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# Responding to College Campus Acquaintance Rape: Contextual Issues and the Challenge of Inter-Organizational Collaboration

## Abstract

One in five college women are victims of acquaintance rape during their academic career and less than 5% of college women who are victims of sexual assault report their victimization (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). The historically stable prevalence of on-campus sexual assault as well as consistently low rates of reporting point to the need for a collaborative process between the campus personnel that are charged with responding to reports of on-campus sexual assault. Through intensive interviews with key campus informants this qualitative study addressed the following questions about the challenge of responding to on-campus acquaintance rape: 1) How do senior campus personnel understand the disparity between high prevalence rates and low rates of reporting; 2) What are the challenges of inter-organizational collaboration when responding to acquaintance rape; 3) What are the specific roles of on-campus supportive resources; and 4) What are successful elements of a coordinated approach to on-campus acquaintance rape?

All study respondents acknowledged the disparity between prevalence and reporting and implicated the guilt, shame, and fear experienced by victim-survivors as a key factor in underreporting. Respondents blamed gender inequity, abuse of alcohol, and the developmental immaturity of male college students for high rates of on-campus acquaintance rape and described two distinct types of offending: situational offending refers to non-consensual sexual assault fueled by alcohol abuse and emotional immaturity; and pre-meditative offending refers to a more predatory trajectory, in which deliberate planning is enacted to manipulate and exploit vulnerability.

Respondents identified trust between community partners as the most important aspect to successful collaboration. Trust refers to a collective agreement to protect the confidentiality of alleged victims of sexual assault and to guarantee victims' decision-making control throughout their post-assault recovery process. Respondents endorsed primary prevention models and harm reduction strategies to target on-campus acquaintance rape. Models for prevention focused on eliciting changes in campus culture and on targeting predation. A harm reduction approach focused on teaching students how to minimize their risk for victimization.

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RESPONDING TO COLLEGE CAMPUS ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: CONTEXTUAL  
ISSUES AND THE CHALLENGE OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

Deborah V. O'Neill

A DISSERTATION

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ISSUES AND THE CHALLENGE OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

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2012

Deborah V. O'Neill

*Dedicated to Mom, Dad, and Steve*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.  
Harriet Beecher Stowe*

I wish to express my gratitude to the people most responsible for helping me navigate this exercise in endurance. You helped me believe the tide would indeed turn.

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**ABSTRACT****RESPONDING TO COLLEGE CAMPUS ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: CONTEXTUAL ISSUES AND THE CHALLENGE OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION**

DEBORAH V. ONEILL

LINA HARTOCOLLIS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
CHAPTERS	
I INTRODUCTION	1
Acquaintance Rape: An Overview	6
Where does Acquaintance Rape Occur	8
When does Acquaintance Rape Occur	9
Prevalence	9
II SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT	11
Gendered Narratives and Hetero-Normative Discourse	11
Coercive Sexual Practice and Unwanted Sex	13
Unacknowledged and Acknowledged Victims	15
Alcohol and Gray Area Rape	16
Misperception and Ambiguous Communication	17
III DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT	20
The Influence of Social Norms on Behavior	20
Social Norms and Emerging Adults	21
Offender Profiles	22
IV THE IMPACT OF ACQUAINTANCE RAPE ON VICTIMS	25
Psychological Impact	25
Revictimization	26
Disclosure	27

The Impact of Community Response	28
The Impact of Reporting Sexual Assault to Formal Authorities	30
Secondary Victimization	31
V SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATION AND PREVENTION	33
The Clery Act	33
VI INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT	35
Filing a Police Report	35
The Hospital	36
The Court System	37
VII RESTORATIVE JUSTICE RESPONSE	40
Restorative Justice Principles	40
Victim Offender Mediation (VOM)	41
Conferencing	42
Integrity Boards (IB)	43
VIII MODELS OF CHANGE	45
Community Change Response	45
Victim Centered Response	46
IX RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	49
The Purpose of This Study	49
Qualitative Research and Intensive Interviews	51
Sample	52
Data Collection	53
Data Analysis	54
Feminist Epistemology	55
The Influence of Clinical Social Work on Research	55
Reflexivity Statement	56

The Interview Process	58
X. FINDINGS	60
Perceptions of Causality: The Impact of	62
Gender Inequality,	63
Alcohol	69
Developmental Stage	75
Explaining Underreporting: Perceptions of Risk	79
Definitions of Acquaintance Rape:	82
Contextual	82
Legal	87
Offending: Situational and Premeditated	89
Departmental Roles: Balancing Independent and	
Collaborative Response	94
Barriers to Collaboration	99
Defining Successful Collaboration	106
Summary of Findings	115
XI. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS	118
Discussion	118
Departmental Roles	118
Prevalence, Offending and Underreporting	124
Collaboration and Response	135
Implications for Policy and Practice	140
Conclusions	143
Study Limitations	148
REFERENCES	150
APPENDICES	161
A. University of Pennsylvania IRB Approval Form	161
B. University of Pennsylvania Informed Consent Guide	163
C. Interview Guide	167



## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

One in five college women are victims of acquaintance rape during their academic career (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Many of these women describe their victimization as forced or unwanted intercourse but do not self-label their experience as rape (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Gavey, 2005, Koss, 1985). The juxtaposition of acquaintance and rape in reference to a single event conjures up a disturbing retrospective of a traumatic disparity between expectation and outcome. Eighty to ninety percent of sexual assault victims on college campuses know their assailants (Sampson, 2002). In fact, their assailants are their friends, boyfriends, sexual partners, and generally people they trust. It is far more confusing and disorienting to be subjected to emotional or physical injury by someone who is trusted. It is equally unsettling when the community in which you live becomes unsafe and the tasks of daily living predispose victims to potential contact with offenders. Strategic and thoughtful collaboration is required for campus crisis-oriented services to respond effectively to the problem of on campus sexual assault. This study will explore the challenges of responding to campus acquaintance rape from the perspectives of key institutional actors.

For the purposes of this study acquaintance rape will be described as follows: coercive sexual intercourse that occurs against a person's will by means of force, violence, duress, or fear of bodily injury imposed upon them by someone they know (a friend, date, acquaintance, etc.). The terms sexual assault, unwanted intercourse, sexual victimization, and acquaintance rape will be used interchangeably throughout this study with the implication that they all refer to victims who were assaulted by someone known to them. Sexual assault does not occur only to women; men are also victims of sexual

assault. “While men can also be victims of sexual assault, it is far more common for women to be victimized”(Lam & Roman, 2009). However, this study will focus exclusively on female victims of sexual assault. Women on college campuses have a more significant risk for rape and sexual assault than women of the same age in the general population (Fisher et al., 2000). Compounding this vulnerability is the knowledge that few victims seek mental health services, medical assistance, or legal support immediately following acquaintance rape, and most women do not disclose or report to formal support systems until months or years post assault (Koss & Burkhardt, 1989; Patterson, Greeson, & Campbell, 2009). Less than 5% of college women who are sexually victimized come forward to report they have been violated (Fisher et al, 2000).

There are many reasons why college rape victims do not report or disclose their assault. They are unlikely to report to criminal justice systems due to fear and mistrust of law enforcement (Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti, & McCauley, 2007). Victims fear they will be treated negatively, fear they will be disbelieved, or fear they have insufficient proof that they were raped. Victims do not trust that law enforcement will honor their right to confidentiality and fear unauthorized disclosure to friends or family. Many victims fear reprisal or retaliation, and far too often victims are uncertain that a crime occurred or that harm was intended.

Stereotypical gender role expectations, normative heterosexual discourse, attributions of shame, and community tolerance of coercive sexual practice reflect the patriarchal ideology of dominant culture and contribute to student ambiguity. The college community has socialized its members to prescribed sexual norms and appears tolerant of acquaintance rape; this informs student perceptions of sexual victimization. The ongoing relationship between the victim and her social context may reflect a disparity between the subjective experience of the victim and a community response that is invalidating and further destabilizing. Sexual assault is a crime of power and control

and often a crime of impunity. Sexual assault crimes are rarely reported, infrequently prosecuted, and the least likely crime to result in offender conviction (Herman, 2005). This is particularly salient for victims of acquaintance rape who are most likely to be disbelieved and blamed for their victimization (Ullman, 2010).

College age women who are denied disclosure are forced to reenter their social surround as hidden victims of gendered violence. Unacknowledged trauma often disrupts interpersonal developmental processes and may have significant implications for psychological development, personality development, and gender identity construction. In addition, Women who are victims of sexual trauma are at greater risk for additional sexual assault victimization than non-victims (Classen, Palesh, & Aggarwal, 2005). Psychological, emotional, social, and physical post-traumatic effects that are not immediately addressed and resolved have the potential to become chronic and persistent. Victims who are unable to achieve resolution during this developmentally vulnerable time in their lives may remain psychologically fragmented. Most college campuses provide therapeutic support, mental health resources, legal services, and advocacy but community acknowledgment, validation of the crime committed, and offender accountability require a major shift in public awareness of risk and impact on victims.

Bloom stated that post-traumatic stress disorder is a social disease (Bloom, 1997, p 76); she suggested that a victim's social context is a more significant predictor of victim outcome following a traumatic event than the event itself (1997). An ecological paradigm supports the influence of the ongoing interaction between individuals and their environment and its significance for healthy human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Communities that do not assume responsibility for the psychological, social, and moral safety of members who are victims of sexual assault and fail to hold offenders accountable are situated to become increasingly tolerant of gendered violence,

systemically oppressive, and implicitly organized around the trauma. The historically stable prevalence of campus sexual victimization (Banyard et al., 2005) demands a community oriented response and a collaborative effort to provide safety for all community members. Victims of unexpected traumatic events that occur in familiar and previously benign environments need support from the community to renegotiate safety without fear of judgment or recrimination.

Victims of on-campus sexual assault require access to resources that provide: medical care, law enforcement, mental health counseling, legal advice, legal representation, economic assistance, academic counseling, housing options, social justice, and criminal justice. Victims are best served by a thoughtful community response grounded in a collaborative alliance of university administrators and campus-based services. This study will describe potential pathways of risk associated with on campus sexual assault as a means to underscore the institutional challenges inherent in responding to allegations of campus sexual violence. The first four chapters will provide a statistical overview of college campus acquaintance rape, sociological and developmental features associated with risk for on campus acquaintance rape, and the potential impact on victims of acquaintance rape and of disclosure of acquaintance rape. This will be followed by a brief explanation of Federal mandates for campus sexual assault education and prevention. Chapters six through eight will describe the trajectory of victims in traditional criminal justice systems, the risk of retraumatization when seeking justice, restorative justice models, and community-oriented responses to sexual assault. The intent is to acquaint the reader with the unique social and interpersonal context surrounding campus sexual crimes and the trajectory from college student to victim as a background in which the needs of victims are embedded. Chapter nine will provide rationale for the use of constructivist grounded theory, feminist approach to research, and describe data collection and analysis process. The findings of this study

will be covered in chapter ten and the final chapter will offer a discussion of the findings, implications for policy and practice, and some concluding thoughts.

#### ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: AN OVERVIEW

*Campus wide, people think having sex with a drunk girl is fine, if you're drunk yourself the girls just drunk. I know there's like gray area rapes, so obviously campus wide nobody would say that if a girl is passed out in your room that its okay to have sex but I would say that there's probably a lot of people who, you know, if a girl is too drunk to handle herself really, they would still go back and have sex with her.*

-20 year old female college student

Working in a college counseling center has provided me direct and intimate access to student disclosure of events that fall along the spectrum of sexual victimization. Gray area rape narratives depict a range of circumstances from subtle forms of coercion or pressure to engage in sexual acts, to forced penetration, to the unexpected early morning discovery of conspicuous evidence suggestive of an unrecalled, unwanted sexual violation. Equally disconcerting are reports by students of text messages received, after a weekend of alcohol intoxication, advising a purchase of The Morning After Pill. The commonality in the above descriptions, and other narratives indicative of campus sexual victimization, is the unwanted aspect of the completed sexual act, the absence of consent and choice, and the acceptance of gray area rape as sexually normative.

The dilution of acquaintance rape into gray area rape represents the tolerance on campus settings of community norms and practices that support rape. It also connotes a sexually active culture dissociated from the reality that rape is not sex. Between three percent and ten percent of college women experience rape during an academic year with 14% to 26% percent of these women experiencing additional forms of sexual victimization (Daigle, Fisher, & Cullen, 2008). These statistics do not take into account women who report experiences of unwanted sexual intercourse yet do not identify their experience as rape. It also speaks to a generation defining rape based on stereotypes that

associate rape perpetrators as strangers unknown to their victims. While there is no denial that stranger rapes occur, most rapes are committed by men women know and trust (Lam & Roman, 2009). Women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four have the highest risk of becoming victims of acquaintance rape (Banyard et al., 2005; Fisher et al, 2000).

A theoretical understanding of rape based on feminist scholarship offers a perspective of sexual assault that calls attention to the sexual and social roles that promote rape tolerance, framing rape as a crime motivated by patriarchal issues of power and control (Brownmiller, 1975). Rape typologies have established rape as the use of sexuality to express issues of power and anger whereby rape "... is a pseudo-sexual act, a pattern of sexual behavior that is concerned much more with status, aggression, control, and dominance than with sensual pleasure or sexual satisfaction" (Groh, Burgess, & Holmstrom, 1977, p. 1240).

Rozee (1993) defined normative rape as "a rape against the will of the woman but does not violate the social norms for acceptable behavior" (p. 499). A conceptual framework based on female determinants of rape (defined as the completion of sexual activity without female choice) was used to examine rape across nonindustrial societies. Rozee found normative rape in 97% of the random sample of 35 world societies. In addition the study found a significant overlap in the majority of societies between normative rape and non-normative (in violation of social norms) rape in which a form of normative rape (rape in the presence of marriage, consent implied by dress or behavior) was tolerated.

The sociocultural context that defines rape discriminates between stranger rape and acquaintance rape by bestowing legitimacy only on rapes committed by unknown offenders. Universal definitions of stranger rape typically describe a rape that occurs when the victim and the offender were unknown to each other prior to the incident. The

unknown aspect of the offender offers survivors greater acknowledgment to their victimization experience and an earned right to receive subsequent empathy.

Acquaintance rape victims are often viewed not by the nature of the act of rape, but by attributes of the victim such as her attire, her prior relationship with the attacker, her behavior, and perceptions of her sexual history (Denmark, Rabinowitz, & Sechzer, 2000; Grub & Harrower, 2009). Victims of acquaintance rape are often held accountable for their victimization particularly when they are acquainted with their attacker (Grub & Harrower, 2009).

#### WHERE DOES ACQUAINTANCE RAPE OCCUR

The majority of sexual assaults experienced on college environments by female college students have not only been committed by people the victims know and trust but they have occurred in locations that represent familiarity and safety to victims. Much ceremony is made when college students move in to campus housing with most universities requiring undergraduates to live on campus during their early years. The availability of coed housing offered on college campuses reflects a progressive zeitgeist marked by unsupervised living arrangements and the coexistence of developing adults.

Sampson (2002) suggested that 90% of college sexual assaults are committed by acquaintances with 34% of completed rapes and 45% of attempted rapes taking place on campus. On campus rapes occur in but are not limited to the following locations: parties, fraternity houses, in the offenders residence, in the victim's dorm room. Assaults also take place in bars, clubs, work settings, and student residences close to campus (Fisher et al., 2000). Almost 60% of assaults that occur on campus take place in the victim's residence, 31% occur elsewhere on campus, and 10% occur in a fraternity houses (Fisher et al., 2003; Sampson, 2002).

#### WHEN DOES ACQUAINTANCE RAPE OCCUR

The majority of campus sexual assaults occur after 6 p.m. with 51.8% occurring after midnight, 36.5% occurring between 6 p.m. and midnight, and 11.8% occurring sometime between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. (Fisher et al., 2000). Samson (2002) suggested that undergraduate students are the most vulnerable to rape and the first few days of freshmen year present the greatest risk for assault. Factors associated with increased risk of sexual assault for female college students include: alcohol intoxication, being unmarried, a previous sexual assault experience (Testa, Hoffman, & Livingston, 2010), and on-campus residency (Fisher et al., 2000).

#### PREVALENCE

Reports on the prevalence of college campus acquaintance rape reflect variation among studies based on various definitions of sexual assault as well as the use of different methodology. Data collection efforts reflect biases in terms of context, the wording of questions, and the timing of study efforts. As a result estimates vary. Federal law rape reform evolved in the 90's requiring college campuses to make sexual crime statistics available to the public. While this promised greater transparency and recognition of the problem significant numbers of victims do not report their victimization to formal (campus administrators, law enforcement agencies) support systems (Ullman, 2010). In addition individual appraisal of sexual assault differs and reflects the influence sexual norms have on creating ambiguity about victimhood and tolerance for unwanted sexual experiences.

Sexual assault data, including prevalence, is collected by the following sources: law enforcement, victimization surveys, service providers, victim compensation offices, and mental health/physical health agencies (Wagner, 2008). All the above data sources are limited in their ability to provide accurate data on prevalence. Law enforcement

prevalence estimates are based solely on victims who file a police report; victimization survey estimates are limited to victims who have established addresses and telephone numbers. All the above data sources require victims to file criminal incident reports in order to include victim data in prevalence estimates.

In 2000 a Department of Justice funded study on the sexual victimization of college women addressed the problem of previous prevalence study limitations. The study used a randomly selected nationally representative sample of college women, assessed a wide range of victimization, obtained greater detailed information on victimization incidents, examined variables associated with risk, and measured victimization through survey and incident report methodology (Fisher et al., 2000). Based on a sample of 4,446 college women the study calculated that a college population with 10,000 female students could experience more than 350 rapes per year. An overview of the campus landscape provides a context from which to understand the potential pathways of risk associated with on campus acquaintance rape. A significant feature of the campus landscape is its location within the larger social, political, and cultural arena at a developmentally vulnerable time.

## CHAPTER II

### SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

#### GENDERED NARRATIVES AND HETERO-NORMATIVE DISCOURSE

The cultural and historical context in which sexuality is defined is built upon a gendered foundation that maintains separate rules for masculine and feminine behavior. Gendered narratives situate men in dominant positions of power and women in roles that are passive and deferential. Krueger (1996) suggested that “females are socialized to believe they must be overcome by the moment” (p.108) reinforcing traditional sex roles and a sexual imbalance between genders. Feminist activists in the 60’s and 70’s redefined rape as a crime and a political method of control through the subordination of women by force. Feminist scholarship calls attention to the anti-woman bias inherent in language that perpetuates a sexual power imbalance and a patriarchal discourse that supports male proclivity to sex and the objectification of women (Benedict, 2005).

Embedded within a rape supportive discourse and symbolic of the inequity of power in sexual relationships is what is referred to as the coital imperative (Jackson 1984). This defines a model of sexuality in which culturally normative sex is equated with heterosexual intercourse and defines the desired ascension from inexperienced adolescent play into mature adult sex (Gavey, 2005). Hetero-normative sexual practice confers upon men a male sexual-drive discourse providing men a biological imperative (linked to reproduction and human species survival) to act on emergent sexual urges (Hollway, 1984). Hetero-normative discourse is evidenced by beliefs that male aggression and coercive practice are normal. A study exploring 944 victim narratives found that one in five female victims of sexual assault excused offender behavior based on normative discourse endorsing male sexual aggression as biological and unwanted sexual contact as common (Weiss, 2009). When women internalize dominant discourse

they must adjust personal beliefs to fit into dominant expectations concerning sex and relationships (Burnett et al.,2009).

Another example of gendered narratives is reflected in rape supportive attitudes influenced by the acceptance of rape myths. Rape myths are faulty assumptions that influence cultural beliefs about acquaintance rape. Rape myths reinforce sexual inequality by supporting male sex-drive discourse, blaming victims, and fostering ambiguity about the difference between sex and rape. The following examples of rape myths, from the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Payne, Lonsway, & fitzgerald, 1999), exemplify gendered narratives and hetero-normative discourse:

1. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn on".
2. If a woman does not physically fight back, you can't really say it is rape.
3. When men rape it is because of their strong desire for sex.
4. When a man is sexually aroused, he may not even realize that the woman is resisting.
5. A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.
6. When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous.
7. If a woman isn't a virgin, then it shouldn't be a big deal if her date forces her to have sex.
8. Once men get turned on they can't help themselves from forcing sex on a woman.
9. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex.
10. When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they're just asking for trouble.

A study of 341 female college students and 294 male college students explored forms of male-against-female sexual aggression in order to assess risk factors associated with date rape (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). The study concluded that sexually aggressive men, compared to nonaggressive men, were more likely to accept gendered sex roles, rape myths, and violence towards women. Hetero-normative discourse denies women sexual equality and situates college age women as passive objects of male imperatives. Inherent in this sexual double standard is the internalization of gendered vocabularies that tolerate coercive sexual practice and normalize women's participation in unwanted sexual activity.

#### COERCIVE SEXUAL PRACTICE AND UNWANTED SEX

In a Department of Justice report on the sexual victimization of college women Fisher et., al (2002) identified the following ten types of unwanted sexual experiences implicit on college campuses: completed rape, attempted rape, completed sexual coercion, attempted sexual coercion, completed sexual contact with force or threat of force, completed sexual contact without force, attempted sexual contact with force or threat of force, attempted sexual contact without force, threat of rape, threat of contact with force or threat of force, threat of penetration without force and threat of contact without force. All categories involved coercion or unwanted sex.

Between 22% and 83% of women will experience sexual coercion at some point in their lives (Byers & O'Sullivan, 1996). "Sexual coercion is any form of force or pressure used in an attempt to make a non-consenting other engage in some type of sexual activity" (p.3). A study examining differences in prevalence rates of unwanted sexual activity over a twelve-year period on a single state university campus, reported no decrease in the reported rates of unwanted sexual intercourse over the course of the

twelve years (Banyard et al., 2005). Banyard and colleagues also indicated that most experiences of unwanted sex in her study involved acquaintances as offenders.

A current study used 185 survey responses from a convenience sample of college undergraduate women to assess several forms of sexual victimization and potential risk factors preceding victimization (Franklin, 2010). Types of victimization explored included: verbal coercion resulting in unwanted sex, alcohol-induced sexual assault, and completed rape as a result of threats or force. Study results found that the more women delayed their response to the impending threat of unwanted sex, and the earlier along women were in their college process, the greater the potential that verbal coercion would result in unwanted sex.

Sexually coercive practices have become a form of foreplay on the college campus as one antecedent to sexual activity. The use of coercion to control or force the sexual response of another reinforces cultural stereotypes equating male sexuality with conquest and female sexuality with passivity; it also creates ambiguity between normal heterosexual behavior and rape (Weiss, 2008). Female college students who reported engaging in unwanted sex described unwanted sexual experiences as unsatisfying, unpleasurable, and undesired, suggesting they consented to unwanted sex because they considered it to be normal (Gavey, 2005). Examples of unwanted sexual experiences include but are not limited to the following: situations in which women experience pressure to engage in sexual activity, gender-role informed obligation to engage in sexual activity, situations in which women do not feel they have a right to refuse or do not possess a vocabulary for refusal, situations in which refusal was perceived as dangerous, or acquiescence in order to avoid forcible rape (2005).

## UNACKNOWLEDGED AND ACKNOWLEDGED VICTIMS

Gendered narratives concerning sex and power obscure the line between sex and rape creating ambiguity associated with underreporting. The number of college women who acknowledge that they have been victims of sexual assault (acknowledged victims) is far higher than the number of women who report their assault experience to formal authorities (Ullman, 2010). Sexual assault literature has referred to unreported acknowledged victims as *hidden* rape victims (Koss, 1985). A study with the intent to explore the experience of hidden victims surveyed 2,016 subjects on sexual experiences that did not include the word rape, but described sexual activity and sexual intercourse that occurred against consent and in the face of increasing measures of coercion, threat, and physical force (1985).

After survey completion participants were asked if they had ever been raped. Based on survey response participants were classified on a scale ranging from highly sexually victimized to not sexually victimized. Forty-three percent of the respondents who qualified as highly sexually victimized did not acknowledge their experience as rape (unacknowledged victims). Fifty-nine percent of acknowledged victims and 100% of unacknowledged victims knew their attacker with 31% of acknowledged victims and 76% of unacknowledged victims reporting a romantic involvement with their assailant (Koss, 1985). Unacknowledged victims demonstrated greater familiarity with their assailants and reported greater prior intimacy with their assailants than acknowledged victims. Study results infer that in the college context, levels of acquaintance familiarity and pre-assault intimacy are significant in relation to victim ambiguity, unwanted sexual experience, and rape.

