# Conversation Guide: Harassment Reporting Landing Page & Poster

## Warm-up Questions - 5-15 minutes (depending on whether show poster)

*NOTE how to share URL: dictate / Zoom chat / email / text*

Let’s start with a question...

I'd like you to imagine that you or a friend went to a VA medical clinic today for a doctor's appointment, and on the way in, a person said something rude and made a sexual gesture that made you or your friend feel uncomfortable. You or your friend think more about what happened and decide to report it to hopefully prevent it from happening to other people. What do you think you or your friend would do? During the reporting? You would have to go the patient advocate I believe because the people at the front desk are volunteers know what direction to point you in.

You stated you would want to talk to patient advocate? My, myself I would probably say something else, but inside house I would go to patient advocate. I would go to the front desk to ask them where they are located.

Have you had to use patient advocate before? Yeah, I have.

*(don't / report it / talk with someone/police at VA / call 911 / google)*

* Can you tell me more about why?
* What do you think you or your friend would do next?
  + *(Google / Facebook / MHV / eBenefits / Contact center call or email / VA.gov / In person / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

### For sighted participants

Say that while you were at VA, you saw a poster about reporting harassment, but you're no longer there. How would you find information about reporting harassment now? With today’s technology you could just google it.

What information would you look up online? Just google the number to report harassment within the VA system. You could also call the VA clinic to ask them to connect you to the patient advocate.

You first thought is to Google it and stay off the phone? Yeah, but you have to ensure you are googling the right clinic.

* *(ask someone / google it? / VA.gov? / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

### For sighted participants on desktop

Now I'd like to show you a poster and get your feedback on it. *(share my screen with poster and give mouse control to participant so they can move around)*

* What are your initial impressions? Too much writing. The numbers aren’t standing out. Call 911 won’t work out for you right now. Yeah, too much information. Give me the number big at the bottom of the poster. There is nothing memorable about this poster. You have to think we have gone through 20 years of the sexual harassment posters with the pull of tabs are more memorable than this poster. They have pictures of people you would report to or even picture of people in destress. You should have a QR code to scan to take you right to the website if you do not have phones right off.
* You stated to have a QR code, what would you expect to come up? All this information and phone numbers you can call. Something quick.
* You said something about 911 and it not working out for you, what did you mean by that? Well unless you are getting assaulted, they will not deal with you. Harassment would be another person’s problem.
* You seem to be looking for a number that will connect you with someone within the VA? Yes, because it happened at the VA.
* *(Note especially any sentiments/feelings they express re safety, comfort, trust, confidentiality)*
* *(Pause to allow as much time as the participant wants to read/process the poster)*
* What do you think you or your friend would do next if you wanted to report the interaction I described earlier--a person said something rude to you and made a sexual gesture that made you feel uncomfortable? I would try to get in connection with the VA rep. I guess if you read this all it would tell you where to go. Where is it? Where am I supposed to go?
* You stated there are too many words, and it doesn’t stand out on what to do? Yes. Mostly like the person who would be willing to report would not be in the state of mind to read all this.
* How would you get in contact with patient advocate?
* Which number would you call?
* If you were still at the facility, how would you decide how to report it? If I was at the VA I would either tell the police or talk to the front desk before calling the 800 number.
  + *(call 911 / call 800 # / talk to patient advocate / police / building security / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
* What other thoughts do you have about this poster? Most people would not take the time to read all this unless sitting waiting for an appointment.
* Where have you seen posters like this? About 3 years ago when I was active duty.
* Are you still active duty? No
* Have you seen anything like this in the VA since retirement? Not that I can think of, but I try to avoid going into the VA.
* Do you think something like this would be useful if there was less writing? Oh yes if there was less writing or has the QR code. I wouldn’t stand there reading this poster in a high traffic area. But if you could just take the picture so you can read it later. Keep it simple
* You are saying that if you stood there reading it you would feel that you are being judged? Well, I am going off my own anxieties about judgement and people just staring at me.
* Interesting concern that would be a good reason not to have too much writing.

### For participants using a screen reader

Say that while you were at VA, someone mentioned that you could report harassment, but you're no longer there. How would you find information about reporting harassment now?

* *(ask someone / google it? / VA.gov? / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

What assistive technology are you using today?

