

MOSAIC Narrative/Semi-Structured Interview Guide

In this project, we are interested in learning about formal and informal help-seeking behavior among male-identified military personnel who experienced sexual trauma including unwanted sexual contact or sexual harassment. This includes learning about participants' sexual trauma or harassment experiences, with whom participants shared their experiences, whether participants used resources or support services, and whether participants made an official report. To begin the interview, though, I will start by asking some general questions about your military characteristics and personal identities.

I have a list of prepared questions to ask you. At times, I will ask you to say more about something or to clarify or expand on your answers. At other times I may ask that we move to the next topic to respect your time and stay on schedule. Also, I will be taking a few notes during our conversation, so I may need to pause now and then.

As a reminder, your participation in this interview is completely voluntary—if at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can tell me to skip it. If you would like to withdraw completely from the study, that is OK too. You can also just take a break or pause if you need to. Just let me know.

We will be discussing some personal topics today, so it's important that you are in a private place, a place where you feel comfortable talking.

Next, you may remember that I will be audio recording this interview so I may focus on what you're saying without trying to write everything down. Later, research staff will create a transcript of the interview. Is that okay with you?

Do you have any questions so far? (Pause)

Okay, then I'm going to start the recording now.

This is (interviewer name), interviewing participant (interview ID_____) on (DATE_____).

As we get started, I'd like to tell you a bit more about how we are protecting your privacy today. As I was saying, this interview will be audio recorded, and then transcribed. We do ask that you avoid sharing any identifying information, like names or locations. However, should you accidentally do so, any identifying information will be deleted or replaced with non-specific information when we review transcripts. This might be something like inserting John Doe for a person's name. After the recording is transcribed, the audio file will be permanently deleted. I will never identify you as a participant or provide information that may permit other people to figure out that you took part. Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

To begin, I'd like to get some information about your military service and personal identities and characteristics.

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your military service, like which branch you serve/served in, and what your occupational specialty is/was?
 - i. Prompt: What is your branch of service?
 - ii. Prompt: What is/was your rank in the military?
 - iii. Prompt: What is/was your job or MOS in the military
 - iv. Prompt: What were your main duties or responsibilities?
2. What was your primary reason for joining the military?
3. How long have you been in the military?/How long did you serve in the military?

Thank you for sharing some information about your military service. Now I'll ask a few questions about your personal identities and characteristics.

4. How old are you?
5. What is your gender identity?
6. What is your sexual identity?
7. How would you describe your race and ethnicity? I will state the minimum categories prescribed by OMB's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 and ask you to respond with a "yes" or "no" to each.
 - Are you American Indian or Alaska Native?
 - Are you Asian?
 - Are you Black or African American?
 - Are you Hispanic or Latino?
 - Are you Middle Eastern or North African?
 - Are you Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander?
 - Are you White?
8. What is your highest level of education?
9. What is your relationship status? What is your partner's gender identity?

Thank you so much for sharing that information with me. At this point in the interview, I'd like to discuss your experiences with unwanted sexual contact during military service so I can better understand what happened. As a reminder, all of your answers are confidential, and you can disclose as much or as little as you feel comfortable.

10. If it's okay with you, could you please tell me more about what happened?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: [participant narrative] - The interviewee begins telling their story; the interviewer should use non-verbal encouragement, for example smiles, saying "mhhmm" and so on to encourage the interviewee to talk freely. The interviewer should avoid interrupting until there are clear signs that the interviewee has finished their story.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: [Prompting the participant/asking questions] - This is when the active listening by the interviewer becomes useful and the interviewer can use the participant's own language to fill in any gaps or to ask for more detail about an issue of interest. The interviewer could ask questions like 'What happened then/before/after', or 'can you say a bit more about...?' rather than asking for opinions or attitudes or even asking why questions.

