Sexual Assault Response Systems in an Evolving Legal Landscape:
Implications for Reporting and Help-Seeking

By

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all sexual assault survivors, with the hope that, one day, reporting and seeking help will never feel unsafe, unbearable, or useless.

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ABSTRACT

Three decades of research illustrate that sexual assault is a persistent and pernicious problem on college campuses, with women at greatest risk. Recent changes in federal law and oversight have brought substantial change in university sexual assault response systems. For instance, in a 2011 Dear Colleague Letter, the Department of Education enhanced Title IX guidance on sexual assault, instructing universities to institute policies and reporting procedures that will address reports of sexual assault and make resources available to survivors. Under this evolving legal landscape, universities nationwide have overhauled their sexual assault policies, reporting procedures, and resources. There is a pressing need for empirical evaluation of these response systems: Do policies, procedures, and resources work as they are intended? How do they affect the campus community—including employees who are expected to enact policies (e.g., "Responsible Employees" mandated to report sexual assault disclosures to the university) and students who are expected to benefit? Three studies addressed these larger questions.

Study One collected survey data from 305 resident assistants (RAs)—who are Responsible Employees—and investigated factors that predicted RAs' likelihood to enact their mandate to report sexual assault disclosures to the university and refer survivors to sexual assault resources. Results suggested that RAs' perceptions of their mandatory reporting role was particularly important: RAs who felt negatively about mandatory reporting were less likely to report disclosures and refer survivors to resources. Study Two used a mixed methodological approach to examine reasons that 284 college sexual assault survivors did not use three key

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campus supports—Title IX Office, sexual assault center (SAC), and housing staff—and if these reasons differed across the three supports. Qualitative analyses identified four overarching themes: logistical issues (e.g., lacking knowledge), feelings, beliefs, and responses that made it seem unacceptable to use a support (e.g., anticipating negative consequences), judgments about the appropriateness of a support (e.g., lacking familiarity or confidentiality), and alternative methods of coping (e.g., disclosing to informal supports). Some quantitative findings suggested that survivors faced the most barriers for the Title IX Office (e.g., fearing consequences, questioning if the assault was serious enough to report), lacked knowledge about the SAC, and believed housing staff were an inappropriate support (e.g., because they are reporters). Perceiving the assault to be insufficiently severe was the most frequent reason mentioned; these findings suggest that the ubiquitous nature of sexual assault in college hinders help seeking. Study Three analyzed a stratified random sample of 150 university mandatory reporting policies to determine how institutions have interpreted and implemented federal law and guidance around mandatory reporting. The majority of institutions adopted policies that require most, if not all, employees to report any sexual assault disclosure to the university. Then, a review of the literature suggests these expansive policies have been implemented despite limited evidence regarding their effectiveness. In fact, some findings suggest negative consequences for survivors, employees, and institutions (e.g., making it harder for survivors to disclose). Collectively, these studies elucidate some effects of changes in the interpretation and implementation of federal law and guidance addressing campus sexual assault and demonstrate the need for more empirically informed policies and practices. However, without substantial change in community norms around sexual assault, these efforts may be for naught. Ongoing evaluation of university sexual assault response systems must be coupled with efforts to change the cultural context.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Overview of Sexual Assault on College Campuses

The prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses[1] has been documented for

decades—with women at greatest risk (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016; Fisher, Cullen, &

Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). The term *sexual assault* describes the full

range of unwanted sexual activity, including unwanted sexual contact (e.g., kissing, fondling),

sexual coercion (e.g., verbal pressure), attempted and/or completed rape—legal definitions of

"rape" vary, but is typically defined as penetration of the vagina or anus (by a penis, other body

parts, or objects) and oral sex obtained by force, the threat of force, or when the victim is

incapacitated. Men also experience sexual assault, but less frequently than women (Banyard,

Ward, Cohn, & Plante, 2007; Breiding et al., 2014). Women are more likely to fear sexual

assault: in a sample of undergraduate students, nearly all men (86%) reported not being afraid of

sexual assault, but only 23% of women reported not being afraid (Cook & Fox, 2012). In

addition, men are overwhelmingly perpetrators of sexual violence against women (e.g., Breiding

et al., 2014; Koss, et al., 1987; Zinzow & Thompson, 2015). Consequently, women are the

primary focus of this research.

There can be devastating consequences of experiencing sexual assault, including harms

that are psychological (e.g., self-blame, depression, posttraumatic stress, suicidality; Chang et al.,

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[1] The terms "college" and "university" are used interchangeably throughout to represent institutions of higher education.

2015; Frazier et al., 2009; Kaltman, Krupnick, Stockton, Hooper, & Green, 2005; Peter-Hagene & Ullman, 2016), physical (e.g., gynecological problems, pain, cervical cancer; Campbell, Lichty, Sturza, & Raja, 2006; Jayasinghe et al., 2016; Jozkowski & Sanders, 2012), behavioral (e.g., alcohol use, disordered eating; Bulgin & Amar, 2016; Kilpatrick et al., 2007), and educational (e.g., low GPA, withdrawal from school; Jordan, Combs, & Smith, 2014; Mengo & Black, 2016). All forms of sexual assault are associated with negative outcomes (Gilmore et al., 2017; Muldoon, Taylor, & Norma, 2016; Pinsky et al., 2016). In addition to intrapersonal harms, sexual assault perpetuates an oppressive gender hierarchy (MacKinnon, 1987). The experience (and ever present fear) of sexual assault undermines women's ability to participate fully in university life. College women frequently constrain their behavior out of concern for safety (Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2007). Sexual assault, whether actual or feared, is as a form of gendered social control, in which women's behavior is regulated and constrained (Day, 1994).

Although sexual assault on college campuses is a long-standing issue, within recent years, there has been increasing public attention and regulation by the federal government. A combination of federal policy and grassroots organizing has wrought substantial change in how institutions of higher education respond to sexual assault experienced by students. However, there is much we still need to know about what happens after sexual assault response systems are established. The overarching purpose of this research is to examine how federal regulations are enacted on campus—for instance in the sexual assault policies, reporting procedures, and resources created—and how these decisions affect the campus community.

Laws Addressing Sexual Assault in Higher Education

The Clery Act

In 1990, Congress passed the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act (later

termed The Clery Act, 20 U.S.C.A. § 1092), which requires colleges and universities receiving federal funding to collect and distribute information about the prevalence of sex-related crimes on and near campus (including public property and non-campus property or structures that the university controls; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Institutions are required to publish an Annual Security Report (ASR) that presents statistics on the type of crimes committed and locations where the crimes occurred. The ASR should also describe information about safety-related policies and resources (e.g., sexual assault reporting procedures). Under The Clery Act, colleges must also issue alerts to warn students and employees about any threats to their safety.

Title IX

Title IX is a civil rights law established to eliminate sex discrimination in educational programs and activities that receive funding from the federal government (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is the federal agency charged with enforcement of Title IX. The Department of Education and The Supreme Court have long recognized sexual harassment of students as a prohibited form of sex discrimination under Title IX (which includes any unwelcome sexual advances and behaviors). In 1997, the OCR issued and distributed guidance on the sexual harassment of students—which defined sexual harassment, established parameters for legal liability, and required schools to establish grievance procedures for students to report sexual harassment (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). In 2001, the OCR issued revised guidance on sexual harassment that clarified and reaffirmed Title IX compliance standards, including the requirement for schools to have policies that prohibit sexual harassment and grievance procedures that will resolve complaints promptly and equitably (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

However, the role of Title IX in addressing sexual assault on college campuses did not

gain significant public attention until President Obama's Administration. The OCR substantially

enhanced its focus on sexual assault in its 2011 Dear College Letter (Ali, 2011). This "significant

guidance document" emphasized that OCR considers sexual assault a prohibited form of sex

discrimination—unlawful under Title IX—and institutions must respond promptly and equitably

to reports of sexual assault. The 2011 Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) outlined a number of

requirements and recommendations for institutions' sexual assault response systems: universities

are mandated to adopt sexual assault policies and grievance procedures that are easy to

understand and widely distributed (e.g., posted on websites, published in student handbooks);

such policies must cover student-on-student sexual violence that occurs on-campus and in

connection with school programs and activities (e.g., academic, athletic, extracurricular) and may

also cover acts of sexual violence that occur off-campus if the event creates a hostile

environment for the victim on-campus. Universities must also establish a Title IX coordinator,

who directs university efforts to comply with Title IX (e.g., establishing policies, educating

students about their rights, overseeing sexual assault complaints). Additionally, the 2011 DCL

encourages universities to provide comprehensive resources for sexual assault survivors (e.g.,

victim advocates, counseling options, health services; Ali, 2011).

Three years after the DCL, OCR released a Q&A document further clarifying and

explaining Title IX guidance (Lhamon, 2014). For instance, this document includes more

detailed information about each of the following: OCR oversight and application of Title IX in

cases of sexual violence (e.g., how OCR determines if a hostile environment was created); How

schools should respond to specific student survivors (e.g., students with disabilities); The roles

and responsibilities for Title IX Coordinators; OCR expectations for educating students and

employees; Interim measures and accommodations that should be offered to students during and

after grievance processes (e.g., information about victim advocacy programs, academic assistance); Specific requirements for grievance procedures, investigations, hearings, appeals processes, and sanctions (e.g., using preponderance of the evidence to determine responsibility).

Grassroots activism by students and sexual assault survivors helped move Title IX into the center of university sexual assault response efforts. For instance, student activists at the University of North Carolina Chappell Hill (e.g., Annie Clark, Andrea Pino), Amherst College (e.g., Dana Bolger, Angie Epifano), Occidental College (e.g., Audrey Logan), and Yale (e.g., Alexandra Brodsky) helped increase the public's awareness of Title IX and the OCR's role in holding universities accountable for failing to prevent and respond appropriately to sexual assault (Pérez-Peña, 2013). Following the 2011 DCL and student activist efforts, there have been over three hundred Title IX complaints filed with OCR (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2016).

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)/Campus SaVE Act

The reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2013 amended The Clery Act—which is known as the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act ("Campus SaVE Act")— to include more specific requirements for college sexual assault response systems (VAWA, 2013). For instance, VAWA now requires universities to report domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and hate crimes based on national origin and gender identity (in addition to the crimes already covered under Clery) in their Annual Security Report. Additionally, VAWA mandates institutions to include specific information in their policies and grievance procedures for sexual assault; for instance, policies must include information on victims' options for reporting (or not reporting) to campus authorities and law enforcement officials, a statement of the standard of evidence used in investigations, a list of possible sanctions for students found "responsible" for sexual assault, and the right for both parties to have an advisor present during

disciplinary proceedings. Finally, VAWA (2013) establishes requirements for training students and employees on sexual assault prevention and awareness: programs must be offered to new students and new employees and include certain information (e.g., definitions of consent, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking; ways to safely intervene as a bystander; how to recognize signs of abuse and avoid an assault); schools should also provide continuing prevention and awareness training for all students and faculty members.

State Law

In addition to federal law, some states have proposed and enacted laws that affect university sexual assault policies, reporting procedures, and resources. For instance, a recent study by Richards and Kafonek (2016) found that 28 states introduced 70 bills addressing sexual assault in higher education in the 2014-2015 legislative session. These bills addressed a wide variety of issues, including policies and reporting procedures, partnerships with the criminal justice system (e.g., memorandums of understanding), training and education standards for students and employees, amnesty protections for sexual assault victims who may be in violation of drug or alcohol use policies, resources and accommodations for victims, due process protections for students accused of sexual assault, and best practices for the dissemination of information about sexual assault, polices, reporting procedures, and resources. During the timeframe under study, eleven of these states signed bills addressing college sexual assault into law: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). More state laws addressing sexual assault in higher education have been proposed in the years following this study.

<center>**Institutional Responses to Law**</center>

Under this evolving legal landscape, universities nationwide have overhauled their sexual

assault response systems. When making these changes, institutions are responding to multiple (and sometimes conflicting) directives. Lauren Edelman and her colleagues (1999) conceptualize the interaction between institutions and the laws that regulate them as *endogeneity of the law*— where institutions actively interpret laws and participate in defining what it means to be in compliance. Organizations' decisions in response to law and the legal system's reactions to those decisions are driven by "*ideologies of rationality*—the accounts, stories, and myths about how organizations should respond to law" (Edelman, Uggen, & Erlanger, 1999, p. 407). Lawmakers, administrators acting out the law within institutions, and courts overseeing and ruling on institutional actions are all influenced by such ideologies: bolstering and legitimizing some compliance approaches while disregarding or quelling others. Moreover, Edelman et al. (1999) assert that "[t]he more ambiguous and politically contested the law, the more open it is to social construction" (p. 407). Edelman and her colleagues establish this theory around Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (i.e., prohibiting employment discrimination based on sex, race, religion, and national origin), and the interactions between organizations and legal systems in the interpretation and construction of compliance for this law; however, this theory is also applicable for laws regulating sexual assault response within institutions of higher education. For instance, universities make important decisions in the establishment and dissemination of information about sexual assault reporting procedures, mandatory reporting policies, and resources.

Reporting procedures. Under Title IX (through OCR guidance in the 2011 DCL), universities must establish mechanisms for reporting sexual assault (Ali, 2011), and schools have created specific offices and procedures to address reports. Although OCR identifies best practices for grievance procedures that will provide "prompt and equitable resolution" of complaints (e.g., allowing both parties to present evidence and witnesses, utilizing the

preponderance of evidence standard, aiming to complete investigations within 60 days; Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014), there are no standard processes. As a result, institutions have adopted a range of different approaches (Koss, Wilgus, & Williamsen, 2014). Some universities use an investigator model: an investigator (e.g., Title IX Coordinator, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, student conduct professional) gathers and considers evidence and decides whether the student accused of sexual assault is responsible; Others use a hearing model: typically a quasi-criminal justice process that involves a panel of people (e.g., student conduct professionals, faculty members, students) weighing the information and evidence presented and determining responsibility; Some use a hybrid of these two models; for example, a single investigator gathers and presents information to a panel of people who then decide responsibility (Koss et al., 2014).

The OCR requires universities to explain grievance procedures in a policy that is easy for students to access and understand, but institutions choose how to educate students about them. Recent research finds that students' knowledge about sexual assault policies and procedures is substantially greater when they receive more extensive and interactive education (Potter et al., 2016). However, many universities do not meet recommended education standards (Griffin, Pelletier, Griffin, & Sloan, 2016; Richards, 2016). The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial & Contracting Oversight (2014), at Senator Claire McCaskill's request, conducted a national survey to assess university sexual assault policies, procedures, and resources: one-third (31%) of universities surveyed did not provide any sexual assault training for their students.

Mandatory reporting policies. Laws have also shaped university policies that require certain employees to report sexual assaults—i.e., mandatory reporting. There are two mandatory reporting roles on college campuses. First, The Clery Act requires universities to designate Campus Security Authorities (CSA; 34 CFR 668.46(a)). CSAs must report aggregate

information about sexual assaults (e.g., types, dates, and locations of crimes) disclosed to them in their official capacity as a CSA (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These employees are not required to report sexual assaults learned about through informal channels (e.g., overheard in the hallway, mentioned in an assignment) or provide personally identifying information (e.g., names of the students involved). Employees who typically have CSA reporting duties include individuals responsible for campus security, student life and campus activities (e.g., housing staff, advisors to student groups), and victim advocacy services. CSAs help colleges fulfill their duties to disclose accurate crime statistics and issue timely warnings and emergency notifications about potential threats in the campus community.

Second, Title IX requires universities to designate Responsible Employees. The definition of "Responsible Employee" was provided in the OCR's revised guidance on sexual harassment in 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), and the definition was retained in the 2014 Q&A document. The broad definition refers to any employee:

> Who has the authority to take action to redress sexual violence; who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual violence or any other misconduct by students to the Title IX Coordinator or other appropriate school designee; or whom a student could reasonably believe has this authority or duty. (Lhamon, 2014 p. 15)

Unlike CSAs, Responsible Employees are required to report all relevant facts about the assault to a university official (typically the Title IX Coordinator), which includes identifying information about the victim and alleged perpetrator. Responsible Employees must report this information even if the survivor does not want to make an official report.

Some university policies also require Responsible Employees and/or the Title IX Coordinator to report sexual assaults to the police (regardless of whether the survivor wants to

involve law enforcement). California and Virginia have passed state laws that require schools to notify law enforcement about sexual assaults under certain circumstances (e.g., the alleged perpetrator is an "ongoing threat"; Richards & Kafonek, 2016). Five states introduced similar bills in the 2014-2015 legislative session: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). In 2017, several bills have been proposed that would affect mandatory reporting, for example: Georgia (HB51) would require universities to report behavior they "reasonably believe" to be a felony (including sexual assault) to law enforcement; Utah (HB326) would require universities to report sexual assault to the police against survivors' wishes if the university deems the behavior to be a "significant threat to campus safety"; Texas (SB576), would require university employees and student organization leaders to report any sexual assault they are aware of—including the alleged victim's name and address—to the institution's "chief executive officer," and failing to report can be charged as misdemeanor (punishable by a fine and jail time). Although not all of these bills have or will become law, they provide clear examples of state involvement in mandatory reporting on campus.

If a survivor does not want the university to pursue a report made by a Responsible Employee, the 2011 DCL states that survivors should be able to request confidentiality, and universities must "take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request for confidentiality or request not to pursue an investigation" (Ali, 2011, p. 5). However, even if a survivor explicitly asks the university not to investigate, OCR guidance stipulates that university officials must weigh this request against potential threats to campus safety; if university authorities deem the incident a sufficient threat (e.g., a weapon was used, the assailant is likely to rape again), they can ignore the survivor's request, and initiate an official investigation (Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014).

In addition to reporting, OCR expects Responsible Employees to provide support and information to sexual assault survivors, including explaining survivors' right to ask the university for confidentiality and discussing possible accommodations and available resources (Lhamon, 2014). Collectively, Responsible Employees have weighty responsibilities—revealing deeply personal information about students who experience sexual assault, putting them in contact with university officials and possibly law enforcement (which could then initiate potentially unwanted university investigation processes and/or criminal justice proceedings), and connecting them to resources. Thus, decisions made regarding the designation of Responsible Employees carry significant implications for both employees and survivors.

When designating Responsible Employees, institutions are responding to multiple, and often conflicting, directives. For instance, OCR guidance instructs institutions to consider a range of factors, such as employees' positions, students' specific situations and perceptions, and the school's formal and informal procedures (Lhamon, 2014). However, some OCR Resolution Agreements with institutions of higher education—following OCR investigations into potential Title IX violations—have approved the designation of all employees as Responsible Employees (e.g., University of Virginia OCR Case No. 11-11-6001), while other Resolution Agreements have not specifically required all employees to be designated as Responsible Employees (e.g., Hunter College OCR Case No. 02-13-2052).

Resources. Campus resources are another example of the translation of law into institutional practice. The OCR encourages colleges to establish comprehensive resources that can provide services and support for sexual assault survivors, and deliver training that informs students about these resources (Lhamon, 2014). Although resources vary across campuses, many have established sexual assault centers and/or victim advocacy programs (Carmody, Ekhomu, &

Payne, 2009; Richards, 2016). Sexual assault centers (SAC) can be a vital resource because survivors' needs and interests are placed at the very center of their mission (Martin, 2005). At a SAC, survivors can obtain a range of supports and services from advocates trained in working with victims of trauma (e.g., explaining reporting options, providing information and support during an investigation, facilitating connections with physical and mental healthcare services).

However, institutions also make decisions when creating resources. For instance, universities have some autonomy in designating "confidential" supports—which means that these resources, and employees who work within them, do not have to report sexual assault disclosures to campus officials or law enforcement unless a survivor explicitly asks them to or they are compelled by other law (e.g., the victim is a minor; Lhamon, 2014). More specifically:

> OCR does not require campus mental-health counselors, pastoral counselors, social workers, psychologists, health center employees, or any other person with a professional license requiring confidentiality, or who is supervised by such a person, to report, without the student's consent, incidents of sexual violence to the school in a way that identifies the student. (Lhamon, 2014 p. 22).

The OCR "strongly encourages" universities to designate SAC employees and victim advocates as confidential sources of support as well (Lhamon, 2014). Some institutions, however, have not followed this directive and require victim advocates to report sexual assault disclosures to the university; this decision can limit advocates' ability to assist survivors (Moylan, 2016).

Institutions' decisions about how to educate their students about such resources are also important. For instance, students given more extensive and comprehensive education report greater knowledge of resources for sexual assault (Potter et al., 2016). Less than half of the students in a study by Walsh and colleagues (2010) knew where the sexual assault center was

located on-campus. Furthermore, 42% of students said that they were not at all likely to use the center if they were sexually assaulted; however, students who knew where the center was located were significantly more likely to say that they would use it (Walsh et al., 2010).

University housing staff—such as undergraduate Resident Assistants (RAs)—can also be an essential resource for survivors. RAs have a wide array of job roles: building community, serving as a confidant, intervening during crisis situations, providing referrals to resources, and enforcing university policies (Blimling, 2003). RAs are often the "first responders" for students in crisis—responsible for recognizing the problem and responding appropriately (e.g., providing referrals to resources on campus; Owens, 2011; Reingle, Thombs, Osborn, Saffian, & Oltersdorf, 2010). In response to federal law, institutions are increasingly designating RAs as Responsible Employees (Letarte, 2014). Consequently, if an RA learns a student has been sexually assaulted, they must report it to the appropriate university officials and provide survivors with support and information about resources.

Current Research: Evaluating Institutional Responses to Law

The examples outlined above clearly illustrate ways that federal regulations have been interpreted and implemented in the development of university sexual assault response systems (i.e., reporting procedures, mandatory reporting policies, and resources). These laws and institutional decisions can have significant implications for both students and university employees. Through the theory of endogeniety of the law, Edelman and her colleagues (1999) illustrate that while some organizational responses to law are effectual (e.g., benefitting and protecting its members), others may *appear* rational but not actually accomplish what the law intends. For instance, even when organizations have the best intentions (e.g., enhancing employees' protection), the policies and procedures established in response to law may not

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effectively address the problem (e.g., reducing discrimination) and can even create new problems (e.g., creating procedures and systems that are difficult to use and make employees vulnerable to retaliation; Edelman et al., 1999). Similarly, Rappaport (1981) discusses how the intentions and outcomes of social policies can become distorted during and after the actual implementation of policies within institutions. Thus, university sexual assault response systems must be closely evaluated: Do policies, procedures, and resources work as they are intended? How do they affect campus communities—including employees who are expected to enact policies (e.g., Responsible Employees) and students who are expected to benefit (e.g., sexual assault survivors)? There is a pressing need for empirical evaluations of university sexual assault response systems. I conducted three separate, yet related studies to help meet this need.

Study one. As housing staff members and Responsible Employees, RAs are in a position to play a significant role in students' lives following a sexual assault, and their responses have implications for survivors' well-being. Survivors who receive positive support following a disclosure report better mental health (e.g., Campbell, 2008; Orchowski, Untied, & Gidycz, 2013; Ullman 1996a, 1999). However, little is known about RAs' understanding and perceptions of university sexual assault response systems and responses to sexual assault disclosures. Enforcing policies can be a stressful role for RAs, who often experience conflict between their responsibility to enforce policies and their other job roles (e.g., serving as a confidant; Reingle et al., 2010; Schaller & Wagner, 2007; Thombs et al., 2014). Research suggests that RAs can be inconsistent in enforcing other university policies (e.g., under age drinking; Kozlowski, 2008, Reingle et al., 2010) and other support providers, such as medical and legal personnel, are not uniform in their responses to survivors (Campbell, 2008; Filipas & Ullman, 2001). As such, there may be variability in RAs' likelihood to enact their reporting requirements and support survivors.

