

Report to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives



Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for Fiscal Year 2023

July 2024

The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$143,000 for the 2023 Fiscal Year. This includes \$111,000 in expenses and \$32,000 in DoD labor.

Generated on 2024Jun17 RefID: F-E06B09B

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List of Acronyms

CAC – Child Advocacy Centers
CAM – Century Anger Management
CATCH – Catch a Serial Offender
CCR – Coordinated Community Response
CCSM – Clinical Case Staff Meeting
CRB – Central Registry Board
CI – Confidence Interval
CNIC – Commander, Navy Installations Command
DAF – Department of the Air Force
DAVA – Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate
DMDC – Defense Manpower Data Center
DoD – Department of Defense
DoDI – Department of Defense Instruction
DoDM – Department of Defense Manual
FAP – Family Advocacy Program
FY – Fiscal Year
GAO – Government Accountability Office
IDC – Incident Determination Committee
ISS – Incident Severity Scale
IPPI-RAT-M – Intimate Partner Physical Injury Risk Assessment Tool - Monitoring
JKO – Joint Knowledge Online
KSU – Kansas State University
MCA – Military Community Advocacy
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
NCA – National Children’s Alliance
NDAA – National Defense Authorization Act
NOVA – National Organization of Victim Advocates
NPSP – New Parent Support Program
NPSP-E – New Parent Support Program Enhanced
OMB – Office of Management and Budget
OSD – Office of the Secretary of Defense
QA – Quality Assurance
SAPR – Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
STEPS – Staff Training for Enhanced Performance

Executive Summary

For more than 42 years, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Family Advocacy Program (FAP) has worked to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families. This report provides the child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incident data from the FAP Central Registry for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, as required by section 574 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2017 (Public Law 114–328), “Requirement for Annual Family Advocacy Program Report Regarding Child Abuse and Domestic Violence,” as amended by section 549 of the NDAA for FY 2022 (Public Law 117–81), “Activities to Improve Family Violence Prevention and Response.” In addition to meeting the congressional requirement, this report provides critical information to inform ongoing prevention and response efforts. Using aggregated FAP Central Registry data submitted from each Military Service (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force),¹ this report offers a Department of Defense (DoD)-wide description of the child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP that either met or did not meet criteria for the DoD definition of abuse in FY 2023.

Background & Methods

The FAP Central Registry is designed to capture reliable and consistent information on child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP from each of the Military Services. Each Military Service maintains comprehensive clinical case management systems, which include required data elements extracted and submitted quarterly to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). Per DoD policy, DMDC operates the DoD FAP Central Registry and provides the OSD FAP with aggregated data on which this report is based.² Data contained in this report reflect child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP that either met criteria or did not meet criteria in FY 2023. The data do not represent estimates of all child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse that occurred in military families in the past fiscal year.

Married Military Couple Population Estimation Due to Missing Data

This report uses the married military couple population to calculate the rates of spouse abuse presented in Section 4. Married military couples are comprised of joint (or dual) military marriages and civilian marriages. The Military Services provide their respective marriage counts to DMDC monthly. For the majority of FY 2023, one of the Military Services inaccurately reported zero joint military marriages to DMDC. To calculate spouse abuse rates within this report, OSD FAP used statistical analyses to estimate the number of joint military marriages DoD-wide. All rates of spouse abuse contained within this report are based on the estimated FY 2023 married population count.

¹ In FY 2023, Space Force data were reported within Air Force data.

² The implementing policy issuance for this registry is Department of Defense Manual (DoDM) 6400.01, Volume 2, “Family Advocacy Program (FAP): Child Abuse and Domestic Abuse Incident Reporting System,” August 11, 2016.

Key Findings

Overall

- There were minimal variations in the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims³ per 1,000 military children in FY 2023 in comparison to FY 2022. Following a downward trend over the past several years, the rate of child abuse and neglect reports increased in FY 2023 (14.3/1,000 military children) from FY 2022 (14.1/1,000 military children). The rate of met criteria incidents remained the same (7.0) compared to FY 2022. The rate of unique victims per 1,000 military children decreased slightly in FY 2023 (5.1) compared to FY 2022 (5.2). Despite these variations, the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages.⁴
- In FY 2023, there was a statistically significant decrease in the number of reports of domestic abuse when compared to the 10-year average. The number of met criteria incidents of domestic abuse did not vary when compared to the 10-year average.
- There were statistically significant decreases in the rates of spouse abuse reports, met criteria incidents, and victims per 1,000 military married couples⁵ of spouse abuse in FY 2023 when compared to their respective 10-year averages.
- There were statistically significant increases in the number of reports, number of met criteria incidents, and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse in FY 2023 when compared to their respective 10-year averages.
- The proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse (6.56 percent) increased in FY 2023 when compared to the 10-year average.

Child Abuse and Neglect

- In FY 2023, there were 11,854 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect to FAP. The FY 2023 rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children was 14.3, which is a 1.4 percent increase when compared to the FY 2022 report rate (14.1). Despite the increase, the rate did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.
- Neglect accounted for the largest proportion of reports of child maltreatment in FY 2023

³ Throughout this report, the term “unique” is used in front of different categories of victims and abusers. The term is used to mean that a victim (or abuser) is counted only once within a category, regardless of the number of incidents of abuse in which that victim (or abuser) may have been involved.

⁴ All analyses in this report tested for significance at the $p < .05$ level, resulting in a Confidence Interval (CI) of 95 percent. Any value outside of this CI is indicative of a statistically significant increase or decrease not likely to have occurred by chance.

⁵ Due to missing joint Service marriage data at DMDC for one Military Service, we estimated the FY 2023 population of married couples using DoD-wide marriage data from FY 2018-FY 2022. All rates of spouse abuse contained within this report are based on the estimated FY 2023 married population count.

(49.38 percent), followed by physical abuse (27.60 percent), emotional abuse (19.39 percent), and sexual abuse (3.63 percent).

- There were 5,812 incidents of child abuse and neglect that met criteria in FY 2023. The FY 2023 rate of incidents that met criteria per 1,000 children was 7.0, which is the same as the rate in FY 2022. The rate of met criteria incidents in FY 2023 did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.
- In FY 2023, neglect accounted for the largest proportion of met criteria incidents (55.01 percent). Physical abuse (21.94 percent) accounted for the next largest proportion of met criteria incidents, followed by emotional abuse (18.94 percent) and sexual abuse (4.11 percent).
- Overall, 49 percent of reported incidents of child abuse and neglect were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. This met criteria rate varied by abuse type, ranging from 39 percent of reports of physical abuse that met criteria to 56 percent of reports of sexual abuse that met criteria.
- The FY 2023 child abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 children was 5.1, which is a 1.9 percent decrease when compared to the FY 2022 rate (5.2). The child victimization rate did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.
- In FY 2023, 52 percent of victims in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect were male and 48 percent were female. However, the sex of victims varied by maltreatment type. More than one-half (55.6 percent) of victims in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents were age 5 or younger.
- Civilian data compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicate that the U.S. civilian substantiation (met criteria) rate for reported cases of child abuse and neglect was 16.1 percent in FY 2022.⁶ The military met criteria rate for reported incidents was 49 percent in FY 2023. Although both rates have fluctuated individually, the military met criteria rate has been well above the civilian substantiation rate consistently over the past decade.⁷
- The DoD unique child victim rate for FY 2023 was 5.1 victims per 1,000 military children (lower than the FY 2022 rate of 5.2), and the civilian child victim rate for FY 2022 was 7.7 per 1,000 children (lower than FY 2021 rate of 8.1).⁸ Although both the military and civilian child victimization rates have fluctuated over time, the military child victimization rate has consistently been lower than the civilian rate over the past decade.⁹

⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2023). *Child Maltreatment 2022*. Available from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

⁷ *Child Maltreatment 2014 through 2022 reports, inclusive.*

⁸ *Child Maltreatment 2022.*

⁹ *Child Maltreatment 2014 through 2022, inclusive.*

- In reports that met the DoD criteria for abuse, the abuser may have been a Service member,¹⁰ a civilian family member, or (in child abuse or neglect incidents) a caregiver outside the family. In more than 90 percent of the met criteria child abuse or neglect incidents, the abuser was a Service member parent or civilian parent.
- Most Service member parent abusers were junior enlisted members; 67 percent were E-4 through E-6, and 11 percent were E-1 through E-3.
- In FY 2023, 57 percent of the met criteria child abuse and neglect abusers were male, and 43 percent were female. There is tremendous variation in the sex of abusers by maltreatment type. However, the overall ratio of male to female met criteria abusers has been relatively consistent over time.
- The majority of abusers in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect in FY 2023 were ages 25 to 44, with 46.9 percent of abusers ages 25-34 and 25.9 percent of abusers ages 35-44.
- There were 14 child abuse-related fatalities, involving 15 abusers, presented to the Incident Determination Committee (IDC) and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2023. Child fatality victims were young in age, with 50 percent of victims 1 year of age or younger and 28.6 percent of victims ages 2-5. Among the abusers in these child fatality incidents, nine were male and six were female. Nine met criteria abusers were Service members and six were civilians.

Child Sexual Abuse

- For the sixth time in this annual report series, FAP examined child sexual abuse as a subset of child abuse. Data on these incidents of child sexual abuse are included in the *FY 2023 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* as Appendix H. In FY 2023, there were 229 unique victims of child sexual abuse. These victims experienced a total of 239 met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse, indicating that one or more victims experienced more than one incident of sexual abuse.
- Child sexual abuse incidents accounted for 4.11 percent of all met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents. Although the FY 2023 rate of child sexual abuse incidents per 1,000 military children (0.288) decreased by 9.4 percent from the FY 2022 rate (0.318), the rate did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year period.
- In FY 2023, 86.5 percent of victims in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents were female, and 13.5 percent of victims were male. More than half (57.6 percent) of victims were ages 11-17.
- Approximately 64.5 percent of abusers in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents were

¹⁰ Service members include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

Service members, and 95.9 percent were male in FY 2023. Service member parents and civilian parents represented approximately 66 percent of abusers in these incidents.

Domestic Abuse

- In FY 2023, there were 15,124 reports of domestic abuse, of which 8,298 incidents met criteria. Those met criteria domestic abuse incidents involved 6,458 unique victims. The number of reports represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average. The number of met criteria incidents did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average.
- In FY 2023, physical abuse accounted for 67.58 percent of domestic abuse met criteria incidents, emotional abuse accounted for a little more than one quarter (25.83 percent), and fewer incidents involved sexual abuse (6.56 percent) and neglect (0.04 percent).
- In 69 percent of met criteria domestic abuse incidents the victim was female and the abuser was male. In 27 percent of incidents, the victim was male and the abuser was female. Three percent of incidents involved a female victim and abuser, and one percent of incidents involved a male victim and abuser.
- When examining unique victims by sex, 69 percent were female and 31 percent were male. When examining unique victims by military status, 55 percent were Service members and 45 percent were civilians. Most domestic abuse victims were age 34 or younger (83.1 percent).
- Most Service member victims in met criteria incidents of domestic abuse were junior enlisted members. Pay grades E-4 through E-6 had the highest percentage of Service member victims (65 percent), followed by pay grades E-1 through E-3 (22 percent).

Spouse Abuse

- The spouse abuse data in this report represent only those incidents involving individuals married at the time of abuse. Either the victim or the abuser was a Service member.
- Due to missing joint Service marriage data at DMDC for one Military Service, we estimated the FY 2023 population of married couples using DoD-wide marriage data from FY 2018-FY 2022. All rates of spouse abuse contained within this report are based on the estimated FY 2023 married population count.
- In FY 2023, there were 11,789 reports of spouse abuse to FAP. The FY 2023 rate of spouse abuse reports per 1,000 married military couples was 19.8, a 6.0 percent decrease when compared to the FY 2022 report rate (21.0). The FY 2023 rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.
- Physical abuse accounted for the largest proportion of reports of spouse abuse in FY 2023

(66.44 percent), followed by emotional abuse (28.04 percent), and sexual abuse (5.27 percent). Neglect accounted for less than one percent of reports (0.25 percent).

- There were 6,283 incidents of spouse abuse that met criteria in FY 2023. The FY 2023 rate of met criteria spouse abuse incidents per 1,000 military couples was 10.5, which is a 4.6 percent decrease when compared to the FY 2022 rate (11.1). The FY 2023 rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.
- Overall, 53 percent of reported incidents of spouse abuse were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse in FY 2023. There was a slight variation in the met criteria rate for emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse reports, ranging from 50 percent of reported emotional abuse that met criteria to 57 percent of reported sexual abuse that met criteria. Only 10 percent of reports of neglect met criteria. However, it is important to note that neglect accounted for less than one percent of all reports of spouse abuse.
- The FY 2023 spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 military couples was 8.3, which is a 4.6 percent decrease when compared to the FY 2022 rate (8.7). The FY 2023 victim rate represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average 10-year rate.
- In FY 2023, 51 percent of victims in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were Service members and 49 percent were civilian spouses. Seventy percent of victims in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were female, and 30 percent of victims were male.
- Females comprised a larger proportion of victims than males for all types of abuse: 96 percent of spouse abuse victims who experienced sexual abuse; 75 percent of victims of emotional abuse; and 65 percent of victims of physical abuse. Although 100 percent of victims of neglect were female, it is important to note that neglect accounted for less than 0.1 percent of all met criteria spouse abuse incidents.
- In FY 2023, 62 percent of all abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were Service members, and 68 percent were male.
- Pay grades E-4 through E-6 had the highest percentage of Service member abusers in met criteria incidents (65 percent), followed by pay grades E-1 through E-3 at 20 percent.
- There were eight spouse abuse fatalities presented to the IDC and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2023.

Intimate Partner Abuse

- In FY 2006, an additional category, “intimate partner” was added to capture incidents involving: 1) a former spouse; 2) a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; or 3) a current or former intimate partner with whom the victim shares or has shared a common domicile.
- The definition of intimate partner was expanded in FY 2022 to include those in dating

relationships.¹¹ In intimate partner abuse, either the victim or the abuser was a Service member.

- In FY 2023, there were 3,335 reports of intimate partner abuse. Physical abuse accounted for the largest proportion of reports of intimate partner abuse in FY 2023 (66.96 percent), followed by emotional abuse (24.11 percent), and sexual abuse (8.94 percent). Consistent with policy,¹² there were no reports of intimate partner neglect in FY 2023.
- There were 2,015 incidents of intimate partner abuse that met criteria in FY 2023, involving 1,524 unique victims. Overall, 60 percent of reported incidents of intimate partner abuse were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. This met criteria rate varied slightly among the three reported abuse types.
- There were statistically significant increases in the number of reports of intimate partner abuse, the number of met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents, and the number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse, when compared to their respective 10-year averages. A rate per 1,000 of intimate partner abuse incidents and/or victims cannot be established, as data on unmarried individuals involved in intimate partner relationships as defined by the DoD are not available.
- From FY 2022 to FY 2023, both the number of reports of intimate partner abuse and the number of met criteria incidents of intimate partner abuse experienced year-over-year increases (14.8 percent and 21.0 percent, respectively).
- In FY 2023, 66 percent of victims in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents were Service members and 75 percent were female.
- In FY 2023, 70 percent of all abusers in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents were Service members, and 71 percent were male.
- There were four intimate partner abuse fatalities presented to the IDC and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2023.

¹¹ Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended defines “intimate partner” as, “Within the context of eligibility for FAP services, a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the alleged abuser, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the person and the alleged abuser. An intimate partner is informed by, but not limited to, the totality of factors such as: previous or ongoing consensual intimate or sexual behaviors; history of ongoing dating or expressed interest in continued dating or the potential for an ongoing relationship (e.g. history of repeated break-ups and reconciliations); self-identification by the victim or alleged abuser as intimate partners or identification by others as a couple; emotional connectedness (e.g., relationship is a priority, partners may have discussed a future together); or familiarity and knowledge of each other’s lives.”

¹² DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended.

Adult Sexual Abuse¹³

- In FY 2023, there were 494 unique victims of adult sexual abuse, including both spouses and unmarried intimate partners. Data on these incidents of adult sexual abuse are included in the *FY 2023 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* as Appendix G, and are referred to as Domestic Abuse-Related Sexual Assault.
- In FY 2023, there were a total of 544 met criteria incidents of adult sexual abuse, indicating that one or more victims experienced more than one incident of sexual abuse.
- Adult sexual abuse incidents accounted for 6.56 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents. The proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the 10-year average.
- In FY 2023, 96.8 percent of unique victims in met criteria sexual abuse incidents were female and 3.2 percent were male. Among these unique victims, 47.2 percent were family members, 37.4 percent were Service members, and the remaining 15.4 percent were non-beneficiaries, DoD civilians, non-DoD civilians, retired Service members, or Government contractors.
- Examining the intersection of sex and status of unique victims of adult sexual abuse, 46.8 percent of victims were female family members and 34.6 percent were female Service members.
- In FY 2023, approximately 82.1 percent of unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents were Service members, and 94.9 percent were male.

¹³ In the domestic violence field, sexual abuse remains contextually distinct from sexual assault, as it occurs within a marriage or intimate partner relationship typically as part of a larger pattern of behavior resulting in emotional or psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty.

DoD and Military Service Program Initiatives

The DoD is dedicated to preventing and addressing child abuse, neglect, and domestic abuse in military families. Through a comprehensive approach involving policies, programs, and partnerships, FAP aims to strengthen protective factors and reduce risks across the Military Services.

In January 2023, the DoD expanded the Military Parental Leave Program, granting eligible Service members up to 12 weeks of paid leave following the birth, adoption, or long-term foster care placement of a child. This expansion enhances work-life balance and promotes parental involvement. Increased parental involvement is linked with lower rates of child abuse and neglect by fostering stronger parent-child relationships. The Department developed and launched an “evergreen” communications strategy to support prevention of child abuse and neglect. This multi-year campaign promotes a holistic approach to education and prevention throughout the year.

The DoD utilizes a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model to address reports of domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect. In 2023, the Department formally established a dedicated Coordinated Community Response office to enhance interagency coordination, improve victim safety, and hold abusers accountable. A strategic partnership the National Organization of Victim Advocates (NOVA) will support the Department in the implementation of CCR strategies through enhanced training and technical assistance, assessing risk and lethality across all components of the CCR, and sharing information across military and civilian CCRs.

The Department made significant updates to child abuse and neglect- and domestic abuse-related training that will help ensure leaders and personnel are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to address abuse within relationship and families. The new "Abuse Within Relationships and Families: For Leaders" course has been migrated to the “purple” Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) learning management system platform, which improves access for commanders and senior enlisted advisors transitioning to new leadership roles. In collaboration with the Military Services, the Department developed child abuse and neglect- and domestic abuse-related learning objectives and sample training materials for chaplains, as well as a mechanism to collect chaplain training completion data, as required by policy and law.¹⁴

In accordance with section 543 of the NDAA for FY 2015 (Public Law 113-291), the FAP officially implemented the Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) program, which allows adult victims of sexual abuse who file a restricted report with FAP the opportunity to anonymously submit suspect or incident information to law enforcement. This helps the Department identify serial offenders who perpetrate multiple sexual assaults. While the CATCH program was originally designed and implemented for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program, DoD policy¹⁵ recently expanded program access to include victims of adult sexual abuse who file a restricted report with the FAP.

¹⁴ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended; Section 549 of the NDAA for FY 2022 (Public Law 117-81).

¹⁵ DoDI 6400.01, December 15, 2021, as amended.

Program and Policy Implications

DoD is committed to keeping families safe and healthy and is taking every measure to prevent child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in our military communities. One incident of child abuse or neglect, or domestic abuse is too many, and programs like FAP implement evidence-based prevention and treatment programs with the goal of ensuring the safety and well-being of all Service members and military families.

There were minimal variations in the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children in FY 2023 in comparison to FY 2022. Despite these slight fluctuations, the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages.

Domestic abuse findings in this report continue to be mixed—with differing patterns in domestic abuse overall and spouse abuse in comparison to intimate partner abuse. Following 2 consecutive years of year-over-year increases in the number of domestic abuse reports and the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents, both measures experienced slight declines in FY 2023. The FY 2023 number of domestic abuse reports decreased, and the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages.

The rates for spouse abuse reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 married military couples experienced year-over-year decreases in FY 2023. These decreases were statistically significant when compared to their respective 10-year averages. Conversely, the number of reports, number of met criteria incidents, and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse increased. These increases are likely due, in part, to the FY 2022 expansion of the definition of intimate partner and the resulting expansion of service delivery. However, there has been an upward trend in intimate partner abuse since FY 2017. The proportion of met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents increased in FY 2023, for the fifth consecutive year, representative of a continuing trend noted over the past decade.

The Department remains committed to continual monitoring and assessment of changes in incident numbers and rates, where available, to inform current and future policy and program efforts. The Department continues to address the results of its analyses through deliberate action and implementation of evidence-informed programs and prevention strategies, as well as additional research efforts.

1. INTRODUCTION

For more than 42 years, OSD FAP has worked to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families. Family maltreatment is incompatible with military values and ultimately impacts mission readiness. The Department is dedicated to addressing family violence to ensure the health and safety of military families.

This report provides the FY 2023 child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incident data from the DoD FAP Central Registry, as required by section 574 of the NDAA for FY 2017 (Public Law 114–328), as amended by section 549 of the NDAA for FY 2022 (Public Law 117–81). In addition to meeting the congressional requirement, this report also provides critical aggregate information on the demographics of these incidents to further inform ongoing prevention and intervention efforts. Using aggregated FAP Central Registry data submitted from the Military Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force),¹⁶ this report offers a DoD-wide picture of the child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP for which a determination was made in FY 2023 (October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023).

Subsequent report sections include a brief description of FAP, congressional reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents, and a review of the findings from an analysis of the FY 2023 FAP Central Registry data. The report concludes with an analysis of the effectiveness of FAP, as well as an overview of potential implications for current and future policy and program initiatives. Note that the use of the word “significant” throughout this report is not a reference or comment on the level of importance, but rather analytical and statistical thresholds.

2. BACKGROUND

FAP is a congressionally mandated DoD program designed to be the policy proponent for a key element of the DoD’s CCR¹⁷ for preventing and responding to reports of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families. The Military Service FAPs, at every military installation where families are located, work closely with the other entities within the CCR, as well as with civilian social services agencies and civilian law enforcement, to provide comprehensive prevention and response to family maltreatment enforcement.

The FAP mission is to provide comprehensive prevention, advocacy, early identification, treatment of abusers, voluntary treatment for domestic abuse victims, and intensive home visitation for expecting and new parents. To execute this mission, the DoD funds more than 2,000 positions to deliver FAP services, include credentialed/licensed clinical providers, Domestic Abuse Victim Advocates (DAVAs), New Parent Support Home Visitors, and prevention staff. FAP staff are mandated reporters to state child welfare service agencies for all allegations of child abuse and neglect, and they are considered “covered professionals” under 34

¹⁶ In FY 2023, Space Force data were reported within Air Force data.

¹⁷ The CCR is comprised of FAP, law enforcement, legal, military criminal investigative organizations, chaplains, command, child and youth programs, Department of Defense Education Activity schools, and medical.

U.S.C. § 20341. DoD policy¹⁸ also requires the Military Service FAPs to report incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse to OSD through the DoD FAP Central Registry.

Once a report of child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse is received by FAP, it is taken to the IDC to determine whether the incident meets criteria for abuse, as defined by the DoD.¹⁹ The IDC uses a standardized research-based decision tree algorithm to determine which reports for suspected child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse meet the DoD definitions of abuse, thereby requiring entry into the Military Service FAP central registry of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents. The IDC is comprised of the deputy to the installation or garrison commander who serves as the chair, the senior enlisted noncommissioned officer advisor to the chair, a representative from the Service member's chain of command, a representative from the Staff Judge Advocate's office, a representative from military law enforcement, and the FAP manager or FAP supervisor of clinical services. In accordance with section 549B of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for FY 2021 (Public Law 116–283), voting membership of the IDC has been expanded to include medical personnel. Additional members, as appropriate, may participate and vote in accordance with policy. A case is presented to the IDC, followed by the members voting to determine whether the incident meets the criteria for an act or failure to act, and a resulting impact.²⁰ The IDC is not a disciplinary proceeding in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice; it is a process to determine whether an incident meets the threshold for additional rigorous treatment, intervention, support, safety planning, and victim protection. In this report, data on incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse that met criteria are referred to as “met criteria incidents.”

The DoD review of child abuse and domestic abuse-related fatalities is required by policy,²¹ directing the Secretaries of the Military Departments to conduct a multidisciplinary, impartial review of each fatality known or suspected to have resulted from child or domestic abuse. Each Military Department has its own team and conducts its own internal review annually. To avoid interference with ongoing investigations and prosecutions, fatalities are reviewed by the Military Departments retrospectively, generally two years after their occurrence or in the first year that the disposition becomes closed. This delay ensures that the review can consider all available information. OSD FAP convenes an annual Fatality Review Summit to discuss the findings of the reviews held in the previous year at the Military Department level; essentially, the DoD Fatality Review Summit examines deaths 3 years after the occurrence. The purpose of the DoD Fatality Review Summit is to conduct deliberative examinations of any interventions provided to the deceased or their family, to formulate lessons learned from agency or system failures, to identify trends and patterns to assist in prevention efforts across the Department, and to develop policy for earlier and more effective intervention.

¹⁸ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 2, August 11, 2016.

¹⁹ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended.

²⁰ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended.

²¹ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended.

Central Registry

The FAP Central Registry is designed to capture reliable and consistent information on child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse incidents reported to FAP from each of the Military Services. Supporting policy is contained in Department of Defense Manual (DoDM) 6400.01, Volume 2, “Family Advocacy Program: Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse Incident Reporting System,” August 11, 2016, which directs Military Service FAPs to track incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse that meet criteria for abuse. Each Military Service maintains a comprehensive clinical case management system,²² which includes the required data elements extracted and submitted quarterly to DMDC. Per DoD policy,²³ DMDC operates the DoD FAP Central Registry and provides OSD FAP with aggregate data, which are the basis of this report.

The DoD FAP Central Registry contains information on: (1) reports of abuse that did not meet criteria for child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse, in which identifiable individual information is not tracked; and (2) information on reports of abuse that meet objective, standardized criteria and are linked to identifiable Service members, their family members, and the abuser. Specifically, the Military Services are required to submit information on 46 data elements on met criteria incidents, delineated in DoD Policy, which include:

- Sponsor Service, location, relevant dates, and case status;
- Demographic data on the military sponsor, victim, and abuser(s) including name, social security number, branch of Service, military status, sex, age, and relationship indicators;
- Type of abuse or maltreatment, level of severity, and, if applicable, resulting fatalities.

The DoD FAP Central Registry **does not** include measures of accountability (command action), law enforcement data, or legal disposition. These processes are completely distinct from FAP intervention and services pursuant to multiple DoD policies separating functions across components. The Central Registry also **does not** include allegations of domestic abuse that were made via restricted report. Restricted reports do not move forward to the IDC. Instead, reports are handled on a case-by-case basis to provide risk and safety planning to the victim without the independent assessment of the decision tree algorithm, which determines whether an allegation meets DoD criteria for abuse or neglect.

Data from the DoD Central Registry are broadly used to assist in overall management of the OSD FAP to inform prevention and intervention initiatives and to determine budget and program funding. The Central Registry also supports the identification of research needs, preparation of reports to Congress, response to public or other Governmental inquiries, and formulation of ad hoc reports relating to the volume and nature of family violence cases handled by the Military Services through outreach, prevention, and intervention efforts. DoD and Military Service FAP Central Registry data are used to conduct background checks on individuals seeking employment in DoD-sanctioned child and youth serving organizations that involve contact with minor children, in accordance with DoD policy.²⁴

²² In FY 2022, Space Force data were reported within Air Force data.

²³ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 2, August 11, 2016.

²⁴ DoDI 1402.05, “Background Checks on Individuals in DoD Child Care Services Programs,” September 11, 2015, as amended.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

As noted, this report relies on Central Registry data extracted by each Military Service and submitted to DMDC for FY 2023 (October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023).²⁵ DMDC performs initial quality assurance checks, aggregates these data, and provides OSD FAP with information on the incidence of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse across the DoD.

DMDC has collected these aggregate FY FAP data for the last 24 years; however, the timeframe of data submission and analysis was adjusted substantially in 2017 to coordinate with the release of the *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military*. The Military Services submitted FY 2023 data by December 20, 2023, for inclusion in this report. All statistical analyses included in this report were performed after these data underwent a series of rigorous quality control checks to ensure uniformity and validity of aggregate data.

Prior to FY 2021, FAP was unable to comprehensively report information on allegations of abuse by abuse type. For calculation purposes, historically, a “report” of abuse could consist of multiple types of alleged abuse. For example, a report of abuse that involved one victim who experienced both emotional abuse and physical abuse by the same abuser, during the same timeframe, could be recorded as a single report of abuse. This historical calculation method did not allow for disaggregation of reports of abuse by abuse type and undercounted the number of reports of abuse.²⁶

Leveraging new data collection methods established in FY 2021, now a single report can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse. The new calculation method for reports of abuse is reflected in the FY 2021, FY2022, and FY 2023 data contained in this report. The new calculation method allows FAP to assess the number of reports of abuse more accurately, and the proportion of those reports that meet the DoD definition of abuse — overall and by abuse type. This improvement in methodology and reporting enhances the Department’s efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse within the military community.

Like historic data on reports of abuse, previous fiscal year data on both child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse contained met criteria incidents that included multiple types of maltreatment in one entry (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional, neglect). Beginning in FY 2015, the process was standardized for each met criteria incident to represent only one type of maltreatment. Thus, more than one incident may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim. This treatment of incident data provides a more comprehensive picture of abuse incidents experienced by military families and aligns with the approach used by the Department of Health and Human Services for reporting civilian data in their annual report on child maltreatment.²⁷ Incidents of domestic abuse are reported both in the aggregate, and separately as spouse abuse

²⁵ In FY 2023, Space Force data were reported within Air Force data.

²⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2021). *Domestic Abuse: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Prevention, Response, and Oversight to Congress* (GAO-21-289). Available from: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-289>. See pp. 21-27 for an in-depth description and analysis.

²⁷ U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau. (2024). *Child Maltreatment 2022*. Available from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

and intimate partner abuse (see definitions in Section 4). Calculated rates of intimate partner abuse across the military are not reportable, as data to establish a denominator (number of Service members in an intimate partner relationship as defined by the DoD) are unavailable. Any notable increases or upward movement in key rates and findings command the attention of OSD FAP to ensure perceived increases in family violence are analyzed for significance and potential causes. This approach ensures that OSD FAP can reconcile any potential contributing factors from both a mathematical and programmatic lens.

Analyses in this report were tested using a Type I error rate of 5 percent (i.e., $\alpha = .05$), resulting in a Confidence Interval (CI) of 95 percent. This CI approach tells us whether the FY 2023 values are within the range of plausible values for the 10-year period, FY 2014-FY 2023. Any value outside of this CI is indicative of a statistically significant increase or decrease.

Married Military Couple Population Estimation Due to Missing Data

This report uses the married military couple population to calculate the rates of spouse abuse presented in Section 4. Married military couples are comprised of joint (or dual) military marriages and civilian marriages. The Military Services provide their respective marriage counts to DMDC monthly. In turn, DMDC makes these data available to authorized users on various self-service reports accessible on DMDC's reporting system website.

For the majority of FY 2023, one of the Military Services inaccurately reported zero joint military marriages to DMDC. To calculate spouse abuse rates within this report, OSD FAP used statistical analyses to estimate the number of joint military marriages DoD-wide. Specifically, we predicted the total number of joint military marriages DoD-wide using the known number of total civilian marriages DoD-wide, given the strong correlation between these two values over the last five years (FY 2018-FY 2022).²⁸ To further validate this estimation method, we tested two additional methods to estimate the number of joint military marriages. The estimated number of marriages using these three methods varied less than 0.2 percent. The value used for this report, as described above, was the median value and demonstrated the strongest correlation among the three methods.

²⁸ The R² value of joint service marriages as a percentage of civilian marriages from FY 2018 through FY 2022 was 0.986, representing a very strong correlation.

