

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:

EXAMINING THE EFFICACY OF SEXUAL
ASSAULT PREVENTION PROGRAMMING
IN GREEK LIFE

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High rates of sexual assault and misconduct are a significant problem at universities across the United States, and students in Greek life (social fraternities and sororities) at universities are at an even higher risk for sexual assault victimization. Sexual assault prevention programming is one way to address this problem. This study utilizes qualitative methods to determine what characteristics of sexual assault prevention programming for students in Greek life are most important to them, as well as how these characteristics influence their willingness to intervene as a bystander of sexual assault or misconduct. Findings suggest that semesterly slideshow presentations are insufficient in encouraging bystander intervention among this population, and that programs should aim to become more discussion and activity based. Furthermore, differences between fraternity and sorority members in their bystander intervention tactics shows that these students may benefit from programs that are more specifically targeted towards them.

EXAMINING THE EFFICACY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION
PROGRAMMING IN GREEK LIFE

By

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Introduction	1
Background	4
Applying The Theory of Planned Behavior to Bystander Intervention	4
Sexual Assault Prevention Programs at Universities	4
Effectiveness of Sexual Assault Prevention Program Characteristics	5
Sexual Assault Prevention Programs in Greek Life	6
Current Study	9
Data and Methods	11
Sampling Procedures	11
Sample	11
Table 1. Participant Demographics	11
Interview Procedures	12
Analytic Strategy	12
Results	15
Common Characteristics of Sexual Assault Prevention Programs in Greek Life	15
Engaging Characteristics of Sexual Assault Prevention Programs in Greek Life	15
Bystander Intervention Willingness Scenario Responses	17
Differing Responses Among Fraternity and Sorority-Affiliated Participants	17
Program Characteristics & Bystander Intervention Willingness	17
Participants' Recommendations to University Administrators	18
Discussion & Limitations	21
Discussion	21
Limitations	21
Implications and Future Directions	24
Implications	24
Future Directions	24
Conclusion	26
References	27
Appendices	33
Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire	33
Appendix B: Interview Guide	34

Introduction

Sexual assault and misconduct are a major problem on college campuses in the United States, as numerous studies have reported that about 19-25% of undergraduate women and about 5% of undergraduate men have experienced sexual assault or misconduct in college (Kleinsasser et al., 2015; Krebs et al., 2009; Rosenberg et al., 2019). According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), sexual assault “refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim” (“Sexual Assault,” n.d.). Sexual misconduct refers to any type of sexual nature that is unwelcome (NSVRC, n.d.). The consequences experienced by victims of sexual assault or misconduct can be extremely harmful, both psychologically and physically. For instance, research has found sexual violence to be a major risk factor for suicidal behavior (Tomasula et al., 2012), eating disorders (Malet-Karas et al., 2022), alcohol and substance use (Kaufman et al., 2019; Messman-Moore et al., 2015), and poor academic outcomes (Molstad et al., 2023). Therefore, examining the prevention efforts that are most effective in minimizing rates of sexual assault is crucial for improving the wellbeing of college students.

The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act) of 2013 requires that all federally funded institutions provide sexual assault education programs to students (RAINN, n.d.) Therefore, most universities across the United States have implemented mandatory sexual assault prevention training programs for all students (Htun et al., 2022). The term “sexual assault prevention training” refers to training that discusses sexual assault and/or sexual misconduct in order to prevent it. For example, many universities require students to complete online sexual assault prevention training as incoming students (Zapp et al., 2018). The goals of these programs

vary, but often include promoting awareness of key definitions and available resources, encouraging bystander intervention, and educating students about relevant laws.

In addition to sexual assault and misconduct being a problem at universities, certain environments on college campuses are at an even higher risk for sexual assault. The term “Greek life” refers to fraternities and sororities, which are social organizations commonly found on college campuses that aim to encourage community involvement, leadership, and belonging. Fraternities are typically composed of male students, while sororities are typically composed of female students. Research has shown that students in Greek life are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual assault and misconduct (DeFazio et al., 2024). One study found that of their sample, 29% of female undergraduate students in Greek life had experienced sexual assault in college, while 7% of female undergraduates not in Greek life had been victims of sexual assault or misconduct (Minow & Einolf, 2009). The authors of this study theorized that one reason for this difference could be due to higher alcohol consumption in Greek life environments (Wechsler et al., 2009). This is because research has found that sexual assault is more likely to occur in situations in which alcohol is being consumed (The Maryland Collaborative, 2016).