Research evaluating victim types found that unacknowledged victims reported more dangerous alcohol use, a greater likelihood to continue having a relationship with their assailant, and greater potential to report another attempted victimization in the 6

months following the initial assault (Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2009; Littleton et al., 2009). In addition, unacknowledged victims are less likely to disclose their experience, more likely to view their experience as less serious, less likely to change the behaviors that put them at risk, and less able to recognize future situations with high sexual assault risk potential. Consistent with previous literature, acknowledged victims were older than unacknowledged victims, more likely to be married, reported greater feelings of stigma, reported greater receipt of negative reactions upon disclosure, and endorsed greater post-assault symptoms of distress (2009).

#### ALCOHOL AND GRAY AREA RAPE

Another variable commonly associated with non-consensual sexual experience on the college campus is the use of alcohol. Alcohol use does not cause rape but alcohol use by the victim or the offender increases the potential for sexual assault through a number of pathways (Abbey, 2002). The following attitudinal and situational factors exacerbated by alcohol consumption create significant pathways of risk for sexual assault: pre-existing gender beliefs about sex and aggression (women want to be convinced to have sex, men should initiate sex, verbal pressure and force are acceptable), men's alcohol expectancies (alcohol makes a man more powerful and more sexual), women who drink are communicating their sexual availability, male over-estimation of sexual cues, male aggression, decreased cognitive and motor skills in women distorting risk perception and the ability to resist physical force, and environments that encourage alcohol use as a means to sexual conquest (2002).

In a study of 221 college students identified as at-risk drinkers, eighty percent of the study participants endorsed engaging in sexual activity while under the influence of alcohol (Goldstein, Barnett, Pedalow, & Murphy, 2007). Participants provided information on repeat and first experiences with alcohol and sexual activity. Participants

reported that the combination of alcohol and sexual activity was more likely to occur in newer relationships and in less committed relationships (2007). Another study suggests that college women who accept the use of alcohol as a legitimate sexual access strategy demonstrate greater ambiguity in naming alcohol-induced sexual assault experiences as rape (Franklin, 2010).

A study of 29 (14 male and 15 female) college students exploring conceptualizations of the relationship between alcohol use and sexual activity demonstrated universal agreement among participants that alcohol leads to sex (Lindgren, Schacht, Pantoalone, Blayney, & George, 2009). Shared perceptions include the following: attendance at a party serving alcohol is explicit for seeking a sexual encounter and holding or consuming an alcoholic drink is an indicator of sexual availability. Male participants also suggested that inebriation allowed them to forego traditional courtship stages and initiate sex more quickly.

A survey of 2000 women selected from a nationally representative list of women attending 4-year colleges examined prevalence rates on drug and alcohol facilitated rape (DFR), incapacitated rape (IR), and forcible rape (FR) (Kilpatrick et al., 2007). The study also examined case characteristics, barriers to disclosure, and comparisons between the different types of assault. Their findings indicated that 230 women endorsed one or more types of rape. The three different types of rape were compared and evaluated to determine which type had the highest risk for rape. Women who become intoxicated voluntarily (IR) are most at risk for sexual assault due to their proximity to predatory men while in an incapacitated state.

#### MISPERCEPTION AND AMBIGUOUS COMMUNICATION

A qualitative study exploring the development of college undergraduate sexual goals and sexual communication since the transition from high school to college exposed

traditional gendered assumptions concerning sexual behavior. Homogeneous focus groups made up of participants identified as heterosexual associated the increased freedom and privacy of college with the intent to become more sexually active upon arrival to college (Lindgren et al., 2009). Participants demonstrated consensus in terms of their goals to become more sexually active and differed in terms of their intended goal outcomes. Both male and female participants characterized women as seeking long-term relationships and men as seeking casual sex.

Male and female participants also shared a preference for indirect, non-verbal communication to express sexual interest or sexual disinterest (Lindgren et al., 2009). Expressions of interest included: body language, accidental touching, and agreeing to go somewhere private. Disinterest was also expressed through body language (avoiding eye contact, creating greater physical distance, or crossing ones arms to avoid contact). Women expressed a preference for indirect communication based on their intent to protect men's feelings. Male participants equally averse to the use of direct verbal communication to seek consent for sexual activity based their preference for indirect communication on a fear of rejection.

Male participants expressed a reliance on the use of behavioral cues to assess sexual interest; male participants also disclosed that they often ignored behavioral cues signifying disinterest and employed manipulative strategies to increase the prospect of sexual activity (Lindgren et al., 2009). Male participants also perceived that the style of a women's dress communicates her sexual interest and sexual intent. Male and female participants agreed that men over-estimate female sexual interest. This is consistent with other study findings that associate male misperception of sexual intent with male use of sexually coercive practice (Burnett et al., 2009; Farris, Treat, Viken, & McFall, 2007).

Three focus groups made up of 37 undergraduate male fraternity members from a small (5,000 students) public institution were asked to share their experience of asking for sexual consent when alcohol was consumed by one or both involved actors. Study participants reported the following: participants do not ask for consent for fear of rejection or fear of looking foolish, participants relied on body language rather than verbal consent as an indicator of sexual readiness, participants believed that consent could be given after alcohol has been consumed in the absence of extreme signs of intoxication (women who are passed out or unconscious), inclusion in long term relationships affords greater comfort in asking for consent, peer familiarity is associated with participant knowledge of how much alcohol a women can ingest and still give consent, and participants were least likely to ask for consent from women they did not know (Foubert, Garner, & Thaxter, 2006). Study findings speak to the relationship between misperception, sex role stereotyping, and coercive sexual practice. They also describe a developmental way station inherent for risk of sexual victimization.

### CHAPTER III

#### DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

##### THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NORMS ON BEHAVIOR

Social Norms Theory contends that human behavior is significantly influenced by perceptions about the thoughts and behaviors of others within one's social group (Berkowitz, 2004). These perceptions concerning the attitude and behavior of others can reflect an overestimation or underestimation of reality. Pluralistic ignorance is the false assumption that one's peers are thinking or behaving differently from them, when the reality is that their attitudes and behavior are similar (2004). A common and universal example of pluralistic ignorance is reflected in a study involving male college students. LaBrie, Cail, Hummer, & Lac reported that male students who identified as moderate drinkers or who abstained from drinking, incorrectly assumed that their peers consumed more alcohol than a moderate drinker and that their peers consumed an amount that far exceeded the reality (2009).

Other misperceptions about behaviors and attitudes relevant on college campus settings include beliefs related to: drug use, smoking, eating disordered behavior, racism, sexism, and homophobia. Berkowitz (2010) suggested that male college student misperceptions concerning the behavior and beliefs of peers overestimates the frequency of peer sexual activity, peer adherence to rape supportive beliefs, and peer refusal to intervene in situations inherent for sexual victimization risk, while underestimating the discomfort their peers experience in respect to hostility toward women. Behavioral decisions based on perceptual discrepancies concerning sexual behavior and beliefs and attitudes associated with rape may become self-perpetuating, foster growth of a perceived normative culture, and silence non-conforming opinions and actions.

Berkowitz suggested that norms are contextual and misperceptions exist within individual, group, and community domains (Berkowitz, 2004). In addition, Social Norms Theory contends that misperceptions are stronger when the perceiver is distanced from the reference group being perceived. Embedded within the campus landscape are socially constructed beliefs based on misperception, gender stereotyping, heterosexist discourse, and social and sexual norms. Social Norms Theory provides a clear theoretical lens with which to view environmental misperceptions and contextual aspects inherent in the college campus landscape that normalize and increase community tolerance for campus sexual victimization through rape-supportive norms. The catalyst intersecting social norms and behavior is the developmental composition of the average impressionable undergraduate student.

#### SOCIAL NORMS AND EMERGING ADULTS

The transition from high school to college is a period of identity development traditionally marked by nascent freedom, social exploration, and personality expansiveness. Relational Cultural Theory broke ground for women by providing a female –oriented model of development suggesting that women’s identity development and differentiation occur within a relational context (Miller, 1976). An Eriksonian model of development suggests that genital maturity, identification with the social environment, and separation from caregivers is associated with the establishment of identity (Erikson, 1959). Both theories provide a prism from which to view the intersection between developmental vulnerability and sexual victimization. A contemporary theory of development (specific to industrialized countries) suggests that demographic changes occurring over time (median age of marriage, age of birth of a first child, increased attendance to academic institutions) locates current college students in a new developmental trajectory of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adults

differ from previous generations and same age predecessors as they are less inclined to settle quickly into traditional adult long-term interpersonal and professional roles.

Arnett (2000) distinguished emerging adults by a “relative independence from social roles and from normative expectations” (p. 469) locating emerging adulthood between adolescence and young adulthood (age 18-25). This period of identity development is marked by consistent change and broad exploration of multiple life directions. The identity exploration indicative of emerging adults is concentrated along trajectories of love, work, and worldview and folds the developmental process in with multiple changes in residential status, educational status, travel opportunities, and employment status. Emerging adults may postpone entrance into college, delay graduation from college, delay post college employment with a move back into family of origin residences, or postpone education and employment in favor of travel. Jobs may reflect a need for an income source as opposed to an identity defining career choice.

The attenuation of eventual adulthood makes possible a degree of exploration that is comprehensive, exhaustive, and legitimate. The process becomes the goal and development is contingent on exhausting the process. Emerging adults arriving on campus quickly experience the sudden loss of supervision and a desire to establish friends and a sense of belonging. Peer pressure to experiment with drugs, alcohol, and sexual activity may present as additional unexplored life experiences. An environment offering far less social control than mainstream society, undetermined boundaries for personal safety, and attenuated maturity between adolescence and adulthood predicts the potential for high-risk behavior.

#### OFFENDER PROFILES

The intersection of developmental processes, the acceptance of gender-normed behavior, and dominant discourse endorsing sexual inequality influence the

perpetuation of risk vulnerability inherent in college campus settings. Equally inherent is the potential within a college community for the presence of men who are predisposed to be sexually aggressive. Studies suggest between 25% and 60% of college men endorse some sort of sexually coercive behavior (Berkowitz, 1992). This continuum of aggression ranges from kissing a woman against her will to physically forcing intercourse against a woman's obvious resistance. In a study seeking to identify characteristics of men who engage in sexual coercion, 201 college males completed measures exploring dimensions of coercive sexual practice. Twenty-eight percent of survey respondents admitted to using sexual coercion; 15% reported forcing a woman to have intercourse (Rappaport & Burkhart, 1984). The following personality and attitudinal characteristics were associated with sexually coercive college men: significant measures of irresponsibility, absence of social conscience, and a system of values that supports the use of violence in a sexual context.

Another study of male college undergraduate students explored the relationship between hypermasculinity and a predisposition for sexual aggression against women. Results suggest that male gender socialization (the rejection by men of feminine attributes such as intimacy and emotional connection) limits men's ability to experience emotion in self and reduces men's capacity to empathize with others (Lisak & Ivan, 1995). Findings suggest that the absence of empathy and the absence of a need for intimacy in men who also endorse gender stereotypes predict hostility towards women. Farris et al., reported that male college students who endorse sex-role stereotypes and who are sexually coercive are more predisposed to perceive female sexual intent in the behavior of women (2007). As discussed earlier misperceptions have the potential to predict campus sexual norms.

Hostile childhood environments, early delinquency involvement, and high levels of sexual promiscuity (Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991) are associated with

trajectories resulting in coerciveness and sexual aggression. This is consistent with attachment research linking sexual offending with early adolescence onset as a strategy of intra- and interpersonal control (Burk & Burkhart, 2003). Pressures related to poor interpersonal relationships (disorganized attachment), childhood exposure to adult sexuality, puberty, and a disorganized experience of self contribute to a sexualized coping mechanism linked to sexual offending. The development of sexualized coping strategies is associated with environments lacking in positive reinforcement and healthy coping, and exposure to specific sexual experiences that model a means to control self (emotional regulation) through the control of others.

Research exploring rapist motivation determined that domains of anger, power, and sexuality coexist in all cases of rape (Groh et al., 1977). In a study of 1,882 male students, 120 (6.4%) respondents were classified as undetected rapists: men who have never been prosecuted for acts of rape who self-report acts of interpersonal violence that meet legal definitions for rape or attempted rape (Lisak & Miller, 2002). Sixty-three percent of the study respondents who endorsed repeat rapes accounted for a disproportionate share of the rapes committed within the study sample. After 20 years of study of undetected rapists within the male college student population, Lisak (2008) reported the following characteristics of campus offenders: adeptness at identifying potential victims, premeditation on how to isolate victims, controlled use of force due to reliance on coercion, psychological weapons, and the deliberate use of alcohol.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE IMPACT OF ACQUAINTANCE RAPE ON VICTIMS**

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT**

Campbell, Dworkin, and Cabral reported that there is no universal experience of rape and that the trauma associated with rape is cumulative (2009). The impact of acquaintance rape on victims can be destabilizing and reverberate through a number of interpersonal domains. Interviews with 92 female adult rape victims resulted in the identification of rape specific symptomology and a syndrome of post rape reaction consistent with study participants (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974). Rape trauma syndrome has been used to describe the behavioral, somatic, and psychological reactions to rape that victims experience both immediately, following an assault, and over time. The syndrome predates DSM diagnostic classification of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suggests that rape victims move through two distinct phases in their reaction to sexual assault. The initial phase is marked by an immediate and acute disorganization identified by somatic and emotional reactions. This is followed by a second phase of ongoing readjustment and reorganization to the life-disrupting trauma. The acute phase may last for hours or weeks; the readjustment phase is marked by a more long-term recovery process (Kress, Trippany, & Nolan, 2003). As victims of sexual assault attempt to make meaning of their experience and deal with the implications of the trauma there are psychological, cognitive, interpersonal, and social reactions common to rape victims (Foa & Rothbaum, 1998).

Many rape victims experience significant post assault reactions for several months after they have been assaulted (Resick, 1993). Symptomatic responses to sexual assault traditionally involve fear, severe anxiety, and arousal (Kress, Trippany et al., 1993). Specific psychological reactions include: PTSD, social anxiety, phobic anxiety,

dissociative reactions, anger, depression, suicidal ideation, repetition compulsion, anhedonia, or alcohol and/or substance abuse (Foa & Rothbaum, 1998; Petretic-Jackson & Tobin, 1996). Victims also reported decreased sexual satisfaction, discomfort with sexuality, or sexual dysfunction, as well as unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (Lam, & Roman, 2009). Other reported problems include sleep disturbances or physical complaints. Traumatic events challenge previously held individual beliefs (Koss & Burkhardt, 1989) and post assault cognitions of acquaintance rape victims often reflect the following attributions: victimization denial, self-blame, guilt, shame, worthlessness, helplessness, negative self-esteem, incident minimization, confusion, and a loss of equilibrium with the environment (Petretic-Jackson & Tobin, 1996).

#### REVICTIMIZATION

The impact of sexual assault on female college student victims must be viewed through the developmental lens that informs personality and identity development. The college years are traditionally thought of as the time to become more self-actualizing, increase one's independence, solidify one's identity, and build a sense of self confidence based on mastery over one's environment. The violation of acquaintance rape during this fragile time of ego construction and self-development is destabilizing, disempowering, and may lead to relational disconnection. In addition, victims of on campus assault are faced with ongoing and unexpected exposure to their assailants.

A review of 90 empirical studies of sexual assault revictimization (experiencing additional sexual assaults) concludes that two of three individuals who are victims of sexual assault will be revictimized (Classen et al., 2005). Students who have been victimized as children have an increased risk for revictimization and may present with the following characteristics: trauma symptomology (hyperarousal states), self medication with alcohol as a means to decrease trauma symptoms, increased sexual

activity (hypersexualization common to trauma victims), and victim difficulty in assessing or responding to risk (Testa et al., 2010).

Acquaintance rape victims know their assailants. This can lead to confusion and ambiguity on several levels. It can interfere with victim ability to name their experience as a rape, particularly if victims had positive feelings towards the perpetrator prior to the rape (Lam, & Roman, 2009). It can also result in victims questioning their judgment and ability to trust their decisions. Feminist theory defines rape as a social and political act, but victim internalization of guilt and shame is often acted out on an intrapersonal level (Burt, & Katz, 1987). Self-blame poses a barrier to reporting and forces victims to face the negative consequences of rape alone, often while perceiving the perpetrators life as unchanged (Lam, & Roman, 2009).

#### DISCLOSURE

Female college women report a higher likelihood of reporting to friends as opposed to formal agencies (police, counseling center, campus advisor) with higher levels of self-protective behavior, sexual communication, and self-efficacy found in women who did report to formal authorities (Orchowski, Meyer, & Gidycz, 2009). Victims who disclosed to formal and informal sources report receiving the following negative reactions: victim blaming responses, betrayal of confidentiality, minimization of the assault, disbelief, denial that rape occurred, avoidance, and revictimization by male confidants who perceive victims as convenient and assessable targets for sex (Ullman, 2010). Directing the blame for sexual assault upon the victims of sexual assault is correlated with underreporting and with victim ambiguity in naming their experience as rape (Fisher et al., 2000; Orchowski et al., 2009).

Most salient to how victims experience acquaintance rape is the combination of cognitive self-appraisals and re-appraisals based on reactions from the victim's social

environment (Koss & Burkhardt, 1989). Cognitive appraisals are influenced by situational factors, cultural constructs, and personal beliefs. Campbell et al reported that receiving positive social support is less powerful than the effects of negative reactions from formal and informal resources; negative reactions are associated with greater depression and PTSD (2009). Blaming victimization on one's own character (characterological self-blame) is also associated with greater depression (Regehr, Alaggia, & Saini, 2009).

Victims who receive negative reactions upon disclosure are more likely to be silenced and refrain from further disclosure and access to potential support (Ullman, 2010). Positive social reactions can be communicated in three ways: emotional support, tangible aid, and information support. Survivors report that emotional support is important not only in response to the assault but also in response to their reactions to the assault and their means of coping (Ullman, 2010). Holmstrom and Burgess (1991) suggest that the length of time required for victims to recover from sexual assault is associated with the quality of victim relational support.

#### THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Rape is a degrading experience involving a complete loss of control over one's sense of self, one's environment, and one's body. Rape interferes with the ability to experience personal safety and compromises the beliefs victims had previously about self and the world. Acquaintance rape is embedded within a social context and regaining a sense of equilibrium on a college campus situates victims in a precarious position. The situations of daily living and victim desire to return to pre-trauma existence juxtapose elements of risk for revictimization with opportunities for readjustment. Student victims must heal within a context in which they run the risk of consistent and unexpected access to the offender.

The impact the campus community has on the victims of acquaintance rape can be understood based on the functions that the community serves for its members (Koss and Harvey, 1991). Campus communities provide the following: identity, a sense of belonging, socialization to prescribed norms, community borne values, a bridge to the larger society, and the opportunity to experience institutional membership. The manner in which these functions are performed in the service of rape victims can range between sensitivity and support to abandonment and victim-blaming. Koss & Harvey suggested that rape is also a community issue. They suggested that communities perform the following functions: teach/foster values and traditions, socialize members by defining their rights and their community responsibilities, mediate between community members and the larger societal community, and provide means of achieving community status. Koss and Harvey referenced the power of community to impact victims with the following statement:

Together these reactions will define the victim's position relative to the larger society and will contribute to or detract from her sense of personal and social power. As these intersecting communities act or fail to act on her behalf, the woman raped literally will rebuild her sense of self. (Koss, & Harvey, 1991, pp. 96)

Community reintegration is particularly salient for victims who are college students. The meanings (cognitive appraisals) that victims make of their assault experience as the psyche attempts to cope with trauma significantly influence recovery; cognitive appraisals are vulnerable to messages embedded within the social and cultural context as well as the reactions of formal and informal resources. The ongoing relationship between victims and their social environment informs personal cognitions. While pre-assault, post-assault and assault variables all affect recovery (Resick, 1993), Koss and Burkhart (1989) suggested that cognitive re-appraisals that are affirming and validating can positively affect healing and the process of resolution.

## THE IMPACT OF REPORTING SEXUAL ASSAULT TO FORMAL AUTHORITIES

The trauma associated with sexual assault reverberates long after the traumatic event through the process of disclosure. A national, random sample of 4,446 female college students was used to assess sexual assault victim willingness to disclose victimization to formal (police and authorities) and informal (friends, family) sources. Respondents (691) reported 1,318 incidents of the following types of sexual victimization: (1) rape, (2) sexual coercion, (3) sexual contact, and (4) threats. Less than 5% of the victimization incidents were reported to police or to on campus authorities. The following reasons were given for not reporting: uncertainty that crime or harm occurred, fear that the authorities would not think the event was serious enough to warrant reporting, absence of tangible proof that the event occurred, fear of reprisal, and fear that friends or family would find out (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003).

Results are consistent with other reports on victim underreporting (Orchowski, Meyer, & Gidycz, 2009; Patterson et al, 2009). Victims fear further psychological harm, feel unworthy of services, perceive their assault experience as less than stereotypical stranger-rape scenario's, and mistrust that formal systems can protect them from assailants. The Department of Justice indicates the following barriers to reporting campus sexual assault: campus policies on drugs and alcohol, victim blaming by way of an overemphasis on victim responsibility, lack of confidential or anonymous reporting options, fear of stigma, and individual trauma response (2005). The multiple interactions sexual assault survivors have with formal and informal resources, whether they are positive or negative, leave a residue associated with the process of healing and feed victim cognitive appraisals.

## SECONDARY VICTIMIZATION

In addition to dealing with multiple levels of inter/intrapersonal post-rape sequelae, victims who report their rape experience and pursue treatment often suffer repercussions that compromise their healing and readjustment. While victims are more likely to disclose to informal sources (family and friends), survivors of sexual assault who disclose to formal sources (criminal justice systems) describe feelings of powerlessness similar to feelings they experienced during the assault (Murphy, Moynihan, & Banyard, 2009). Victim-blaming attitudes, behaviors, and practices that cause victims to experience additional trauma have been defined as secondary victimization (Campbell, 2005). Victims who receive negative reactions upon disclosure are more likely to experience negative mental and physical consequences (Ullman, 2010).

A study testing secondary victimization by assessing its impact on the psychological health of victims of rape found increased levels of post-traumatic stress associated with the revictimizing behaviors of community service providers (Campbell et al., 2009). Specific to interactions with medical and legal personnel was the experience of victims who were disbelieved or informed that their cases were not serious enough to warrant pursuit. The highest levels of post-traumatic stress were found in acquaintance (non-stranger) rape victims who received minimal help. Victims who received ongoing mental health services after experiencing negative interactions with professionals demonstrated a decrease in post-traumatic stress symptoms.

A meta-summary of 31 qualitative studies that examined victim use of professional services post-assault was used to explore how the services that were provided to victims influenced victim response (Martsof et al., 2010). The following professional disciplines were represented in the study: mental health clinicians, hospital staff, physicians, nurses, sexual assault specialists, and police/legal system professionals. Study findings suggest that victim respondents had strong feelings towards service

providers in terms of: abuse focus, interpersonal interactions, and professional competence. The construct of secondary victimization was supported in this study by victim feeling states of powerlessness and feeling demeaned in reaction to provider response to victim need.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATION AND PREVENTION**

#### **THE CLERY ACT**

There were two significant events in the 1980's that directed the attention of campus administrators, government policy makers, college students, and their parents to the problem of campus sexual assault. One event was the first national level study of the sexual victimization of college women published in 1987 by Koss and her colleagues (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). This study established the prevalence and inherent risk for sexual assault within the college campus environment. The second event was the establishment of The Clery Act in 1988. The Clery Act required all colleges and universities that participated in federal student financial aid programs to report sexual crimes (and other crimes) to the FBI (Kirkland, & Kallem, 2008).

The Clery Act was amended in 1992 requiring colleges and universities to define sexual assault, develop sexual assault policies, establish interventions, and provide sexual assault education and prevention programs. Addendums to The Clery Act under The Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights required schools to provide the following: equal opportunity for alleged victims and offenders to have access to witnesses in disciplinary proceedings, equal notification of proceedings outcome, notification to alleged victims of mental health services and law enforcement options, and options to change class and housing assignments that increase contact with alleged offenders. In 1998 the requirements were expanded to include the disclosure and provision of campus sexual assault statistics to students, parents and campus employees. In 1999 Congress mandated the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to assess compliance to The Clery Act (McMahon, 2008). Universities found in violation can incur financial penalties and possible suspension from federal student financial aid programs.