Key Findings

The data contained in this report only reflect child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse reported to FAP that either met or did not meet criteria in FY 2023. These data do not represent an estimate of the total amount of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse that occurred in military families in the past fiscal year.

Following a downward trend over the past several years, the rate of child abuse and neglect reports increased in FY 2023 (14.3/1,000 military children) from FY 2022 (14.1/1,000 military children). The rate of met criteria incidents remained the same (7.0) compared to FY 2022. The rate of unique victims per 1,000 military children decreased slightly in FY 2023 (5.2) compared to FY 2022 (5.1). Despite these variations, the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages.

Although both the number of met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse (239) and the rate of met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse (0.288/1,000 military children) decreased in FY 2023, these measures did not vary statistically significant when compared to their respective 10-year average during the period FY 2014-FY 2023.

In FY 2023, there were statistically significant decreases in the rates of reported spouse abuse incidents (19.8./1,000 married couples), the rate of met criteria spouse abuse incidents (10.5/1,000 married couples), and the rate of unique spouse abuse victims (8.3/1,000 married couples), when compared to their respective 10-year averages during the period FY 2014-FY 2023.

It is not possible to calculate rates per 1,000 for intimate partner abuse incidents or victims, as data on unmarried individuals involved in intimate partner relationships defined by the DoD are unavailable. In FY 2023, there were statistically significant increases in the number of reports of intimate partner abuse (3,335), the number of met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents (2,015), and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse (1,524) when compared to their respective 10-year averages.

Finally, in FY 2023 the proportion of domestic abuse incidents involving sexual abuse (6.56 percent) represented a statistically significant increase when compared to the 10-year average. This increase continues an overall upward trend in adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse that has occurred over the last decade.

The DoD is committed to understanding more about fluctuations in rates of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse through additional, targeted data analysis; ongoing research efforts on military-specific risk factors for child maltreatment; and ongoing research initiatives on domestic abuse. These efforts are further delineated in the Program and Policy Implications section of this report.

3. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

This section discusses reports to FAP of child abuse and neglect in FY 2023, incidents that met criteria for child abuse and neglect, and the characteristics of children and associated abusers for cases that met criteria.

DoD policy defines child abuse and neglect as:

- **Child abuse:** “The physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, foster parent, or by a caregiver, whether the caregiver is intra-familial or extra-familial, under circumstances indicating the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened. Such acts by a sibling, other family member, or other person shall be deemed to be child abuse only when the individual is providing care under express or implied agreement with the parent, guardian, or foster parent.”²⁹
- **Child neglect:** “The negligent treatment of a child through egregious acts or omissions below the lower bounds of normal caregiving, which shows a striking disregard for the child’s well-being, under circumstances indicating that the child’s welfare has been harmed or threatened by the deprivation of age-appropriate care.”³⁰ Neglect includes abandonment, medical neglect, and/or non-organic failure to thrive.

Child abuse and neglect, per DoD policy, include four distinct maltreatment types: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Each of these maltreatment types is outlined in implementing guidance for use during the standardized incident determination process.³¹ One or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim.

Beginning in FY 2015, OSD FAP began to treat each type of maltreatment that met the DoD definition of abuse as representing a distinct incident of child abuse and neglect to capture a more comprehensive picture of well-being for children in military families. Reporting incidents of abuse by maltreatment type is consistent with how other Federal agencies report incidents of child abuse and neglect. Starting in FY 2021 and in alignment with a recommendation from the Government Accounting Office (GAO),³² OSD FAP standardized the calculation method for reports of abuse such that a single report of abuse can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse. Reports of abuse and met criteria incidents of abuse contained within this report for periods prior to the fiscal years noted could include multiple maltreatment types.

There are three elements calculated for child abuse and neglect in this report: the number of reported incidents, the number of met criteria incidents, and the rate of child victimization. The first two elements may be impacted by external factors, thus impacting the calculated rate of child victimization. For example, the number of reports can fluctuate based on impact of

²⁹ DoDI 6400.01, “Family Advocacy Program (FAP),” May 1, 2019.

³⁰ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended.

³¹ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended; and DoDI 6400.01, May 1, 2019.

³² U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2021). *Domestic Abuse: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD’s Prevention, Response, and Oversight to Congress* (GAO-21-289). Available from: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-289>.

awareness campaigns, training, and efforts to reduce stigma in the community associated with contacting FAP. Process improvements attributed to the implementation of the IDC – counting each type of maltreatment as a distinct incident (described above) and identifying all individuals involved in a reported incident as a separate abuser – may impact the number of met criteria incidents. The child victimization rate measures the number of unique children experiencing child abuse and neglect per 1,000 military children. This measure offers an alternative method to examine the rates of child abuse and neglect across years that is less impacted by changes in reporting methodology. In addition, the child victimization rate allows the Department to compare child abuse and neglect in the military against the civilian population.

3-1. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INCIDENTS

As shown below in Table 1, there were 11,854 reports to FAP of suspected child abuse and neglect in FY 2023. The FY 2023 rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children was 14.3, which is higher than the rate in FY 2022 (14.1). This numerical difference of 0.2 represents a 1.4 percent increase in the rate of reported incidents. Although there is an increase in the rate of reported incidents in FY 2023, it is not statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.³³

Table 1: Reports and Incidents of Child Abuse and Neglect (FY 2014-FY 2023)

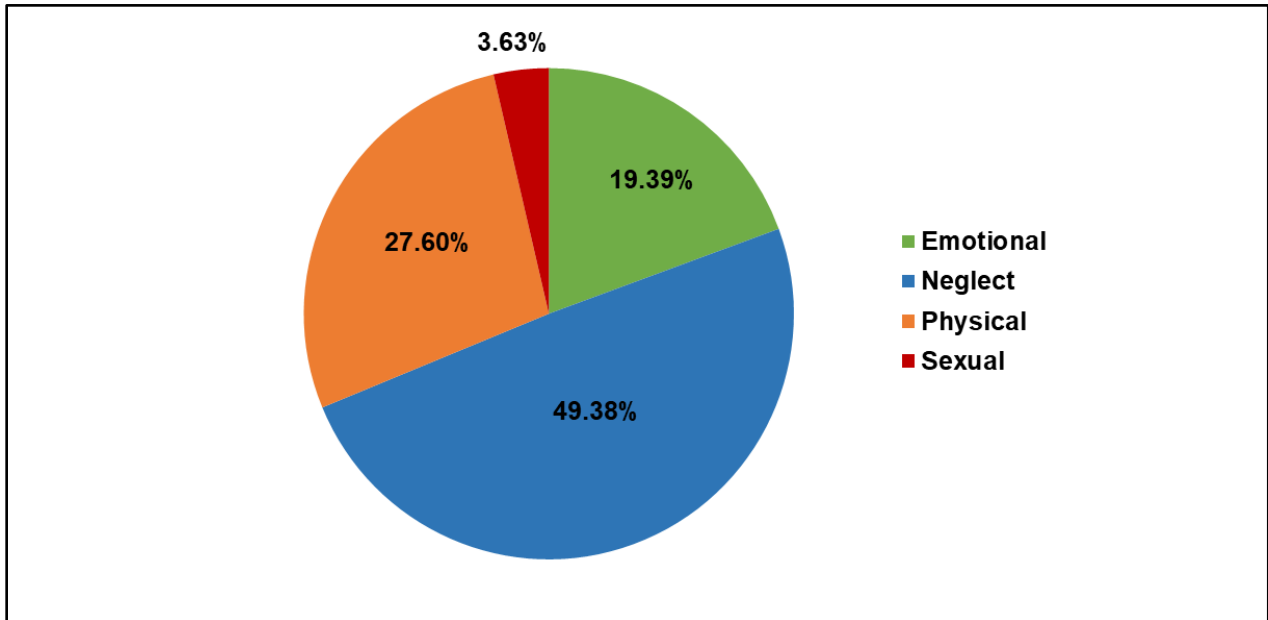
Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Met Criteria Incidents	Child Population	Reports/1000	Met Criteria Incidents/1000
2014	16,526	7,676	1,050,889	15.7	7.3
2015	15,579	7,208	1,005,626	15.5	7.2
2016	13,916	6,998	969,058	14.4	7.2
2017	12,849	6,450	939,186	13.7	6.9
2018	12,850	6,010	921,193	13.9	6.5
2019	12,392	5,600	917,891	13.5	6.1
2020	10,857	5,369	905,577	12.0	5.9
2021*	12,019	5,732	892,457	13.5	6.4
2022*	12,107	5,994	861,638	14.1	7.0
2023*	11,854	5,812	829,626	14.3	7.0

Note. Starting in FY 2021, reports of suspected child abuse and neglect are calculated separately by type of maltreatment (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect). A single report can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse. Similarly, starting in FY 2015, met criteria incidents of maltreatment are calculated separately by type of maltreatment.

³³ The FY 2023 rate of child abuse and neglect reports per 1,000 children (14.3) did not vary significantly when compared to the average rate of child abuse and neglect reports during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [13.29, 14.81]).

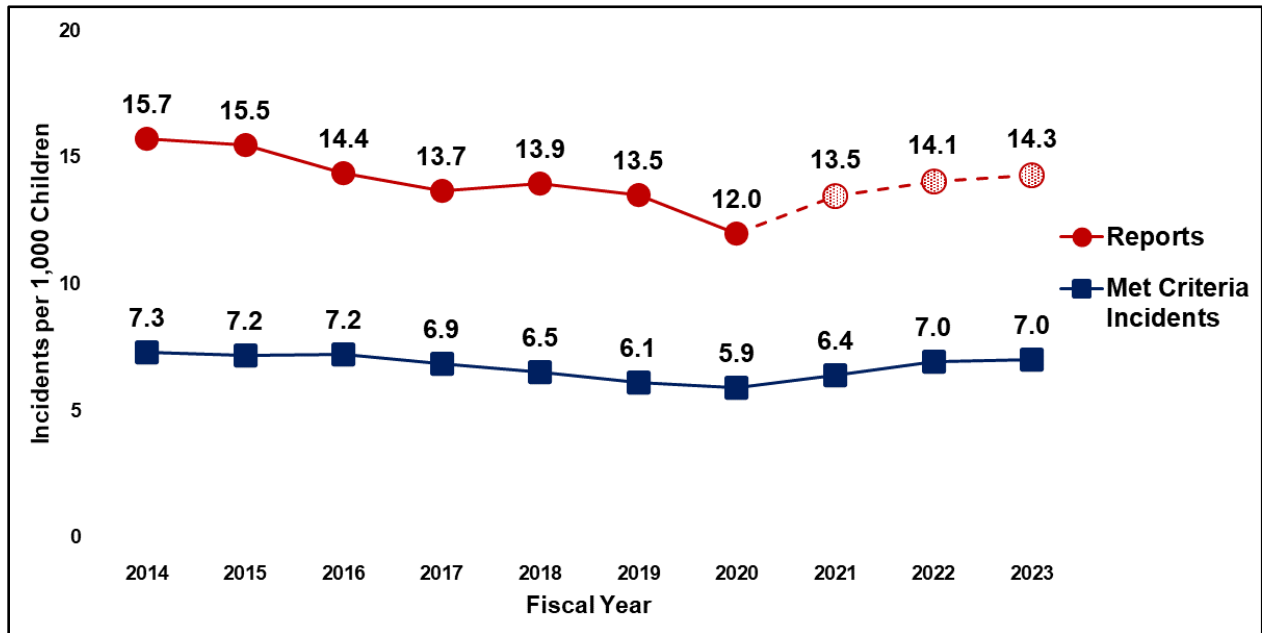
Figure 1 shows the distribution of reports of child abuse and neglect by abuse type. Neglect accounted for the largest proportion of reports of child maltreatment in FY 2023 (49.38 percent), followed by physical abuse (27.60 percent), emotional abuse (19.39 percent), and sexual abuse (3.63 percent).

Figure 1. Child Abuse and Neglect Reports by Abuse Type (FY 2023)



There were 5,812 incidents of child abuse and neglect that met criteria in FY 2023. As shown in Figure 2, the rate of met criteria incidents per 1,000 children in FY 2023 was 7.0, which is the same as the rate per 1,000 in FY 2022. There is not a statistically significant change in the rate of met criteria incidents in FY 2023 when compared to the 10-year average.³⁴

Figure 2. Child Abuse and Neglect Reports vs. Met Criteria Incidents Rates per 1,000 Children (FY 2014-FY 2023)

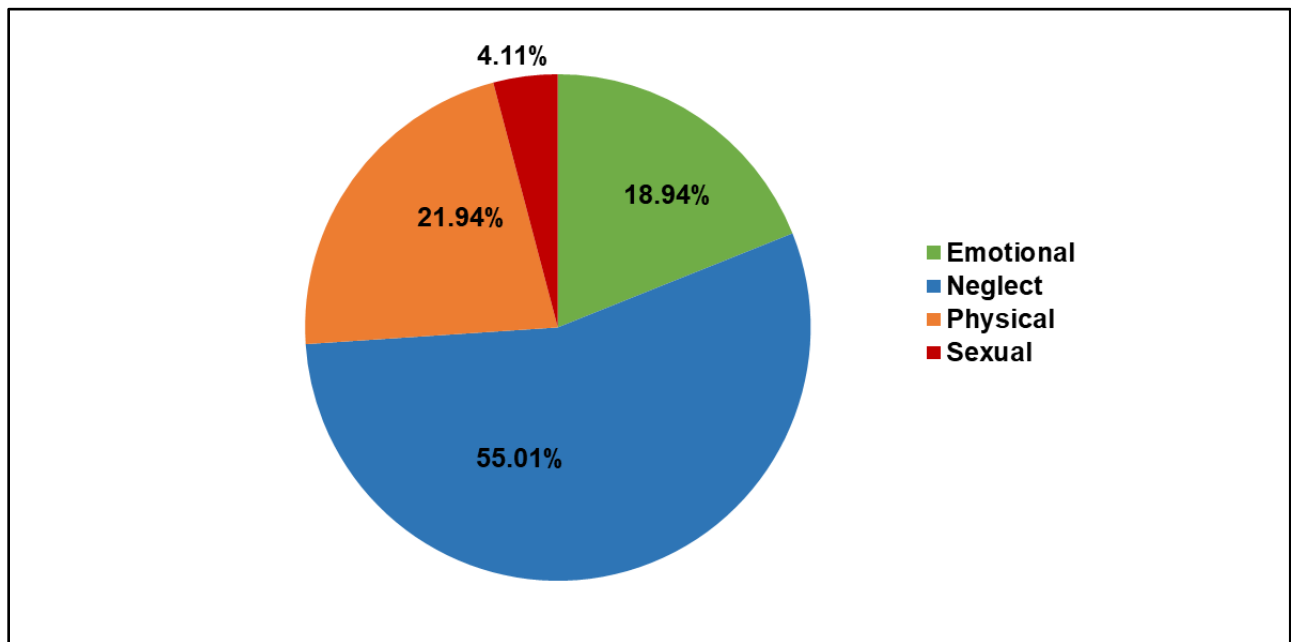


Note. The dashed lines and dotted markers for the rate of reported incidents in FY 2021 through FY 2023 highlight the new calculation method implemented for reports of abuse.

³⁴ The FY 2023 rate of met criteria child abuse incidents per 1,000 children (7.0) did not vary significantly when compared to the average rate of met criteria child abuse incidents from FY 2014-FY 2023 (95 percent CI [6.41, 7.09]).

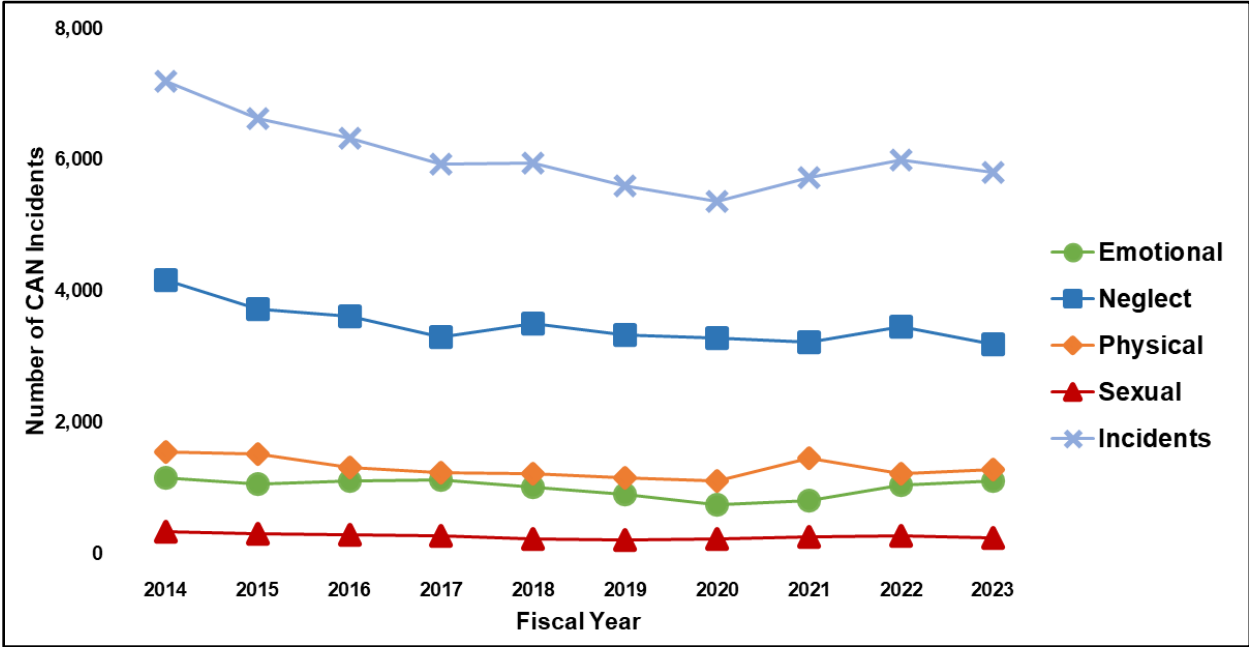
Figure 3 shows the distribution of met criteria incidents of abuse by maltreatment type. In FY 2023, neglect accounted for the largest proportion of met criteria incidents (55.01 percent). Physical abuse (21.94 percent) accounted for the next largest proportion of met criteria incidents, followed by emotional abuse (18.94 percent) and sexual abuse (4.11 percent). Overall, the distribution of met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents by abuse type mirrors the distribution of reports of child abuse and neglect incidents by abuse. Within military families, the two most prevalent forms of child neglect are a lack of supervision appropriate to the age and functioning of the child and exposure to physical hazards, such as bathtubs, electrical outlets, and unsafe cribs.

Figure 3. Types of Maltreatment in Child Abuse and Neglect Met Criteria Incidents (FY 2023)



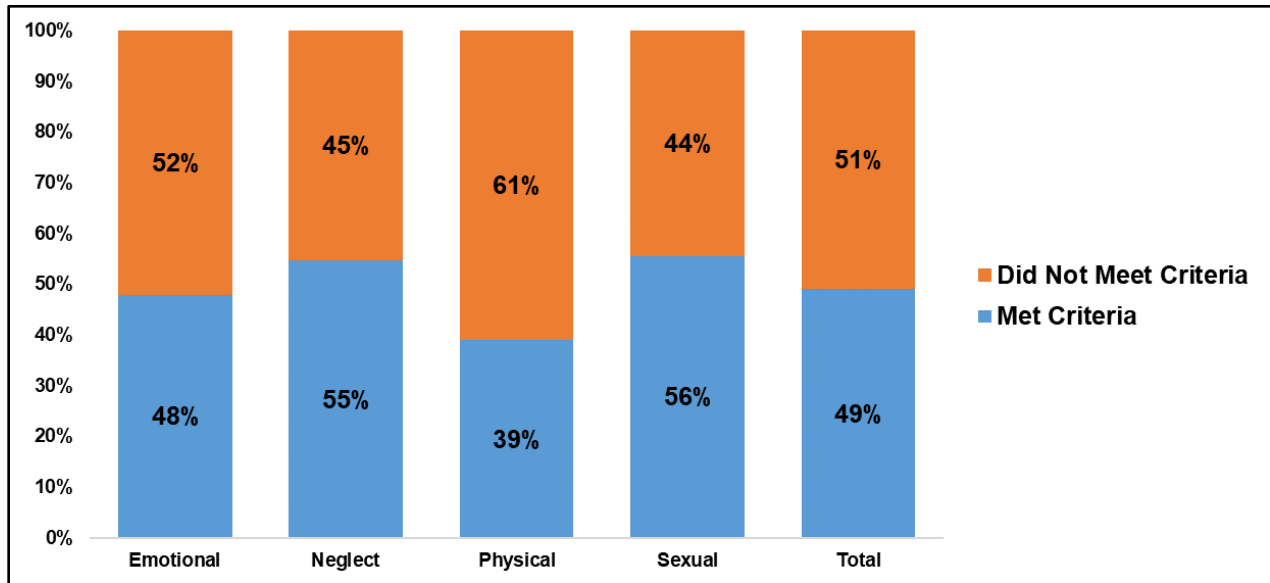
The number of met criteria incidents of each type of child maltreatment is displayed in Figure 4. Throughout the 10-year period from FY 2014-FY 2023, neglect has been the predominant type of child maltreatment. In FY 2023, there was an increase in the number of met criteria incidents of emotional and physical abuse and a decline in the number of met criteria incidents of neglect and sexual abuse.

Figure 4. Child Abuse and Neglect Met Criteria Incidents by Maltreatment Type (FY 2014-FY 2023)



Overall, 49 percent of reported incidents of child abuse and neglect were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. As shown in Figure 5, this met criteria rate varied by abuse type, ranging from 39 percent of reports of physical abuse that met criteria to 56 percent of reports of sexual abuse that met criteria.

Figure 5. Proportion of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents that Met Criteria by Abuse Type (FY 2023)



3-2. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes the characteristics of children who experienced met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect and compares military child abuse and neglect data to the most recent civilian child abuse and neglect data.

As shown in Table 2, there were 4,223 unique victims of child abuse and neglect in FY 2023. The FY 2023 child abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 children was 5.1, which is lower than the rate of 5.2 per 1,000 in FY 2022 (see Figure 6). This numerical difference of 0.1 represents a 1.9 percent decrease in the rate of child victims. Although there was a decrease in the child victimization rate in FY 2023, it is not statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.³⁵

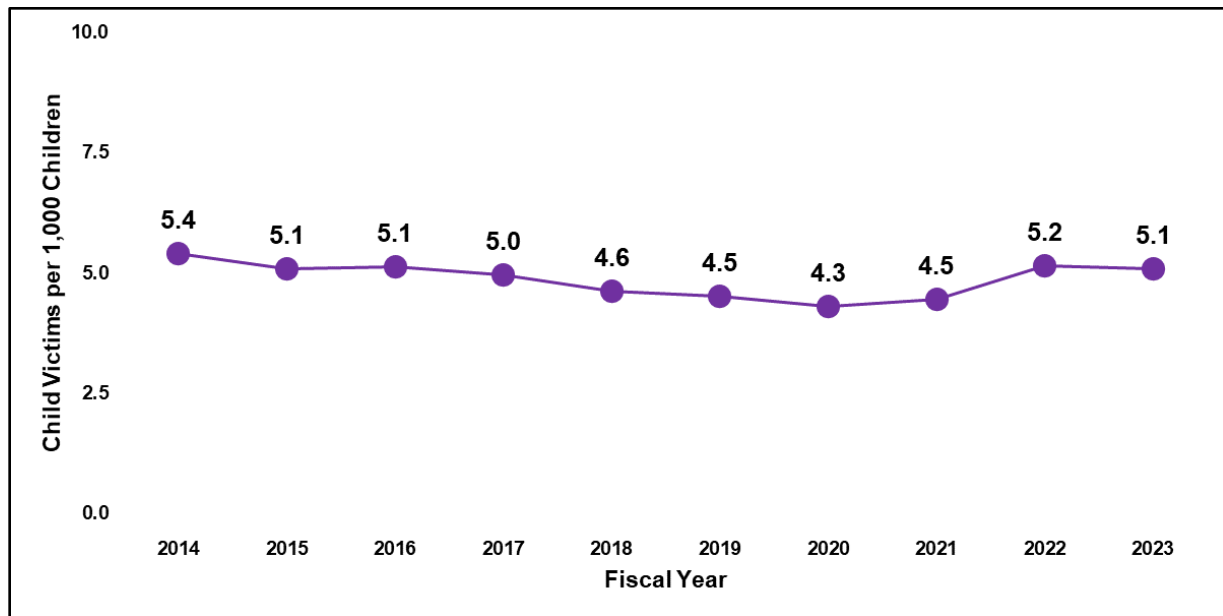
Table 2: Unique Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect (FY 2014-FY 2023)

Fiscal Year	Met Criteria Incidents	Unique Victims	Child Population	Met Criteria Incidents/1000	Rate of Victims/1000
2014	7,676	5,670	1,050,889	7.3	5.4
2015	7,208	5,123	1,005,626	7.2	5.1
2016	6,998	4,960	969,058	7.2	5.1
2017	6,450	4,667	939,186	6.9	5.0
2018	6,010	4,266	921,193	6.5	4.6
2019	5,600	4,150	917,891	6.1	4.5
2020	5,369	3,894	905,577	5.9	4.3
2021	5,732	3,974	892,457	6.4	4.5
2022	5,994	4,438	861,638	7.0	5.2
2023	5,812	4,223	829,626	7.0	5.1

Note. Incidents of maltreatment are calculated separately by type of maltreatment (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect); one or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim.

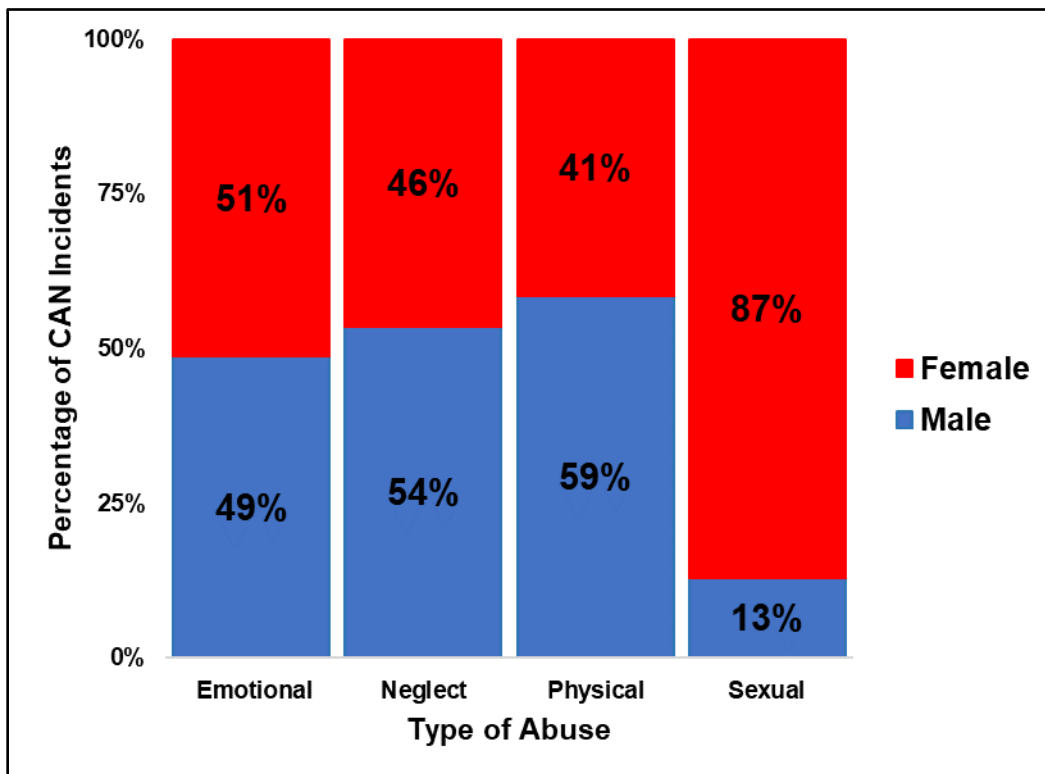
³⁵ The FY 2023 unique child victim rate per 1,000 children (5.1) did not vary significantly when compared to the average child victim rate during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [4.61, 5.13]).

Figure 6. Unique Child Victim Rate per 1,000 Children in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2014-FY 2023)



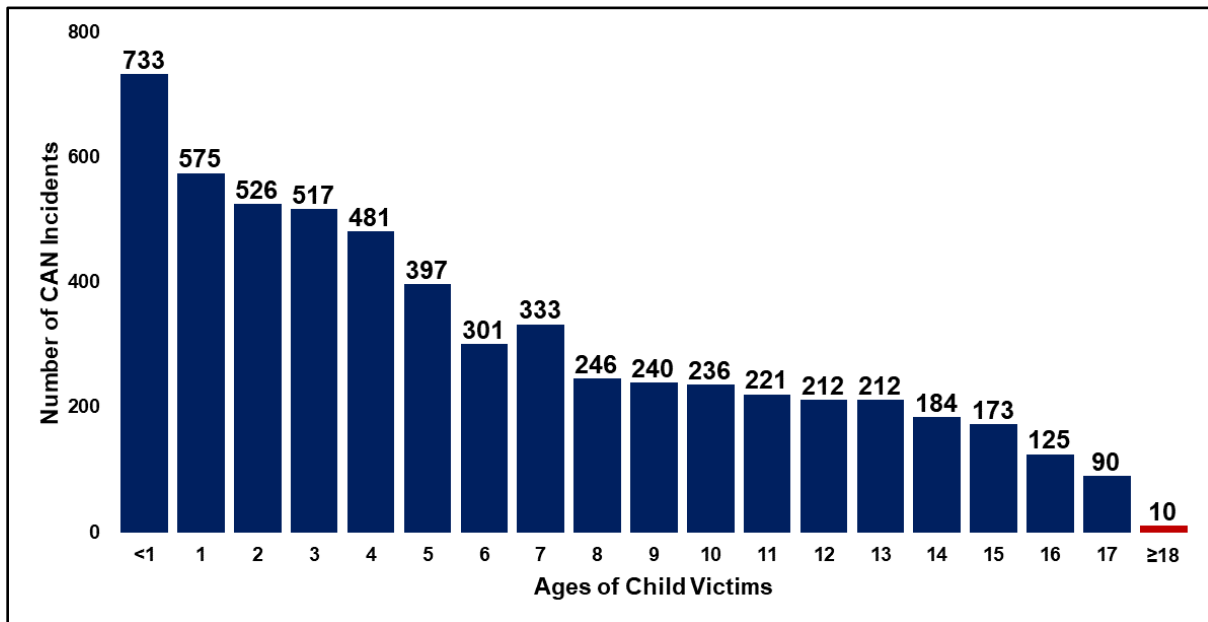
Overall, 48 percent of victims in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect were female and 52 percent were male. Figure 7 depicts the sex of child abuse and neglect victims in met criteria incidents for each maltreatment type. In FY 2023, males were more likely to experience met criteria incidents of neglect (54 percent male vs. 46 percent female) and physical abuse (59 percent male vs. 41 percent female) than females. Males and females had a similar likelihood of experiencing met criteria incidents of emotional abuse (51 percent female vs. 49 percent male). In contrast, females were much more likely to experience met criteria incidents of sexual abuse (87 percent female vs. 13 percent male) than males.

