The Relationship between Campus Climate, Sexual Assault Victimization, and Reporting Sexual Assault to Campus Officials for LGBTQ College Students

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The Relationship between Campus Climate, Sexual Assault Victimization, and Reporting Sexual Assault to Campus Officials for LGBTQ College Students

Sarah Dodd Nightingale, PhD

University of Connecticut, 2020

Sexual assault is a persistent problem on college campuses and has been found to impact the health, well-being, and academic success of survivors. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) college students experience sexual assault victimization at disproportionately higher rates compared to their cisgender, heterosexual peers. Federal Title IX legislation in the United States (U.S) requires higher education institutions to have systems in place to respond to reports of sexual assault and support the students affected. However, few students report sexual assault to college officials. This dissertation seeks to contribute to the understanding of campus sexual assault by exploring relationships between perceptions of the campus climate, sexual assault victimization and reporting to campus officials, specifically for LGBTQ students. Data was collected through a survey which was distributed via social media. Ultimately, 1,115 participants met the study criteria. Three empirical articles were developed from this data. The first article explores how different dimensions of the LGBTQ campus climate, race, gender, and sexual orientation impact the odds of experiencing sexual assault victimization in college. The second article investigates how various factors, including circumstances of the crime and campus climate, impact the odds of LGBTQ survivors reporting sexual assault to campus officials. And the third article deals with how the LGBTQ campus climate and reporting behavior contribute to the variance in LGBTQ survivors perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate. Findings from these analyses are used to make
recommendations for policy change at national and state levels and suggestions for how social workers can improve practice with LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault.
The Relationship between Campus Climate, Sexual Assault Victimization, and Reporting Sexual Assault to Campus Officials for LGBTQ College Students

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A Dissertation
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completing of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut

2020
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Sarah Dodd Nightingale

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for trusting me with your thoughts and experiences. You inspire me every day to keep working to create safer, more just college campuses for all.
Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

The Relationship between Campus Climate, Sexual Assault Victimization, and Reporting Sexual Assault to Campus Officials for LGBTQ College Students

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Rationale

Sexual assault on college campuses is widely recognized by scholars, advocates and government officials as a salient social problem. In the United States (U.S), lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) students experience higher rates of sexual assault while in college, as compared to their heterosexual, cisgender peers (Blosnich & Bossart, 2012, Cantor et al., 2017, & Krebs et al., 2016). College students who experience sexual assault are at an increased risk for suicidal ideation (Chang et al., 2015), post-traumatic stress disorder (Herman, 1992) and disruptions to college academics (Banyard et al., 2016). Federal Title IX legislation requires that institutions of higher education respond to reports of sexual assault and provide academic, safety and mental health supports to students, yet few survivors report sexual assault to college officials (Fischer, Cullen, Daigle, & Turner, 2003; Moore & Baker, 2016). A growing body of research is exploring both factors related to victimization (Mellins et al., 2017) and barriers that influence reporting decisions within the LGBTQ community (Brubaker, Keegan, Guadalupe-Diaz, & Beasley, 2017; Cruz, 2003; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). However, the influence of the campus climate in these phenomenon is still not well understood.

The campus climate for college students is understood to be the general attitudes and perceptions held by students, faculty, and administrators about aspects of their environment. LGBTQ students are more likely to perceive their campus climate as less welcoming and inclusive than heterosexual, cisgender students (Brown, Clark, Gortmaker, Robinson-Keilig, Evens & Broido, 2002; Garber, 2002; Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer 2010). Research
suggests that the climate students experience on campus can have tangible consequences on their health and well-being. Notably, Coulter and Rankin (2017) found in a study of almost 2,000 LGBTQ college students that positive perceptions of LGBTQ inclusion on campus was significantly associated with lower odds of sexual assault victimization. Additionally, investigations of how LGBTQ students (transgender students were not included) perceive the climate for reporting sexual assault to college officials have found that sexual minorities report more negative perceptions of campus response to reports of sexual assault (Seabrook, McMahon, Duqaine, Johnson, & DeSilva, 2018; Smidt, Rosenthal, Smith & Freyd, 2018).

A more in-depth understanding of relationships between campus climate, sexual assault victimization, and reporting to college officials, specifically for LGBTQ students, may help practitioners, advocates and college officials improve response efforts, hold more perpetrators of sexual assault accountable and, ultimately, support equity in education. This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the campus climate for LGBTQ students as it relates to reporting decisions and victimization so as to expand the literature focused specifically on the experience of LGBTQ survivors of sexual violence.

**Glossary of Terms**

Several terms that are frequently used throughout this dissertation have a variety of meanings in both the world of research and practice. For clarity and reference, frequently used terms are defined in the context of this project in the following manner:

- The acronym **LGBTQ** is used to refer to sexual and gender minorities. While LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning it will also be used throughout this dissertation to encompass non-binary, genderqueer/gender nonconforming, pansexual, and asexual persons. However, when discussing the
experience of particular sub-groups of gender and sexual minorities, the sub-group will be specifically noted.