How would you rate your level of experience with using a screen reader--beginner, intermediate, advanced, or expert?

How long have you been using a screen reader?

Are you wearing headphones today? I'm asking so I will be able to hear your screen reader during the session.

* ***(if on desktop)*** Could you please share your audio with me on Zoom?
* ***(if on mobile)*** Would it be possible for you to take them off and use your computer or mobile audio?

## Start screen sharing

Are you OK continuing with the session? We can take a break if you want to.

I'm going to share with you a web page. While you're looking at it, I would like you to *talk aloud* as much as possible so that you share what you're thinking, what you're doing, what you like, what you dislike, and what you're unsure about.

I would like you to share your screen with me so I can watch you use the web page in your web browser. *(refer to Screen sharing instructions above, if needed)*

What kind of device are you using today? *(Phone / Computer) Computer*

I'm going to (spell/put into the Zoom chat) a link for you to open (<https://staging.va.gov/hrt>). *(If asked, reassure that this is a legitimate link to what I want you to test.)*

Do you see the link? Yeah, the chat is right down there.

## Veteran Tasks

### Task 1: [Explore landing page] - 15 minutes

***(for everyone)*** Let's say that you found this page on VA.gov.

What are your initial impressions of this page? Let’s see. It looks like your standard VA page where you sign in. Looks like your basic VA page. They may know it is you once you sign in. When you zoom in, like I have to, I lose a lot of information on either side.

So, you are increasing the size so you can read what is on the page? Yes, I mean I could just get my glasses.

20 years of military 911 just doesn’t come to my mind. That is not what we would do. Oh, so this is not a 24-hour line. Well, there is the crisis line. I got this link why?

You were looking for information on how to report and you found this page. Oh well I guess if I have to thumb through all this crap. As soon as I found the link I would click on it, or the phone number I would call them. I wouldn’t call the number that has limited hours I would call the 24-hour number.

So, you wouldn’t call the number due to the limited hours? Yes, because usually they won’t answer even during their hours. I would just call directly to the crisis line. I mean there is a lot of writing on this. I have already forgotten the question you asked because I have been scanning through this page.

You stated you are looking for a link, what are you expecting if you can find a link? Well somewhere I can report or chat online so I would not talk to someone. Oh, I can text. I would probably do that, so I don’t want to talk to someone.

So, you would prefer to text? Yes, but others may have other options. I just want to hurry and report it while I am in the heat of the moment, so I do not forget.

So, having it available at anytime is important so you can report so you do not have to prolong the emotions? Yes, I think that makes sense.

* *(Note especially any sentiments/feelings they express re safety, comfort, trust, confidentiality)*
* *(Pause to allow as much time as the participant wants to read/process the page)*

What do you think you or your friend would do next if they wanted to report the interaction I described earlier--a person said something rude and made a sexual gesture that made you or your friend feel uncomfortable? I become an a\*\*hole when it comes to things like that so I would probably say something to them right then. If not, I would want to talk to someone immediately after it happened. I guess you could call crisis line, but I do not think they would reply fast enough. The VA police could take care of the issue right then and there. You do have to watch what you say when talking to the VA police about what happened. If you get too loud, they want to push out that stress card and you are the one who will have to calm down. They will think I am the threat because I am upset.

Has this been your experience talking to something that may get you frustrated? Not in person, but when I am on the phone and I’ve been transferred 4 times, hung up on, or have to call numerous times. They flip your frustration back on you.

You are concerned when reporting them flipping back on you? Yes, because they may not have the proper training to help you which may cause more frustration.

In your opinion do you think the patient advocate would have that training? No, but I think those are the ones you would be able to hold accountable. They are supposed to give you some kind of result. If you don’t have authority, I don’t want to waste my time. I have had mixed results when talking to them. They got me to the right traffic flow, but that was in person. The second time it was through email, and it only got blasted up because of keywords that were used they thought I was a threat. The last time was over the phone, went through the whole process hung up on, transferred, and finally got to someone who gave me a phone number to contact to help. Someone for the Pentagon, VA Rep, but finally I got help from them.

It seems you have some mixed results, and they may pass you off if they can not give you results? Well, when you are in person they will handle it right then and there. With switching things up so often information may not be updated, and you may not be able to get in contact with someone you need to get in contact with.