Figure 7. Sex of Victims in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Maltreatment Type (FY 2023)



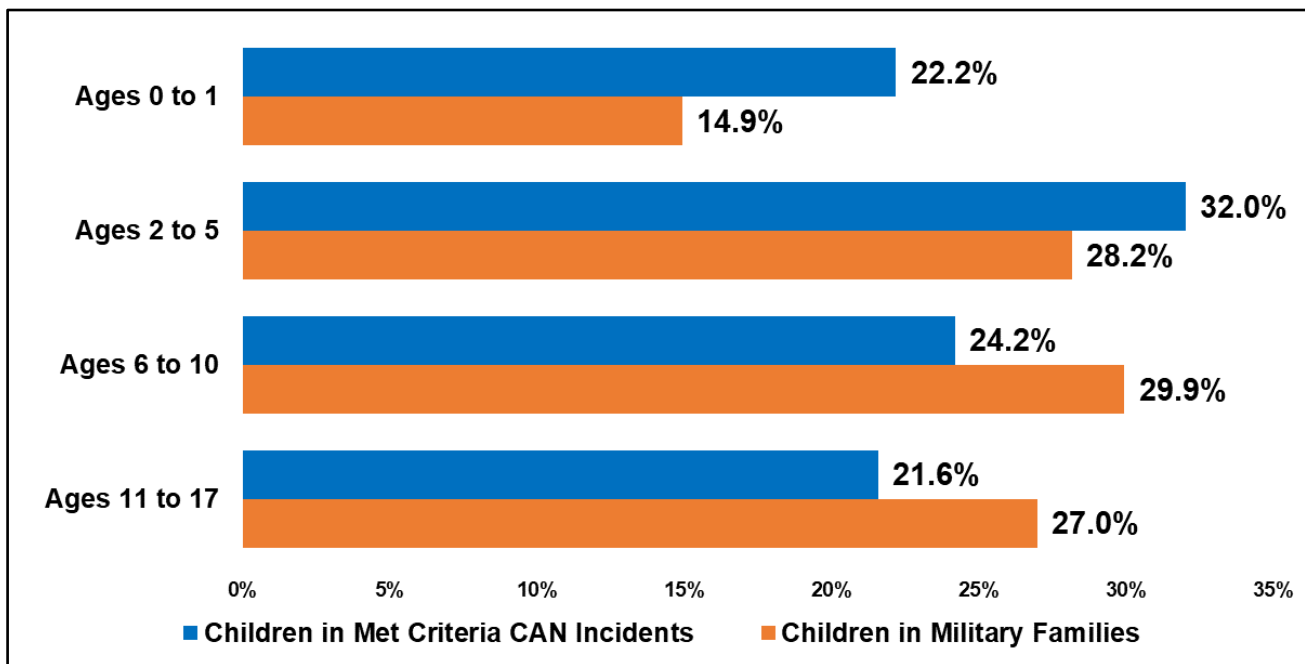
Figures 8 and 9 show the age distribution of child victims in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents. In FY 2023, there were 3,229 met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents with child victims age 5 or younger, representing more than half (55.6 percent) of all child maltreatment incidents in FY 2023. Within this group of victims age 5 or younger, there were 1,308 met criteria incidents involving children 1 year of age or younger and 1,921 involving children ages 2-5 years old. There were 1,356 met criteria incidents involving children ages 6-10, which represented nearly one-quarter (23.3 percent) of all met criteria incidents of abuse or neglect. Among children ages 11-17, there were 1,217 incidents or slightly more than one-fifth (20.9 percent) of all met criteria incidents of abuse or neglect in FY 2023. Additionally, during FY 2023 there were 10 incidents involving children 18 years or older where the abuse occurred while the victims were a dependent child.

Figure 8. Ages of Victims in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2023)



There are notable differences when comparing the age distribution of unique victims in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect in FY 2023 to the age distribution of children in military families. Figure 9 shows that there is a greater proportion of children in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment who are 1 year of age or younger than children of the same age group in the military child population (22.2 percent vs. 14.9 percent). The same pattern holds true for children between the ages of 2 and 5 (32.0 percent of children in met criteria incidents vs. 28.2 percent of the military child population). In contrast, there is a smaller proportion of child victims in met criteria incidents than children in the military child population amongst children ages 6-10 (24.2 percent vs. 29.9 percent) and ages 11-17 (21.6 percent vs. 27.0 percent). We did not include incidents involving victims ages 18 or older in this comparison, as not all military children in this age group are in a dependent status.

Figure 9. Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Age Group, Compared to Demographics (FY 2023)

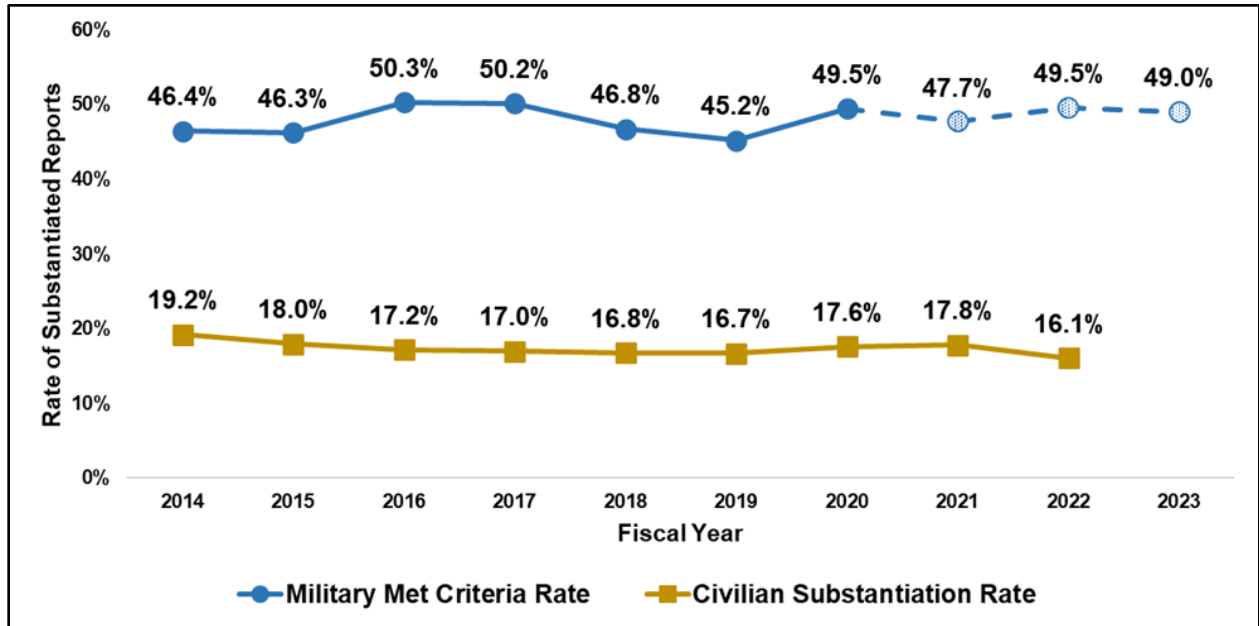


3-3. COMPARISON TO U.S. CIVILIAN DATA

This section compares military child abuse and neglect data to the most recent U.S. civilian child abuse and neglect data.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publishes an annual report that presents data on child abuse and neglect known to child protective service agencies in the United States. As shown in Figure 10, both the military met criteria rate and the civilian substantiation (very similar to met criteria) rate have fluctuated over time; however, the military rate has consistently exceeded the civilian rate over the past decade.³⁶ The military met criteria rate in FY 2023 was 49.0 percent, which is lower than the FY 2022 military rate (49.5 percent). The civilian substantiation rate for FY 2022 was 16.1 percent, which is lower than the FY 2021 civilian rate (17.8 percent).

Figure 10. Military Met Criteria Rate vs. U.S. Civilian Substantiation Rate for Child Maltreatment (FY 2014-FY 2023)



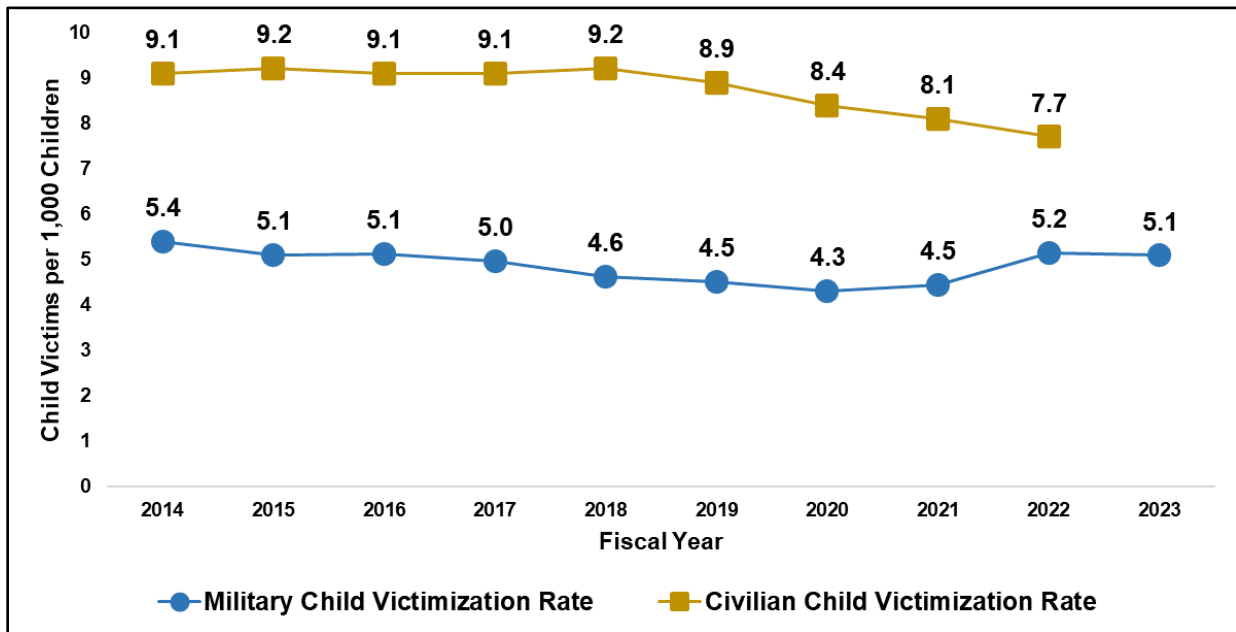
Note. The dashed lines and dotted markers for the military met criteria rate in FY 2021 through FY 2023 highlight the new calculation method implemented for reports of abuse. The most recent U.S. civilian data are from FY 2022, which represents a one-year lag compared to DoD data.

³⁶ *Child Maltreatment 2014 through 2022*, inclusive.

Figure 11 shows the military child abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 military children (i.e., the military child victimization rate) compared to the U.S. civilian victimization rate per 1,000 children. Although both the military and civilian child victimization rates have fluctuated over time, the military child victimization rate has consistently been lower than the civilian rate over the past decade.³⁷ The military child victimization rate for FY 2023 was 5.1 per 1,000 children, which is lower than the FY 2022 military rate (5.2). The civilian child victimization rate for FY 2022 was 7.7 per 1,000 children, which is lower than the FY 2021 civilian rate (8.1).

Considering that the military confirms child abuse and neglect at more than twice the civilian rate (see Figure 10) yet the military has a lower rate of victims per 1,000 children, the overall rate of child abuse and neglect in the military is substantially lower than in the civilian sector.

Figure 11. Military Child Victimization Rate vs. U.S. Civilian Child Victimization Rate per 1,000 Children (FY 2014-FY 2023)



Note. The most recent U.S. civilian data are from FY 2022, which represents a one-year lag compared to DoD data.

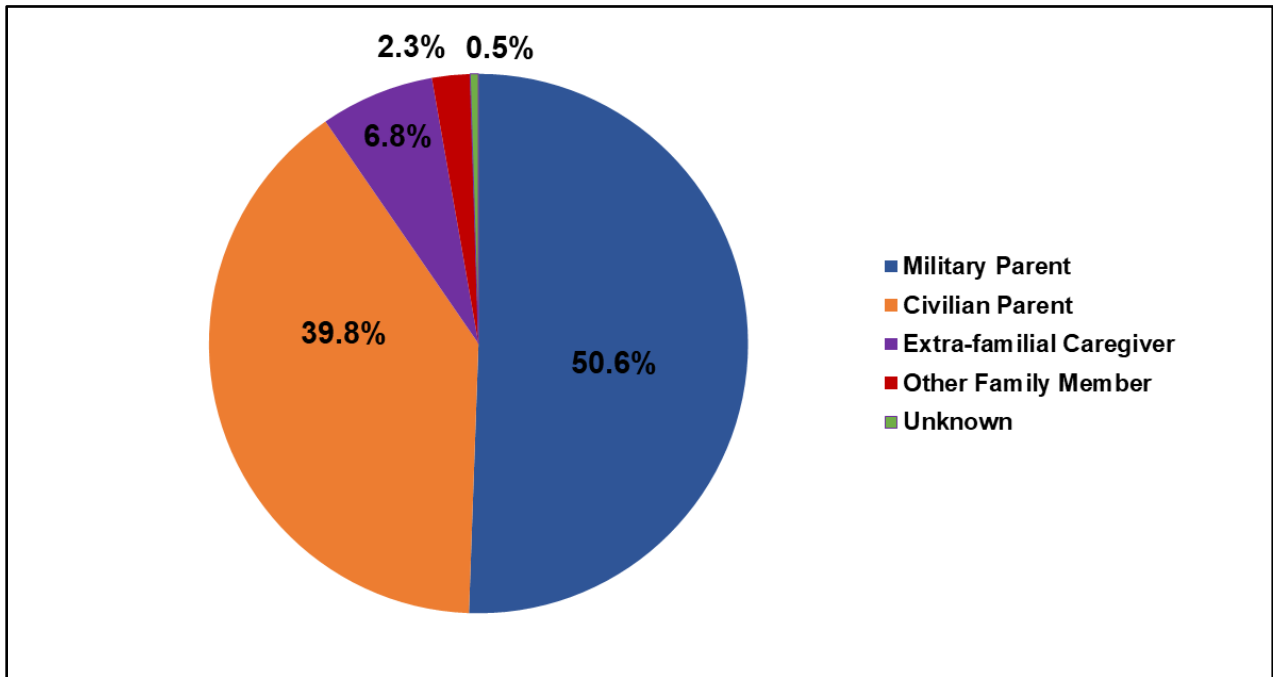
³⁷ *Child Maltreatment 2014 through 2022*, inclusive.

3-4. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults involved in incidents that met criteria for child abuse and neglect, including military status and paygrade.

As shown in Figure 12, parents represented the largest proportion of abusers involved in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect in FY 2023, where 50.6 percent of abusers were Service member parents and 39.8 percent were civilian parents. Fewer abusers involved in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect were extra-familial caregivers (6.8 percent), other family members (2.3 percent), or had an unknown status (0.5 percent).

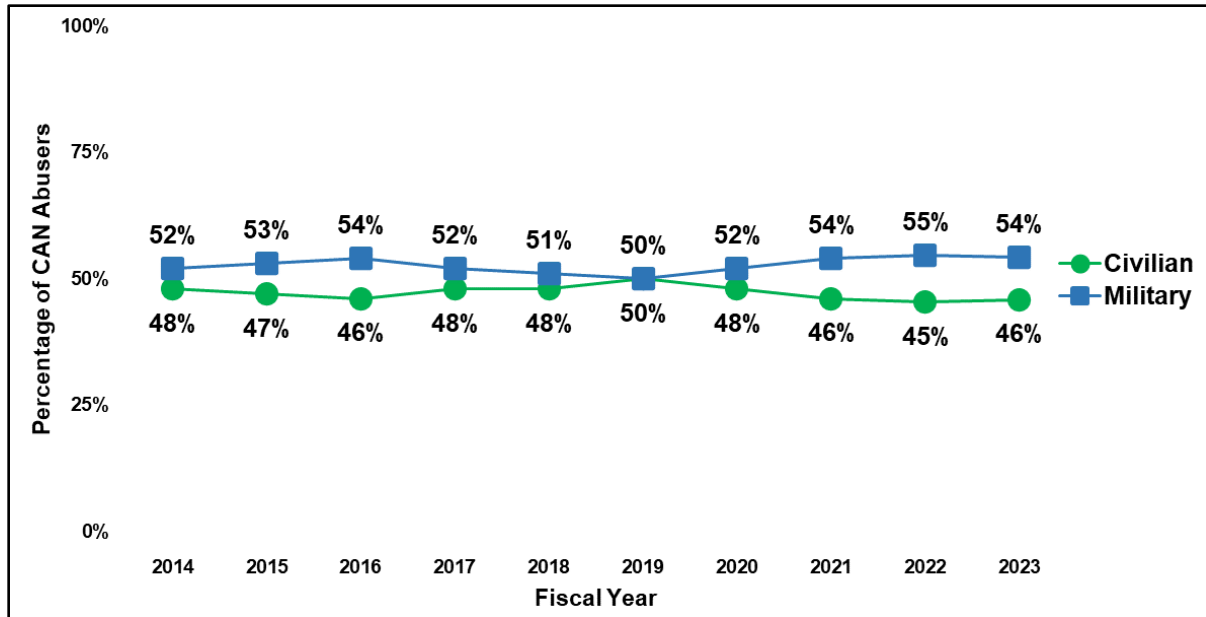
Figure 12. Caregiver Status of Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2023)



Note. Service member parents, referred to as military parents in the figure, include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

As shown in Figure 13, the military status distribution of abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents has remained relatively consistent since FY 2014. In FY 2023, 54 percent of abusers were Service members and 46 percent were civilians.

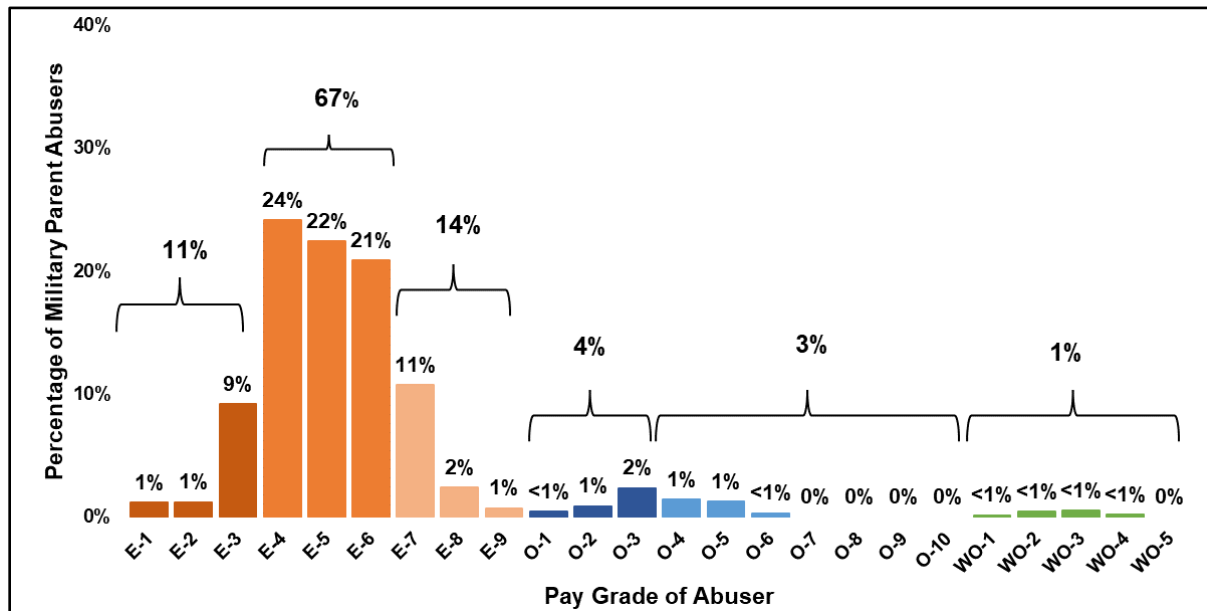
Figure 13. Military Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents (FY 2014-FY 2023)



Note. Abusers with an unknown status were excluded from this figure.

Figure 14 displays the pay grade distribution for Service member parent abusers who were involved in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents. Most Service member parent abusers were junior enlisted members; 67 percent were E-4 through E-6, and 11 percent were E-1 through E-3. Fewer parent abusers were senior enlisted (14 percent were E-7 through E-9), officers (4 percent were O-1 through O-3; 3 percent were O-4 through O-10), or warrant officers (1 percent were WO-1 through WO-5).

Figure 14. Pay Grade Distribution of Service Member Parent Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents (FY 2023)

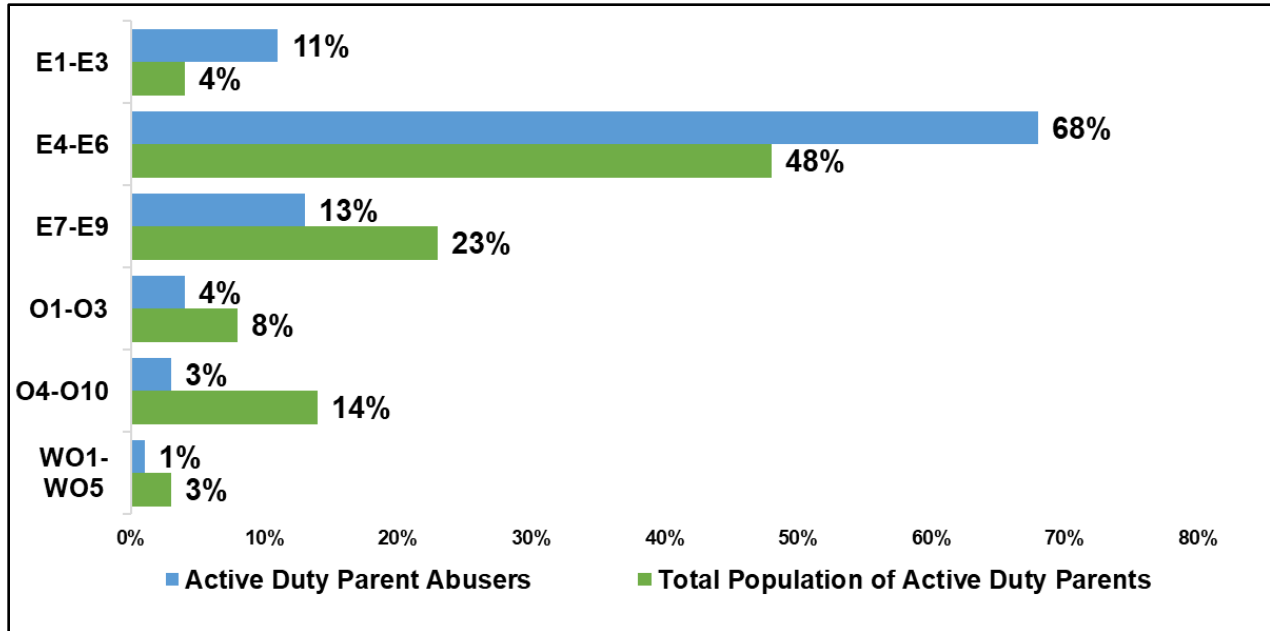


Note. Service member parents, referred to as military parent abusers in the figure, include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

When comparing the pay grades of active duty³⁸ parent abusers in met criteria child abuse and neglect incidents to the pay grades of the total population of active duty parents in FY 2023, the differences in relative proportions are pronounced, although they are relatively consistent with FY 2022 data. As displayed in Figure 15, a much greater proportion of active duty parents in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment are in the E-1 through E-3 pay grade (11 percent vs. 4 percent) and the E-4 through E-6 pay grade (68 percent vs. 48 percent) than in the active duty parent population.³⁹

Meanwhile, there are proportionally fewer active duty parents involved in met criteria incidents compared to the active duty parent population in the E-7 through E-9 (13 percent vs. 23 percent), O-1 through O-3 (4 percent vs. 8 percent), O-4 through O-10 (3 percent vs. 14 percent), and WO-1 through WO-5 (1 percent vs. 3 percent) pay grades.

Figure 15. Proportion of Active Duty Parent Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents by Pay Grade, Compared to Demographics (FY 2023)

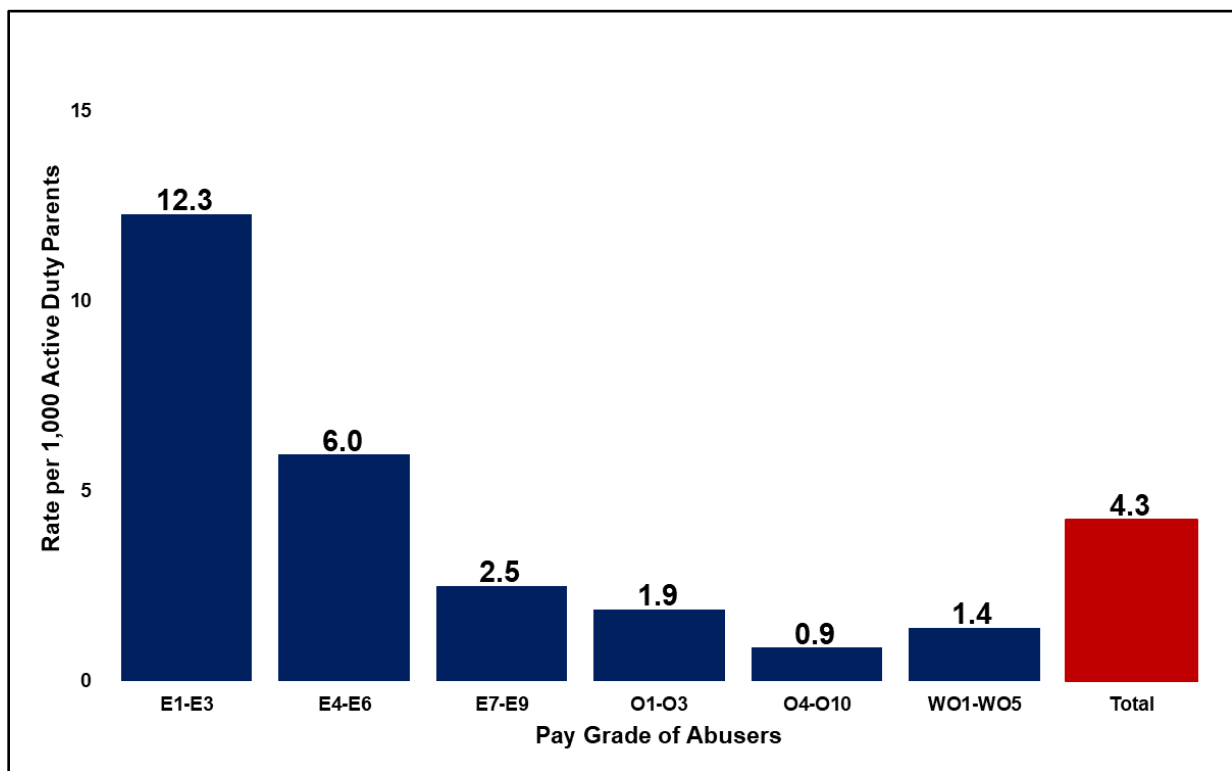


³⁸ For the purposes of this report, active duty refers to Regular Component members, exclusively.

³⁹ While Figure 14 displays pay grade of Service member parent abusers in met criteria incidents, this figure focuses on pay grade of active duty parent abusers in met criteria incidents, exclusively.

While the breakdown of active duty parents by pay grade in Figure 15 shows that the greatest proportion of abusers were in the E-4 through E-6 pay grade, the rate of active duty parent abusers per 1,000 involved in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment is highest for parents who are in the E-1 through E-3 (12.3) pay grades (see Figure 16). This means that active duty parents in the E-1 through E-3 pay grades were more likely to be involved in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect than active duty parents in any other pay grade band, relative to their proportion in the active duty parent population. Overall, this finding is consistent with previous years, although the rate of active duty parent abusers per 1,000 in the E-1 through E-3 pay grades is lower in FY 2023 (12.3) than in FY 2022 (15.5).

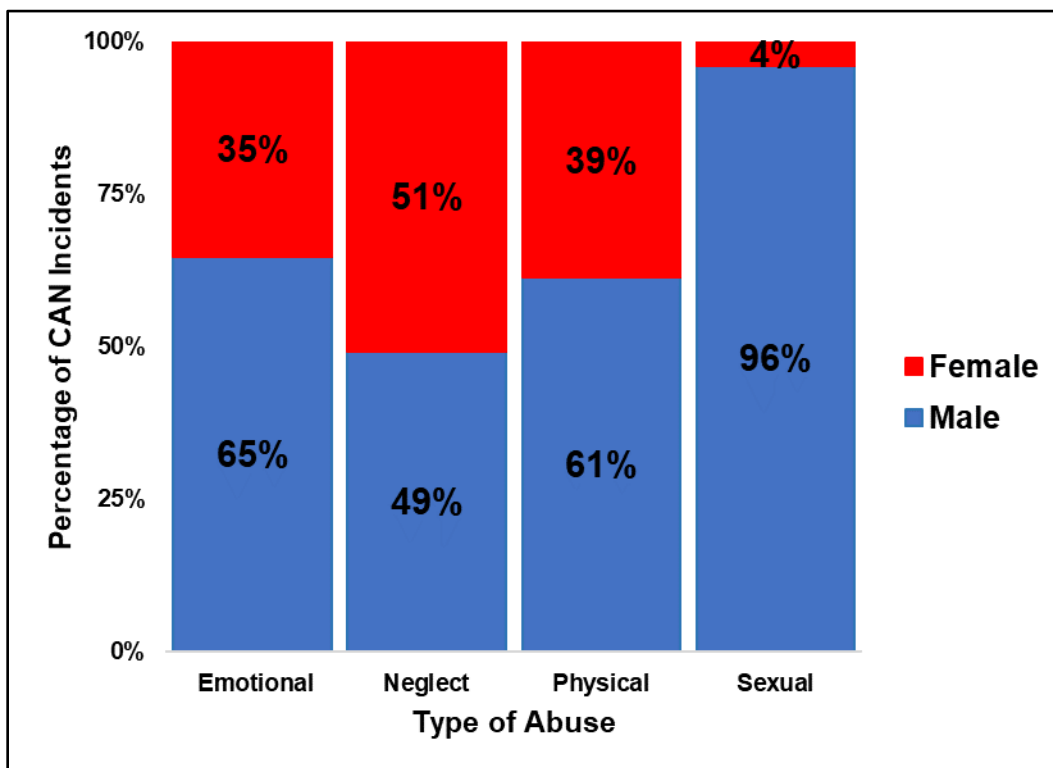
Figure 16. Rate of Active Duty Parent Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents per 1,000 by Pay Grade (FY 2023)



Overall, 57 percent of abusers in child abuse and neglect incidents that met criteria were male and 43 percent were female.

Figure 17 shows the proportions of male and female abusers in met criteria incidents for each type of child maltreatment and demonstrates how the sex of abusers varies in these incidents. The vast majority of abusers for incidents of child sexual abuse were male (96 percent male vs. 4 percent female). Males were also more likely to be abusers in emotional abuse incidents (65 percent male vs. 35 percent female) and physical abuse incidents (61 percent male vs. 39 percent female). In contrast, among incidents of neglect, the most common type of child maltreatment in military families, 51 percent of abusers were female and 49 percent were male.

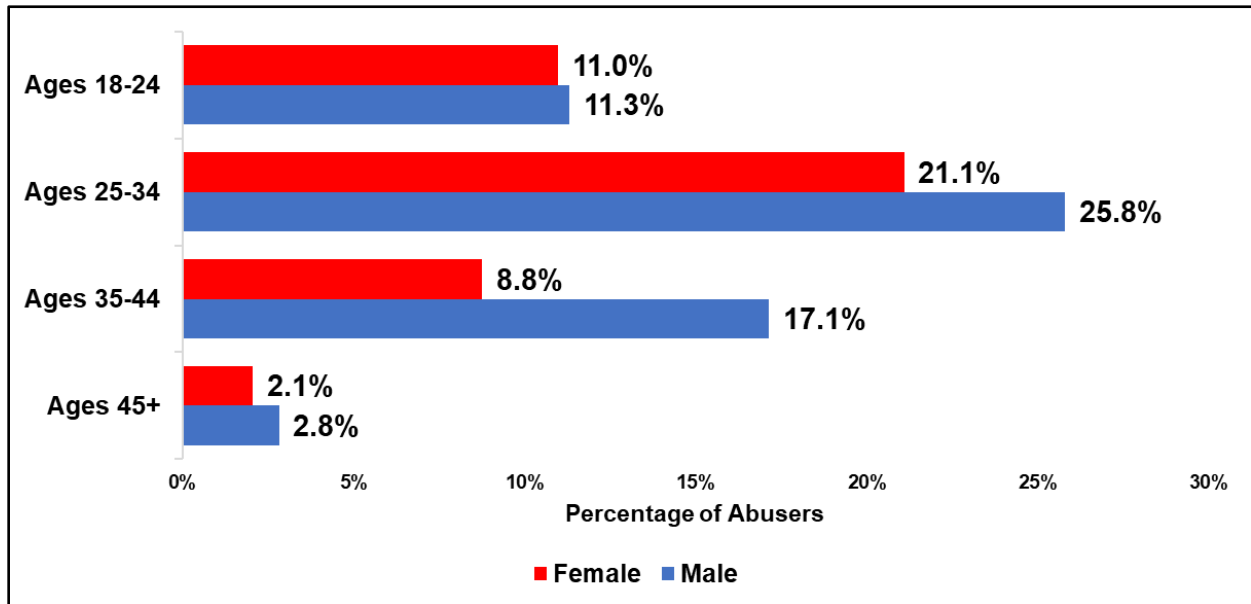
Figure 17. Sex of Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Maltreatment Type (FY 2023)



Note. The sex of the abuser was unknown in 25 met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect. Those incidents were excluded from this figure.