In keeping with Federal mandates colleges and universities offer a wide range of education and prevention programming. Typical programming addresses rape myths, rape supportive attitudes, gender stereotypes, and provides recommendations to lower risk for victimization and increase safety. Additional information is offered directing students to the agencies and departments on campus that provide assistance and support. A meta-analysis of 69 empirical studies examined the effectiveness of college sexual assault education programs on the following outcome measure categories: changing rape-prone beliefs (rape myth acceptance, rape victim blame), changing rape-related attitudes (attitudes thought to promote the occurrence of sexual assault) and increasing rape knowledge (factual knowledge about sexual assault) (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). While significant effects were demonstrated in improving student rape knowledge, changing student attitudes, and decreasing rape-prone beliefs, these improvements did not result in a decrease in the incidents of sexual assault (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). Nor did they result in an increase in victim reports of sexual assault.

While Federal law requirements have put pressure on universities to address the problem of sexual assault, compliance has been uneven and inconsistent with amendment demands (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). A Department of Justice study (2005) examining college campus compliance with Federal law investigated the policies of 1,015 schools. Full compliance was found in 37 percent of the schools. They reported the following data concerning victim resources and prevention: 6 in 10 schools offered safety oriented educational programs with only 6 of 10 addressing sexual assault, less than one-third include acquaintance rape prevention, and only one-fourth train residence staff to address sexual assault issues.

## CHAPTER VI

### INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

An ecological model of post- assault sequelae identifies the following domains that affect victims and influence mental health outcomes: individual aspects (victim and assailant characteristics), formal and informal reactions, legal systems, medical systems, mental health systems, crisis-oriented response, sociocultural context, revictimization, mental health outcomes, and self-blame (Campbell et al., 2009). Survivors of sexual assault have multiple needs associated with recovery. Most college campuses have on campus resources that offer advocacy, mental health treatment, and legal advice. Campus based victims services often include crisis services, crisis counseling, hospital transport, specialized victim services, mental health services, social services, and campus police. Despite the availability of on campus legal, medical, and therapeutic support, few victims seek help from these systems (Patterson et al., 2009).

Notably absent on many college campuses is a judicial process designed specifically for victims of on-campus sexual assault. Victims interested in due process are forced to seek justice through traditional criminal justice systems. The trajectory through traditional justice process has proven to be retraumatizing for many victims due to negative reactions reflecting socio-cultural beliefs, patriarchal ideology, and discursive frameworks that blame women for their victimization (Herman, 2005; Koss, 2006). In addition 80% of victim decisions to prosecute their assailants are overruled by legal personnel (Campbell et al., 2009) and the ongoing procedures can be harmful to victims of sexual assault.

#### FILING A POLICE REPORT

When rape victims make the decision to report their victimization they enter an institutional system of authority that is based on a structure of protocol and routine. The

potential for retraumatization within the justice system begins with police interviews (Koss, 2006). Most sexual assault victims on college campuses initially disclose their rape to friends; as a result someone other than the victim is involved in the decision making process (Holmstrom & Burgess, 1991). Concerned and well-meaning friends often make assumptions about victim need, often use persuasion to over-determine victim need, or contact the police without seeking victim approval. Efforts to offer support in this way may reenact victim powerlessness by denying victims the opportunity to express their own need.

The police interview requires victims to discuss graphic and personal details of their trauma experience. The tone, style of questioning, and the choice of questions vary significantly within police culture as does the potential for negative and positive responses. Police officers do not view all rape cases equally. The crime of rape is viewed as a crime committed against the state as opposed to a crime committed against the victim. Therefore, individual cases are instantly sized up based on their strength or weakness to hold up in court. This distinction is made based on the following criteria: the quality and consistency of the information obtained, the characteristics of the victim (clothing, alcohol use), the relationship between the victim and the offender (previous sexual intimacy), and the characteristics of the offender (Holmstrom & Burgess, 1991). When the interrogation process is geared to this agenda it reflects a victim -blaming attitude and little attunement to the emotional state of the victim.

#### THE HOSPITAL

When sexual assault victims arrive at the hospital the depersonalized nature of institutions is further reinforced. Emergencies are common and prioritized by organizational protocol. This often results in a disparity between the urgency of the victim and the routines of the hospital staff. Hospital admission procedures triage

victims through direct questioning and self-report forms. This is followed by undressing, changing into a hospital gown, receiving instructions, and assignment to non-private waiting areas. Once again interviewer tone, attitude, and choice of questions may reflect implicit messages and value judgments.

Hospital staff serves a dual role in response to sexual assault victims. They must provide medical care and collect evidence for use in the criminal justice proceedings. These services and the required skill set needed to perform them may be contradictory in nature (Holmstrom & Burgess, 1991). Victims face post-assault repercussions such as pregnancy risk, STD risk, physical trauma, and bodily injury. Victims are asked to provide gynecological history and detailed information of the sexual violation. Rape narratives retraumatize victims by forcing them to relive the assault. This is followed by invasive medical procedures. Pelvic exams, hypodermic injections, intravenous procedures, and oral medications situate victims in a familiar role of being subjected to bodily violation. Physician focus on recording bodily injury and determining physical care is often at the exclusion of assessing the emotional condition of the victim.

#### THE COURT SYSTEM

The attrition rate for rape cases is high and for those cases that do make it to trial the number of convictions is low (Roze & Koss, 2001). Victims are often pressured to go to court by family, friends, police, and prosecutors; victims are also pressured to drop cases. Pressure can be directed onto victims in the form of sympathy appeals, intimidation, obligation to protect others, forgive offenders, or oblige a civic duty (Holmstrom & Burgess, 1991). Victims endure yet another interrogation, this time by the District Attorney (DA), as well as preparation for a potentially incriminating cross-examination. The crime of rape is perceived as a crime against the commonwealth, as

opposed to a crime against a victim and the prosecutorial role may resemble one of interviewer, moral arbiter, and/or legal counselor.

Victims may receive little introduction into the court system process, be unaware that the burden of proof is on the commonwealth, and feel betrayed by having to convince all the actors in the system that a rape actually occurred as opposed to expressing the impact on them of the assault experience. The multiple delays and postponements inherent in the judicial system, the absence of victim voice in describing their experience, the double standard requiring justification of one's character, clothes, choices, and behavior is degrading, emotionally depleting, and retraumatizing. Victim rights to social justice, reparation, and safety are subordinated to the adversarial process occurring between prosecutor and defense attorney.

Statutes inform standard sentencing guidelines concerning offender consequences and little heed is given to victim need, preference, or reparation requests. Offenders often profess innocence, are granted rights to legal representation of their choice, are not required to testify, and are guaranteed a trial by jury. The lack of offender accountability and the prioritization of defendant rights diminishes, disrespects, and further traumatizes victims. Survivors who have endured the criminal justice process report little understanding of their rights as victims, little knowledge of institutional processes, and unsatisfactory responses from law enforcement and criminal justice systems (Murphy, Moynihan, & Banyard, 2009).

Criminal justice systems and legal systems are adversarial and prosecutorial; offenders must prove their innocence and victims must often prove they were raped. Victims experience secondary victimization and retraumatization when they are blamed or disbelieved (Ullman, 2010) and "the credibility of rape victims is examined more closely than that of other crime victims" (Koss, 2000, p1334). Sexual assault victims who opt to utilize traditional criminal justice systems become spectators in criminal justice

theatre, depersonalized and dissociated from the process and unintentionally forced to re-experience the trauma of being a silent and passive recipient.

The need for social acknowledgement, personal power, ventilation, and safety are often denied and subverted when victims follow conventional justice processes due to challenges to victim credibility, subordination to institutional agenda, suppression of trauma narratives, and invalidation via offender disavowal. The most desired outcome reported by survivors of sexual assault is community acknowledgement of the harm suffered, offender accountability, and victim reintegration into the community (Herman, 2005).

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE RESPONSE**

Some college communities have turned to the implementation of restorative justice practice to respond to campus crimes with campus located judicial processes. Restorative justice locates the causes of criminal behavior within the structures of society, as opposed to within individuals, and addresses accountability for wrongdoing with a person-in-environment process of healing. Restorative justice practice offers a deliberative, non-traditional approach to crime and justice intended to repair harm to victims, hold offenders accountable, and restore safety to victims, relationships, and communities (Umbreit & Armour, 2010). Restorative practice is grounded in social justice values and the belief that all members of a given community are stakeholders in the safety, social welfare, and healing of their community. Restorative justice has been used within the campus communities to address campus conduct issues such as bullying, property damage, plagiarism, and substance use (Allena, 2004). Since the inception of restorative justice practice, multiple applications of traditional justice models and hybridized innovations have been implemented globally and locally. Proponents of campus restorative justice practice suggest that it compliments a mission of academic endeavor by offering education in: community morality, public health, social justice, democratic participation, and a community approach to systemic social change (Karp, 2004).

#### **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRINCIPLES**

Restorative justice principles are based on the centrality and interconnectedness of relationships (Zehr, 2002). Restorative justice practice models approach crime as a compromise to the integrity of relationship thereby causing tangible harm to individuals

and the community; the interrelatedness of individuals and communities implies mutual obligation and responsibility. Restorative justice practice offers a humanistic approach to crime locating it within a person-in-environment context and addressing harm within the same contextual and relational frame. Power and control are redirected away from hierarchal state systems to individuals, families, and communities. The central concepts of restorative justice are: a focus on repairing harm to victims, the obligation of offenders to understand the impact of their behavior on victims and make restitution, and the obligation of the community to support victims and offenders in the process of harm reparation (2002).

There is an experiential quality to restorative practice that involves actors in their justice process. This stands in contrast to traditional criminal justice systems that disempower victims by assigning them a passive, bystander role. Offenders are punished as a means to transfer suffering from victims to offenders without accessing the voice of victims to determine victim specific needs for reparation. Restorative justice practice supports process as opposed to outcome through equal respect for victims and offenders. Victims determine the emotional or material reparation needed and offenders are supported through encouragement to accept accountability for their behavior and assume rightful obligation for repair. The following examples serve to introduce the reader to models of restorative practice currently used in university settings. The following three models will be described: victim-offender mediation (VOM), conferencing, and Integrity Boards (IB). Greater detail will be provided on the current operation of a campus IB.

#### VICTIM-OFFENDER MEDIATION (VOM)

The VOM model is dialogue-centered, providing victims who are interested in meeting their offenders a safe and structured arena in which to confront offenders

directly, convey the extent of harm experienced, question offenders if greater clarification is needed concerning the harm exacted upon victims, and influence the manner of restitution (Umbreit & Armour, 2010). The emphasis is on the interaction between the victim and the offender in the presence of trained mediators as they pursue a shared process of conflict resolution that is fair to both victim and offender. VOM is differentiated from traditional criminal justice systems, which are based on settlement-driven negotiation, by the expectation that offenders admit responsibility prior to the mediation process (Karp 2004). Koss suggested that VOM is not appropriate for gender-based violence because it views assault as a conflict needing resolution as opposed to a sex crime (2006).

#### CONFERENCING

A form of conferencing called family group conferencing (FGC) has been widely used and institutionalized in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States, particularly in the case of juvenile justice processes (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1997). Conferencing models differ from VOM models by the inclusion of the family, friends, and supporters of both victim and offender. Conferences invite all participants to share how they have been impacted by the crime. The statements of friends and families are important data used in the determination of reparation and their narratives are believed to provide offenders with greater realization of the human impact of their behavior (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1997).

Participants are considered supporters of the post-conference healing process and may be asked to participate in the following ways: assist victims or offenders in task completion, challenge the honesty of offender statements, or support post conference compliance (Karp, 2004). The offender's support system is expected to support reparation and provide the offender ongoing mentorship. The use of conferencing to

address sex crimes would require post conference monitoring to ensure that victims do not experience further trust or safety violations (Koss, 2006).

#### INTEGRITY BOARDS (IB)

Integrity boards are modern versions of youth panels, community reparative boards, and neighborhood boards (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1997). They are traditionally composed of a cohort of community members trained to conduct public, face-to-face court ordered meetings. Offenders face the board to discuss their crime, the consequences and impact of the crime on others, and possible sanctions. Offender's co-construct sanctions with board members and are responsible for documenting their compliance with established sanctions.

Skidmore College maintains an IB made up of students, staff and faculty. Board members are not victims or witnesses and expected to operate from an objective standpoint serving as representatives of the community (Karp, 2004). Training occurs weekly for an entire semester and students receive academic credit for their participation. Student leaders chair the board and facilitate the restorative process, as opposed to controlling decisions. The board perceives all violations as an affront to student commitment to their community. The board seeks reparative sanctions when violations cause: (1) emotional harm to individuals; (2) damage to property, and (3) harm to the community at large.

Offenders (respondents), victims (harmed parties), other affected parties (campus personnel responding to incidents), a representative from the campus Student Affairs Office and victim-identified support persons are all invited to attend (Karp, 2004). Board goals emphasize collaborative processes and collective decision-making. The expectation is for all participants (stakeholders) to engage fully in the process of identifying harm and determining restitution. Throughout the meeting member

participation may include: questioning the sincerity of the offender, evaluating offender sincerity, and the potential the offender has for remorseful reintegration into the community. Restitution may be communicated through apology letters, community service, and/or reflective essay (Karp, 2004).

Skidmore College is one example of several college communities that have embraced the strengths of restorative practice and continue to explore the limitations of restorative justice for handling campus-based crime. The prevalence of campus sexual crimes, and the contextual landscape in which these crimes occur warrant consideration to the range of supportive resources possible on campus to deal with campus acquaintance rape. The absence of current on campus models of restorative justice reflects the concerns of feminist scholars that the process would operate under the same patriarchy that constrains traditional justice systems.

While American universities question the appropriateness of RJ process to deal with campus sexual assault jurisdictions in New Zealand and South Australia have implemented RJ models to deal with adolescent sexual assault. An archival study of 400 cases of youth sexual assault comparing victim satisfaction with conventional justice as opposed to restorative justice yielded greater satisfaction with restorative models due to increased admission of offender responsibility and apology (Daly, 2003). Koss (2006) suggests that conventional justice and restorative justice are complementary systems when attention is paid to social context, gender, community norms, and the survival and justice needs of victims.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MODELS OF CHANGE

#### COMMUNITY CHANGE RESPONSE

There are several models of community change informed by the influence of social context and social norms on community behavior. The Spectrum of Prevention model of community change is founded on the premise that social norms shape community behavior and specific types of norms support an environment tolerant of sexual violence (Davis, Parks, & Cohen, 2006). Norms associated with sexual violence are steeped in the following concepts: the objectification and oppression of women, value placed on maintaining power over other, tolerance of aggression and victim blaming, hypermasculinity, and norms that equate privacy with secrecy. The Spectrum of Prevention model suggests that damaging norms can be replaced with norms that support equality and safety by engaging individual and community participation in change action. The Spectrum model informs change through levels of individual and community education, the creation of coalitions and networks, institutional change, and the creation of law and policy.

Berkowitz (2010) suggested that a Social Norms Approach to community change requires changing environmental perceptions through interventions on universal, selective and indicated levels. Universal levels would target the larger campus audience through internet and print media campaigns supporting healthy sexual norms. Selective levels would focus on small groups of campus cohorts such as fraternities, sororities, or undergraduate students. Indicated levels are directed specifically at student's known to have a problem. The Social Norms Approach is context specific, and reliant on the integration of institutional and peer community stakeholders.

Results from a study on the etiology of sexual assault suggest that risk is associated with multiple contexts (individual, peer, community), and contends that programming should reflect an ecological approach with prevention designed to target all contextual levels (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). An ecological model of prevention consists of the following components: comprehensive design aimed at changing norms, targeted community engagement in change processes, contextualized programming specific to individual campus culture (how the community frames the issue, the history of the issue, language, social constraints), intervention grounded in theory, attention to social structures that perpetuate violence against women, and a focus on enhancing pro-social community strengths (2009).

Bystander education programs are based on a community of responsibility model of sexual assault prevention (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). Bystander education programs approach college community members as witness to what occurs within their community holding students accountable for their own safety and for the safety of others in the environment. Students are taught how to identify potential risk, how to intervene, how to speak out against norms that support violence, and how to support victims. An experimental study of 389 college undergraduates evaluated the potential of Bystander Education on attitude, knowledge and behavior (2004). Results demonstrated an increase in prosocial bystander attitudes, bystander efficacy, and self-reported bystander behaviors.

#### VICTIM-CENTERED RESPONSE

Based on restorative practice and informed by feminist theory The RESTORE (Responsibility and Equity for Sexual Transgressions Offering a Restorative Experience) research pilot combined public health resources, a community sexual assault center, and the criminal justice system in a collaborative process designed to address sexual

offending (Hopkins & Koss, 2005). The RESTORE program sought to create a victim-centered process that would lessen victim trauma, respond to victim preference for reparation, and educate the community on the social and cultural norms that feed gendered violence. The successful collaboration of multiple stakeholders demonstrates thoughtful intention to the challenges of bringing interorganizational task forces together to address sexual violence.

Hopkins and Koss perceive repairing harm to victims as a bifurcated process (2005). One aspect of the process is to provide survivors the opportunity to use their own voice to fully describe the harm that was done without having to defend or protect themselves. Safe space is provided to create expression and give voice to the impact of emotional wounds and victimization. Authentic, honest dialogue elevates the status of victims and stands in sharp contrast to a culture of silence that minimizes victims and implicitly blames victims for their trauma experience. A second aspect to the process delimits revictimization associated with traditional criminal justice systems by giving survivors control over the process. Victims take charge of improving their interpersonal lives without having to avoid conflict and by developing mastery over the dialectic of disruption and repair.

The RESTORE model operates after an arrest has been made, and before offenders are convicted. The pilot addresses date rape, acquaintance rape, and non-penetration sexual offenses. Victims, offenders, and their respective support networks are given the opportunity to speak to the impact the crime has had on their lives. At conference end A Community Accountability and Reintegration Board (CARB) monitors offender compliance. Program design required consultation with legal and constitutional representatives to insure that the rights of victims and offenders were protected in the restorative process. Boundaries were set around the types of sexual assault offenses deemed appropriate for restorative practice, based on individual

screening and the potential for ongoing physical, emotional, and sexual violence. After 2 years of practice, 71% of victims and 84% of offenders participated in the program (Koss & Achilles, 2003). While quantitative evaluation of program effectiveness and participant satisfaction is currently in process Koss (2010) asserted that “carefully reasoned, safe, and respectful alternatives can be offered for sexual assault if we collaborate, consult, and listen to the needs of our constituencies”(pp. 219).

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY**

The disparity between the continued prevalence on college campuses of acquaintance rape and the low percentage of victim reporting suggests there is more work to be done in addressing the Public Health problem of on-campus acquaintance rape. The campus community is in need of thoughtful and creative means for increasing transparency to the problem, increasing safety for victims to come forward, and improving community awareness and access to resources. Rates of on-campus completed and attempted sexual coercion (14.7 per 1000 female students) and rates of completed and attempted unwanted sexual contact (58.2 per 1000 female students) are more disturbing when reports indicate that many victims experience repeat victimization (Fisher, Blevins, Santana, & Cullen, 2004). In addition, survivors of sexual assault are routinely retraumatized when they seek support through various formal and informal resources (Ullman, 2010).

Trauma theories suggest that victim recovery occurs through processes of reconnection that reestablish victim safety, autonomy, identity, intimacy, and trust (Herman, 1992). Key to victim recovery is empowerment through validation of the traumatic experience and victim ownership of the recovery process. Victims express the need to give voice to their experience, legitimize their victimhood, observe offender remorse, receive support that counteracts isolation, and provide input concerning reparation (Koss & Achilles, 2008). Survivors of sexual assault report that community acknowledgment of harm and offender denunciation provides justice by validating victim experience, relieving victim shame, and inviting victim reintegration into the community (Herman, 2005).

The multiple pathways of risk for sexual assault on college campuses challenge the efforts of inter-organizational task forces. Understanding systemic vulnerability requires expertise from various campus resources in response to on campus crime. Lofton stated “crimes emerge from a community’s lack of wholeness” (2004, pp. 385). The sustained prevalence rates of victims of on campus acquaintance rape reflect a lack of wholeness within campus communities. The broader institutional perspectives on university settings are framed by attempts to deal with crime and misconduct in the face of social and legal constraints. Addressing the prevalence of on campus acquaintance rape requires community involvement and ongoing assessment of the inter-organizational task forces that respond to the crime of rape. Whether or not victims of on campus acquaintance rape report or utilize campus resources, they are impacted by their awareness of how the campus administrative community approaches and responds to the issue of campus sexual crimes.

Upon acceptance to academic institutions, students are inundated with information pertaining to campus resources, policies, procedures, and issues of safety. Arrival on campus coincides with various orientation programs and attempts to prepare students for meeting the needs of academic life as well as dealing with unexpected situations. The decentralized nature of university communities requires a strategic alliance between multiple campus organizations demonstrating a shared allegiance to student well-being and a coordinated response to community need. Campus decision makers and policy makers have the power to model social responsibility through institutional responsiveness, student oriented advocacy, operational efficiency, and social justice values.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of senior university personnel on the challenges of responding to campus sexual assault. In their dual role as campus stakeholders and decision makers they have the power to affect the entire

student community and influence community safety. The daily process of working collaboratively to form a strategic alliance in dealing with campus crime may prohibit the time needed for individual reflection on the challenges of responding to campus acquaintance rape. This qualitative study accessed the experience, insight, and perceptions that make up the subjective world of key campus informants tasked with responding to reports of on-campus sexual assault. Through the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews the following questions were explored:

1. Given that the prevalence of on campus acquaintance rape exceeds the number of rapes reported on college campuses, how do senior campus personnel perceive the ongoing challenge of responding to this disparity?
2. What are the challenges of inter-organizational collaboration when responding to campus acquaintance rape?
3. What are the specific roles of on campus supportive resources and how do these roles inform collaboration?
4. What do various campus stakeholders perceive as successful elements of a coordinated approach to campus sexual assault?

#### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND INTENSIVE INTERVIEWS

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study. Weiss stated that the goals of research dictate methodology (1994). The goals of this research are congruent with the following aspects of qualitative research: a) access detailed descriptions, b) integrate multiple perspectives, c) describe process, d) solicit holistic descriptions, e) understand how perceptions and reactions influence interpretation, f) capture intersubjectivities and, g) provide data for further research. Social work principles of starting where the client is, humanistic perspectives, and relational paradigms are

synonymous with Padgett's tenets of qualitative research: flexibility, naturalism, and immersion (2004).

The research methodology utilized for this study was face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Padgett stated "in-depth interviewing clearly resonates with practitioners who are experts at listening empathetically" (p. 10). The immersion of researcher and participant throughout the inquiry process situates both actors as co-constructors of data. Charmaz (2006) suggests that researchers are "part of the world we study and the data we collect" (p. 10) bringing the past and present experience of both participants to the ongoing collection and analyses of data. The researcher worked from a self-developed interview guide (See Appendix B) composed of interview questions reflecting a symbolic interactionist perspective (Charmaz, 2006). Questions were composed to extend the interview conversation without leading the respondent in any particular direction. Probes were used throughout the interview to enhance depth detail. A memo-writing journal was kept throughout the process of data collection and analysis.

#### SAMPLE

Through a process of purposive sampling, participants were selected based on their position of leadership and their participation in responding to on-campus sexual assault. Representatives from the following offices were asked to participate in this study:

The Office of the President

The Office of the Provost

Student Intervention Services (P9)

Student Health Services (P5)

The Women's Center (P3)

General Counsel (P10)

Greek Life (P1)

Public Safety (P7)

The Office of Student Conduct (P2)

Special Services (P6)

Religious Life (P4)

Academic Faculty (P8)

The Office of the President and The Office of the Vice Provost declined the request to participate in this study. The participants who agreed to an interview encompassed multidisciplinary training backgrounds and varying expertise on social, political, developmental, and administrative domains associated with responding to campus sexual assault. I too am part of the sexual assault response system in this University. In my role as a clinical social worker I provide psychotherapy to students in the campus counseling center. Students reporting victimization may seek therapeutic support on their own, or may be referred by campus administrators, faculty, and by any of the respondents who participated in this study.

