

**2025 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in
Higher Education**

Soteria Solutions

**Organizational Self-Assessment Tool: Supporting Military-
Connected Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence,
Sexual Assault, and Stalking**

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Prevention: Other efforts to address or prevent sexual harassment
2. Remediation: Other efforts to remediate the harm of sexual harassment and/or support those that experience sexual harassment
3. Approaches for Pursuing Organizational Change: Using Community Readiness for Change to Guide Efforts
4. Approaches for Pursuing Organizational Change: Leveraging the strengths of distinct stakeholder groups and creating partnerships between them

Description of Work:

Background and Purpose of the Work

From January 2023 through March 2025, Soteria Solutions served as a subgrantee under a federal grant awarded to the National Organization for Victim Advocacy (NOVA) from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The project, supported by OVW Award No. 15JOVW-22-GK-04039-MUMU, was awarded to support the “Advocating for Military-Connected Survivors” project.

The term “military-connected” refers to active-duty service members, reservists, National Guard members, veterans, and their current or former spouse, intimate or dating partners, dependents, or individuals who have shared a home or child with any of the aforementioned. “Survivor” refers to individuals who have experienced domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking (DVSAS).

The project mission is to provide trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and culturally responsive training and technical assistance (TTA) that empowers legal personnel, victim advocates, and allied professionals to support military-connected survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking (DVSAS).

The goals for this grant program include: 1) To champion military-connected survivors of DVSAS as a community deserving of trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and culturally responsive advocacy; 2) To develop and deliver specialized training and technical assistance (TTA) that equips legal personnel, victim advocates, and allied professionals with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to serve military-connected survivors of DVSAS; and 3) To encourage collaboration and the development of a coordinated community response (CCR) between military and civilian/community agencies to provide comprehensive and holistic support to military-connected survivors of DVSAS.

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Under this grant, NOVA established Communities of Practice (CoP) with self-selected representatives from civilian organizations¹ (including higher education institutions) in communities with large military/veteran populations to connect around common goals to share resources, strategies, innovations, and support. Soteria Solutions' role on the project was to establish an assessment strategy to support these organizations in enhancing their response to military-connected survivors of DVSAS. In collaboration with NOVA, Soteria Solutions developed the Supporting Military-Connected Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking: An Organizational Self-Assessment Tool (referred to as 'Organizational Self-Assessment Tool' throughout this summary).

Military-connected survivors of DVSAS often face unique barriers and complex dynamics that impact help-seeking, navigating both military and civilian systems, safety-planning, and support. When military-connected survivors seek support from civilian agencies, these professionals must have a working knowledge of the barriers they may encounter. Additionally, these professionals can best serve military-connected survivors when they have established working relationships and partnerships with military services in their region and have created an organization that supports the needs of military-connected community members.

In higher education, it is widely recognized that military-connected individuals—including active-duty service members, spouses, and dependents—are an integral part of the student population. The Organizational Self-Assessment Tool helps institutions of higher education evaluate their current practices, systems, and processes, as well as their relationships with off-campus civilian and military organizations. This allows higher education institutions to develop and enhance more tailored responses to support the unique needs of military-connected student survivors.

This description of work most closely aligns with the NASEM rubric areas aimed at pursuing organizational change, both through using community readiness strategies to guide change efforts, as well as leveraging the strengths of stakeholder groups and creating partnerships. These organizational changes can contribute to meaningful improvements in supporting broad institutional DVSAS and sexual harassment prevention, response, and evaluation efforts, as articulated in the 2018 NASEM report.

Organizational Self-Assessment Tool Development Process

At the outset of the project, Soteria Solutions and NOVA met several times to brainstorm the approach and needs that should be addressed in the assessment strategy. Soteria Solutions conducted research into existing resources and topics related to organizational readiness to support military-connected survivors. Soteria Solutions attended NOVA's CoP Cohort 1's first meeting in June 2023 to gather insights from CoP members to inform the initial development of the assessment. At the October 2023 CoP meeting, Soteria Solutions introduced the anticipated

¹ 'Civilian' and 'community' are terms that are interchangeable, but refer in this project to advocates that are OVW grantees or potential grantees. They are not Department of Defense civilians, and are individuals and organizations that operate outside of military installations and bases.

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structure of the assessment tool and gathered feedback from CoP members on how their organizations have engaged with past assessment and organizational review processes.

Soteria Solutions used this formative research to draft the initial Organizational Self-Assessment Tool and to complete ongoing revisions with the support of NOVA's expertise. In February and May 2024, Soteria Solutions attended CoP Cohort 1 meetings to introduce the draft Self-Assessment Tool and explain how organizations can use it to benefit their work. CoP members were encouraged to complete at least one section of the tool as a pilot and were asked to complete an evaluation to provide their feedback, as well as to provide feedback during discussion in the CoP meetings. The Organizational Self-Assessment Tool was initially released by NOVA and Soteria Solutions in summer 2024 and then finalized with minor revisions in English and Spanish in February 2025.