Figure 18 shows the proportion of unique abusers in met criteria incidents of child maltreatment by age group and sex. The majority of abusers (46.9 percent) in met criteria incidents of child abuse and neglect were ages 25-34 (25.8 percent male and 21.1 percent female). Just over a quarter of abusers (25.9 percent) were ages 35-44 (17.1 percent male and 8.8 percent female), over a fifth of abusers (22.3 percent) were ages 18-24 (11.3 percent male and 11.0 percent female), and a smaller proportion of abusers (4.9 percent) were 45 years of age or older (2.8 percent male and 2.1 percent female). There were no abusers younger than age 18 in FY 2023.

Figure 18. Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Abuse and Neglect Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2023)



Note. Abusers with unknown status or demographics were excluded from this figure.

3-5. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

For the sixth time in this annual report series, we specifically examine child sexual abuse as a subset of child abuse.⁴⁰ Data on these incidents are also included in the *FY 2023 DoD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military* as Appendix H. Child sexual abuse is defined as:

“The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.”⁴¹

In FY 2023, there were 239 met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse (see Table 3), and 229 unique victims of child sexual abuse who received FAP services. Given that there were more incidents than victims, one or more victims experienced more than one incident of child sexual abuse during the fiscal year. Although the rate of child sexual abuse incidents per 1,000 military children decreased by 9.4 percent in FY 2023, it is not statistically significant when compared to the 10-year period.⁴²

Table 3: Incidents of Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse (FY 2014-FY 2023)

Fiscal Year	Met Criteria Incidents	Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents	Child Population	Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents/1000	Percentage of Overall Met Criteria Child Abuse
2014	7,676	328	1,050,889	0.312	4.27
2015	7,208	317	1,005,626	0.315	4.40
2016	6,998	311	969,058	0.321	4.44
2017	6,450	286	939,186	0.305	4.43
2018	6,010	227	921,193	0.246	3.78
2019	5,600	212	917,891	0.231	3.79
2020	5,369	222	905,577	0.245	4.13
2021	5,732	260	892,457	0.291	4.54
2022	5,994	274	861,638	0.318	4.57
2023	5,812	239	829,626	0.288	4.11

Note. Total met criteria child abuse incidents numbers include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect met criteria numbers combined.

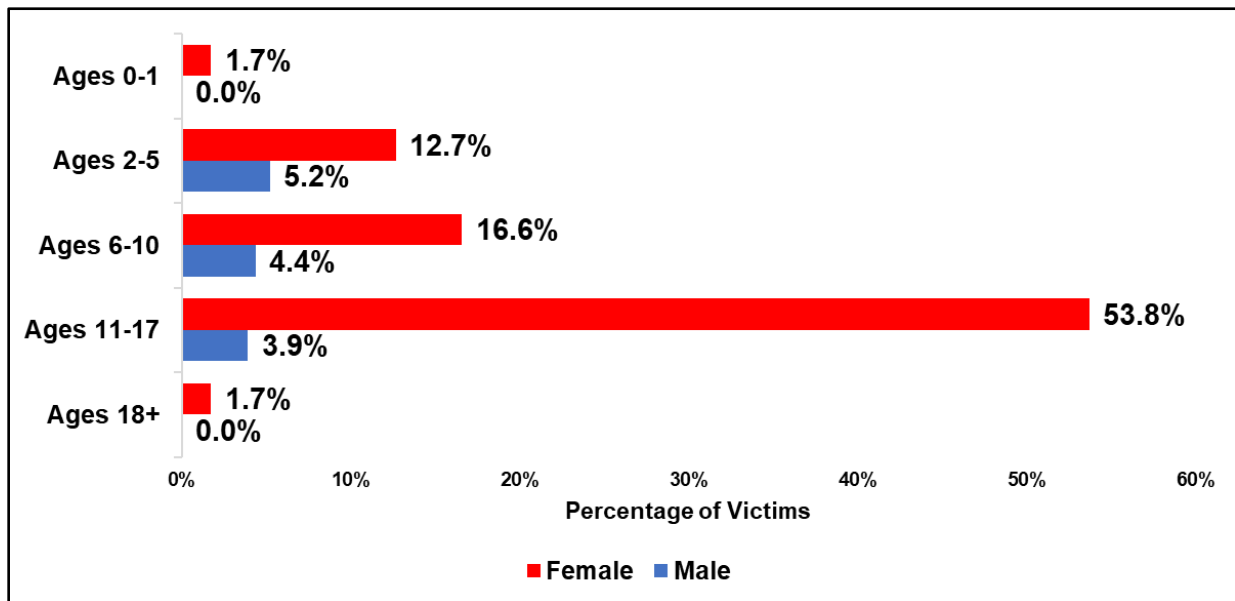
⁴⁰ DoDI 6400.01, May 1, 2019 defines “child abuse” as, “the physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, foster parent, or by a caregiver, whether the caregiver is intra-familial or extra-familial, under circumstances indicating the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened. Such acts by a sibling, other family member, or other person shall be deemed to be child abuse only when the individual is providing care under express or implied agreement with the parent, guardian, or foster parent.”

⁴¹ DoDI 6400.03, “Family Advocacy Command Assistance Team (FACAT),” April 25, 2014, as amended.

⁴² The FY 2023 number of met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse (239) did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average (95 percent CI [237.39, 297.81]). Similarly, the rate of child sexual abuse incidents per 1,000 military children (0.288) did not vary significantly when compared to the 10-year average (95 percent CI [0.263, 0.312]).

Of the 229 unique victims of child sexual abuse who received FAP services in FY 2023, 198 (86.5 percent) were female and 31 (13.5 percent) were male. Figure 19 shows the proportion of unique child sexual abuse victims by age and sex. Of the unique victims in met criteria incidents of sexual abuse, 57.6 percent (53.8 percent female and 3.9 percent male) were ages 11-17, 21.0 percent (16.6 percent female and 4.4 percent male) were ages 6-10, and 17.9 percent (12.7 percent female and 5.2 percent male) were ages 2-5. Of the unique victims, 1.7 percent (all female) were age 1 or younger, and 1.7 percent were child dependents 18 years old or older.

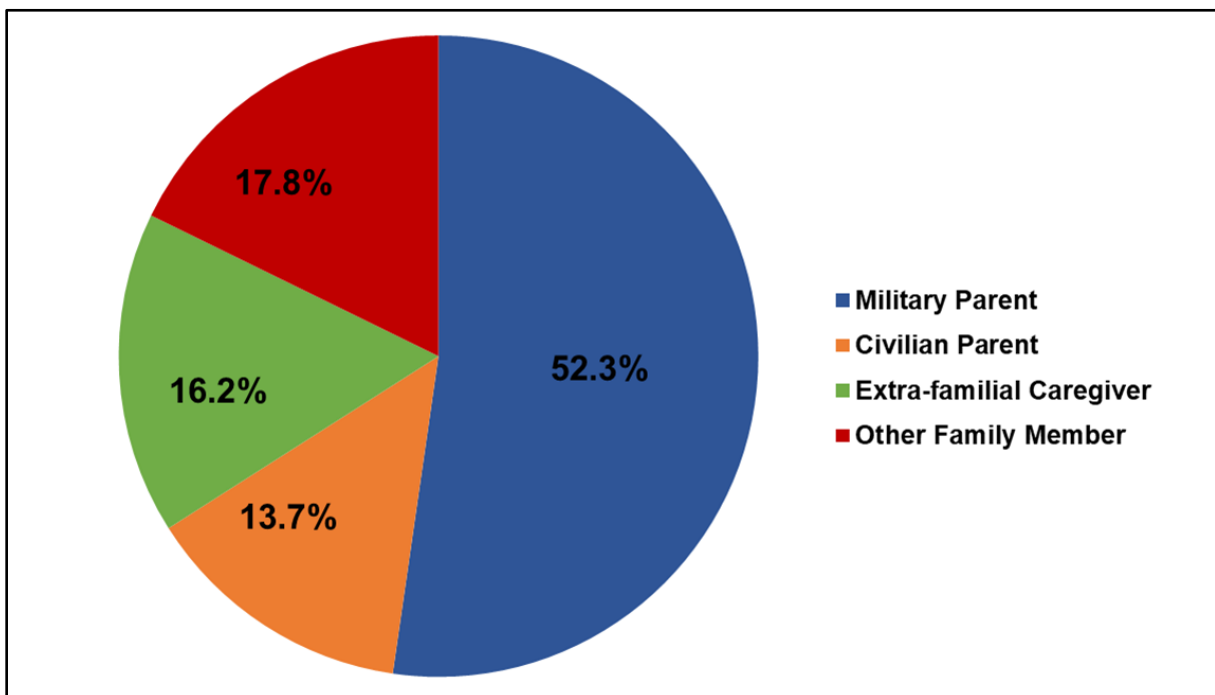
Figure 19. Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2023)



There were 197 known unique abusers in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents.⁴³ Among those known abusers, 103 (52.3 percent) were Service member parents, 27 (13.7 percent) were civilian parents, 35 (17.8 percent) were other family members, and 32 (16.2 percent) were extra-familial caregivers (see Figure 20).

Of the known abusers, 127 were Service members, including 126 (99.2 percent) active duty members and 1 (0.8 percent) member of the National Guard. Of the 127 Service members, 115 (90.6 percent) were enlisted members, 10 (7.9 percent) were officers, and 2 (1.6 percent) were warrant officers.⁴⁴

Figure 20. Caregiver Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



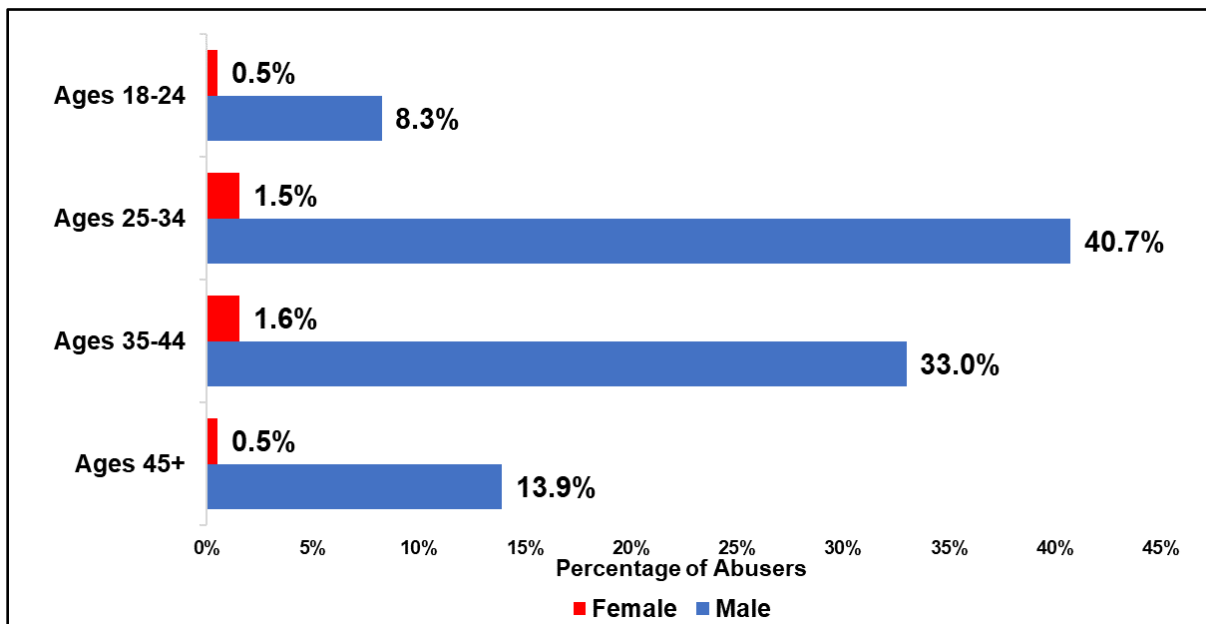
Note. Service member parents, referred to as military parents in the figure, include active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status. Abusers with an unknown status are excluded from the figure.

⁴³ In FY 2023, there were six met criteria incident of child sexual abuse where the abuser was unknown.

⁴⁴ The Service members breakdown by percentage adds up to 100.1 percent rather than 100 percent due to rounding.

Of the 197 known unique abusers in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents, 189 (95.9 percent) were male and 8 (4.1 percent) were female. Figure 21 shows the proportion of unique abusers in met criteria child sexual abuse incidents by age group and sex. Among unique abusers where both the age and sex were known (ages for 3 male abusers were unknown), 42.2 percent were ages 25-34 and overwhelmingly male (40.7 percent male and 1.5 percent female), 34.6 percent were ages of 35-44 (33.0 percent male and 1.6 percent female), 14.4 percent were ages 45 or older (13.9 percent male and 0.5 percent female), and 8.8 percent were ages 18-24 (8.3 percent male and 0.5 percent female).

Figure 21. Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Child Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2023)



Note. Abusers with unknown status or demographics were excluded from this figure.

3-6. CHILD ABUSE FATALITIES

As discussed previously, reviews of fatalities reported to the Central Registry in FY 2023 will occur in the Military Departments in FY 2025. Data on child fatalities included in this report represent only those fatalities taken to the IDC after the death of the victim and that met criteria for child abuse and neglect in FY 2023.

There were 14 child abuse-related fatalities involving 15 abusers taken to the IDC and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2023 (see Table 4). Of the 14 child abuse-related fatalities, one child victim and no met criteria abusers were previously known to the Central Registry.⁴⁵ Among the child fatality victims, six (42.9 percent) were female and eight (57.1 percent) were male. Seven (50.0 percent) child victims were 1 year of age or younger, four (28.6 percent) child victims were 2-5 years old, and three (21.4 percent) were between 6 and 18 years of age. Among the met criteria abusers in these child fatality incidents, six (40.0 percent) were female and nine (60.0 percent) were male. Of the 15 met criteria abusers, nine (60.0 percent) were Service members and six (40.0 percent) were civilians.

Table 4: Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities Reported to FAP in FY 2023

Total Fatalities: 14	
- 15 Met criteria abusers involved (including 3 fatalities with 2 abusers)	
- 1 Child victims previously known to the Central Registry	
- 0 Met criteria abusers previously known to the Central Registry	
Victims	
Sex of Victims	Ages of Victims
- 6 Female	- 7 One year of age or younger
- 8 Male	- 4 Between ages 2-5 years old
Met Criteria Abusers	
Sex of Abusers	Military Status of Abusers
- 6 Female	- 9 Active duty
- 9 Male	- 6 Civilian

Note. Represents only those fatalities taken to the IDC in FY 2023. Military Service fatality reviews of these incidents will take place in FY 2025. Service member includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

⁴⁵ “Known to the Central Registry” means that the victim or abuser was involved in a previous met criteria incident of abuse.

4. DOMESTIC ABUSE

This section discusses domestic abuse and provides information on reports to FAP in FY 2023, incidents of domestic abuse that met criteria, and the characteristics of the adult victims and abusers involved in those incidents.

DoD policy defines “domestic abuse” as, “domestic violence, or a pattern of behavior resulting in emotional or psychological abuse, economic control, or interference with personal liberty that is directed toward a person who is one or more of the following:

- Current or former spouse.
- Person with whom the alleged abuser shares a child in common.
- Current or former intimate partner with whom the alleged abuser shares or has shared a common domicile.
- Person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the accused and determined to be an intimate partner (as defined in [DoD Instruction 6400.06]).”⁴⁶

For purposes of this report, FAP distinctly analyzes incidents of spouse abuse and incidents of intimate partner abuse in addition to the umbrella category of domestic abuse, which contains the sum of all incidents. There is no Federal mechanism to track rates of civilian spouse abuse for comparison to the military population. This is, in part, because each state has different laws and definitions of domestic abuse—making a comparative analysis to civilian data impossible.

Spouse abuse – Either the victim or abuser was a Service member.

Intimate partner abuse – In FY 2006, an additional category, “intimate partner”, was added to capture incidents involving: (1) a former spouse; (2) a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; or (3) a current or former intimate partner with whom the victim shares or has shared a common domicile. This definition was expanded in FY 2022 to include those in dating relationships. Either the victim or the abuser was a Service member.

Domestic abuse, per DoD policy, encompasses four distinct types of abuse for either spouse or intimate partner abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Spouse neglect is a type of domestic abuse in which an adult fails to provide necessary care or assistance for his or her spouse who is incapable of self-care physically, emotionally, or culturally. Each of these types of abuse is outlined in implementing guidance for use during the standardized incident determination process.⁴⁷ One or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim.

Reports and incidents of domestic abuse are reported separately by type of abuse. Prior to FY 2015, a single met criteria incident may have included multiple abuse types. Similarly, prior to FY 2021, a single report of abuse may have included multiple abuse types. Calculation and reporting have since been standardized for consistency.

⁴⁶ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended.

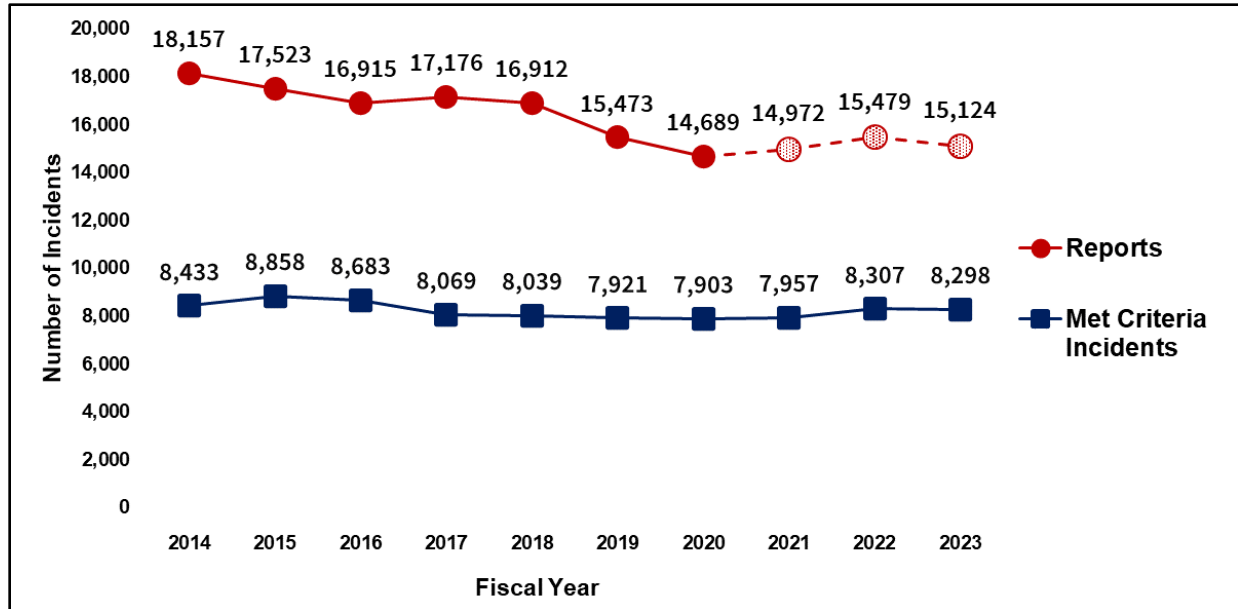
⁴⁷ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016.

4-1. DOMESTIC ABUSE INCIDENTS

For the third year, this report includes an expanded analysis of the overarching category of domestic abuse, which provides a better understanding of the demographic characteristics of domestic abuse victims and abusers.

Overall, the number of reports and met criteria incidents of domestic abuse has steadily decreased over the past decade, despite year-over-year increases from FY 2020 to FY 2021 and then again from FY 2021 to FY 2022 (see Figure 22). The number of reports of domestic abuse (15,124) in FY 2023 is a statistically significant decrease when compared to the 10-year average.⁴⁸ The slight decrease in number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents (8,298) in FY 2023 is not statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.⁴⁹

Figure 22. Number of Domestic Abuse Reports vs. Met Criteria Incidents (FY 2014-FY 2023)



Note. Domestic abuse includes spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse. Starting in FY 2021, reports of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type. A single report can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse. Similarly, starting in FY 2015, incidents of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type.

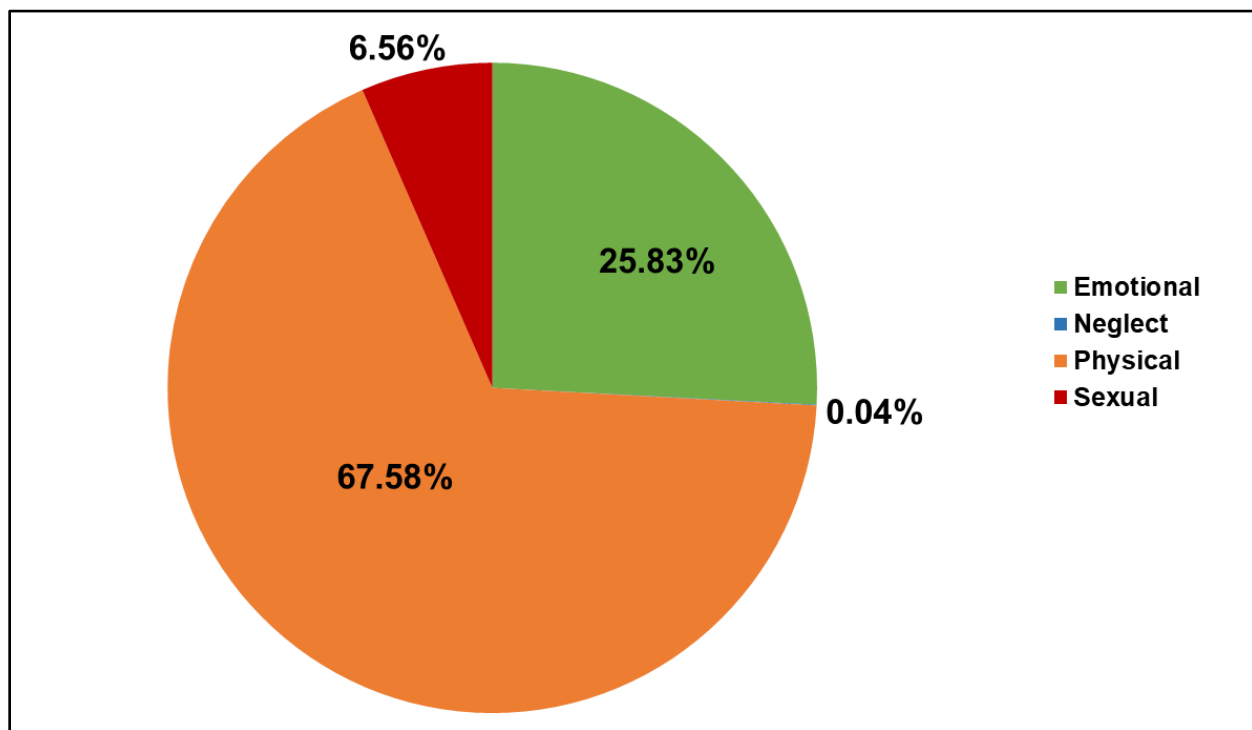
⁴⁸ The FY 2023 number of domestic abuse reports (15,124) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average number of domestic abuse reports during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [15,364.88, 17,119.12]).

⁴⁹ The FY 2023 number of met criteria incidents of domestic abuse (8,298) did not vary significantly when compared to the average number of domestic abuse incidents during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [8,009.80, 8,483.80]).

As shown in Figure 23, physical abuse accounted for the largest proportion of met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2023 (67.58 percent). Emotional abuse (25.83 percent) accounted for the next largest proportion of met criteria incidents. Sexual abuse (6.56 percent) accounted for a much smaller proportion of incident, and neglect (0.04 percent) accounted for the smallest proportion of met criteria incidents.⁵⁰

Since FY 2014, the proportion of domestic abuse incidents involving sexual abuse has increased incrementally, although there was a slight decrease in FY 2018. In FY 2023, the increase in the proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse is statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.⁵¹

Figure 23. Types of Abuse in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



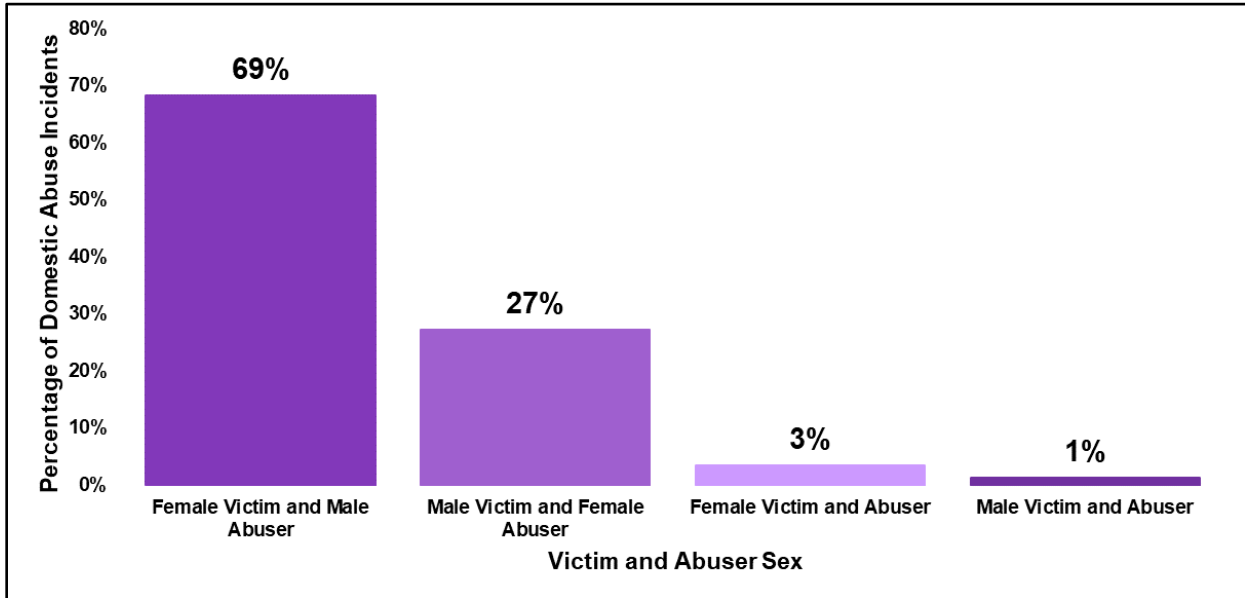
Note. Domestic abuse includes spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse incidents.

⁵⁰ Due to rounding, the sum of the percentages is 100.01.

⁵¹ The FY 2023 proportion (6.56 percent) of adult sexual abuse incidents among all domestic abuse incidents represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the average proportion of sexual abuse incidents among domestic abuse incidents during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [0.0333, 0.0515]).

Figure 24 shows victim and abuser sex in met criteria domestic abuse incidents. In 69 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents, the victim was female and the abuser was male. In 27 percent of incidents, the victim was male and the abuser was female. In 3 percent of incidents, the victim and abuser were female. And in 1 percent of met criteria domestic abuse incidents the victim and abuser were male (see Figure 24).

Figure 24. Proportion of Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Victim and Abuser Sex (FY 2023)



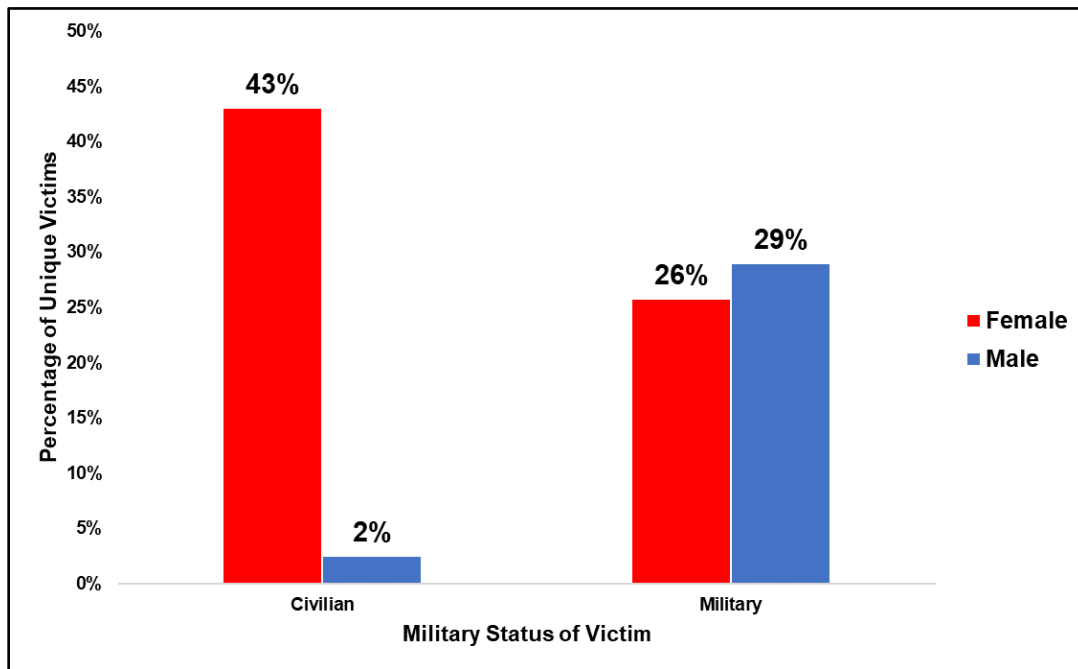
4-2. DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults who were victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents, including military status, sex, age, and pay grade.

In FY 2023, there were 6,458 unique victims of domestic abuse. Figure 25 shows unique victims of domestic abuse by military status and sex. Overall, a majority of unique victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents were Service members (55 percent Service members vs. 45 percent civilians), and a majority were female (69 percent female vs. 31 percent male).

When examining the military status and sex of unique victims in combination, 43 percent were female civilians, 29 percent were male Service members, 26 percent were female Service members, and 2 percent were male civilians. Males comprise a much larger portion of the total force than females—contributing to the larger proportion of male Service member domestic abuse victims compared to female Service member victims.⁵² When examining the domestic abuse victimization rate for active duty members by sex, female active duty members were more than four times more likely to experience domestic abuse than male active duty members (7.4 per 1,000 for female active duty members vs. 1.8 per 1,000 male active duty members).