When you say following you, do you mean that day? *(call 911 / call VA police / call 800 # / in person / call at a VA health facility / Vet Center / regional office / national cemetery / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

What do you think will happen next?

What other thoughts do you have about this page?

Feedback on the information in it? You are talking about reporting harassment; you have all the familiar things of knowing you are on the right page. It just has a lot of writing. I am not one to read everything. How to get help quickly is smaller than everything else on the page. That should be bigger.

You really want the message on how to get help bigger? Yes, you should be able to pick it out and get help now.

* Feedback on how the information is organized?

**Post-Task Interview - 15 minutes**

*Type into #feedback-backchannel: "Any questions you want me to ask?"*

What thoughts do you have about what you've reviewed today?

* What was *helpful* about what you've reviewed today? At least the numbers are on there. The information is there.
* What was *not* helpful about what you've reviewed today? That you have to dig through all the writing to find the numbers. It is like being on the phone having to click multiple things to get where you need to go.
* What would you like to *change* about what you've reviewed today? If I am clicking it to find out why, I don’t need the definition of harassment I need the number up front to report the harassment.

We would like the harassment reporting resources to meet the needs of ALL Veterans who may have been harassed at a VA site. If you've ever experienced any type of harassment at VA, and are willing to share, we would like to know a little more about your experiences. I'm not asking for details, and I don't want you to re-live these difficult experiences. Your feedback today has been valuable, even if you decide to not answer the questions I'm about to ask. If you share anything about your experiences or someone else's with me, what you say will remain confidential. Are you comfortable if I ask a few more questions? Yeah, I am fine.

* Have you or anyone you know ever been made to feel uncomfortable by someone else at VA while applying for, using, or communicating about your VA benefits or health care? This could be in person, over the phone, or in an email or text message. And it could be a range of things, like someone whistling or making sexual comments, making negative comments about gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, giving unwanted attention, or making inappropriate gestures. You don't need to share any details, you can stop at any time, or you could skip this question. *(yes / no / decline to answer)* I guess so with a couple things I have already said.
* If you or your friend was harassed, was it reported? *(no / yes)* Not until, well I guess I kind of did. That is why I went to the patient advocate in person and over the phone.
* You were trying to get your problem resolved by complaining about why your problem is not getting solved? Yes, and it took a long time. I would not stop until they finally got my help.
* During this whole process, was any of this turned into a formal harassment report? Oh no it was not reported as harassment. In that aspect, none of that would not be harassment. They have you in a position where they have control over you. I do not know what they can put into the system when you give them you DOB or social. You try to avoid making those waves.
* Did you ever consider reporting it? I am more of a fight or flight person where I will push push push until I get to the right people.
* If so, *how* was it reported? *(phone call / in person / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
* If it wasn't reported, what were the barriers to reporting it?

How would you prefer to report any future harassment? *(phone call / in person / online somehow / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)* It would be situational. Handling in person if it happened in person, or on phone if it happens on the phone.

If you wanted to report anonymously, would you want to report it online? Yes, go on the webpage and click and report.

*(If they share anything about a harassment experience, say...)*

* I am sorry you (or your friend) had this experience. We appreciate you sharing this with us. Your story will inform how we provide resources to help Veterans in the future.
* If you (or your friend) want to report your experience with harassment, that can be done in person at a VA site or by calling the VA Inspector General Hotline at 800-488-8244.

Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think I should know? You mean about getting information out? No, I do not think so. A lot of the people just go to the VA because it is free healthcare we have earned. Why do we have to deal with all these issues have to happen when we have already dealt with so much already. They make it so difficult. You say we get all this stuff, but you make it so hard that we finally just give up. That is why so many people kill themselves. It may not be that bad for everyone, but it is only a few VA that are getting fixed. That is why we call it the game.

## Thank You and Closing - 5 minutes

We really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to work on providing resources for reporting harassment. We're hoping that by providing such resources, we can make VA safer for everyone.

I'm going to stop the recording now. *(STOP recording)*

Before we end this session, are there any questions or concerns that you wanted to express?

Thank you so much again!

*(if this session didn't appear to trigger a traumatic response)* And I hope you enjoy the rest of your day!