While most prior research regarding sexual assault for college students has looked at college campuses as a whole, few studies have solely studied the Greek life-affiliated population of college students. It is important to examine whether the effectiveness of certain aspects of sexual assault prevention programming differ for this population because students in Greek life are at a higher risk for sexual violence (DeFazio et al., 2024). Various studies have theorized that this disparity is due to certain aspects of the Greek life environment. For example, Canan and colleagues (2016) found that Greek life-affiliated students are often accepting of rape myths and token resistance (the idea that “no” actually means “yes” in a sexual context). Furthermore, this

relationship was moderated by gender, with Greek life-affiliated men being even more accepting of these attitudes.

This paper aims to address the problem of high sexual assault and misconduct rates in Greek life on college campuses by exploring the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs for students in Greek life. Specifically, this study will analyze effectiveness by examining students' willingness to intervene as a bystander of sexual assault or misconduct, as well as their own opinions of the engagingness of the characteristics of these programs. Students' willingness to intervene as a bystander is an important outcome of sexual assault training because any student can be a witness of sexual assault or misconduct and therefore change the outcome of the situation. According to the Association of American Universities' 2019 Campus Climate Survey, 14.8% of students reported that they had witnessed a situation they believe could've led to sexual assault (Cantor et al., 2020). This study will specifically analyze what aspects of sexual assault prevention training promote bystander intervention willingness in Greek-affiliated students, as well as how the students themselves feel about sexual assault prevention programming in Greek life.

Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior and Engagement Theory in psychology, this study has two main objectives. First, this study aims to determine what characteristics of sexual assault prevention programs students in Greek life feel are important. Programs can only be effective if students feel as though they are engaged with and relate to the material. Therefore, it's important to be able to give students a voice in this area of research. Next, this study aims to understand how these characteristics of sexual assault prevention programs shape students in Greek life's willingness to intervene as a bystander. I use will original qualitative interview data to address these questions.

Background

Applying The Theory of Planned Behavior to Bystander Intervention

The Theory of Planned Behavior by social psychologist Icek Ajzen posits that one's intentions influence their behaviors, and these intentions are impacted by three factors: their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985). This study will focus on how perceived behavioral control affects behavior. This is the idea that when a person feels that they are equipped and able to perform a behavior, they are more likely to do so.

The Theory of Planned Behavior can help to explain bystander intervention and why or why not a person might choose to perform as a bystander. A bystander is a person who is a witness to a situation, but is not directly involved. Bystanders have the opportunity to intervene in these situations, ultimately changing the outcome (McMahon et al., 2011). One common example of ways that a bystander can intervene is the Four D's: direct, distract, delegate, delay (Coker et al., 2015). A bystander using a "direct" intervention tactic will directly involve themselves into the situation, such as by speaking to the perpetrator or victim. Using a "distract" intervention method, a bystander might pretend to know the victim in order to get them out of the situation, for example. If a bystander does not want to intervene on their own, perhaps because the situation is too dangerous, they can "delegate" by asking others around them to help. Finally, a bystander using a "delay" method will help after the situation has occurred, such as by supporting the victim (Coker et al., 2014). Bystanders can completely change the outcome of a

dangerous situation for a victim; therefore, it is critical for all students to know how to act if they are a bystander.

As previously mentioned, one aspect of the Theory of Planned Behavior explains that a person's intention to perform a behavior, and ultimately if they do perform that behavior, is impacted by their own perceived ability to carry the behavior out. Therefore, according to this theory, a person is more likely to engage in bystander intervention if they feel that they are able to do so and will know what to do in the situation. One way to increase this perceived behavioral control is through training. In regard to being a bystander of sexual assault, one can increase their knowledge of how to act as a bystander by engaging in sexual assault prevention training.

Sexual Assault Prevention Programs at Universities

There is a wide variety of sexual assault prevention programs and trainings that universities offer to students, which can ultimately increase their perceived ability to act as a bystander. Though this is just one goal of these programs, other objectives can include teaching students about sexual assault and related topics, educating them about their resources on and off campus, and informing them of what to do if they are a victim of sexual assault.

One popular option for sexual assault prevention programs at universities is the use of required online prevention training prior to students' first year of college (Zapp et al., 2018). These programs often include bystander intervention training, as well as definitions of terms related to sexual assault and misconduct. For example, the University of Maryland requires that all students complete one online training module in their first year, and another in their second year at the university (OCRSM, n.d.). In the first online training, students learn about sexual harassment, stalking, consent, reporting, and other related topics (Vector Solutions, n.d.). In the second online program, students learn how to create and maintain healthy relationships (Vector

Solutions, n.d.). In both of these programs, students are required to watch video modules and answer quiz questions about what they watched. Other universities such as the University of Virginia, Georgia Tech, and The George Washington University offer this program to students as well.