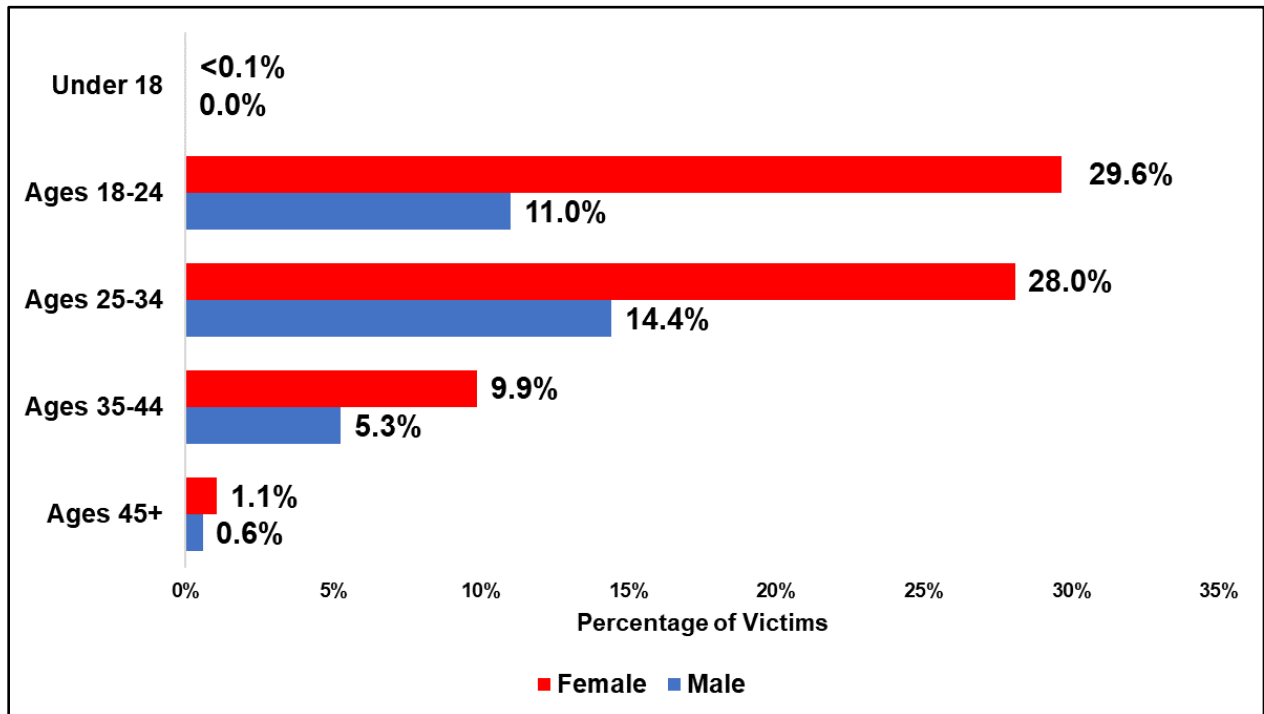
Figure 25. Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Military Status and Sex (FY 2023)



⁵² In FY 2023, males comprised 82.3 percent of the total force. Data retrieved from the September 2023 DMDC Self-Service Report, *Active Duty by Demographics*.

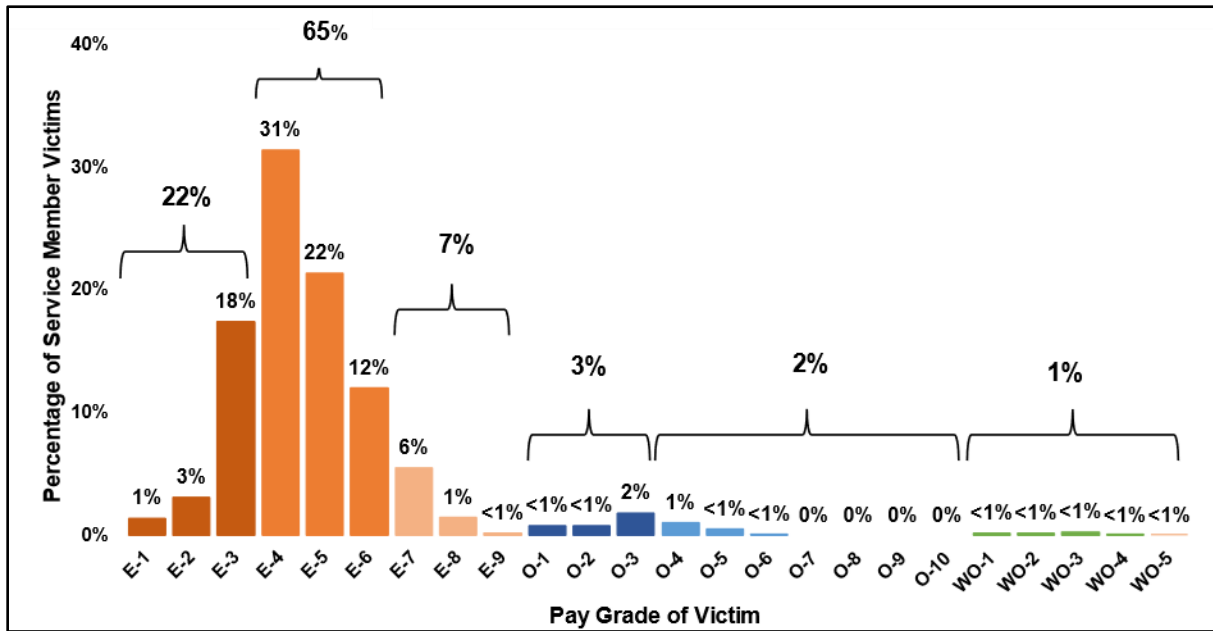
Figure 26 shows the proportion of unique victims of domestic abuse by age group and sex. More than four-fifths of victims were 34 years or younger. Of unique domestic abuse victims, 42.4 percent were ages 25-34 (28.0 percent female and 14.4 percent male), 40.6 percent were ages 18-24 (29.6 percent female and 11.0 percent male), and 15.2 percent were ages 35-44 (9.9 percent female and 5.3 percent male). Less than 2 percent of unique victims were ages 45 years or older (1.1 percent female and 0.6 percent male). Less than 1 percent of victims were 17 years or younger; these victims experienced domestic abuse as a spouse or intimate partner even though they were under the age of 18.

Figure 26. Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2023)



As previously noted in Figure 25, more than half (55 percent) of unique domestic abuse victims in FY 2023 were Service members. Figure 27 displays the pay distribution of Service member victims of domestic abuse. The majority of victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents were junior enlisted members; approximately 65 percent were in the E-4 through E-6 pay grades, and 22 percent were E-1 through E-3. Approximately 7 percent of victims were E-7 through E-9, 5 percent were officers (3 percent were O-1 through O-3, 2 percent were O-4 through O-10), and 1 percent were warrant officers (WO-1 through WO-5).

Figure 27. Pay Grade Distribution of Service Member Victims in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



Note. Service member includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

4-3. DOMESTIC ABUSE ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults who were the abusers involved in met criteria incidents of domestic abuse, including military status, sex, and age.

Figure 28 shows unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents by military status and sex. Overall, a majority of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents were Service members (64 percent Service members vs. 36 percent civilians), and a majority were male (67 percent male vs. 33 percent female).

When examining the military status and sex of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents in combination, 56 percent were male Service members, 25 percent were female civilians, 11 percent were male civilians, and 8 percent were female Service members.

Figure 28. Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Military Status and Sex (FY 2023)

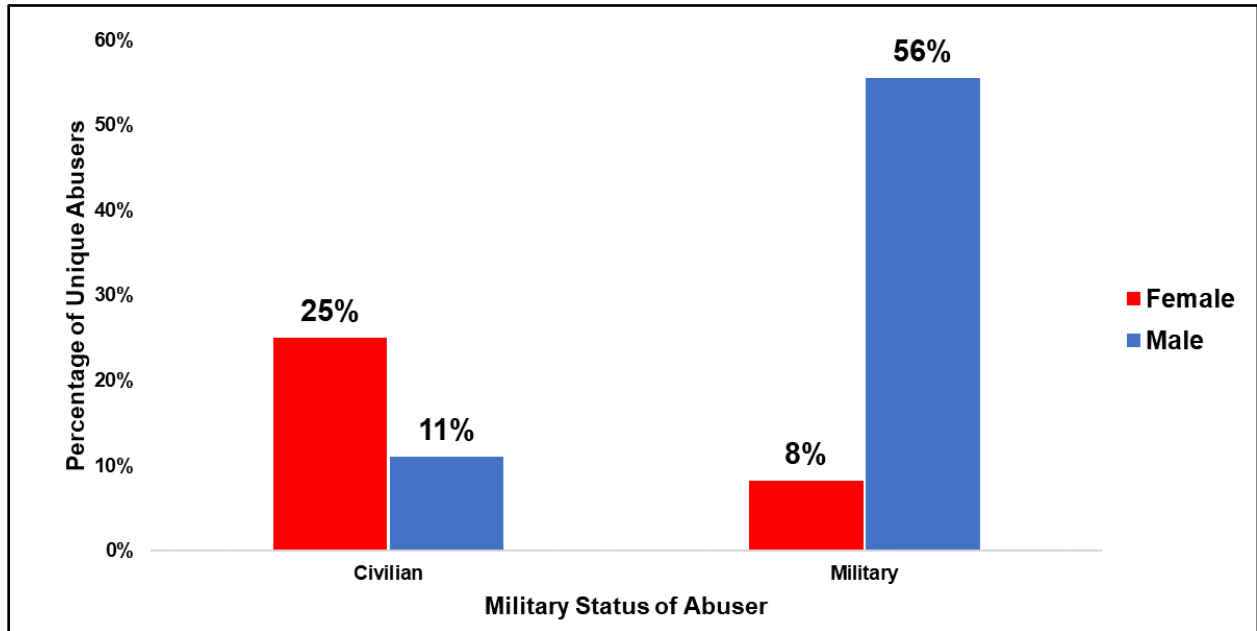
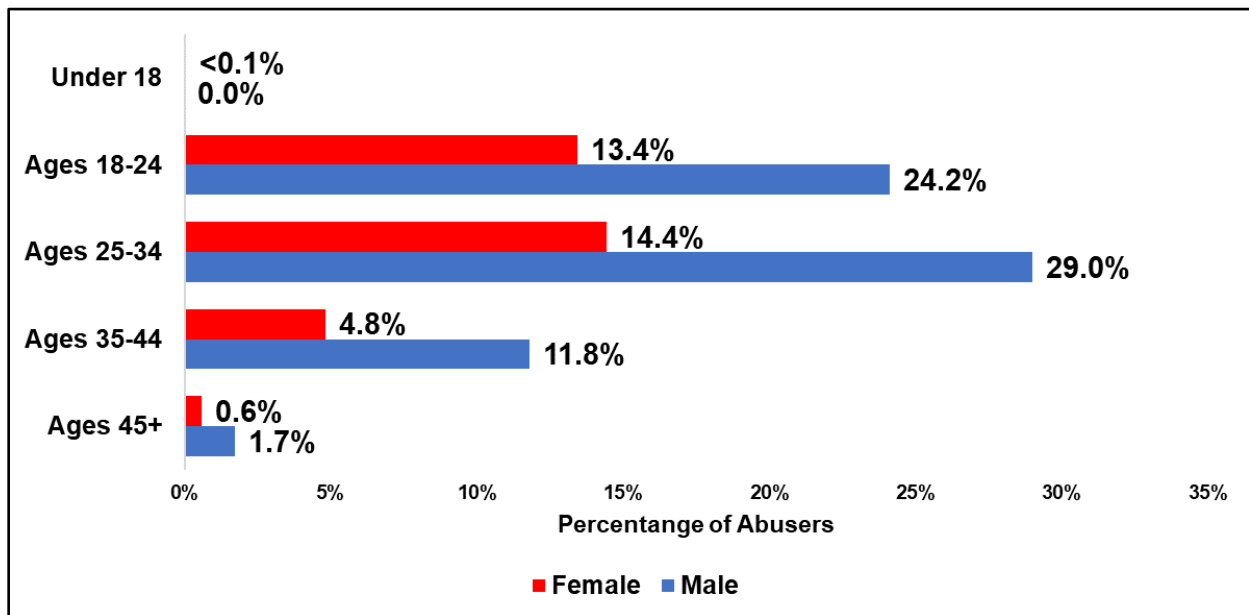


Figure 29 shows the proportion of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents by age group and sex. More than four-fifths of abusers were 34 years or younger, which is similar to the age distribution for unique victims in met criteria domestic abuse incidents.

Of unique abusers in met criteria domestic abuse incidents, 37.6 percent were ages 18-24 (24.2 percent male and 13.4 percent female), 43.4 percent were ages 25-34 (29.0 percent male and 14.4 percent female), and 16.6 percent were ages 35-44 (11.8 percent male and 4.8 percent female). 2.3 percent of unique abusers were ages 45 years or older (1.7 percent male and 0.6 percent female) and less than 1 percent of unique abusers were under 18 (0.1 percent female and no males).

Figure 29. Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2023)



Note. Abusers with unknown date of birth were excluded from this figure.

4-4. SPOUSE ABUSE INCIDENTS

As outlined in the previous section, spouse abuse includes acts of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. Reports and met criteria incidents of abuse are reported separately by type of abuse. One or more incidents may be submitted to the Central Registry involving an individual victim. As noted previously, prior to FY 2021, a single report of abuse may have included multiple abuse types. Similarly, prior to FY 2015, a single met criteria incident of abuse may have included multiple abuse types. Reporting has since been standardized for consistency. The data on spouse abuse included in this section are limited to only those incidents involving married individuals.

There are three elements calculated for spouse abuse in this report: the number of reported incidents, the number of met criteria incidents, and the rate of spouse victimization. The first two elements may vary as they can be impacted by external factors. The calculated rate of spouse victimization, however, can be more accurately compared year-over-year, as it controls for the number of reports made. For example, the number of reports can fluctuate based on the impact of awareness campaigns, training, and efforts to reduce stigma in the community associated with contacting FAP. Process improvements such as the implementation of the IDC and counting each type of maltreatment as a distinct incident can impact the number of met criteria incidents. The spouse abuse victimization rate measures the number of married individuals who experience spouse abuse per 1,000 married military couples and offers an alternative way to examine the rates of spouse abuse.

As shown in Table 5, the FY 2023 rate of reported spouse abuse per 1,000 married couples⁵³ was 19.8, which is lower than the rate per 1,000 in FY 2022 (21.0). This numerical difference of 1.2 represents a 6.0 percent decrease in the rate of reported incidents in FY 2023. The FY 2023 decrease in the rate of reported incidents is statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.⁵⁴

Table 5: Reports and Incidents of Spouse Abuse (FY 2014-FY 2023)

Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Met Criteria Incidents	Married Couples Population	Reports/1000	Met Criteria Incidents/1000
2014	16,287	7,464	690,460	23.6	10.8
2015	15,725	7,892	665,429	23.6	11.9
2016	15,144	7,661	646,782	23.4	11.8
2017	15,657	7,153	638,132	24.5	11.2
2018	15,242	7,015	628,167	24.3	11.2
2019	13,571	6,800	626,705	21.7	10.9
2020	12,663	6,596	620,387	20.4	10.6
2021*	12,630	6,629	620,442	20.4	10.7
2022*	12,636	6,637	600,515	21.0	11.1
2023*	11,789	6,283	596,095**	19.8	10.5

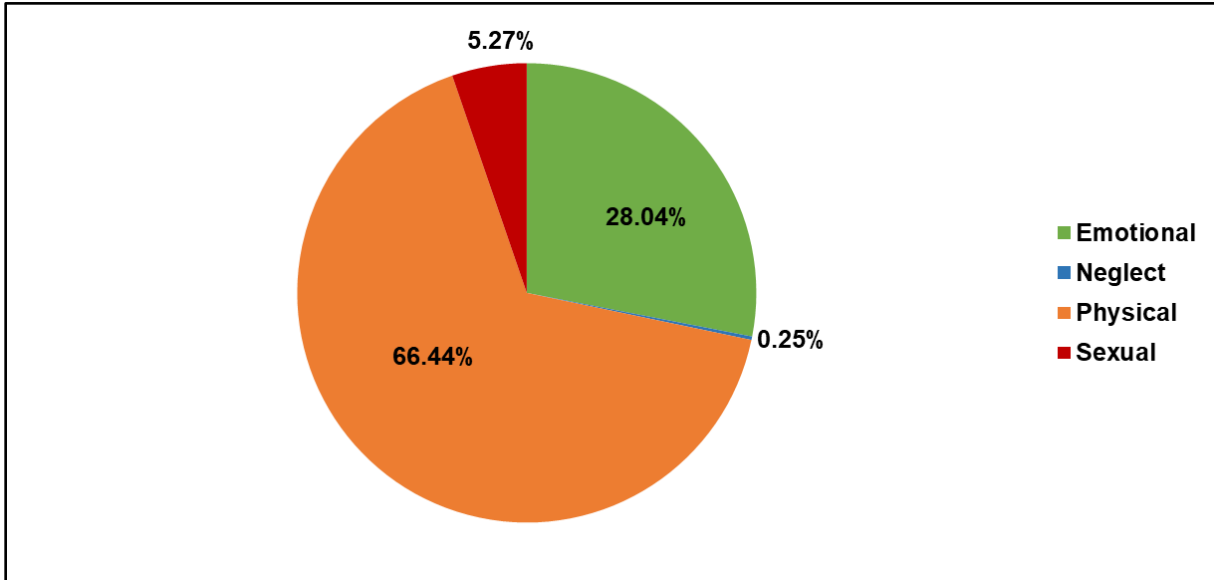
Note. Starting in FY 2021, reports of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type. A single report can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse. Similarly, starting in FY 2015, incidents of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type. The FY 2023 married couples population is estimated due to missing data at DMDC.

⁵³ The FY 2023 married couples population is estimated due to missing data at DMDC.

⁵⁴ The FY 2023 rate of spouse abuse reports per 1,000 married couples (19.8) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate of spouse abuse reports during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [20.98, 23.56]).

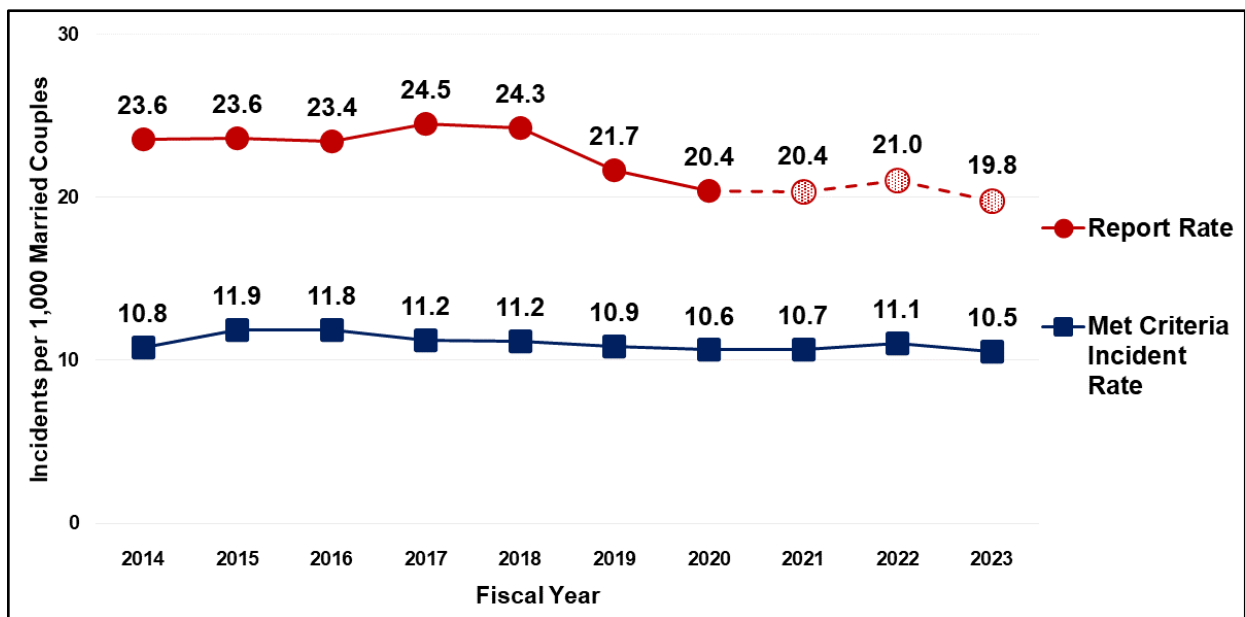
Figure 30 shows the distribution of reports of spouse abuse by abuse type. Physical abuse accounted for the largest proportion of reports of spouse abuse in FY 2023 (66.44 percent), followed by emotional abuse (28.04 percent), sexual abuse (5.27 percent), and neglect (0.25 percent).

Figure 30. Spouse Abuse Reports by Abuse Type (FY 2023)



There were 6,283 incidents of spouse abuse that met criteria in FY 2023. The rate of met criteria spouse abuse incidents per 1,000 married couples⁵⁵ was 10.5, which is lower than the rate per 1,000 in FY 2022 (11.1). This numerical difference of 0.6 represents a 4.6 percent decrease in the rate of incidents that met criteria. The FY 2023 decrease in the rate of met criteria incidents is statistically significant when compared to the 10-year average.⁵⁶ The rate of spouse abuse reported to FAP and the rate of spouse abuse incidents that met criteria per 1,000 married couples from FY 2014-FY 2023 are displayed in Figure 31.

Figure 31. Spouse Abuse Reports vs. Met Criteria Incident Rates per 1,000 Married Couples (FY 2014-FY 2023)



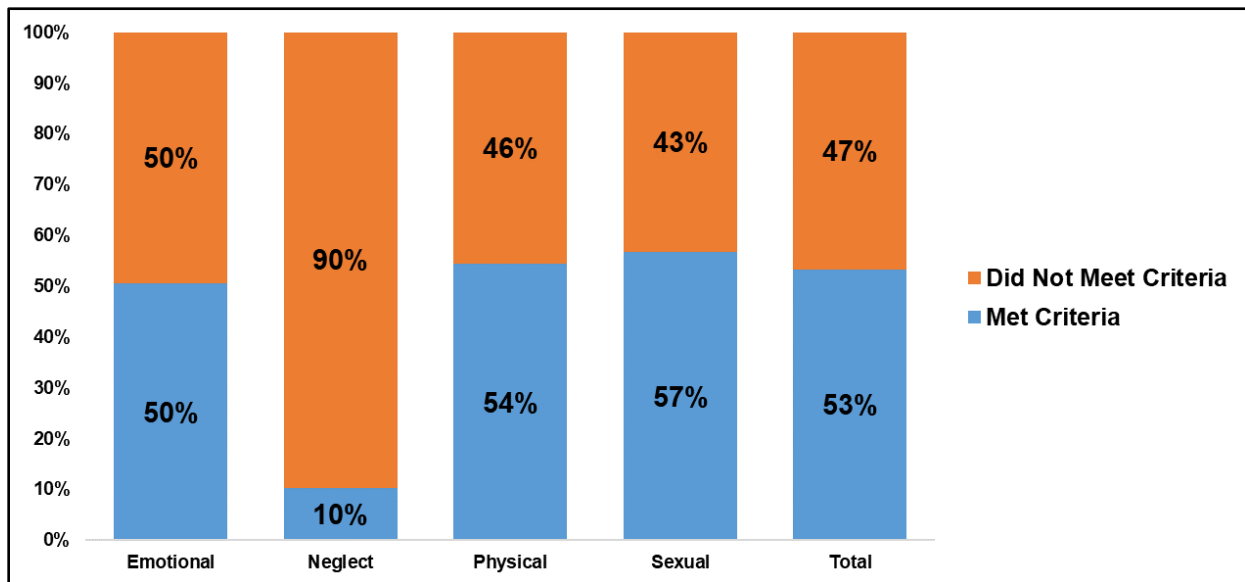
Note. The dashed lines and dotted markers for the rate of reported incidents in FY 2021 through FY 2023 highlight the new calculation method implemented for reports of abuse.

⁵⁵ The FY 2023 married couples population is estimated due to missing data at DMDC.

⁵⁶ The FY 2023 rate of met criteria spouse abuse incidents per 1,000 married couples (10.5) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average rate per 1,000 married couples during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [10.73, 11.40]).

Overall, 53 percent of reported incidents of spouse abuse were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. As shown in Figure 32, there was a slight variation in the met criteria rate for emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, ranging from 50 percent of reports of emotional abuse that met criteria to 57 percent of reports of sexual abuse that met criteria. Only 10 percent of reports of neglect met the DoD definition of abuse. However, it is important to note that neglect accounted for less than one percent of all reports of spouse abuse—making neglect subject to extreme variation in percentages.

Figure 32. Proportion of Reported Spouse Abuse Incidents that Met Criteria by Abuse Type (FY 2023)



As shown in Table 6 there were 4,952 unique victims of spouse abuse in FY 2023. The FY 2023 unique spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 married couples⁵⁷ was 8.3, which is lower than the rate per 1,000 in FY 2022 (8.7) (see Figure 33). This numerical difference of 0.4 represents a 4.6 percent decrease in the unique spouse abuse victim rate. The FY 2023 decrease in the victim rate is statistically significant when compared to the average 10-year rate.⁵⁸

Table 6: Unique Victims of Spouse Abuse (FY 2014-FY 2023)

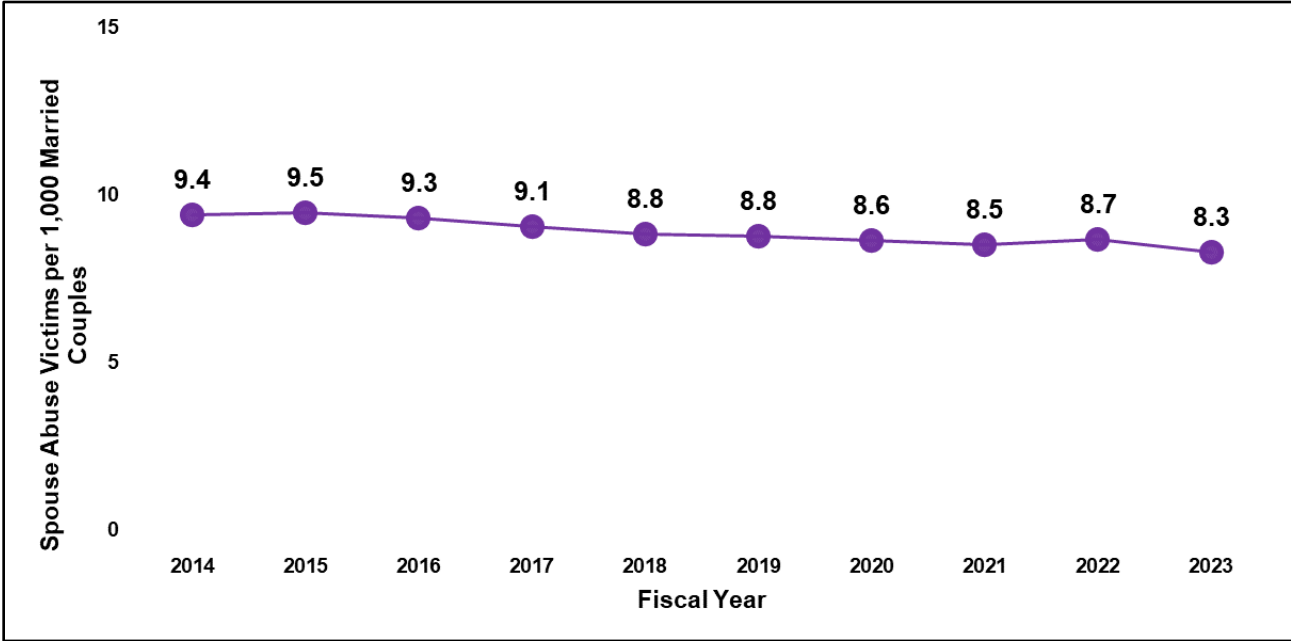
Fiscal Year	Met Criteria Incidents	Unique Victims	Married Couples Population	Met Criteria Incidents/1000	Rate of Victims/1000
2014	7,464	6,491	690,460	10.8	9.4
2015	7,892	6,314	665,429	11.9	9.5
2016	7,661	6,033	646,782	11.8	9.3
2017	7,153	5,781	638,132	11.2	9.1
2018	7,015	5,550	628,167	11.2	8.8
2019	6,800	5,505	626,705	10.9	8.8
2020	6,596	5,363	620,387	10.6	8.6
2021*	6,629	5,276	620,442	10.7	8.5
2022*	6,637	5,212	600,515	11.1	8.7
2023*	6,283	4,952	596,095**	10.5	8.3

Note. Starting in FY 2021, reports of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type. A single report can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse. Similarly, starting in FY 2015, incidents of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type. The FY 2023 married couples population is estimated due to missing data at DMDC.

⁵⁷ The FY 2023 married couples population is estimated due to missing data at DMDC.

⁵⁸ The FY 2023 spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 married couples (8.3) represents a statistically significant decrease when compared to the average spouse abuse victim rate per 1,000 married couples during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [8.62, 9.19]).

Figure 33. Rate of Unique Spouse Abuse Victims per 1,000 Married Couples (FY 2014-FY 2023)



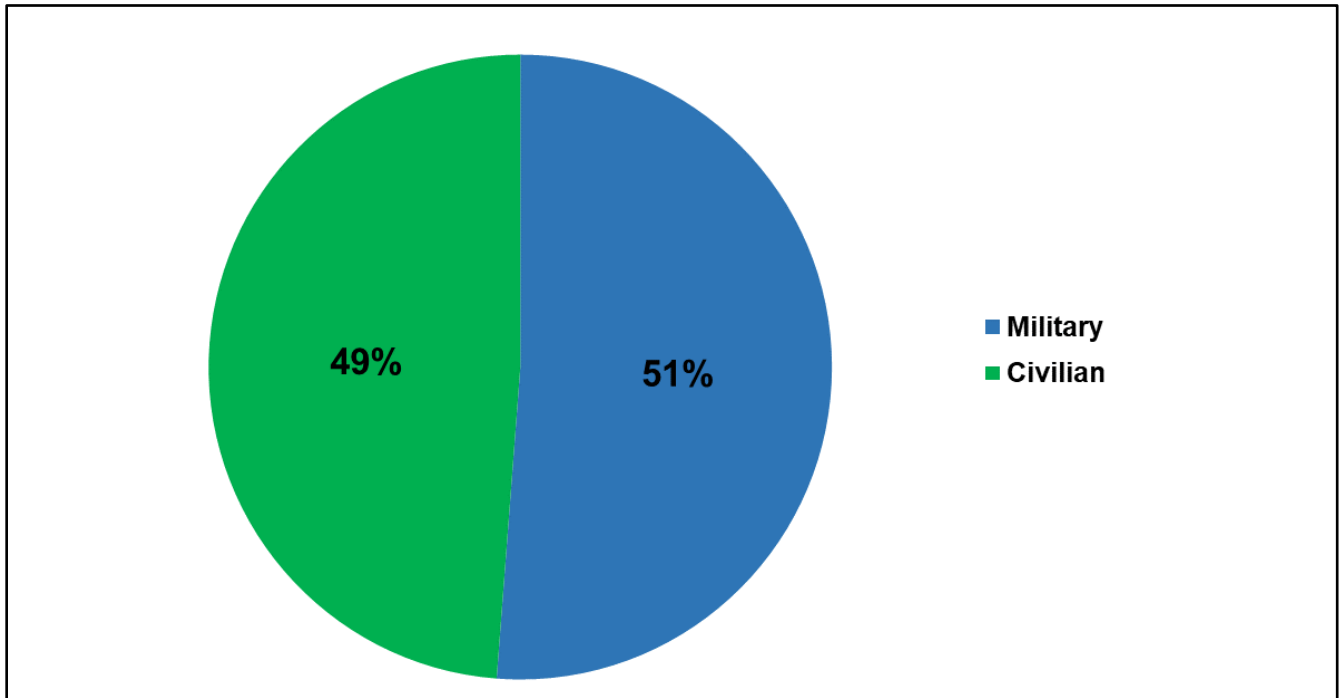
Note. The FY 2023 married couples population is estimated due to missing data at DMDC.

4-5. SPOUSE ABUSE VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes adults who were victims in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse, including military status and sex.

The military status of victims involved in spouse abuse incidents that met criteria in FY 2023 is displayed in Figure 34. Of the total victims, 51 percent were Service members and 49 percent were civilians.