#### DATA COLLECTION

The Study proposal was submitted for approval to The University of Pennsylvania Office of Regulatory Affairs for Institutional Review Board (IRB) after the CITI training requirement was complete. IRB approval was granted on June 7, 2011 (See Appendix A) and the study recruitment process followed. Research participants were sent a letter that included the following: information on the topic, a brief description of the study, the investigators affiliation with the University, why the potential candidate was selected, and a request for participation in an interview process. Respondents were advised to expect a follow-up phone contact to discuss elements of participation. Interviews took

place on the University campus in the locations requested by the individual respondents. Six interviews took place in the office of the respondents, two interviews took place in conference rooms, and two interviews took place in my office. Respondents were asked to sign informed consent forms and were advised that while confidentiality and anonymity would not be guaranteed, participants would not be identified by name. Interviews lasted between 60 minutes and 90 minutes, were recorded, and fully transcribed by a confidential service. Intensive interviews were used to capture the subjective experience and insight of the respondents and explore the complexity of responding to campus sexual assault through the lens of the various inter-organizational task forces.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

Grounded theory was used to interpret and analyze study data. Data gathering and analysis occurred simultaneously. Grounded theory allows an inductive approach consisting of “systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data” (Charmaz, 2000, p.509). Data was coded as it emerged, allowing ongoing definition and categorization. I engaged in ongoing memo writing throughout the coding process and an audit trail reflected research collection, process of analysis, emergent categories, and the development of concepts.

Line-by-line coding was used to develop concepts from the raw interview data as a means to support in-depth identification of the perspectives, experiences and language of the individual participants. Line by line coding preceded the evolution of provisional categories and themes. Axial coding was used to explore variation within and across categories. The final process compared codes, categories, concepts, and variations. A process of constant comparison allowed the researcher to refine existing codes, develop

new codes, and process from the level of description to a more abstract level of provisional concepts. A transcription service was employed to transcribe recorded interviews and a secure transmission protocol was followed.

#### FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY

This study utilized a feminist theoretical framework. Synonymous with a constructivist approach a feminist paradigm acknowledges the social construction of reality (Dickson-Swift, James, & Liamputtong, 2008). Feminist theory frames research with awareness to the “multiple intersectionalities of identity” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 27) and positions gender relations and empowerment aims at the center of inquiry. The prevalence of on campus sexual assault is located within the broader sociopolitical domain and reflects the imbalance of power consistent with patriarchy.

Likewise, my role as researcher replete with social, historical, and personal characteristics is equally positioned within the research context as is a position of power as researcher and interpreter of data. A feminist framework obligates awareness to the multiple identities of researcher and subject at play within the research process. Olesen cautioned awareness in feminist qualitative research to attend to one’s location within the analytic process in order to “avoid replication of the researcher and instead display representation of the participants” (p. 236).

#### THE INFLUENCE OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK ON RESEARCH

Social work has an extensive history of working to improve the lives of individuals and the state of communities. Approaching the college campus community from a person-in-environment orientation reflects social work values for promoting social change and individual well-being through an understanding of the intersection between individuals and their environment. Principles of social justice and a humanistic

perspective guide tenets of social work as does awareness to the mutually reciprocal influence of person and environment. The prevalence of on campus sexual assault visits systemic injustice to victims and the community at large. Exploring this issue through the lens of social work incorporates values of empowerment, advocacy, dignity, inclusivity, and social justice.

The practice of social work research is based on an integration of science and art. Social work occurs in a specific socio-cultural context and maintains awareness to the interpretive nature of reality and the lack of a value-free orientation. Social work research practice requires systematic observation and rigorous procedure. The art of social work is grounded in the use of self to sit with the uncertainty, mystery, and unpredictable nature of human behavior. Goldstein reflects on the organic integration of art and science by stating: “The rationality and order of science are complemented by the willing acceptance of ambiguity, irony, double meaning, and obliqueness as natural symptoms of the human condition” (p.48, 1992).

#### REFLEXIVITY STATEMENT

My clinical experience working with victims of sexual assault and my visibility on campus as an activist and advocate for assault victims complimented and preceded my developing role as a researcher. In my role as a psychotherapist working with victims of on campus assault I am often confronted not only with helping victims work through the trauma of their assault experience, but to also deal with the trauma brought on by the reactions they receive from peers, family, faculty, and various supportive resources. Uneducated and uninformed reactions have the potential to foster secondary trauma. This further challenges victim recovery, victim self-worth, and the integrity of victim identity. It unravels self-confidence, supports self-doubt, and often reinforces the tendency of many victims to take responsibility for being assaulted. As I bear witness to

this erosion of self I feel not only compassion for the victim but anger towards whoever has reacted to victim disclosure in a judgmental or shaming way. It is difficult to recover from a sexual assault experience. It is confusing and disorienting to unpack the feelings of betrayal associated with being violated by someone known to the victim. Responding to victim disclosure with anything less than compassion is an additional betrayal and another layer of trauma. As I approach the in-depth interview process I am aware that I move forward feeling protective towards the victims of sexual assault and wary of the perceptions the interview respondents will share concerning victims.

As I prepared for the interview process I wondered what the interviewees thought of my request to interview them. I felt somewhat intimidated interviewing people I did not know very well. I felt unsure of my skills as an interviewer. I also felt aware of monitoring my reaction to the interview content. Throughout my development as a researcher I have been advised to be "academic" and not "polemic" in my writing. It is easy to delete emotional reactivity from the written page. It is harder to contain emotional reactivity in person. I am aware of the need to maintain my stance as a researcher throughout the interview process and restrain my voice in order to hear the voices of my study participants.

My immersion in the sexual assault literature for the past three years and my interest in working with victims and survivors of sexual assault have afforded me a newfound reputation as having both an expertise and a willingness to dialogue on the subject of sexual assault. Everyone knows someone who has been a victim or who has been accused of being an offender. As a result, I have become the lightning rod for all manner of verbal discharge on the topic and a convenient repository for the projection of emotionally activating thoughts and opinions. Since the onset of my research and the subsequent announcement of my topic area peers, colleagues, family members, and people I hardly know have approached me curiously, defensively, antagonistically,

supportively, and sometimes to offer self-disclosure. I have given considerable thought to understanding the meaning and motivation behind the aggressive and defensive posture people take when engaging me in a dialogue about sexual assault. I also reflect compassionately on the impetus behind the spontaneous self-disclosure. As I approach my impending interview process I am aware of my strong countertransference and my sensitivity to victim-blaming reactions. As I prepare for the interview process I am mindful of the need to respect the narratives of my interview participants. I am duly aware of the need to respect my own process by debriefing post interview with colleagues and peer supervisors as a means to deal with my own potential activation.

#### THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The interview process and my relationship with my interviewees informed my activism, my clinical awareness, and my mentorship of other clinicians. I have become more aware of the power of language and discourse to constitute meaning. I began the interview process using the term *acquaintance rape* to refer to sexual violence that is perpetrated by someone known to the victim. Several of my respondents had strong opinions and negative reactions to the use of this term. They suggested that it softens the mental image of the offender and the offense and delegitimizes the impact of the assault on the victim. I questioned my use of the term and ultimately regretted the explicit endorsement of the term on the title of my project. I now use the term *non-stranger* rape or *non-stranger* sexual assault.

Several of the respondents assured me throughout the interview process that they did not want to use victim-blaming language. My work with victims and my identification as a feminist made me quite sensitive to the language respondents used to refer to victims, offenders, and the community in general. As I worked to maintain my role as researcher, capture the voices of the informants, and restrain myself from

commenting on what I perceived as victim-blaming language, my silence, though self-imposed, felt forced and oppressive. A respondent described sexual assault as "a situation" that women get into. The researcher was silent. I noticed my silence in response to the language of the interviewee and thought about the parallel process between the experience I was having and the experience of victims when they disclose. I thought about the words of the respondent and the dialectic between not wanting to blame victims and holding victims responsible for getting themselves into the "situation" of sexual assault. This made clear to me the line between intent and impact. This has been a useful reminder to me when I sit with victims, when I provide supervision to developing clinicians, and when I engage in dialogue about the issue of sexual assault.

## **CHAPTER X**

### **FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of key campus informants on the challenge of responding to on-campus sexual assault, wherein the victim and perpetrator are students who are acquainted with one another. I conducted intensive interviews with ten key campus personnel tasked with responding in different capacities to incidents of on-campus sexual assault. My aim was to try to understand more about the well-documented disparity between actual incidents of on-campus acquaintance rape and rates of disclosure and the challenges faced by key university personnel as they try to respond. Participants were purposively selected based on their position of leadership and a professional role as part of an inter-organizational campus crisis response team. Respondents tasked with addressing the multiple repercussions of on campus sexual assault represented university offices offering the following resources: victim services, law enforcement, public safety, victim advocacy, public health, student intervention services, Greek life, general counsel, judicial affairs, and religious guidance. The respondents are not identified by name, as per the informed consent agreement. Participants will be identified in the following way: P1- P10.

My experience as a campus counseling center psychotherapist informed my awareness of victim process and gave me a working knowledge of the campus landscape in terms of student resources. Some victims of on-campus sexual assault utilize available campus resources; other victims elect not to for a variety of reasons. Victims who have been involved with formal resources on campus express a mix of feelings and opinions about their experience ranging from gratitude to retraumatization. My proximity to victims of campus sexual assault has not only situated me to bear witness to the

psychological and emotional process of victim recovery, but also allowed me to hear how victims experience the response of on campus supportive resources.

I approached my study with varying levels of familiarity with the study participants. I assumed all my interviewees would have an experientially informed understanding of the subject matter. My hope was to gain a better understanding of how the perceptions of my interview participants may influence the collective mechanisms that drive the University's formal response to sexual assault. The culture of silence surrounding campus sexual assault is well documented and I assumed my respondents were aware of it as well. In light of this I questioned how study participants would approach my exploration of the subject. Would they be transparent about the prevalence of on campus sexual assault or would they be reticent about expressing their views? Would their interdependent roles allow them to think critically and speak honestly about inter-organizational vulnerabilities? I wondered how respondents balanced dual roles that required them to work with victims and offenders and at the same time represent the University. I also wondered how my role as an insider would influence respondent presentation. I approached the interviews with curiosity and awareness that although my opinions would not be overtly expressed during the interview process they might come through in subtle, unintentional ways that I would need to monitor and keep in check.

I identified seven themes that emerged out of the interview data, some with sub-themes, which I categorize as follows:

1. Perceptions of Causality: The Impact of Gender Inequality, Alcohol, and Developmental Stage.
2. Explaining Underreporting: Perceptions of Risk.
3. Definitions of Acquaintance Rape: Contextual and Legal
4. Offending: Situational and Premeditation
5. Departmental Roles: Balancing Independent and Collaborative Response.

6. Barriers to Collaboration
7. Defining Successful Collaboration

The first category contains three sub themes associated with participant perceptions of causality: gender inequality, alcohol, and stages of socio-emotional development. There was much overlap between sub themes within this category. Themes of gender inequality, alcohol, and development came up as well in subsequent categories. Eight of the respondents perceived sexual assault as an issue of power and control. All interview participants responded emphatically about the link between alcohol use and the frequency of on-campus assaults. Several respondents suggested that certain developmental attributes of college students situate them for risk of becoming victims or offenders of sexual assault. All of the respondents expressed awareness of the disparity between the frequency with which on-campus acquaintance rape occurs and how infrequent sexual assaults are reported.

How respondents explained underreporting is captured in the second theme that emerged from the interviews. All respondents expressed a clear understanding of the fear and shame that influence victim decisions not to report to formal authorities. Several respondents blamed underreporting on social pressure and fear of social ostracism.

The third theme, which relates to respondent definitions of acquaintance rape overlaps with the first two categories. There are two sub themes that parse out the ways in which respondents defined acquaintance rape: contextual and legal. The respondents offered descriptions of context in terms of the actors, the location, the circumstances preceding the assault, or the extent of familiarity between victim and offender. Three of the respondents referenced the legal definitions of acquaintance rape as they relate to consent and incapacitation. Three respondents suggested that students might hold

antiquated ideas about rape, believing that it is only enacted by someone unknown to the victim.

The fourth theme captures respondent perceptions of offending. This category differentiates between situational offending and pre-meditated offending. The fifth category focuses on how the distinct professional roles of the respondents inform their perceptions of and response to on-campus acquaintance rape and how the interviewees work both independently and collaboratively in response to reports of on-campus acquaintance rape. The sixth theme speaks to the issues that challenge the collaboration between community partners who are part of a collective response to on-campus acquaintance rape. The final theme involves individual perceptions of what constitutes successful inter-organizational collaboration.

#### PERCEPTIONS OF CAUSALITY: THE IMPACT OF GENDER INEQUALITY, ALCOHOL, AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE.

##### GENDER INEQUALITY

Eight of ten respondents implicated violence against women as a dimension of gender inequality. Several respondents suggested that acquaintance rape was a gendered crime enacting issues of power and control. According to these respondents, power was located both as a precursor to sexual assault and as a post assault entitlement. The latter having to do with the perpetrator's sense of security that there would be no retribution. Half of the interviewees suggested gender inequality on campus was an extension of gender inequality in the larger culture. Some respondents spoke explicitly about the role of gender inequality in on-campus acquaintance rape. Along these lines, respondents spoke about the ways in which male students use physical force, objectify female students, and otherwise engage enactments of internalized patriarchal attitudes.

A male respondent with 30 years in higher education suggested that sometimes "no does not always mean no" for male students whose sexual advances are rejected. When I probed for underlying meanings of what "no" means in this context, and asked the respondent to expound on the profile of a male student likely to misinterpret the word "no" from a female student, he offered the following:

*Some may interpret "no" as "no" but that's part of what they get off on is the force, so I think it's probably a whole spectrum of interpretations. I think in the minds of the perpetrators, I don't know, you know I think there are some who are predisposed to being, um, violent. You know, a lot of our students are very entitled and not many people say no to them so they, I think they say, that's not, this is what I want, I want to get this. (P1)*

In the previous quote, the respondent provides a narrative containing several examples of how power and control may be used to satisfy a sexual imperative. In this vignette the refusal to be denied sex is accompanied by a cognition, on the part of the perpetrator, that betrays objectification of the victim: "this is what I want, I want to get this".

Other respondents are more explicit about the role of power, control, and gender inequality in on-campus acquaintance rape. The interviewee whose quote follows, had a long history of employment in the legal profession and described working in multiple capacities over time with the issue of sex crimes. When asked what systemic changes would decrease the prevalence of on-campus acquaintance rape based on her experience she suggested the following:

*God knows. You know what uh, you really can't do anything because this is just a microcosm of society, uh, it's no different here than it is anywhere else uh, you know what can you do? Who Knows? I mean change the balance of power? I mean rape is really not a crime of sex, it's a crime of power, um and um and it's men asserting themselves uh getting power over women and uh to that extent I don't know how you change that. (P2)*

When prompted to consider why men would want power over women she stated the following:

*Well, they, uh, you know, it's like inbred, it's part of your genes I gather, it's been going on for so, since cavemen you know. It's a control issue. (P2)*

She also suggested that there is a "wicked double standard in this world as much as we'd like to think there is not", stigmatizing female victims of on-campus acquaintance rape as opposed to stigmatizing male offenders. A female respondent (P5) in the medical field, and a male respondent (P4) who has worked closely with offenders had similar views on the cultural origins of sexual violence:

*It reflects what's going on in society, I mean it's not, you know, I, uh, the concept itself has been one that has been in evolution over the past couple of decades. I don't think there is anything different happening here then what's happening in the larger uh context of the world. (P5)*

*They may think that guys have all the power and if they report there will be retribution...because a couple of reasons, one, men often have the power just like in society males have power. (P4)*

A male respondent employed as an adjunct professor and a religious leader addressed the issue of gender inequality when prompted to consider how he would decrease the prevalence of on campus sexual assault:

*A school that was a male only school for so long that has all the fraternities on [campus], all fraternities, not sororities, that only had it's first woman president in like the 90's after 200 plus years of existence, I don't think we've ever had a female head of the Board of Trustees, but our Board is by far male, um there's been like one maybe 2 or 3 student council presidents of the whole UA who have been women, um women's athletics, there's a disparity so I think that if we started over and did our best to make it as fair as possible, would that cut down rape? I don't know but I think that would empower women in a different way. I think seeing strong women...I think really is a big step in the right direction but women are not equal [here], yet, as buildings demonstrate um, you know I think, sort of deep down, why this, so few women report acquaintance rape is connected to why so few women run for chair of the UA, run for President of organizations, um, I think there's connections where, why are women hired probably at slightly less rates at on campus recruiting, yeah, and why also do they apply to fewer jobs than their male counterparts do, I think there is something down there that is bigger than [this university], that's bigger than college. (P4)*

The respondent in the previous quote refers to the visibility of multiple professional roles held by men on campus. He goes on to suggest that a more fair distribution of highly visible roles for men and women may prove empowering to women. In the quote below a female respondent who works closely with victims was asked why acquaintance rapes occur. Her response referenced issues of power and control:

*Um, that's a tough question to answer: male dominance, power, alcohol, and peer pressure. I think it's really important with college males to have people think they are sexually active and to have the power to get what they want. (P6)*

A female respondent with legal expertise was asked what would deter victims from reporting that they were raped. She suggested that victims may be intimidated based on their perceptions of power:

*Yeah, they may think that the guys have all the power and if they report there will be retribution. (P 10)*

When prompted to consider why female students would assume that male students had power, she responded as follows:

*Men often have the power just like in society males have power. Um some of the fraternities on campus are known to be fraternities of the powerful guys. Their families are wealthy, um buildings are named after them and so there's a sense of inequity in the power structure. Some of it is based on um what they've been told, some it is based on what they see and some it is not completely nuts that,*

*uh, if you take on a boy who has powerful connections they can make your life pretty miserable and they can re-victimize you and they blame you and second guess what you've said. It can make your college career even worse. (P10)*

A female respondent with several roles as an educator, director, and activist connected social capital with "gender inequity". In the following quote she defined social capital as a way to exercise power and control based on the ownership of prime geographical location and the ability to provide entree to exclusive social events at that location:

*You know historically this was an all male campus and so the fraternities have been here for hundreds of years but the result of that in 2011 is that the young men on this campus own, you know, prime real estate, host the prime parties, host the socially desirable parties, opportunities, and anyway there's this other national Greek rule that I'm sure you discussed that women aren't allowed to host parties so there's two issues, one is that they don't have real estate in the heart of campus and that means that they don't have the same degree of cultural capital. Young women, they want to be socially accepted, they want to get in with the in crowd, they want the hip guys to, you know it's all about gaining social capital and so the risk factors for me are about, are about gender inequity on campus more generally. I think it's a risky environment if men have more social capital. (P3)*

She goes further to link a "sense of untouchability" with social capital:

*A certain plot of young men who think that they are immune to prosecution, like the, the very same social capital that helped them get to school will also help cover up any tracks of any misdemeanors on their part. (P3)*

A female respondent working closely with female victims stated that acquaintance rape " is the predominant type of sexual assault that happens on campus". When asked why non-stranger rapes occur in university environments she referred to the prevalence of "rape myths" that influence behavior by reinforcing false assumptions about sexual inequality, victim blaming attitudes, and ambiguity about the difference between sex and rape. The vignette below captures her point:

*There are people that exist and they're everywhere including here on campus who have their own set of misunderstandings or myths or biases, whatever word you want to use, um that placed in a certain circumstance, then non-consensual sex can happen. The responsibility for the behavior falls on the person whose having non-consensual sex so that answer means you would have to think about who that is. There are people who if the circumstances are right, will do that. (P8)*

#### ALCOHOL

All of the subjects perceived alcohol use as highly prevalent in cases of on campus sexual assault. When asked why acquaintance rape occurs so frequently on university settings all respondents indicted the use of alcohol. Respondents expressed collective frustration with student idealization and glorification of alcohol and concern that the lowered inhibition and distorted decision making of students under the influence of alcohol increased their potential to become victims or offenders. The respondents with

closest proximity to victims described it as over simplistic to view victim intoxication as the only cause of sexual assault.

Several respondents spoke about the combination of alcohol and emotional immaturity as an increased risk factor for acquaintance rape:

*Many of the kids on our campus drink too much and I think they find themselves um with boys who also aren't mature enough to know what they are doing. The boys think this is it, they got lucky, and the girls don't think they consented to go that far and I just think that it is endemic in a college community where there's a lot of partying and there's a lot of partying on this campus and there's a lot of alcohol. (P10)*

*I think that a lot of our students are not mature enough to really be able to identify their feelings, understand the appropriate ways to be able to express that, and um then when you toss alcohol into the mix, it just makes it that much more volatile. (P1)*

Several respondents reported they had never been involved in a case of reported acquaintance rape that did not involve alcohol:

*There are cases that don't involve alcohol but they are few and far between when we're talking about acquaintance rape. I can't think of a case by the way, ever in twelve years. I cannot think of a single case involving, not stranger rape, we're talking about what I would call date rape or acquaintance rape, where*

*the young woman, or the woman says, I said no, I said no, I said no, and he forced me and no I hadn't had anything to drink. (P10)*

*This is in the literature and I see it on campus as well and I'm sure some of the other people you talked to will agree as well. Alcohol. Alcohol has a great deal to do with the assaults that happen here on campus and I have to work really hard to think about how many cases I've had something to do with that happened here on campus and had nothing to do with alcohol. (P8)*

When asked how often acquaintance rape occurs in the absence of drugs or alcohol on campus, a female respondent associated with campus judicial process replied:

*I have not a clue about that because most of the cases that I get are drug and alcohol related. In fact I can't at this point, think of one [case] that isn't, wasn't. (P2)*

A male respondent working with students for 28 years reported the following:

*I've heard very, very few situations where a sexual assault happened and alcohol and drugs was not part of the equation. (P1)*

A female respondent working in law enforcement called alcohol "by far the biggest risk" factor associated with reports of on-campus acquaintance rape. Her quote below describes the role of alcohol in a hypothetical morning after scenario:

*I think when young women wake up the next morning and uh, either they are with the perpetrator or they have stumbled back home, they are trying to piece it all together, their memories are foggy, um and then they also feel like well, you know, did I really? Did I mean to do that? Did I cause it by, by, you know, getting too drunk? (P7)*

A female respondent speaking about the national fraternity and sorority system ("Greek") rule that prohibits sororities from hosting parties suggested that although alcohol use is a risk factor for sexual assault other powerful forces are also at play:

*The national prohibition on them [women] hosting parties, so what that creates is a situation in which men are in charge of parties and everyone who works on campus always says to you, scratches their heads because that's just not a great idea. It means men are in charge of the alcohol, the ordering of the alcohol, the distribution of the alcohol, the mixing of drinks. (P3)*

This excerpt with a male respondent working closely with Greek life speaks to the effects of alcohol on judgment:

*Even if they have significant experience with alcohol or drugs, um it still affects their decision making process and if they were sober and able to look into the eyes of someone that they are considering assaulting, I think that they would think twice about it. (P1)*

For most respondents the relationship between alcohol and sexual assault was causal, for others the disinhibiting effect of alcohol exacerbated gender-based

entitlement. When asked if alcohol was the cause of sexual assault the above respondent suggested the following:

*I don't know that's necessarily why, I think it's one of the major contributing factors, I think students not being able to um identify and control their emotions, um you know I don't, I think that some, well all sexual assault is violence, is an act of violence, I don't think it's necessarily a malicious intent all the time, I think they feel like I have these overwhelming feelings for this person and I need to express them, I'm not thinking straight, um so you know I don't think it's necessarily always a horrible, negative malicious intent, that doesn't mean it's not a horrible experience for somebody, I just think that a lot of our students are not mature enough to really be able to identify their feelings. (P1)*

A respondent with 17 years of experience at the university described alcohol as contributing factor to victimhood and to perpetration:

*Alcohol and sex sometimes blow up, either you're the victim or you become the perpetrator. Even though you thought you had a green light, there are no green lights with drinking and sex. (P7)*

A female respondent suggested that alcohol use impairs the judgment of male and female students:

*The fact that students are congregating at, you know, have a place where there is a significant amount of alcohol and judgment gets impaired on both the female and the male side of the equation, it's hard to stop the alcohol from*

*coming in, can you stop the parties? Well it's hard to stop the parties if you have the fraternities. I mean, I would do away with fraternities if I was to do away with one thing. (P5)*

A female respondent referred to all-male groups such as fraternities or athletic teams as cohorts strongly associated with the use of alcohol:

*Well, I think fraternities and athletics again, as a group, it's embedded in their culture, the alcohol and the sex, um, and I think you have the mob mentality when you get those groups together combined with the alcohol. Um I don't think there's as many forced rapes in individual residential residences as you get in these party settings. (P6)*

All respondents referred to a significant relationship between on-campus acquaintance rape and alcohol. Some suggested alcohol use was tied to a *work hard play hard* mentality and a means to discharge the pressure of academic demands. Some respondents saw alcohol as a weapon of pre-meditation. When asked how to rebuild the campus system to decrease the prevalence of campus sexual assault respondents offered the following suggestions: "ban alcohol", "decolonize fraternities", or "legalize alcohol in order to exert greater control over its usage". Most of the respondents favored a harm reduction approach to decreasing incidents of sexual assault by targeting and reducing alcohol use on campus. Although for the most part they did not go so far as to blame sexual assault solely on alcohol use, eight of ten respondents were unable to pinpoint campus reported sexual assaults that did not involve alcohol.

## DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

Several respondents associated a risk for on-campus acquaintance rape with developmental attributes of students, victims, and perpetrators. They noted the immaturity, naïveté, and vulnerability that are often characteristic of incoming freshmen. A female respondent in Public Safety talked about New Student Orientation (NSO). She spoke of the great pains taken to educate students on the dangers of alcohol use and to define alcohol incapacitated sex as a crime of rape. When asked to comment on how aware students are that Pennsylvania sexual assault law holds that an intoxicated person cannot provide consent she blamed a disregard for this particular law on a lack of maturity indicative of this age group:

*I don't think they really, you know what, I don't think an 18 year old boy is really caring about all that. (P7)*

The respondent above recommended a more *scared straight* model of prevention with reference to a Public Safety presentation concerning retail theft during which students were warned they would "be handcuffed" and "be put in the back of a paddy wagon with all your friends watching" if they were caught stealing. She suggests students were further advised they would "meet new people in jail". She suggested the above approach was accountable for an observable decrease in retail theft at the university bookstore.

A female respondent employed for 12 years on the campus expressed an opinion on the maturity level of both victims and perpetrators:

*Kids on our campus, and they're treated as adults, but they are kids, uh, find themselves in situations that they are unable and un-mature, and not mature enough to handle, I think that they find themselves um with boys who also aren't mature enough to know what they are doing. (P10)*

Her suggestion that student immaturity made them "vulnerable" to risk was shared by a female respondent working closely with victims and perpetrators:

*They're young. Folks with experience know what to kind of anticipate, but not young and trusting in a community where you're learning to fit in and to have new friends. (P9)*

All respondents agreed that the highest degree of risk for sexual assault in female freshman is during the first two weeks of freshman year. The respondents above suggested that student efforts to create social connections and fit into their social environment as well as their lack of awareness of risk of on-campus acquaintance rape increased student vulnerability.

A male respondent involved with Greek life talks about the "culture shock" experienced by freshmen as they try to navigate the academic demands and social landscape of their new environment:

*A majority of rapes on campus are by acquaintances whether it's dates or friends or next-door neighbors in a residence hall or whatever, and they don't understand that. They don't understand the role that alcohol plays in peoples decision making and so it's um, I think it's a big wake up call a lot of times.*

*They're kind of in awe of all of their peers, they're being completely overloaded with, um information about school, they're nervous about being able to be accepted, they're nervous about being able to be um successful here, there's a whole culture shock going on. (P1)*

A female respondent working in the Women's Center refers to the naive and trusting nature of students arriving on campus:

*They're coming in with such a sense of like trust of [This University]. [This University] is going to take care of them and their co-students, their sense is like [This University] bubble and the outside world is unsafe. So that is what we're working with is that they come in trusting the [University] administration to take care of them, their dorms to take good care of them and their peers to be on their you know, on their side. (P3)*

A female respondent involved with campus judicial processes who identified "alcohol and drugs" as the primary risk factors for on-campus acquaintance rape referred to the vulnerability inherent in this developmental stage of life as an additional risk factor:

*These kids are kids and they're between the ages of 17 and 22. They're not fully formed. They haven't grown up yet. (P2)*

A female respondent with law enforcement talked about the significance and timing of her sexual assault education and prevention programming during NSO:

*Education, starting with the day they arrive I do my NSO. Every year since I've been here it's been on a Saturday. This year we're doing it on Friday of Labor Day weekend because the student population came back and said we're getting to them the day after the students have been sexually assaulted and raped, that their first Friday night at the University is the biggest night for partying and putting themselves at risk. So for the first time we're doing it before their first Friday night with us. (P6)*

A female respondent working with health services reported on the three primary risk factors associated with on-campus acquaintance rape:

*Again, it's the large breath of uh, literature to date and if it's research or not research, it uh points to significant factors: alcohol and other substances play a significant part of it, uh Greek culture to some extent, and I would not paint them with a broad brush but certainly uh, that being another factor, uh freshmen status. I'd say those are probably the big three that I would think about. (P5)*

Most respondents suggested that the frequent use of alcohol by post-adolescent college students during this developmentally vulnerable stage of life contributed to the majority of on-campus sexual assaults. Several respondents offered examples of gender-based inequity on the college campus and in the culture outside of the college setting as additional factors of risk.

#### EXPLAINING UNDERREPORTING: PERCEPTIONS OF RISK

All respondents were well informed about the disparity between the prevalence of on-campus acquaintance rape and the lack of reporting. Respondent explanations for underreporting were based on real time experience with victims and students, knowledge of the literature on underreporting, and learned knowledge from working with community partners. A female respondent working closely with students in general and victims in particular disliked the practice of quantifying incidents of sexual assault. She suggested that any number of sexual assaults was too many. She offered the following when asked why disclosure happens so infrequently:

*Everything I've heard directly from their mouths: I don't want my parents to know, I don't want to interrupt my education, I brought it on myself because I was drunk, I don't want that fraternity to get into trouble, my brother is friends with him, my friends don't want me to get the house into trouble, no one will believe me. (P3)*

The above quote comprises themes of privacy, prioritizing education, self-blame, peer pressure, fear of implicating offenders, and fear of being disbelieved. Other respondents when prompted to explain underreporting answered similarly:

*Guilt, self-blame, fear, fear of being isolated, fear of not being believed, um not only fear of not being believed but fear of people taking his side. (P6)*

*She feels embarrassed, she feels like she may have contributed to it, um, she doesn't want to go public with it, she doesn't want any retaliation from the young man. (P2)*

The female respondent in the above quote goes on further to link fear of disclosure with gender inequality:

*Another reason why they don't want to report, um, because there is a wicked double standard in this world as much as we'd like to think there is not. (P2)*

A male respondent agreed with fellow interviewees that: victims blame themselves, are concerned about different types of retribution (social and professional), and fear reporting to formal authorities. His attunement to the experience of victims is expressed in the following quote:

*I haven't been a victim like this but my, my empathic feeling would be that um, I've already been in this situation where I was not in control, where decisions were made for me and I, I have been traumatized. I don't want to be traumatized anymore, I don't know these people, I don't trust these people, or why am I going to trust them? (P1)*

All of the respondents referenced shame, guilt, self-blame, fear of retribution, and fear of judgment as reasons for victims to reject disclosure. A few respondents suggested that an offender may not be a stranger to the victim, but may be unidentifiable by name, or unknown to the victim due to absence of memory based on alcohol use or date rape drugs. Several respondents referenced victim ambiguity about whether or not the assault experience was rape. A male respondent working closely with victims and offenders suggested that victim decisions not to report may be a mechanism of "survival":

*Survival, um and that I think it's an easier pill to swallow that this was a bad night versus I was assaulted and the stigma that comes along with that. All the burden of feeling like one needs to kind of go down the path and the acceptance and grief and human things that come with that. (P4)*

The most compelling statement about underreporting came from a female respondent working closely with victims and tasked with training health professionals as sexual assault nurse examiners. She approached the subject of reporting with empathy and awareness of the courage required to disclose:

*Who is brave enough to come forward in the first place and is there something different about people who are brave enough to come forward? You're one brave young person who's willing to report this to somebody and have it investigated. (P8)*

Many of the respondents expressed awareness of multiple post-assault realities that may be unknown to victims when they come forward to disclose. Survivors who are brave enough to come forward do so often with little awareness that there will be consequences beyond the violation of bodily integrity and that victims who report are never free to concentrate solely on recovery. There will be expectations by peers, campus administrators, health professionals, legal and judicial representatives, and family members to prove their victimhood.

## DEFINITIONS OF ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: CONTEXTUAL AND LEGAL

All of the interviewees were asked to define acquaintance rape. Four of the respondents took issue with the term suggesting it was too soft a term to legitimize the act of sexual assault. Many of the respondents worked alcohol use into the definition and some respondents defined sexual assault through legal terms. The respondents who endorsed a *he said-she said* conceptualization of on campus sexual assault worked a description of or opinion of offenders into their definition. The language respondents used to discuss context and offenders gave meaning to the offending violation. This language had the power to minimize the assault, minimize the victim, forgive the assault, justify the assault, forgive the offender, or demonstrate zero tolerance for the assault. I have grouped the following excerpts in two sub categories representing the different ways respondents defined acquaintance rape. The first category defines sexual assault through context, the second through legal definitions.

### CONTEXTUAL

When asked to define acquaintance rape a female respondent working closely with victims was torn between using context and using a legal definition:

*I should come out with a legal definition shouldn't I? Um, but in terms of the stories that come to me it is nearly always a story about two people who weren't already dating who met at a party, it always involved intoxication, the intoxicant is invariably unknown, in other words there was alcohol but there's a question mark to whether there was something else. (P3)*

Another female respondent working closely with victims talked about coercion:

*How do you distinguish a sexual interaction, a consensual sexual interaction where two people go into it wanting different things and there's negotiations back and forth and any outcome is that one person is penetrated and absolutely did not want that and absolutely did not consent to that. (P8)*

Yet another female respondent from law enforcement describes a context that suggests pre-meditation:

*In fraternities in particular and in athletic situations, they have designated sections so that when they're having a party there are rooms that are set up so that if a female should come forward, it's almost impossible for her to identify the room she was in. So it [she] may be able to identify the perpetrator but the victim is seldom taken to the perpetrator's room in the special interest groups, it's a non descript room with few indicators in the room of who would have ownership of it and, a couple of people, more than one person has referred to them as the sex rooms, and there's often lines outside the sex rooms of people who are voluntarily having sex. (P6)*

When asked to define acquaintance rape, this female respondent suggested there was a "policy" from which to seek definition. She opted for a more descriptive definition than provided by policy:

*Usually a student will tell us that they were out with someone and they were not expecting something to happen because he is my friend and something, he asked me to walk, it was late at night, he asked could he walk me home, he walked me*

*home and the next thing I know I'm saying no and they're not taking no for an answer. So that is one of my definitions, is someone who is familiar with another person in whatever way they might be, even if it's a first date and if that person says no, then and something happens, then to me that's an acquaintance rape. If that person went out, they had drinks and they were not able to make sound decisions than that person takes advantage, I don't care how big or small the advantage is, the mere fact that that person was not able to make clear decisions for themselves, that's acquaintance rape. (P9)*

The above respondent also referred to situations where students are studying together, the female falls asleep, and awakens to "feel someone touching you". She made the point that this occurs in the absence of alcohol. She suggested that male peers with membership in the victims social circle are considered "safe" by the unsuspecting victim.

A female respondent with 17 years of experience with Public Safety elaborated on the difficulties in pinning down an exact definition of acquaintance rape:

*I would define acquaintance rape as anything in between I just met you at a party tonight and we had a few drinks, uh, to I've been going out with you or engaged to you for, you know, two weeks, a year, so it's everything in between. It's, I think it's a loose term and especially when it's the party scene and acquaintance rape makes it sound like they really know each other when in fact they don't. Uh, it's better than stranger rape but it's certainly, you know, acquaintance rape sounds so intimate, and it's really not. (P7)*

She makes the point that use of the term "acquaintance" suggests there is an intimacy between victim and offender. She goes on to say that there may not be a term that accurately covers the experience of being assaulted when your guard is down and you believe you are with someone safe. She and several other respondents differentiate acquaintance rape from stranger rape, making the point that conventional beliefs about rape involve offenders who are unknown by their victims:

*Stranger rape to me is the guy in the bushes and so acquaintance rape is sort of the other side of that spectrum and known. I think when the word acquaintance rape first came out on the scene, it made sense because I think they were thinking about people who were dating and that certainly fits. (P7)*

*I think most of them come to school with the concept that rape is, you know, some horrible, dirty old man hiding in a bush just ready to jump on the first person that comes along. (P1)*

*When people think sexual assault they think masked guy jumping out from behind a dumpster, snatching you, throwing you, and that never happens. Or they think sort of dumb jock who locks the door and is like that big football guy, they don't think like nice, normal, average buddy down the hall, or my nice normal male friend, or my nice normal boyfriend because it's unimaginable. (P4)*

What is significant to the university context and implied by terms such as *acquaintance rape, date rape, non-stranger rape, and marital rape* is that offenders are

more likely to be known to victims. This belies a common belief that familiar and trustworthy are synonymous.

A respondent working with victims for thirty years suggested that the language used to define sexual assault has the power to influence how people respond to victims. As a result she reports she is "not crazy about the term acquaintance rape" because of the ambiguity of the term. When asked if non-stranger rape is a preferable term she answered as follows:

*An acquaintance could be someone you are dating, someone you used to be married to, could be someone you're riding on the school bus with, could be some guy who lives on your block, and if you know the person's name, then it gets listed as a non-stranger rape but the person could be close to being someone they don't know at all. I think what matters is what their relationship is. Ok, so what kind of a relationship the victim, um, has with the, suspect, I'll use that word, suspect, because we have to come up with something, um can influence how people look at the particular case and so that can create a different helping kind of an environment. If the people who are helping change up what they do based on hearing at the very beginning what the relationship is between these two people I think we are totally honest with each other from the legal perspective, stranger rape gets a lot more attention than a rape that occurred from someone, by someone you know, who is known to the victim in some regard. So I think it does of course impact the victim because it impacts the people who are supposed to be assisting. (P8)*

She suggested that greater legitimacy is offered to victims of stranger rape than to victims of non-stranger rape. She suggested that the language used to address the assault event has the power to influence the post-assault experience of the victim, specifically in terms of how responders interact with victims based on their interpretations of the assault event.

#### LEGAL

Some respondents interspersed contextual definitions with legal definitions of rape relying on their knowledge of the law to define acquaintance rape. A respondent trained in law enforcement offered the following based on state laws concerning consent:

*If you're intoxicated in Pennsylvania and probably across the country, intoxication is not a mitigating factor if you commit a crime, and so we want them to understand that, that they can't say Oh, I was drunk, I didn't mean to do that. You did it against someone who couldn't give you consent. (P7)*

A female respondent working closely with victims referred to the lack of consent; she also addressed the presence of alcohol and how it confounds the issue of consent:

*The legal definition of acquaintance rape would focus, you know, would talk about lack of consent in a sexual situation, um, a lot of the stories that come to me don't involve um, don't involve a student telling me how she was in a sexual situation with a young man and he was pressuring her to go further than she wanted to go and there was back and forth and there was a no and there was a [pause]. Stories I hear are about I don't know what happened you know, I went to this party and I was drinking and then there's always this black out. (P3)*

In accordance with Pennsylvania law persons under the influence of alcohol, due to their diminished capacity, do not have the legal ability to give consent. When victims and offenders are both using alcohol it is difficult to determine what occurred. A female respondent with legal training addresses the issue of alcohol and consent when asked to define acquaintance rape:

*It involved two, usually two students, but they're not always both students, or either one student, but the cases I deal with are often two students, um are either dating or met them, met each other that evening and who uh, ended up having some kind of uh, event that one or both of them found unwelcomed. I mean the definition I gave doesn't really answer the question of 99% of the time. Ninety-nine percent of the time both parties are stinking drunk and so the issue of whether or not there was consent for the activity is excruciatingly difficult to identify. It's very hard to figure it out. If there is consent, it's obviously not rape.*  
(P10)

A male respondent talked about his efforts to increase student awareness of on-campus acquaintance rape through definitions of rape and the laws concerning consent:

*I think if we raise more awareness um about that then we are doing what we can to try and address that. For instance, there's a number of students um that are shocked every year when I am talking to them about this that says that according to many state and commonwealth laws, if one or both have had alcohol then they legally cannot consent and technically it is rape.* (P4)

A female respondent in law enforcement relied upon legally defined parameters to offer a distinction between "full blown rape" and sexual assault:

*Well, a rape is a forced penetration in my eyes, sexual assault um, in fondling, oral, um the commonwealth defines rape as intercourse, so that's what I'm going by, the legal term for intercourse. (P6)*

#### OFFENDING: SITUATIONAL AND PREMEDITATED

When asked if on-campus acquaintance rape was situational or premeditated all respondents suggested both types of offending are present within the University setting. However, all respondents suggested that the presence of male students on campus who engaged in premeditated sexual assault were in the minority. A male respondent who works closely with offenders differentiates between premeditation and situational offending:

*Those who are predisposed to be violent um and do what they want, it wouldn't surprise me if it's premeditated, I think there are others who um you know they start to get worked up, really turned on by this particular person, they've had a few drinks, they don't think clearly they just say, I'm so worked up I can't stop myself and so I think there are some situations where it's situational, I think some where its premeditated. (P1)*

Another male respondent with a role as a religious leader disclosed the following when asked if premeditation occurs within the University "you know, I want to say no, um, but I know that it does". (P4) In the vignette below he described a situational example:

*My heart, in believing that when kids are at their best judgment, that's not affected by substance or by stress or whatever mental health things, I like to believe that most of them wouldn't do things to harm their neighbors. I do believe that the majority of our kids that come here right at the core are really good kids, yet things happen to sort of impair judgment, um in all parties involved, be it substance use or stress or peer pressure or whatever that uh, makes people make poor choices. (P4)*

A female respondent working closely with victims suggested "both" occur, but defines the line between situational offending and premeditated offending as an issue of opportunism:

*I think it, uh, I think you need a number of variables to come together all at the same time, um, and then there are some folks who will go forward and this will happen and there will be non-consensual sex and there are other folks and the brakes will come on and there won't be. I mean it's tough to tell if that's premeditated, like I really thought about I'm going to this gathering just to do this. I doubt that that's the truth. It happens. They are there, the opportunity affords itself, and some people take advantage of what they see as an opportunity and others do not. (P8)*

A female respondent working in the medical field expressed a similar viewpoint:

*Do I think that our undergraduate or graduate male students wake up and say I'm going to a party tonight and I'm going to rape somebody? I don't think that*

*is the mindset, maybe I'm wrong, but I sort of tend to have the mindset that what happens is they are getting ready for the party and think maybe I'll get lucky and what they perceive as lucky can end up being in the views of the female, in the views of the family, in the views of the school, in the views of the courts, could be, meet the definition of acquaintance rape. Do I think that's premeditated? No, I don't think it was premeditated to rape somebody. Do I think that situation had all the variables to allow this to happen, I'm going to get lucky tonight, yes I think that happened. (P5)*

A female respondent cited the use of date-rape drugs as the only evidence that determined premeditation:

*I don't think that most of the boys on our campus, I mean, I'm going to caveat, except for date rape drugs. Everything I'm saying um, excludes those cases and we have had them where there are date rape drugs. With date rape drugs it's obviously pre-meditated, that's the whole MO of the party, but assuming there's no date rape drug, I do not think the boys on our campus are deliberately out to get girls drunk and get em into bed. There are some. There are some people in this community who are um, not acting in the best interest of the community. We have criminals; there are people who are bad actors. (P10)*

The following narrative based on the real time experience of the respondent describes elements of premeditation:

*When you're dealing with special interest groups like athletics and fraternities and the Greeks, it's premeditated, I know for the most part that's premeditated.*

*In fraternities in particular and in athletic situations they have designated sections so that when they're having a party there are rooms that are set up so that if a female should come forward, it's almost impossible for her to identify the room she was in. So she may be able to identify the perpetrator but the victim is seldom taken to the perpetrators room in these special interest groups. It's a non-descript room with few indicators in the room of who would have ownership of it. (P6)*

A female respondent who works closely with victims refers to research on predation:

*The recent research is spine chilling because it suggests a phenomenal degree of premeditation on the part of serial acquaintance rapers and the interviews conducted. I mean young men literally use words almost like predatory and prey, I mean it is about, it's a game, it's a hunt so those, so we have pretty strong reliable you know data about premeditation. (P3)*

A female respondent working in Public Safety suggested premeditation exists on the part of both male and female students. She refers to male predators as "psychopaths that target women". In the following quote she described her perception of the type of premeditation enacted by female students:

*Not to say that some of the women aren't necessarily also, you know engaged in premeditation. I'm going to go out you know and I don't want to make all women look like they're not capable of saying I really want to go out tonight and I'm going to have a little bit of this and that, but they don't necessarily think that they're going to do everything. I think there's a percentage that happens in*

*that line as well. You know there's been a liberation of what women want too, so maybe they don't want the whole monty, they want that excitement, the chase and maybe a little bit of this and that but they don't necessarily think that they're going to do everything. (P7)*

A female respondent working with alleged offenders expressed empathy for students who are charged with acts of sexual assault. In the following quote she described the potential impact of being labeled as an offender:

*Part of what factors into my thinking [is] about how young women need to understand that when they make a charge against somebody it can stick with them for life and God forbid if it's not true or even if it can't be proven or established. (P2)*

I asked the above respondent if she was familiar with the statistics on false reporting. This refers to reports of sexual assault that are untrue. She suggested they were "very low" but added the following:

*I'm primarily thinking about this last case where it was unfounded and doesn't mean he didn't do it, we just couldn't prove it. Man, she told everybody, the whole graduate group, everybody and, um I thought that was very unfair to him. Particularly since we, it couldn't be proven, but again, she has every right to open her mouth about it but again, and he and these guys end up with, you know, if it's not true, then these guys end up with a stigma that is attached to them for the rest of their lives. But I don't think [false reporting is] a big problem. (P2)*

A male respondent suggested that part of the complexity of acquaintance rape is the nature of the relationship between victims and offenders that existed prior to the assault. He suggested that some victims don't report for fear of "getting my friend in trouble". In the vignette below he offers a descriptive narrative of how filing a report of assault against an alleged offender changes the life of the accused student:

*A condition of rape, you're a sexual predator now. You're lucky if you are convicted of a real rape, you get kicked out of school or certainly suspended. It goes on your record. If the police get it, it's on your permanent criminal record, um, let alone the social destruction of [the accused]. This guy is a rapist. Um you'd have to transfer, you just can't exist in a place where people think you assaulted someone. Um, telling your parents, trying to get a job, you'll have to register as a sex offender, you'll never, you thought you were working for Goldman. You never will, it's just your life will absolutely change. (P4)*

#### DEPARTMENTAL ROLES: BALANCING INDEPENDENT AND COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE

All interviewees were asked to describe their role in responding to on-campus acquaintance rape and to consider how their role informed their perception of campus sexual assault. Several of the interview participants referred to one another when asked to name the campus offices with which they collaborate. All of the respondents expressed admiration for the work of several of their community partners. Participants working in close proximity to victims described a response process that was consistent with the recommendations of evidence-based literature for providing a victim-centered response. The impact on the respondents with roles affording them the greatest proximity to victims and offenders was notable. A male respondent describing one of his several roles

as an "advisor to some people involved, usually being accused of things" revealed how he is impacted by his work with offenders:

*I'm often kind of asked to hand hold the perpetrator which is so hard and awkward and painful and conflicting, um, and that's sort of, I don't want to say conflict of interest, that's not the right term but kind of be his advisor. (P4)*

Another male participant working closely with students for 28 years shared how bearing witness to victim disclosure activates an interior conflict for him between protecting the confidentiality of the victim, and an urge to respond pro-actively:

*Morally I don't feel like I can just sit here and do nothing. I want to respect where the victim is coming from but I also feel like this is an opportunity for me to be able to reach out to young men and, and populations in general and be able to talk in generalities about the effect of acquaintance rape. (P1)*

A female respondent tasked with investigating "violations of the code of student conduct" described sitting on a "hearing panel" with students and coming to terms with the responsibilities associated with her role:

*I can think of a recent sexual assault that was resolved by voluntary agreement and the whole case really troubled me, I was um, I went back and forth and back and forth on whether even to charge the kid, it's a very difficult case. It creates, part of what factors into my thinking about how young women need to understand that when they make a charge against somebody it can stick with*

*them for life and God forbid, if it's not true or even if it can't be proven or established. (P2)*

A female respondent described her role as a member of the campus multidisciplinary crisis response team by identifying herself as a "first responder" and the University "point person". In the following quote she describes how her role informs her perception of the vulnerability of victims:

*I'm the first person to tell them what's in store, to give them advice, to help them along so when I get to them they're raw. They're still in the moment, they're confused, and they're scared. This is a terrible thing to say but with me they are like scared children, like babies, just looking anywhere for anyone to help them, to tell them what just happened to them, tell them what's going to happen to them. They don't care if I see their vulnerability I'm nobody to them. I'm just somebody they hope is going to help them. They can be as powerless as possible, as they want to be around me. Once they get around those that love them and have certain expectations of them, then they have to like man up, you know, act strong, don't cry in front of, don't do this, don't do that. (P6)*

I asked the above respondent if seeing victims in such a vulnerable state offered an understanding of the experience of victims that is lost on the general campus community. She agreed and suggested that as victims move forward in their disclosure process they meet with different campus administrators. They tell their story many times to formal sources, to family, to friends. She suggests that the feedback victims receive from others changes them. Victims become self-protective and *other-protective*, masking their true feelings for fear of how others will respond to them. She suggests the

pre-conceived notions people carry about how victims should respond, the expectations on victims, and the internalized rape myths of the people victims interact with cause victims to develop "their own coat of armor" to hide their vulnerability.