The purpose of the first study was to examine how mandatory reporting responsibilities affect an important group of policy actors: Responsible Employee RAs. Specifically, I examined whether knowledge and perceptions of sexual assault reporting procedures and resources predict the likelihood of RAs enacting their policy mandate—reporting disclosures to university authorities and referring survivors to sexual assault resources.

Study two. Many college students now have more formal support options for sexual assault than survivors in other contexts; yet very few student survivors report to campus authorities or seek help from victim services (Banyard et al., 2007; Fisher et al., 2000; Fisher et al., 2003; Sabina & Ho, 2014; Walsh et al., 2010). For instance, a national study of college women found that only 3.2% of sexual assaults were reported to campus authorities (Fisher et al., 2003). Lindquist and colleagues (2013) found that only 4.3% of undergraduate women who experienced sexual assault filed a grievance with the university. Similarly, only 0% to 17.8% of survivors sought help from SACs or women's centers on campus (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007; Nasta et al., 2005; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Although seeking help from formal campus supports may not be the first or best choice for all survivors, these supports have the capacity to provide essential resources for recovery (e.g., information, emotional support, housing or academic accommodations). Prior research has provided important information on the incidence of non-disclosure, but more research is needed to further understand the reasons that survivors do not use campus supports. In study two, I used a mixed methodological approach to examine the reasons that sexual assault survivors did not seek help from three key campus supports—the Title IX Office, the sexual assault center, and housing staff—and if these reasons differed across the three supports.

Study three. Proponents of mandatory reporting assert that it increases reports—enabling

universities to investigate and remedy more cases of sexual assault—and benefits sexual assault survivors, university employees, and the institution. Mandatory reporting policies have great potential to influence both employees' and survivors' lives. For instance, RAs experience stress and frustration with their role as a policy enforcer, especially when these obligations interfere with other key responsibilities like developing trusting relationships with their residents (Kozlowski 2008; Schaller & Wagner, 2007); a survivor who discloses to their RA may not be emotionally ready to formally report the assault, but the RA may have to report it anyway as a Responsible Employee. There is some evidence that survivors forced into formal reporting are less likely to engage with those processes (Campbell, Greeson, Fehler-Cabral, & Kennedy, 2015; Patterson & Campbell, 2010). Moreover, when support providers take control away, survivors report increased posttraumatic stress, depression, and anxiety (Orchowski et al., 2013; Peter-Hagene & Ullman, 2014). Despite the significant implications of reporting mandates, it is unclear how institutions are responding to federal directives in the implementation of mandatory reporting policies—i.e., which members of campus communities are designated Responsible Employees? Moreover, an analysis is needed to ascertain whether the presumed benefits of mandatory reporting policies are supported by empirical data. In study three, I performed a content analysis of a stratified random sample of 150 university policies to examine the scope of mandatory reporting across institutions of higher education, and reviewed and synthesized existing literature to evaluate assumptions about the benefits of such policies.

Summary

Three decades of research illustrate that sexual assault is a persistent and pernicious problem on college campuses, with women at greatest risk. However, recent changes in federal law and oversight have yielded substantial change in university response systems. I conducted

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three studies to examine the interpretation and implementation of laws in the development of university sexual assault policies, reporting procedures, and resources, and the implications of these support systems for the campus community—both students and university employees. While each study can stand alone, they are also purposefully connected. The first two studies give an in-depth examination of the experiences of undergraduate RAs (who are designated as Responsible Employees) and sexual assault survivors living in university housing on a large Midwestern college campus. RAs are designated as important actors in sexual assault policy and survivors who live on campus are in an ideal position to access campus supports. These groups are deeply embedded in the campus community, which can also help to reveal challenges to handling sexual assault in this unique and insular sociocultural context. The third study takes a broader approach, examining the scope of mandatory reporting policies in institutions across the U.S. and synthesizing literature to evaluate the benefits and risks of such policies.

These studies take an interdisciplinary approach: drawing from constructs and theoretical frameworks in multiple fields. Moreover, a feminist, contextual analysis examines how systems and institutions affect individuals—for instance, how laws and subsequent university responses shape sexual assault survivors' ability to use campus supports (vs. how individual survivors should alter their behavior). Collectively, these studies aim to elucidate some effects of changes in legal and institutional responses to campus sexual assault, and inform the development of more theoretically and empirically informed policies, reporting procedures, and resources.

CHAPTER II

Study One

Predicting Mandatory Reporters' Responses to Sexual Assault Disclosures[2]

Approximately one in four women is sexually assaulted in college (Fisher et al., 2000; Koss et al., 1987; Krebs et al., 2016). There can be devastating psychological and educational consequences of sexual assault, including depression, posttraumatic stress, suicidality, performance decline, and school withdrawal (e.g., Chang et al., 2015; Frazier et al., 2009; Kaltman et al., 2005; Mengo & Black, 2016). Recent changes to federal laws attempt to address this issue. For example, Title IX guidance now dictates requirements for university sexual assault response systems, including the development and implementation of policies, reporting procedures, and resources. Both Title IX and The Clery Act establish mandatory reporting roles on campus: employees who are required to respond to sexual assault disclosures in specific ways (e.g., reporting all known assaults to the university, with names, with or without the victim's consent).

Under the evolving landscape of federal law, universities nationwide have overhauled their sexual assault policies. Decisions made in these policy revisions have significant implications for employees and students. For instance, under many university policies, undergraduate resident assistants (RAs) are designated as "Responsible Employees" (a mandatory reporting role under Title IX) and required to provide assistance and report to the

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university if a student discloses sexual assault (Letarte, 2014). Lauren Edelman and colleagues (1999) conceptualize this interaction between institutions and the laws that regulate them as endogeneity of the law—where institutions actively interpret laws and participate in defining what it means to be in compliance.

The purpose of the current study was to examine how policy decisions—specifically around required reporting of sexual assault disclosures—affect an important group of policy actors: Responsible Employee RAs. RAs play a central role in many of these revamped sexual assault response systems, but we know little about their relevant knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. Making novel contributions to the literature, I investigated factors that predict the likelihood of RAs enacting their policy mandate, i.e., reporting sexual assault disclosures to university authorities and referring survivors to sexual assault resources.

Resident Assistants' Roles and Responsibilities

Undergraduate RAs—students who work for university housing—are an integral and influential aspect of university life, and have a wide array of job roles, including building community, serving as a role model and confidant, intervening during crisis situations, providing referrals to resources, and enforcing university policies (Blimling, 2003). RAs are often the "first responders" for students in crisis, and when a resident is in distress, RAs are responsible for recognizing the problem and responding appropriately (e.g., making a report, providing a referral for professional assistance; Owens, 2011; Reingle et al., 2010). A common crisis on university campuses is sexual assault, and RAs are increasingly expected to handle residents' disclosures of sexual assault under both federal and institutional policy (Letarte, 2014).

The Clery Act and Title IX both shape university policies that designate RAs as mandatory reporters. The Clery Act (20 U.S.C.A. § 1092) requires schools to collect and

distribute information about the prevalence of sex-related crimes on and near campus, and available reporting options and resources. The Clery Act also establishes "Campus Security Authorities" (CSA) on campus ((34 CFR 668.46(a)); CSAs are required to report aggregate (non-identifying) information about sexual assault disclosures to the individuals who prepare the school's Annual Security Report. This mandatory reporting role is intended to help increase the accuracy of the school's reported rates of sexual assault and issue emergency notifications. RAs are typically considered CSAs.

RAs are also often considered "Responsible Employees" under Title IX guidance, which means they have the duty to report sexual assault disclosures to the school's Title IX coordinator, or another appropriate designee, including (when known) the names of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and other relevant facts (Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014). According to the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Responsible Employees should also inform survivors of this duty to report, explain confidentiality (e.g., what it means, who can provide it), and provide information about resources on and off campus (e.g., victim advocacy, housing and academic support, health services; Lhamon, 2014). Unlike their role as a CSA, when RAs are considered Responsible Employees they must report potentially identifying information about a survivor to the university, regardless of the survivor's personal wishes or consent. Following OCR guidance, once the university has official notice of a sexual assault, authorities must respond to the report promptly and equitably (Lhamon, 2014). Although university authorities must "take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request for confidentiality or request not to pursue an investigation" (Ali, 2011, p. 5), under Title IX guidance, authorities can ignore survivors' wishes and take action if the incident is deemed a threat to campus safety (Lhamon, 2014).

Together, these policies place a substantial responsibility on RAs to act as a legal extension of the university and assist students who experience sexual assault (Letarte, 2014). After an assault is disclosed, many colleges and universities now require RAs to: 1) report the disclosure to the university and 2) refer the survivor to sexual assault resources. Although resources vary across campuses, many universities are providing on-campus sexual assault centers and/or victim advocacy programs (Richards, 2016). Sexual assault centers (SAC) are an essential resource: survivors' needs and interests are placed at the very center of their mission and survivors can obtain a range of services and supports (Martin, 2005). The OCR encourages universities to designate these centers as "confidential" sources of support (i.e., survivors' personally identifying information will not be reported unless they explicitly ask; Lhamon, 2014).

Resident Assistants' Responses to Disclosures

RAs are in a position to play a significant role in students' lives following a sexual assault, and their responses may have weighty implications for survivors' well-being. For instance, survivors who receive positive support following a disclosure report better mental health (e.g., Campbell, 2008; Orchowski et al., 2013; Ullman 1996a, 1999). Yet, we know little about RAs' understanding, perceptions, and responses to these policies. Some studies suggest that, across universities, RA training is increasingly including the topic of sexual assault (Bowman & Bowman, 1995; Koch, 2012). The OCR recommends that mandatory reporters receive training about their responsibilities under federal and intuitional policy (e.g., whom to report to when they learn of an incident that may constitute sexual violence; Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014).

Although the OCR has provided expectations regarding the training of Responsible Employees (see Lhamon, 2014), there are (currently) no federal laws that require training or dictate best practices around the content, format, or extent of sexual assault training for undergraduate RAs and other Responsible Employees. Many schools fail to meet recommended education standards (Richards, 2016; U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial & Contracting Oversight, 2014), and even if they do, the content and format of information about sexual assault policies may be confusing for both students and staff (Gregory & Janosik, 2006; Moylan, 2016). In general, research suggests that RAs can be inconsistent in enforcing other university policies (e.g., under age drinking; Kozlowski, 2008, Reingle et al., 2010). Moreover, other support providers, such as legal and medical personnel, are not uniform in their responses to sexual assault disclosures (Campbell, 2008; Filipas & Ullman, 2001).

As such, there may be variability in RAs' likelihood to report disclosures and refer survivors to resources. Across a variety of social science fields and literatures, knowledge and attitudes are identified as important predictors of people's behavioral intentions and actual behavior (e.g., the Reasoned Action Model in social psychology, Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Social Cognitive Theory in health behavior and health education, Bandura, 2004). In the current study, I specifically examine three possible predictors of RAs' responses: 1) knowledge of sexual assault reporting procedures and resources, 2) trust in these procedures and resources, and 3) attitudes toward their mandatory reporting responsibilities.

Knowledge. Scholars and practitioners stress the importance of housing staff having adequate knowledge about the federal and institutional policies they are required to follow (Blimling, 2003; Gregory & Janosik, 2006; Letarte, 2014). For instance, RAs' knowledge about policies and resources for mental health and substance abuse problems is associated with

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enacting reporting procedures and referring students to resources when those issues arise (Reingle et al., 2010; Taub & Servaty-Seib, 2010; Thombs et al., 2014). RAs who have greater knowledge of policies and resources should be better equipped to handle sexual assault disclosures—knowing what they are actually getting a resident involved with (whether formal reporting processes or resources) could help RAs be more confident in their decision to report or refer. But, it is unclear what RAs really know about sexual assault policies and resources.

Some related work has examined undergraduate students' awareness of the existence of reporting procedures and/or resources, general thoughts about these supports, and comfort with using them (e.g., Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Nasta et al., 2005; Walsh et al., 2010). Studies that have examined students' knowledge of sexual assault policies and resources (e.g., knowing the policy definition of "sexual misconduct") have primarily studied changes in knowledge after an education intervention (e.g., Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007, Potter et al., 2016). The current study builds on that foundation, investigating how the extent and accuracy of RA knowledge of sexual assault policies and resources—beyond simply knowing they exist—affect their responses to sexual assault disclosures.

> *Hypothesis 1: Greater knowledge of sexual assault reporting procedures and resources*
> *will be associated with an increased likelihood to a) report disclosures to the university*
> *and b) refer survivors to the SAC*

Trust. In addition to knowledge, RA attitudes toward policies and resources are key predictors in their responses to students in crisis. RAs' trust in university sexual assault reporting procedures and resources is one important factor to consider. In the context of higher education, students have a reasonable expectation that the institution will protect them from sexual assault and come to their aid if an assault does occur; however, this is often not the case (Smith & Freyd,

2013). The theory of *institutional betrayal* conceptualizes wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution when people are dependent upon the institution and can expect that it will protect its members from harm (Smith & Freyd, 2013; 2014).

Although institutional betrayal can take many forms, violation of trust is one key component. Inadequate response systems for sexual assault can foster a deep sense of mistrust among community members (Smith & Freyd, 2014). For example, believing that reports are not taken seriously or survivors are not treated with care and compassion can violate students' trust in the institution, its policies, and its resources. This lack of trust may have implications for RAs' responses to crises. For example, trust in reporting procedures and resources can affect how RAs respond to students struggling with mental health issues and substance abuse: RAs who think there may be negative consequences of reporting and/or using a resource are more hesitant to put their residents in contact with these systems (Reingle et al., 2010; Taub & Servanty-Seib, 2010). Although there is no research examining RAs' trust in sexual assault reporting procedures and resources specifically, these prior findings affirm the importance of assessing RAs' trust.

> *Hypothesis 2: Greater trust in sexual assault reporting procedures and resources will be associated with an increased likelihood to a) report disclosures to the university and b) refer survivors to the SAC*

Perceptions of responsibilities. In addition to perceptions of trust, another important attitude to consider is RAs' perceptions of their responsibilities under mandatory reporting policies—to report sexual assault disclosures and assist survivors. Enforcing policies can be a stressful and challenging role for RAs (Schaller & Wagner, 2007). RAs often experience a conflict between their responsibility to enact policies and their other job roles—like building community and acting as a confidant—and, as a result, can be reluctant to follow institutional

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expectations when faced with a crisis (Reingle et al., 2010; Schaller & Wagner, 2007; Thombs et al., 2014). RAs were less likely to provide referrals (e.g., for mental health or substance use problems) when they were less confident that referring a resident to professionals would be a good decision for the student, themselves, and/or their community (Reingle et al., 2010). A primary reason that students become an RA is to help other students (Deluga & Winters 1991; Kozlowski 2008), but RAs experience frustration with the strict requirements created by their concurrent position as a policy enforcer (Schaller & Wagner, 2007). The current study contributes to this literature by examining how RA attitudes toward their mandatory reporting responsibilities relate to their responses to disclosures of sexual assault.

Hypothesis 3: More positive perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities will be associated with an increased likelihood to a) report disclosures to the university and b) refer survivors to the SAC

Multiplicative effects. Finally, theoretical frameworks suggest that there may be a complex relation between knowledge and attitudes in predicting RA responses. For instance, the Reasoned Action Approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) theorizes that knowledge alone may be insufficient to increase someone's intentions to act, and the interplay between background factors (like knowledge) and attitudes may further predict behavioral intentions. Thus, it is essential to examine multiplicative effects: How does the combination of RAs' knowledge of reporting procedures and resources, trust in these supports, and perceptions of their responsibilities as a mandatory reporter affect willingness to put survivors in contact with support systems? For example, an RA who has excellent knowledge of the reporting process, but has little trust in that system's ability to care for survivors and believes that their mandatory

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reporting requirement is problematic, may be less likely to initiate these reporting procedures after a disclosure. Therefore, I proposed an exploratory hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 4: Interactions between knowledge, trust, and perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities will be associated with RAs' likelihood to a) report disclosures to the university and b) refer survivors to the SAC*

Method

Procedures & Participants

Data were collected from Responsible Employee RAs at a large Midwestern university. I attended weekly staff meetings for each of the seventeen residence halls on campus. At each meeting, I introduced the study and invited all undergraduate staff in attendance to take an anonymous paper survey in exchange for $5 in cash. RAs were given notice that I would be attending the meeting and were not required to participate. Every RA in attendance agreed to participate, and a total of 306 took the survey. One respondent completed less than half of the survey items, and was subsequently removed from the data, yielding a final sample size of 305 (approximately 80% of all RAs). The Institutional Review Board approved all study procedures.

Of the 305 RAs, 55.7% (n = 170) were women, 42.6% (n = 130) were men, and 1.6% (n = 5) identified as another gender (e.g., gender queer). The race/ethnicity of participants were as follows: 40.3% (n = 123) White, 26.2% (n = 80) Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, 17% (n = 52) African American/Black, 7.5% (n = 23) multiracial, 4.9% (n = 15) Latina(o)/Hispanic, 2.6% (n = 8) Middle Eastern/Arab, and 1.3% (n = 4) another race/ethnicity. RAs' ages ranged from 18 to 25, with an average age of 20.5 years. Regarding year in school, 12.5% (n = 38) were second years, 43.8% (n = 133) were third years, 38.2% (n = 116) were fourth years, 5.6% (n =

17) were fifth years or above. At the time of the survey, RAs had worked in their current job from a minimum of 1 month to a maximum of 5 years ($M = 11$ months, $SD = 10$).

Measures

   Knowledge. RAs were asked 12 true/false questions about the process of formally reporting sexual assault to the university and 12 true/false questions about the process of seeking help from the sexual assault center (SAC).[3] The formal reporting items were developed using the university's sexual misconduct policy and assessed a range of knowledge about reporting procedures (e.g., "A student who reports an experience of sexual misconduct can decline participation in the investigation process"). The SAC items were developed using the center's website and assessed a range of knowledge about the supports and services offered (e.g., "SAC can provide legal representation to students who report sexual misconduct"). See Appendix A for all knowledge items. Response options included *true* = 1, *false* = 2, and *unsure* = 3. First, correct answers were coded as "1" and incorrect answers (including unsure) were coded as "0." Next, items were summed to give two total knowledge scores—formal reporting and SAC—ranging from 0 (*no answers were correct*) to 12 (*all answer were correct*). This approach to assessing students' knowledge of campus sexual assault policies has been used in prior research (e.g., Potter et al., 2016).

   Trust. The measures of trust in 1) the university's ability to handle reports of sexual assault and 2) the SAC's ability to provide help to sexual assault survivors were developed using measures of trust in prior climate surveys (Defense Manpower Data Center, 2010; OVW Climate Survey, 2014). Participants were asked "if a female student were sexually assaulted by another student, what do you think would happen if she reported it to the university?" RAs rated how

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[3] The official names for the office that receives and investigates reports of sexual assault and the sexual assault center were used in the survey, but the general terms—formal reporting to the "university" and "SAC"—were used here to maintain anonymity for the campus.

much they agreed with eight statements on a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* = 1 to *strongly agree* = 5 (e.g., "She would be taken seriously" and "Her privacy would be protected"). Similarly, participants were asked "if a female student were sexually assaulted by another student, what do you think would happen if she sought help from the sexual assault center?" and rated agreement with eight statements on the 5-point scale. The items comprising these two measures assessed both general dimensions of trust (e.g., being taken seriously) and aspects of trust that were specific to each source of support (e.g., "nothing would happen to the perpetrator" for formal reporting, "the experience would be empowering for her" for the SAC). See Appendix B for all items. Participants' responses were averaged to yield two measures of trust, specific to formal reporting (α = .84) and the SAC (α = .77); higher scores indicated greater trust.

Perceptions of responsibilities. Participants were asked four questions (created for this study) to assess perceptions of their mandatory reporting responsibilities. Following the stem, "In your opinion, mandated reporting…," each item had a Likert response scale with "1" representing negative perceptions of mandatory reporting and "5" representing positive perceptions; for example, 1 = *is an unnecessary aspect of my job* to 5 = *is a necessary aspect of my job,* and 1 = *makes it challenging to gain my residents' trust* to 5 = *makes it easier to gain my residents' trust.* The four items were averaged, with higher scores representing more positive perceptions of their responsibilities (α = .72).

Likelihood to report. Eight items measured RAs' likelihood to report sexual assault disclosures to the university. Participants were presented with eight scenarios (see Appendix C) that described a sexual assault between two students, and were told to imagine the student who experienced the behavior lives in their residence hall and disclosed the incident to them. The scenarios were developed to meet two criteria: 1) they are diverse examples of "sexual

misconduct" and 2) they indicate "lack of consent" as defined by the university's sexual

misconduct policy. In other words, all eight scenarios would trigger RAs' mandatory reporting

duties under university policy. For example:

> *Tina agrees to let Paul give her oral sex. After a few minutes, Paul pulls off his pants and*
>
> *inserts his penis in her vagina. Tina did not want to have intercourse, and tells him to*
>
> *stop. Paul does not stop.*

After each scenario, participants were asked "would you report this to the university?" on a scale

from 1 = *not at all likely* to 7 = *extremely likely* (the question and scale were adapted from

Orchowski, Meyer, & Gidycz, 2009). Participants' responses to these eight items were averaged

to yield a single measure of likelihood to report (α = .92).

Likelihood to refer. After each scenario participants were also asked: "would you refer

[victim's name] to the SAC?" on a scale from 1 = *not at all likely* to 7 = *extremely likely*

(adapted from Orchowski et al., 2009). Participants' responses to these eight items were

averaged to yield a single measure of likelihood to refer (α = .89).

Results

Descriptive Results

Summary statistics and correlations appear in Table 2.1. Descriptively speaking, results

suggest that knowledge about the university's sexual assault reporting protocols was relatively

low (mean of 6.35, on an index ranging from 0-12).[4] Knowledge of the SAC was higher (mean

of 7.10, on a 0-12 index),[5] though still lower than expected given that all RAs had received

training on available resources. Also notable was that trust in the SAC was higher (M = 4.39)

than trust in official reporting channels (M = 3.64, both on a 1-5 scale). These data suggest a

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[4] For participants' knowledge of reporting: scores ranged = 0-12, median = 6.00, and mode = 6.00.
[5] For participants' knowledge of SAC: scored ranged 1-12, median = 7.00, and mode = 8.00.

certain amount of skepticism that the university would take a survivor seriously, protect her

privacy, and sanction her perpetrator. As with trust, RA attitudes toward mandatory reporting

responsibilities were not uniformly positive. On average, RAs believed mandatory reporting was

a necessary part of their jobs (*M* = 4.60, *SD* = 0.73, 1 = is *an unnecessary part of my job* and 5 =

a necessary part of my job) and was somewhat helpful (*M* = 3.78, *SD* = 1.08, 1 = *does not help*

me do my job to 5 = *helps me do my job*). However, RAs were ambivalent about whether

mandatory reporting helped them build community (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = 1.07, 1 = *hinders community*

building to 5 = *facilitates community building*), and believed it hindered their ability to develop

trust (*M* = 2.68, *SD* = 1.04, *1 = makes it challenging to gain residents' trust* to 5 = *makes it*

easier to gain residents' trust). Nevertheless, RAs reported strong intentions to enact their duty

to report (*M* = 6.35) and refer to resources (*M* = 6.70, both on a 1-7 scale). Those behavioral

intentions varied, however, as my results below demonstrate.

