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# Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces

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DGRAPM  
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recherche et analyse  
sur le personnel militaire

Canada



## Change in the Social and Institutional Context

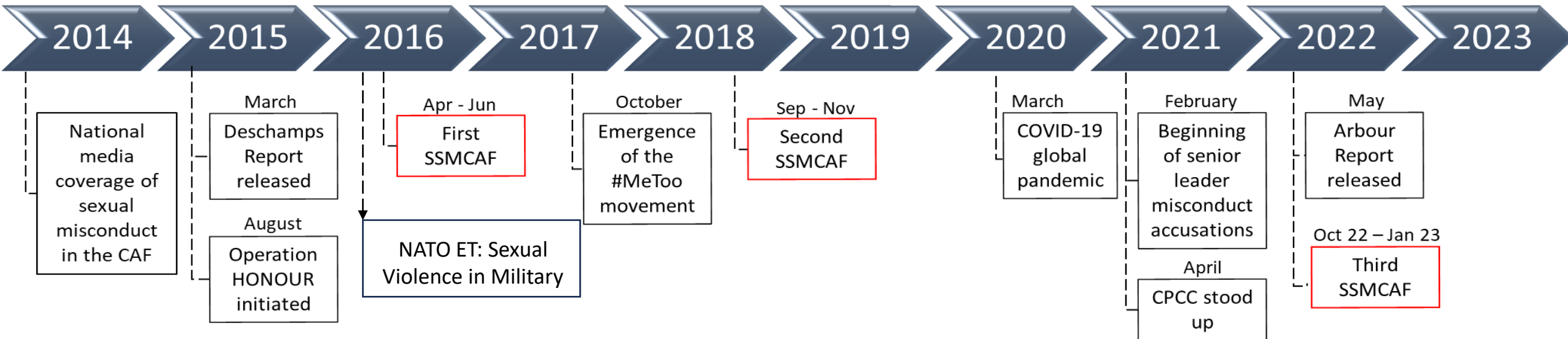


Figure adapted from Rubinfeld et al (2023). Contextualizing Results from the 2022/23 Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the CAF. Deck prepared for DGEPR, CPCC.





CANADA

# PPCLI commander against cadet

Former military officer says she was sexually assaulted by

Lt.-Col. Mason Stalker of the 1st Canadian Parachute Brigade has been charged with sexual assault.

Politics

## Senior soldier once tasked with army command

retired while facing sexual misconduct probe

By The Canadian Press

### Canada's following

Retired lieutenant-general Trevor Cadieu has said the allegations against him are false.

The military was [Catharine Tunney, Ashley Burke](#) · CBC News · Posted: Apr 20, 2022 2:24 PM EDT | Last Updated: April 20, 2022

[Nick Boisvert](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 15, 2021 8:39 PM EDT | Last Updated: October 15, 2021

## Admiral Art McDonald under investigation

Investigative Service

Politics CANADA

### Former military

# A military in crisis: misconduct cases to 13,500 as deadline nears

Observers say they've at the same time



By **Amanda Connolly** · Global News  
Posted November 8, 2021 4:39 pm · Updated November 8, 2021 8:29 pm

Lt.-Gen. Chr service men

The Canadian F

Since early February 2021, 13 senior Canadian military officers — current and former — have been sidelined, investigated or forced into retirement from some of the most powerful and prestigious posts in the defence establishment.



2014

2015

## Historical Context

- In 2014, media reports of sexual misconduct in the CAF captured widespread public attention.
  - The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) commissioned an external review to investigate sexual misconduct in the CAF.
- The external review was conducted by retired Supreme Court justice Marie Deschamps (Deschamps, 2015):
  - Concluded the CAF has a permissive sexualized culture that tolerates acts of sexual misconduct, and made 10 recommendations to address sexual misconduct in CAF.
- In 2015, the CAF launched the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC) and Operation HONOUR.