Another female respondent having close proximity to victims described her role as a combination of "some teaching life and some clinical life". She expressed her opinion on the significance of the reactions of formal authorities to victims following victim disclosure. She suggested that there is significant responsibility on the part of the recipient of that first disclosure in terms of how their reaction will impact the victim and any other subsequent members of the response team:

*Whoever that first person is can blow it for everyone else. For everyone else that door will just close and whoever the victim is it will be something that he or she will never talk about again and [the victim will] just go on an act like nothing ever happened. (P8)*

Eight of the ten respondents reported having roles requiring active involvement in some aspect of campus education and prevention outreach. A female respondent described her role as "the gateway into the criminal justice system". She referred to a timely initiative of her department and a common misperception related to this initiative:

*In recent years they made the month of September um, kind of campus safety month because they recognize that this is the highest possible month of perpetration, of victimization, um and you know it's a catch 22. I will tell you that when college campuses do a good job of education and outreach and the*

*numbers of rapes go up, the reported rapes, then everyone looks like oh you have a problem, so, I think there's just a big misperception about reporting of sexual assault. (P7)*

She suggested the increased numbers of reported assaults does not necessarily mean that more assaults are occurring. On the contrary, when the number of reported assaults increases it is a sign that a greater number of victims have been reached and are accessing needed services. All respondents were highly complimentary of the model of crisis response utilized at this university. They were equally complimentary of the work of fellow members of the University crisis response team. All of the respondents described membership currently or at different points in time on various administrative teams, case conference teams, and sexual assault response teams. These collaborations occurred within the university, outside the university, and often in partnership with other interview respondents. Several respondents were affiliated with panels, coalitions, and boards associated in some way with sexual assault response and prevention. A female respondent with an extensive history of working with victims expressed a desire for the university to assign greater priority to the issue of on-campus acquaintance rape. In the quote below she referenced the efforts assigned to other campus safety initiatives:

*This crime is not out there like other things. These are smart people here. They would come up with a solution. I think, if I had a magic wand we would put some effort into doing it. When you think about it, it's ridiculous that [a fellow interviewee and first responder] is the only one. It is telling you in a backhanded kind of way that it's just not a priority on campus. When you know those guys are out there on the bicycles in the yellow outfits, right, they are there to prevent strangers from doing anything to me and you. That's the*

*solution and the cameras all around are the solution for that. Expensive! Lots of effort and energy! But, we believe in that, right, we don't want people coming in to campus and victimizing students and robbing them or whatever, right, so we've got cameras, we've got people patrolling around and when I walk home from here often the guys stop and it's dark and ask if I'd like an escort. That's effort and energy. What do you see happening on this campus that's equivalent to that in terms of acquaintance rape? (P8)*

#### BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

When asked to identify barriers to collaboration all respondents agreed that the most egregious threat to collaboration was a breach of trust. Trust was centered on a collective agreement between community partners who respond to reports of on-campus sexual assault to both protect the confidentiality of victims and to give victims control over decision-making throughout their post-assault trajectory. A respondent who described her role as "being on the front line" in response to campus sexual assault expounded on the importance of providing victim confidentiality:

*Um, confidentiality, um, because you always want the student or the victim of an assault to feel like they're safe. That they're not walking out and everyone knows. It's the challenge of confidentiality at the same time that you're trying to have a collaboration and a response that is coordinated. (P9).*

She went on to describe the importance of being able to trust all team members to give control of decision-making over to the victim, even when the decisions of the victim are in contrast to the opinions of individual response team members:

*The second [biggest challenge] would be, knowing that you want to do something but you're not going to do it unless the victim wants that to happen and we can't because the victim is uncomfortable. Our challenge is to respond as a university and protect the emotional health and confidentiality of the victim.*  
(P9)

Several female respondents reiterated the importance for all members of the response team to give decision-making control over to the victims even when victim decisions contradict the opinions of individual members of the response team or the team as a whole:

*Confidential collaboration. I think confidentiality is the biggest thing. Providing the students confidentiality and letting them know that they're in control of this situation and that we're going to do for them what they want done, not what we want done.* (P6)

*Provide confidential offices, and continue to protect those confidential offices, I think that, I think for students it is very off putting to think if they walk through a door, consequences are going to happen that they are no longer in control of and so from a feminist perspective it is absolutely vital that you re-empower a victim by saying you are in control of what happens next.* (P3)

When asked how trust is built between community partners, a respondent representing general counsel described the evolution of the "case conference":

*I think that this notion of this case conference, which we created a number of years ago, um, where everybody comes together and talks about a particular case from their own expertise perspective, um I think it works pretty well. I think it relies on people who really do want to be part of a university community. (P10)*

Another challenge to the collaboration of community partners is the philosophical differences team members have about models of education and prevention. Respondents endorsed either a harm reduction approach or a primary prevention approach to sexual assault education and prevention. The harm reductionists believed in educating potential victims to take specific precautions to decrease their risk of victimhood. Respondents who endorsed a primary prevention approach believed that education and prevention should target offenders and greater cultural changes. The following respondents offered examples of harm reduction strategies starting with the quote below made by a male respondent working in Greek life:

*I encourage women to not go to parties that they are unfamiliar with alone, even if they are familiar with these people I think it's always good to go at least in a buddy system, in pairs or something, to not let their drink out of their sight. (P1)*

A female respondent suggested the following "game plan" as a means to lessen ones risk of becoming a victim:

*Two or three or four of us are going out the door and two, three, or four of us are going to call, and come back. You meet someone that seems of interest, we'll*

*make a plan to meet at another time when we're all on a level playing field and there's no alcohol involved. (P7)*

A male respondent endorsing a harm reduction approach suggests that college women should pay attention to their intuitive cues and approach all male peers with awareness regardless of the nature of the friendship:

*Do not be left alone with a guy who kind of skeeves you out a little bit. Don't let your guard down, even with your closest male friend, um, so I know, I hear students of, people who are up late studying at a friend of the opposite gender's place and then we shared a bed but whatever, it's cool, um it might be cool to you because he's just a friend in your eyes but he's slowly scheming on you to sort of, you know, and so you're laying there in bed and suddenly feel someone touching you. (P4)*

A female respondent endorsing a harm reduction approach suggested that students equate being in college with an increased opportunity for underage drinking. In the quote below she asserts that the legalization of alcohol would demystify the allure of inebriation:

*Legalize alcohol, Yeah I think that part of the problem is that these young kids come here and part of the fun of getting stinking drunk is that its illegal so I'd like it not to be illegal so we could manage it better, yeah I'm a big supporter of harm reduction. (P10)*

The following vignette offers a primary prevention approach endorsed by a female respondent who talked about the fundamental differences between the two approaches:

*The problem with risk reduction strategies is that they are so bound up with victim blaming, it's really hard sometimes to separate the two. With the onus being on women to stop predatoryness (sic) the problem with that is it assumes predatoryness is a given, right? That's the thing that is out there and then what can women do, drink less, dress conservatively, go out in packs, because, but what it leaves unchallenged and unquestioned is predatory male behavior. (P3)*

She suggested that this type of continual messaging to *would- be- victims* provides a narrative that can be turned against victims and used to blame incidents of sexual assault on the attributes or character of victims. Another female respondent providing direct service to victims, and training health care professionals to do the same referred to the lack of evidence based data on risk reduction strategies:

*As long as you just keep talking to the people that you think have the best statistical probability of becoming victims and telling them what not to do to be victimized, whether you give that advice in orientation, or, how valid any of that is, is really tough to say. It's not really data driven. If you don't explain that this is not okay, you can't get a cultural change to everyone deciding this is not alright. (P8)*

Another issue that appeared to challenge collaboration was the division between respondents who expressed a desire for the university to call more attention to the issue

of on-campus acquaintance rape and respondents who had concerns that increased transparency would result in a fear response:

*Let's be tactful about this, there's considerable disagreement among, among well-meaning colleagues as to how much attention we should give this, this year, how much upfront acknowledgement, slash warning, there should be. (P3)*

She went on to share her experience of talking openly in front of parents about the problem of student-on-student violence and the subsequent repercussions:

*I was absolutely not popular for having said this, for having raised this, and I was told in no uncertain terms to never do that again. (P3)*

When asked if there was a way to be informative without frightening the student community she responded as follows:

*I do know that there are people on this campus, and I won't name names, who feel very strongly that the minute you bring up sexual assault as a topic you've traumatized everybody, like you know as long as you don't bring it up, we're okay, well we all know that silence is not particularly golden when it comes to this issue and that silence isn't going to save any of us. (P3)*

A female respondent, working closely with victims shared the perception of the above respondent on the discomfort associated with discussing sexual assault:

*People get uncomfortable when their and this is everywhere, not just here. People are uncomfortable talking about sex just in general so it kind of gets in the way of having intelligent discussions in all the right forms about this crime because this isn't just about sex. People are squirrely to begin with talking about consensual sex. If you add a non-consensual layer on top of it then people want to pretend that it is not going on. It's harder to talk about this in this culture than things like drunk driving or [the dangers of] smoking. (P8)*

A male respondent recommended educating students and their families without instilling fear. When asked what would happen if parents got scared he responded as follows:

*Some of them don't let their kids go to school here, I think some of them sit at home nervous all the time, um you know I mean this generation of parents is very different than what we've ever had in the past, you know, nobody heard of helicopter parents ten years ago. (P1)*

Several respondents expressed concern about a potential threat to collaboration presented in the form of Department of Justice regulations concerning First Amendment violations. Title IX refers to one of five civil rights laws that prohibit various forms of discrimination. Title IX covers sex-based discrimination. This includes any conduct of a sexual nature considered both *unwelcome* and *compromising a student's ability to receive university services* (Title IX, 1972). Based on the media coverage of recent high profile sex discrimination cases in which universities have been found in violation of federal civil rights laws, the Department of Justice advised all universities receiving federal financial assistance to treat disclosures of on-campus violations as confidential

but to also take action once assault allegations are reported. The Office of Civil Rights denotes specific requirements for prompt investigative action to be initiated upon receipt of a disclosure of sexual assault. This requirement threatened the collective agreement between community partners to guarantee victims that any sexual assault disclosure would be kept confidential. All of the respondents expressed awareness of the dialectic between guaranteeing victims confidentiality and following Title IX mandates to initiate an investigative response after receipt of an allegation of on-campus sexual assault. A female respondent who works closely with victims shared the following concerning Title IX:

*We sorted that out through a series of meetings actually, um, and I'm very glad that the outcome is a very strong collective re-statement of our commitment to confidential offices existing because anything other than that is, you are guaranteeing that young women are not going to come forward and respond if they think that the minute they open their mouths a whole set of legal or internal disciplinary actions are going to start. (P3)*

There was consensus among interviewees that trust between community partners is an essential component to successful inter-organizational collaboration in response to on-campus acquaintance rape.

#### DEFINING SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

Respondents were asked to share what they perceived as successful elements of a coordinated approach to responding to on-campus acquaintance rape. Several respondents answered this question with identification of the actors who needed to be part of a sexual assault response team. One respondent talked about her own experience

working with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) and explained how this experience informed her perception of the makeup of a successful sexual assault response team:

*If you want to make a change then you have to have everyone who is responding to whatever victimization you're interested in at the table so you can change it up. All the [people] that could touch this victim, you needed those people at the table. (P8)*

For the respondent above this consisted of community members representing advocacy, law enforcement, special victims, prosecution, medicine, and any "community people interested" in what happens in the campus community. From her perspective success is not defined purely based on the process of collaboration but also by appointment of the appropriate actors significant to the issue. In the vignette below another respondent defined successful collaboration not only by having specific "key players at the table", such as special services, counseling, advocacy, and student intervention services, but by continually widening the circle of involvement to include anyone who may be approached by victims:

*I think that there are certain offices that we need to do more work with, I mean there are certain pieces of our collaborative work that we definitely want to strengthen, let me put it that way, um and the college houses, we're already working towards doing that but that's still a goal to strengthen those relationships because the college houses are so different. Each one has a different personality, a different Dean, they house hundred and thousands of students, um but trying to ensure that those front line folks, one of the questions*

*you asked me much earlier was when does this happen? They happen in the middle of the night, they don't happen in the middle of the day, and so that's why to me it's so important that the residential staff are really well trained on these issues. (P3)*

Several of the respondents expressed confidence in specific colleagues who were members of the crisis response team or in the specific model of response at this University:

*After almost three decades in higher ED, some of the professionals here at [this University] are the best I've ever seen. There's some incredibly skilled people at being able to support, make people feel safe in what they see as an unsafe situation and an unsafe environment, and for them to feel, eventually to feel cared for. (P1)*

*Appropriate information sharing, um, which I think [this university] does a very, very good job at because we have a point person or two. We're a small enough school that we all know each other and we trust each other and we've sat, I've been through enough cases together that you know [a colleague] and I can glance at each other in a meeting and make it right. (P 4)*

*I think [this University] has a really great model of what we do. We don't do it in a silo. It's not just the police. It's not just public safety. Um, I think it's spoken about in so many areas across the university. There's so many place that a woman could go to that she doesn't have to walk into a police department or Special Services department. I would say that the model that [this University]*

*uses should be something that's used across the country because a lot of times it's not the case, you know. I'm sure you've been in conferences and you see x doesn't talk to z. We're really unique. (P7)*

*I remember how impressed I was when I realized that they [Special Services] would pick up a student, in plain clothes, in a plain car, would sit with them, where they take them, would bring them into the office, have a confidential report and if you say to the Special Services person, I do not want anyone else to know but you. I think the confidence that they can come and talk to someone. (P9)*

The respondent in the above quote goes on to state that consistency between community partners, in terms of a dialogue around confidentiality, is one of the keys to successful collaboration:

*The good thing is we're consistent, we all agree, no matter which office you go to, this is the conversation that you have with the student, and I remember the student sitting in my office and apparently she had gone to another office, she had heard the same spiel, I told her the same thing and she said to me, Oh, okay, and she left my office and a half of hour later I got a call from the Office of Student Conduct, the student is in my office, they were in your office and they heard this, so we're doing this and are you going to do what you said? And I said absolutely. (P9)*

Another respondent cited the importance of trusting the expertise of community partners:

*I think that it's important that we know each other as a group, which we do, that we trust each other, that we use each other's expertise, and that we continually are working to think of new ways to address this problem and I think we do. (P10)*

A female respondent further deconstructed trust between community partners. She talked about referring a student in need to a specific campus office or cultural center with the confidence that the student would receive the support that was promised:

*When we send a student over, and we usually make specific recommendations so they're going to end up in good hands so we're not seeing bounce backs. We don't get students coming back to us and saying no that didn't work out for me, which is great. (P3)*

A male respondent confirmed the importance of trust between community partners in order to guarantee collaborative efficacy in response to campus sexual assault. In the vignette below he talks about the importance of dealing promptly with any lapses in trust between community partners:

*I think it needs to be direct, directly dealt with. To be able to say, look I shared something. I shared something in confidence with you and somehow it got back, it got out to somewhere else. I don't know what you said, I don't know if you said it, but we need to work in situations where we need to be able to trust each other at the drop of a hat and I just want to make sure that this is cleared up. I think it needs to be addressed directly, you know, we never know when these*

*crisis situations come up and it can't be one of these case conferences, figuring out what's best for the student when no one at the table trusts each other, and if they can't be trusted, they shouldn't be at the table. (P1)*

Several respondents suggested that collaboration could only be defined as successful if it *changed the culture*. For some respondents this required greater focus given to involving men in enacting cultural change:

*Rape is everybody's problem. The entire community is affected by interpersonal violence. Um, this is not women's issue, women don't have to solve this, women and men should work together on these issues, but it's about challenging the entire premise and that, that comes back to these questions about entitlement and gender inequity and everything else. (P3)*

*Earlier on I said that, you know, education for the victim was, you know key, but education for the men is more key, you know to get away from this bystander, you know, for people to step to the plate and start taking responsibility for them, for their group as well as themselves and not be bystanders and enablers, so I do think education with the males, I think that's really crucial. (P6)*

*Your target audience can't only be female college students. These aren't things that only women should or should not be doing. We need to expand the dialogue, expand the discussion with everyone here on campus including the young men. We're not really doing that effectively here, is my opinion. We're*

*not really doing that effectively anywhere if we don't have men in the dialogue about his. How does that happen? (P8)*

The respondent continued to discuss cultural change in the following quote targeting the university administration and faculty:

*It would mean you would have to change not the students but the administration, the faculty. You know, everybody who works here. You have to work on educating all the people who touch the victims and the victimizers. I'm sure there's highly educated people here on campus who have no clue about anything we've just talked about for the last hour that don't think about it, don't want to think about it. You have to change that, break all the rape myths somehow and then you'd want to change the students themselves. (P8)*

Several respondents suggested collaboration could be improved with the inclusion of a campus-located rape crisis center and specifically trained health professionals:

*I think the whole hospital experience certainly could be uh, improved. There's no more traumatic experience for a rape victim than that whole exam and you know how all the paths cross right there at the juncture, you have to have the rape kit, the medical, you know, and up until now women were sitting in the masses with all the gunshot victims and so if you haven't already been traumatized by the time your numbers called in the emergency department, you're going to say, really, that just happened to me but look at those people or you know what, I don't want to be here anymore. (P7)*

*If HUP was a rape center. I think dragging a kid down to, downtown, or wherever, Temple or wherever, is it Einstein? I mean there's no reason why we can't have, no reason why a college campus can't have, with one of the best hospitals in the world, can't have that there too. It would just feel a little better, I'd imagine to a student. (P4)*

*The one thing that I think would be wonderful would be a 24/7 sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) program that would be available so that a student who thinks she was raped, and I have to still say thinks because you still don't know the whole situation, but a student who wants to, to be assessed for an acquaintance rape has one place that she goes or he goes. (P5)*

The above vignettes call for an increase of campus located victim-centered services in addition to the existing campus resources. Several respondents expressed awareness that victims are often retraumatized throughout their post-assault trajectory by formal resources with well-meaning intentions. Respondents suggested that creating more proximal access to services would provide a more familiar setting for recovery and empower victims by locating healing within the campus setting, a setting marked by reminders of their victimization. Several respondents defined a successful collaboration based on victim outcomes:

*[a successful coordinated approach] It protects the psyche of the victim, it offers the victim choices as to what feels best and what individuals, you know, they have options of who they can deal with it, it might in fact increase the, the um rate of reporting. (P7)*

*The biggest measures of success is how, how the victims feeling, I mean if they feel safe and cared for, I think that's a really good measure. (P1)*

*A student who is stable at the end of it. What are the elements? You know, the medical care has been provided and all the medical care that might be needed acutely and follow up has been provided. Uh, the student who has been, uh, the target is aware of the resources available to her so that, uh, she is aware of the, uh, what she can do, if she wants to report it she can, if she wants to press charges. It's not to say that she has to but at least if she's been given a sense, if she's been given good information about what she can do, uh and has made a decision that works well with her. She's gotten psychological support if she needs it, she's gotten support from her friends if she shares it with them, regardless of whether she chooses to report and press charges or not. (P5)*

Following the formal interviews all interview respondents spoke off the record. For some it was a natural process to continue the dialogue after the interview ended. Other respondents made a personal request during the interview process to speak off the record. I honored the requests of the interview participants to exclude certain interview content from my study. I regret not challenging my subjects to name their own biases or assumptions concerning gendered crime as part of my interview questionnaire. As a clinician working with sexual assault victims I know first-hand the necessity of identifying one's own internalized biases as a means to expose any unconscious assumptions that can threaten victim recovery. Several of the respondents reminded me throughout the interview process that they did not want to engage in any victim blaming. All respondents appeared earnest, committed, and highly motivated to continue to work

collaboratively with community partners to improve sexual assault education and prevention programming on campus and to improve sexual assault response initiatives.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study explored the perceptions of key campus informants who were selected based on their roles in responding to on-campus acquaintance rape. The interviewees were asked to describe their role on campus, how their role informs their understanding of multiple aspects of acquaintance rape, and what challenges they encountered in responding to on-campus acquaintance rape as part of an inter-organizational response team. There was consensus among interview respondents concerning the disparity between the high occurrence of non-stranger rapes on campus and the low numbers of reported rapes on campus. Many respondents defined rape as an issue of power and control. Several respondents identified gender inequity and alcohol use as precipitants of risk for on-campus acquaintance rape. Most respondents referred to the developmental time period of college age students as an additional vulnerability associated with poor decision-making skills. When asked to explain underreporting respondents showed consensus on the issues that inhibit victim disclosure: shame, guilt, fear of retribution, privacy, fear of social isolation, ambiguity, and fear that their allegations will be disbelieved. All respondents defined acquaintance rape literally and through descriptions of context. Several respondents relied on legal based definitions of rape as well.

Respondents differed in their approach to education and prevention.

Respondents in support of a primary prevention approach sought social and cultural change via education to address the norms and systems that support rape-prone attitudes and behavior. Recommendations for cultural change included: student mandated gender studies, education and prevention training grounded in feminist scholarship, bystander training, and victim response training. Respondents favoring a

harm reduction approach sought to change specific student behaviors associated with a perceived risk for sexual assault. Harm reduction recommendations included banning alcohol from campus, targeting female students with warnings about risk, having victims talk to students in small group settings, bystander training, and educating male students about consent. All respondents targeted the role of alcohol as either a pathway to risk for sexual assault, or a danger secondary to that of being in close proximity to predatory males. In addition all respondents spoke about the importance of designing education and prevention programs specifically targeting men and recruiting men to assume greater visibility in speaking out against rape-supportive attitudes and behavior.

There was consensus among respondents that providing victims with confidentiality was key to victim recovery, to increasing the potential for on-campus reporting, and to empowering victims by giving them control of their post-assault healing process. Most salient to the issue of victim disclosure was the potential for the recipient of assault disclosure to influence negatively or positively the healing process of the victim. While this finding is not missing in the sexual assault literature, bearing witness to the description of victim disclosure offered by respondents with the closest proximity to victims offered a profound reminder of the state of victims during disclosure and the importance of providing a reaction that communicates belief and validation.

All of the interview respondents showed empathy for victims and concern for the community at large. Their collective passion and investment in creating on-campus safety was evident. What was equally represented was a range of informed response born out of their differing areas of expertise. How the respondents understood acquaintance rape and how they perceived the experience of victims and offenders was related to the proximity and or boundaries that their professional roles afforded them in relation to working with victims and or offenders. Respondents having roles with the closest

proximity to victims and offenders were less neutral about the issue of acquaintance rape and very explicit about how to respond to victims and offenders. These respondents expressed strong support for the University to respond with greater transparency to the problem. Most of the respondents expressed an understanding of the potential for victims who disclose to be retraumatized by formal and informal support systems. This prompted respondent recommendations to locate all sexual assault resources on campus.

All interview participants knew well the line between their role in response to campus sexual assault and the role of their colleagues. Most of the respondents asked whom else I would be interviewing and several respondents made assumptions that they were sharing information with me that I had received from other interviewees. All respondents supported ongoing inter-departmental consultation and training, and expressed the need for community partners to respond to victims and offenders in a consistent manner. All of the respondents expressed confidence in many of their community partners and all respondents agreed that the University had a responsibility to inform students of risk.