Table 2.1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Variables	Mean(SD)	Range	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Knowledge of reporting	6.35(2.18)	0−12	−					
2. Knowledge of SAC	7.10(1.88)	0−12	.45***	−				
3. Trust in reporting	3.64(0.73)	1−5	.05	-.08	−			
4. Trust in SAC	4.39(0.50)	1−5	.08	.14*	.27***	−		
5. Perceptions of responsibilities	3.57(0.73)	1−5	.04	-.01	.28***	.07	−	
6. Likelihood to report	6.35(1.00)	1−7	.14*	.13*	.16**	.05	.19***	−
7. Likelihood to refer	6.70(0.61)	1−7	.01	.06	.01	.04	.21***	.35***

Note. SD = standard deviation. SAC = sexual assault center. Perceptions of responsibilities = perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities.

p ≤ .05. **p* ≤ .01. ***p* ≤ .001.

Women, compared to men, reported greater knowledge of the SAC (*M* = 7.39, *SD* = 1.85

and *M* = 6.68 and *SD* = 1.81 respectively; *t*(298) = 3.33, *p* = .001, *d* = .39, 95% CI [0.29, 1.13]),

less trust in the university's ability to handle reports of sexual assault (*M* = 3.52, *SD* = 0.74 and

M = 3.82 and *SD* = 0.67 respectively; *t*(298) = -3.61, *p* < .001, *d* = .42, 95% CI [-0.46, -0.14]),

more positive perceptions of reporting requirements (*M* = 3.66, *SD* = 0.69 and *M* = 3.47 and *SD*

= 0.77 respectively; *t*(298) = 2.14, *p* = .033, *d* = .25, 95% CI [0.01, 0.35]), and greater likelihood

to refer survivors to the SAC (*M* = 6.78, *SD* = 0.42 and *M* = 6.59 and *SD* = 0.79 respectively;

t(298) = 2.64, *p* = .009, *d* = .31, 95% CI [0.05, 0.32]). However, there were no significant

differences between women and men for knowledge of reporting procedures, trust in the SAC,

and likelihood to report.[6]

Results for Likelihood to Report and Refer

First, I ran two exploratory factor analyses, using principle-axis factor extraction, to

confirm that all eight scenarios comprised a single factor for reporting and referring. The eight

items assessing RAs' likelihood to report all correlated above 0.40. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure

of sampling adequacy was .91 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(28) = 1,735.91$,

p < .001). Only the one-factor solution had an eigenvalue greater than one (explaining 66% of

the variance) and all factor loadings were above 0.60—indicating that there was one underlying

factor for the reporting items. Similarly, the eight items assessing RAs' likelihood to refer all

correlated above 0.30. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .88 and Bartlett's

test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(28) = 1,553.29$, *p* < .001). Only the one-factor solution had

an eigenvalue greater than one (explaining 62% of the variance) and all factor loadings were

above .60—again, suggesting that there was one underlying factor for the referring items.

To test my hypotheses, I ran two linear regressions with likelihood to report or likelihood

to refer as the dependent variable.[7] I entered knowledge (of reporting procedures or SAC

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[6] There were too few participants who identified as another gender to analyze here. Contact the primary author for all non-significant *t*-test results.
[7] Both variables were negatively skewed, but the sample was large, models met other assumptions for linear regression, and transformations did not substantially alter the results; thus, I used the original variables for better interpretability.

services), trust (in reporting procedures or SAC services), and perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities on Step 1. Next, I entered three two-way interactions and one three-way interaction between these variables on Step 2. All variables were centered before computing interaction terms.

Likelihood to report. Results for this analysis appear in Table 2.2. In support of my first hypothesis, greater knowledge of the university's sexual assault reporting procedures was a significant predictor of RAs' likelihood to report disclosures to the university. However, my second hypothesis was not supported—there was no main effect of trust in the university's sexual assault reporting procedures on likelihood to report. My third hypothesis was supported: holding more positive perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities was associated with an increased likelihood to report.

Moreover, I found some support for my fourth hypothesis: there was a significant two-way interaction between trust and perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities. I probed this interaction using simple slopes (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2015). Figure 2.1 illustrates that, among RAs with more negative perceptions of mandatory reporting, greater trust in official reporting channels related to greater likelihood to report sexual assault disclosures to the university ($b = .31$, $p = .002$). On the other hand, trust did not affect RAs' likelihood to report if they had positive perceptions of mandatory reporting ($b = -.02$, $p = .83$)—these RAs were likely to report disclosures regardless of their trust in the system.

Table 2.2

Linear Regression Predicting Likelihood to Report Sexual Assault Disclosures

Predictors	R^2	F	β	B(SE)	95% CI
Step 1: Main Effects	.06	6.78***			
df		(3, 297)			
Knowledge of reporting			.12*	.05(.03)	[0.003, 0.11]
Trust in reporting			.11†	.15(.08)	[-0.01, 0.31]
Perceptions of responsibilities			.16**	.22(.08)	[0.06, 0.37]
Step 2: Interactions	.10	4.45***			
df		(7, 293)			
Knowledge X Trust			-.01	-.01(.03)	[-0.08, 0.06]
Knowledge X Perceptions			-.08	-.05(.04)	[-0.12, 0.02]
Trust X Perceptions			-.14*	-.23(.09)	[-0.41, -0.04]
Knowledge X Trust X Perceptions			.09	.08(.05)	[-0.02, 0.17]

Note. CI = confidence interval [lower bound, upper bound]. Reporting = formal reporting. Perceptions of responsibilities = perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities. †p < .10. *$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p \leq .001$.

Figure 2.1. Two-way interaction. Trust in the university's reporting procedures and perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities predicting likelihood to report sexual assault disclosures to the university. MndRpt = low/negative and high/positive perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities. Low = 1 SD below the mean and High = 1 SD above the mean. *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient (simple slope). ** = *p* < .01.

Likelihood to refer.[8] Results for this analysis are presented in Table 2.3. Contrary to my first hypothesis, knowledge of the SAC's services was not a significant predictor of likelihood to refer survivors to the SAC. Similarly, my second hypothesis was not supported, as trust in SAC services was not a significant predictor of RAs' likelihood to refer. But, in support of my third hypothesis, holding more positive perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities was significantly associated with a greater likelihood to refer survivors to the SAC.

I also found some support for my last hypothesis: there was a significant two-way interaction between knowledge and trust, and this interaction was further qualified by a significant three-way interaction between knowledge, trust, and perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities. I probed this three-way interaction using simple slopes (Preacher et al., 2015). Figure 2.2 illustrates that as knowledge of SAC services increased, RAs with low trust in the SAC and negative perceptions of mandatory reporting were significantly more likely to refer survivors to the SAC ($b = .14$, $p < .001$). Conversely, as knowledge increased, RAs with high trust in the SAC but negative perceptions of mandatory reporting were less likely to refer ($b = -.11$, $p = .002$).

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[8] I also ran this analysis controlling for gender, but it did not change the results.

Table 2.3

Linear Regression Predicting Likelihood to Provide Referrals to the SAC

Predictors	R^2	F	β	B(SE)	95% CI
Step 1: Main Effects	.05	4.81**			
df		(3, 296)			
Knowledge of SAC			.07	.02(.02)	[-0.02, 0.06]
Trust in SAC			.02	.03(.07)	[-0.11, 0.17]
Perceptions of responsibilities			.20***	.17(.05)	[0.08, 0.26]
Step 2: Interactions	.13	5.96***			
df		(7, 292)			
Knowledge X Trust			-.19***	-.13(.04)	[-0.20, -0.05]
Knowledge X Perceptions			.01	.00(.03)	[-0.05, 0.05]
Trust X Perceptions			-.07	-.10(.09)	[-0.28, 0.08]
Knowledge X Trust X Perceptions			.18**	.17(.05)	[0.06, 0.27]

Note. CI = confidence interval [lower bound, upper bound]. SAC = sexual assault center. Perceptions of responsibilities = perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities. **$p \le .01$. ***$p \le .001$.
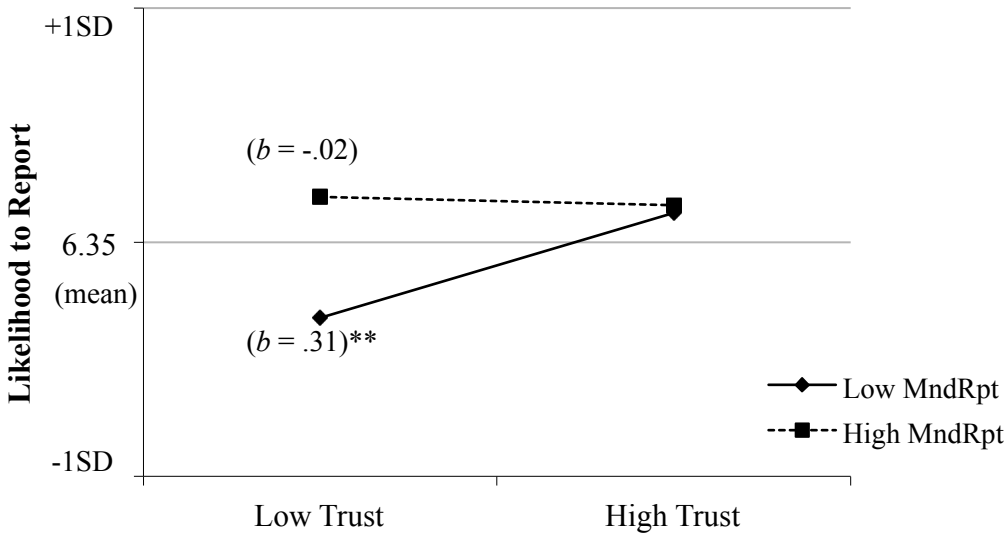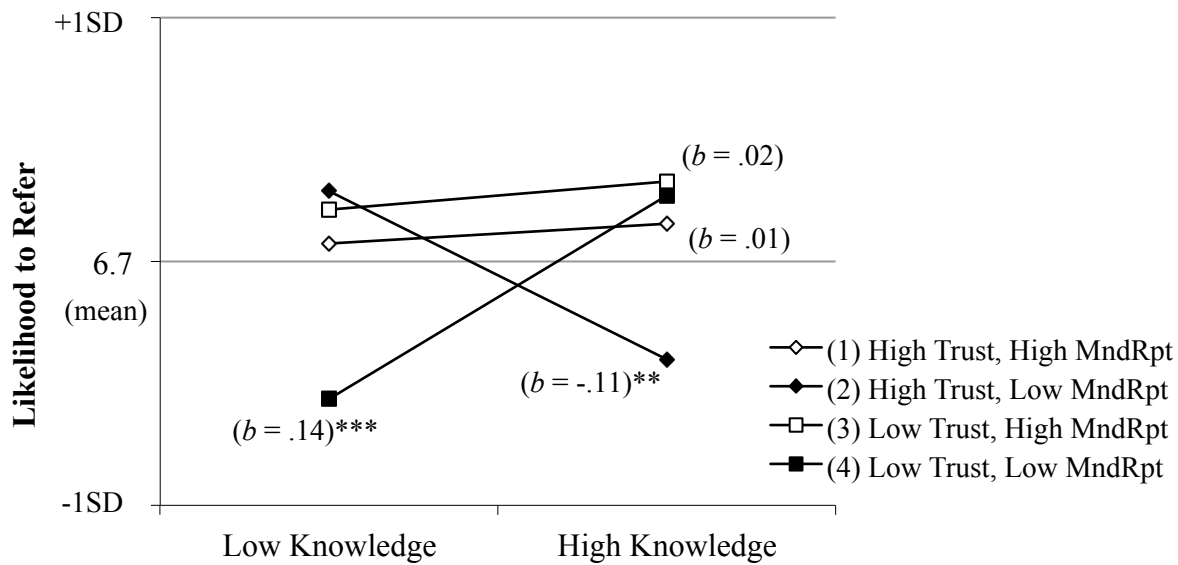

Figure 2.2. Three-way interaction. Knowledge of sexual assault center (SAC) services, trust in the SAC, and perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities predicting likelihood to refer sexual assault survivors to the SAC. MndRpt = low/negative and high/positive perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities. Low = 1 SD below the mean and High = 1 SD above the mean. *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient (simple slope). ** = $p < .01$. *** = $p < .001$.

Discussion

Federal laws have played a critical role in the establishment of sexual assault response systems on college campuses (e.g., reporting procedures, resources). Given the high rates of sexual assault among college students—particularly women—these support systems are imperative. However, there is much we still need to know about what happens after reporting procedures and resources are established. For instance, what do "Responsible Employees" know and think about their duty to report, and how do they respond when that duty is triggered? The current study makes steps toward answering these questions. I investigated factors that predict likelihood of Responsible Employee RAs enacting their policy mandate, i.e., reporting sexual assault disclosures to university authorities and referring survivors to sexual assault resources. These behavioral intentions varied according to both knowledge and attitudes, as detailed below.

Reporting Disclosures to the University

As expected, my results found that RAs who had more accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the university's sexual assault reporting procedures were also more likely to report disclosures to the university. The OCR recommends that mandatory reporters receive training about their roles and responsibilities under federal and institutional policies (Lhamon, 2014). Research does suggest that RAs are increasingly trained on the issue of sexual violence (Bowman & Bowman, 1995; Koch, 2012), but there are no (current) federal laws regarding the format, content, and extent of sexual assault training for undergraduate RAs (or other Responsible Employees). Complex policies (e.g., investigation processes and timelines, standards of proof, sanctions)—while important for legal and informational purposes—can be confusing for both students and staff (Hartmann, 2015). My results emphasize the importance of in-depth, comprehensive training for RAs on sexual assault policies and practices.

However, RAs' perceptions of their mandatory reporting responsibilities may also play an important role in their likelihood to report. I found that RAs who had more positive perceptions of their role as a mandatory reporter were significantly more likely to report sexual assault disclosures to the university. Moreover, there was a significant interaction between their trust in reporting procedures and perceptions of reporting responsibilities. On one hand, RAs with negative attitudes toward mandatory reporting were more likely to report disclosures as their trust in reporting procedures increased. On the other hand, RAs who had more positive perceptions of their reporting roles were likely to report disclosures, regardless of their (mis)trust in reporting procedures.

These findings mirror prior research on RAs' responses to mental health and drug use crises—that when RAs feel negatively or conflicted about their role as a policy enforcer, they are more hesitant to enact that role (Reingle et al., 2010; Taub & Servaty-Seib, 2010). RAs who additionally lack trust in their institutions' sexual assault reporting procedures may be further discouraged from reporting disclosures. Their hesitancy to report is understandable in these circumstances, as sexual assault survivors frequently experience further abuse and trauma when interacting with formal support systems (Campbell, 2008). Lawmakers, administrators, and researchers should think critically about how mandatory reporting policies affect the campus community—including those members who are obligated to enforce them.

Providing Referrals to Sexual Assault Resources

In addition to reporting disclosures, providing survivors with referrals to sexual assault resources is another central responsibility for RAs (and other Responsible Employees). In extreme crisis situations, RAs primarily help students by facilitating access to resources and supports that can more effectively manage the problem (Blimling, 2003). Contrary to my

expectations, knowledge and trust of SAC services alone were not significant predictors of RAs'
likelihood to refer survivors to the SAC. However, I did find a significant main effect for their
perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities: RAs with more positive perceptions were
more likely to refer. I also found that the complex relationships between RAs' knowledge and
attitudes were related to their referral intentions.

First, my results suggested that knowledge was important for RAs' likelihood to make
referrals if they had low trust in the SAC and negative perceptions of mandatory reporting—
these RAs were more likely to provide referrals as their knowledge of SAC services increased.
These findings illustrate the importance of incorporating comprehensive information about
sexual assault resources into RA training, as this may help those who are least likely to provide
referrals (due to their attitudes). On the other hand, knowledge was less important for RAs who
held positive perceptions of mandatory reporting; these RAs were likely to make referrals
regardless of their knowledge and trust of SAC services. Interestingly, I also found that RAs who
had high trust in the SAC but negative perceptions of mandatory reporting were significantly less
likely to make referrals as their knowledge of the SAC increased. Perhaps these RAs know that
the SAC is a useful resource, but they are not convinced that the university should be getting
involved with sexual assault survivors' decision-making. Prior research demonstrates that when
RAs feel conflicted about their role as policy enforcer, they express more confusion about how
they should respond to students in crisis and whether they should make referrals (e.g., referring
students to drug abuse counseling; Reingle et al., 2010).

Taken together, my findings demonstrate that RAs' responses to sexual assault
disclosures are not as simple as knowing they have to report and/or provide referrals. Instead, the
complexity of RAs' knowledge of university sexual assault reporting procedures and resources,

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trust in these support systems, and perceptions of their mandatory reporting responsibilities all play a key role. Understanding RAs' intentions to report disclosures and refer survivors to resources is crucial because help-providers' responses can have serious implications for survivors' mental health and future help seeking (Ahrens, Stansell, & Jennings, 2010; Campbell, 2008; Orchowski et al., 2013). Providing tangible aid, such as explaining reporting procedures and providing resource referrals, can be an important source of support for survivors (Ullman, 1999). RAs are in a unique position to provide this support—and are increasingly obligated to do so. The current study helps to shed light on factors that may influence these responses.

Policy and Practice Implications

My results identify the need for policy changes at both the federal and institutional level. Currently, there are no explicit or uniform requirements for training Responsible Employees under federal law. In its Title IX guidance, the OCR stresses that university employees— especially those who are likely to receive reports of sexual assault, including RAs—should receive training that will allow them to know the procedures for reporting sexual violence and how to respond appropriately (Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014); however, this is guidance (not law) and leaves room for variability in institutional interpretation and implementation of these recommendations (e.g., training content and delivery). The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), a recent amendment to Clery through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization of 2013, makes more prescriptive legal requirements for sexual assault education: institutions are required to provide sexual assault prevention and awareness programs for new students and employees, which must include a variety of topics (e.g., definitions of sexual assault and consent, methods of bystander intervention; VAWA, 2013). However, the SaVE act provides

no explicit requirements and regulations regarding training for members of the campus community who are mandatory reporters (Duncan, 2014).

Current and future policies should establish clear requirements for training Responsible Employees. These employees have a weighty role: they are responsible for bringing assault survivors in contact with campus support systems, which have the potential to strengthen or impede healing after an assault (Smith & Freyd, 2014). For example, OCR has the power to provide more explicit technical guidance about what constitutes comprehensive training for mandatory reporters and advocate for progressive sexual assault response systems under Title IX (Hartmann, 2015). Additionally, new legislation—such as the proposed Campus Accountability and Safety Act (CASA, 2015)—could include training requirements for mandatory reporters (in addition to employees who are involved in sexual assault grievance procedures, which was more explicitly addressed in this bill; Coffina, 2015). The states of Massachusetts and Delaware have also proposed bills that would require comprehensive, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered training for all Responsible Employees (Richards & Kafoneck, 2016).

Moreover, schools must systematically and empirically evaluate the effectiveness of these trainings. Universities are not required to evaluate their sexual assault education and training efforts, and many do not assess the efficacy of RA training in general (Koch, 2012). My study identified the importance of assessing RAs' knowledge and perceptions of reporting procedures and resources: Do they understand what they are being asked to do, and what do they think about that? RAs experience stress and frustration with their role as a policy enforcer, especially when these obligations interfere with other key responsibilities like developing trusting relationships with their residents (Kozlowski 2008; Schaller & Wagner, 2007). These contradictory roles are even more challenging when policy obligations conflict with what might

be in their residents' best interests (Owens, 2011); for instance, a survivor may not be emotionally ready to formally report her/his assault, but that student's RA may be mandated to report it anyway. Policies that remove survivors' agency in reporting decisions may be experienced as institutional betrayal for both the survivor and the employee. Consequently, universities should evaluate the impact of policy decisions on both policy actors and intended beneficiaries.

Limitations and Future Directions

Similar to all research, there are several limitations that must be considered. First, this cross-sectional and correlational study did not allow me to draw causal conclusions about the associations between variables. Although my study was an important first step in understanding RAs' responses to sexual assault disclosures, future experimental and longitudinal research will be essential for identifying how RAs' knowledge and attitudes influence their actual responses to disclosures. Moreover, it will be useful to conduct qualitative research to gain more in-depth and nuanced understandings of RAs' knowledge and perceptions of university sexual assault policies and resources.

A second limitation was that RAs were responding to hypothetical scenarios. Future research is needed to examine RAs' responses to residents' disclosures in real life. Nonetheless, the scenarios provided an inclusive range of sexual assault behaviors. When assessing responses to sexual assault, Schwartz (2000) asserts that "hypothetical vignettes…are a relatively reliable measure of the contextual meaning of survey constructs." (p. 830). In other words, giving context through short vignettes is a more reliable way to assess people's responses to sexual assault—as participants are responding to a specific encounter. This reduces the inherent variability of behaviors and situations that participants will imagine if they are asked how they would respond

to a "sexual assault" or "rape" in general, which would then affect their subsequent answers. Building upon my work, it will be important for research to examine RAs' thought processes when deciding how to respond in actual sexual assault situations.

Additionally, participants were from a single university in the Midwest, and as a result, the findings may not generalize to all campus contexts. Across colleges and universities, however, RAs tend to share certain features: they are more likely to live on campus for long periods of time, have financial need to work, and have desire to help others (Deluga & Winters 1991; Kozlowski 2008). RAs' unique position as both students and mandatory reporters also sets them apart from other reporters (e.g., administrators, faculty members). Future research should examine how these findings generalize across campuses, students, and reporters.

Conclusion

Under federal law and institutional policy, undergraduate RAs are increasingly positioned as a central component of university sexual assault response efforts. It is therefore critical that we better understand how the interpretation of law and enactment of sexual assault policy affect RA (and other mandatory reporter) behavior within these sexual assault response systems. The current study contributes novel information about ways in which RAs' knowledge and attitudes affect their responses to sexual assault disclosures. Understanding Responsible Employees' intentions to report disclosures and refer survivors to resources is crucial, because help-providers' responses can have serious implications for the recovery of sexual assault survivors. My findings elucidate some effects of changes in the interpretation and implementation of Title IX guidance, with potential to inform the development of more theoretically and empirically informed policies.

CHAPTER III

Study Two

Examining Sexual Assault Survivors' Reasons for Not Using Campus Supports[9]

Approximately 20-25% of women are sexually assaulted in college (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Sexual assault can have a devastating effect on survivors' lives, psychologically (e.g., depression, posttraumatic stress, suicidality; Chang et al., 2015; Kaltman et al., 2005) and academically (e.g., low GPA, withdrawal from school; Jordan, Combs, & Smith, 2014; Mengo & Black, 2016). These negative outcomes may intensify if a survivor does not receive adequate care and assistance.

