



**Who we are:** Mindstrong Guardians was founded by U.S. Coast Guard veterans to improve mental health outcomes for military members and first responders. Our team draws upon the talents and lived experience of:

Veterans | Licensed clinicians | Trauma survivors | Professional coaches | Chaplains | Medical professionals

**Mission:** Deliver innovative pre-crisis prevention and awareness programs and post-traumatic healing events.

**Duration:** 2.5 hour MST Lived Experience Conversation and 2.5 hour MST Workshop

**Primary Goals:** Build communal engagement and foster healing for both MST survivors and advocates.

Create safe spaces for members to connect | Model mental health agency & post-traumatic growth | Humanize the struggle to heal from sexual trauma | Fill the gap between member needs & service capability | Break stigma & fight the pressure to remain silent | Give permission to share healing stories

**Alignment:** Our MST Healing Program supports the Coast Guard’s Integrated Primary Prevention Program and directly addresses recommendations of the Accountability and Transparency Review. More specifically:

***“Create a program for restorative engagements that will allow victims to work on healing with the assistance of trained personnel.”***

To accomplish this, we maximize the: (1) power of peer-support and (2) benefit of lived experience conversations. Evidence shows trauma-informed peer engagements make a difference by providing:

**Increased:** Self-esteem & social functioning | Empathy and acceptance (camaraderie) | Engagement in self-care and wellness | Sense that clinical treatment is responsive to needs | Sense of hope and inspiration | Sense of control and ability to bring about change in their lives

**Decreased:** Substance use and depression

**MST Lived Experience Conversation** (2.5 hrs): Hear the lived experience of a veteran with service-connected MST who is a model of post-traumatic growth. General outline may include:

Setting the context | How the body keeps score of trauma | Survivors lived experience | Impact on work-life | Reaching out for help | Moral injury | Support and resources | Strengths-based healing | Allies and advocates | Key take-aways: self and organization | Close-out

**MST Workshop** (2.5 hrs): Designed to help MST survivors and advocates develop and use their voice to promote healing going forward. We take themes and learning from the morning panel session and carry them into the afternoon. Subjects may include:

Self-care techniques | Grounding | Trust-building activities | Trauma-informed approaches to healing | Healing modalities | Agency and resilience building | Peer support and building a supportive community | Advocacy and activism | Next steps | Close-out