Figure 34. Military Status of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)

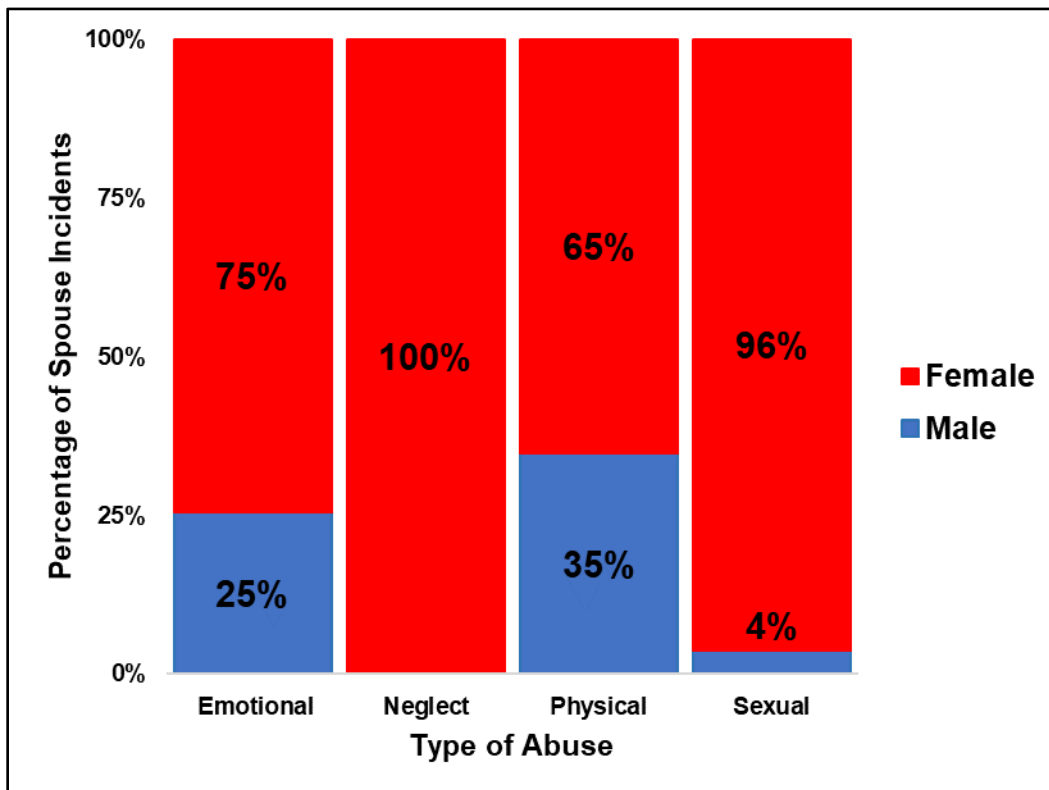


Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

Overall, 70 percent of victims of spouse abuse in met criteria incidents were female and 30 percent of the victims were male.

Figure 35 displays the sex of spouse abuse victims for each abuse type. Females comprised a larger proportion of victims than males for all types of abuse. Ninety-six percent of spouse abuse victims who experienced sexual abuse were female versus 4 percent male. Seventy-five percent of victims of emotional abuse were female versus 25 percent male. Among incidents of physical abuse, the most common type of domestic abuse in military families, 65 percent of victims were female versus 35 percent male. While 100 percent of victims of neglect were female, it is important to note that neglect accounted for less than 0.1 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents—making neglect subject to extreme variations in percentages.

Figure 35. Sex of Victims in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)

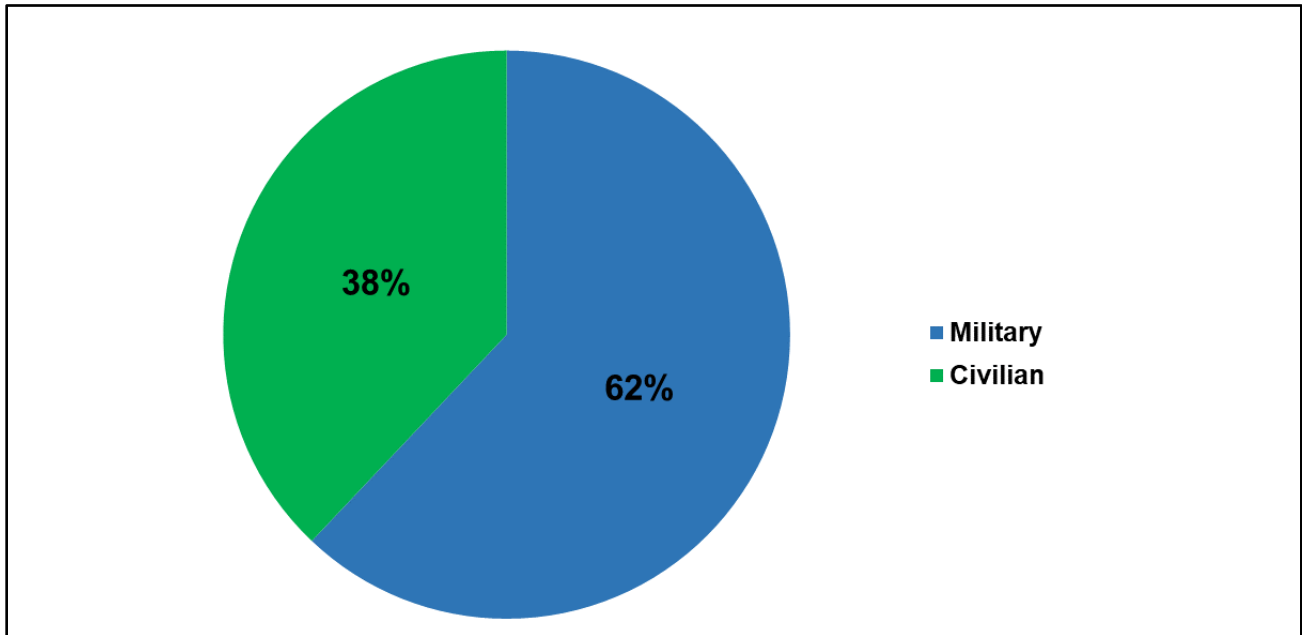


4-6. SPOUSE ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of adults who were the abusers involved in incidents that met criteria for spouse abuse, including military status, pay grade, and sex.

The military status of abusers involved in spouse abuse incidents that met criteria in FY 2023 is displayed in Figure 36. Sixty-two percent of abusers were Service members and 38 percent were civilians.

Figure 36. Military Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

As shown in Figure 37, the military status distribution of abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents has been relatively consistent since FY 2014.

Figure 37. Military Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2014-FY 2023)

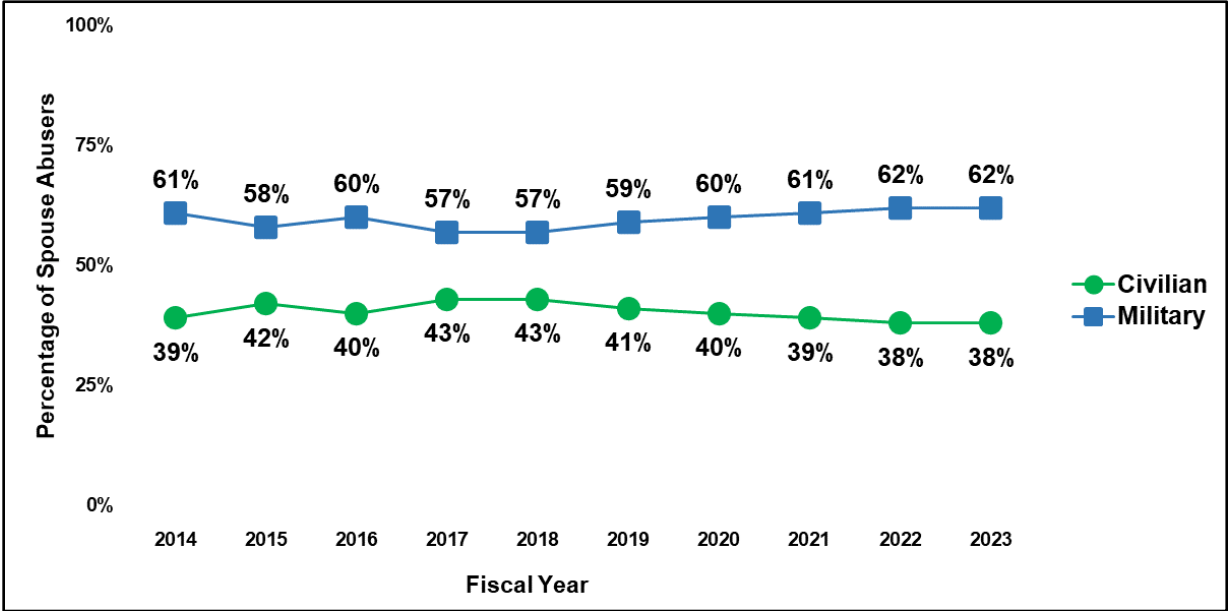
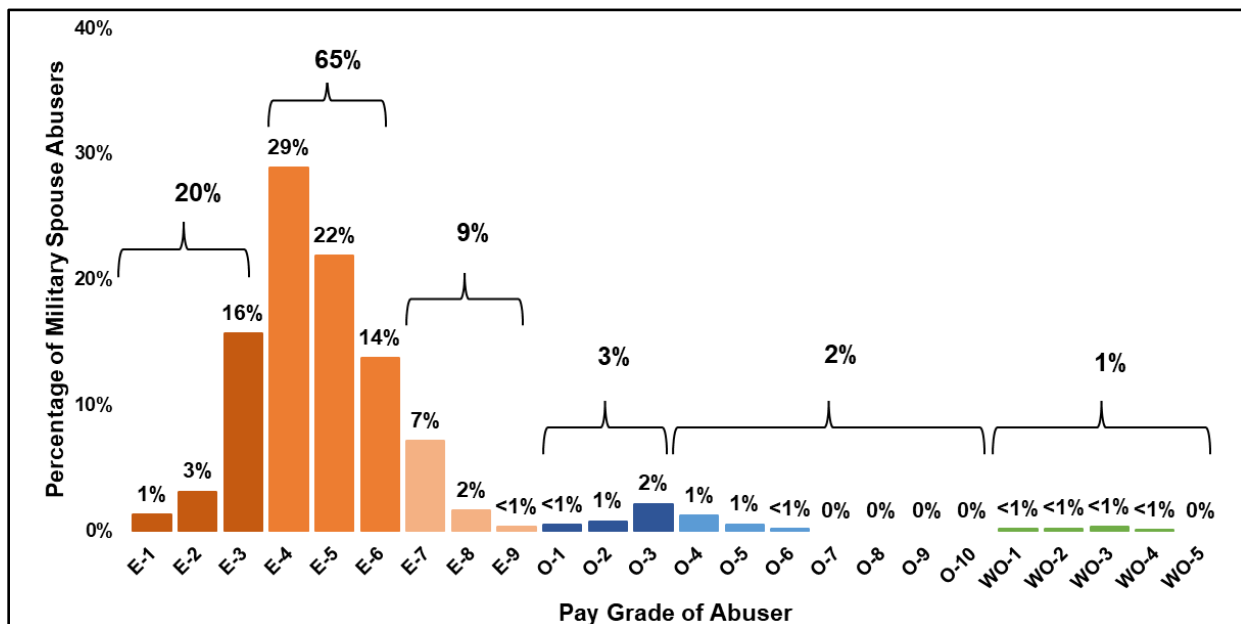


Figure 38 displays a breakdown by pay grade for military spouse abusers who were involved in a met criteria incident. The majority of abusers in met criteria incidents were junior enlisted members; approximately 65 percent were E-4 through E-6, and 20 percent were E-1 through E-3. Nine percent of abusers were E-7 through E-9, 5 percent were officers (3 percent were O-1 through O-3, 2 percent were O-4 through O-10), and 1 percent were warrant officers (WO-1 through WO-5).

Figure 38. Pay Grade Distribution of Military Spouse Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



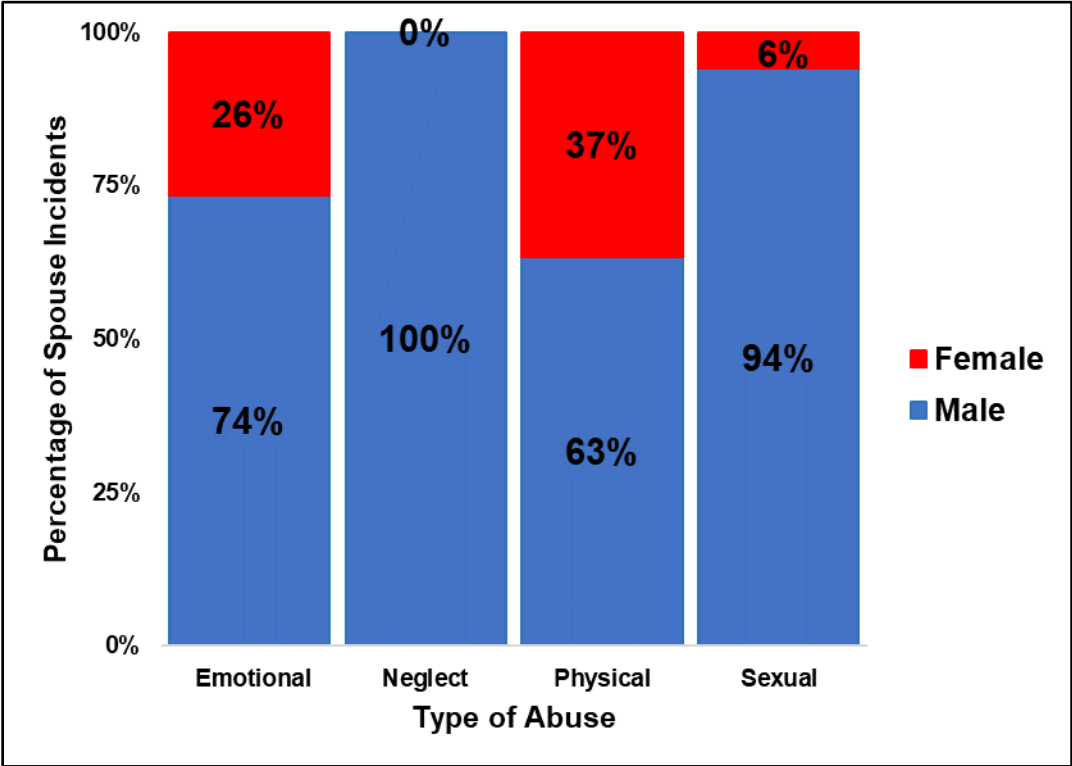
Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

As previously noted in this report, the FY 2023 married couples population was estimated due to missing data at DMDC. Figures based on the particular pay grade of active duty spouses in the military population were removed to avoid more granular estimation of the unknown data. The “Proportion of Active Duty Spouse Abusers in Met Criteria Incidents by Pay Grade, Compared to Demographics” and “Rate of Active Duty Spouse Abusers per 1,000 Married Couples by Pay Grade” figures that appeared in the FY 2022 report were excluded from the current report.

Overall, 68 percent of abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents were male and 32 percent were female.

Figure 39 shows the proportions of male and female abusers for each individual type of met criteria spouse abuse. The vast majority of spouse abusers in met criteria incidents of sexual abuse were male (94 percent male vs. 6 percent female). Males were also more likely to be abusers in emotional abuse incidents (74 percent male vs. 26 percent female) and in physical abuse incidents (63 percent male vs. 37 percent female). While 100 percent of abusers in met criteria incidents of neglect were male, it is important to note that neglect accounted for less than 0.1 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents.

Figure 39. Sex of Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



Looking specifically at Service member abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents, 90 percent were male and 10 percent were female.

Figure 40 shows the proportions of Service member male and female abusers in met criteria spouse abuse incidents for each individual type of abuse. The vast majority of Service member spouse abusers for incidents of sexual abuse and emotional abuse were male (98 percent male vs. 2 percent female for sexual abuse and 94 percent male vs. 6 percent female for emotional abuse). Eighty-eight percent of Service member abusers in physical abuse incidents were male versus 12 percent female. All Service member spouse abusers for met criteria incidents of neglect were male, although neglect accounted for less than 0.1 percent of all met criteria spouse abuse incidents involving Service member abusers.

Figure 40. Sex of Service Member Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)

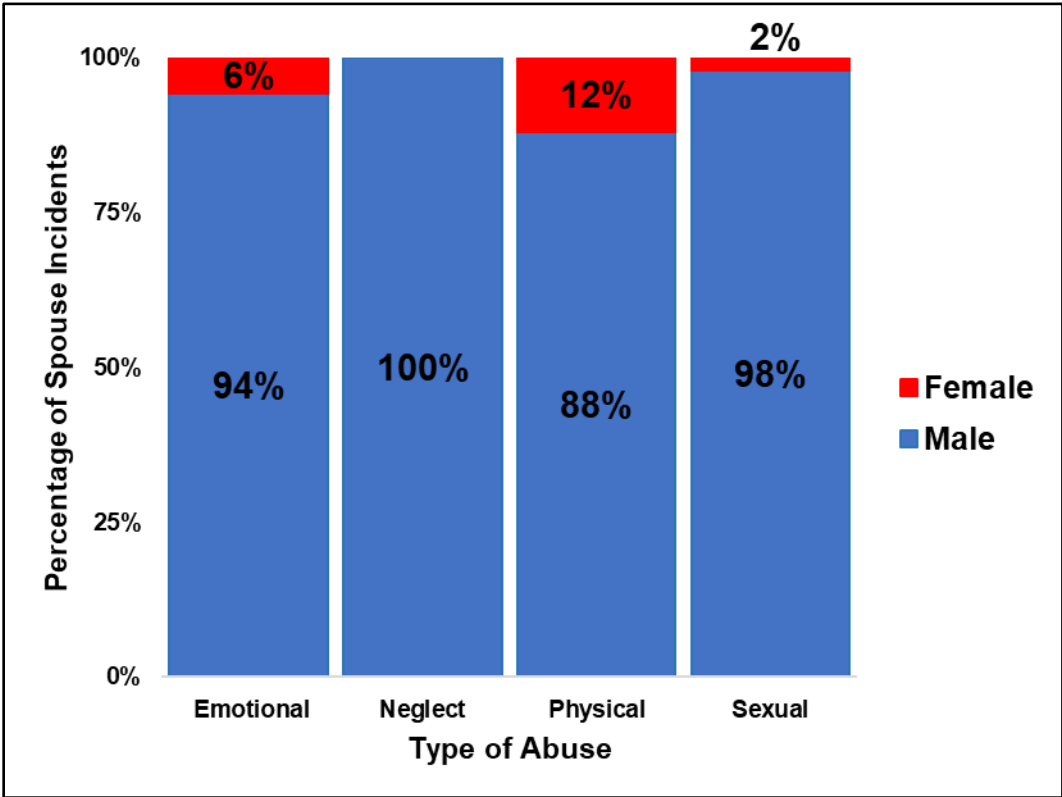
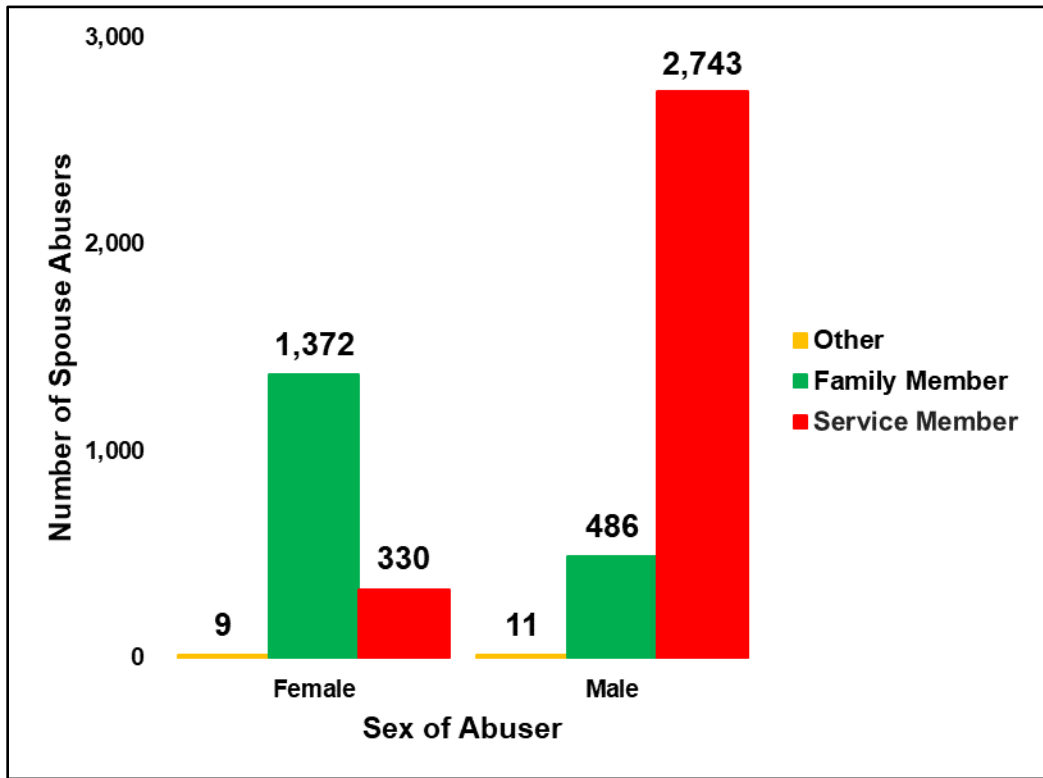


Figure 41 shows the breakdown of spouse abusers by sex and military status. Among male abusers in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse, 2,743 were Service members, 486 were family members, and 11 fell into the “other” category.⁵⁹ Among female abusers in met criteria incidents of spouse abuse, 330 were Service members, 1,372 were family members, and 9 were categorized as “other”.

Figure 41. Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Spouse Abuse Incidents by Sex and Military Status (FY 2023)



Note. “Other” category includes DoD civilians, non-DoD Government civilians, retired Service members, Government contractors, and non-beneficiaries.

⁵⁹ The “other” category includes abusers in met criteria incidents who were DoD civilians, non-DoD government civilians, retired Service members, government contractors, and non-beneficiaries.

4-7. INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE INCIDENTS

As with child abuse and neglect and spouse abuse, reports and met criteria incidents of unmarried intimate partner abuse are reported separately by type of abuse. Prior to FY 2015, a single met criteria incident may have included multiple abuse types. Similarly, prior to FY 2021, a single report of abuse may have included multiple abuse types. Calculation and reporting have since been standardized for consistency.

The data on intimate partner abuse included in this section are those incidents involving former spouses, individuals with whom the victim shares a child in common, current or former partners with whom the victim shares or has shared a common domicile, and individuals with whom the victim has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature.⁶⁰ The types of abuse for intimate partner abuse are physical, sexual, emotional, which is similar to those for spouse abuse except that intimate partner abuse excludes neglect.⁶¹

⁶⁰ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended defines “intimate partner” as, “Within the context of eligibility for FAP services, a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the alleged abuser, as determined by the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the person and the alleged abuser. An intimate partner is informed by, but not limited to, the totality of factors such as: previous or ongoing consensual intimate or sexual behaviors; history of ongoing dating or expressed interest in continued dating or the potential for an ongoing relationship (e.g. history of repeated break-ups and reconciliations); self-identification by the victim or alleged abuser as intimate partners or identification by others as a couple; emotional connectedness (e.g., relationship is a priority, partners may have discussed a future together); or familiarity and knowledge of each other’s lives.”

⁶¹ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended.

In FY 2023, there were 3,335 reports of intimate partner abuse made to FAP, of which 2,015 met the DoD definition of abuse.⁶² The met criteria incidents of intimate partner abuse involved 1,524 unique victims (see Table 7).⁶³ The number of reports, the number of met criteria incidents, and the number of unique victims are statistically significant increases when compared to their respective 10-year averages. A rate per 1,000 of intimate partner abuse cannot be established, as data on unmarried individuals involved in intimate partner relationships as defined by the DoD are not available.

Table 7: Reports and Incidents of Intimate Partner Abuse (FY 2014-FY 2023)

Fiscal Year	Reported Incidents	Met Criteria Incidents	Unique Victims
2014	1,870	969	669
2015	1,798	966	778
2016	1,771	1,022	847
2017	1,519	916	756
2018	1,670	1,024	822
2019	1,902	1,121	886
2020	2,026	1,307	996
2021*	2,342	1,328	1,048
2022*	2,843	1,670	1,270
2023*	3,335	2,015	1,524

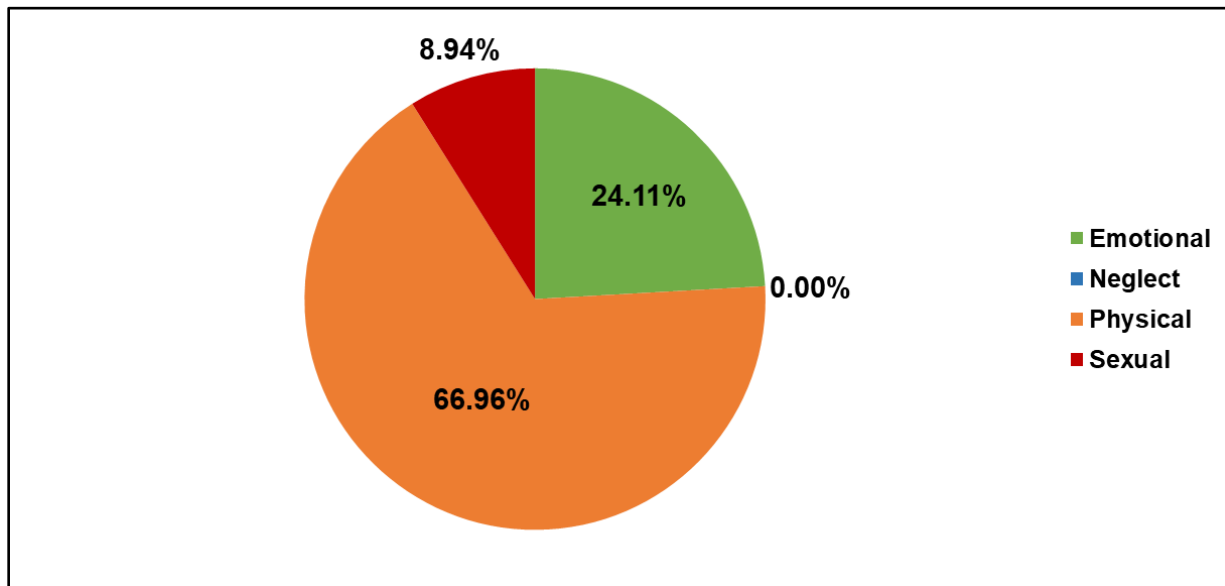
Note. Starting in FY 2021, reports of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type. A single report can only be associated with one type of alleged abuse. Similarly, starting in FY 2015, incidents of abuse are calculated separately by abuse type.

⁶² The number of reports of intimate partner abuse in FY 2023 (3,335) represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the average number of reports of intimate partner abuse during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [1697.72, 2517.48]). The number of met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2023 (2,015) represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the average number of intimate partner abuse incidents during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [977.07, 1490.53]).

⁶³ The number of unique intimate partner abuse victims in FY 2023 (1,524) represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the average number of unique intimate partner abuse victims during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [771.85, 1147.35]).

Figure 42 shows the distribution of reports of intimate partner abuse by abuse type. Similar to reports of spouse abuse, physical abuse accounted for the largest proportion of reports of intimate partner abuse in FY 2023 (66.96 percent), followed by emotional abuse (24.11 percent), and sexual abuse (8.94 percent).⁶⁴ Consistent with policy,⁶⁵ there were no reports of intimate partner neglect in FY 2023.

Figure 42. Intimate Partner Abuse Reports by Abuse Type (FY 2023)



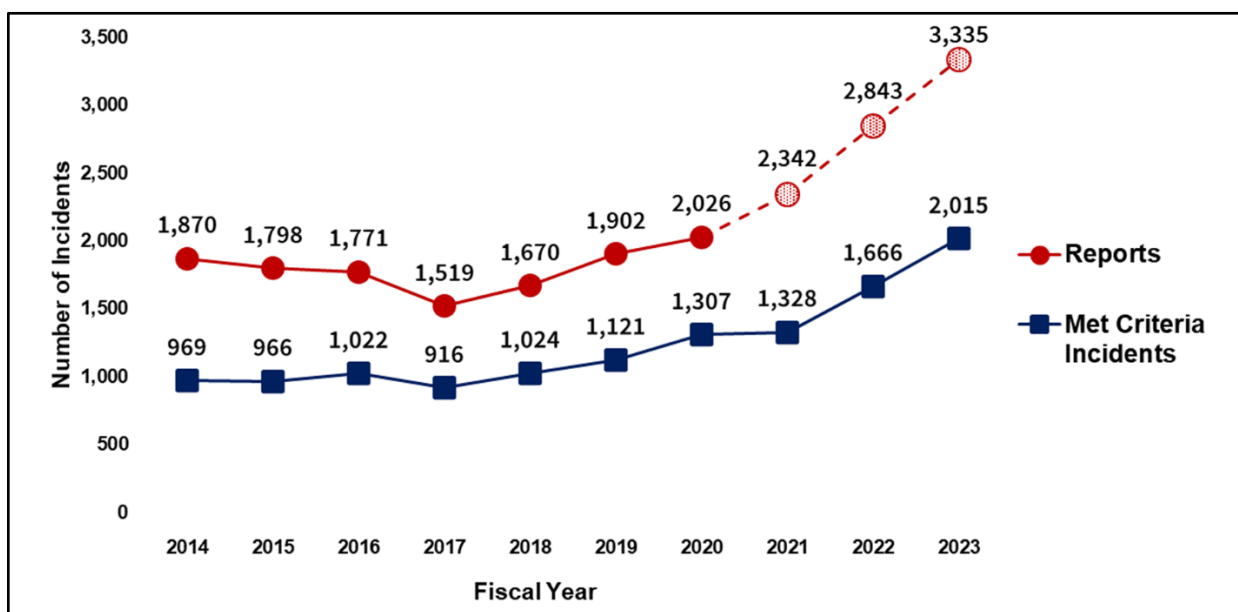
⁶⁴ Due to rounding, the sum of the percentages is 100.01.

⁶⁵ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended.

Figure 43 shows a steady increase in both the number of reports and the number of met criteria incidents of intimate partner abuse since FY 2017. Although it is not possible to calculate rates per 1,000 for intimate partner abuse, as previously noted, it is possible to examine percent changes in both the number of reports and met criteria incidents of intimate partner abuse, over time. From FY 2022 to FY 2023, the number of reports of intimate partner abuse increased by 17.3 percent. From FY 2022 to FY 2023, the number of met criteria incidents increased by 21.0 percent. These year-over-year increases from FY 2022 to FY 2023 are substantial, although they are smaller than the respective year-over-year increases noted from FY 2021 to FY 2022.

It is important to note that these pronounced increases in the number of reports and the number of met criteria incidents correspond in timing to two major changes implemented: a new calculation method for reports of abuse, and an expansion in the DoD definition of an intimate partner. The definition expansion meant that more individuals were eligible for FAP services in FY 2022 and FY 2023 than in previous years.