Ask these probing questions if not already discussed during participant narrative:

- i. **What were the circumstances? (e.g., what setting, what time, what was the situation, were others present)**
 - a. **Where were you at the time?**
 - b. **How long had you been in the military at that time?**
 - i. **How long were you at that duty station?**
 - c. **Were other people around?**
- ii. **Can you tell me more about the people involved, like their gender, rank, and relationship to you?**
 - a. **How many people were involved?**
 - b. **What was the gender of the person (or people) involved?**
 - c. **What was the person's rank?**
 - d. **Did you know this person prior to this happening? How so?**

Now let's talk a little bit about what happened afterward.

11. Did you continue to have contact with the person (or people) who did this to you? What were your interactions like with the person (or people) who did this to you, afterwards?

➔ If YES: **Would you tell me a little more about that?**

- i. **Probe: In what context?**
- ii. **Probe: How frequently?**
- iii. **Probe: How did this make you feel?**

12. How do you remember feeling in the days and weeks after this happened?

- i. Prompt: How did it affect you emotionally or physically?
- ii. Prompt: Did it have any effect on your relationships with other people?
- iii. Prompt: Did it have any effect on your performance at work?

Thank you for sharing all of this with me. As I mentioned earlier, we are interested in learning about help-seeking behavior among male military personnel who experienced sexual trauma. Before we move on to discuss help-seeking, is there anything else you would like to talk about regarding your experience?

Allow participant to finish telling details of their narrative if needed.

Sometimes, people talk about their negative experiences with other people, and some people will use resources and support services to help them cope. To start, I'm going to ask you about whether you talked to anyone about your experience, and then I'm going to ask you several questions about any resources you may have used like support groups, hotlines, or other services. Does that sound okay to you?

13. Who, if anyone, have you talked to about your experiences? Please share as much as you are willing to share about your experiences talking to others about what happened, if you did so.

[participant narrative]

Probing questions:

Informal supports

- i. *Have you ever talked to a friend about what happened?*
- ii. *Have you ever talked to a romantic partner about what happened?*
- iii. *Have you ever talked to a family member about what happened?*
- iv. *Have you ever talked to a coworker or other people in your command about what happened?*

Formal healthcare supports

- v. *Have you ever talked to a therapist or counselor about what happened?*
- vi. *Have you ever talked to a hospital corpsman like a general duty corpsman, behavior technician, or independent duty corpsman about what happened?*
- vii. *Have you ever talked to other military medical professionals about what happened?*
- viii. *Have you ever talked to medical professionals outside of the military about what happened?*

Support groups

- ix. *Have you ever talked to anyone online about what happened, for example,*

- through a virtual support group or through social media?*
- x. *Have you ever talked to members of an in-person support group about what happened?*

Chaplain

- xi. *Have you ever talked to any religious leaders or chaplains about what happened?*

14. Have you ever talked to anyone else about what happened other than the people we have already discussed?

Follow-ups: ASK Q15-18 FOR EACH PERSON/PEOPLE ENDORSED IN Q14:

15. How soon after your experience did you talk to [USE PARTICIPANT LANGUAGE]?

16. How did it go when you talked to this person?

17. What led to or contributed to your decision to talk about your experience with this person?

- i. *Probe: Did someone close to you, for example a friend or your romantic partner, influence your decision to seek help from this person?*

18. Sometimes, people will seek advice from other people, and sometimes people seek comfort when they share their experiences. When you talked to _____ about your experience, what were you looking for at that time?

- i. *Prompt: Did this person provide help or support? How so?*

19. Were there any other ways that you may have sought support, comfort, or help after this happened?

Some people who have this kind of experience [use participant language] decide to make an official report, while others decide not to. For instance, you may have made an Unrestricted or Restricted Report of sexual assault to a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator or Victim Advocate or made a complaint about sexual harassment to a command climate specialist or command managed equal opportunity program manager, Navy Inspector General, or Command Leadership. This is a very personal decision. I'd like to talk about whether you made an official report and what the reporting or not reporting experience was like for you.