Other programs, such as Bringing in the Bystander, include an in-person lecture, followed up by a group discussion, interactive exercises, small group discussion, and role playing (Soteria Solutions, n.d.). Universities such as the University of Delaware, Lehigh University, and Cornell University offer this program to students.

In order for programs to be effective, one important criterion that they must meet is engagingness. Engagement Theory is a psychological theory that explains that when people are actively engaged with the material they are learning, they understand the material more in-depth (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). Because sexual assault prevention programs are a learning environment, this theory can be applied. Therefore, when sexual assault prevention programs are more engaging for students, Engagement Theory expects that the students will understand the material better, allowing the program to be more effective.

Effectiveness of Sexual Assault Prevention Program Characteristics

While previous research has examined the effectiveness of certain sexual assault prevention program characteristics, these attributes that have been studied are broad and do not delve into the specifics of these programs, such as discussions, lectures, and videos. For example, in a review of prior research on this topic, Vladutiu and colleagues (2011) discussed that programs which are targeted towards students' attitudes toward sexual assault should be conducted by professionals, while programs aimed toward debunking sexual assault-based myths

are more effective when run by peers. Additionally, programs that span multiple sessions have also been shown to improve students' attitudes toward sexual assault. In general, this literature review posits that sexual assault programs should differ based on the intended outcome of the program. For example, a presentation by a survivor of sexual assault can be effective at changing students' perceptions about myths, but might not influence behaviors as well as a different program (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Vladutiu et al., 2011).

Sexual Assault Prevention Programs in Greek Life

Though lots of research has been conducted on sexual assault prevention programs for college students as a whole, few studies have looked at the population of Greek life-affiliated students on its own. However, initial studies explain that due to excessive drinking, gender norms, and rape attitudes in Greek life, students in Greek life are expected to respond differently than general college students to prevention programming. Therefore, training that is tailored to students in Greek life are necessary (DeFazio et al., 2024).

Studies that have analyzed the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs for student in Greek life have mainly focused on fraternity members, as men are more likely to be perpetrators of sexual assault (Franklin et al., 2012). For instance, studies have found that bystander intervention programs, as well as programs that focus on gender roles, have been effective for men in fraternities. However, programs which center around empathy are less impactful for fraternity men (Mazar & Kirkner, 2016). Additionally, one study found that after participating in a program which taught men how to help a survivor of sexual assault, those in the treatment group were less likely to be accepting of rape myths and/or to commit rape in comparison to the control group (Foubert, 2000).

Though some studies have found that programs tailored to Greek life can have a more positive impact on students' rape attitudes, minimal research has been done on what aspects of these programs affect these students' behaviors as a bystander (Vladutiu et al., 2011). As previously mentioned, bystander intervention is an important outcome of sexual assault prevention programming. Due to sexual assault rates being higher in Greek life, it is critical that members of this population are equipped with the skills to act as a bystander (DeFazio et al., 2024).

Furthermore, most of this previous research has consisted of literature reviews and quantitative methods. While these methods are important to understand how students in Greek life respond to sexual assault prevention programming, hearing from the students themselves is critical. Therefore, this study uses qualitative methods in order to gain a deeper understanding of how students in Greek life themselves feel they are engaged with the programs they are participating in, as well as understand how the characteristics of these programs influence their willingness to intervene as a bystander.

Current Study

Although previous studies have examined relationships between sexual assault prevention programming and bystander intervention for college students, few have specifically analyzed these relationships solely for students involved in Greek life organizations. To address this gap, this study aims to examine two research questions: 1) What are the characteristics of sexual assault prevention programs that students in Greek life feel are important? 2) How do these characteristics shape their willingness to intervene as a bystander?

Addressing these questions will help to acknowledge and fill various gaps in the existing literature regarding sexual assault prevention programming in Greek life. The first way that this study will do so is by examining students in both fraternities and sororities. While previous studies have aimed to determine the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programming for fraternity members, few have looked at Greek life as a whole. Previous studies have done this because men are more likely to engage in sexual violence (Franklin et al., 2012). However, it is important to study both fraternity and sorority members because students in both organizations can intervene as a bystander. Therefore, this study will utilize original qualitative interview data from both sorority and fraternity members to address these questions. Since previous studies analyzing sexual assault prevention programs in Greek life have mostly not been qualitative, it's important to introduce this method of research to this topic because qualitative research allows for a more in-depth understanding of how students in Greek life respond to sexual assault prevention programming. While there are limitations to qualitative research, such as biases and

limited generalizability, comparing qualitative results with previous literature reviews and quantitative research will allow for a much better understanding of this topic overall.