Within recent years, federal and institutional policies have attempted to address this issue, and many college students have more formal support options than survivors in other contexts; yet very few student survivors report or seek help (Sabina & Ho, 2014). The current study used a mixed methodological approach to examine why survivors did not seek help from three key campus supports—the Title IX Office, the sexual assault center, and housing staff—and if these reasons differed across the three supports. Qualitative and quantitative analyses provide an in-depth, contextual understanding of sexual assault survivors' use of campus supports in the wake of substantial policy change.

Formal Supports for Sexual Assault Survivors on Campus

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[9] This paper is in press: Holland, K. J. & Cortina, L. M. (2017). "It happens to girls all the time": Examining sexual assault survivors' reasons for not using campus supports. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 59*(1), 50-64.

Within the last six years, there have been substantial shifts in federal and institutional policies to address sexual assault on college campuses. The Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Dear Colleague Letter provided additional guidance around sexual assault as a prohibited form of sex discrimination in higher education (Ali, 2011). This guidance requires universities to appoint a Title IX coordinator who will ensure compliance with Title IX, oversee complaints, and provide other important services (e.g., training employees; Ali, 2011). Additionally, universities must establish clear procedures for reporting sexual assault, including the Title IX coordinator's office and contact information and where a complaint can be filed (Ali, 2011). As a result, schools have created specific positions/offices to address sexual assault (e.g., reporting, investigating, sanctioning, providing accommodations); although the specific titles will differ across campuses, I refer to this support as the Title IX Office. The Title IX Office handles official reports and grievance procedures.

Additionally, the OCR encourages universities to provide comprehensive resources for survivors—that can provide services and support. Although resources vary across campuses, many universities have centers specifically for sexual assault (Carmody, Ekhomu, & Payne, 2009). Sexual assault centers (SACs) place survivors' needs and interests at the very center of their mission, and specially trained advocates can provide a range of services, such as explaining reporting procedures, providing support during an investigation, and connecting survivors to other resources. Moreover, the OCR encourages universities to designate SAC employees as confidential—meaning they will not share a survivor's personally identifying information with the police or campus officials, unless she/he explicitly asks them to (Lhamon, 2014).

University housing staff members are another potential resource for survivors. For example, Resident Assistants (RAs) play an important role in students' lives, with

responsibilities like building community and trusting relationships with their residents, intervening during crisis situations, and providing referrals to campus resources. Housing staff members are also increasingly mandated to manage students' sexual assault disclosures (Letarte, 2014). For instance, many universities are designating housing staff as "Responsible Employees," which means (under Title IX guidance) that they have a duty to report all information about a sexual assault disclosure to the Title IX coordinator or another designee (Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014).[10] As Responsible Employees, housing staff would be required to report an assault to the university even if that goes against the express wishes of the survivor. In addition, the OCR states that Responsible Employees' responsibilities also include explaining confidentiality and providing information about possible accommodations (e.g., changing classes) and resources (Lhamon, 2014).

Despite an increasing availability and variety of supports on college campuses, students who are sexually assaulted rarely use formal supports (Sabina & Ho, 2014). To date, most research on students' use of formal supports has examined reporting to the police. According to national studies, only 2-11% of college women report sexual assault to law enforcement (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Less research has focused on survivors' reliance on campus supports, but this also appears to be rare. For instance, studies have found that only 0% to 5.3% of survivors made a formal grievance through university reporting procedures (Fisher et al., 2003; Lindquist et al., 2013). Similarly, 0% to 17.8% of survivors sought help from SACs or women's centers on campus (Krebs et al., 2007; Nasta et al., 2005; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). These studies provide important descriptive information on the incidence of (non)disclosure, but more research is needed to understand reasons for non-

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[10] The OCR does not require all universities to designate all undergraduate RAs as Responsible Employees. Housing staff do have reporting requirements as a Campus Security Authority (CSA) under the Clery Act (34 CFR 668.46(a)), which only requires reporting aggregate, non-identifying information about sexual crimes to campus officials.

disclosure. Moreover, no study to date has closely investigated survivors' disclosures to housing staff, which are an important source of support on college campuses.

Survivors' Help-Seeking

Survivors who do not seek help report greater psychological distress and symptoms of depression and PTSD (Ahrens, Stansell, & Jennings, 2010). However, seeking help from formal supports is not always feasible, suitable, or even beneficial. Survivors are more likely to disclose to informal help providers first (e.g., friends, family), and they are more likely to receive positive reactions from informal support providers and more likely to receive negative reactions from formal support providers (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco, & Sefl, 2007; Starzynski, Ullman, Filipas, & Townsend, 2005; Ullman, 1996b). Some studies find that survivors who receive positive support from formal and informal sources report better mental health (Ullman 1999). On the other hand, unsupportive reactions (e.g., asking questions that are intrusive, communicating doubt and blame) exacerbate survivors' distress (Ahrens et al., 2007; Orchowski et al., 2013; Ullman, 1999). Although seeking help from formal campus supports may not be the first or best choice for all survivors, these supports have the capacity to provide essential resources for recovery, including information, emotional support, housing and/or academic accommodations (e.g., moving the perpetrator to a different residence hall). Moreover, policy makers and administrators are putting a lot of time and resources into creating formal campus supports. Thus, it is crucial to better understand the reasons why survivors are not using them.

However, there is a lack of systematic, theoretical conceptualization of the reasons why college student survivors are not using available services (Sabina & Ho, 2014). Nearly all research has presented survivors a list of possible reasons that they chose not to report to the police or use campus supports (with twelve options, on average). Some of these studies use or

adapt items from national surveys, such the National Violence Against Women Survey (e.g., Thompson, Sitterle, Clay, & Kingree, 2007; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011) and the National College Women Sexual Victimization Survey (e.g., Fisher et al., 2003; Walsh et al., 2010); others have developed their own list (e.g., Allen, Ridgeway, & Swan, 2015; Amar, 2008; Moore & Baker, 2016; Nasta et al., 2005; Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006).

Several existing models have conceptualized the process of help seeking for survivors of interpersonal violence. For instance, Liang and colleagues (2005) identified three important components for survivors of intimate partner violence: 1) recognizing and defining the problem, 2) making a decision to seek help, and 3) selecting a particular type and source of support. A recent conceptual model of help attainment for victims of sexual assault and intimate partner violence proposes that formal help seeking—within any given developmental and situational context—is influenced by survivors' perceptions of their needs, the availability of help and fit with support systems (Kennedy, Adams, Bybee, Campbell, Kubiak, & Sullivan, 2012). While these models help elucidate steps within the entire help-seeking process, the current study focused explicitly on understanding the reasons why survivors did not use specific supports for sexual assault in the campus community.

Existing theory can help conceptualize the reasons survivors did not use supports. For instance, Penchansky and Thomas (1981) categorized several overarching dimensions to health service utilization, including the volume of services in the community, the cost of services, the physical accessibility of services (e.g., location, hours), and clients' attitudes and personal characteristics. Drawing from this model, Logan and colleagues conducted two studies (2004; 2005) examining reasons that women with victimization experiences—including sexual assault and intimate partner violence—in urban and rural communities did not use physical and mental

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health services and criminal justice services. This work identified four primary factors that impeded service use: First, *availability* included a lack of resources in one's community. Second, *affordability* included the costs of care. Third, *accessibility* barriers occurred when reporting options and/or resources were available, but survivors could not use them (e.g., lack time or transportation) or did not know enough to use them. Finally, *acceptability* included a wide range of feelings, beliefs, and responses that made it seem unacceptable to use supports, such as experiencing embarrassment, shame, and self blame, fearing backlash from their community, worrying about confidentiality, anticipating that services would not help or would cause further trauma, considering characteristics of the assault (e.g., being financially dependent on their abuser means they should not risk using supports), and believing they did not need help. This theoretical framework also helps to identify how survivors' reasons for not using supports are shaped by the larger structural context—an institution does not make supports available, affordable, accessible, and/or acceptable. Thus, this model helps illustrate how survivors' willingness and ability to seek help is constrained by community norms, policies, practices, and resources.

Study purpose. The current study had two primary aims. The first aim was to examine and categorize reasons that survivors did not use three formal supports for sexual assault on campus: the Title IX Office, the sexual assault center (SAC), and housing staff. Most prior research was conducted before the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter outlining new Title IX guidance and the significant subsequent changes to university sexual assault support systems and/or collapsed across a variety of campus supports rather than examining why survivors did not use each support (e.g., Amar, 2008; Fisher et al., 2003; Lindquist et al., 2016; Nasta et al., 2005; Sable et al., 2006; Walsh et al., 2010). Two more recent studies asked students (both women and

men, not specifically sexual assault survivors) to imagine why sexual assault survivors would be unwilling to use campus supports, and some of the top reasons identified were shame, guilt, embarrassment, fear of retaliations, desire that nobody know (Allen et al., 2015), off-campus location of the assault, and acquaintance perpetrator (Moore & Baker, 2016). Although these studies have examined a range of important issues, additional work is needed to more fully understand why survivors do not use campus supports.

To meet this aim I collected qualitative data from survivors—explaining why they did not use campus supports. Qualitative data can provide a deeper, more contextual understanding of why survivors are/are not using campus supports, but few studies have used qualitative methods. Koo and colleagues (2013) asked Asian American college women to imagine why a survivor might not use campus supports after an assault. Lindquist and colleagues (2016) asked survivors what could be done to encourage reporting to the police or campus security. More research is needed to specifically assess why survivors are avoiding formal campus supports. In the current study, I drew from Logan and colleagues' (2004; 2005) four-factor framework to help categorize the reasons why survivors' did not use three specific supports for sexual assault.

My second aim was to examine if the reasons survivors did not seek help differed across supports. Most previous research does not look for variation across sources of support. However, knowing the reasons survivors are not using different formal supports would allow institutions to improve supports and increase survivors' willingness and ability to use them. For example, if survivors did not use the SAC because they lacked knowledge of this resource (i.e., an accessibility issue), addressing this would require a different approach than if students mainly feared retaliation (i.e., an acceptability issue). Some studies suggest that students may perceive and use campus supports differently. For example, Orchowski, Meyer, and Gidycz (2009)

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assessed students' likelihood to use different supports if they experienced a sexual assault; students indicated the greatest likelihood to report to the police, followed by the counseling center and a resident advisor. Another study asked students how helpful campus supports would be for female sexual assault survivors; they rated the sexual assault center as most helpful, followed by the campus police and housing staff (Allen et al., 2015). In the current study, I used quantitative analyses to examine if the reasons survivors did not use supports differed for the Title IX Office, the SAC, and housing staff.

Method

Procedures & Participants

Participants were part of a larger IRB-approved study. Survey data were collected from 1) resident assistants (RAs) and 2) undergraduate women living in university housing at a large Midwestern university in 2015. These two complementary surveys examined knowledge and perceptions of sexual assault policies and resources, and reporting and help-seeking behavior among RAs—an important support for survivors—and the students they serve. The current study examined the women resident survey data.

The Registrar's Office sent recruitment and reminder emails (containing a link to the survey) to 80% of all undergraduate women with a university housing address (my target sample; $n = 3,412$)[11]. A total of 1,031 students responded to the survey, for a 30% response rate. Of those, 152 were ineligible: 79 worked as housing staff, 2 identified as men, 52 did not currently live in university housing, and 19 did not provide gender or housing information. Following recommendations for web survey research (e.g., Meade & Craig, 2012), I thoroughly inspected the data provided by the eligible participants and removed 39 who had excessive missing data

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[11] The Registrar's Office selects and contacts a random sample of 80% of any student population requested (e.g., all women in university housing) to avoid overburdening students with research requests.

(e.g., missing more than 50% of survey items) and/or failed attention check items (e.g., gave a wrong answer for items that asked for a specific response, such as "please select 5"); this careful "cleaning" helps improve the quality of survey data (Meade & Craig, 2012). The final sample was 840 women. In the current study, I only analyzed data from the participants who had experienced some form of sexual assault as a student at the university—termed "survivors" hereafter ($n = 284$).

Survivors' mean age was 18.6 (range 18 to 22). The majority were white (71.8%, $n = 204$), and the rest identified as Asian American (11.3%, $n = 32$), multiracial (8.1%, $n = 23$), African American/Black (5.3%, $n = 15$), Middle Eastern (2.1%, $n = 6$), Latina (0.7%, $n = 2$), or another race/ethnicity (0.7%, $n = 2$).[12] Most of the women identified as heterosexual (77.5%, $n = 220$), but some identified as mostly heterosexual (17.3%, $n = 49$), bisexual (3.2%, $n = 9$), gay or lesbian (0.8%, $n = 2$), or another sexual identity (e.g., queer; 1.4%, $n = 4$). Two-thirds were first year students (68.9%, $n = 195$), and the rest were in their second year (26.9%, $n = 76$), third year (2.1% $n = 6$), fourth year (1.1%, $n = 3$), or fifth year and above (1.1%, $n = 3$). There were students from every university residence hall or apartment community in the sample.

Measures

Sexual assault. I used a modified Sexual Experiences Survey Short-Form (SES-SF; Koss et al., 2007) to measure sexual assault.[13] Seven items assess a broad spectrum of behaviors: *unwanted sexual contact* (e.g., "Has anyone fondled, kissed, or rubbed up against the private areas of your body (lips, breast/chest, crotch or butt) or removed some of your clothes without your consent?"), *attempted oral, anal,* and *vaginal penetration* (e.g., "Even though it did not

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[12] The ethnic distribution of the sample contained slightly fewer Latina students and slightly more White and multiracial students than the total undergraduate population.

[13] The SES-SF assesses the frequency of behaviors (*0 times, 1 time, 2 times, 3+ times*) in the past 12 months and from age 14; however, researchers have inquired about different time frames and used a more simplified, dichotomous *yes/no* response scale.

happen, has anyone TRIED to have oral sex with you, or make you have oral sex with them without your consent?"), and *completed oral, anal,* and *vaginal penetration*. The SES-SF specifies five tactics through which the behaviors could be obtained "without consent" (e.g., physical force, coercion, incapacitation due to alcohol or drugs). Participants indicated if they had experienced any of the behaviors while they were a student at the university. In this study, I included those who experienced any form of sexual assault while they were a student. The SES-SF is one of the most widely used measures of sexual victimization and exhibits good reliability and validity (Johnson, Murphy & Gidycz, in press).

Title IX office.[14] Following the SES, participants were asked, "Have you formally reported the incident to the University? In other words, have you filed a complaint against the person(s) who committed the behavior with the University?" Response options included 1 = *yes* and 2 = *no*. Those who answered "no" were asked to please tell me why, and a text-box was provided for students to type their answer.

Sexual assault center (SAC).[15] Students were also asked, "Have you sought help for the incident at the Sexual Assault Center (SAC)?" Again, response options included 1 = *yes* and 2 = *no*, and participants who answered "no" were asked to please tell me why.

Housing staff. Respondents (all of whom lived in university housing) indicated if they had sought help from housing staff: "Have you told anyone who works for University Housing about the incident?" Participants could select anyone from a list of staff: 1 = *resident advisor*, 2 = *community assistant*, 3 = *diversity peer educator*, 4 = *peer academic success specialist*, 5 = *other* [write in option]; participants could also select: *N/A, I have not told anyone who works for*

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[14] The full and official name for the Title IX Office was used in the survey, but this general term is used to maintain anonymity.
[15] The SAC was designated a confidential resource on the campus. The full and official name for the SAC was used in the survey, but this general term is used to maintain anonymity.

university housing. Students who had not told any housing staff member were then asked to please tell me why.

Qualitative Analysis Approach

I pooled participants' open-ended responses—describing why they did not use the supports—and analyzed them using thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, two trained research assistants and I reviewed these data and created a codebook (i.e., a detailed list of words or phrases that capture an analytical idea present in data). The codebook was refined over several iterations by applying the codebook to subsets of data and revising it. When the codebook was finalized, my research assistants coded all data using Dedoose version 6.1. Interrater reliability was excellent (Cohen's kappa = 0.89; Cohen, 1960). I then identified themes by searching for patterns and meaning across the coded data. Following a deductive approach, I used Logan and colleagues' (2004; 2005) four-factor framework to guide my interpretation of themes (i.e., does this theme fit within or fall outside?). Additionally, I checked all themes against the dataset to ensure that they adequately fit these data (i.e., does this theme clearly describe what participants are expressing?).

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Results

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Descriptive Results

Of the total sample, 33.8% (*n* = 284) had experienced at least one form of sexual assault as a student: 48.9% (*n* = 139) unwanted sexual contact, 26.8% (*n* = 76) attempted oral, anal, and/or vaginal penetration, and 24.3% (*n* = 69) completed oral, anal, and/or vaginal penetration. Of the 284 women who experienced sexual assault, only 16 (5.6%) disclosed to any of the three campus supports: 5 made a formal report to the university, 11 sought help at the SAC, and 9 told

someone who worked for university housing (ten survivors used only one support and six used two or more).

Qualitative Themes: Why Did Survivors Not Use Campus Supports?

I identified four overarching themes: two fit within the Logan et al. (2004; 2005) four-factor framework (*accessibility* and *acceptability*) and two fell outside of it (*appropriateness* and *alternative coping*). Moreover, I identified five unique sub-themes within the acceptability theme. The themes are summarized in Table 3.1 and discussed below. Participants' responses for the Title IX Office, SAC, and Housing Staff could reflect more than one theme (e.g., the reasons described for not using the SAC included both *accessibility* and *alternative coping*).

Table 3.1

Themes, Definitions, and Example Excerpts

Barrier Theme	Definition	Example Excerpt
Accessibility	Logistical barriers that made a support difficult or impossible to use, including time constraints and lacking knowledge about the support	"I'm too busy with schoolwork."
Acceptability	Thoughts, beliefs, and responses related to the assault made it seem unacceptable/unjustifiable:	
1) Negative emotions	Experiencing negative emotions after the assault hindered their use of a support, including shame, fear, and self blame	"I was scared and it was difficult to process. I just wanted to forget it ever happened."
2) Consequences	Anticipating negative consequences for themselves and/or the perpetrator hindered their use of a support	"Reporting it would cause me a lot of stress and anxiety."
3) Contextual characteristics	Interpreting circumstances around the assault (e.g., where it happened, who the perpetrator was) as a reason not to use a support	"It was a party and I didn't think I would be taken seriously since alcohol was involved."
4) Minimizing impact	Believing their reaction to the assault was not severe or extreme enough to warrant or justify using a support	"I was not extremely affected emotionally by the incident."
5) Minimizing behaviors	Minimizing the assault, by normalizing sexual assault or comparing their assault to more "severe" forms, hindered their use of a support	"I didn't consider it serious enough because it happens to girls all the time."
Appropriateness	Assessments about the usefulness or helpfulness of a support made it undesirable to use, like lacking efficacy, familiarity, or confidentiality	"I knew they would have to report it and I wasn't comfortable with that."
Alternative Coping	Actions taken made it unnecessary to use a support, like telling informal supports, stopping the behavior, or using passive coping strategies	"I've told my friends, I didn't feel the need to tell any one else."

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Accessibility. First, participants identified accessibility issues—logistical barriers that rendered a support too difficult or impossible to use. These women primarily described two types of accessibility problems: having time constraints and lacking knowledge about a support. For instance, one student stated that her time needed to be spent elsewhere: "I'm too busy with schoolwork" (ID 540). Some students stated that they did not know a support existed at all: "I didn't know about it" (ID 304). Others did not use a support because they lacked knowledge about the services provided. For instance, "I don't know whether [the SAC] is confidential or not" (ID 664).

Students also lacked knowledge about what the support could provide help for. For example, some survivors thought that they could only use a support for a recent assault: "Once I finally accepted the fact that the incident did take place, I believed it had been too late to report it" (ID 796). Another student stated, "I didn't know much about [the SAC] at the time and once I learned more about it, I felt it was too late to talk about the situation" (ID 228). There are no time limitations for reporting to the Title IX Office or seeking help from the SAC or housing staff (on this campus), but some survivors who did not immediately acknowledge the assault believed too much time had passed.

Acceptability. Many survivors identified a wide range of acceptability concerns as a reason they did not use campus supports—thoughts, beliefs, and affective responses related to the assault that made it seem unacceptable to use a support. Logan and colleagues' studies (2004; 2005) identified a wide range of acceptability concerns, but they were not classified into a set of specific sub-types, generalizable across the samples. My analysis identified five acceptability sub-themes. Additionally, my analysis more clearly differentiated survivors' thoughts and beliefs about the assault and their own reactions to it—which made it seem unacceptable or unjustifiable

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to seek help (i.e., acceptability)—and survivors' thoughts and beliefs about the support (i.e., appropriateness, a new theme that is described in detail below).

1) Negative emotions. First, experiencing negative emotional reactions to the assault deterred survivors from using campus supports. For example, some students described feeling shame or embarrassment: "Because I am embarrassed." (ID 683). Some students also experienced self-blame, which hindered their willingness and ability to use supports. For instance, one student stated, "I knew I shouldn't have been drinking as much as I was at the time. It was partially my fault." (ID 602).

2) Consequences. For the second sub-theme, survivors' concerns about personal consequences that might arise made it seem unacceptable to use supports, including how their mental health or personal life might suffer. For instance, survivors were afraid of feeling stressed and revictimized: "Reporting it would cause me a lot of stress and anxiety." (ID 302) and "I didn't want to be forced to relive things over and over throughout the investigation." (ID 698). Participants were also concerned about consequences in their social network: "It would have affected my friend group at the time so I just pretended it wasn't a big deal." (ID 15). Additionally, some survivors did not use supports because they were concerned about how it might harm the perpetrator: "I was drinking and wasn't sure if I had given consent, and he seemed like a decent guy that I didn't want to get in trouble." (ID 348) and "I didn't want to ruin the guy's life" (ID 678).

3) Contextual characteristics. In the third sub-theme, survivors believed that contextual characteristics surrounding the assault—where it happened, what they were doing when it happened, who committed the assault—made it unacceptable to use campus supports. For example, participants stated, "I did not feel the need to tell anyone who works for university

housing because it happened off campus" (ID 224) and "I was drunk and it was at a party, so I felt as though the incident would not be taken seriously" (ID 154). Students were particularly hesitant to use campus supports if the assault took place off campus and/or if there was alcohol involved. Additionally, some women believed that who committed the assault made it unacceptable to seek help. For some students, not knowing the perpetrator was the reason: "I didn't know who the person was. It was a random guy at a frat party." (ID 326). For others, the reason was knowing the perpetrator well: "He was my boyfriend at the time and I didn't want to tell anybody. I felt ashamed and thought people would blame me." (ID 228).

4) Minimization of personal impact. The fourth sub-theme concerned survivors' beliefs about their reaction to the assault, and feeling as though the outcomes were not bad enough to warrant or justify using formal campus supports. Most of these participants discussed psychological or physical outcomes: "I didn't feel significantly traumatized." (ID 58), "It did not majorly affect my psychological health" (ID 377), and "I was not extremely affected emotionally by the incident." (ID 348). Some discussed their everyday lives: "The incident was not anything that affected my daily life that much." (ID 435). These survivors felt it would only be acceptable to use campus supports if the assault had a "severe" or "extreme" impact on their lives in some way.