2016

## Research Program Objective:

*To influence cultural change strategy through comprehensive, multi-phase research focused on understanding the key cultural dimensions, incidence, and response to inappropriate sex- and gender-based behaviours in the CAF/DND*



**HOW?**

- Monitoring the scope of sexual misconduct in the CAF
- Identifying key risks and barriers to healthy and inclusive CAF/DND cultures
- Understanding experiences of affected members, including victims, bystanders, perpetrators and leaders
- Identifying key cultural factors and behaviours that enable positive cultural change and that proactively address inappropriate sex- and gender-based behaviours in CAF/DND





2016

2018

2022

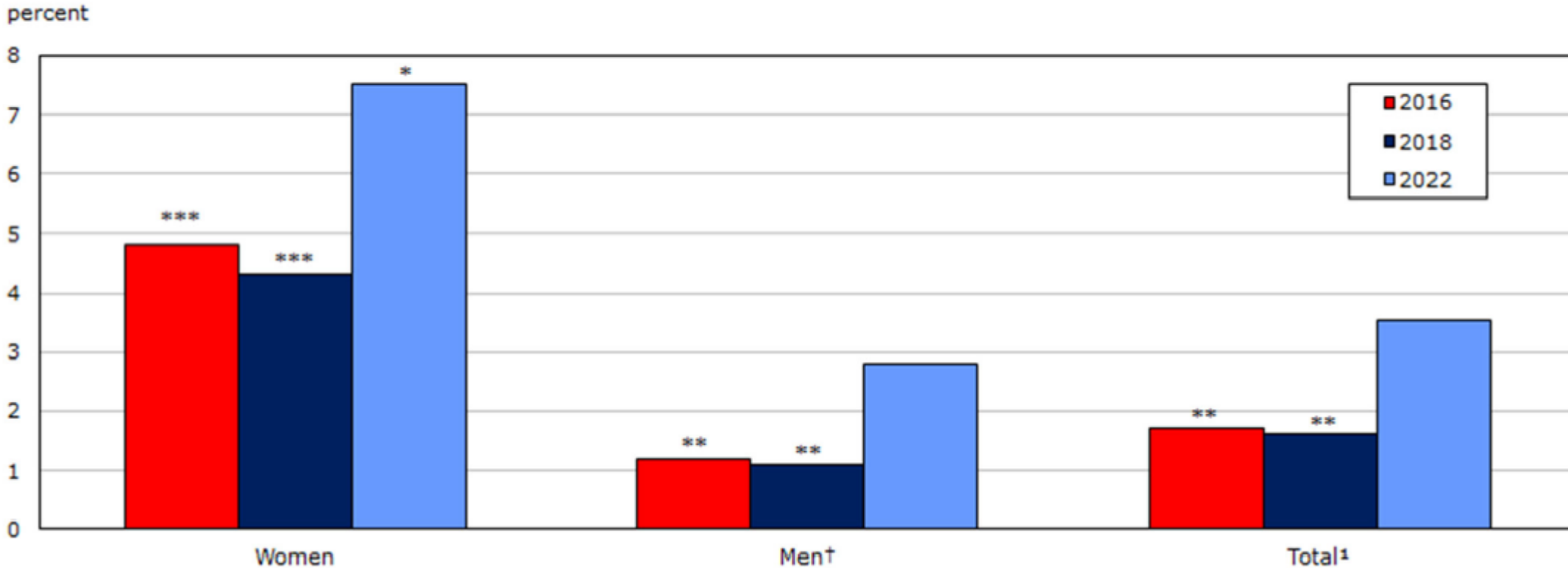
## SSMCAF Survey

- The Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the CAF (SSMCAF) measured the following:
  - Three forms of inappropriate sexual behaviour:
    - sexual assault (experienced);
    - sexualized behaviour (witnessed **and** experienced); and
    - discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity (witnessed **and** experienced).
- The SSMCAF was administered to all Reg F and P Res personnel in 2016, 2018 & 2022.
- The response rate for Reg F was 33% (2022), 52% (2018), 61% (2016).
- The response rate for P Res was 17% (2022), 29% (2018), 36% (2016).





## Regular Force members who were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months, by gender, 2016, 2018, and 2022



\* significantly different from reference category ( $p < 0.05$ )

\*\* significantly different from 2022 ( $p < 0.05$ )

\*\*\* significantly different from reference category ( $p < 0.05$ ) and 2022 ( $p < 0.05$ )

† reference category

1. Includes gender diverse individuals and those whose gender was not stated.

**Note:** Includes sexual assaults in the military workplace and outside the military workplace involving military members (Canadian Armed Forces or foreign) and/or Department of National Defence civilians or contractors. Includes current Regular Force members but may include some incidents of sexual assault which occurred prior to joining the Regular Force (i.e., while a member of the Primary Reserves). Differences between 2016 and 2018 are not statistically significant.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2016, 2018, and 2022.





Table 1  
Canadian Armed Forces Regular Force members who were sexually assaulted in the past 12 months, by gender and type of sexual assault, 2016, 2018, and 2022

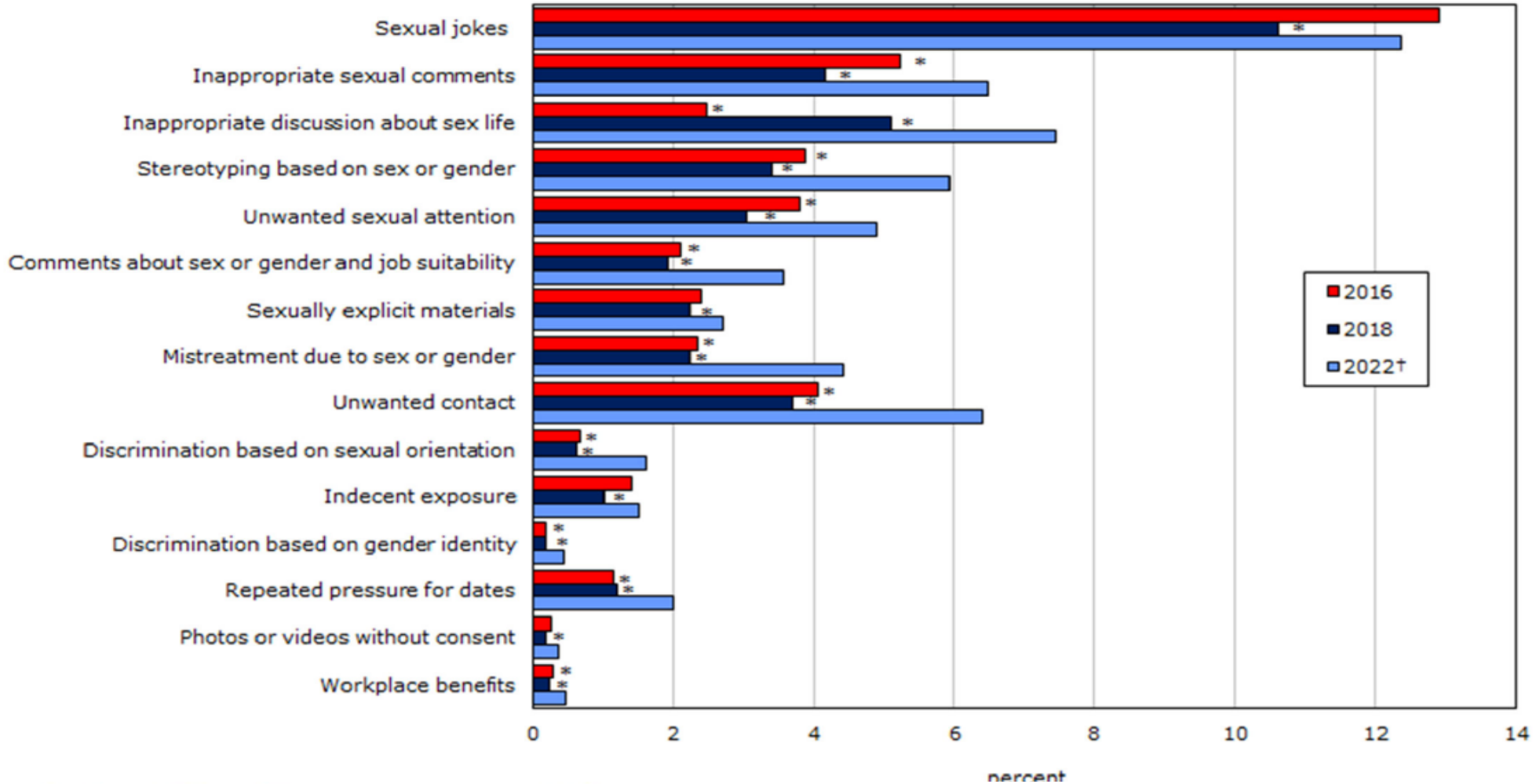
Year and gender	Sexual attack		Unwanted sexual touching		Sexual activity where unable to consent		Total sexual assault <sup>1</sup>	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
<b>2022</b>								
Women	160	1.8*	580	6.8*	140	1.6*	640	7.5*
Men†	180	0.4	1,260	2.7	210	0.4	1,310	2.8
<b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>340</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1,960</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>2018</b>								
Women	60	0.8***	300	3.7***	70	0.9***	340	4.3***
Men†	60	0.1**	480	1.0**	50 <sup>E</sup>	0.1 <sup>E</sup> **	520	1.1**
<b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>140</b>	<b>0.2**</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>1.4**</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>0.2**</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1.6**</b>
<b>2016</b>								
Women	70	0.9***	320	4.0***	60	0.7***	380	4.8***
Men†	80	0.2**	520	1.1**	60	0.1**	570	1.2**
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>0.3**</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>1.5**</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>0.2**</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1.7**</b>