## CHAPTER XI

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

#### DISCUSSION

This qualitative study addressed the following questions about the challenges of responding to on-campus acquaintance rape:

1. How do senior campus personnel understand the disparity between the persistently high prevalence of on-campus acquaintance rape on college campuses and the low rates of reporting?
2. What are the challenges of inter-organizational collaboration when responding to campus acquaintance rape?
3. What are the specific roles of on-campus supportive resources and how do these roles inform collaboration?"
4. What do various campus stakeholders perceive as successful elements of a coordinated approach to campus sexual assault?

In this chapter I will discuss these questions and my interpretations of the meanings of the findings.

#### DEPARTMENTAL ROLES

The campus context that was the focus of this study operates within a decentralized administrative structure. Various campus departments, cultural centers, and resources specific to the needs of college students operate both independently and interdependently. Crimes of a sexual nature typically call into action any and all of the departments represented in this research. As a result, all study respondents were known to one another, had occasion to work with one another, and expressed respect for the expertise of their fellow respondents. In describing their individual roles and the

intersection of their roles with that of their fellow collaborators interviewees identified the following core components of college campus sexual assault response: victim's services, law enforcement, victim advocacy, medical support, legal counsel, judicial processes, public safety, religious support, student affairs, and student intervention services.

When a sexual assault is reported on campus the alleged victim will either be directed to Student Intervention Services or to Special Victims Services. Student Intervention Services responds to students in distress and provides consultation and direction based on the specific needs of the student. If the student in distress is reporting a sexual assault incident the alleged victim will be guaranteed confidential disclosure; they may also receive "options counseling". Options counseling involves an appraisal of all the available supportive resources on and off campus as well as all the options a victim has for filing a criminal report. The respondent representing student intervention services described herself as "wearing a lot of hats" (P9), coordinating community partners in responding to reports of sexual assault, advising administrators on how to handle student disclosure, and referring students to the multidisciplinary supportive resources on campus. She provides an example of options counseling in the following quote:

*When I'm working with a student and I refer them I will say to them...there are specific staff dedicated to your kind of issue and what has happened so when you call the counseling center you might want to ask for [the researcher], or if you're not ready to go to CAPS, the Women's Center has staff there that are trained...if you aren't ready to go to the Women's Center you can use Special Services and all of these resources are available and are willing to work with you and at the end of the day, if you still aren't ready for any of those and you*

*still have questions, Student Intervention Services is available to continue to answer your questions. (P9)*

Several of the respondents referred to "options counseling" as part of a sexual assault response protocol:

*Oh it's all the things that, all the resources that are there...Here are the things you can do. That's what I meant by options counseling and there are an array of things that can be done and often somebody needs real support in helping them figure out which is the best for them. (P10)*

*Yes, we do options counseling and are able to give them a full explanation as to if they do decide to go to the criminal justice mode, what those steps will look like and what they'll have to do and not do and we're with them the whole time. (P7)*

Students directed to Special Services will be directed to a respondent describing herself as a "first responder". She elaborates on her role in the following narrative:

*I'm one of the first people from campus other than the actual police officers that meet with the person. I'm the first person to tell them what's in store, to give them advice, to help them along so when I get to them they're raw. They're still in the moment, they're confused, they're scared...I get notified in real time when a rape or sexual assault occurs so the police officers take them to whatever facility is necessary, a hospital, special victims unit. We arrive within an hour, we're in plain clothes, we relieve the uniform police officer and then we support*

*them through the system, we begin the navigation through the criminal justice system or we begin the navigation of the medical response and we're with them, as I said in the moment when they are raw, and they have no idea, when they haven't been able to begin processing. (P6).*

A fellow collaborator described the above two respondents as "an airline hub" (P5) and the center of a coordinated approach that may involve some or all of the other respondents. In the quotes below respondents described their respective roles in responding to reports of sexual assault:

*Once a complaint is made...we investigate. We first, you know, obviously talk to the victim, because she's the one who came in here and then we find out what witnesses there are and we call the uh respondent in....and you know, try to investigate every angle that we can...we can actually have a sanction imposed against the respondent, you know, if they admitted or if they go to a hearing panel. (P2)*

*Staff members here are a part of student life, who engage with students in an advisory way or a mentoring way, are invited into various aspects of students lives... students come to talk about everything whether its to do with their lives after they graduate, you know their various extra-curricular they're involved in, as well as their tragedies in their life from death in the family, to times they've been sexually assaulted...You know one feels blessed to be able to jury next to kids. (P4)*

*The majority of the time that we get involved is looking at the organizational issues that are involved in this and supporting the victim and dealing with the perpetrator. [This University] is set up in such a way whether it be disciplinarily or whatever individuals are handled in a certain way. We've been able to do enough education...the role that we end up playing in addition to just educating them is to be able to help that peer network be a better support for this person, whether they're going through emotional problems...a lot of what we do is end up talking to the people that they're going to be living with...here are ways that you can be supporting this person. We want to do that in every way possible. (P1)*

*There are multiple offices dealing with this issue, getting their staff trained, responding sensitively to students, giving options counseling, knowing the right referrals to make, I think we're still at the heart of it though...because we've had this [Violence Against Women] grant... we've done such good work with training and education, we see more students in the walk-in situation. (P3)*

*If a student wakes up and says I don't know what happened I think I've been raped...their thoughts are going to be mostly in terms of what they need medically...to make sure that physically they're okay, I want to make sure I didn't get an STI, I want to make sure that I'm not pregnant... and if they identify themselves to us then we make the referrals. (P5)*

*We do play somewhat of a coordinating role because we know the various pieces, we know the various resources, we work with Public Safety, we work with the Office of Student Conduct, we work with the Vice Provost of Student*

*Life, and I think that people value our judgment and our advice as we try and navigate through these very difficult issues. (P10)*

*I teach a course called Victimology, which does talk about victims of rape and sexual assault. My research is with Marilyn Summers, another faculty member here, and is about injury and sexual assault. I've been seeing victims of sexual assault in the clinical part of my life since the seventies. (P8)*

The respondent perceptions of what victims need immediately after being assaulted and over the course of time were consistent with recommendations in sexual assault response studies that focused on college student victims (Burt & Katz, 1987; Decker & Nagle, 2009; Kirkland, 2008; Lam & Roman, 2009; Resick, 1993). All respondents described roles on campus affording them proximal or distal contact with victims or offenders of sexual assault. Respondents in this study with closest proximity to victims demonstrated a more informed understanding of how to respond to the needs of victims in a manner consistent with feminist informed practice. Their sensitivity to victims reflected an experiential knowing based on years of close contact with victims and mirror a feminist orientation, one that honors individual standpoints while attending to the meanings of the social, cultural, and political context surrounding the assault. Respondents working closely with victims endorsed a primary prevention approach to sexual assault education and prevention. The respondents endorsing primary prevention strategies understood sexual assault as a sociocultural phenomenon, wherein the only path to the prevention of on-campus acquaintance rape would be to target gender inequality as the foundation of predation.

Respondents working closely with alleged offenders demonstrated greater empathy for the post-assault trajectory of the accused offender. They expressed regret for

the professional goals and career expectations of the student that would not be realized due to the impending sex offender status. Respondents working closely with offenders also expressed a need for female students to take greater responsibility for actions that put them at risk. Respondents with more distal roles took a pragmatic stance in thinking about prevention endorsing a harm reduction approach that entailed educating victims to anticipate risk as a means to reducing their potential to become victims. Strategies included traveling in groups, avoiding fraternity parties, and limiting alcohol use. What is most salient to the issue of acquaintance rape is that the rape is not committed by a stranger but by someone known to the victim. It is the familiarity of peers to potential victims that ameliorates any fear that one is at risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault.

#### PREVALENCE, OFFENDING, AND UNDERREPORTING

Study respondents were all aware of the disparity between the frequency with which on campus assaults occur and the contrasting low number of reported assaults. Respondent estimates of incident occurrence ranged from "ten cases a weekend" (P6) to yearly totals between "150 to 200" (P1) attempted or completed on-campus sexual assaults, yet a study respondent in law enforcement with the greatest access to victim disclosures of sexual assault suggested that only five to ten rapes are "officially" (P6) reported per year. This disparity is consistent with literature citing high numbers of attempted and completed rapes on college campuses and low numbers of reports (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000).

It is significant to note that *unacknowledged victims*, victims who have been sexually assaulted but do not name their assault event as rape or sexual assault also exist in college campus environments (Koss, 1985). Published crime reports of on-campus sexual assaults under-represent the actual prevalence of on-campus sexual assault. The

ambiguity of unacknowledged victims, and students who identify as victims but do not report, together account for the discrepancy in published crime statistics.

All respondents suggested that incidents of sexual assault on campus were not limited to male to female victimization but that females were most often the victims of on-campus acquaintance rape. This is consistent with literature reporting that women are more likely than men to be raped by an intimate partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In addition, male victims of sexual assault are even less likely than female victims of sexual assault to report victimhood (Daniel, 2009). Data on where acquaintance rapes occur suggest that 60% of rapes occur in the victims residence with 10% taking place in fraternity houses (Fisher et al., 2000). Most of the respondents identified fraternities as rape-prone environments in which gendered narratives supporting sexual inequality, alcohol abuse, and the potential to isolate victims created significant risk for sexual assault. This is consistent with literature on alcohol use and Greek culture. Franklin (2010) associated the use of alcohol and an affiliation with Greek systems with increased odds for experiencing a completed rape on campus. A respondent with law enforcement (P6) stated the following " I don't think there's as many forced rapes in individual residential residences as you do [have] in these party settings". Several respondents went so far as to suggest that getting rid of fraternities on campus would significantly decrease the incidents of on-campus acquaintance rape.

There was consensus among respondents on their perceptions of offending. According to the interviewees, perpetration of on-campus acquaintance rape was enacted by two distinct categories of offenders: situational offenders and premeditated offenders. All the respondents acknowledged the existence of premeditated offenders within the University community. Some respondents expressed certainty that premeditated offenders existed within the college community while other respondents expressed disbelief that college students would be capable of such criminal behavior. For the latter

respondents, the evidence of date rape drugs in on-campus reports of sexual assault disallowed denial to the presence of premeditation, as respondents could find no other explanation for why male college students would choose to drug their female counterparts. Several respondents associated premeditation with narratives supporting gender inequality, and the enactment of power and control. These respondents viewed gender inequity as a cultural construct endemic to patriarchy and internalized by students within the college community.

All respondents suggested that premeditated offending was rare on college campuses and indicative of a certain type of pathological or anti-social offender. Most of the respondents suggested that situational offending typified college campus perpetration and was born out of developmental immaturity and the abuse of alcohol. The use of alcohol on college campuses is well documented, as is the association between alcohol use and the risk for sexual assault (Abbey, 2002; Kilpatrick et al., 2007; Lindgren et al., 2009). The respondents blamed alcohol use for increasing emotional reactivity, exacerbating entitlement, and decreasing judgment on the part of the offender. The assumption being that sober male students would be likely to exhibit better judgment, would have greater access and identification of their emotions, and therefore be able to use sober decision-making and emotional awareness to reconsider their use of coercive and forced sexual practice.

The perception of several respondents that the majority of campus acquaintance rapes can be explained by situational offending may be an internalization of sociocultural beliefs that differentiate non-stranger rape from stranger rape by imagining it to be a less traumatizing form of sexual assault. Victims who are raped by strangers are treated with greater legitimacy than victims who are raped by offenders they know (Ullman, 2010). Lisak (2010) suggests that rape victims represent a vulnerability to the general

population that is resolved through shunning victims by disbelieving victims. Lisak elaborates on the fear of vulnerability to rape:

*Vulnerability scares us very deeply. To feel your body being forcibly penetrated by another human being is an experience of such utter, terrifying vulnerability and helplessness that most people recoil from the thought. To overcome that resistance, to actually identify with the experience and the person who suffers it, is an act of profound empathy and considerable courage. Most people frankly are not up to the challenge, certainly not without a lot of support. (2010, p. 1373)*

While the respondents construct of situational offending, perpetration as a result of developmental immaturity and alcohol use, may describe some offenders within the student population, the use of sexually coercive behavior by male college students has been cited in research studies and associated with the following offender characteristics: irresponsibility, the absence of social conscience, and values that support the use of violence in a sexual context (Berkowitz, 1992; Rappaport & Burkhart, 1984). Several respondents associated entitlement with on-campus sexual assault:

*A lot of our students are very entitled and not many people say no to them so they, I think they say, that's not what I want [being told no], this is what I want, I want to get this...a number of our students are entitled. (P1)*

*I think our male students who have engaged in acquaintance rape, I think it's connected to a sense of entitlement. (P3)*

A study exploring the relationship between entitlement and male sexual aggression, with sexual aggression defined as male efforts to coerce potential partners to engage in intercourse, surveyed 325 sexually active, heterosexual college men (Bouffard, 2010). Bouffard concluded that entitlement was correlated with gender-stereotyped attitudes, rape supportive attitudes, and self-reported sexual aggression. A literature review exploring research comparing the cognitions of college students and the cognitions of convicted offenders identified commonality between the two types of offenders on beliefs about: sex, rape, and masculinity (Ryan, 2004). Cognitions offer justification for rape and legitimize sexual aggression. Ryan suggests the combination of rape justification and hypermasculinity predicts rape (2004). Other research supports the relationship between masculine gender role socialization and rape prone behavior (Farris et al., 2007; Lisak & Ivan, 1995; Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991; Rappaport & Burkhart, 1984;

The relationship between entitlement, sexual aggression, and rape-prone behavior, and the use on college campuses of coercive sexual practice may challenge the assumption that most college campus sexual assaults stem from situational offending. A study exploring the presence of undetected rapists on college campuses surveyed 1,882 male college students (Lisak & Miller, 2002). One hundred and twenty students (6.4%) met criteria for rape. Of the 120 students meeting criteria for rape, 63.3% reported committing repeat rapes. Research on *undetected rapists*, men self-reporting acts of interpersonal violence that meet legal definitions of rape and who have never been prosecuted, reveal common characteristics of sexual offending present on college campuses. Undetected rapists demonstrate adeptness in the following ways: the identification of potential victims based on victim vulnerability (younger students, students new to campus, emotionally unstable students, heavy drinking students, students abused as children, students having a bad week), the ability to enact planning

and premeditative grooming strategies (attentiveness, invitation to social events), intentional physical isolation of victims, the use of minimal violence, the use of psychological weapons such as power, control, manipulation, and threat, and the deliberate use of alcohol or drugs to incapacitate victims (Lisak, 2011). The following narratives provide respondent examples of several of the above characteristics associated with the behavior of undetected rapists:

*In fraternities in particular and in athletic situations they have designated sections so that when they're having a party there are rooms that are set up so that if a female should come forward, it's almost impossible for her to identify the room she was in. so she may be able to identify the perpetrator but the victim is seldom taken to the perpetrators room in these special interest groups. It's a non-descript room with few indicators in the room of who would have ownership of it (P6)*

The above quote speaks to premeditated intent to isolate, and the use of psychological weapons of manipulation, power, and control.

*Young men on this campus own, you know, prime real estate, host the prime parties, host the socially desirable parties, opportunities...we all know that behind the scenes and in hidden bedrooms there's still jungle juice and so it allows those students who are engaged in the predatory behavior, and it's not all of them, but for those who want to be like that in relation to freshmen and it's interesting to me, so many of the stories that have come to me have been in that red zone, that first 8 to 12 weeks of school (P3)*

The preceding quote refers to the use of social capital as a grooming strategy and use of alcohol as a weapon.

*There are some very powerful students that go [here] and very influential students that go to school here and they, I've asked sorority women if you know that this particular group has a history of using date rape drugs and these occurrences happen why do you continue to socialize with them, why even put yourself and your sisters in this potential situation and that's the answer. There are some very powerful people here...I can't afford to be burning bridges as I try and build my career. (P1)*

The above observation speaks to power and control via influence. It also speaks to the use of drugs and alcohol as weapons of control.

*I think it's important to educate freshmen around all those things because they are particularly susceptible and most of these sexual assaults happen in the beginning of the school year, in that first two months or first three week of school. (P4)*

*There are some psychopaths out there that target women, that target, you know, freshmen women, have it pre-planned with you know some of the party animal homes where they, you know, that they're going to do somebody...they don't get caught and it's because there's not a full understanding that people have been taken advantage of, because of alcohol again, they're slick, you know, they're able to be, you know they usually have those charming personalities, you know, and the women don't understand what just happened. (P7)*

The above narrative speaks to premeditation and exploiting the vulnerability of incoming freshmen. All of the respondents suggested that freshmen students, during the first weeks of school, are vulnerable not simply because they are new, but because they are targeted by motivated or opportunistic offenders seeking to take advantage of them. The quote below speaks to the vulnerability of freshmen and the use of alcohol as a weapon.

*Alcohol and other substances play a significant part of it [risk for acquaintance rape] Greek culture to some extent, and I would not paint them with a broad brush but certainly being another factor, freshmen status. I'd say those are probably the big three. (P5)*

The above quotes describing the behavior of college students based on respondent experience are consistent with research on the following elements of predation: the use of power and control, grooming strategies (access to socially desirable events), awareness of the vulnerability of freshmen and or students new to campus, the use of alcohol or substance as a weapon, and the deliberate isolation of potential victims (Lisak, 2011). After twenty years of experience studying non-stranger rapists Lisak asserted the following on the similarities between the behavior of college offenders and the behavior of incarcerated rapists:

*They share the same motivational matrix of hostility, anger, dominance, hypermasculinity, impulsiveness, and antisocial attitudes. They have many of the same developmental antecedents. They tend to be serial offenders, and most of them commit a variety of different interpersonal offenses. These data indicate that they are accurately and appropriately labeled as predators. (Lisak, 2010)*

Two respondents were familiar with Lisak's studies and referred to them during the course of the interview:

*When you are dealing with special interest groups like athletics and fraternities and the Greeks, it's premeditated, I know for the most part that's premeditated...It's not something that you just hear about in Doctor Lisak's studies. (P6)*

*The recent research is spine chilling, because it suggests a phenomenal degree of premeditation on the part of serial acquaintance rapers...We have pretty strong reliable data about premeditated [rape]...and everyone starts to argue if it's spontaneous and it's just like homicide, if its in the heat of the moment, then it's a crime of passion, then it's not as bad as premeditated murder and I think you hear that a lot in the conversations people have around acquaintance rape. You know they'll watch the Lisak video and it's like Oh my God, yeah, they're out to prey on these freshmen women. (P3)*

All respondents strongly associated alcohol use with an increased risk for sexual assault. The association between alcohol use and sexual assault on college campuses is well documented. The literature review of this study includes research that compares prevalence rates on three different types of rape: drug and alcohol facilitated rape, incapacitated rape, and forcible rape (Kilpatrick et al., 2007). The Kilpatrick study surveyed 2000 women attending 4-year colleges. The results indicate that incapacitated rape, wherein women become intoxicated voluntarily, presents the greatest risk for

sexual assault when women are in intoxicated *in the presence of predatory men*. Several respondents spoke to this type of *opportunism*:

*There are people that exist everywhere including here on campus who have their own set of misunderstanding or myths or biases whatever word you want to use, that placed in a certain circumstance, then non-consensual sex can happen. (P8)*

*I still meet young men who felt like if someone didn't say no, then it wasn't rape and then you give the retort of well, they couldn't say no or they normally would say no...Oh I never thought about that. (P4)*

*A given in our culture is predatory male behavior, it is a grotesque oversimplification, most men don't rape and it is such an unacceptable thing to suggest, and how should we walk around it then, you know, I mean it works for sunburn, the sun is hot and you can reduce your risk by putting fricking hundred degree sun block on. Cars go fast you shouldn't walk out in front of them, okay, but men will rape given the opportunity, being out there as a statement, the same as the sun is hot and cars go fast. (P3)*

Significant to the college community is the influence that social norms have on behavior. This relates to Social Norms Theory, a conceptual lens that helps shed light on the ways in which behavior is influenced by one's perceptions concerning the beliefs and behaviors of people in one's social environment (Berkowitz, 2004). According to Berkowitz typical misperceptions related to the attitudes and behaviors of college students include but are not limited to: overestimations of the frequency of peer sexual

activity, peer adherence to rape supportive beliefs, and peer refusal to intervene when sexual victimization appears imminent. Berkowitz goes on to suggest students misperceive the impact on their peers of hostile attitudes and behaviors toward women by underestimating the discomfort their peers experience when confronted with misogynistic behavior.

In addition to the influence of social norms there is significant data on college campus sexual assault that reveals the following: most on-campus sexual assault is committed by offenders known to the victims, most offenders of sexual assault are never prosecuted, and most on-campus sexual assaults are never reported (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Herman, 2005). Victim underreporting and the tendency for reported sexual assaults not to result in prosecution or conviction reinforces a culture of silence that protects offenders and devalues victims. The cycle between non-reporting and campus student-on-student violence has been described in this way:

*Perpetrators rape because they think they will not get caught or because they actually have not been caught, and, because survivors do not report the violence, perpetrators are not caught, continue to believe they will not get caught, and continue the violence. (Cantalupo, 2010, p.50)*

The opinion above was echoed by a female respondent in the following quote about the role of underreporting in the cycle of violence:

*The university can't do anything unless there is an actual report. So the fact that everybody know that fraternity X preys on freshmen women, not a lot you can do when none of freshmen women will put themselves on record of this having happened. (P5)*

All of the respondents demonstrated significant understanding of the multiple reasons why victims do not report that were consistent with the literature and research on this topic. Respondents named the following reasons for underreporting by victims: shame, guilt, self-blame, fear of retribution, fear of judgment, fear of social ostracism, and ambiguity about the assault event. The literature review in this study cites research confirming that sexual assault victims are reluctant to disclose assault events to formal authorities due to: fear they will not be taken seriously, fear they will not be believed, fear of reprisal, and fear that confidentiality will not be guaranteed (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Orchowshi Meyer, & Gidycz, 2009; Patterson et al, 2009). This is most significant to victims of acquaintance rape who are assaulted by perpetrators known to them. Victims of non-stranger rape (acquaintance rape, date rape, marital rape, incest) are less likely to be believed and most likely to be blamed for their victimhood (Ullman, 2010). Negative reactions in response to sexual assault disclosure most commonly reported by victims of sexual assault include judgmental, disbelieving, and victim-blaming reactions (Ullman, 2010). Studies also suggest that receipt of positive social support is far less powerful to victims than the negative effects of victim-blaming reactions (Campbell et al., 2009).

#### COLLABORATION AND RESPONSE

All of the respondents spoke highly of the model of sexual assault response in place on their campus. There was consensus on the importance of trusting one another and consensus on providing victims confidentiality and control. All respondents agreed that successful collaboration between community partners in response to on-campus acquaintance rape required trust between collaborative partners and ongoing communication. Trust was defined as a commitment from all community partners

involved in the response process to guarantee victims confidentiality and decision-making control. This is underscored by the belief that recovery begins at the moment of disclosure. Herman described the importance of survivor empowerment in this way "She [the survivor] must be the author and arbiter of her own recovery" (1992, p. 133). Several respondents expressed awareness to the importance of guaranteeing victims confidentiality and decision-making control as a means of re-establishing safety for the victim, supporting the victim in reclaiming mastery of the environment, and setting a standard of care that will encourage other victims to report. A respondent couched this in a feminist approach:

*I think for students it is very off putting to think if they walk through a door consequences are going to happen that they are no longer in control of and so from a feminist perspective it is absolutely vital that you re-empower a victim by saying you are in control of what happens next...Confidentiality I would say is a huge piece of how you encourage young women to report, but so is everything else we do, I mean you know you encourage women to report when you create a community in which behaviors are identified as unacceptable behaviors. (p3)*

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) commissioned a publication on primary prevention in response to community sexual violence (Davis, Parks, & Cohen, 2006). The project associated the presence of the following kinds of community norms with environments susceptible to incidents of sexual violence: limited roles for women, objectification of women, oppression of women, value placed on maintaining power over another, tolerance of aggression, attribution of blame to victims, negative constructs of manhood (domination, control, risk-taking) and notions of

privacy that foster secrecy and silence. The data collected in this study located several of the above norms within the university environment. This is in keeping with the opinions of several respondents who suggested a cultural change was needed to decrease the prevalence of on-campus acquaintance rape. For some respondents this meant getting rid of fraternities by "decolonizing fraternities". For others this meant addressing the use of alcohol, "legalize alcohol in order to exert greater control over its usage". One respondent suggested that cultural change required a student community commitment to the value that "this is not part of our society". For other respondents changing the culture required the highest- ranking University administrators taking a very public role in supporting greater transparency to the public health problem of sexual assault in the university setting.