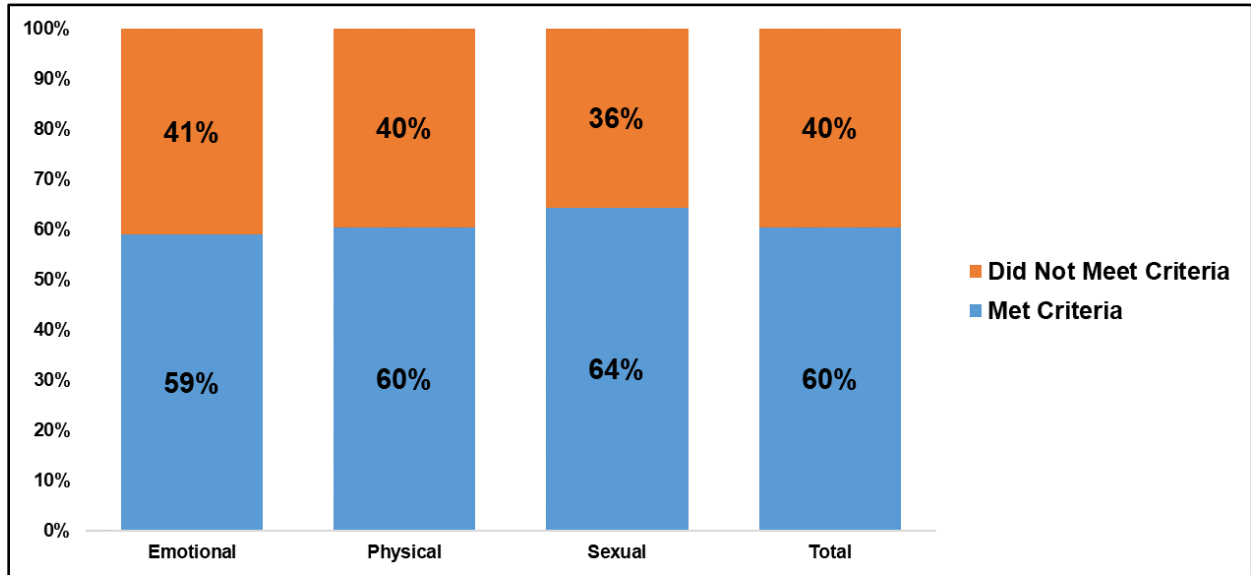
Figure 43. Number of Intimate Partner Abuse Reports vs. Met Criteria Incidents (FY 2014-FY 2023)



Note. The dashed lines and dotted markers for the number of reported incidents in FY 2021 through FY 2023 highlight the new calculation method implemented for reports of abuse.

Overall, 60 percent of reported incidents of intimate partner abuse were determined to meet the DoD definition of abuse. As shown in Figure 44, there was only a slight variation in the met criteria rate for emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, ranging from 59 percent of reports of emotional abuse that met criteria to 64 percent of reports of sexual abuse that met criteria. In accordance with policy,⁶⁶ there were no reports of intimate partner neglect in FY 2023.

Figure 44. Proportion of Reported Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents that Met Criteria by Abuse Type (FY 2023)



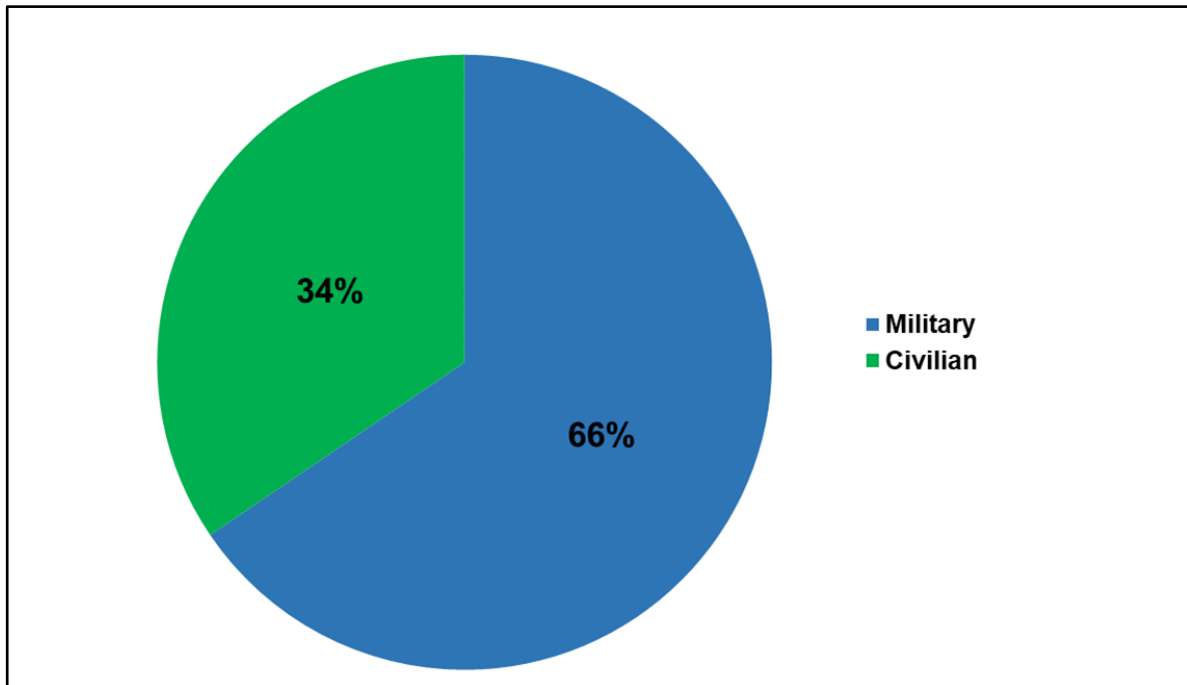
⁶⁶ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, August 11, 2016, as amended.

4-8. INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE VICTIM PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of victims in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents.

The military status of unique victims in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2023 is displayed in Figure 45. Of the victims of intimate partner abuse, 66 percent were Service members and 34 percent were civilians.

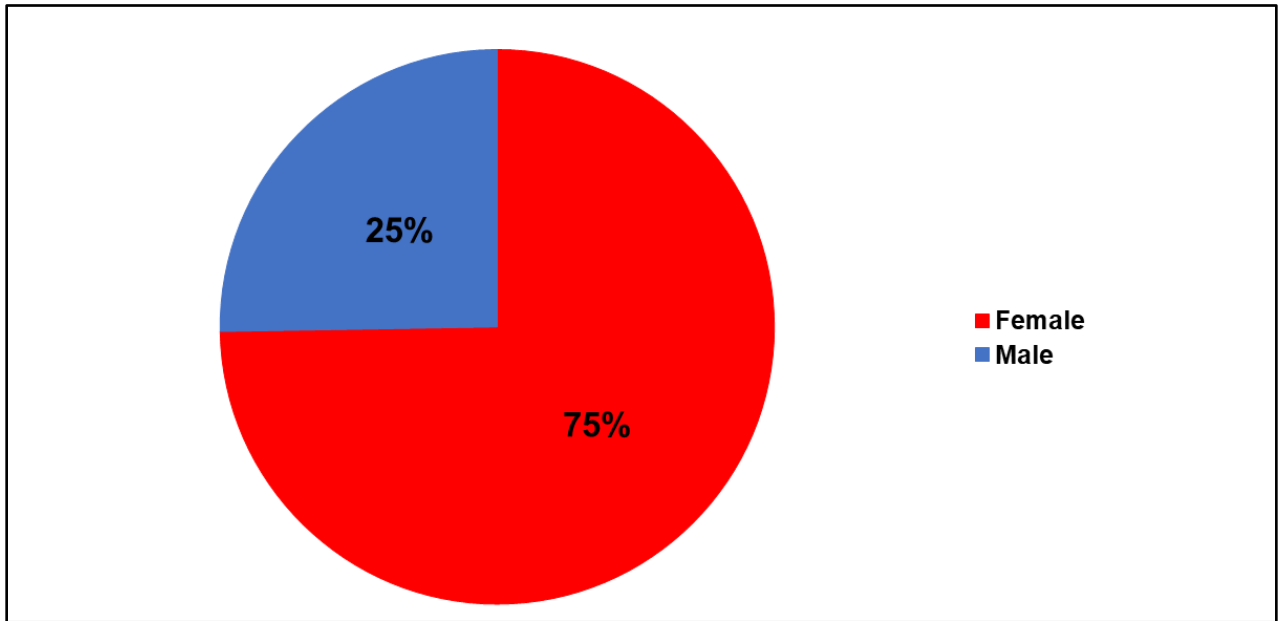
Figure 45. Military Status of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

The sex of unique victims involved in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2023 is displayed in Figure 46. Among unique victims in these incidents, 75 percent were female and 25 percent were male.

Figure 46. Sex of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)

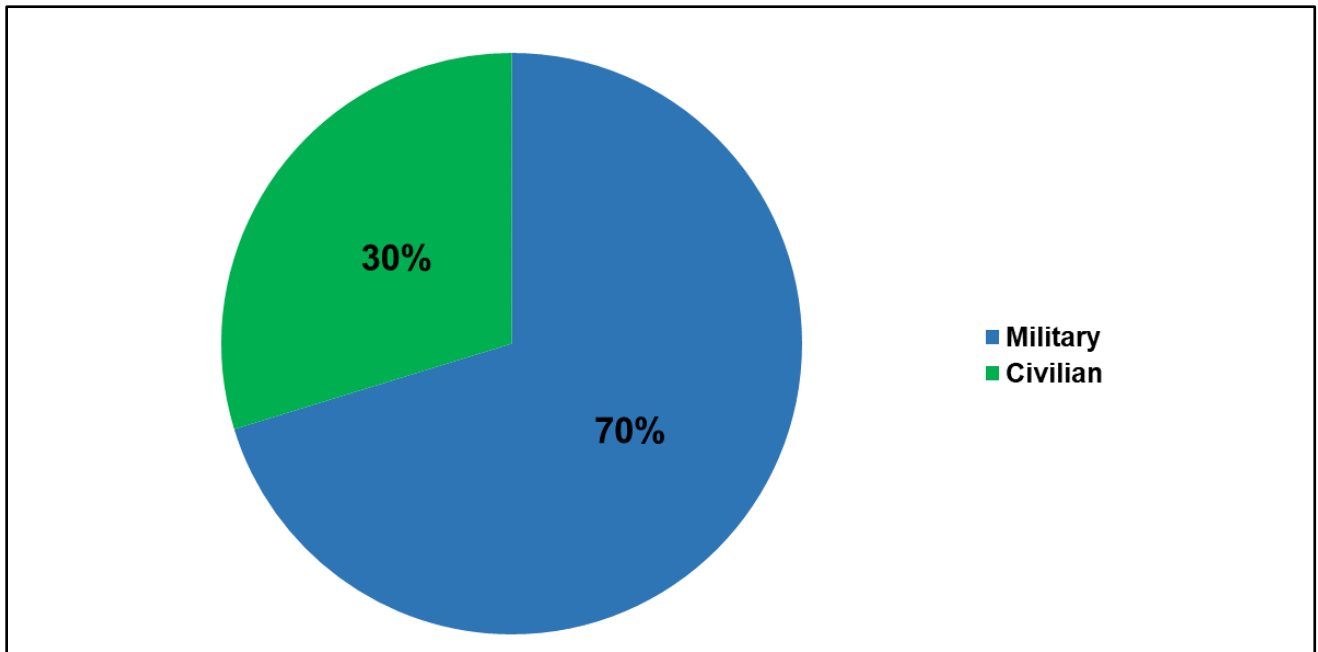


4-9. INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSER PROFILE

This section describes characteristics of abusers in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents.

The military status of abusers involved in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2023 is displayed in Figure 47. Seventy percent of abusers were Service members and 30 percent were civilians.

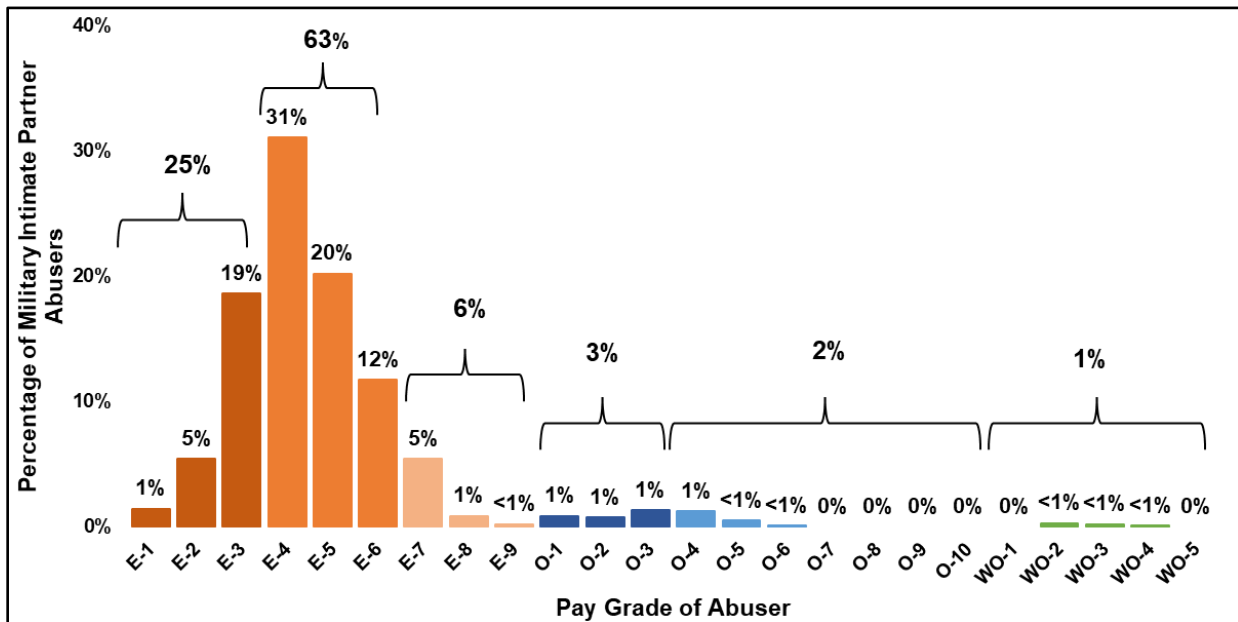
Figure 47. Military Status of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



Note. Military includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

Figure 48 displays a breakdown by pay grade for Service member intimate partners who were abusers in met criteria intimate partner incidents. The majority of abusers were junior enlisted members; approximately 63 percent were E-4 through E-6 and 25 percent were E-1 through E-3. Six percent of abusers were E-7 through E-9, 5 percent were officers (3 percent were O-1 through O-3, 2 percent were O-4 through O-10), and 1 percent were warrant officers (WO-1 through WO-5).

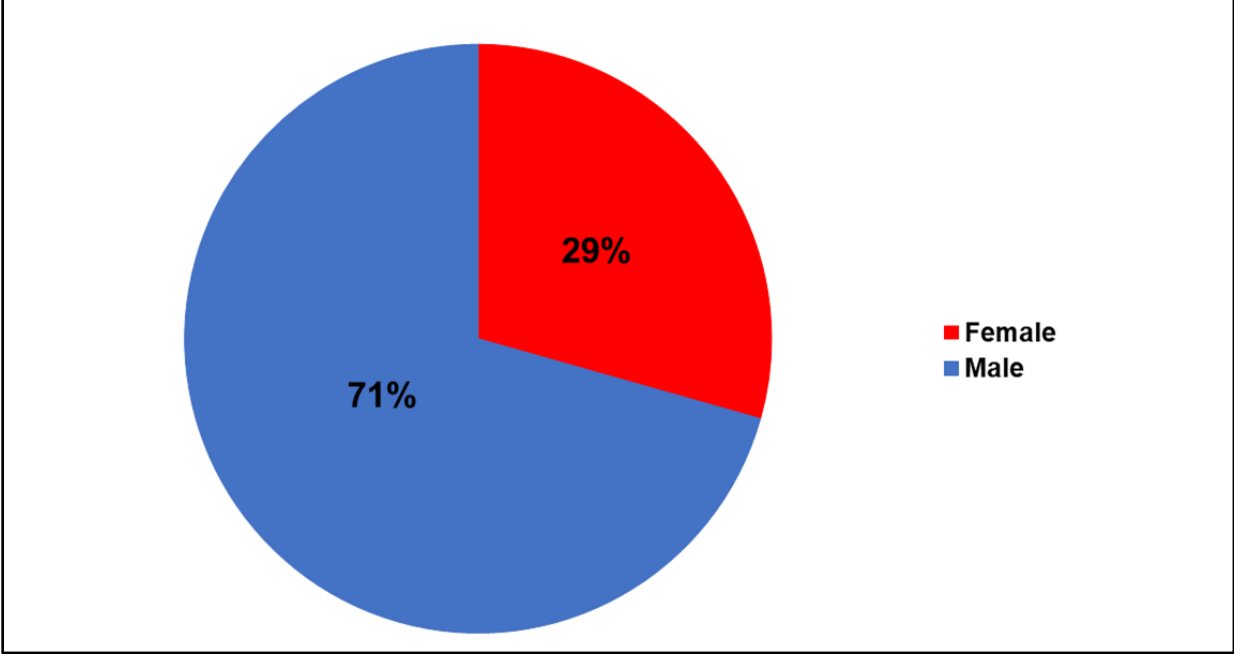
Figure 48. Pay Grade Distribution of Service Member Intimate Partner Abusers in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



Note. Service member includes active duty members as well as Reserve and National Guard members who are in an active status.

The sex of abusers in met criteria intimate partner abuse incidents in FY 2023 is displayed in Figure 49. Among unique abusers in these incidents, 71 percent were male and 29 percent were female.

Figure 49. Sex of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Intimate Partner Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)



4-10. ADULT SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse of a spouse or intimate partner is defined as:

“A sexual act or sexual contact with the spouse or intimate partner without the consent of the spouse or intimate partner or against the expressed wishes of the spouse or intimate partner. Includes abusive sexual contact with a spouse or intimate partner, aggravated sexual assault of a spouse or intimate partner, aggravated contact of a spouse or intimate partner, rape of a spouse or intimate partner, sodomy of a spouse or intimate partner, and wrongful sexual contact of an intimate partner.”⁶⁷

Sexual abuse in the domestic violence field is contextually distinct from sexual assault in that it occurs within a marriage or intimate partner relationship usually as part of a larger pattern of behavior resulting in emotional or psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty. Sexual abuse occurring within the context of a domestic relationship is indicative of higher risk for more serious injury or fatality, and is referred to FAP for comprehensive safety planning, victim advocacy and support, and treatment (when appropriate and requested by the victim).

In FY 2023, there were 544 met criteria incidents of adult sexual abuse (see Table 8) and 494 unique victims of sexual abuse who received FAP services. Overall, 6.56 percent of all met criteria domestic abuse incidents were sexual abuse incidents, a statistically significant increase when compared with the 10-year average.⁶⁸ Given there were more incidents than victims, one or more victims experienced more than one incident of sexual abuse.

Table 8: Incidents of Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse (FY 2014-FY 2023)

Fiscal Year	Total Met Criteria Domestic Abuse Incidents	Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents	Percentage of Overall Met Criteria Domestic Abuse
2014	8,433	241	2.86
2015	8,858	262	2.96
2016	8,683	299	3.44
2017	8,069	300	3.72
2018	8,039	290	3.61
2019	7,921	310	3.91
2020	7,903	327	4.14
2021	7,957	409	5.14
2022	8,307	504	6.07
2023	8,298	544	6.56

Note. Met criteria domestic abuse incidents include spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse combined.

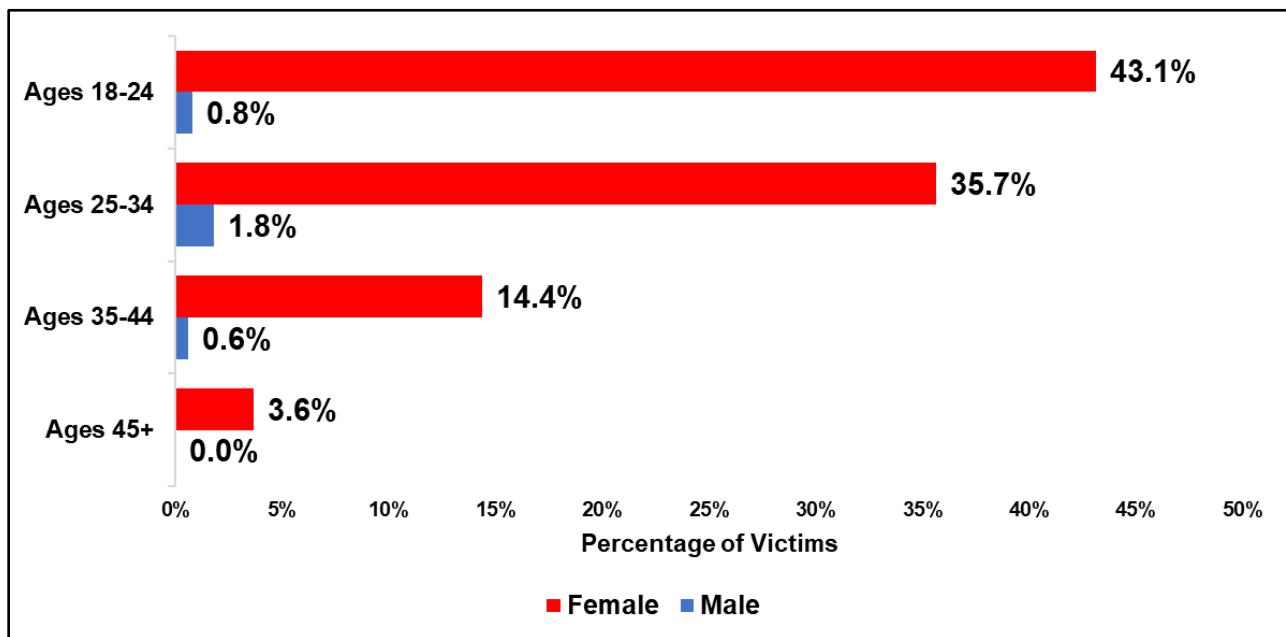
⁶⁷ DoDM 6400.01, Volume 3, Glossary, August 11, 2016, as amended.

⁶⁸ The proportion of met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents as a percentage of overall met criteria domestic abuse incidents in FY 2023 (6.56 percent) represents a statistically significant increase when compared to the average percent of overall met criteria domestic abuse during the FY 2014-FY 2023 period (95 percent CI [3.33, 5.15]).

Of the 494 unique victims of adult sexual abuse who received FAP services in FY 2023, 478 (96.8 percent) were female and 16 (3.2 percent) were male. Examining the characteristics of unique victims by age, a majority were between the ages of 18 and 34 (81.4 percent). Figure 50 shows the proportion of unique adult sexual abuse victims by age group and sex.

Of the unique victims in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents, 43.9 percent (43.1 percent female and 0.8 percent male) were ages 18-24, 37.5 percent (35.7 percent female and 1.8 percent male) were ages 25-34, 15.0 percent (14.4 percent female and 0.6 percent male) were ages 35-44, and 3.6 percent were 45 years or older (all female).

Figure 50. Proportion of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2023)

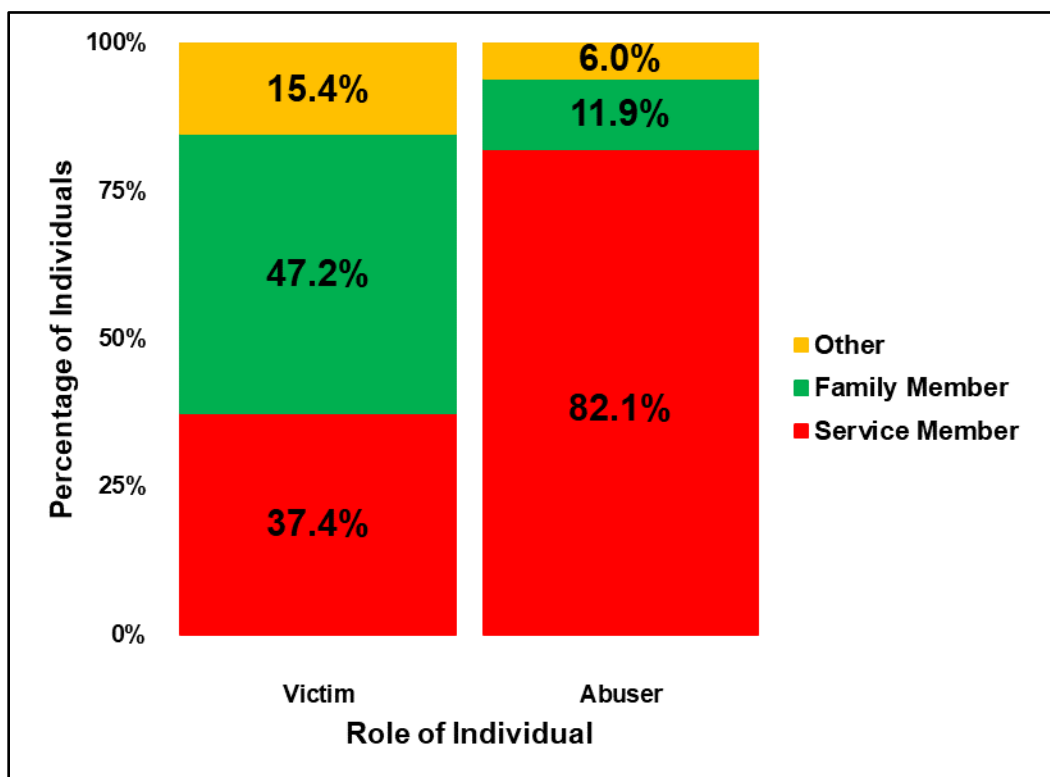


As shown in Figure 51, of the 494 unique victims of adult sexual abuse who received FAP services in FY 2023, 233 (47.2 percent) were family members, 185 (37.4 percent) were Service members, and 76 (15.4 percent) fell into the “other”⁶⁹ category, including 58 (11.7 percent) who were non-beneficiaries and 18 (3.6 percent) who were DoD civilians, non-DoD civilians, retired Service members, or Government contractors.

Of the 487 unique abusers in met criteria sexual abuse incidents, 400 (82.1 percent) were Service members, 58 (11.9 percent) were family members, and 29 (6.0 percent) fell into the “other” category.

Among the 400 abusers who were Service members, 389 (97.3 percent) were active duty and 11 (2.8 percent) were members of the Reserves or National Guard.⁷⁰ The vast majority of Service member abusers in adult sexual abuse incidents were enlisted members (364 or 91.0 percent); fewer were officers (33 or 8.3 percent) or warrant officers (3 or 0.8 percent).

Figure 51. Status of Unique Victims and Abusers in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)

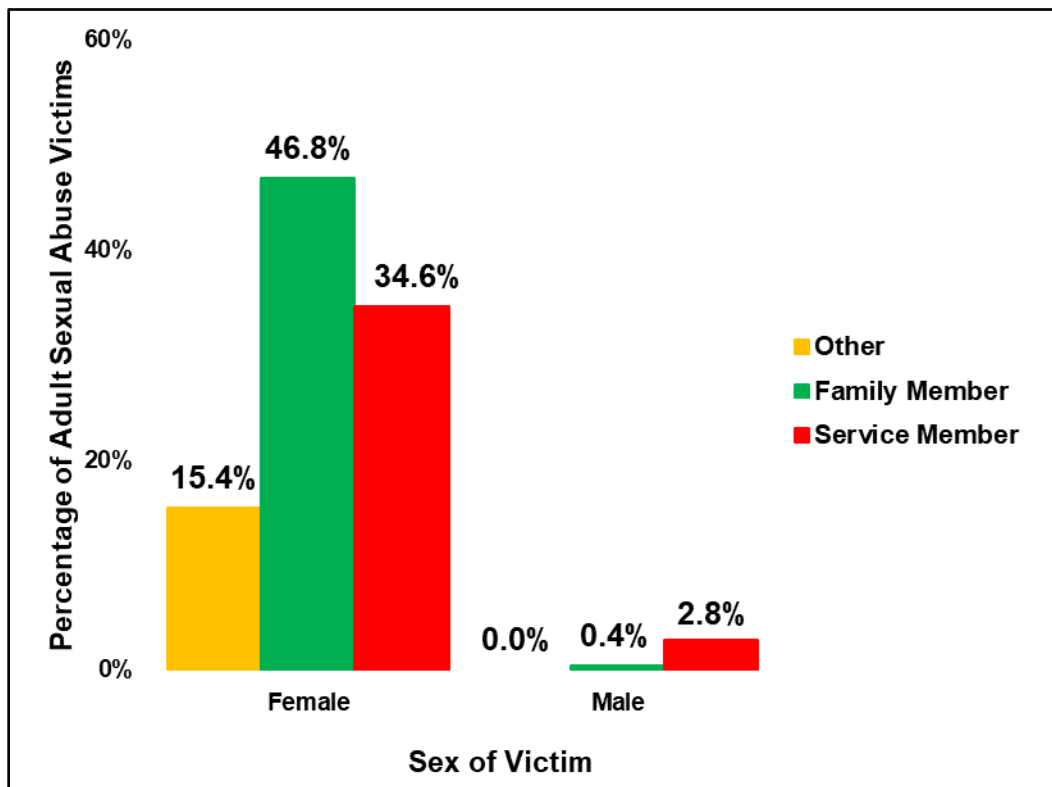


⁶⁹ The “other” category includes abusers in met criteria incidents who were DoD civilians, non-DoD government civilians, retired Service members, government contractors, and non-beneficiaries.

⁷⁰ Due to rounding, the sum of the percentages is 100.01.

Figures 52 and 53 show that when examining the sex and status of unique victims of adult sexual abuse in FY 2023 separately, the majority were female (96.8 percent) and the majority were family members (47.2 percent). Figure 52 shows unique victims of adult sexual abuse by sex *and* military status. Among adult sexual abuse victims who received FAP services, 46.8 percent were female family members, 34.6 percent were female Service members, and 15.4 percent were females that fell into the “other” category.⁷¹ Males represented 3.2 percent of unique victims of adult sexual abuse, including 2.8 percent who were Service members and 0.4 percent who were family members; no male victims fell into the “other” category.

Figure 52. Sex and Status of Unique Victims in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents (FY 2023)

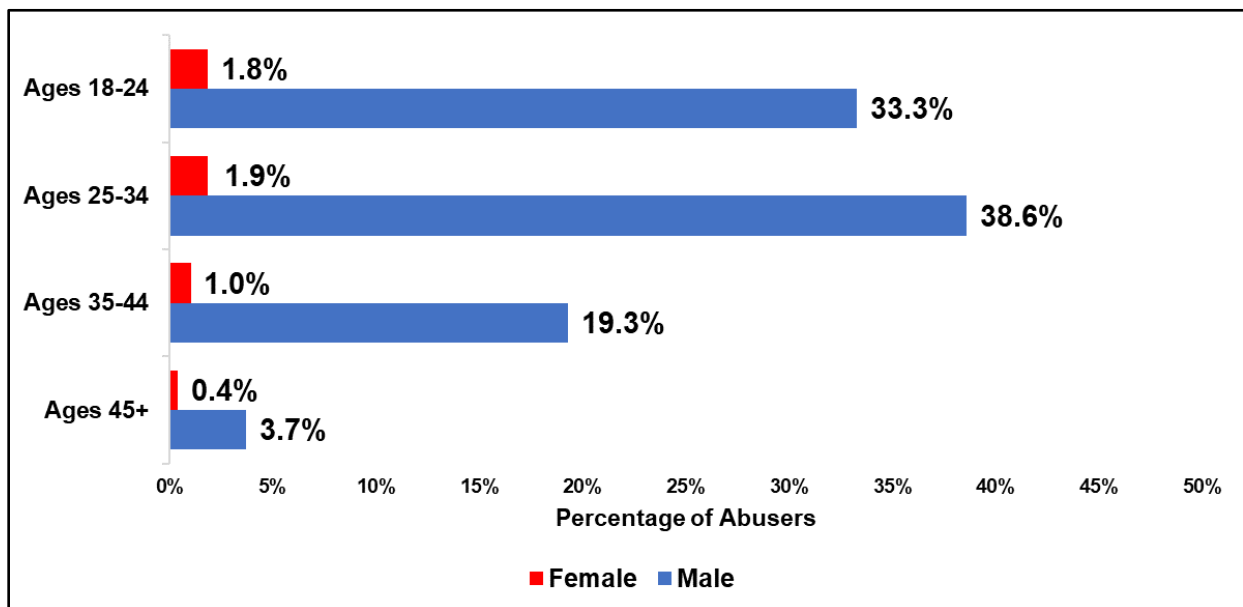


⁷¹ The “other” category includes abusers in met criteria incidents who were DoD civilians, non-DoD government civilians, retired Service members, government contractors, non-beneficiaries, and those who had an unknown status.

Of the 487 unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents, 94.9 percent were male and 5.1 percent were female. Examining the characteristics of unique abusers by age, 75.6 percent were 34 years or younger. Figure 53 shows the proportion of unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents by age group and sex.

Of the unique abusers in met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents, 40.5 percent (38.6 percent male and 1.9 percent female) were ages 25-34, 35.1 percent (33.3 percent male and 1.8 percent female) were ages 18-24, 20.3 percent (19.3 percent male and 1.0 percent female) were ages 35-44, 4.1 percent (3.7 percent male and 0.4 percent female) were ages 45 years of age or older.