Similarly, other studies that have assessed students' perceptions and outcomes of sexual assault prevention programs have only looked at all college students. I focus on students in Greek life rather than college students more broadly because students in Greek life are more likely to be victims of sexual assault, but have received little attention in prior research (Mazar & Kirkner, 2016; Minow & Einolf, 2009). Therefore, sexual assault prevention programs for Greek-affiliated students may need to have different or more intense training features to accommodate for this problem.

Data and Methods

Sampling Procedures

This study draws from semi-structured original qualitative interview data collected from six students at the University of Maryland. With university institutional review board (IRB) approval, participants were recruited via convenience and snowball sampling. I reached out to leaders and peers in the Greek life community to ask them to pass along a flyer with information about the study. Students then reached out to me if they were interested in participating. No compensation was provided for participating in this study. Participants were also asked if they knew anyone in the Greek life community who may be interested in participating. To ensure diversity among interview responses, participants were all from different sororities and fraternities.

Participants were eligible for this study if they were: 18 years or older, a student at the University of Maryland, a member of a fraternity or sorority, and they had have participated in at least one sexual assault prevention program provided by their sorority, fraternity, the Panhellenic Association, the Interfraternity Council, and/or the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life. I did not ask about students' experiences with university-level training because I wanted to ensure that all of the respondents' testimonials directly discussed program experiences in Greek life, as that is the main focus of this study.

Sample

A total of six participants were interviewed for this study: three sorority-affiliated participants and three fraternity-affiliated participants. Five of the participants were White, and one participant was Asian American. Additionally, most participants were 21 years old (83.3%)

and seniors at the University of Maryland (83.3%). The average length of interviews was 22.6 minutes, with the longest interview lasting 39 minutes and the shortest interview lasting 15 minutes. Five of the interviews were conducted in a private space of the interviewee's choice, and one interview was conducted over the phone. All interviews were recorded and then deleted after being transcribed.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

	N	Percent (%)
<i>Greek Affiliation</i>		
Fraternity	3	50
Sorority	3	50
<i>Gender Identity</i>		
Male	3	50
Female	3	50
<i>Age</i>		
21	5	83.3
22	1	16.7
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	5	83.3
Asian American	1	16.7
<i>Year in College</i>		
Junior	1	16.7
Senior	5	83.3
<i>Years in Greek life</i>		
2	2	33.3
3	1	16.7
4	3	50

Interview Procedures

Prior to the interview itself, participants were asked to complete a demographics form that asked about their age, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Appendix A).

Furthermore, this form asked participants what year they are in college, how many years they've

been a member of Greek life, and if they live in their fraternity or sorority house. These questions helped to further understand the themes that came to light from these interviews.

The interviews began by asking participants what they would do as a bystander in three hypothetical situations (Appendix B). For example, participants were asked, “You are at a bar, and you think you see a man put something in another girl’s drink, but you’re not positive. What would you do in this situation and why?” The purpose of this section of the interview was to understand what resources, if any, participants would use if they were to witness sexual assault. Next, participants were asked about their previous experiences with sexual assault prevention programs in Greek life. Questions asked participants what these programs included, how often they’ve participated in these programs, and their opinions about the engagingness of these programs. Participants then were asked about their own experiences as a bystander of sexual assault or potential sexual assault. Questions asked if the participants have ever used the resources provided in the programs they discussed as a bystander. Finally, the interviews wrapped up by asking participants what recommendations they would make to university administrators to promote safety when it comes to sexual assault. The purpose of this section was to wrap up everything we had talked about, bringing it back to the University of Maryland as a whole. Additionally, I chose to end each interview by asking this question because this is a tough topic to discuss, and therefore I wanted to ensure that interviews ended on a positive note.

Analytic Strategy

The interview data for this sample was analyzed using NVivo, which is a software that helps to analyze qualitative interview data through organized coding and labeling. All of the interviews were transcribed, and then each interview was coded for topics regarding program

characteristics, opinions, and bystander intervention willingness. For program characteristics, interviews were coded for any characteristics mentioned, such as presentations, discussions, and videos. I did not ask about previously researched characteristics, such as programs being run by peers or targeting attitudes or behaviors, because I wanted to focus on the more specific aspects of prevention programming. For opinions, the negative and positive opinions of program characteristics and features from each participant were organized into codes such as “important”, “not important”, “engaging”, “not engaging,” and more. Finally, bystander intervention willingness was coded into themes that emerged from participant answers. The ways in which participants intervened or did not intervene in these scenarios were sorted into groups such as “directly intervened,” “created a distraction,” “did not intervene,” etc. Other outcomes that did not directly relate to the research questions but were still important were coded into their own categories for future analysis. For example, differences between responses among sorority and fraternity participants emerged, both in their answers regarding hypothetical scenarios and their program experiences.

Results

Common Characteristics of Sexual Assault Prevention Programs in Greek Life

Across the interviews, there were numerous characteristics of programs that were mentioned, such as slideshows, discussions, and videos. The most common characteristic of the prevention programs that interviewees had participated in was a slideshow presentation. These presentations often began with an introduction, which provided a list of definitions of terms related to sexual assault. One fraternity participant noted that “First they do definitions of the terms... they go into why it’s important and sometimes they’ll give statistics about sexual misconduct that happens within Greek life.”

After receiving various definitions, the next step to these slideshow presentations often provides resources and tactics to chapter members. For example, participants learned about the university’s on and off campus resources, as well as what they should do in a situation as a victim or bystander.

Facilitated discussions were another characteristic of these programs that many participants experienced. These discussions were held in small groups, with the entire chapter, and/or with multiple chapters. One sorority participant described a program called “Real Talks,” in which sororities and fraternities get together to openly discuss sexual assault prevention. The participant explained that rather than a presentation, these “Real Talks” were more “dialogue based.” Other participants explained that when presentations were only to their chapter, they were often encouraged to turn to each other in small groups to discuss what they would do in various hypothetical scenarios. Though most participants explained that their group would

usually stay on-topic during these discussions, one fraternity-affiliated respondent mentioned, “It depends on who is in the group. It’s hard to keep people on topic.”

A less common program characteristic mentioned by participants was watching a video. Only two participants mentioned that they had previously watched a video in a sexual assault prevention program given to their chapter. Both participants were in sororities, and they each explained that the videos depicted real-world scenarios that can occur on a college campus.

Regarding the frequency of these sexual assault prevention programs, all the participants explained that their individual chapter shows a presentation regarding sexual assault to all members at least once each semester. However, while all sorority participants noted that attendance to these programs was mandatory, fraternity participants explained that members can miss these training sessions with seemingly no consequences. One fraternity participant and one sorority participant noted that these trainings only happen once each semester, while other participants explained that their chapter offers a few other trainings throughout the year.

Engaging Characteristics of Sexual Assault Prevention Programs in Greek Life

A clear theme that arose throughout the entire interview process was that all participants did not find slideshow presentations to be engaging. Participants explained that they are often given the same exact presentation each semester, making the information less impactful and engaging each time. One sorority participant explained that “I feel like when it’s the same information being given to the same people over and over, it kind of has less of an effect on them.” She further went on to say that these presentations “don’t really warrant a lot of discussion.” Another sorority participant explained that she feels as though these presentations are “just to kind of check off that box of saying that the training was done.” Due to this, she felt that these presentations are often rushed, further losing engagement

On the other hand, many participants said that they felt that the group discussions that take place during these training sessions were the most informative and engaging. One fraternity participant explained that “[The programs are] most engaging when they’re asking us what we would do in scenarios. It really gets you thinking about, you know, putting yourself in that situation.” A sorority participant noted that “when you break out into groups and you have to be engaged... [it’s] a more engaging atmosphere rather than just sitting there watching.”

Of the few participants who had watched videos in a sexual assault prevention program, they noted that these videos were also more impactful and memorable. One participant explained that “[The videos] kind of make me look at like perspectives differently than just someone giving us a presentation over and over.”

Bystander Intervention Willingness Scenario Responses

Differing Responses Among Fraternity and Sorority-Affiliated Participants

As mentioned in the data and methods section, interviews began with participants being asked what they would do in three hypothetical scenarios in which they were a bystander of potential sexual assault. The first theme that came to light when analyzing participants’ responses to these scenarios was that fraternity-affiliated students are likely to intervene in one similar way, while sorority-affiliated participants are likely to intervene in a different similar way. For example, in the situation in which the participants saw a man put something into a woman’s drink, fraternity-affiliated participants were more likely to “accidentally” spill the woman’s drink with no explanation. However, sorority-affiliated participants were more likely to directly talk to the woman in this situation to tell her what they saw, then offer to buy her another

drink. A sorority-affiliated participant explained that “First off, I would pull her aside... I’d just say to her, get rid of the drink, I’ll buy you another one.”

This theme also remained constant for the hypothetical situation in which the participant sees a man at an apartment party pull an intoxicated woman toward a bedroom. Fraternity-affiliated participants were more likely to confront the man in this situation, while sorority-affiliated participants were more likely to speak to the woman to ask if she was okay. One fraternity-affiliated participant explained “I would probably step in myself or try and at least... figure out what his intentions are.” One sorority-affiliated participant explained “I would go up to her... I wouldn’t let her go.”