20. Can you please share whether you chose to make an official report or not?

- i. **Prompt: Would you mind talking a little bit about your experience reporting or not reporting?**
- ii. **Prompt: How did you make your decision at the time?**
 - a. **Probe: Did someone close to you, for example a friend or your romantic partner, influence your decision to make—or not make—an official report?**
 - b. **Probe If P did make an official report: For example, some people report their experience because they feel a duty to protect others from the offender, some feel as though it is the only way they could get the help they needed, and of course there are other reasons why people choose to make official reports. Could you please describe what went into your decision to make an official report?**

→ If they did NOT make a report.

- i. **FOLLOW UP: Was there anything you learned along the way that might have changed your decision?**
- ii. **FOLLOW UP: Thinking about it now, do you think that not making a formal report had any positive or negative effects on you? How so?**
 - a. **Did your decision have any positive or negative effects on your romantic relationship (if applicable)?**
- iii. **FOLLOW UP: If you knew then what you know now, would you have made the same decisions?**
- iv. **FOLLOW UP: How would you advise someone in a similar situation?**
- v. **FOLLOW UP: Did your experience affect whether you would encourage others (such as family members or other people close to you) to serve in the military?**

→ If they DID make a report.

- i. **FOLLOW UP: To whom did you report your experience, and how did that go?**
- ii. **FOLLOW UP: Was there anything you learned along the way that might have changed your decision?**
- iii. **FOLLOW UP: Thinking about it now, do you think that making this report had any positive or negative effects on you? How so?**

- i. *Probe:* Did making this report have any positive or negative effects on your romantic relationship (If applicable)?
 - iv. FOLLOW UP: If you knew then what you know now, would you have made the same decisions?
 - v. FOLLOW UP: How would you advise someone in a similar situation?
 - vi. FOLLOW UP: Did your experience affect whether you would encourage others (such as family members or other people close to you) to serve in the military?
21. Thank you so much for talking to me about your experiences, I really appreciate your willingness to share. We are particularly interested in learning more about the barriers to seeking help among men in the military who have similar experiences. Could you please talk to me about what you think are the main barriers or obstacles men face when it comes to seeking help or care after experiencing unwanted sexual behavior in the military?
- i. *Prompt:* In other words, why might men in the military not seek help?
22. Is there anything that might facilitate or encourage men to seek help or care after experiencing unwanted sexual behavior in the military?
- i. *Prompt:* In other words, what might encourage men in the military to seek help?
23. Is there anything else you feel we should have talked about regarding your experiences reporting or seeking support?
24. Is there anything else about your experiences you would like to share that I may have missed?

Thank you for talking to me about these challenging experiences, I really appreciate your willingness to share. At this point in the interview, I would like to shift gears now and spend a little time talking about positive experiences that you [have] had with other service members or coworkers while in the military.

25. Think about the positive or rewarding experiences you had because of how someone treated you. Which experience would you consider having been the best, meaning that it made you the happiest or had the biggest positive effect on you?
- i. *Prompt:* Would you tell me a little bit more about that?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. I am going to stop the recording, now.

DEBRIEF

I'd like to take a couple of minutes to tell you a little more about the purpose of this study.

The reason we are doing these interviews is to learn about factors relating to service member and veteran help-seeking behavior following unwanted sexual contact or harassment experienced during military service. The information gathered through these interviews will be used to help assemble formal recommendations for policy, programs, and resources to support people who have experienced military sexual violence. Your participation will be very helpful for this research project and I am extremely grateful for the time you spent sharing your story with me today. Just as a reminder, all of your responses will always be kept completely confidential, and they will never be linked with your name or any other identifying information.

We would also like to ask you to please share our study website with folks in your social networks should they know someone who may be eligible to take part. Our goal is to interview 20 military personnel for this project.

[answer any questions that may come up]

Thank you, again, for taking the time today to participate in this interview. I hope you have a great day!

(Resource list, gift card/incentive tracking, post-interview instructions - separate documentation)