Figure 53. Proportion of Unique Abusers in Met Criteria Adult Sexual Abuse Incidents by Age Group and Sex (FY 2023)



Note. Abusers with unknown date of birth were excluded from this figure.

4-11. DOMESTIC ABUSE FATALITIES

As discussed previously, reviews of fatalities reported to the Central Registry in FY 2023 will occur in the Military Departments in FY 2025. Data on domestic abuse fatalities included in this report represent only those fatalities taken to the IDC after the death of the victim and that met criteria for domestic abuse in FY 2023.

There were 12 domestic abuse fatalities taken to the IDC and entered into the Central Registry in FY 2023 (8 spouse abuse fatalities and 4 intimate partner abuse fatalities—see Table 9). Two victims and one met criteria abuser was previously known to the Central Registry.⁷² In the domestic abuse fatality incidents, 11 victims were female and 1 victim was male. Five victims were Service members and 7 victims were civilians. Among the met criteria abusers, 11 were male and 1 was female. Eight of the met criteria abusers were active duty members and 4 were civilians.

Table 9: Domestic Abuse Fatalities Reported to FAP in FY 2023

Total Fatalities: 12 (8 spouse, 4 intimate partner)	
- 2 Victims previously known to the Central Registry	
- 1 Met criteria abusers previously known to the Central Registry	
Victims	
Sex of Victims	Military Status of Victims
- 11 Female	- 5 Service member
- 1 Male	- 7 Civilian
Met Criteria Abusers	
Sex of Abusers	Military Status of Abusers
- 11 Male	- 8 Active duty
- 1 Female	- 4 Civilian

Note. Represents only those fatalities taken to the IDC in FY 2023. Military Service fatality reviews will take place in FY 2025.

⁷² “Known to Central Registry” means that the victim or abuser was involved in a previous met criteria incident of abuse.

5. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

In addition to providing an update on specified Central Registry data elements, section 574 of the NDAA for FY 2017 (Public Law 114–328), mandates that the Department provide an annual assessment of the effectiveness of the DoD FAP. This report highlights three different approaches currently utilized to assess and promote effectiveness in the Department’s prevention and response to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse.

The first approach is via quantitative annual metrics, the primary mechanism through which OSD FAP measures the performance and effectiveness of family readiness programs, specifically on the success rates of the New Parent Support Program (NPSP) and domestic abuser treatment.

The second approach highlights DoD-wide efforts intended to support and enhance the overall effectiveness of FAP, as well as associated plans for assessment and measurement, and will include data and results when available.

The third approach is to capture a snapshot of the efforts and initiatives employed at the Military Service level to measure and enhance the effectiveness of respective Military Service FAPs. Although all Military Services comply with core FAP program requirements and DoD policy, they also have considerable flexibility to tailor their approach for prevention programs, safety assessment, and clinical treatment to best meet the needs of military families in their Military Service. Therefore, there is a great amount of innovation in piloting programs, creating effective training to increase the skills of credentialed personnel, and receiving feedback from participating families to ensure that the services provided by FAP are effective and appropriate.

5-1. FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM METRICS

Below are the FY 2023 metric results on the successes of the NPSP and domestic abuser treatment. Both programs are implemented by the Military Services and administered by FAP at the installation level.

These data are collected by the Military Services, as required by section 581 of the NDAA for FY 2008 (Public Law 110–181). Each of the Military Services collects information for these metrics and submits the data annually to OSD FAP for analysis and reporting. Although OSD FAP aggregates data from each of the Military Services upon receipt, there is some minor variation in interpretation of current implementing guidance and how definitions are operationalized across the Military Service FAPs.

Success of NPSP

NPSP is a selected primary prevention program for child abuse and neglect,⁷³ which offers intensive home visiting services on a voluntary basis to expectant parents and parents with young children (ages 0-5 years in Marine Corps; ages 0-3 in the other Military Services) who display indicators of being at risk for engaging in harmful, or potentially abusive or neglectful parenting practices. Those reported to FAP for an incident of child abuse or neglect for a child aged 0-5 years in their care may also receive NPSP services in limited circumstances, provided the use of NPSP is clinically recommended for the family.⁷⁴

To measure the success of NPSP, the Military Services collect annual data on the number of families who began receiving NPSP services at least two times per month during FY 2022 and continued receiving services for at least 6 months, and who did not have any incidents of child abuse and neglect reported to FAP that met criteria within 12 months after NPSP services ended. To achieve success, the total DoD ratio of families served to families with no child maltreatment reports that meet FAP criteria must be 85 percent or higher.

Table 10 displays the metric for NPSP and the aggregated FY 2023 DoD results. A total of 1,285 families across the Military Services met the metric criteria and received NPSP services within the required timeframe. Of those families, 1,271 did not have a subsequent met criteria incident for child maltreatment within 12 months after NPSP services ended, resulting in a success rate of 98.91 percent. This rate exceeds the established target rate of 85 percent.

Table 10: Success of the NPSP (FY 2023)

METRIC	TOTAL DoD
Number of families without open FAP child abuse and/or neglect cases that began receiving intensive home visitation NPSP services (at least two home visits per month) during the previous fiscal year (FY 2022) and continued receiving intensive home visitation NPSP services for at least 6 months.	1,285
Such families that had no reported incidents of child abuse and/or neglect that occurred after NPSP services were completed and that met FAP criteria within 12 months after NPSP services ended.	1,271
Percentage successful NPSP	98.91 percent
Target: 85 percent	

⁷³ Selected primary prevention takes place BEFORE violence initially occurs. It involves programs and strategies designed to reduce the factors that put people at risk for experiencing violence. Selected primary prevention efforts focus on those individuals or groups that show one more risk factors for violence. Under Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Execution of the Department of Defense Prevention Plan of Action 2.0 (2022-2024)," May 27, 2022.

⁷⁴ Enclosure 3 of DoDI 6400.05, "New Parent Support Program (NPSP)," June 13, 2012, as amended.

Success of Domestic Abuser Treatment

Each Military Service’s FAP program delivers clinical interventions to individuals involved in met criteria domestic abuse incidents based on a clinical assessment, and targeted directly to address the specific concerns of each abuser.⁷⁵ By collecting data on the recidivism of spouse and intimate partner abusers who received FAP clinical treatment services, OSD FAP can assess the impact that treatment services have on abusers in preventing incidents of domestic abuse in the short term (12 months).

To measure the success of domestic abuser treatment, the Military Services collect annual data on the number of spouse and intimate partner abusers involved in one or more incidents that met FAP criteria for domestic abuse, who started and completed clinical treatment services during FY 2022, and who were not involved in any met criteria incident reported to FAP during the 12 months after completing treatment. To achieve success, the total DoD rate of spouses and intimate partners with no subsequent incidents that meet FAP criteria must be 75 percent or higher.

Table 11 displays the metric for domestic abuser treatment, as well as the aggregated FY 2023 DoD results. A total of 2,402 abusive spouses and intimate partners across all Military Services met the criteria of the metric and started (and completed) FAP clinical treatment services within the required timeframe. Of those spouses and intimate partners, 2,294 did not have a report that met criteria for domestic abuse within the following 12 months after FAP clinical treatment was completed, resulting in a success rate of 95.50 percent. This rate exceeds the established target rate of 75 percent.

Table 11: Success of Domestic Abuser Treatment (FY 2023)

METRIC	TOTAL DOD
Total abusive spouses and intimate partners in any incident that met FAP criteria for domestic abuse who began receiving FAP clinical treatment services during FY 2022 and completed FAP clinical treatment services by September 30, 2022.	2,402
Such spouses/partners who were not reported as allegedly abusive in any incident that met criteria for domestic abuse within 12 months after FAP clinical treatment was completed.	2,294
Percentage successful abuser treatment	95.50 percent
Target: 75 percent	

⁷⁵ Domestic abuse treatment is also offered and provided to individuals involved in incidents that do not meet criteria for abuse. As currently defined, this metric is limited to met criteria incidents.

5-2. DOD-WIDE INITIATIVES

In addition to preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in military families, FAP works to strengthen protective factors and reduce risk for violence and abuse through policy, programs, and partnerships. Each of the Military Services implements its own prevention practices and activities at the installation level, while OSD FAP oversees the development of new policies and strategic partnerships to support successful prevention efforts across the total force.

Expansion of the Military Parental Leave Program

In January 2023, the Directive-type Memorandum 23-001 – “Expansion of the Military Parental Leave Program” was implemented. This program provides eligible Service members with up to 12 weeks of leave following the birth or adoption of a child, supporting military families with enhanced work-life balance opportunities during significant life events. This program affords military parents increased quality time to connect and bond with their newborns or newly adopted children. Increased parental involvement is linked to lower rates of child abuse and neglect, as it strengthens the parent-child relationship and increases opportunities for nurturing and attentive caregiving. The initiative also supports parents in managing the demands of caring for a newborn, which assists in reducing stress levels and promotes parental and familial well-being. Information from the Directive-type Memorandum 23-001 and accompanying fact sheet were made available on the Military OneSource website and garnered 471 downloads and views between April-September 2023, the most of any resource located on Military OneSource.

Communication Site Visits

The Department conducted installation site visits in FY 2022 and FY 2023 to ensure implementation of the DoD Domestic Abuse Communication Plan and address strategic messaging gaps between stakeholders, marketing of domestic abuse reporting options, and FAP resources. The DoD met with installation site leadership, as well as communication and marketing teams, victim advocates, command triads, and law enforcement. These meetings facilitated a review of the Plan’s strengths and potential barriers and the identification of effective means of promotion. Key insights from these meetings included reducing social media and resource oversaturation to improve connections to the resources, expanding dissemination efforts of DoD-developed content, and reviewing options to combat stigma associated with FAP services.

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Communication Plan

The Department developed a communications strategy to support prevention of child abuse and neglect. This multi-year “evergreen” campaign, launched in April 2023 in support of the National Child Abuse Prevention Month, promotes a holistic approach to education and prevention throughout the year. Previous initiatives focused on identifying the signs of child abuse and neglect and methods of reporting suspected abuse. The new effort moves beyond awareness of existing child abuse and neglect. Instead, the campaign promotes prevention by offering education on positive and engaged parenting, encouraging military leaders and community members to support parents, and providing parents of children and teens direct links to resources.

CCR and the NOVA Contract

The Department uses a CCR model, which was developed and recognized as a best practice in the civilian domestic violence field, to respond to reports of domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect. In 2023, the Department formally established a Coordinated Community Response office within Military Community Advocacy (MCA) to serve as a sustained coordinating function. The CCR team connects and collaborates with all entities that have equity in an incident of abuse or neglect to improve interagency coordination in delivering a coherent, uniform process to enhance victim safety and hold abusers accountable.

MCA contracted with NOVA to support the Department by aiding in the implementation of CCR strategies. NOVA will support the Department in providing a credential for DAVAs, assessing the need for and implementing improvements in the areas of training and technical assistance, assessing risk and lethality across all components of the CCR, and sharing information and strategic communications across military and civilian CCRs. This contract supports ongoing Department efforts to facilitate a coordinated response to domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect, with the goal of reducing related fatalities.

Updates to Training

“Abuse Within Relationships and Families: For Leaders” Training

The new “Abuse Within Relationships and Families: For Leaders” course, previously titled “FAP for Leaders,” has successfully migrated to the “purple” JKO learning management system platform and is now live. This 45-minute course is designed for all commanders and senior enlisted advisors and meets all required content elements outlined in policy.⁷⁶ Prior to the migration to JKO, the course was updated in October 2023 and was housed on the Military OneSource MilLife Learning platform. Migrating to the JKO platform makes the course easily accessible to commanders and senior enlisted advisors, especially those transitioning to new command leadership roles.

⁷⁶ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended.

Since the JKO launch, 117 individuals have enrolled in the course, with 70 course completions within the first month. When the course was housed on Military OneSource, 143 individuals enrolled in the course and 110 completed the course during FY 2023. The number of course completions within a single month of the JKO launch underscores the improved accessibility and value this migration provides.

The course title change more intentionally aligns course content with the knowledge leaders are required to have about abuse within relationships and families, their role in prevention and safety, and the support and resources available. The Military Services are encouraged to develop additional training materials or desk side briefs as a supplement to the foundational information contained within the Abuse Within Relationships and Families: For Leaders course. DoD policy⁷⁷ requires commanders to meet with the installation FAP manager or their designated point of contact within 90 days of taking command. This requirement helps ensure that leaders are provided information on available resources, both on and off the installation, that promote protective factors and support families at risk.

Training for Chaplains on Domestic Abuse and Child Abuse and Neglect

Section 549 of the NDAA for FY 2022 (Public Law 117-81) mandates that all Armed Forces chaplains receive training covering domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, and the FAP. Additionally, this provision requires the Department to establish a process to ensure the quality and completeness of training data. The Department, in collaboration with the Military Departments, created child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse-related learning objectives and sample training materials for chaplains. The Military Services developed Service-specific training materials in alignment with the learning objectives and began providing the newly developed chaplain training in FY 2023. The Department will collect chaplain training completion data through the Military Services on an annual basis, commencing in FY 2024. These collective efforts support the chaplain training and data collection requirements set forth in policy and law.⁷⁸

Updates to DD Forms

DD Form 2967

The Department revised DD Form 2967, “Domestic Abuse Victim Reporting Option Statement” in FY 2022 to clarify options available to victims reporting domestic abuse, seeking care, and accessing services and protections and to provide victims the opportunity to confirm that they have been informed of various services and options. In FY 2023, the Department received Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for DD Form 2967, and the form was assigned an OMB Control Number, in accordance with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. The updated form was distributed to Military Service FAPs and published to the DoD Forms Management website, making the April 2022 version of DD Form 2967 obsolete.

⁷⁷ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended.

⁷⁸ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended; Section 549 of the NDAA for FY 2022 (Public Law 117-81).

DD Form 2893

The Department rescinded DD Form 2893, “Victim Advocate Safety Plan,” dated March 2005, following a review mandated by the Paperwork Reduction Act under 5 CFR 1320.5(b). While DoD policy⁷⁹ mandates that FAP create appropriate safety plans for victims of domestic abuse, policy does not require the use of DD Form 2893, specifically. Each Military Service's FAP employs its own safety planning procedures, and the use of DD Form 2893 was not standardized across Military Services, regions, or installations.

CATCH Program for FAP

In accordance with section 543 of the NDAA for FY 2015 (Public Law 113-291), the FAP officially implemented the CATCH program, which allows adult victims of sexual abuse who file a restricted report with FAP the opportunity to anonymously submit suspect or incident information to law enforcement. This helps the Department identify serial offenders who perpetrate multiple sexual assaults. While the CATCH program was originally designed and implemented for the SAPR program, DoD policy⁸⁰ recently expanded program access to include victims of adult sexual abuse who file a restricted report with the FAP.

To make a CATCH entry, installation FAPs assist the victim in obtaining CATCH Program website credentials. If a victim's entry matches another entry in the system or an ongoing investigation, FAP staff notifies the victim, who can decide if they would like to change their report from restricted to unrestricted and initiate an investigation. The victim's name is not provided to law enforcement without their expressed consent. Participation in the CATCH Program is voluntary, and the victim may decline to participate at any point. There are no adverse consequences if the victim chooses to keep their report restricted or declines to participate in an investigation. Since its inception, there have been 24 requests for CATCH passwords and 15 completed CATCH entries across the installation-level FAPs, with no identified CATCH matches.

⁷⁹ DoDI 6400.06, December 15, 2021, as amended.

⁸⁰ DoDI 6400.01, December 15, 2021, as amended.

5-3. MILITARY SERVICE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to FAP metrics at the OSD level and Department-wide efforts, provided below is a snapshot of the initiatives employed at the Military Service level that measure and enhance FAP effectiveness. Each section highlights Military Service-level strategies used to improve or assess the effectiveness of different aspects of FAP.

Army

Quality Assurance of IDC–Clinical Case Staff Meeting (CCSM) Model

In FY 2023, the Army launched its first systematic and comprehensive quality assurance (QA) system to monitor and improve FAP determinations and clinical case management. All garrisons completed robust quality assurance assessments conducted through observation of IDC and CCSM meetings. Assessments revealed that Army IDCs continue to make correct determinations in classifying incidents that meet the FAP definitions of maltreatment at very high rates. Ninety percent of partner maltreatment incidents and 77 percent of child maltreatment cases were correctly classified. Upon receiving feedback from trained QA assessors, the rate of correct determinations improved to 94 percent for partner maltreatment incidents and 89 percent for child maltreatment incidents.

QA training was implemented to address deviations from fidelity to the incident determination process. As a result, although 99.6 percent of garrisons had errors noted on the domestic abuse fidelity checklists initially, 50 percent of all garrisons were able to achieve zero fidelity errors at the end of the FY 2023 QA check process. Process improvement increased from an average of 65 percent adherence to fidelity markers initially to an average of 91 percent adherence to fidelity markers in this same period. QA assessments of CCSMs revealed an improvement from 20 percent of garrisons with no errors indicated on the Army’s fidelity checklists initially, to 89 percent of garrisons with no errors by the end of the quality assurance review process. Ratings of meeting quality improved from 3.9 initially to 4.5 at re-assessed sites, where a rating a 4 indicated that “this was a strong meeting.”

The Army FAP has also instituted quarterly remote live training tailored by role for new FAP personnel and is continuing its commitment to in-depth, in-person, experiential training for FAP managers and clinical staff. In FY 2023, over 160 staff members participated in this comprehensive training which focused on the assessment, appropriate and fair determinations, and clinical management of families involved with FAP. During FY 2024, Army FAP will continue to evaluate each garrison for IDC fidelity, providing necessary interventions until fidelity is achieved.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Army FAP and the National Children's Alliance (NCA)

Army FAP became the first Military Service FAP to sign and formalize a partnership between the NCA and FAP. The MOU solidifies a collaborative effort between these organizations to ensure a coordinated community response is provided to children and their families who require support because of child abuse or neglect. This agreement provides guidance for installation FAP offices and accredited child advocacy centers (CACs) to partner and use collective programs, services, and materials in coordination with United States Army Criminal Investigation Division and other CAC multidisciplinary team partners. The MOU eliminates the need for individual MOUs at the local level and addresses Recommendation #20 of the U.S. Government Accountability Office report, "Child Welfare: Increased Guidance and Collaboration Needed to Improve DOD's Tracking and Response to Child Abuse."⁸¹

NPSP Parents as Teachers Foundational Virtual Training

The Army's NPSP is designed to help Service members and their families who are expecting a child, or have children ages 0-3, in building strong, resilient families through a variety of support services. NPSP teaches families ways of coping with stress, isolation, military transitions such as relocation or deployments, and the everyday demands of parenthood. NPSP services include home visits, support groups, and parenting classes.

To compliment the NPSP's in-home service delivery approach, Army FAP instituted the Parents as Teachers Foundational Virtual Training, an evidence-based curriculum and mandatory requirement for all NPSP home visitors. The curriculum is a collection of professional resources and parent handouts designed specifically for the military community. The training ensures that NPSP primary and secondary prevention services are being implemented with excellence and quality, resulting in the enhancement of readiness and overall well-being of military families with young children.

Department of the Navy

QA and Staff Training for Enhanced Performance (STEPS)

The Navy FAP continues to demonstrate its commitment to excellence and continuous improvement through its comprehensive QA delivery program. In FY 2022, the Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) mandated the inclusion of the IDC and CCSM Sustainability Checklist within the FAP QA Record Audit. The purpose of the checklist is to ensure that screening decisions are consistent with the reasonable suspicion standard and the documentation includes an explanation of the basis for the decision. The FY 2022 and FY 2023 FAP QA Records Audits, which included the IDC and CCSM Sustainability Checklist, revealed incomplete documentation and procedural inconsistencies. In addition to the FAP QA Records

⁸¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office (2020). *Child Welfare: Increased Guidance and Collaboration Needed to Improve DOD's Tracking and Response to Child Abuse* (GAO-20-110). Available from: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-110>.

Audits, CNIC conducted 56 onsite visits to observe IDCs and CCSMs and to validate the use of the Checklist. During these onsite visits, CNIC identified an average error rate of 3.6 per site across 33 competency criteria.

In response, STEPS for new FAP staff and Family Advocacy Representative training were developed and implemented to provide guidance and reinforce procedural compliance. Additionally, the Navy hired Regional QA Analysts and conducts quarterly Community of Practice meetings led by CNIC Counseling, Advocacy, and Prevention Program Analyst QA Risk Management.

Evaluation of Military-specific Take Root Home Visitation Curriculum

The Navy's Parent Support Program is working with the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Pennsylvania State University to evaluate current home visitation services, "Nurturing Parenting," compared to a new, military-specific curriculum, "Take Root Home Visitation."

The evaluation will assess several outcomes, including positive child development, increased positive parenting behavior, increased protective factors against maltreatment, and decreased parenting stress. Nine installations are participating in the evaluation, which includes five installations using the "Take Root Home Visitation" curriculum and four installations implementing previously provided services. All approvals were obtained, and data collection began in mid-2023 with the launch of the pilot. Participation in the evaluation is voluntary and the evaluation is anticipated to conclude in late 2024 or early 2025.

Marine Corps Century Anger Management (CAM)

CAM is an evidence-based anger management curriculum that teaches participants assertive communication, effective coping, and healthy stress and anger management strategies. CAM is an 8-week course with 60-minute sessions available to all individuals eligible for treatment in military medical treatment facilities. A pilot evaluation of CAM was conducted with Marines and their families, beginning in 2019 and concluded in 2022, at six Marine Corps installations. Participants completed the pre- and post-survey for the evaluation analyses. Participants reported increased perceived ability to manage anger after completing the course.⁸² Additionally, participants gained better awareness of their stress and anger and reported lower levels of perceived stress.⁸³ Ninety-seven percent reported intentions to better manage their stress and anger after completing CAM.

⁸² CAM survey respondents reported increased perceived ability to manage anger after completing the course ($t = -5.52, df = 271, p < 0.001$).

⁸³ CAM survey respondents had better awareness of their stress and anger ($t = -7.58, df = 271, p < 0.001$) and lower levels of perceived stress ($t = 7, df = 269, p < 0.001$).

Marine Corps Warrior Maintenance

Stress Management for Marines and Families teaches healthy techniques to manage and respond to stressors, which has been found to protect against child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse. Warrior Maintenance is an evidence-based 8-week stress management course developed by ProChange Behavior Systems. Each session lasts between 60 and 90 minutes. Participants learn effective techniques to handle stressors, manage healthy communication skills, and develop strategies to overcome challenges to stress management. Due to delays in full implementation caused by the pandemic, data collection for analysis is still underway.

Department of the Air Force (DAF)

Enhanced NPSP

Working with researchers at Northern Illinois University, the DAF conducted a pilot efficacy study to evaluate and compare the NPSP home visitation-based prevention and clinical outcomes between the NPSP Treatment as Usual interventions and NPSP Enhanced (NPSP-E) interventions. After implementing two intervention group trainings (six sessions), bi-weekly to monthly team meetings, and quarterly meetings with intervention group participants, the pilot study assessed NPSP clients and programmatic outcomes following enhanced NPSP interventions. Seven intervention and six comparison sites were trained and participated in completing two client surveys — the Child Abuse Potential Inventory and Couple’s Satisfactory Inventory.

Within the NPSP-E group, pregnant mothers had moderate to large effect size improvements in self-efficacy, resiliency and social support, and a reduction of depression. Parents within the NPSP-E group showed greater knowledge of safe infant sleep practices for 5 out of 6 safe infant sleep items. Based on the positive outcomes for NPSP-E, DAF FAP has decided to roll-out NPSP-E as the standardized NPSP implementation DAF-wide and has already developed an implementation plan.

VISTA/Change Step Projects

The DAF FAP is partnered with domestic abuse researchers at Kansas State University (KSU) and Cherokee Insights, LLC to conduct research on the efficacy of the domestic abuse manualized group treatment programs, VISTA and Change Step. VISTA is a program designed for women who have used force in intimate relationships, as well as those who have physically or emotionally abused their children. Change Step is a batterer intervention program for men currently serving in the military who have used abusive behaviors within their intimate relationships. The goal of this research project is to continue to reduce intimate partner violence recidivism rates among total Air Force airmen and guardians on active orders, as well as to enhance outcome measures specific to the provision of care offered through VISTA and Change Step. Additional goals of the research project are to ensure FAP clinicians’ adhere to VISTA and Change Step protocol, provide quality care and services to clients, encourage consistent utilization of VISTA and Change Step as treatment modalities, and strengthen completion rates.

The KSU Treatment Modality Study was conducted to examine various aspects of the Change Step and VISTA Program to determine if treatment modality or contextual factors associated with the first instance of maltreatment impacts future reports of maltreatment for abusers. Results of the study found that there was no significant difference in recidivism rates if the programs were delivered virtually versus in-person, or in a group- versus individual-setting. However, the study found that abusers who participated in VISTA Program or Change Step Program individually were about 1.5 times more likely to have a repeat case of maltreatment compared to those who participated in a group format. The study also found no significant difference in recidivism between abusers who participated in Change Step or VISTA programs when abusers had strangled their victims. The findings from this study suggests that Change Step and VISTA may not be effective in reducing recidivism rates among abusers who have strangled the victim.

The KSU Exploration of the Impact of the VISTA Curriculum Project was a mixed-methods study conducted by DAF FAP clinicians. The study explored the impact of the 20-session VISTA Curriculum. The focus of the research centered around the understanding of any changes in personal growth, self-awareness, beliefs, and relationship interaction skills for sixty-two cisgender women using pre- and post-survey data from 2018 to 2022. Researchers reported strong statistical evidence that the reported change was associated with the FAP VISTA Program. Quantitative data indicates that the FAP VISTA has significantly impacted women's comprehension of domestic violence. It also shows that the program has fostered personal growth and facilitated the implementation of de-escalation strategies in the participant's relationships.

Central Registry Board (CRB) QA

The DAF FAP partnered with Pennsylvania State University, Clearinghouse for Military Readiness and New York University to assess the quality of implementation of the CRB.⁸⁴ This collaboration focuses on assessing “correct” decision making by comparing installation-level CRB decisions to those of “gold standard” master reviewers; and identifying areas of CRB implementation that are maintaining fidelity and those that need improvement. Data gathered from this collaboration will be used to develop a QA process that includes training and ongoing QA maintenance tools. Overall, this QA process will equip headquarters DAF FAP staff with the necessary skills to help ensure high-quality implementation of the CRB throughout the field. Several reports and training manuals have been revised to enhance CRB implementation: a) Interim Report, b) Case Preparation Report, c) CCSM Report, (4) Incident Severity Scale (ISS) Report, Standardization Tool Report, and (5) CCSM Training Manual. FAP clinicians and supervisors from 44 DAF installations attended virtual CCSM Training in support of this initiative. In addition, virtual ISS training is being developed and revisions to the ISS tool are underway.

⁸⁴ DAF refers to the Incident Determination Committee (IDC) as the Central Registry Board (CRB).

FAP Staffing Tools

There are two DoD-wide projects, in which DAF FAP is engaged, that have significant implications for FAP staffing. In the collaboration with KSU, FAP has been working to develop and validate a new tool, the Intimate Partner Physical Injury Risk Assessment Tool - Monitoring (IPPI-RAT-M). This tool is an adapted version of the IPPI-RAT, replacing five static items from the original with dynamic items. The substitution allows ongoing monitoring of the risk of recurring instances of intimate partner violence involving physical injury. Once implemented, scores from the IPPI-RAT-M will be employed to gauge the efficacy of the VISTA and Change Step programs. In addition to the work on the IPPI-RAT-M, DAF FAP is collaborating with KSU to validate use of the original IPPI-RAT to include DAVAs, an expanded population of service providers.

The DAF FAP has partnered with Pennsylvania State University's Clearinghouse for Military Readiness to develop FAP staffing tools for all maltreatment and DAVA positions. The objective of this initiative is to analyze Program demands and develop a staffing model to ensure the Program can effectively deliver services at each installation based on its specific mission requirements. Currently, over 21 FAP staffing tools are in development. This process has included refining the DAF Clinician and NPSP Home Visitation Staffing tools and collaborating with DAF Headquarters to update all staffing tools with FY 2022 data. Six DAF installations participated in a pilot project to support refinement of the DAVA staffing tool.

6. PROGRAM AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Overview of Key Findings

There were minimal variations in the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children in FY 2023 in comparison to FY 2022. Despite these slight fluctuations, the rates of child abuse and neglect reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 military children did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages.

Domestic abuse findings in this report continue to be mixed—with differing patterns in domestic abuse overall and spouse abuse in comparison to intimate partner abuse. Following 2 consecutive years of year-over-year increases in the number of domestic abuse reports and the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents, both measures experienced slight declines in FY 2023. The FY 2023 number of domestic abuse reports decreased and the number of met criteria domestic abuse incidents did not vary significantly when compared to their respective 10-year averages.

The rates for spouse abuse reports, met criteria incidents, and unique victims per 1,000 married military couples experienced year-over-year decreases in FY 2023. These decreases were statistically significant when compared to their respective 10-year averages. Conversely, the number of reports, number of met criteria incidents, and number of unique victims of intimate partner abuse increased. These increases are likely due, in part, to the FY 2022 expansion of the definition of intimate partner and the resulting expansion of service delivery. However, there has been an upward trend in intimate partner abuse since FY 2017. The proportion of met criteria adult sexual abuse incidents increased in FY 2023, for the fifth consecutive year, representative of a continuing trend noted over the past decade.

Continual monitoring and assessment of key findings are necessary to inform current and future program efforts. The DoD recognizes that there is more work to be done and remains committed to enhancing efforts to prevent incidents of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse by providing effective supportive services, treatment (as appropriate), and resources for military families.

Continued Focus on the Upward Trend in Intimate Partner Abuse and Adult Sexual Abuse

Results from this report show that the inverse relationship between spouse abuse and intimate partner abuse indicators evident since FY 2019 persisted in FY 2023. While spouse abuse indicators experienced statistically significant decreases in FY 2023, intimate partner indicators experienced statistically significant increases for the fourth consecutive year. At the same time, the proportion of adult sexual abuse incidents as a subset of domestic abuse increased in FY 2023 for the fifth consecutive year.

Holistically, these indicators present an opportunity for the Department to reassess and strengthen its approach to preventing and responding to domestic abuse. To that end, MCA, the overarching agency for OSD FAP and OSD CCR, will be realigned under the Office of Force Resiliency effective October 2024. This organizational shift was directed by the Secretary of Defense in support of a recommendation from the “Preventing Suicide in the U.S., Military: Recommendations from the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee” report published in May 2023. This move will ensure that programs covering harmful behaviors fall under one umbrella—improving efficiency and communication and strengthening the coordinated community response across all prevention programs.

The Department continues to make significant progress implementing GAO-21-289 report recommendations. In collaboration with the Military Departments, the Department established standardized learning objectives and sample training materials for chaplains. Simultaneously, the Department improved access to child abuse and domestic abuse-related training through the new “Abuse Within Relationships and Families: For Leaders” course available on JKO. The JKO platform makes the course easily accessible to commanders and senior enlisted advisors transitioning to new command leadership roles. These enhancements in training support both prevention and response.

The stand-up of the CCR office within MCA formally recognizes the centrality of the CCR model in the Department’s response to reports of domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect through a sustained coordinating function. The newly established NOVA contract further supports implementation of CCR strategies. The contract will support the Department in providing a credential for DAVAs, enhancing training and technical assistance, assessing risk and lethality across all components of the CCR, and improving information sharing and communication across the Department and with our civilian partners.

Conclusion

The DoD is committed to keeping our families safe and resilient, and to taking every measure to prevent child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse in our military communities. One incident of child abuse and neglect or domestic abuse is too many, and programs like FAP implement evidence-based prevention and treatment programs with the goal of ensuring the safety and well-being of all military families. OSD FAP reinforces the enduring commitment of Department leadership to provide effective, efficient programs to promote the safety, readiness, and well-being of all Service members and their families through a CCR to child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse.