# 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? I would probably wait until I got home to call the patient advocate.

How would you call the patient advocate? I would call my VA and ask to talk to patient advocate because I do not think I would be comfortable talking to someone in person due to you do not know who knows who, and what information that I rely to them would get out.

Have you talked to patient advocate before? No but I do know they are a good resource at the VA.

*(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? I would have to go to the VA website and hope they have something on there. I usually go to my VA website to get information.

What information would you look up online?

* *(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? It is too much I am not going to read all that. I think there is just too much repeating itself. Call 911 or the VA Police. It should just say Sexual Harassment or Sexual Assault together. I know me personally would not read all that. I think Veterans and Veteran families know what harassment is and it is belittling to them to have to explain them. Also, it could trigger someone to say that they were harassed when they were not.
* What information is most important to you? The phone number and that it is for sexual assault and harassment both. It needs to also state you can contact your PCP because you are more likely to trust them over the VA Police/Building Security. If you have anyone with MST trying to get them to report this, they may not trust anyone to report it because of the PTSD from the MST. It takes a lot of time to trust someone. I would not walk up to a male police office or male building security to tell them anything.
* You stated you would call; would you be more willing to trust someone over the phone? No. I would more likely go straight to my PCP or therapist because most of the individuals you talk to on those lines are volunteers whose plates are also full
* *(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? Again, I would go to my therapist and tell them what happened, and then start second guess myself and may not report it at all. Being a victim of MST, I would second guess myself.
* You like the option to talk it over with the therapist before reporting? Yes, because I want to make sure that my report is a valid report. I would have to talk it out first
* If you had an upcoming appointment, you mentioned secure messaging. would you message them that way also? Yes, if I was not there, I would secure message and inform them what had happened to me.
* 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?

### 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? I got it.

## 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? That doesn’t do it. It doesn’t stick out. I would walk right by it. If there was more detail to that bold statement, it would grab my attention. What kind of harassment? Someone being rude is harassment. If you are a Veteran or a visitor that has experienced sexual harassment at the VA and then list the resources. What is VA, Virginia? There has to be a better way to word that, here at the VA everyone has the right to be treated with respect. By flipping the words around would help. Some people would look at this and think “Oh yeah bullsh\*t.”

You said you have not had bad experiences, does this turn you off? Yes, and I have great experiences at the VA.

What is a better way to word it, so we do not turn them off? Here at the VA everyone should be treated with respect and be safe. *Should* is the key word because saying everyone does is not a correct statement. Harassment can happen to anyone, and it is not your fault. By explaining what harassment is, you are talking to us as if we do not know what it is and belittling. Harassment can happen to anyone, and it is not your fault. It could be an employee to a Veteran or a Veteran to an employee, Veterans also need to know they cannot harassment the employees.

Do you work at the VA? No, I just do peer mentorship.

Just explaining what harassment is you would get rid of? Yes. Just said it can happen to anyone and it is not your fault. I don’t remember what I said. That is why I talk so quickly. Everyone should receive respect and be safe at the VA. Harassment is anything that causes a hostile environment and is not your fault.

If you could look more through it does it feel that throughout the page? I do not think you should have to click to find out more about harassment, and that it is demanding you to do that.

So, the tone of the page is off? Yes, and I know that there are all kinds of people who will take this differently.

Are you a professional writer? No, I am not. I just like to write.

* *(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?

* *(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? Once again, I would not call 911. I do not know if I would even report. I would like to think I have come far enough to report, but I do not know. If it was harassment, I would rather talk to through but not report it.

If you were to file a report, how do you think you would report it? If it happened at the VA I would go to the VA police, if it was harassment I would just secure message to my PCP to inform her what happened and have it in my records or call the 800 number.

What other thoughts do you have about this page? I don’t think you need all the information you have on the page. It is repeating. It doesn’t really tell you when to report it. If you want to call 911 or go to the VA police. How would you know when to report? Is there something to report? It just doesn’t say that. I am sure they are talking about how to report it by phone. My thing is when I see when to report I think of what physical time do I report it. I am looking at it as it is timely manner. Is there a certain amount of time that I need to report this? A lot of this is super important, even if you are just a VA you still have the right to report that stuff. Sometimes you overhear employees talking inappropriately and as a visitor you have the right to report the situation. I like that it states that as a visitor you have the right to report. Some people think they couldn’t go to someone to say something. Super important to say what to expect when filing a report. That is a key part. I am just looking over the part that we will talk immediate action to ensure that this harassment does not occur again. You can’t stop harassment you can try to make sure it doesn’t happen again. You can not promise that it wont it happen again. And I would not be able to trust you because you said it would not happen again and then it happens again. If it happened again after I filed a report, I would lose trust and never file another report again. I would also be in fear that now there is a paper with my name on it that I do not know who now has access to that information. It is unrealistic to say you are going to stop harassment in every VA across our country. You can state you are trying to stop it. Again, right nothing within the VA happens right away. Veterans will call bullsh\*t. My right away could be two months from now and your right away could be six months away. I knows what triggers me as a Veteran, I know what triggers me as a female Veteran, I know what triggers me as an African American female Veteran, and as a drill sergeant in law enforcement.

* Feedback on the information in it?
* 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? The fact that you put it out there that you are putting this out there is helpful. Accountability is huge. Letting the visitors know they too can be victims and can report inappropriate. I like having Dr. L here to help me in case I need that help. That is huge. I was very impressed with having Dr. L. I have been with the VA for 30 years and that has not always been the situation.
* What was *not* helpful about what you've reviewed today? No, I think I really touched on the tone of how things are written. Remember the lenses of the audience. One person could have 10 different lenses on. Are you up for the challenge? The challenge is that we have to find a way to have the perfect page and the perfect wording.
* What would you like to *change* about what you've reviewed today? No, I think again as much as information you can put out there but condensed. Even if you hand out cards out with the information.

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? Absolutely

* 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)* That is a hard one, I would say yes but if you ask me detail. I have worked in a male environment most of my life I am more accustomed to that way. I am used to brushing off what may bother other people.
* If you or your friend was harassed, was it reported? *(no / yes)* No
* If so, *how* was it reported? *(phone call / in person / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*
* If it wasn't reported, what were the barriers to reporting it? Yes, depending on your work history. Being a woman in the military we were told not to talk about anything that occurred to you. I went from being in the military to being in law enforcement. I was just taught to never say anything. We just don’t talk about it. I wish I would have known earlier.
* If you did get harassed now knowing what you know, would you report it? I would go to my PCP or my therapist because those are who I trust the most. I do not trust the law enforcement. If you are not in the good ole boy system, you are not acknowledged. Not acknowledging I am a Veteran that is a form of harassment.

How would you prefer to report any future harassment? *(phone call / in person / online somehow / \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)*

*(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? No, I think it is absolutely wonderful. I think you should put these down on cards to be given out by the people in the red vests.

## 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? No.

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!