## Regular Force members who were targeted by sexualized or discriminatory behaviours in the past 12 months, by type of behaviour, 2016, 2018, and 2022

Sexualized or discriminatory behaviour



\* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05)

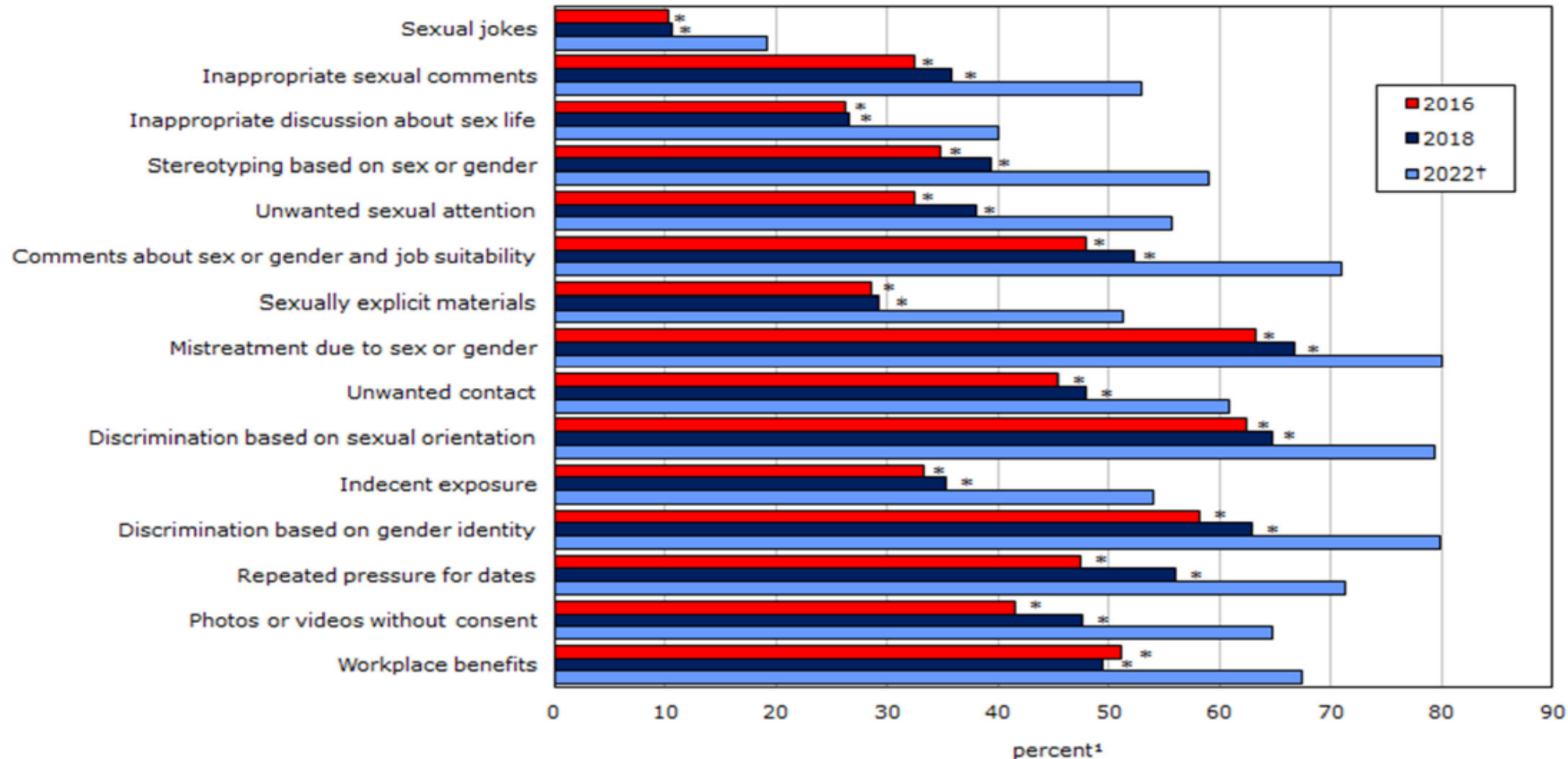
† reference category

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2016, 2018, and 2022.



## Perceived offensiveness of sexualized or discriminatory behaviours seen, heard, or experienced in the past 12 months, by