5) Minimization of assaultive behaviors. For the fifth sub-theme, many survivors did not use campus supports because they perceived the behavior(s) to be insufficiently severe. These women primarily described instances of unwanted sexual contact and/or attempted rape, and evaluated these behaviors as less serious than other forms of sexual violence. For instance, some survivors did not seek help because there was no vaginal penetration: "It [penetration] didn't happen, therefore, I didn't find it a big deal, but I now realize it was." (ID143) and "I didn't

realize until a while later that it was bad that I was pressured into oral sex which I didn't want to have." (ID 341). Others discussed how assault could have been worse:

> The situation wasn't very serious, I was dancing and he pulled his penis out of his pants and rubbed up against me. I thought he was disgusting and capable of doing other things but…I don't think that his actions are serious enough to report. (ID 153)

> I felt that others were going through worse things than me and they needed help more. (ID 349)

> I didn't think it needed to be, a guy grabbed my ass and I yelled at him and he laughed. I was wearing a tight skirt…When I told someone they shrugged and said "What did you expect." (ID 613)

Additionally, participants minimized the assault by interpreting the behavior as a normal part of being a woman in college: "Because these things are normal for most women and are seen as part of teenage sexual experiences." (ID 93) and "I didn't consider it serious enough because it happens to girls all the time." (ID 780). Some survivors also believed that campus supports would be uninterested in these "normal" behaviors:

> I've been grabbed inappropriately by drunk guys on MANY occasions here as a student. I've never reported it because…I didn't think anybody would care since it happens to everybody. (ID 116)

> It happens all the time, if people reported all instances of sexual harassment that take place at fraternities, the university would never be finished investigating. (ID 749)

It is important to note that for the fourth and fifth sub-themes—minimization of personal impact and assaultive behaviors—participants' assessments were made when thinking about and explaining why they did not use specific supports. Thus, these responses should not be

interpreted as experiencing false consciousness or representing the full impact of the assault on survivors' lives.

Appropriateness. A new theme that I differentiated from Logan and colleagues (2004; 2005) framework concerned survivors' explicit assessment of campus supports. In these assessments, survivors communicated that they did not think it would be useful or helpful to tell the support about their assault. Some participants believed that seeking help from the support would lead to an inappropriate or undesired response. For instance, some believed nothing would actually happen: "I am afraid of what may happen to me and if the person will actually be punished." (ID 297), and "Misconduct cases get thrown out. Universities don't do shit about them." (ID 479). Survivors were also afraid they would be disregarded, doubted, or blamed for the assault: "I felt I would not be taken seriously." (ID 154) and "I didn't think they would care or help." (ID 12).

Additionally, participants described supports as lacking qualities they were looking for: in particular, familiarity and confidentiality. First, some survivors wanted to seek help from people they felt close to personally and emotionally, and the support did not meet this need: "I am not really comfortable enough with anyone in university housing. I prefer to confide these things to friends, parents, and therapists." (ID 341) and "The last thing I want is for someone I see all the time but barely know to know intimate details about my life. That is not helpful in this incident." (ID 93).

Second, some survivors stated that they did not want to disclose their assault to a source of support that was not confidential. For example, one participant wrote: "I knew they [housing staff] would have to report it and I wasn't comfortable with that." (ID 45). Another survivor

stated, "…I'm afraid it will not be kept private." (ID 558). These quotes illustrate that some survivors prefer supports that can offer confidential assistance.

Alternative coping. Another new theme was engaging in alternative methods of coping. These survivors described not using campus supports because they had coped with the assault in other ways, such as seeking help from an informal source of support, taking action during the assault to stop the behavior, or ignoring the assault altogether. First, many students chose not to use formal supports because they told an informal source of support, usually a friend: "I've told my friends, I didn't feel the need to tell any one else." (ID 76). Others told a trusted adult, like a parent or professor.

Additionally, some women did not use campus supports because they had taken action during the assault. These women described being able to stop the perpetrator from touching them further or penetrating them. For example, some were able to get away before things escalated: "I handled the situation by removing myself and was able to move on from it." (ID 18) and "I was able to easily escape." (ID 255). Another said:

> When hooking up with a guy he tried to insert himself and I stopped him and left.
>
> Had I been unable to stop him, I most likely would have reported it, I hope. (ID 656)

However, some survivors did not seek formal help because they engaged in passive coping strategies, like ignoring the assault altogether: "I would rather not think about it." (ID 69) and "I just wanted to forget it ever happened." (ID 10). Several women expressed the desire to just "move on" with their lives, for instance: "I didn't really want anyone involved and prolonging it, I just wanted to ignore it and move on." (ID 15).

Quantitative Comparisons: Do Reasons Differ Across Campus Supports?

My second aim was to examine if the reasons survivors did not use formal campus supports differed across the three supports: the Title IX Office, the SAC, and housing staff. For each theme, I summed the number of participants who identified the theme in their response to each support. For example, a total of 33 survivors expressed the accessibility theme (e.g., lacking knowledge about a support), but 10 of these women identified this theme for more than one support: 26 survivors identified accessibility issues as a reason they did not use the SAC, 13 survivors identified this for the Title IX Office, and 5 identified this for housing staff. Next, I conducted a One-Way Repeated Measures ANOVA for each theme. For each test, the independent variable was the three supports and the dependent variable was the number of participants who identified a particular theme. Significant F-tests were followed by pairwise comparisons. Figure 3.1 illustrates the frequency of themes across the three supports.
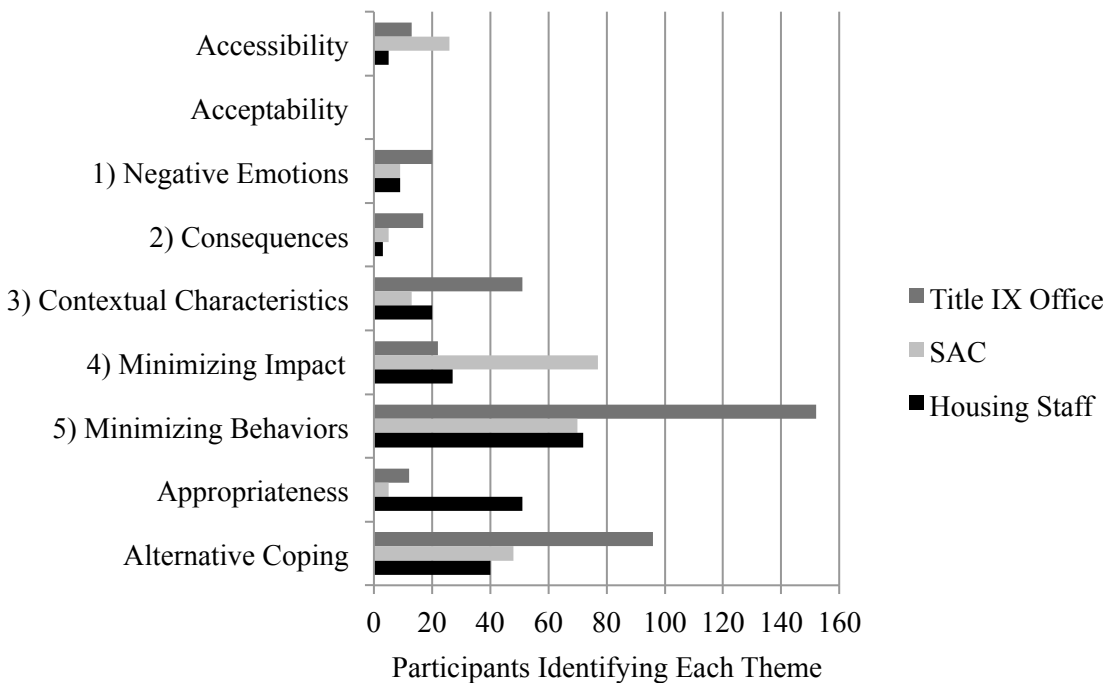

Figure 3.1. Frequency of Responses for Three Campus Supports. Title IX Office = making a formal report to the university. SAC = seeking help from the sexual assault center. Housing Staff = seeking help from housing staff member(s).

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Accessibility. A total of 33 survivors identified accessibility reasons for at least one of the three supports (10 identified it for more than one support); most of these women identified accessibility issues for the SAC ($n = 26$), followed by the Title IX Office ($n = 13$), and housing staff ($n = 5$). Statistically, there were significant differences across supports ($F(2, 566) = 10.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p2 = .04$). More participants identified accessibility issues as a reason they did not use the SAC compared to both the Title IX Office ($p = .02$) and housing staff ($p < .001$). There was no significant difference between the Title IX Office and housing staff ($p = .136$).

Acceptability/negative emotions. There were 30 women who identified negative emotions (e.g., shame) as a reason they did not use at least one support (7 identified it for more than one); most identified this reason for the Title IX Office ($n = 20$), and equal numbers identified this reason for the SAC ($n = 9$) and housing staff ($n = 9$). There were significant differences across supports ($F(2, 566) = 4.22$, $p = .018$, $\eta_p2 = .02$). Survivors were more likely to express that experiencing negative emotions was a reason they did not use the Title IX Office compared to the SAC ($p = .02$) and (marginally) housing staff ($p = .08$). There were no differences between the SAC and housing staff ($p = 1.00$).

Acceptability/consequences. In total, 21 women identified concerns about consequences as a reason they did not use one or more of the supports (4 identified this for more than one); most of these survivors communicated that they did not use the Title IX Office because they anticipated negative consequences ($n = 17$), followed by the SAC ($n = 5$) and housing staff ($n = 3$). There were significant differences across supports ($F(2, 566) = 8.40$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p2 = .03$). More participants identified this as a reason they did not use the Title IX Office compared to the SAC ($p = .008$) and housing staff ($p = .003$). There were no significant differences between the SAC and housing staff ($p = 1.00$).

Acceptability/contextual characteristics. There were 63 women who identified

contextual characteristics about the assault (e.g., off-campus, alcohol-involved) as a reason they

did not use one or more of the three supports (15 identified this for more than one support); these

participants were most likely to identify this reason for the Title IX Office ($n = 51$), followed by

housing staff ($n = 20$) and the SAC ($n = 13$). These differences were statistically significant ($F(2,$

$566) = 23.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p2 = .08$). Survivors were significantly more likely to identify this as a

reason they did not use the Title IX Office compared to both housing staff ($p < .001$) and the

SAC ($p < .001$). There were no significant differences between housing staff and the SAC ($p =$

.38).

Acceptability/minimizing impact. A total of 82 survivors perceived a lack of severe

outcomes as a reason they did not seek help from at least one of the campus supports (37

identified this for more than one support); survivors were more likely to identify this as a reason

they did not use the SAC ($n = 77$), followed by housing staff ($n = 27$) and the Title IX Office (n

$= 22$). There were significant differences across supports ($F(2, 566) = 42.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p2 = .13$)

Survivors were more likely to identify this as a reason the did not use the SAC compared to both

housing staff ($p < .001$) and the Title IX Office ($p < .001$). There were no significant differences

between housing staff and the Title IX Office ($p = 1.00$).

Acceptability/minimizing behaviors. There were 167 women who minimized the

assaultive behaviors when describing why they did not use one or more of the supports (86

identified this for more than one); participants were more likely to identify this as a reason they

did not report to the Title IX Office ($n = 152$), followed by housing staff ($n = 72$) and the SAC (n

$= 70$). This reason significantly differed across supports ($F(2, 566) = 63.57$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p2 = .18$).

More participants identified this as a reason they did not use the Title IX Office compared to

both housing staff ($p < .001$) and the SAC ($p < .001$). There were no differences between SAC and housing staff ($p = 1.00$).

Appropriateness. In total, 58 survivors cited appropriateness concerns as a reason they did not use at least one of the three supports (8 identified this for more than one support); nearly all of these women viewed housing staff as an inappropriate source of support ($n = 51$), followed by the Title IX Office ($n = 12$) and the SAC ($n = 5$). These differences were statistically significant ($F(2, 566) = 37.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p2 = .12$). Survivors were significantly more likely to identify this as a reason they did not seek help from housing staff compared to both the Title IX Office ($p < .001$) and the SAC ($p < .001$). There was no difference between the Title IX Office and the SAC ($p = 0.16$).

Alternative coping. A total of 116 women stated that they did not use at least one of the three supports because they engaged in an alternative coping strategy (50 identified this for more than one support); approximately half of these survivors identified this as a reason they did not use the Title IX Office ($n = 96$), followed by the SAC ($n = 48$) and housing staff ($n = 40$). The differences across supports were significant ($F(2, 566) = 31.05$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p2 = .10$). More participants identified alternative coping as a reason they did not use the Title IX Office compared to the SAC ($p < .001$) and housing staff ($p < .001$). There was no difference between the SAC and housing staff ($p = 0.65$).

Discussion

Universities across the U.S. have been expanding their sexual assault response efforts, including creating Title IX coordinator roles and offices, establishing sexual assault centers (SACs), and designating housing staff members as help providers. Yet, very few survivors actually use these supports (Sabina & Ho, 2014). Why might that be? I sought in-depth answers

to this question, to inform efforts to improve sexual assault response systems in higher education.

First, using qualitative data, I examined survivors' reasons for not using three formal campus supports: the Title IX Office, the SAC, and housing staff. I drew from Logan and colleagues' (2004; 2005) theoretical framework to help guide the conceptualization and classification of survivors' responses. None of my participants described *availability* (e.g., complete lack of resources for sexual assault) and *affordability* (e.g., cost of care) concerns. This finding was not unexpected—college students have increasing access to free sources of support for sexual assault (Sabina & Ho, 2014) and my participants were in a well-resourced institution. However, the availability of supports differs across campuses (U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial & Contracting Oversight, 2014), and these barriers will likely arise in less-resourced institutions and communities.

In accordance with Logan and colleagues' (2004; 2005) framework, I found that student survivors experienced problems with *accessibility*—logistical issues, such as lacking time and knowledge, that prevented them from using campus supports. The survivors in my study also experienced a wide variety of *acceptability* issues—feelings, beliefs, and responses related to the assault that made it seem unacceptable to use campus supports. Building upon Logan and colleagues' (2004; 2005) framework, I classified and clarified the responses that fall under *acceptability*: identifying five unique acceptability sub-types. I found that survivors did not use campus supports because they 1) experienced negative emotions (e.g., self-blame), 2) anticipated personal consequences (e.g., they will disrupt their friend group), 3) interpreted contextual characteristics of the assault (e.g., off-campus, alcohol-involved), 4) minimized the outcomes (e.g., no "severe" psychological damage), and 5) minimized the assaultive behavior(s). In addition, I more clearly differentiated survivors' thoughts and beliefs about the assault and their

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own reactions to it that made it seem unacceptable or unjustifiable to seek help (i.e., acceptability) and survivors' thoughts and beliefs about the support (i.e., appropriateness).

Appropriateness. When describing why they did not seek help from campus supports, some survivors discussed their assessments of a support: Was it suitable? Would it be helpful? Some survivors believed that seeking help from a support would lead to an inappropriate or undesired response. For instance, nothing would actually happen (e.g., the perpetrator goes unpunished) and/or they would be disregarded, doubted, or blamed for the assault. Additionally, some survivors identified ways that a support lacked qualities they sought. Two primary qualities discussed were familiarity (i.e., a sense of comfort or closeness with the person to whom they would disclose) and confidentiality (i.e., assurance that what they say would not be shared with others). Prior studies find that concern about confidentiality is a reason survivors choose not to report their assault to authorities (e.g., Krebs et al., 2007; Nasta et al., 2005; Walsh et al., 2010). Additionally, some survivors are highly selective when choosing a confidante—only disclosing to someone who is emotionally close to them (Guerette & Caron, 2007).

Alternative coping. Another new theme that I identified, why survivors did not use campus supports, was the use of alternative methods of coping, including interrupting the assault, using passive coping strategies, and disclosing to informal sources of support. Some survivors described actively intervening during the assault (e.g., stopping the perpetrator from touching her further or penetrating her). On the other hand, some survivors engaged in more passive coping strategies (e.g., ignoring or denying the assault). Research suggests that, in some instances, avoidance can exacerbate psychological distress following an assault (Littleton & Henderson, 2009).

Other survivors did not use campus supports because they had sought help from an informal support, usually a friend. It is well established in the literature that sexual assault survivors are most likely to disclose to friends and loved ones. Banyard and colleagues (2010) found that one in three female and one in five male undergraduates had at least one friend (mostly women) disclose an experience of sexual assault to them. Unfortunately, some students report not knowing what to do or how to help when a friend disclosed an assault (Ahrens & Campbell, 2000; Banyard et al., 2010). Although survivors find tangible aid helpful, informal support networks do not usually provide this type of support (Ahrens, Cabral, & Abeling, 2009; Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Research suggests that college student survivors rarely receive information about campus sexual assault resources from their peers (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012). There is no "right" way to disclose sexual assault, and seeking help from an informal support (vs. a formal support) may be the best choice for a survivor. However, it is essential to understand why formal supports are rarely used and what would make them a more desirable option.

Examining Reasons for Non-Use Across Supports

Of the three supports examined, survivors reported many different reasons for not using the Title IX Office (i.e., utilizing formal grievance procedures), including negative emotions, consequences, contextual characteristics, minimization of behaviors, and alternative coping strategies. For example, survivors anticipated more adverse outcomes in their personal lives as a result of using the Title IX Office compared to the SAC. The college context—where students are often living, learning, working, and socializing together—may especially foster survivors' worries about social ostracism if they speak out about an assault committed by a peer. Logan and

colleagues (2004; 2005) identified similar concerns among survivors living in insular, rural communities.

My results also suggest that contextual characteristics have a complex link to reporting in college settings. While some participants were hesitant to seek help from the Title IX Office because they knew the perpetrator well, others did not use this support because they did not know the perpetrator at all (e.g., a "random guy" grabbing her at a party). If campus party culture fosters situations where women are assaulted by acquaintances and strangers, and survivors are reluctant to report in either situation, rates of service use will remain low. Additionally, survivors were hesitant to use the Title IX Office if the assault happened off-campus. Title IX covers off-campus assaults if the behavior was committed by a university member and creates a hostile environment on campus (Ali, 2011); however, it is currently unclear if universities are investigating and adjudicating on- and off-campus assaults similarly.

Alternative coping—such as taking action during the assault to prevent it from escalating—was another reason that survivors were more likely to identify for the Title IX Office, compared to the SAC and housing staff. Prior research finds that some women do not report sexual assault to the police because they "handled it" (Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). My results help to contextualize this finding—the survivors in my study described avoiding a completed rape, which stopped them from reporting. Feminist scholars have made a strong and impassioned case for training women in resistance and self-defense (e.g., Gidycz & Dardis, 2014). It is certainly important to equip women with the confidence and tools to stop an assault from escalating, but we should also consider how resistance messages may inadvertently reify myths about what counts as "real rape," and undermine help seeking. A sexual assault in progress that is interrupted is still a sexual assault. Survivors should never be forced to use

supports, but disclosure decisions are made in a context where unwanted sexual contact is normalized and people believe only certain kinds of sexual assault (forced vaginal penetration in particular) can be reported.

Two common reasons that survivors did not use the SAC pertained to accessibility and minimization of personal impact. Prior research suggests that students who know that sexual assault resources exist on campus may be more willing to use them (e.g., Amar, 2008; Walsh et al., 2010). However, it may not be enough for survivors to simply know that a SAC exists on campus or in the community. For example, some survivors in my study believed they could only use the SAC for a recent assault. Many women do not (immediately) acknowledge and label experiences of sexual assault and rape (Cleere & Lynn, 2013). If a student was assaulted her freshman year, but did not identify the incident as "sexual assault" until her junior year, she may believe it is too late to use the SAC if she is not informed about services for non-acute crises. Educational efforts should reduce these (mis)perceptions by including more detailed information about the SACs mission and services.

Moreover, many participants believed the outcomes of the assault were not bad enough to warrant the use of the SAC. Prior research finds that perceptions of harm—such as physical injury—predict survivors' reporting to the police (Amar, 2008; Fisher et al., 2003). However, I found that perception of harm was more likely to hinder seeking help from the SAC compared to Title IX and housing staff. For instance, survivors believed that they needed to be severely traumatized or distraught to use the SAC. This reveals another myth that informs survivors' decisions about disclosure.

Finally, survivors' judgments about the appropriateness of a source of support—such as the familiarity and confidentiality of the support—particularly inhibited disclosure to housing

staff members. Housing staff have an interesting role in sexual assault response: their job includes building trusting relationships with students and supporting them in times of crisis, but housing staff are also frequently required by their universities to report sexual assault disclosures to campus authorities (e.g., Title IX Office; Letarte, 2014). My findings demonstrate the need for campus supports that can offer emotional and tangible aid in a way that feels both safe and private. Housing staff have the potential to fulfill this need for more familiar supports—if they do their job well—but mandatory reporting policies may deter survivors from using them.

Most Prevalent Reasons for Non-Disclosure

Experiencing negative emotions is one of the most prototypical acceptability constraints. When researchers ask students (in general) why survivors may not report or seek help, these feelings are among the most commonly identified reasons (Allen et al., 2015; Sable et al., 2006). However, experiencing negative emotions was one of the least identified reasons in my study. Perceiving the sexual assault as insufficiently severe (i.e., minimization of behaviors) was, by far, the most frequent reason mentioned. In studies that provided survivors a list, believing the assault was not serious enough was a top reason for not using campus resources (e.g., Lindquist et al., 2016; Walsh et al., 2010). My work extends and contextualizes these findings. Survivors who minimized the assault frequently described unwanted sexual contact (e.g., groped at a party) and attempted rape (e.g., a man tried to penetrate her, but did not succeed), and evaluated these behaviors as less serious on an unspoken spectrum of sexual violence. While many of these women expressed annoyance, anger, or fear, they still believed these "less serious" assaults were an inevitable—or even normal—part of campus culture.

The cultural acceptance of non-penetrative violence against women acts as a powerful deterrent to formal help seeking. Girls and women describe experiences of sexual harassment,

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coercion, and violence as commonplace in their interactions with boys and men (e.g., Weiss, 2009). Taking advantage of women who are drunk is accepted, and even expected, behavior in some male peer groups (e.g., fraternities, athletics; Martin, 2015). Moreover, our culture has a very narrow conceptualization of "rape" (e.g., a stranger forcibly penetrates a women), and survivors who experience non-stereotypical assaults are less likely to report to the police (Fisher et al, 2003). Yet, "less serious" forms of sexual assault still cause psychological harm (Muldoon, Taylor, Norma, & 2015). While some may dismiss women who minimize their assault (if they don't think these behaviors are serious, why should we?), it is really community norms and the ubiquitous nature of these assaults that stand in the way of reporting and help seeking.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Despite the expansion of sexual assault policies and resources, sexual assault survivors rarely seek help from formal supports. My findings suggest that this may be fueled, at least in part, by community norms and institutional policies. First, universities must take a stronger stance against "less serious" forms of sexual assault. In policy and the media, there is a tendency to rank the severity of sexual assault, with forced vaginal penetration (particularly by a penis) marked as the foremost problem. Journalists have criticized researchers for including unwanted sexual contact in college sexual assault statistics (Yoffe, 2015). A man rubbing his penis on a woman at a party without consent is prohibited under university policy, and illegal under criminal law[16], but the campus context does not facilitate reporting these behaviors. Yet, these behaviors are so widespread that they are considered a normal part of women's lives in college. Education programs must emphasize the seriousness of unwanted sexual contact. Additionally, universities must take reports of unwanted sexual contact seriously—survivors will be

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[16] For example, this behavior could be considered criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree (*750.520e*), a misdemeanor under Michigan law.