Program Characteristics & Bystander Intervention Willingness

When analyzing the data, I examined participants’ responses to the hypothetical scenarios alongside the characteristics of programs they had participated in. When doing this, the first theme that came to light was that respondents who had participated in programs with other sororities and/or fraternities were more prepared to help their friend in the hypothetical situation in which a friend discloses that they may have been a victim of sexual assault. One sorority-affiliated participant who had previously participated in programs combined with other fraternities and sororities explained that “First I would thank them for coming to me with this information and try to validate their feelings... provide resources I know about and kind of let what they want navigate.” This participant was very prepared to answer this question, which was the same for other participants who had participated in combined prevention programs.

Another theme that arose when comparing the hypothetical responses to program characteristics is that participants who had participated in programs beyond semesterly presentations were likely to alert a person in charge in the bar scenario. This means that their

fraternity or sorority offers additional programs on top of the mandatory presentations that all participants noted that their chapter holds, and they have participated in at least one of these additional programs. One fraternity-affiliated participant who had participated in additional programs explained that in the bar scenario, they would “tell a bartender [or] a bouncer... I feel like that’s the best move.” Other participants who had also participated in additional programs provided similar answers to this situation.

Finally, participants who had watched a video in a sexual assault prevention program were more likely to thank their friend for coming to them and being willing to share their experience in the friend disclosure scenario. This is a great response to this scenario, as the Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network explains that this is the first step that one should take if someone discloses their experience as a victim of sexual assault (RAINN, n.d.). One fraternity-affiliated respondent who had watched a video in a prevention program with his fraternity told me, “First I would probably thank them for trusting me with that information... I would just try and let them know that I’m not judging them and I hear them.” The other participant who had watched a video, a sorority-affiliated respondent, provided a similar answer.

Participants’ Recommendations to University Administrators

At the end of each interview, I asked each respondent what advice or recommendations they would give to University of Maryland administrators to promote safety on campus when it comes to sexual assault and misconduct. A few participants agreed that programs should be led by peers and involve hypothetical scenarios that are relevant to college students. For example, one fraternity-affiliated respondent told me that he would prefer “small groups with current students leading it... someone that’s relatable and that’s like ‘Hey, I was in your shoes just two,

three years ago.’’ This advice can be specifically applied to sexual assault prevention programs in Greek life, as these were the opinions of Greek life-affiliated students.

Discussion & Limitations

Discussion

This study sought to determine the characteristics of prevention programming that students in Greek life feel are important, as well as understand how these program characteristics shape their willingness to intervene as a bystander. I drew from interviews with students in Greek life at the University of Maryland to address these questions. As interviews were conducted, additional findings regarding common program characteristics and differences between fraternity and sorority students' bystander interventions came to light as well.

Though a mandatory slideshow presentation is the most common form of sexual assault prevention programming for students in Greek life, it is also the least engaging. Regardless of fraternity or sorority affiliation, participants unanimously agreed that they do not engage with the material at these presentations, as it is repetitive and not engaging. Due to this finding occurring across all interviews, many students in Greek life likely share similar opinions. According to Engagement Theory, students in Greek life will not gain a deep understanding if they are not engaged, which came to light in the interviews.

When comparing participants' responses to the hypothetical scenarios and their experiences with prevention programming, it appears as though one semesterly presentation is not enough. Those who participated in additional programs with other chapters and belonged to chapters who offered more programming were ultimately more prepared to intervene as a bystander. As previously mentioned, respondents who had participated in programs with other chapters were most prepared to help their friend in the hypothetical disclosure scenario. This is

just one example of how programming beyond one presentation each semester may better prepare students in Greek life to intervene as a bystander. This finding is supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior, as those who have participated in more programming felt more able to intervene as a bystander.

One finding of the interviews that was not an initial objective of this study was the difference in responses between fraternity and sorority participants. Sorority respondents were more likely to directly engage with the woman in the bar scenario, while fraternity participants agreed that they would spill the woman's drink with no explanation. Furthermore, in the apartment party scenario, sorority participants were more likely to talk to the woman to determine what was happening, while fraternity respondents preferred discussing the situation with the man. Though determining gender differences was not an original research question for this study, this finding is supported by prior literature, which has found differences in responses to prevention programs among fraternity students (Franklin et al., 2012; Mazar & Kirkner, 2016). These differences show that perhaps programs should not only be tailored to students in Greek life, but should be specialized separately for fraternities and sororities.