type of behaviour, 2016, 2018, and 2022†

Sexualized or discriminatory behaviour



\* significantly different from reference category ( $p < 0.05$ )

† reference category

1. Percent calculations based on Regular Force members who witnessed or experienced sexualized or discriminatory behaviours and who stated that the behaviour was either somewhat or very offensive.

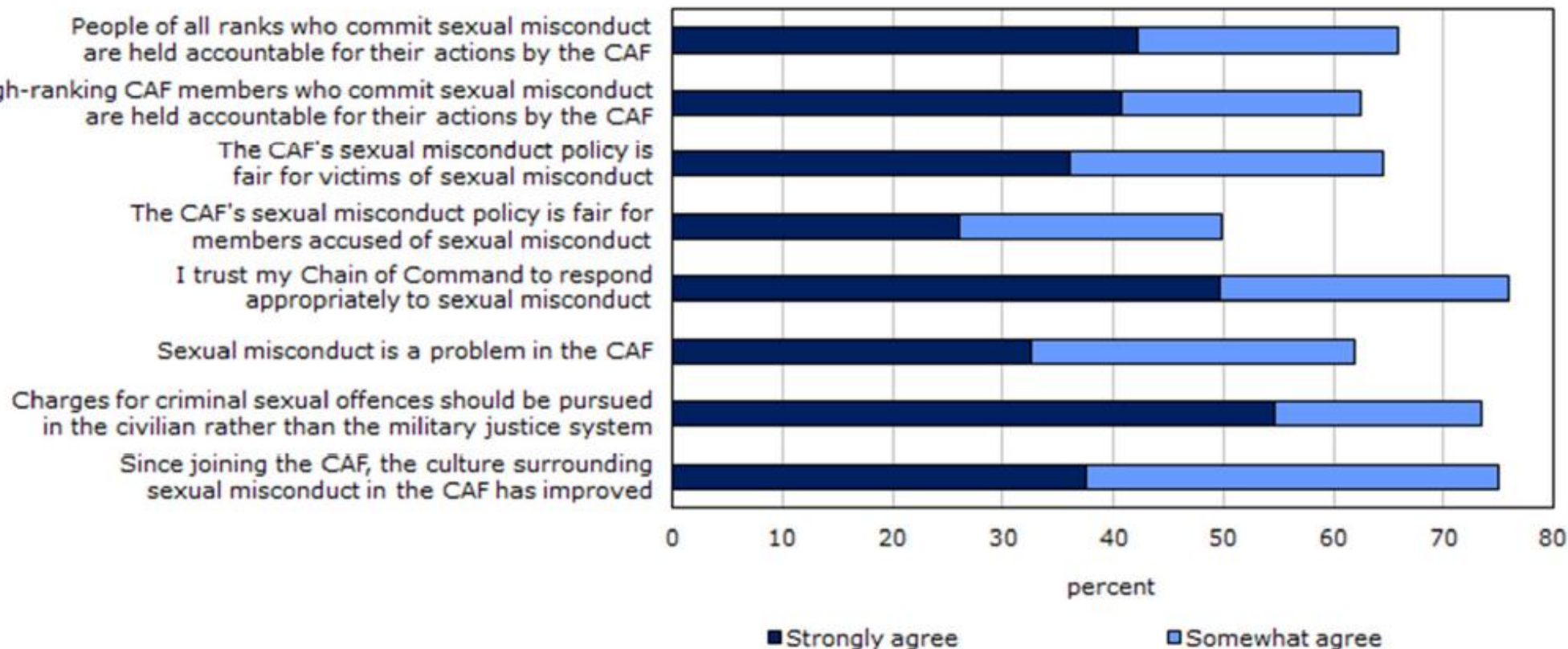
Source: Statistics Canada, Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2016, 2018, and 2022.