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discouraged from coming forward if there are no sanctions for these behaviors.

Second, universities should carefully examine the choices being made when interpreting federal laws and guidance and establishing sexual assault policies. My results suggest that some policy choices may (inadvertently) make it more challenging for survivors to use supports, in particular, modeling investigation and adjudication processes on the criminal justice system and expanding mandatory reporting.

Quasi criminal justice. Although Title IX is a civil rights statute, universities are increasingly adopting aspects of the criminal justice system in their investigation and adjudication of sexual assault (Hartmann, 2015). In my study, reasons that survivors did not use the Title IX Office's formal grievance procedures mirrored top reasons that survivors do not report to the police (e.g., thinking it is not serious enough to report, fearing negative consequences; Fisher et al, 2003; Lindquist et al., 2016; Thompson et al., 2007). Thus, it may be beneficial to examine if there are effective alternatives to a quasi-criminal justice model. For instance, restorative justice models hold perpetrators accountable, provide victims validation and control, and actively include both parties in the process of identifying how harm can be repaired (see Koss, Wilgus, & Williamson, 2014 for a review of restorative justice in cases of sexual assault).

Mandatory reporting. Across the U.S., universities have been designating every faculty and staff member as a Responsible Employee (Savino, 2015). Under Title IX guidance, when a Responsible Employee receives a sexual assault disclosure, they are required to report all information, including identifying information about the victim and perpetrator, to the Title IX Coordinator or another appropriate designee (Lhamon, 2014). Written guidance from the OCR does not require universities to make all faculty and staff responsible employees (Lhamon,

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2014), and my results suggest that such expansive policies may discourage survivors from seeking help. For instance, some survivors stated they did not seek help from housing staff because they are required to report.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although my study makes important contributions, it has limitations. First, I asked survivors of any form of sexual assault about their use of three formal campus supports. There are additional supports that deserve attention in future research, both on- and off-campus (e.g., counseling centers, healthcare services, community rape crisis centers). It will also be critical to examine students' disclosure to other individuals who may be designated as mandatory reporters, including faculty members, coaches, and academic advisors. Additionally, women who experience more stereotypically "severe" sexual assaults (e.g., force or a weapon is used) are more likely to disclose to formal sources of support (Fisher et al., 2003; Starzynski et al., 2005). While it is important to consider the full spectrum of sexual assault—as I did in the current study—future studies may build upon this work by examining different types of assault.

Second, my participants were primarily white, heterosexual women. I chose to examine women because they are more likely to experience sexual assault (Banyard, Ward, Cohn, & Plante, 2007; Breiding et al., 2014). However, students of color may face institutionalized racism that further hinders help seeking (Amar, 2008; Koo et al., 2013). International students may also encounter unique issues, such as cultural norms and language barriers (Koo et al., 2013). In addition, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students may experience barriers related to institutionalized homophobia and heterosexism. Although sexual assault is less prevalent among college men, male survivors may not disclose due to unique issues stemming

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from cultural norms and stereotypes around masculinity (Allen et al., 2015; Sable et al., 2006). Future research will be needed to better understand (lack of) service use by such groups.

Moreover, the survivors in my study were students in a well-resourced and highly residential campus. Although this represents the campus context for many survivors nation-wide, future research is needed to explicitly examine survivors' use of supports in institutions with fewer resources and more students living in the community. In this future work, it will be crucial to continue determining how the reasons survivors' are not seeking help from formal supports differ across sources of support and settings. Creating a comprehensive (quantitative) measure that taps into the dimensions proposed in my theoretical framework can help researchers study reasons for non-use more easily and consistently—including how such reasons vary across contexts and supports.

Conclusion

My study extends research and theory on factors that hinder sexual assault survivors' use of formal supports. Building on previous work, I propose that there are at least six overarching reasons that survivors do not use supports: availability, affordability, accessibility, acceptability (with five sub-types), appropriateness, and alternative coping. My findings characterize a wide range of reasons for non-disclosure that arise through interactions between survivors, institutions, and larger social contexts. These findings can drive efforts to change policies, allocate resources, and improve formal supports and increase survivors' willingness and ability to use them.

CHAPTER IV

Study Three

Analyzing Mandatory Reporting of College Sexual Assault[17]

More and more, universities are requiring employees to report student experiences of
sexual assault to university officials (and, in some cases, to police), even if the survivor does not
want to report. These mandates have been prompted and shaped by federal law and guidance,
including Title IX and The Clery Act. In this article, policies that require reporting of sexual
assault are labeled *mandatory reporting policies* (they come under various names, however, such
as "required reporting"). Although most university policies require reporting of various types of
gender-based violence, the current article focus specifically on sexual assault. *Sexual assault*
encompasses a range of non-consensual sexual acts: unwanted sexual contact, sexual coercion,
attempted and completed rape. Sexual assault is a widespread problem on college campuses
(e.g., Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016); and resulting harms can be psychological (e.g.,
posttraumatic stress), physical (e.g., gynecological problems), behavioral (e.g., substance use),
and academic (e.g., withdrawal from school) (for a review, see White et al., 2015).

Mandatory reporting policies are a newer facet of evolving federal and institutional
efforts to address campus sexual assault, giving rise to important questions: how broad (or
narrow) are these reporting mandates, and what are their effects? Proponents of mandatory

reporting assert that it increases reports—enabling universities to investigate and remedy more cases of sexual assault—and benefits sexual assault survivors, university employees, and the institution. Do any empirical data support these claims? These are timely questions, with relevance to psychological science, practice, education, and policy. The purpose of this article is to: 1) review federal law and guidance around mandatory reporting, 2) analyze a sample of mandatory reporting policies to shed light on their scope, and 3) evaluate key assumptions about the benefits of mandatory reporting through a review of the literature. The article concludes with a call for survivor-centered reforms in institutional policies and practices.

Overview of Mandatory Reporting Law and Guidance

Mandatory reporting laws are not new: state laws requiring the reporting of sexual abuse against children and elders have existed for decades. Legally, our society has established that children lack the maturity or authority to make many important decisions for themselves, and as result, cannot be expected to decide if abuse should be reported (Bledsoe, Yankeelov, Barbee, & Antle, 2004). All U.S. states have laws that identify mandatory reporters for child abuse (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016); some require any adult who suspects child abuse to report, but most designate specific professions (e.g., teachers). Eleven states have explicitly required university employees (e.g., athletics staff) to report child abuse—possibly in response to events at Pennsylvania State University, where university officials failed to report former football coach Jerry Sandusky for sexually abusing children on campus (Kim, Gostin, & Cole, 2012).

However, college students are not children—under U.S. law, most are adults with the right to self-determination. Adults, unlike children, have the capacity to make significant decisions in their lives. There are fewer laws that explicitly mandate reporting of abuse experienced by competent (non-elder) adults, but all states have medical reporting laws that may

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be applicable in cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) and criminal sexual assault (Kratochvil, 2010). For instance, some states require medical personnel to report IPV and criminal sexual assault to police and/or social services, while others require reporting for certain injuries (e.g., resulting from weapon use; NDAA 2010). This article draws from research on IPV reporting laws to inform our understanding of mandatory reporting in higher education. Although there are differences between mandatory reporting policies for IPV and college sexual assault (e.g., IPV-related laws generally mandate reporting to the police, whereas university policies may or may not involve law enforcement), both require reporting of violence experienced by adults with the capacity for self-determination.

There are two primary mandatory reporting roles in higher education, both established through federal laws. First, The Clery Act requires colleges to collect and publish information about the prevalence of sex-related crimes on and near campus. Campus Security Authorities (CSA; 34 CFR 668.46(a)) are specific groups of people with reporting duties under Clery; this includes individuals responsible for campus security, student life and campus activities (e.g., housing staff, advisors to student groups), and victim advocacy services. CSAs report aggregate information about sexual assaults (e.g., dates, locations) disclosed to them in their official capacity as CSA. They need not report sexual assaults learned about through informal channels (e.g., mentioned in an assignment) or provide personally identifying information.[18] CSAs help universities fulfill their duties to disclose accurate crime statistics and issue emergency notifications about potential threats to the community (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Second, Title IX is a civil rights law established to prohibit sex discrimination in educational programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance (U.S. Department of

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[18] According to the Violence Against Women Act 1994, personally identifying information can include names, home addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, other identification numbers (e.g., school ID, social security number), birthdates, demographic information, etc., and does not need to be reported.

Education, 2015). The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the federal

agency charged with enforcement of Title IX, enhanced its focus on sexual assault in its 2011

Dear College Letter (Ali, 2011). This "significant guidance document" emphasized that OCR

considers sexual assault a prohibited form of sex discrimination—unlawful under Title IX—and

institutions must respond to sexual assault promptly and equitably. Three years later, OCR

released a Q&A document further explaining the guidance of the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter,

including requirements and recommendations for sexual assault personnel, policies, grievance

procedures, accommodations, prevention efforts, and resources (Lhamon, 2014).

In its 2014 Q&A document, the OCR provided a broad definition of Responsible

Employee—the mandatory reporting role under Title IX guidance. This refers to any employee:

> Who has the authority to take action to redress sexual violence; who has been given the
>
> duty of reporting incidents of sexual violence or any other misconduct by students to the
>
> Title IX Coordinator or other appropriate school designee; or whom a student could
>
> reasonably believe has this authority or duty. (Lhamon, 2014 p. 15)

Unlike CSAs, Responsible Employees are required to report not only relevant facts but also

identifying information—including the names of the victim, alleged perpetrator (if known), and

any witnesses. Responsible Employees must report this information to a university official (often

the Title IX Coordinator[19]). Survivors who do not want the assault reported have no voice in the

matter if they said something to a Responsible Employee designated by the university. Educating

students about the importance of consent is central in sexual assault prevention efforts; yet,

mandatory reporting policies can and do result in reports made without survivors' consent.

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[19] A Title IX Coordinator directs university efforts to comply with Title IX, e.g., establishing policies, educating campus
community members about their rights, and overseeing complaints.

Some schools' policies take this a step further, requiring employees and/or the Title IX Coordinator to report all sexual assaults to the police (whether or not the survivor has consented to this action). California and Virginia have passed state laws that require universities to notify law enforcement about sexual assault reports under certain circumstances (e.g., the alleged perpetrator is an "ongoing threat"; Richards & Kafonek, 2016), and other states are introducing similar bills (e.g., Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Utah). The OCR encourages schools to establish and maintain collaborative relationships between the Title IX investigative office and law enforcement, but does not dictate that Responsible Employees must report survivors' personally identifying information to the police (Lhamon, 2014). Mandatory reporting policies that require reporting of personally identifying information, irrespective of survivor consent, are the primary focus of this article.

Analysis of Mandatory Reporting Policies

When establishing these mandatory reporting policies, institutions are responding to multiple, and often conflicting, directives. For instance, Title IX guidance provides autonomy in designating "Responsible Employees"—instructing institutions to consider a range of factors, such as employees' positions, students' perceptions and situations, and the school's formal and informal practices (Lhamon, 2014). However, some Resolution Agreements following OCR investigations have approved the designation of all employees as Responsible Employees (e.g., University of Virginia OCR Case No. 11-11-6001). Other Resolution Agreements, in contrast, have not specifically required all employees to be designated as Responsible Employees (e.g., Hunter College OCR Case No. 02-13-2052). How are institutions interpreting these instructions? How broad (or narrowly tailored) are contemporary mandatory reporting policies? To answer these questions, I analyzed a stratified random sample of university sexual assault policies.

Sample. First, using the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, I

obtained three lists of 4-year, not-for-profit colleges and universities: small (enrollment of

1,000–2,999; $n = 683$), medium (enrollment of 3,000–9,999; $n = 480$), and large (enrollment of

least 10,000; $n = 285$).[20] Using a web-based random number generator, I drew a random sample

of 50 schools from each list, for a total N of 150. Within this sample, 52% ($n = 78$) of institutions

were public and 48% ($n = 72$) were private.

Data collection and analysis. Trained research assistants and I visited each school's

homepage and searched for its sexual assault policy. The precise policy titles varied across

campuses, but all policies explicitly addressed sexual assault. Next, we read the entire policy for

information about mandatory reporting. If there was a definition and information, all applicable

text was saved. If there was no definition or information, we combed the school's website, using

a variety of search terms (e.g., "responsible employee," "mandated reporter," "required to

report"). This research was classified as "not regulated" by the IRB. Using this procedure, I

located mandatory reporting policies for 146 schools. In other words, in this stratified random

sample of 150 institutions of higher education, 97% had an accessible policy mandating that

certain employees report any possible sexual assault disclosed to them by a student.[21]

Next, I analyzed these policies using content analysis, a technique for classifying written

text into meaningful categories (Stemler, 2001; Weber, 1990). In a deductive (or *a priori*)

content analysis, researchers approach data analysis with specific questions and categories in

mind; my focus in this case was the scope of mandatory reporting policies. I identified four

categories of scope, defined in Table 4.1: all employees, most employees, few employees, and

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[20] Enrollment numbers include all students. Each list included all residential classifications: highly residential, primarily residential, and primarily nonresidential. I excluded the United States Air Force Academy, Naval Academy, and Military Academy in West Point, because they are exempt from Title IX and The Clery Act.

[21] In many cases the list of reportable offenses was broader than sexual assault, also including sexual harassment, IPV, and stalking, which often fall under the term "sexual misconduct."

ambiguous. A trained research assistant and I coded the policies using these four categories; interrater reliability was excellent (Cohen's kappa = 0.93; Cohen, 1960), and discrepancies were resolved through discussion between coders.

Table 4.1
Categories Classifying the Scope of Mandatory Reporting Policies

Category	n(%)	Definition
All employees	101(69%)	The policy states, generally, that all employees and/or staff members are mandatory reporters.
Most employees	27(19%)	The policy does not simply state that all employees are mandatory reporters, but the list of reporters includes nearly all employees.
Few employees	6(4%)	The policy provides a specific and selective list of employees who are mandatory reporters, and excludes most employees.
Ambiguous	12(8%)	The policy does not simply state that all employees are mandatory reporters, but also does not clearly identify those who are reporters.

Results. Over two-thirds (69%, n = 101) of the 146 policies identified *all employees*—i.e., all faculty and staff employed by the school—as mandatory reporters of sexual assault. Two illustrative examples of these policies read:

All faculty, staff, volunteers, vendors and agents are required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct…to the Title IX Coordinator or a Title IX Deputy Coordinator. (Small, Private)

All employees who have any knowledge of on- or off-campus sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or retaliation…are required to report the incident to [University] Police, Dean of Students, Housing & Resident Life Director, or Title IX Coordinator. (Medium, Public)

Approximately one in five (19%, $n = 27$) schools designated *most employees* as

mandatory reporters. Unlike the all-employee policies, these policies did not simply state that all

employees were mandatory reporters, but the list of reporters included *nearly* all of their

employees. Under these policies, only a small number of staff positions are considered exempt:

> *Responsible Employees shall include all administrators, faculty, staff, student workers,*
>
> *except: any employee with confidentiality obligations and…cafeteria staff, custodial staff,*
>
> *groundskeeper staff, maintenance staff, and ranch/agricultural staff not assigned*
>
> *administrative duties.* (Small, Public)
>
> *Responsible Employees include, but are not limited to: Administrators; Academic*
>
> *advisors; Coaches and other athletic staff who interact directly with students; Faculty*
>
> *members, including professors, adjuncts, lecturers, instructors, and teaching assistants;*
>
> *Student services personnel; Graduate research assistants; Residence life or community*
>
> *advisors; Student organization advisors; All supervisory personnel; Human Resources*
>
> *personnel; and The [University] Police Department.* (Medium, Public)

Only 4% ($n = 6$) of the schools named *few employees* as mandatory reporters, limiting

this role to faculty and staff who are in top leadership positions and/or have significant

responsibility for student safety and wellbeing. For example:

> *Responsible Reporting Officials include employees, acting in their official University*
>
> *capacities, in the Office of the Title IX Coordinator, Office of Student Conduct,*
>
> *[University] Police, the Designated Harassment Resource Persons, Resident Advisors*
>
> *and Community Directors…Director of Equal Opportunity Programs/University*
>
> *Compliance Officer and Human Resources, non-student University employees in a senior*
>
> *management role…such as Deans, Vice Presidents, Department Chairs, and*

Directors…Faculty members, graduate teaching or research assistants, and

undergraduate student employees are not generally considered Responsible Reporting

Officials. (Large, Public)

Finally, 8% (*n* = 12) of the schools provided an *ambiguous* definition. They did not

designate all employees as mandatory reporters, but also did not clearly identify those who were;

for instance, "*Most employees of the college are required by law to report any incidence of*

sexual misconduct of which they are aware" (Small, Private) and *"Some employees are required*

to report all the details of an incident (including the identities of both the victim and alleged

perpetrator) to the Title IX Coordinator" (Large, Public). It was impossible to determine the full

scope of these policies (e.g., would all faculty members fall "most" employees?")

Follow-up analyses revealed no differences in the scope of mandatory reporting policies

between public and private institutions (χ^2 (3, N = 146) = 1.77, p = 0.62) or small, medium, and

large schools χ^2 (6, N = 146) = 3.60, p = 0.73). In sum, these findings suggest that the great

majority of U.S. colleges and universities—regardless of size or public vs. private nature—have

developed policies designating most if not all employees (including faculty, staff, and student

employees) as mandatory reporters of sexual assault. Does empirical evidence support the

widespread implementation of mandatory reporting policies?

Analysis of Rationales for Mandatory Reporting Policy

Given federal regulations requiring mandatory reporting roles in higher education, and

this evidence of the proliferation of very expansive mandatory reporting policies, it is crucial to

examine underlying rationales regarding the benefits of mandatory reporting. For instance,

assumptions are made that these policies will 1) bring more sexual violence to light, enabling

universities to investigate and adjudicate more cases, 2) benefit sexual assault survivors, 3)

benefit university employees, and 4) benefit and protect the institution by ensuring compliance with Title IX and reducing legal liability. Is there empirical evidence to support these claims? The following review of the literature analyzes each of these assumptions in turn.

Assumption #1: Mandatory Reporting Policies Surface More Sexual Violence

  Supporting evidence. A strong assumption in mandatory reporting policy-making is that it will bring more cases of sexual assault to the attention of university officials, enabling them to adjudicate more cases and distribute more accurate crime statistics. It is also assumed increased reporting could facilitate the identification and removal of repeat perpetrators (for research on the extent of repeat college offenders, see Lisak & Miller, 2002 and Swartout et al., 2015). In a recent study, Mancini and colleagues (2016) asked a general sample of undergraduates (not limited to survivors) their perceptions of law requiring universities to report sexual assaults to police: 56% imagined they would be more likely to disclose sexual violence to their university under such a law. Turning to research on IPV, Smith and Winokur (2004) found that women with an extensive history of IPV (e.g., multiple abusive relationships) indicated they would be more likely to seek healthcare if there were laws requiring medical professionals to report IPV to the police. Additionally, an analysis of 631 IPV cases reported to the Cabinet for Families and Children under Kentucky's mandatory reporting law suggested that the law helped to identify instances of IPV that may have gone undetected—approximately three quarters of the cases were at least somewhat substantiated (Bledsoe et al., 2004).

  Conflicting evidence. Other studies suggest that sexual assault survivors may be *less* likely to come forward under mandatory reporting policies. For instance, a survey conducted by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence and Know Your IX found that 88% of survivors agreed that requiring mandatory reporters to tell campus police (without victims' consent) would

lead to fewer disclosures (NAESV, 2016). In a recent study of college students, only 5.8% indicated they would be "extremely likely" to tell a university employee about an unwanted sexual experience if there was a policy requiring employees to report sexual assault; in contrast, 21% were "extremely likely" to disclose if there was a policy requiring employees to respect students' decisions about reporting (Barnes & Freyd, 2017). Other research indicates that, due to concerns about confidentiality, survivors of college sexual assault do not report their assault to housing staff (see Study Two) or campus authorities (e.g., Nasta et al., 2005; Walsh, Banyard, Moynihan, Ward, & Cohn, 2010). Studies of IPV similarly find that victims lie to healthcare providers or avoid accessing medical care when providers are mandated to report to the police (e.g., Davidov, Jack, Frost, & Coben, 2012; Gielen et al., 2000; Sullivan & Hagen, 2005). In addition, there is some evidence that survivors forced into formal proceedings without their consent are less likely to engage with those processes (Campbell, Greeson, Fehler-Cabral, & Kennedy, 2015; Patterson, & Campbell, 2010). This is deeply problematic, because investigation and adjudication hinge heavily on information provided by the survivor; these processes do not go far without that individual's participation (Spohn & Tellis, 2014).

Summary and future directions. Some studies suggest that mandatory reporting (to police) can potentially bring more cases of victimization to light. However, other research complicates and contradicts this conclusion; some evidence even suggests that these reporting mandates can deter survivors from disclosing. Moreover, it remains entirely unclear whether reports made through mandatory reporting, without survivor consent, lead to more (or less) successful investigation and adjudication of sexual assault. Many questions remain unanswered and deserve the attention of psychological science: Do expanded mandatory reporting policies cause a rise or fall in survivors' disclosures? Do mandatory reporting policies assist or hinder the

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meaningful investigation and adjudication (or criminal prosecution) of sexual assault?

Assumption #2: Mandatory Reporting Policies Benefit Survivors

  Supporting evidence. A second major assumption in favor of mandatory reporting is that these policies benefit survivors, for example by connecting them with information, services, and support. In Mancini and colleagues' (2016) study of college students, many imagined positive results of mandatory reporting, such as increased accountability for both universities and perpetrators and increased assistance to survivors. Studies of women who had experienced IPV found that a majority agreed that medical personnel should be required to report IPV to the police, and believed there would be benefits (e.g., it would be easier to get help; Gielen, Campbell, Garza, & O'Campo, 2006; Malecha et al., 2000). Rodríguez and colleagues (2002) found that IPV survivors supported mandatory reporting laws if the law allows survivors to have a voice in the decision to report. Another study reported that support for medical mandatory reporting laws increased with the severity of abuse: women in multiple abusive relationships saw more potential benefits in the law (Smith & Winokur, 2004).

  Conflicting evidence. Although the findings reviewed above suggest that mandatory reporting policies could benefit survivors, there is conflicting evidence. For instance, Mancini and colleagues (2016) also found that the majority of students worried about negative consequences of mandatory reporting, including reduction in survivors' autonomy and re-traumatization of survivors. Similarly, many IPV survivors see problems in mandatory reporting laws (e.g., failing to stop abuse, increasing risk of abuse, reducing their likelihood of disclosing to medical providers; Gielen et al., 2006; Malecha et al., 2000). Moreover, research consistently finds that perceptions of mandatory reporting laws differ between IPV victims and non-victims, with the former being significantly less supportive (e.g., Gielen et al., 2006; Rodriguez,

McLoughlin, Nah, & Campbell, 2001; Sachs et al., 2002).