A male respondent (P4) described acquaintance rape as "under talked about". He suggested that because it is not explicitly discussed, people inside and outside the campus community disbelieve that rape occurs on campus. While most of the respondents called for initiatives that provided greater transparency to the issue of on-campus sexual assault, two respondents expressed concern about potential negative repercussions associated with transparency. The interviewees expressed concern about inciting panic among students and their parents and concern about the reputation of the university. When asked what responsibility the university has in informing students about risk a female interviewee responded in the following way:

*If the university learns of this and can substantiate that there are prescribed behaviors going on then the university's responsibility is to stop the behavior and that's as much as I can see. Who do you tell, the university at large? Fraternity X is going to lace your drinks and drag you upstairs and assault you while you are incapable of doing anything, I mean how do you inform ten*

*thousand, five thousand undergraduate women?...Take out a tweet?...Put up a sign? (P5)*

The American College Health Association (ACHA) white paper states the following position on sexual violence prevention:

*High levels of victimization, coupled with cultural acceptance of rape myths, create an environment where victimized students are disempowered and alienated from their college experiences. This environment has resulted in impediments to academic success, lower graduation rates, health problems, and persistent mental health issues. Students cannot learn in an atmosphere where they do not feel safe. (2008, p. 5)*

The ACHA recommends the following guidelines for addressing sexual assault as a public health issue: engaging men to serve as role models intolerant of sexual violence, specific outreach to student groups identified as high-risk for perpetrating sexual violence, alcohol abuse initiatives, sexual violence screening assessment tools, and bystander intervention training. Bystander training, which is based on a community of responsibility model, educates student bystanders to identify offenders, situations of risk, and intervene when risk is imminent (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007).

Respondents offered several initiatives for addressing the problem of on-campus acquaintance rape consistent with the above recommendations. Suggestions included: Explicit and visible inclusion of men to address the issue of campus sexual assault, ostracizing offenders, mandated classes for all students in gender studies, mandated sexual assault education and victim-response training for all campus employees, education and prevention programming grounded in feminist literature, empowering

sexual assault victims as activists sharing their survival stories with small groups of female students, and mobilization of the entire student community in acknowledging and targeting the problem.

The American College Health Association makes the following recommendations for successful primary prevention in response to on-campus sexual assault consistent with respondent recommendations:

*Successful primary prevention of sexual violence requires recognition of the problem at the highest levels of campus leadership. Likewise, policy development and accountability for all policies that reflect intolerance for sexual violence across its continuum---from sexist statements to sexual harassment to sexual assault---should be enforced. Further, it is the responsibility of faculty, staff, and administrators to serve as mentors and role models for students as well as to provide educative opportunities for the primary prevention of sexual violence. (ACHA Guidelines, 2007, p.5)*

As stated previously and in the findings section of this study, respondents expressed pride in the sexual assault response model of [this University], and in the expertise of several of their community partners. A male respondent working with college students for 28 years stated the following about his community partners:

*Some of the professionals here at [This University] are the best I've ever seen and it's an honor to really be able to work with them...I think there's always more that we can do. I think we have a good deal of trainings and resources that go on. [This University] has been a recipient of numerous Federal grants ...specific for violence against women so there's been a good deal of ...service*

*training for people to be responders or to be resource people...it's not to say we can't always do more, we can always be doing more but you know I think there's some incredibly skilled people at being able to support, [to] make people feel safe in what they see as an unsafe situation and an unsafe environment and for them to feel, eventually to feel cared for. (P1)*

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The respondents in this study offered validation to significant on-campus incident rates, the challenges victims face when considering disclosure, and the importance of responding to victims in ways that not only support individual recovery but also assure future victims that it is safe to come forward. Increasing transparency to the prevalence of on-campus sexual assault means exposing current and future students and their families as well as the entire campus community to the reality that women in college are at greater risk for sexual assault than women the same age who are not in college (Fisher et al., 2000). This study demonstrates that much is gained by having a dialogue on the issue of college campus sexual assault with the people who work closely with victims and offenders and who have considerable knowledge about the community at large. The data in this study is consistent with current literature and research on college campus acquaintance rape and can be used to inform clinical practice as well as community change. In addition, the voices of the respondents confirm the vulnerability of the campus climate due to the stable presence of acts of sexual violence.

The Center for Public Integrity (2010) interviewed fifty current or former college students who reported being sexually assaulted during their college careers. They also surveyed 152 crisis centers on or near university campuses and reviewed records of 10 years of complaints filed against universities under Title IX and Clery Act statutes. The intent was to explore how college campuses responded to victim allegations of sexual

assault. The investigation published the following key findings: offenders, including repeat offenders, face little or no consequences; student victims underreport due to self-blame or ambiguity about the assault event; campus judicial processes are secretive and lack transparency; The Office of Civil Rights rarely sanctions institutions for non-compliance to Title IX and Clery statutes or for mishandled campus judicial processes; and university institutional responses to on-campus sexual assault perpetuate a cycle of non-reporting and sexual violence. The investigative study determined that victims of campus sexual assault face multiple barriers to reporting; the narratives of the respondents in this study confirmed this reality and identified many barriers to reporting. In addition, The Center for Public Integrity suggested that victims are subjected to additional re-victimization if they do report to campus judicial processes and often witness the behavior of alleged offenders remaining unpunished. This maintains both the silence implicit in underreporting and in the ongoing invisibility of undetected rapists.

The significant prevalence of on-campus sexual assault and the disparate low numbers of reported assaults provides significant motivation for institutional response systems to provide a victim-centered, report encouraging campus climate. The findings in this study provide perspectives that are consistent with research on college-campus sexual assault and consensus amongst study respondents that more needs to be done to encourage reporting and to identify and respond to risk. In addition, legal scholars are predicting that changing moral standards and evolving state and federal laws expose universities to increased potential for legal and financial consequences and the risk of establishing reputations for not being able to guarantee student safety on campus (Smith & Gomez, 2012). Legal based recommendations for creating a victim-centered institutional response system suggest the following: establishment of a safe space on campus offering comprehensive victim-oriented services ranging from reporting a sexual

assault to assessing and evaluating sexual assault policy; sexual assault service centers with professional staff having expertise in the area of sexual assault; and the construction of campus judicial processes that do not model criminal justice processes (Cantalupo, 2010). This study documents the re-traumatizing aspects of criminal justice systems on victims of sexual assault who elect to pursue legal action through judicial processes (Holmstrom & Burgess, 1991; Koss, 2000; Murphy, Moynihan, & Barnyard, 2009).

An ecological approach to the primary prevention of sexual assault targets on-campus sexual violence through a multi-level approach that mobilizes faculty, staff, administrators, and students in a commitment to community safety (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). This approach aligns with feminist theory as it focuses on the social context of rape, promotes change beyond an interpersonal level, and supports community level solutions. Ecological prevention models target systemic structures that foster sexual assault, promote community involvement, emphasize positive development, and are grounded in theory. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey Summary Report recommends the following primary prevention strategies for addressing sexual violence that are consistent with an ecological approach: promote healthy relationships between peers; teach non-violent conflict resolution, healthy communication skills, stress management, emotional regulation skills, and respect for the autonomy of others; identify and change communal norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes that promote violence as normative, reinforce negative stereotypes about masculinity, and objectify or devalue women; and educate and mobilize bystanders to intervene when risk for sexual violence is imminent (Black et. al., 2011).

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although this study attempts to make a contribution to better understanding the context within which college campus acquaintance rape occurs, and how elements specific to context challenge inter-organizational responses to acquaintance rape, this study has several limitations. First and foremost is the small sample size, drawn from only one campus setting. Although the sample size was small and circumscribed, what I learned from the respondents was largely consistent with literature on college campus sexual assault. Ten study participants were purposively selected and solicited to participate on a volunteer basis. I recruited participants known to have roles in responding to reports of on-campus sexual assault. All of the respondents were familiar to me as their professional roles on campus supported their visibility. Three of the respondents are well known to me based on therapeutic referrals made by the respondents to me. Additionally, this study did not recruit participants from all the campus offices and cultural centers on campus; recruitment concentrated only on the personnel directly involved in responding to reports of campus sexual assault.

The familiarity of the researcher to respondents and the location of the researcher in the campus counseling center may have biased the data and might also have contributed to the respondents' tendency to tell me things "off the record". Most respondents requested that portions of their narrative be withheld from the findings, which meant that some interesting and salient pieces of data had to be excluded from my study. Additional study limitations are associated with time constraints. The pressure of time constraints disallowed the following verification techniques: peer debriefing, and member checking. A further limitation to this study is that it focuses primarily on male to female victimization.

## CONCLUSIONS

A prevalence study of sexual assault and college women predicted that a college populated with 10,000 female students had the potential for more than 350 rapes per year to occur (Fisher et al., 2000). Concurrent with the high risk of occurrence are political, social, and cultural factors that challenge the ability of college campuses to eliminate the occurrence of on-campus acquaintance rape. Feminist theory asserts that the personal is political (Brownmiller, 1975; Brown, 2010) and redirects focus away from the attributes of individual victims to the larger cycle of socialization that is rooted in a history of inequality, oppression, and the marginalization of women. Feminist theory identifies patriarchal systems as oppressive social systems that privilege male attributes while devaluing attributes associated with women. A feminist theoretical analysis of rape locates the predilection for sexual violence in the patriarchal roots of inequality and the social and sexual dominance of women by men (Brownmiller, 1975). The following quote speaks to the origins of gender inequality in political and social systems and how these systems of power and control reach beyond the incident of sexual assault and continue victimizing survivors through victim-blaming reactions:

*Rape, centered around power and control, grows out of a structural disparity in status and power held by men as a class versus women as a class. Accordingly, a woman gets raped by virtue of class membership and not due to something she has done to ask for or deserve it. Rape of women by men has its roots in patriarchal manifestation of and a tool for the perpetuation of the dominance of*

*men as a class over women as a class. Women are set up to be vulnerable because of their prescribed dependence on men for physical protection, for economic support, and for political representation. Vulnerability also comes from false lessons learned about what rape is, that blame women for their own victimization, and from women's efforts to deal with rape or the threat of rape in their lives through individual solutions. (Burt & Katz, 1987, pp. 61)*

Endemic to gender inequality within the college culture are the myths, assumptions, and biases associated with violence perpetuated against women. This re-traumatizes survivors by blaming them for their assault experience and redirects the responsibility for causing male on female violence away from motivated offenders. A culture that blames victims and glorifies the use of alcohol provides camouflage to motivated offenders and offender access to the use of alcohol as a weapon. Furthermore, victims who are assaulted while under the influence of alcohol are more likely to be blamed for their victimization. The shame and self-blame experienced by victims of sexual assault denotes the internalization of rape scripts that hold women accountable for their victimhood and contributes to low numbers of victim reporting.

College students who are victims of on-campus acquaintance rape are forced to recover from sexual assault within the same social, cultural, and political environment in which are embedded predatory behaviors, rape supportive myths, and victim-blaming reactions. Feminist scholars suggest that focusing on individual aspects of victims as opposed to the socio-cultural context and the power dynamics informing that context depoliticizes rape and looks for solutions that are inherently victim blaming (Gavey, 2007; Ullman, 2010). Judith Herman stated the following: "the subordinate condition of women is maintained and enforced by the hidden violence of men" (1992, pp. 32). Sexual assault is a crime of power and control. Responding effectively to reports of on-campus

sexual assault demands awareness to the invisibility of motivated offenders, awareness of the ways in which cultural norms and behaviors support violence against women and underreporting, and a shift away from interventions on an interpersonal level to interventions on communal and societal levels.

College student victims facing recovery within the environment in which the assault occurred are tasked with the regaining of their own power over both the environment and over self. Significant to victim recovery is the freedom to reclaim the identity that was evolving before becoming identified as a *victim*. The reclamation process for victims often begins with disclosure. In the following narrative an interviewee regarded by all study participants as a trusted *first responder* reflects on what training and experience have taught her concerning the victim empowerment process.

*Thirty-five years in law enforcement, a ton of crisis intervention training, you know a ton of rape and sexual assault training, I mean it's a combination of all of it but you never really, you are never really prepared for when you walk into that room, you're just never really prepared to like, every victim is different. What I say to you, I can't say to the next one, and you are treading water every time for the first five to ten minutes until you get a feel, what I've learned over the years is active listening, not talking, tell them who I am, what, you know, how much I can do for them, and do it in 30 seconds or less. Because they don't want to be talked to or talked at and they might not want to talk themselves and silence is golden. If they, I let them, let me put it, I let them run the show. After I tell them who I am and why I'm they're, I just let them [run the show]. I take their cues on how I'm going to act." (P6)*

The descriptions interviewees gave of victims and offenders reflected the distance or proximity to the victims that their professional roles afforded them. As a therapist working with victims of sexual assault I am often the first person to whom victims disclose. But the disclosure I witness does not occur moments or hours after victims have been assaulted. The disclosure that I see has been tempered by time, by victim cognitive appraisals, by the perceptions victims have of how others will react to their disclosure, and the meaning they assign to the assault event and to their role as a victim of sexual assault.

First responders of victim disclosure experience a visceral understanding of the immediate effect sexual violence has on victims. The capacity for understanding and empathy that this creates cannot be learned from a text. In addition, distance from victims protects internalized biases and unchallenged assumptions one may have about acquaintance rape. All of the interviewed respondents demonstrated empathy for victims and concern for the community at large. Their collective passion and investment in creating on-campus safety was evident. What was equally represented was a range of informed response tempered by differing levels of self-awareness concerning internalized gender assumptions, personal biases, and rape myths. These differing responses become critical to victim recovery when respondents, representing positions of authority within the campus community, are the first person to hear the victim's story. What victims need most is to be believed. This is supported by research presented in this study and by my experience working with victim and survivors of campus sexual assault. Being believed does not require victims to verify their experience, justify their decisions, or apologize for their victimization. Everyone has the potential to be the first person approached by a victim of on campus sexual assault and the most well-intentioned among us have internalized assumptions and biases that need to be known to us if we are going to provide an appropriate victim-centered response.

The phenomenon of unconscious victim blaming has been explained in cultural competency literature as an *aversive bias*. Brown defines aversive bias as "nonconscious biases held by individuals who consciously eschew overt expressions of bias" (2009, p172). She suggests this type of bias is an intersubjective event having an impact within interpersonal domains. Most problematic about this type of bias occurs when one's unexamined self emits interpersonal cues that are inconsistent with good intentions. Several interview respondents reinforced their intent not to blame victims. This suggested to me that the topic of victim blaming had been discussed among community partners. My assumption was confirmed when a female respondent (P2) tasked with investigating assault allegations described an interaction between she and a fellow interviewee during a case conference in which she felt her intentions were misunderstood by her colleague.

*I said one thing, I that, I don't think could be ignored was the role that young women play in this, I have seen in my office, too many women who come in or a number of women who come in and say, well I think I was sexually assaulted but I was so drunk I don't know, I have a vague recollection of somebody penetrating me and, um, I got my head handed to me [by her] about blaming the victim. I'm just thinking that you need to educate young women as well about what's out there and what goes on, um particularly if you are talking about prevention, um, because they may continue to put themselves in dangerous situations. I'm not excusing the males behavior by any stretch of the imagination, but I do think that young women are part of the solution.*

Brown (2009) suggests the only way to negotiate unconscious biases is to accept the improbability of being truly objective about any target group; on the college campus

sexual assault victims represent an underserved target group. Brown calls for "compassionate acceptance" of ones biases, as a means to make biases conscious in order to reduce the unconscious enactment of said biases. This is an important point for all members of the campus community to learn, as all community members have the potential to be the recipient of a victim disclosure. Language has the power to constitute meaning and implicit victim-blaming messages have the power to silence victim disclosure.

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## APPENDIX A: University of Pennsylvania IRB Approval Form

University of Pennsylvania  
 Office of Regulatory Affairs  
 3624 Market St., Suite 301 S  
 Philadelphia, PA 19104-6006  
 Ph: 215-573-2540/ Fax: 215-573-9438  
 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
 (Federalwide Assurance # 00004028)  
 08-Jun-2011

Ram A Cnaan

Attn: Deborah O'Neill

cnaan@sp2.upenn.edu

doneill@exchange.upenn.edu

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

TITLE

:Ram A Cnaan, PhD

:College Campus Acquaintance Rape: Contextual  
 Issues and the Challenge of Effective Institutional Response

SPONSORING AGENCY

:No Sponsor Number

PROTOCOL #

:813735

REVIEW BOARD

:IRB #8

Dear Dr. Cnaan:

The above referenced protocol and was reviewed and approved by the Executive Chair (or her authorized designee) using the expedited procedure set forth in 45 CFR 46.110, category 6,7, on 07-Jun-2011. This study will be due for continuing review on or before 06-Jun-2012.

**Approval by the IRB does not necessarily constitute authorization to initiate the conduct of a human subject research study.** Principal investigators are responsible for assuring final approval from other applicable school, department, center or institute review committee(s) or boards has been obtained. This includes, but is not limited to, the University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center Clinical Trials Scientific Review and Monitoring Committee (CTSRMC), Clinical and Translational Research Center (CTRC) review committee, CAMRIS committee, Institutional Bio-safety Committee (IBC), Environmental Health and Radiation Safety Committee (EHRS), and Standing Conflict of Interest (COI) Committee. Principal investigators are also responsible for assuring final approval has been obtained from the FDA as applicable, and a valid contract has been signed between the sponsor and the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. If any of these committees require changes to the IRB-approved protocol and informed consent/assent document(s), the changes must be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to beginning the research study. If this protocol involves cancer research with human subjects, biospecimens, or data, you may not begin the research until you have obtained approval or proof of exemption from the Cancer Center's Clinical Trials Review and Monitoring Committee.

### **The following documents were included in this review:**

\_HS-ERA IRB Application, submitted 06/06/11 [confirmation code: gcijage] \_CITI Completion Report for Deborah O'Neill, passed 04/24/11 \_Subject Recruitment Document, uploaded 05/23/11 \_Meehan Transcription Letter, uploaded 05/17/11

Appendix B: Initial Interview Guide, uploaded 05/17/11 Appendix A: Informed Consent Form (no version date), uploaded 06/06/11 CITI Menu showing courses passed by Deborah O'Neill, uploaded 05/23/11 Email Correspondence, dated 05/25/11 - 05/31/11

**APPENDIX B: University of Pennsylvania  
Informed Consent Form**

**Title of the Research Study:** Responding to College Campus Acquaintance Rape: Contextual Issues and the Challenge of Inter-Organizational Collaboration

**Introduction and Purpose of Interview**

You are being asked to take part in a qualitative research study exploring the challenges of inter-organizational collaboration in responding to on campus acquaintance rape. I am a Doctoral candidate in the DSW program at the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. This study is being conducted to fill a program requirement for an original work of scholarship that makes a contribution to the clinical social work literature and knowledge base. The completed study will serve as my dissertation.

**What is involved?**

You will be asked to sign a consent form and commit to an interview date. The interview will take 60 minutes. I will audiotape the interview process. I may also take written notes. A secure transcription service will be used to transcribe audio-taped interview recordings. I will ask you questions exploring the specificity of your role in the collaborative process, how your role differs from that of your colleagues, what you find challenging about inter-organizational collaboration, and what elements you perceive as successful to a coordinated approach to campus sexual assault. I will explore your understanding of acquaintance rape, your thoughts on prevalence, trends, and rates of victim disclosure. I will ask you about University accountability,

what progress you think has been made in responding to campus sexual assault, and what you think still needs to be done.

### **Confidentiality**

Due to the nature of this study anonymity is not possible and confidentiality is not guaranteed. You will not be identified by your name, you will be identified in the study write-up as a representative of the university department for which you work. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Pennsylvania is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research volunteers like you. The IRB has access to study information. Any documents you sign, where you can be identified by name will be kept in a locked drawer in the researchers office. These documents will be kept confidential. All the documents will be destroyed when the study is over

### **Risks of Participating?**

The risks of participating are minimal. I will not use your name in my write up of our interview. I will blot out your name on this consent form when my write up is complete. I will be the only person who will listen to the audio recording and when my write up is complete I will destroy the audiotape, interview notes, and interview transcript.

### **Compensation?**

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

As a stakeholder in the well being of individual students and the campus community at large your participation may be a rewarding and satisfying experience due to the contribution you will make to improving inter-organization collaboration and improving campus response to sexual assault. Your participation may offer you

personal insight on your role as a member of an inter-organizational alliance, as well as inform your understanding of your community partners.

**Your participation is completely voluntary:** There is no penalty if you choose not to join the study. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate. You can decide to withdraw from the interview at any time. You can also refuse to answer any questions that you don't want to answer.

**If you have any questions about this study please feel free to contact me:**

Deborah V. O'Neill, LCSW

[doneill@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:doneill@pobox.upenn.edu)

215-898-7021

If after talking with me you still have concerns or you want to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs with any question, concerns, or complaints at the University of Pennsylvania by calling (215) 898-2614.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you have had all of your questions about the interview answered to your satisfaction and that you have been given a copy of this consent form.

**Participant signature:**

---

**Participant printed name:**

---

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer signature:**

---

**Interviewer printed name:**

---

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

This study seeks the perspectives of prominent campus personnel on the challenges inherent in responding to on campus acquaintance rape. Participants have been selected based on their position of leadership and their knowledge of campus administration, programming, law enforcement, advocacy, public health, or the development and activation of response mechanisms. You have been asked to join this study based on your area of expertise and your role as a stakeholder in the safety and well being of the campus community. For the purposes of this study acquaintance rape refers to sexual assault perpetrated by someone known to the victim. This study is limited to female victims and male offenders.

### Topic I: On Campus Acquaintance Rape

- Has your professional experience as a campus administrator made you aware of on campus acquaintance rape? If so, how?
- How would you define acquaintance rape?
- How often do you think acquaintance rape occurs on college campuses?
- What on campus risk factors do you think may be associated with the potential for acquaintance rape to occur?
- Why do you think acquaintance rapes occur?
- How would you advise female students to reduce their risk of becoming victims of acquaintance rape?

### Topic II: Locating Acquaintance Rape

- Where on campus do you think acquaintance rape is most likely to occur?
- Is there a time of day that you think acquaintance rape is most likely to occur? If so what time of the day and why do you think the risk is increased at that time of day?
- How often do you think acquaintance rape occurs in the absence of drugs or alcohol?
- Do you think acquaintance rape is situational or pre-meditated? Please explain?

- What knowledge do you have of acquaintance rape occurring on this campus?

### Topic III: The Disparity between prevalence and rates of reporting

- How often do you think on campus acquaintance rapes occur and how often do you think they are reported?
- Do you think that statistics of reported campus acquaintance rapes are accurate? If so, why? If not, why not?
- What do you think would deter a victim of on campus acquaintance rape from reporting?
- Do you think there is a disparity between the number of on campus acquaintance rapes that occur and the number that are reported?
- What can college campuses do to encourage victims of on campus acquaintance rape to report?

### Topic IV: Responding to campus acquaintance rape

- What kinds of resources do you think victims of on campus acquaintance rape need?
- What responsibility, if any, does the University have to inform students of the risk of on campus acquaintance rape?
- How can the University inform the campus community about the risk of acquaintance rape?
- What role should the campus student community play in decreasing the risk of on campus acquaintance rape?
- What role should the campus student community play in supporting the increase in rates of reporting?
- What University practices have been successful in responding to campus acquaintance rape?

### Topic V: Building a Coordinated Response System

- What role does your office play in responding to on campus acquaintance rape?
- What other campus offices do you collaborate with on the issue of campus acquaintance rape?
- How does your role in responding to on campus acquaintance rape differ from the role of other on campus resources?
- Is there a coordinated response between your office and other on campus offices?
- What do you perceive as successful elements of a coordinated approach to responding to on campus acquaintance rape?
- Are there additional resources that would complement current resources?

- What methods, resources, or trainings do you utilize to inform your response to campus acquaintance rape?

#### Topic VI: Designing Services

- What University offices should be involved in responding to and addressing the issue of on campus acquaintance rape?
- What community agencies are available to assist in responding to on campus acquaintance rape?
- What methods, resources, or trainings would you recommend to inform the campus response to acquaintance rape?
- What services do you think should be available for victims of acquaintance rape?
- What do you think victims would say they need immediately following an assault? What do you think victims would say they need over time?
- How do you imagine the campus student community reacts to victims of on campus acquaintance rape?
- What do you think can be done to further educate the student community on how to respond to victims of acquaintance rape?
- If you could build this University over from scratch what systemic changes would you make to decrease the prevalence of campus acquaintance rape?
- Are there any questions I haven't asked that I should ask you?