

Violence and Voicelessness: Experiences of Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence on College Campuses

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Objective

To evaluate survivors of intimate partner violence's (IPV) experiences working with service providers on campus to assess if the emotional and mental health needs of IPV survivors were being met. The goal was to center the voices of these survivors while also providing feedback to providers based on their experiences through qualitative interviews.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that schools did not offer comprehensive services to survivors with varying needs and experiences. Based on a one-dimensional narrative of sexual violence on college campuses commonly shown, we hypothesized that survivors of non-dominant social identities would not be included in service provision and marketing.

Challenges

- Recruiting a diverse study pool
- Translating lived experience into concrete provider feedback
- How is this study different?

Research findings

- 75% of survivors who used services at U of M did not receive the help they needed
- Institutional reporting process not designed for IPV
- CAPS administratively inaccessible, not marketed correctly
- SAPAC name is misleading, 21% did not know they could go to SAPAC for IPV
- Knowledge disparities about resources for survivors
- Exclusion of experience \neq exclusion of social identity

Impact

- Centering survivor voices commonly left out of the conversation
- Deconstructing harmful stereotypes about IPV
- New research findings on the exclusion of experiences
- Survivor-centered feedback on how providers can improve

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Discoveries

- Experience and not just social identity can be marginalized
- Not all forms of sexual misconduct are equally represented within policy
- Representation of sexual violence in media impacts how and if a survivor seeks help or support
- In the discussion around intersectionality, experiences must also be considered
- Providers must actively work to include all narratives of sexual violence

Further Work

I would like to continue with this project as a national survey that documents survivors of IPV's experiences working with the providers on their campus to see if the findings from the University of Michigan are consistent across the United States. By expanding this research we will learn potential ways this University can improve their services to survivors at this school.