Major medical associations and victim advocacy organizations oppose mandatory reporting for adult victims, including the American Medical Association (Sachs, 2007), the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013), and the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV, 2015). Rules that deny independent, competent adults the decision to report or not report abuse can stigmatize and humiliate victims and perpetuate harmful stereotypes (e.g., survivors are helpless; Kratochvil, 2010). Survivors of sexual assault endure an extreme loss of control during their victimization, and "one of the only aspects that remains in their control is if, how, when, and to whom to share their story" (DeAmicis, 2013, para. 29). Following a report, even if a survivor explicitly asks the school not to investigate, authorities can deem that the incident threatens campus safety (e.g., a weapon was used, a predator is "loose" in the community and may rape again), ignore the request, and take action (Lhamon, 2014).

When support providers take control away, survivors report increased posttraumatic stress, depression, and anxiety (Orchowski, Untied, & Gidycz, 2013; Peter-Hagene & Ullman, 2014). Survivors must regain their sense of control to recover and heal after sexual trauma (e.g., Frazier, 2003; Walsh & Bruce, 2011; Zweig & Burt, 2007). Some sexual assault and IPV victims forego treatment and support, rather than sacrifice their privacy and control under mandatory reporting (Davidov, Jack, et al., 2012; Moylan, 2016; Sullivan & Hagen, 2005). Although OCR guidance clearly states that colleges are *not* required to investigate information shared at public events like Take Back the Night rallies or Survivor Speak-Outs (Lhamon, 2014), at some institutions, survivors cannot disclose at such events without fear that a report will be made should a mandated reporter be present (Moylan, 2016).

The idea that survivors will benefit from mandatory reporting also assumes that

interacting with the university reporting process and/or criminal justice system will be a positive experience. However, survivors often encounter negative treatment from law enforcement and other formal supports (e.g., medical providers)—leaving them feeling blamed, traumatized, and reluctant to seek further help (Campbell, 2008). Many endure institutional betrayal, which refers to wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution against those who are dependent on it (Smith & Freyd, 2013; 2014); this includes both acts of commission (e.g., blaming the victim) and omission (e.g., doing too little to prevent the assault). Student survivors who experience institutional betrayal report more posttraumatic symptoms, including anxiety and dissociation (Smith & Freyd, 2013). Fear of such secondary victimization is among the top reasons college students do not report their sexual assaults to police (e.g., Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Thompson, Sitterle, Clay, & Kingree, 2007).

Summary and future directions. In sum, evidence is weak that mandatory reporting policies clearly benefit survivors. Some studies have demonstrated positive attitudes toward mandatory reporting. Much of this work, however, included either non-victims (e.g., Mancini et al., 2016) or victims who were already accessing services (e.g., criminal justice system, healthcare centers, IPV shelters). For instance, IPV victims who had contacted the police for assistance were more likely to support mandatory reporting laws (Smith & Winokur, 2004). It remains unknown whether these findings would generalize to survivors more broadly, especially those who are unable or unwilling to seek help. Other research has documented fears and experiences of negative consequences (e.g., institutions stripping survivors of control, first responders blaming victims). One limitation that applies to much of this research (both supporting and opposing mandatory reporting) is the factor of age, being over 10 to15 years old; this raises questions about the applicability of these findings in today's social climate.

These issues deserve renewed research attention, addressing a range of questions. For example, do today's college student survivors—including those who have not accessed any supports—see and experience benefits from mandatory reporting policies? Do these policies differentially affect survivors belonging to marginalized groups? For instance, ethnic and sexual minority students are more likely to encounter discrimination and institutional betrayal (Smith, Cunningham, & Freyd, 2016; Gómez, 2015); do they feel protected and relieved or surveilled and distressed by mandatory reporting policies that require reporting of their assaults?

Assumption #3: Mandatory Reporting Policies Benefit Employees

Supporting evidence. Another argument about the benefit of making *all* faculty and staff Responsible Employees is that it simplifies the policy and reduces confusion for employees (see, for example, Association of Title IX Administrators, 2015). According to OCR Title IX guidance, universities must inform all employees and students which members of the campus community are Responsible Employees, so that employees are equipped to handle sexual assault disclosures and survivors are able to make informed disclosure decisions (Lhamon, 2014). In theory, an all-employee reporting policy should remove ambiguity about reporting responsibilities and simplify employee roles. However, these notions have not yet received empirical evaluation, in part because these policies are new to the context of university employment. Study One examined undergraduate resident assistants (RAs)—who are frequently designated as required reporters—and their opinions of their mandatory reporting requirements. On average, RAs believed mandatory reporting was a necessary and somewhat helpful part of their job. At the same time, however, RAs believed reporting duties complicate their other job roles (e.g., make it more challenging to gain residents' trust). In a study of physicians,

approximately two-thirds of the sample believed that mandatory reporting laws could improve physicians' response to IPV (Rodriguez, McLoughlin, Bauer, Paredes, & Gumbach, 1999).

Conflicting evidence. Studies of IPV reporting suggest that mandatory reporting policies do not simplify the responsibilities of reporters, who are often unprepared for this role. Studies find that healthcare providers often lack knowledge about IPV-related reporting laws (Davidov & Jack, 2014; Gerbert, Caspers, Bronstone, Moe, & Abercrombie, 1999), and they are less likely to report suspected IPV when they are unaware of their legal mandate or do not know how to report (Davidov, Nadorff, Jack, & Coben, 2012; Rodriguez, McLoughlin, et al., 1999; Smith, Rainey, Smith, Alamares, & Grogg, 2008).

Reporters' mistrust of mandatory reporting policies may also create challenges. For instance, compared to other RAs, those who held negative perceptions of mandatory reporting responsibilities were significantly less likely to report sexual assault disclosures to university authorities (see Study One). Other studies have found that healthcare providers believe IPV mandatory reporting laws hinder their ability to help patients and could inflict harm (Davidov, Jack, et al., 2012; Gerbert et al., 1999), and providers were less likely to report suspected IPV when they feared it may damage relationships with their patient or put the victim at greater risk for abuse (Davidov, Nadorff, et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008). Another study found approximately 60% of physicians stated that they would not report IPV if a patient did not want them to (Rodriguez, McLoughlin et al., 1999). Nurse practitioners with a personal history of IPV were also less likely to agree that they would report IPV to the police (Bryant & Spencer, 2002)

The field of psychology has long recognized the ethical dilemmas that mandatory reporting laws create for psychologists (e.g., Fisher, 2008; Pope & Bajt, 1998). Two central responsibilities for psychological practice include building trusting relationships with clients and

protecting their confidentiality. Critical questions arise about how to perform these essential job functions while also breaking confidentiality as required by victimization laws—potentially risking clients' dignity, autonomy, and safety (Fisher, 2008). The OCR exempts licensed psychologists and counselors, healthcare providers, and pastoral counselors from reporting responsibilities, and encourages universities to exempt sexual assault center employees and advocates as well (Lhamon, 2014).[22] Accordingly, any of these employees would not be obligated to report identifying information without survivors' consent (unless compelled by other law, e.g., the victim is a minor). Although teachers and advisors are not bound by the same level of confidentiality, many strive to build trusting relationships with students and safeguard their privacy. In short, mandatory reporting may require faculty to deviate from the principles of good, ethical educational practice.

According to anecdotal evidence, many faculty members express disbelief and anger after learning that their university sexual assault policy requires them to betray their students' trust (DeAmicis, 2013; Flaherty, 2015). Moreover, faculty fear that expansive mandatory reporting will deter survivors from participating in research and hinder rigorous investigation of sexual assault and other forms of violence (see Potter & Edwards, 2015). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2016) opposes sweeping mandatory reporting policies. In Moylan's (2016) study of university victim advocates, being designated as a Responsible Employee hampered advocates' ability to perform their jobs (i.e., assisting survivors).

Summary and future directions. Compared to few-employee policies, all-employee mandatory reporting policies appear simpler on their face. However, scant evidence supports the assumption that the latter are easier or better for university employees. Faculty have voiced

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[22] Although, in other roles (e.g., instructor), "these employees may have responsibilities that would otherwise make them responsible employees for Title IX purposes" (Lhamon, 2014 p 22).

concerns about the practical, ethical, and instructional challenges created by mandatory

reporting, and these claims warrant careful study (e.g., Are students less likely to trust faculty

who are Responsible Employees? Do these policies hinder faculty ability to teach about sex,

gender, or violence? Do they impede research on sexual violence?). It is also important that

schools evaluate the enactment of mandatory reporting policies: How well are Responsible

Employees responding to student disclosures, and how could those responses be improved?

Assumption #4: Mandatory Reporting Policies Benefit the Institution

Supporting evidence. A final argument in favor of mandatory reporting policies is that

they ensure compliance with Title IX and protect the institution against legal liability. The OCR

established that a college has "official notice" of a sexual assault when any Responsible

Employee "knows or reasonably should know" about the incident (Lhamon, 2014, p. 15). Once

the school has official notice, administrators must take immediate action to investigate,

determine if the conduct has created a hostile environment (violating Title IX), and if so, remedy

the situation quickly and equitably (Lhamon, 2014). Some schools may designate all faculty and

staff as "Responsible Employees" in an attempt to insulate themselves from liability under the

"known or should have known" standard (Moylan, 2016; Savino, 2015). If all employees must

report any sexual assault they see or hear about, the university can strive to take appropriate

action in response to every incident. Schools that fail to respond rapidly and equitably to sexual

assault run the risk of losing federal funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). However,

there is no concrete evidence that mandatory reporting policies insulate against legal liability.

Conflicting evidence. Some scholarly work suggests that broad mandatory reporting

policies could potentially violate other aspects of Title IX guidance. These policies prioritize the

OCR directive to investigate all reports, and overlook OCR guidance to provide victim-centered

support and respect survivors' autonomy and privacy (Moylan, 2016). According to qualitative accounts by Title IX investigators (i.e., student affairs professionals gathering facts for sexual assault complaints), their primary focus—respecting and supporting complainants and respondents throughout the fact-finding process—is sometimes at odds with university attorney concerns about legal liabilities (Peters, 2016). The 2011 Dear Colleague Letter states that if a survivor requests confidentiality, the school should "take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request for confidentiality or request not to pursue an investigation" (Ali, 2011, p. 5). However, even when Title IX Coordinators do everything possible to respect requests for confidentiality, Responsible Employee reports made against a survivor's wishes already disregarded that individual's desire for confidentiality and autonomy.

Responsible Employees have significant responsibilities—revealing deeply personal, distressing information about student-survivors and putting them in contact with university officials, resources, and possibly law enforcement (which could then pull survivors into criminal justice proceedings). These employees must be properly trained to respond to sexual assault disclosures with appropriate information, compassion, and discretion. The OCR outlines detailed expectations for Responsible Employee training: schools should train Responsible Employees to understand thoroughly 1) their responsibility to inform survivors about their role as a mandatory reporter, ideally before the disclosure takes place; 2) their reporting obligations, e.g., what and to whom they must report; 3) their duty to explain all of survivors' reporting options, e.g., filing a Title IX complaint, reporting to law enforcement; 4) survivors' right to request confidentiality or confidential resources; and 5) ways to respond appropriately to survivors, e.g., using nonjudgmental language (Lhamon, 2014). Responsible Employees who are inadequately or improperly trained could exacerbate survivors' distress and trauma, for example by asking

questions that communicate doubt or blame (Campbell, 2008; Orchowski et al., 2013).

The importance of training raises an important question: Can institutions with broad mandatory reporting policies appropriately train every employee (or even most) on their campus to the extent expected by OCR? Research has found that many institutions do not meet the recommended education standards under Title IX and Clery (Griffin, Pelletier, Griffin, & Sloan, 2016; Richards, 2016). For instance, at Senator Claire McCaskill's request, the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial & Contracting Oversight (2014) conducted a national survey to assess university sexual assault policies, procedures, and resources. They found that 21% of schools did not train faculty staff members on how to respond to sexual assault disclosures; of the schools that did provide training, 54% said this training was voluntary.

Summary and future directions. Mandatory reporting may seem justifiable if it protects the institution and embodies the victim-centered goals of Title IX and related guidance: investigating and adjudicating more assaults, assisting survivors, holding perpetrators accountable, preventing future assaults, and enhancing campus safety. Many would agree that these are laudable objectives. It remains unclear, however, whether expansive mandatory reporting policies achieve their intended goals. Do they insulate institutions against legal liability? Make it easier for survivors to receive assistance and justice? Result in prompt and equitable investigation and adjudication of sexual assault? These questions remain unanswered and merit careful study. Moreover, research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of training for Responsible Employees. Which training approaches are most (and least) effective, using which formats and materials (e.g., lectures, role plays, case studies, videos), and for whom?

Survivor-Centered Reforms

The preceding sections illustrate that broad mandatory reporting policies have become

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ubiquitous in American higher education, despite a dearth of evidence regarding their effectiveness (and some data suggesting possible harm). This is especially problematic from the perspective of psychology: according to the APA Ethics Code, the principle of *beneficence and nonmaleficence* dictates that psychologists must carefully assess risks and benefits, ensure benefits outweigh costs, and avoid or minimize harm before an intervention is implemented (and certainly before it becomes widespread). My analyses suggest that expansive mandatory reporting policies may not live up to these ideals. Thus, there is an urgent need for alternative, innovative policies and practices. The overarching goal should still be rapid and appropriate institutional response to sexual violence, but there should also be minimization of harm to students and respect for their rights to self-determination. Ideally, these alternative approaches should be developed with input from survivors as well as experts in sexual violence and mental health, and they should then be carefully evaluated for their efficacy. When one thinks beyond mandatory reporting, what policies and practices seem most promising?

Alternative #1: Ascertain and respect survivors' wishes. First, universities could require employees who receive a student disclosure of sexual assault to ascertain what the survivor wants to have happen with her or his private information, and then respect that student's choice (an idea proposed by Freyd, 2016). In a study of nurses and their patients, both indicated that the ideal response to an IPV disclosure is to allow the victim to have control over whether a report is made (Davidov, Jack, et al., 2012). If the survivor wants the information relayed to university officials or law enforcement, the employee must relay it. If instead the student desires privacy, the staff or faculty member should respect that choice. The policy should also acknowledge that survivors' wishes might change with time. For an example of this policy approach, see the "student-directed employees" policy recently enacted at the University of

Oregon (US16/17-07, 2016).

Alternative #2: Create a restricted reporting option. A second approach could be to implement a restricted reporting option, where students can make an initial report, provide evidence, and receive services, but choose not to launch an (immediate) official investigation. The U.S. military offers a similar reporting option for sexual assault: service members can make an unrestricted report (initiating an official investigation) or a restricted report (remaining confidential while accessing services); a survivor can later switch a restricted report to an unrestricted report (Department of Defense Directive 6495.01). The Department of Defense (DoD) documented a 40% increase in sexual assault reports in the year following the implementation of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program and restricted and unrestricted reporting options (DoD, 2016). Although survivors are more likely to make unrestricted reports, Service women report more positive experiences with restricted reports (e.g., protected privacy; Mengeling, Booth, Torner, & Sadler, 2014). Restricted reporting options protect survivors' autonomy—giving them time to receive services, weigh their options, and recover mentally, physically, and emotionally before deciding to make their report "official."

Alternative #3: Make use of a third party reporting system. A third approach could be to use third party reporting technologies, such as Callisto (https://www.projectcallisto.org). Callisto is a non-profit, online platform that can perform a number of important functions: 1) compile information about sexual assault policies, reporting options, and resources in a given college community, 2) allow survivors to create and save a time-stamped electronic record of the assault—including photographic evidence, 3) provide survivors the option to submit their report to the university at any time, 4) provide a "matching" option, which automatically submits the report if another student reports the same perpetrator, and 5) send anonymous, aggregate

statistics to administrators in order to better track the prevalence of sexual violence over time and understand the campus climate. Systems like these are a new approach to sexual assault reporting, and it will be important for future research to evaluate their efficacy.

Alternative #4: Refine mandatory reporting procedures. While expanding voluntary reporting options is the most survivor-centered alternative, institutions may be hesitant to abandon mandatory reporting policies entirely, given OCR directives. Some may also see mandatory reporting as a tool for detecting sexual predators and protecting the community. If nothing else, a blended approach is possible: alongside mandatory reporting, there could be expanded voluntary reporting options that provide survivors with additional outlets for disclosure. The aims could be to decrease involuntary disclosures (i.e., fewer reports without survivor consent) while increasing voluntary ones (more survivor-initiated or consented reports).

Modifications to mandatory reporting procedures could also help mitigate harm. For instance, universities could require Responsible Employees to report sexual assault disclosures to well-trained and confidential advocates, rather than Title IX officials or law enforcement. With enhanced social, emotional, medical, and legal support, more survivors may choose to participate in reporting and investigation processes later. This was a key finding in Campbell's (2006) study: rape survivors who worked with victim advocates were more likely to file an official police report and permit an investigation. A similar approach has been taken under Kentucky IPV law, which requires mandatory reporters to report to the department for social services rather than law enforcement. Researchers found that this law facilitated social workers' ability to assist IPV victims (e.g., with safety planning, finding legal help; Bledsoe et al., 2004), and IPV survivors preferred such approaches (Antle, Barbee, Yankeelov, & Bledsoe, 2010).

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Conclusion

A content analysis of 150 university policies provides evidence that schools are widely implementing policies that require most, if not all, employees to report student disclosures of sexual assault (even without student consent). A review of the literature reveals limited research to support assumptions regarding the benefits of mandatory reporting. In fact, some evidence suggests that these mandates may carry negative consequences: silencing and disempowing survivors, complicating employees' jobs, and prioritizing legal liability over student welfare. Policymakers and administrators must consider empirical evidence when making decisions about mandatory reporting policies. The alternatives outlined above purposefully move away from mandatory reporting as a primary response mechanism, and instead expand voluntary reporting options. Establishing more confidential supports, providing multiple voluntary reporting options, and improving investigation and adjudication processes could help survivors come forward on their own. With a combination of increased voluntary reporting and improved institutional response, universities could potentially remedy more cases of sexual assault, without sacrificing survivors' autonomy. There is a pressing need for additional research to further understand the efficacy and effects of mandatory reporting policies and survivor-centered alternatives.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Overarching Conclusions

The Importance of Evaluating Response Systems

These three studies illustrate the importance of evaluating federal and institutional responses to sexual assault. How are institutions interpreting and implementing federal law and guidance? And how do these decisions affect employees who are implicated in policies and procedures (e.g., Responsible Employees required to report disclosures) and students who experience sexual assault? The theory of endogeniety of the law suggests that, however well-intended, some products of anti-discrimination law (e.g., policies, reporting procedures) may not effectively address the problem, and could create additional complications (Edelman et al., 1999). The findings from these three studies take steps toward better understanding how university sexual assault response systems affect the campus community.

It is crucial to understand what Responsible Employees and survivors actually know about sexual assault reporting procedures and resources. Study One found that many RAs were lacking comprehensive knowledge about sexual assault reporting processes and sexual assault center (SAC) services. However, this knowledge may be important for RAs' responses to sexual assault disclosures. RAs who had more accurate and comprehensive knowledge of sexual assault reporting procedures were more likely to enact their reporting requirements. Additionally, greater knowledge of SAC services was associated with an increased likelihood of referring

survivors to the SAC for RAs who had low trust in the SAC and negative perceptions of mandatory reporting (i.e., the least likely to provide referrals). Scholars stress the importance of RAs having adequate knowledge of the policies they are required to follow (Blimling, 2003; Gregory & Janosik, 2006; Letarte, 2014). Study One suggests that RAs with greater knowledge of reporting processes and resources may be better equipped to handle sexual assault disclosures, but many institutions do not assess the efficacy of RA training programs (Koch, 2012).

Similarly, Study Two found that women who had experienced sexual assault lacked knowledge of campus supports. For instance, some survivors did not know the SAC existed, while others lacked knowledge about the confidentiality of SAC services. Additionally, some survivors were unsure whether they could (or should) use the SAC for an assault that was not recent and/or did not cause "severe" psychological trauma. Prior research suggests that students who know that sexual assault resources exist on campus may be more willing to use them (e.g., Amar, 2008; Walsh et al., 2010). However, a lack of in-depth knowledge of SAC services may prevent some survivors from using this resource.

In addition to knowledge, my studies also illustrate the importance of considering Responsible Employees' and survivors' attitudes and perceptions of policies, reporting procedures, and resources. In Study One, RAs with negative perceptions of their mandatory reporting requirements were less likely to report sexual assault disclosures to the university and refer survivors to the SAC. However, perceptions of mandatory reporting also interacted with their trust in these systems; for example, RAs with negative perceptions of mandatory reporting were more likely to report disclosures as their trust in the university's reporting procedures increased. RAs experience stress and frustration with their conflicting roles as a policy enforcer and support provider (Kozlowski, 2008; Reingle et al., 2010; Schaller & Wagner 2007). Many

other Responsible Employees, such as faculty members, hold similar conflicting positions that may affect their responses to students' sexual assault disclosures. Survivors' perceptions of campus resources may also hinder their ability to report and seek help. Study Two found that survivors were concerned about consequences of reporting their assault to the university (e.g., believing there would be harm to their mental health and/or personal life) and were unconvinced that reporting would be effective (e.g., thinking the university might "throw out" their case). Some survivors were also hesitant to seek help from housing staff because they were mandated to report sexual assault to the university. Unfortunately, these concerns are not surprising, as many survivors experience institutional betrayal after an assault (e.g., being blamed, seeing no positive outcome of a report), which is linked to posttraumatic stress (Smith & Freyd, 2013) and re-traumatization (Campbell, 2008).

Despite these findings, Study Three demonstrates that some policies have been implemented without clear empirical evidence that they will benefit survivors, employees, or the institution. For example, expansive mandatory reporting policies—that require all employees to report any sexual assault disclosure they learn about (either directly or indirectly)—may appear to be an advantageous policy decision on the surface. In our current climate, institutions are under great pressure to take a strong stance against sexual assault and respond swiftly and equitably when assaults occur. The OCR deems universities to have "official notice" of a sexual assault when a Responsible Employee knows or reasonably should have known about the assault, and dictates that schools must respond to all reports (Lhamon, 2014). However, the results from Studies One and Two, and the literature reviewed in Study Three, suggest that policy decisions, like mandatory reporting, may create complications for employees and survivors.

Collectively, my findings raise an important question: Can campus formal support systems still be considered "supports" if students who experience sexual assault cannot or will not use them? Historically, supports for sexual assault survivors on college campuses grew out of the women's movement and students' grassroots activism in the early 1970s; for example, residential advisors at the University of Maryland helped form one of the first on-campus sexual assault centers in 1972 (Gold & Villary, 2000). Sexual assault centers provide a range of essential services for survivors and the community, including crisis intervention and education (Gornick, Burt, & Pittman, 1985; Martin, 2005). In recent years, however, there has been an increasing focus on reporting as a principal response to sexual assault in higher education at the federal, state, and institutional level. My studies suggest that a narrow focus on reporting may undermine survivors' ability to access other supports. In Study One, RAs' who felt more negatively about their role as a mandatory reporter were less likely to refer survivors to the SAC. In Study Two, some survivors did not seek help from the SAC because they were unsure whether it was confidential and did not seek help from housing staff because they knew they were mandatory reporters. Campus victim advocates also report that a compliance-driven focus on reporting hinders their ability to serve student survivors (Moylan, 2016). If essential support providers—like SACs or RAs—are perceived to serve the institution (e.g., surveilling and reporting), students who experience sexual assault may be reluctant to use any formal support. Thus, the actual outcomes of policy decisions must be closely monitored.