Overview of Organizational Self-Assessment Tool

The Organizational Self-Assessment Tool is designed to empower civilian agencies, including institutions of higher education, in supporting military-connected survivors of DVSAS. This tool serves as a starting point for civilian criminal justice professionals, community advocates, and organizations to initiate discussions, assess readiness and strengths, identify areas for improvement, and provide goal-setting opportunities to enhance services for military-connected survivors in their communities. While not exhaustive in all areas of learning, partnership, and sustainability, it functions as an organizational check-in that can and should be revisited over time.

Given that organizations have varying degrees of readiness and capacity to support military-connected survivors, the Organizational Self-Assessment Tool provides various examples of strategies for organizations to complete it, ranging from having one or two staff complete it then share internally, to having multiple agencies in a Coordinated Community Response (CCR)

Team complete the self-assessment to inform shared CCR Team goals. Regardless of how the tool is completed, it is designed and recommended to include some level of collaboration.

This tool is essential for community advocates, civilian agencies, healthcare providers, social service and educational institutions, law enforcement and legal professionals, community organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.



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Key features of the Organizational Self-Assessment Tool:

- Comprehensive Assessment: Evaluate organizational knowledge and practices related to supporting military-connected survivors.
- Collaboration Strategies: Enhance capacity for effective collaboration with military and civilian organizations.
- Cultural Guidance: Develop an organizational culture that is inclusive and supportive of military-connected survivors.

The Organizational Self-Assessment Tool is an editable PDF that can be completed digitally or on paper, and includes the following sections:

- Acknowledgements and Introduction
- How to Use This Tool
- Self-Assessment (to be completed by the organization)
 - Core Area 1: Organizational Knowledge
 - Staff Training
 - Identifying Military-Connected Clients
 - Core Area 2: Collaboration & Capacity-Building
 - Relationship-Building and Collaboration
 - Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Teams
 - Core Area 3: Organizational Culture & Sustainability
 - Organizational Culture
 - Organizational Sustainability
- Next Steps and Goal Setting (to be completed by the organization)
- Conclusion and Resources

Each Core Area of the Organizational-Self Assessment Tool includes a series of questions organized by theme with a mix of check-all-that-apply and open-ended response formats. The intention is not to provide right or wrong answers, but to facilitate reflection and meaningful change. Some questions are objective, for example, asking about the format and frequency of staff training, while others call for more subjective reflection on current practices and approaches, such as describing the organization's internal culture in relation to serving military-connected survivors. Each Core Area includes a summary section that enables organizations to reflect on their strengths and gaps in that area, followed by setting priorities to advance work in that area.

The end of the tool includes an overarching reflection section intended to help organizations set a primary goal related to findings from the Organizational-Self Assessment Tool, along with

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reasoning, action items, people and resources needed, and a timeline to complete that goal. The tool is intended to be revisited over time as organizations work toward the goals they've set to enhance their support of military-connected survivors. The resources at the end of the Organizational Self-Assessment can guide agencies toward tools and strategies that support the goals they have set.

Current Status and Next Steps

The Organizational Self-Assessment Tool is currently publicly available in English and Spanish to be downloaded from NOVA's 'Advocating for Military-Connected Survivors' Training and Technical Assistance website at linktr.ee/novamilitary or by following [this link](#). Both NOVA and Soteria Solutions have shared this resource via social media and other stakeholder communications, and have planned for further promotion once NOVA's new 'Advocating for Military-Connected Survivors Project' website is launched. The last page of the Self-Assessment Tool includes a QR code that allows users to provide feedback and share their information to be highlighted on NOVA's social media, as part of our commitment to serving military-connected survivors.

As higher education institutions engage in more conversations about the unique needs and barriers experienced by military-affiliated students, the hope is that this can be a resource for institutions looking to assess their readiness and enhance their approaches to serving military-connected student survivors of DVSAS.

Soteria Solutions' subgrant role concluded in March 2025, having met all subgrantee deliverables. NOVA has since launched a new 4-session CoP Cohort for 2025 with participants from all over the world, both from areas with large military populations, as well as rural communities with fewer military populations. The 20 participants are all advocates who work in some capacity related to DVSAS prevention or response, including law enforcement, legal personnel, healthcare providers, victim advocates, policy workers, mental health care workers, and social workers. Participants are required to complete the Organizational Self-Assessment Tool by CoP Session 3 to facilitate discussion of shared challenges, ideas, and strategies within the cohort. NOVA will soon share the success of these organizations in completing the Organizational Self-Assessment Tool and will use their responses to inform tailored technical assistance.

Soteria Solutions hopes to partner with NOVA on future iterations of this tool.

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