## Regular Force members' perceptions of the CAF in regards to sexual misconduct, 2022

Perception about the CAF



**Note:** Percent calculations exclude missing responses. Other response categories not displayed are "neither agree nor disagree", "somewhat disagree" and "strongly disagree".

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2022.





## Additional Insights

- Sexual assault was more prevalent among Regular Force members who are **younger**, who are **Indigenous**, who have a **disability**, or whose sexual orientation is **not heterosexual**.
- Over half (52%) of Regular Force members who were sexually assaulted identified **a peer as the perpetrator** in at least one instance.
- One in five (21%) Regular Force members who were sexually assaulted in 2022 stated that the incident was **reported**, down from 2018 (25%) but not statistically different from 2016 (23%). The most common reason provided for not reporting an instance was a belief that it would not make a difference.
- Compared with 2018, a **higher proportion** of Regular Force members who witnessed sexualized or discriminatory behaviours intervened or took action. Speaking to the person(s) responsible was the most common form of **bystander action**.
- **Reporting** sexualized or discriminatory behaviours to someone in authority has steadily **increased**, from 26% in 2016 to 34% in 2022. Women (50%) were more likely to report at least one instance they experienced compared with men (27%).





2018

# Qualitative Study on Experiences of Sexual Misconduct

- **Objective**

- To examine the experiences of serving and retired members with regards to seeking and receiving support following an incident of sexual misconduct in the CAF

- **Methods**

- One-on-one, semi-structured interviews - Questions focused on the types of support people seek (i.e., formal and informal); the quality of care they have received and the impact of that care; as well as the challenges and barriers to care and support within the CAF

- **Key Findings: Support Services**

- Challenges were reported across all formalized support services
- The nature of these challenges varied, but were linked by shared concerns regarding transparency, impartiality, and fairness

- **Key Findings: Workplace support**

- The need for workplace support was discussed to a great degree across the interviews
  - Leadership support is an integral mitigating factor in participants' recovery
- Secondary harm/distress from insufficient organizational responses was commonly reported
  - Main challenges: lack of trauma-informed responses; conflicts of interest within the unit; and difficulties obtaining workplace accommodation





2017

## Socialization: Four Phase Qualitative Study

<i>Multi-Phase Study</i>		<i>Data Collection</i>	<i>Analysis &amp; Reporting</i>
Phase 1	Entry Level Training Environment	Oct 2017 – Mar 2018	Complete / In Progress
Phase 2	Entry Level Occupational Training	Jan 2019 – Mar 2020	Complete / In Progress
Phase 3	Operational Units	Nov 2021 – May 2022	In Progress
Phase 4	Deployed Operational Units	TBD	TBD

- **Key Findings: Entry-Level Training Environments (Phase 1)**

- Anticipatory socialization: Participants emphasized importance of familial and peer influences on informing their attitudes and views toward the CAF prior to joining
- Culture & values:
  - Instructors report a shift away from a sexualized culture, embracing positive organizational cultural changes
  - New recruits discuss persistent use of inappropriate language in the training environment
- Impact of gender on training:
  - Most new recruits felt that gender did not have a negative impact on training outcomes, important nuances remained among some participants related to problematic attitudes
  - Instructors reported mixed results when asked about the impact of gender on training outcomes
- Risk factors: Stress, adaptation to routines at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School and in the CAF, and pre-existing attitudes of candidates