Limitations

There are many limitations of this study. First, this study used snowball and convenience sampling to collect interview participants. Since these sampling methods are not random, they may be less representative of the target population. Though I attempted to address this limitation by sampling participants from different fraternities and sororities, future studies may benefit from a randomized sampling procedure.

Additionally, the sample size for this study was small and lacked variability. This sample was predominately made up of participants who were White, 21 years old, and seniors at the

University of Maryland. Therefore, findings may not be generalizable, as this sample is not representative of all students in Greek life. A larger and more diverse sample size would be necessary to confirm the results of this study.

Additionally, qualitative results can sometimes be unreliable due to social desirability bias. This occurs when interviewees change their answers to say what they think the interviewer wants to hear or do not want to disclose certain experiences. I addressed this in the interviews by ensuring participants that their responses would remain confidential and free of any judgement. However, the addition of quantitative data to this study would have helped to mitigate some of the limitations of qualitative research.

Finally, this study initially was aimed to be a mixed methods study. However, due to difficulty acquiring the quantitative data, this study was only qualitative. Though the qualitative data yielded important results, further questions were meant to be answered through quantitative data, and findings from the qualitative interviews were meant to be supported by this data. For example, I set out to analyze whether students in Greek life were more likely to be a bystander of sexual assault, which would have further emphasized the need for Greek life-specific programming.

Implications and Future Directions

Implications

If future research were to yield similar results to this study, there are many aspects of sexual assault prevention programming in Greek life that need to change. First, programs should rely less on slideshow presentations. Participants in this study unanimously agreed that the information from these presentations is not absorbed, as they are not engaging and are repetitive. Programs should begin to shift toward more facilitated discussions and activities in order to engage students, as participants agreed that they are the most engaged when they are a part of the conversation.

Furthermore, programs may not only need to be targeted towards students in Greek life, but also separately towards fraternities and sororities. Since this study found that bystander interventions vary between those in fraternities and sororities, this finding may suggest that programs between fraternities and sororities should differ. For example, perhaps facilitated discussions should cater specifically to whether a fraternity or sorority is participating. The program itself may not need to be different, but the situations and context provided in these programs might benefit from being better directed towards the target audience.

Finally, fraternities and sororities should mandate additional sexual assault prevention programming for chapter members. This study shows that one presentation each semester is not enough, and that chapter members should be continuously learning about sexual assault prevention through more engaging methods. This should ultimately improve how students in

Greek life are willing to intervene as a bystander, and overall allow them to be more educated about sexual assault prevention.

Future Directions

Future studies regarding this topic should aim to survey a larger and more diverse sample of students in Greek life to learn more about the ways in which sexual assault prevention programming can continue to change. Adding more voices to this area of research can allow for more efficient changes in sexual assault prevention students in Greek life. Additionally, it is important that future research continues to analyze the differences in bystander intervention tactics between fraternity and sorority members to understand how to create the most effective program for each population. Finally, future research should compare responses between Greek life and non-Greek life-affiliated students to analyze what characteristics of sexual assault prevention programs are specifically needed for students in Greek life.

Conclusion

This study set out to analyze the characteristics of sexual assault programs that are important to students in Greek life, as well as how these characteristics shape their willingness to intervene as a bystander through qualitative methods. After interviewing six students in Greek life at the University of Maryland, it became clear that prevention programming can no longer rely on slideshow presentations, as they are the least engaging and therefore not effective. In order for students to fully grasp the material being presented to them, they must be engaged with these programs. Discussions, videos, and other activities may result in more willingness to intervene as a population, as these tactics allow students to engage more with the material. Furthermore, programs in which sororities and fraternities get together to discuss sexual assault can be more effective, as well as additional programs throughout each semester.

This study is only the beginning of the conversation surrounding what characteristics of sexual assault prevention programs can create the most effective outcomes for students in Greek life. While previous studies have begun to address the need for specialized prevention programs for students in Greek life, few have given students the opportunity to vocalize how they feel these programs can improve. Future research should continue to analyze how sexual assault prevention programs in Greek life can change for the better, as well as how these students can benefit from programs catered more towards them.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? _____

What is your race/ethnicity? _____

What is your sexual orientation? _____

What year are you in college? Circle one:

- First year
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

Are you in a fraternity, sorority, or neither? Circle one:

- Fraternity
- Sorority
- Neither

If you are in a fraternity or sorority, how many years have you been a member? _____ years

If you are in a fraternity or sorority, do you live in a fraternity or sorority house? Circle one:

- Yes
- No

Appendix B: Interview Guide

*****I will begin the interview by defining the following terms to the participant.*****

Sexual assault: “Sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim” (RAINN)

Sexual misconduct: “A broad term encompassing any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or by force, intimidation, coercion, or manipulation” (NSVRC)

Bystander: “A bystander is a person who is present when an event takes place but isn’t directly involved” (RAINN)

Part 1: Hypothetical Scenarios

I am going to read you three hypothetical scenarios that discuss being a bystander of sexual assault. After I read each scenario, I will ask you what you would do in the hypothetical situation. There are no right or wrong answers. You may request to skip a question, skip this section, or end the interview if you feel uncomfortable discussing this topic.

