#) after-action report (AAR) and all required data fields no later than five business days after the event ends. MST Coordinators will follow the [M27-1 Part II, Chapter 1, Outreach Services](#), for entering MST-related outreach in the [ORT+](#).

**j. MST
Outreach
Coordinator
Poster**

Each RO will display the MST Outreach Coordinator poster in the Public Contact Unit waiting area and any VA facility that Veterans may visit. The poster will include the name and telephone number of both the female and male MST Outreach Coordinators. The poster templates can be found at <https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/BAS/outreach/MST.asp> These can be printed and distributed locally.

**k. Required
MST-Related
Training**

MST Outreach Coordinators will complete required MST-related courses in Talent Management System (TMS) within 90 days of assignment. Coordinators will participate in teleconference training calls provided by the Office of Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement (O&E).

The specialized MST-related training can be found in the [M21-3, Training Program Manual](#).

I. MST-Related Resources

The resources listed below assist with educating Veterans on the broad range of services and supportive assistance they can receive outside of VBA. Each MST Outreach Coordinator must be familiar with the information in the table below and be able to discuss resources and services detail if the Veteran has questions.

Name	Description	Location
MST Program Web Page	Provides an overview of the VBA MST program, links to resources and guidance for MST Coordinators.	https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/BAS/outreach/MST.asp
MST Toolkit	Provides VA information and resources about MST-related benefits, services and policies.	https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/BAS/outreach/MSTResources.asp#MST5
VBA MST Mailbox	Corporate VBA MST corporate mailbox	VAVBAWAS/CO/MST or MST.VBACO@va.gov
VHA MST Home Page	Provides information and resources about outpatient and residential/inpatient care and services.	http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp
VBA MST Coordinator Directory	Provides contact information for VBA Military Sexual Trauma Coordinators at each regional office.	http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/mstcoordinators.asp
VHA MST Coordinator Directory	Provides contact information for VHA Military Sexual Trauma Coordinators at each VA Medical Center/facility.	https://vaww.portal.va.gov/sites/mst_community/section_pages/People-Finder/Find-MST-Coordiators.aspx
VBA MST Fact Sheet	Provides information and answers about MST-related disability claims and treatment entitlements even if the	http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/serviceconnected/MST.pdf

	Veteran is not service-connected.	
VA.gov	Provides access and information for Veterans to manage VA benefits and health care services.	https://www.va.gov/
Crisis Line	Raises awareness and has downloadable, ready-to-use material with graphics, written content and a number (800-273-8255) for information.	VeteransCrisisLine.net/SpreadTheWord
Make the Connection	Connects Veterans with other Veterans through shared experiences – provides video galleries, discussions and resource support.	www.maketheconnection.net

m. References and Regulations

- [38 CFR 3.304\(f\)\(5\)](#) is the governing regulation for service connecting claims for PTSD based on in-service personal assault
- [38 U.S.C. § 1720D \[Counseling and treatment for sexual trauma\]](#) sets standards for MST treatment and defines the term
- [38 CFR § 3.159\(c\) \(4\) \[Providing medical examinations or obtaining medical opinions\]](#) establishes a relatively low threshold for requesting VA medical examinations
- [M27-1, Part I, Chapter 4, *Personal Interviews*](#)
- [M27-1, Part II, Chapter 4., *Women Veterans*](#)
- [M27-2, Part II, Chapter 1., *Outreach Services*](#)
- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv.3.A., *Examination Requests Overview*](#)
- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv.4.H., *Mental Disorders*](#)
- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv.4.O., *Mental Disorders*](#)
- [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii.1.D., *Claims for Service Connection for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*](#)
- [M21-3, *Training Program Manual*](#)

For questions regarding this policy, email the Office of Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement at: VAVBAWAS/CO/OUTREACH or Outreach.VBACO@va.gov.