# Findings: Entry-Level Occupational Training & Operational Units

- **Key Findings: Entry-Level Occupational Training (Phase 2)**

- Conduct-Related Risk Factors:

- Individual: Age, gender, “bad apples” and alcohol
- Situational: Close quarters, unsupervised situations, boredom, and stress
- Organizational: Predominantly male composition, highly hierarchical structure/power differences, and power that lasts a limited duration, stigma of reporting sexual misconduct

- Conduct-Related Protective Factors:

- Belonging, cohesion, role models and mentorship, stress management, perceived social support, and awareness of and access to resources

- **Preliminary Findings: Operational Units (Phase 3)**

- Concerns in the workplace affecting new members’ sense of belonging were identified:

- Role ambiguity: Vague job descriptions or where job descriptions and boundaries are not clearly defined
- Career ambiguity: Feeling of uncertainty and lack of control over career progression and what the future holds
- Mismatch between organizational direction and individual experiences
- Lack of respect in the workplace

- Sense of belonging is a reflection of socialization experiences. Low sense of belonging impacts acceptance of culture evolution, connection to the organization and intentions to remain in the CAF





## 2021 → 2022 Organizational Context

- In 2021, media reports again drew attention to issues of sexual misconduct in the military, especially among military leaders.
  - Operation HONOUR ended.
  - The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) commissioned another external review to investigate sexual misconduct in the CAF.
- The external review was conducted by former Supreme Court justice Louise Arbour (Arbour, 2022):
  - Concluded that the CAF has “a deeply deficient culture fostered by a rigid and outdated structure” that has contributed to sexual misconduct and made 48 recommendations to help address the issue of sexual misconduct in the CAF.
- CAF stood up a new L1 organization: Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC).
  - Unify and integrate all associated culture change activities across DND/CAF.







2023

## Canadian Military College (CMC) Survey

- *“The Exit Survey of graduating cadets should be adapted to capture cadets’ experiences with sexual misconduct or discrimination.”*
- Administered May 2023 to both CMCs and across all academic years
- Includes questions on a continuum of 12 unwanted sexualized behaviours and discrimination (sex, gender, sexual orientation) in the past 12 months
- Questions were based on the 2019 Statistics Canada Survey on Individual Safety in the Postsecondary Student Population (SISPSP)

### Status

- The data is being analyzed, and top-line results were presented in November 2023
- The results will be briefed to key stakeholders (e.g., CPCC, CDA, CMC administration, and the External Monitoring Committee)
- A briefing to the students (at both CMCs) will occur Jan 2024
- The next administration of the survey will likely occur Winter-Spring 2024





2023

## Update on Madame Arbour's IECR Final Report

- Criminal Code sexual offence charges now laid in the civilian justice system.
- Complaints of non-criminal sexual harassment can now be made directly to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC).
  - Members no longer required to exhaust all internal complaint systems before engaging the services of the CHRC.
- Grievances related to sexual misconduct currently expedited through the Military Grievance External Review Committee.
  - Formal changes to the military grievance process forthcoming.
- Reimbursement of eligible legal costs incurred by those who have been affected by sexual misconduct, retroactive to 2019.





2023

## Update on Madame Arbour's IECR Final Report (Contd)

- CAF has adopted a character-based leadership model, which informs evaluation and promotion processes.
- Initiated the repeal of Duty to Report regulations (will be implemented Winter 2023/2024).
- SMSRC support services expanded.
  - Includes first DND/Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) peer support program launched.
- Declaration of Victims' Rights (DVR) launched.
  - access to information, right to protection, and right to request a victim liaison officer.





## Gaps and the way ahead

- Further engagement with the academic and international community, internal and external stakeholders to address challenges and advance knowledge
- Integrate, and leverage knowledge in other research domains, such as culture, leadership, ethics, and workplace well-being
- Effectiveness of training
- Review of administrative data - Data collection/data coding underway
  - Goal: Systematically examine available administrative information on incidents of sexual misconduct, including perpetrator, victim, and environment relevant characteristics.
- Response to respondents – In development
  - Goal: Qualitative interview-based study to examine the experiences and perspectives of respondents when an allegation of sexual misconduct is made within the CAF.





THANK YOU

