



# HOLISTIC WELLNESS CHALLENGE



## PREVENTION STARTS WITH CONSENT

**CHALLENGE** yourself and your Service members to use at least one of the recommended resources to promote consent and prevent sexual assault.

### CNGB & SEA Corner Always Ready, Always There

As we recognize Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, we want to be clear: preventing sexual assault and communicating consent are essential to our mission and to who we are as the National Guard.

Our duty is not only to protect our communities, states, and nation—it is also to protect our people.

Sexual assault undermines trust, weakens our cohesion, and directly impacts readiness. Consent is critical and it is every Service member's responsibility to uphold our high standards and hold each other accountable, regardless of rank.

When we foster a culture of dignity and respect, we strengthen our force and stay mission ready.

Stronger Together, Stronger Tomorrow.

*Steven S. Nordhaus John T. Raines III*

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### FACTS & FIGURES: DID YOU KNOW?

- Consent to engage in sexual activity must be given clearly and freely by everyone involved<sup>1</sup>
- Consent cannot be given if the person is:<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Underage (legal age for consent varies by state)
  - Intoxicated or incapacitated
  - Asleep or unconscious
  - Coerced, threatened, or pressured by unequal power or rank dynamics
- Consent is the line between intimacy and abuse<sup>2</sup>

### RESPECT IS READINESS

#### Sexual assault impacts readiness at every level.



#### Individual

Survivors may experience **physical, psychological, or emotional effects** that can interfere with training, focus, and performance.



#### Unit

Sexual assault **erodes trust, unit cohesion, and morale**. When Guard members don't feel safe or respected, teamwork suffers.



#### Force

Sexual assault contributes to **decreased retention and loss of experienced personnel**, which strains overall readiness.

*Promoting a culture of dignity and respect strengthens trust, improves performance, and supports mission readiness.*

### CONSENT 101

Talking about consent is one thing; practicing it in real life is another. Follow these tips to ensure you seek and give clear consent:<sup>1,2</sup>

- Never assume consent based on flirting, past encounters, or the way someone is dressed.
- Before sexual activity, ask, "Is this okay?"
- Understand that silence or lack of resistance are not signs of agreement.
- Check in with a question like, "Are you still comfortable with this?" as things progress.
- Pay attention to body language and nonverbal cues like freezing or pulling away.
- Stop immediately if your partner says "no," even if it's communicated quietly or indirectly.
- Any individual has the right to withdraw their consent *at any point* during an intimate encounter, regardless of prior agreements.

### CONTACT US

For more information on sexual assault prevention or other topics email:  
[ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil](mailto:ng.ncr.ngb.mbx.integrated-prevention-branch@army.mil)

## COMMIT TO CONSENT

### What does it mean?

- Clear consent means asking directly, listening carefully, and respecting the answer every time. Silence, uncertainty, or lack of resistance does not equal consent.

### Why does it matter?

- Clear communication and respect for boundaries are essential to building trust and maintaining readiness.

### What can you do?

- **Communicate consent clearly**—consent must be voluntary, informed, and ongoing.
- **Respect boundaries at all times**, including when consent is withdrawn.
- **Do not make assumptions** based on silence, past interactions, or relationships.
- **Intervene early and safely** when you observe behavior that could lead to harm. (See resources for more information)
- **Foster a climate of dignity and respect** by staying connected and holding each other accountable on and off duty.
- **Talk with your family and children about consent**, personal boundaries, and respect in age-appropriate ways.
- **Support survivors without judgment** and share Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) resources.
- **Know reporting options** and how to contact your local SAPR office.

## TECH-ENABLED SEXUAL ABUSE<sup>2,3</sup>

Tech-enabled sexual abuse is when intimate photos, videos, or audio clips are created and shared online without consent. It doesn't matter if the content is real or artificially generated. If the person depicted did not give explicit consent, that is abuse. In the digital era, this type of assault is not limited to a single act of violence. As the content is shared, downloaded or viewed, it compounds the initial trauma, creating a digital echo that can cause psychological, social and/or professional harm. Protect yourself against tech-enabled sexual abuse by securing devices, updating privacy settings, and protecting webcams.



## RESOURCES TO RECOMMEND



Find your local SAPR office point of contact: <https://www.nationalguard.mil/Leadership/Joint-Staff/J-1/SAPR/>.



Access SAPR reports and learn about assistance available to sexual assault survivors at <https://www.sapr.mil>.



Explore treatment, coping mechanisms, and resources for Military Sexual Trauma (MST): <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome/index.asp>.



Learn safe and effective ways to intervene and Step in with CARE: <https://rainn.org/show-up-speak-out-step-in/stop-sexual-violence-step-in-with-care/>.



Learn to identify when relationships become "too close" and the possible consequences. <https://www.hprc-online.org/social-fitness/teams-leadership/fraternization-dating-and-sex-your-unit-how-close-too-close>.

## SPOTLIGHT: ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD TOP PERFORMER

- Alaska National Guard's SAPR program has been recognized as one of the strongest across the country.
- Leadership, program staffing, and comprehensive survivor support services were highlighted as areas of excellence, signaling a sustained commitment to prevention, education, and survivor-centered care.
- Learn more at <https://ak.ng.mil/Media/News/Article/4341977/alaska-national-guard-named-top-performer-in-sexual-assault-prevention-efforts/>.

## REFERENCES:

1. RAINN. <https://rainn.org/share-the-facts/consent-101-respect-boundaries-and-building-trust/>
2. RAINN. <https://rainn.org/what-counts-as-sexual-violence/get-the-facts-about-tech-enabled-sexual-abuse/>
3. RAINN. <https://rainn.org/strategies-to-reduce-risk-increase-safety/staying-safer-online-tech-enabled-sexual-abuse/>