Considering Cultural Context

My research also suggests that cultural context can play a role in the success (or failure) of university sexual assault response systems. Rape culture normalizes the association between (hetero)sexuality and violence, and sustains the blaming and silencing of victims (Herman, 1984;

Rozee, 1993). Pascoe and Hollander's (2016) theory of *mobilizing rape* illustrates how the normalization of male sexual dominance over women and narrow cultural characterizations of rape allow men to both commit sexual assault and "preserve their identity as non-rapists" (p. 70). College men are aware that they are engaging in behavior that is sexually aggressive and coercive, but do not see these behaviors as inappropriate (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Loh, Orchowski, Gidycz, & Elizaga, 2007).

Similarly, many women do not identify forced intercourse as rape because the experience does not match normative scripts for "real rape" (e.g., a male stranger forcibly and violently penetrates a woman's vagina with his penis, and the woman verbally and physically resists; Ahrens, 2006; Littleton, Axsom, & Yoder, 2006; Weiss, 2009). College women are particularly at risk for not acknowledging sexual assault (Cleere & Lynn, 2013; Wilson & Miller, 2016). Young women describe everyday occurrences of sexual harassment, coercion, and violence as a routine part of interacting with boys and men (Hlavka, 2014). Girls learn from a young age that their bodies are never safe from unwanted and intrusive staring, commenting, and touching. Research consistently finds that survivors who experience less stereotypical assaults and/or do not perceive their experience to be "rape" are less likely to report to the police (Fisher et al, 2003; Weiss, 2009; Zinzow & Thomompson, 2011). The results from Study Two similarly found that the most frequent reason survivors did not use campus supports was perceiving their assault as insufficiently severe. These young women frequently experienced unwanted sexual contact and/or attempted rape, and even though many expressed annoyance, anger, or fear, they believed this was an inextricable part of campus culture. However, survivors who experience "less serious" forms of sexual assault or do not acknowledge the behavior as "rape" still report

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negative outcomes like psychological distress, posttraumatic stress, depression, and anxiety (Carretta, Burgess, & DeMarco, 2015; Littleton & Henderson 2009; Muldoon et al., 2016).

The normalization of sexual violence and conceptualization of "real rape" are also deeply enmeshed in college drinking culture. College men are more likely to commit sexual assault in settings where drinking takes place, such as parties and bars (Testa & Cleveland, 2017; Thompson & Cracco, 2008; Wilson, Calhoun, & McNair, 2002). In some male peer groups in college (e.g., fraternities, athletics), taking advantage of women who are drunk is not only accepted but even expected behavior (Sanday, 1996, Humphrey & Kahn, 2000; Martin, 2015). In college, participating in party culture is viewed as a normal and desirable social activity—in particular, attending parties thrown by high-status fraternities is seen as a way for women to gain or keep social status on campus (Harris & Schmalz, 2016). College culture encourages women to attend parties and drink, but also delegitimizes sexual violence perpetrated in these settings—hindering survivors' use of formal response systems. College women who were drinking before experiencing sexual assault are more likely to blame themselves, and less likely to report to the police (Fisher et al., 2003; Littleton et al., 2009; Weiss, 2009). Similarly, Study Two illustrated that survivors did not use campus supports (especially the Title IX office) because the incident involved alcohol use and/or happened in an off-campus party setting.

These cultural norms could create problems for Responsible Employees as well. These employees must first recognize a disclosure as "sexual assault" before enacting their requirements to report the assault and provide the student with resources. Given widespread myths and misconceptions about sexual assault—especially when there is alcohol involved—Responsible Employees may struggle to identify sexual assault without proper knowledge and training. For instance, research has found that nurses with mandatory reporting requirements

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have failed to report IPV when they believed the situation was not serious enough (Smith et al., 2008). Even if Responsible Employees do recognize an assault, Studies One and Three also provide some evidence that these employees may be hesitant to put students in contact with formal support systems when they feel negatively about these systems' ability to handle reports and support survivors (e.g., believe a victim could experience further harm).

<div align="center">**Implications for Policy and Practice**</div>

My studies identify the need for reforms to university sexual assault response systems at the federal and institutional level. Policy makers and activists have been addressing this issue through state legislation, but federal regulations can help to ensure that student survivors and university employees do not have vastly different experiences simply because of where they work or attend school. Following federal reforms, individual institutions must make careful decisions in the implementation and evaluation of sexual assault policies, reporting procedures, and resources on their campus. My studies also illustrate the importance of recognizing the different groups that have a stake in these decisions (e.g., institutional leaders, employees, survivors), and acknowledging tensions that may arise between these groups' interests. For instance, Study One identifies factors that may help institutional leaders prepare RAs to perform their duties as Responsible Employees (e.g., reporting disclosures), while Studies Two and Three suggest that mandatory reporting may be harmful. RAs (and other Responsible Employees) should be well equipped to handle their responsibilities and assist survivors under the current policy landscape while we advocate for change—identifying, implementing, and evaluating policies, practices, and resources that will be most beneficial for student survivors.

Clarity and consistency in defining mandatory reporters. Policy makers should establish clarity and consistency in the definition and designation of mandatory reporters.

Federal civil rights laws must be flexible enough to work across a variety of institutions, but they must also be clear. The OCR's broad definition of "Responsible Employee" has helped open the door for policies that require all employees to report survivors' identifying information to university officials (and possibly law enforcement). Differences across OCR resolution agreements and state laws further complicate the designation of mandatory reporters and their reporting duties. Administrators struggle to understand how to interpret and implement conflicting federal laws and regulations (e.g., Moylan, 2016; Peters, 2016), and as a result, mandatory reporting practices vary across schools. The proposed Campus Accountability and Safety Act (CASA, 2015; *S. 590*) would attempt to clarify the definition of "Responsible Employee"—removing the vague category of people "whom a student could reasonably believe has this authority or duty," and clarifying the overlap between Responsible Employees under Title IX and CSAs under The Clery Act. Further federal reforms are needed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Responsible Employees; however, these decisions must be empirically informed. As discussed in Study Three, mandatory reporting—especially policies that designate all employees as Responsible Employees—should neither be recommended nor required without clear evidence that it benefits survivors and improves campus safety.

Training mandatory reporters. These studies also illustrate the importance of establishing requirements for training Responsible Employees. Through Title IX guidance, the OCR stresses that university employees—especially those who are likely to witness or receive sexual assault disclosures, including RAs—should receive training that prepares them to report sexual assaults and respond appropriately to survivors (e.g., using non-judgmental language, informing the student about their rights and options, referring the student to available resources; Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014). However, these expectations are written into OCR guidance, not law,

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which leaves room for variability in training content and delivery across institutions. The Campus SaVE act makes more prescriptive legal requirements for sexual assault education and training; for example, institutions are required to 1) make sexual assault prevention and awareness programs available for new students and employees (e.g., that define sexual assault and consent, and provide options for intervening as a bystander and reducing personal risk), 2) provide ongoing education on these topics, and 3) administer annual training for university officials who investigate and adjudicate sexual assault on how to conduct these processes in a manner that "protects the safety of victims" and "promotes accountability" (VAWA, 2013); However, there is no explicit direction regarding training for Responsible Employees.

Some state laws have been addressing this issue. For example, bills proposed in Massachusetts and Delaware would require that all Responsible Employees receive comprehensive training on consent, sexual assault, reporting requirements, and responding to survivors (Richards & Kafonek, 2016). However, legislating this issue at the state level means that sexual assault survivors' experiences with Responsible Employees could vastly differ depending on where they live and attend school—with only some students having access to well trained Responsible Employees. Legal scholars have asserted that federal law, such as The Clery Act, could be amended to establish more uniform standards for training employees who are mandated to report and respond to sexual assault disclosures (e.g., Letarte, 2014). New legislation could include better training requirements for mandatory reporters as well. For instance, CASA would require extensive training for university employees who conduct sexual assault grievance procedures, including information on consent, alcohol- and drug-facilitated sexual assault, survivor responses to trauma, and "victim-centered" and "trauma-informed" interviewing (CASA, 2015); this type of training could also be required for all Responsible

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Employees. Institutions should also evaluate the effectiveness of this training: Do Responsible Employees gain adequate knowledge of survivors' rights, reporting options, and available resources? Are they prepared to respond appropriately to sexual assault disclosures and manage any conflicting roles they may hold (e.g., mandatory reporter and support provider)?

  Educating students. Education on sexual assault response systems—policies, reporting procedures, and resources—must also expand to the entire student body. Student survivors frequently seek help from friends and peers, but they may not know the best ways to respond to a disclosure and/or the formal supports available (Banyard et al., 2010; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012). The Campus SaVE act requires institutions to include information about reporting sexual assault in education programs, but expectations around the breadth and depth of this information is not included in this law (VAWA, 2013). Additionally, research finds that many institutions do not meet the recommended education standards under Title IX and The Clery Act (Griffin et al., 2016; Richards, 2016). Universities must provide training programs that inform all students about the process of reporting sexual assault and the services provided by campus resources.

  However, the results from Study Two suggest that simply knowing that reporting options and resources exist on campus may not be enough to enable reporting and help-seeking. For example, confusion about what services are offered (e.g., can the SAC provide support for non-acute crises?) and what behaviors can be reported (e.g., what is "serious" enough to report?) hindered survivors' use of campus supports. In addition, Study One illustrated that undergraduate students working as RAs were lacking comprehensive knowledge of reporting processes and SAC services, and these student employees often receive more extensive training on sexual assault reporting processes and resources than the general student body. Therefore, institutions should incorporate comprehensive information about sexual assault response systems in training

programs (e.g., the methods of reporting, the investigation and adjudication process, the services offered at campus resources), and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of these educational efforts. Moreover, education programs must work to combat harmful myths about sexual assault and cultural acceptance of men's sexual aggression and "less serious" forms of assault.

Consider survivors' autonomy. While it is important to ensure that institutions are not ignoring or covering up sexual assault, attention must be paid to survivors' autonomy in the development and oversight of university sexual assault policies and grievance procedures. Study Three illustrates that many institutions are requiring all employees—including faculty, staff, and student workers—to report any sexual assault they learn about to the university, whether or not the survivor consents. Some schools and state laws also require that students' sexual assaults be reported to the police. Study Three demonstrates that these mandatory reporting policies have been implemented despite limited evidence regarding their effectiveness (and some evidence that suggests there may be harms). Legal scholars arguing against all-employee mandatory reporting policies have identified that federal laws (e.g., Title IX, Clery) have failed to adequately address the consequences that mandatory reporting may have for student survivors (e.g., Engle, 2015). Policies that restrict survivors' autonomy may limit their disclosure options and/or force them into unwanted reporting processes. Policy makers must consider the potential risks of adopting mandatory reporting policies without sufficient empirical evidence.

It is also important to consider how university grievance procedures that emulate criminal justice processes may limit survivors' autonomy. Although Title IX is a civil rights statute— emphasizing and providing equal rights for survivors and alleged perpetrators—university grievance procedures take a quasi-criminal justice approach to investigating and adjudicating sexual assault (Cantalupo, 2011; Hartmann, 2015; Koss et al., 2014). For instance, once a report

has been initiated, Title IX guidance provides university officials the power to decide whether or not to investigate regardless of the survivors' desire to pursue a report (Ali, 2011; Lhamon, 2014). Some schools may focus more heavily on this aspect of OCR guidance (i.e., investigate and solve all reports) and neglect guidance that instructs institutions to ascertain and respect survivors' desire to pursue a formal report (Moylan, 2016). In addition, some policy makers assert that universities should increase criminal justice intervention. The proposed Safe Campus Act (2015; *H.R. 3403*), for example, would require universities to report all sexual assaults to the police and prohibit universities from investigating an assault or issuing interim measures unless a survivor consents, in writing, to the university reporting the assault to the police.

However, not all sexual assault on college campuses constitute "crimes" under the law (e.g., sexual coercion), and even if an assault can be prosecuted within the criminal courts, cases can take years to resolve and law enforcement cannot provide supports that can be essential for a survivor's ability to thrive in school (e.g., changes to course schedules or housing assignments; Brodsky & Deutsch, 2015). Moreover, research documents the severe attrition of sexual assault cases in the criminal justice system: sexual assaults reported to the police rarely make it to trial (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Kelley & Campbell, 2013; Lonsway & Achambault, 2012). The results from Study Two suggest that survivors do not report to the university for some of the same reasons that they do not report to the police (e.g., thinking it is not serious enough to report, fearing negative consequences; Fisher et al, 2003; Lindquist et al., 2016; Thompson et al., 2007). Rather than viewing university sexual assault policies and reporting processes as another way to "police" criminal behavior, it is crucial to see these response systems as a way to protect students' civil rights—ensuring equal access to educational spaces and opportunities.

Survivor-centered alternatives. There is a pressing need for alternative, survivor-centered response systems that provide rapid and appropriate responses to sexual assault, while minimizing harm and respecting survivors' autonomy. Study Three outlines several options for institutional policy and practice, for instance, expanding confidential supports and voluntary reporting options (e.g., adopting reporting policies that require Responsible Employees to ascertain and respect survivors' wishes; utilizing third party reporting platforms). However, it is crucial to think beyond the minutiae of reporting and move toward more comprehensive supports that fully address the range of concerns and needs that may arise following an assault. For example, centralizing response systems in a location that is easily accessible but also affords privacy (e.g., not in the center of the student union), including: 1) specially trained sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) who can collect forensic evidence and provide other medical care (e.g., emergency contraception, STI testing); 2) confidential victim advocates and mental health counselors who specialize in violence and trauma; 3) administrators who can provide academic and/or housing accommodations; 4) legal representatives; and 5) university officials who can facilitate reporting options. A coordinated approach would improve the continuity of care, minimize the burden on survivors to seek out information and support from multiple locations, and facilitate reporting and help seeking (Cantalupo, 2011). In the community, Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) that facilitate coordination between key groups—advocates, police officers, forensic specialists, prosecutors—help survivors successfully navigate the criminal justice process (Greeson, Campbell, Bybee, & Kennedy, 2016). Supports that prioritize survivors' mental health and academic wellbeing should be central in educational policymaking.

Although it is important to acknowledge that efforts to improve response systems for survivors may be met with criticism from those concerned with alleged perpetrators' rights. For

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instance, journalist Emily Yoffe (2014) wrote "efforts to protect women from a putative epidemic of violence have led to misguided policies that infringe on the civil rights of men" (para. 1). However, some evidence suggests that institutions may provide more protections for alleged perpetrators. A national survey of intuitions of higher education, conducted by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Financial & Contracting Oversight (2014), found that 82% of universities let students accused of sexual assault challenge the impartiality of people serving on sexual assault hearing panels (78% allowed survivors to raise these concerns) and 91% allowed alleged perpetrators to appeal the outcomes of grievance processes (85% allowed survivors to appeal). Efforts to reform response systems may benefit all students involved; for instance, The Campus SaVE act affords protections for both survivors and alleged perpetrators (e.g., both students must be allowed to have an advisor during grievance processes, both students must receive information about the outcome at the same time; VAWA, 2013). Placing survivors' needs at the center of response efforts does not have to conflict with other institutional priorities.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this research that must be acknowledged. Studies One and Two each utilized a cross-sectional survey conducted at a large, highly residential, public university in the Midwest. Therefore, neither of these studies can provide causal conclusions and the findings may best apply to similar campus contexts. Additional research is needed to more fully understand RAs' responses to sexual assault disclosures; for instance, gathering data from different campus contexts and using qualitative methods can provide more in-depth information about RAs' knowledge and perceptions of policies and their responses to actual sexual assault survivors. Future research should also examine other groups of Responsible Employees, such as faculty members, athletic coaches, and academic advisors. Additionally, research is needed to

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examine survivors' reasons for not seeking help from different campus supports (e.g., campus counseling center), and whether reasons for not reporting or seeking help differ across campus contexts (e.g., institutions with fewer resources and more students living in the community).

Similarly, Study Three utilized data that were gathered at a single time point. These data did not allow an examination of how mandatory reporting policies have changed across time, for example, before and after significant OCR guidance. Much of the literature reviewed in Study Three focused on IPV reporting laws, and there are some key differences between these laws and policies in higher education (e.g., IPV-related laws generally mandate reporting to the police, whereas university policies may or may not involve law enforcement). Despite these differences, both require reporting of violence experienced by adults with the capacity for self-determination and, given the dearth of direct research on university mandatory reporting policies, can be useful in understanding the potential outcomes of such policies. Study Three outlines many fruitful avenues for future research on mandatory reporting of college sexual assault.

In addition, all three studies do not provide evidence about how identities (in particular, marginalized identities) may further complicate sexual assault survivors' ability to report and seek help and employees' ability to perform their duties as Responsible Employees. For example, students of color may face institutionalized racism that further hinders help seeking after experiencing sexual assault (Amar, 2008; Koo et al., 2013). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students may also experience unique barriers related to institutionalized homophobia and heterosexism. Future research will be needed to better understand (lack of) service use by survivors with marginalized and stigmatized identities, and how formal support systems can better serve these students. Relatedly, the legal and ethical dilemmas surrounding mandatory reporting may be especially challenging for faculty members who specialize in

gender, sexuality, or violence; sexual assault disclosures come up more naturally in this work, and students may see these faculty members as valuable sources of information and support for issues of sexual violence (Engle, 2015; Flaherty, 2015). Thus, balancing roles as a support system and mandatory reporter may be especially likely for women and people of color. Future research is needed to better understand how mandatory reporting policies affect both survivors and Responsible Employees who hold stigmatized and marginalized identities.

Summary

Three decades of research illustrate that sexual assault remains a staggering problem on college campuses. Recent changes in federal laws and oversight—including Title IX, The Clery Act, and VAWA—have prompted and shaped university responses to sexual assault. The intentions and outcomes of social policies can become distorted during the actual implementation of policies within institutions (Edelman et al., 1999; Rappaport, 1981), and, as a result, must be closely monitored. My research takes steps toward understanding the implementation and effects of university sexual assault response systems for employees and student survivors. These results demonstrate the need for more empirically informed policies and practices. However, without substantial change in community norms around sexual assault, these efforts may be for naught. A university can have the best-trained Responsible Employees, most scrupulous reporting processes, and highest quality resources, but a campus context that minimizes and normalizes sexually aggressive and coercive behavior (especially at bars or parties) can render these supports largely ineffective. Comprehensive education in combination with improved sexual assault response systems may help foster a campus climate that is more conducive to reporting and help seeking. Moving forward, ongoing evaluation of university sexual assault response systems must be coupled with efforts to change the cultural context.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

Knowledge Items

Knowledge of Reporting to the University (i.e., Title IX Office) Items
1. A student can make an anonymous report of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office.
2. If a student under 21 reports sexual misconduct that happened while they were drinking, they can be held responsible for underage drinking by the University.
3. A student who reports an experience of sexual misconduct can decline participation in the investigation process.
4. The student who reported and the student who is accused of sexual misconduct are both allowed to review the investigator's written report.
5. A student who reports sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office must also file a report with the University Police Department.
6. Students involved in a sexual misconduct investigation may have a support person present during any meeting.
7. Anonymous reports of sexual misconduct cannot be investigated.
8. The Title IX Office will offer confidential assistance to students who are considering making a report.
9. The Title IX Office can investigate sexual misconduct that occurs off-campus.
10. During an investigation, the student who reported sexual misconduct will be questioned by a legal representative for the student she/he accused.
11. A student who witnesses sexual misconduct can report the incident to the Title IX Office.
12. For a student to be found "guilty" of sexual misconduct, the investigation must prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the behavior took place

Knowledge of Sexual Assault Center (SAC) Items
1. SAC provides 24-hour crisis intervention and support.
2. If a student uses SAC services, the University will initiate an investigation into the sexual misconduct.
3. SAC can provide legal representation to students who report sexual misconduct.
4. If a student reports sexual misconduct to the University, the SAC can provide assistance and support during the reporting process.
5. SAC provides therapy for students who experience sexual misconduct.
6. SAC will alert the University Police Department about all reports of sexual misconduct.
7. SAC advocates can provide in-person crisis intervention at residence halls and campus offices.
8. SAC can only provide services if the experience of sexual misconduct has been reported to the University.
9. SAC advocates can review documents and materials from a sexual misconduct investigation.

10. SAC services and support are confidential.
11. SAC advocates can conduct forensic exams ("rape kit") to collect evidence after an experience of sexual misconduct.
12. SAC advocates can attend meetings during a sexual misconduct investigation process.

APPENDIX B

Trust Items

Trust of Reporting to the University (i.e., Title IX Office) Items

1. She would be taken seriously.
2. Nothing would happen to the perpetrator. (reverse scored)
3. There would be consequences for the perpetrator and they would be fair.
4. Her privacy would be protected.
5. The investigation would reveal her identity to others. (reverse scored)
6. She would be treated with dignity and respect.
7. Her safety would be ensured.
8. She would <u>not</u> be informed about the outcome of the investigation. (reverse scored)

Trust of Sexual Assault Center (SAC) Items

1. She would be taken seriously.
2. The staff members would <u>not</u> understand her experiences. (reverse scored)
3. The experience would be empowering for her.
4. Her privacy would be protected.
5. The staff would <u>not</u> support her decisions. (reverse scored)
6. She would be treated with dignity and respect.
7. Her safety would be ensured.
8. The staff members would <u>not</u> be sensitive to her identities (e.g., gender, race, sexuality). (reverse scored)

APPENDIX C

Sexual Assault Scenarios

1. Alice gets so drunk at a party that her friend Nick has to help her get home. Alice passed out when they got to her room and Nick had sex with her.

2. After working on a school project together, Kyle asks Ben to give him oral sex. When Ben says no, Kyle gets angry and threatens to force him. Ben feels afraid and gives Kyle oral sex.

3. John attacks Noel in the parking lot next to the library at 10pm. She screams "No," but he holds her down, pulls off her pants, and has sex with her.

4. Tasha is sleeping in her dorm room. Her roommate's boyfriend Steve starts fondling her breasts. Steve stops when Tasha wakes up and yells.

5. Luke and Dana have been dating for a few months. One night, Luke wants to have anal sex but Dana does not want to. He threatens to end the relationship if they don't. They have anal sex.

6. Tina agrees to let Paul give her oral sex. After a few minutes, Paul pulls off his pants and inserts his penis in her vagina. Tina did not want to have intercourse, and tells him to stop. Paul does not stop.

7. While hanging out in her room, Paige puts her hand under Carmen's skirt. Carmen pushes her hand away. Paige puts her hand under Carmen's skirt again and inserts a finger in her vagina.

8. Helena is having sex with Adam in his room, and his friend Tim walks in. Adam tells him to "go for it." Helena does not want to have sex with Tim too. Before she can say anything, Tim starts having sex with her.

Note. Contact the author for the policy definitions of "sexual misconduct" and "consent" that were used when creating the scenarios.

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