- - a. You’re at a party at an apartment and you notice a girl who seems to be heavily intoxicated. She is slurring her words and tripping over herself. A few minutes later, you notice a man walk up to her and he begins pulling her towards a bedroom by her arm.
 - a. What would you do in this situation? Why?
 - b. A friend comes to you to tell you that they think they might’ve been a victim of sexual assault, but they are unsure.
 - a. What would you do in this situation? Why?
 - c. You are at a bar and you think you see a man put something in another girl’s drink, but you’re not positive.
 - a. What would you do in this situation? Why?

Part 2: Training Experience

I am now going to ask you about your experiences with sexual assault prevention programs and trainings provided by your fraternity/sorority/Panhellenic Association/Interfraternity Council.

- a. What types of sexual assault prevention programs or trainings provided by your fraternity/sorority/Panhellenic Association/Interfraternity Council have you participated in?
- b. *I’m now going to ask you a series of questions regarding what the program you mentioned was like.*
 - a. Was this program online or in-person?
 - i. If this program was in person, were you in a group?
 - 1. How big was this group?

2. Was only your chapter present at this program, or were there multiple chapters present?
 - a. If there were multiple chapters, were they chapters of the same or opposite gender?
- b. Was there a presentation?
 - i. What did they talk about in the presentation?
 - ii. If you had to use three words/phrases to describe the presentation, what would they be?
 1. Why?
 - iii. Was this presentation engaging? If yes, what was engaging about it? If not, what made it not engaging?
 - iv. Was the information they presented relevant for you as a UMD student? Why or why not?
- c. Was there an open discussion with the group? Did they have you speak to a partner or small group?
 - i. Starting at the beginning of the discussion, walk me through what was discussed.
 - ii. Some group discussions flow well while others can be awkward. How did it go for your group?
 - iii. Did your group stay on-topic?
 - iv. How did this conversation shape how you see your Fraternity/Sorority friends/peers?
- d. Did you hear a survivor's story?
 - i. How did hearing that story make you feel?
 - ii. Did you think the survivor's story was relevant to a real-life case that could happen at UMD? Why or why not?
- e. Did you watch a video?
 1. What was the video about?
 2. How did you feel about the video?
 - ii. Did you think the video was relevant to a real-life case that could happen at UMD? Why or why not?
- f. Did this program include any other characteristics that I did not mention, such as a quiz, activity, etc.?
- g. Would you say that the program provided you more with definitions, such as what sexual assault is, or with instructions and resources, such as what to do as a victim or witness of sexual assault?
- c. How often are these programs offered to your fraternity/sorority?
 - a. Do you volunteer or are they mandatory?
 - b. Do you think your fraternity/sorority should offer these programs more often? Why or why not?
 - c. If you were on the advisory board for Greek Life, what would you recommend to improve these programs?
- d. Overall, what did you find to be the most engaging parts of these training sessions?
 - a. The least engaging?

Part 3: Bystander Intervention

I am now going to ask you some questions regarding your own experiences as a bystander of sexual assault. You may request to skip a question, skip this section, or end the interview if you feel uncomfortable discussing your experiences.

- a. Have you ever used the information and/or resources provided to you in the program we've discussed, as a bystander?
- b. Since participating in the program you previously mentioned, have you witnessed an act of sexual assault or potential sexual assault as a bystander?
 - a. How many?
 - b. Would you be comfortable telling me what happened, without mentioning any names?
- c. Did you respond to this incident?
 - i. How did you respond?
 - ii. Why do you think you responded that way?
 - iii. Thinking back to the program you participated in, do you think it influenced how you responded?
 1. If yes, in what ways?
 2. If not, what went into your decision on how to respond?

Part 4: Wrap-Up

Thank you for everything you have shared with me today. This topic can be difficult to discuss. To end this interview looking towards the future, I'd like to ask you: if you could make a recommendation to UMD administrators on how to promote safety on campus when it comes to sexual misconduct, what advice would you give?

I will end the interview by thanking the participant once again and giving them a handout of mental health resources for students at UMD. I will also give them my contact information if they have any questions or concerns