- **Sexual assault** is conceptualized as any sexual contact that a person did not consent to and that they did not want to happen (Krebs et. al., 2016). This differs from the term sexual violence, which typically refers to a broad spectrum of behaviors that includes sexual harassment, and intimate partner violence amongst many other behaviors.

- In this dissertation the term **survivor** is used to refer to a person who has experienced sexual assault. However, the term **victimization** is used when discussing the experience of sexual assault.

- **Campus Climate** refers to the general perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes held in a campus community towards a particular group or topic. Climate is differentiated from the campus culture in that culture refers to how an organization functions, and climate refers to how the community feels about the environment of the campus (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

- To **report a sexual assault to campus officials** means that a person contacts a campus official, such as a Title IX Coordinator or Student Conduct Official, tells them that an assault occurred and requests that the university take some sort of action. This is conceptualized differently than when a student discloses a sexual assault, which refers to a student telling a counselor or advocate that an assault occurred and seeking support or guidance but not requesting university action or intervention at that time.

**Literature Review**

The following literature review explores primary independent and dependent variables explored throughout this study.
Sexual assault victimization and LGBTQ students. Social science research conducted across several decades has found that sexual assault is a persistent problem on college campuses (Berger, Searless, Salem & Pierce, 1986; Brener, McMahon, Warren, Douglas, Kendall, 1999; Cantor et al., 2017; Fedina, Holmes & Backes, 2018; Fischer, Turner & Cullen, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher & Martin, 2007). Sexual and gender minorities have been found to experience sexual assault at higher rates that heterosexual, cisgender students. LGB college students are three times as likely to experience sexual assault in college than heterosexual students (Canter et al., 2017) and transgender students have been found to have significantly higher odds of experiencing sexual assault compared to female students (Griner, Vamos, Thompson, Logan, Vazques-Otero, 2017). While studies focused on the prevalence of sexual assault within racial groups are inconsistent, Coulter et al., 2017 found that racial minorities, within LGBTQ sub-groups, often experienced higher rates of sexual assault compared to white individuals in the same gender or sexual minority group. There is a growing body of work that delves into the issues of prevalence, yet little research explores why LGBTQ students have a higher risk of sexual assault and how their experience may differ from dominant social groups.

Reporting sexual assault. When college students experience sexual assault there are several different systems through which they can make a formal report. Like their non-student peers, college students can report such crimes through the criminal justice system by making a police report in the jurisdiction where the assault occurred. Unlike their non-student peers, college students can also report the assault to a college official. Federal Title IX legislation mandates that campuses have a grievance procedure in place to address sexual assault. Title IX or Student Conduct Offices are in place at college campuses to investigate, and if necessary, adjudicate
reports of sexual assault on campus. While the reporting process is mandated to be in place throughout higher education, several studies have found that college students are even less likely to report to campus officials than to law enforcement (Fischer, Cullen, Daigle & Turner, 2003; Moore & Baker, 2016).

Rates of reporting sexual assault are not significantly different when comparing LGBTQ adults and heterosexual, cisgender adults (Landgenderfer-Magruder, Walls, Kattari, Whitfield, & Ramos, 2016; Eisenberg, Lust, Mathiason, & Porta, 2017). However, research does suggest that LGBTQ identified college students may experience distinct concerns when deciding whether to report a sexual assault to college officials. LGBTQ college students have been found to have concerns that they will experience discrimination, due to their gender or sexual orientation, during the reporting process (Gentlewarrior & Fountain, 2009). They may also fear being “outed” by campus officials during the reporting process and the consequences this could have for them if they are not “out” to family, friends, and/or colleagues (Cruz, 2003; Mendez, 1996; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000).

The decision to report sexual assault to college officials is multi-faceted. However, it can be a significant moment for survivors of sexual assault. Research has found that healing after sexual assault can be impacted by how people and institutions respond to survivors. Negative reactions to disclosures or reports can reinforce negative coping strategies (Littleton & Radecki Breitkopf, 2006; Ullman & Filipas, 2001; Ullman, Townsend, Filipas, & Starzynski, 2007) while social support can positively impact the healing of survivors (Littleton, 2010). There is limited research focused on the impact the formal reporting process on college campuses has on survivors, including LGBTQ students, who engage with it.
**Sexual Assault Campus Climate.** While the primary line of inquiry around reporting has focused on individual decision making, there is a growing interest in understanding how social systems impact response and prevention of sexual assault, particularly on college campuses (Coulter & Rankin, 2017; Eisenberg, Lust, Mathiason, & Porta, 2017; McMahon, Stapleton, Cusan, O’Connor, Gandhi & McGinty, 2017). The sexual assault campus climate is conceptualized as both the prevalence of sexual assault in a community and the attitudes and perceptions of campus community members as it relates to this crime (White House Task Force in Protecting Students from Sexual Assault, 2014). As researchers have begun to examine the sexual assault campus climate, they have delineated different dimensions of this concept. Considering how students perceive reports of sexual assault will be handled by campus officials has been of primary interest. Studies have found that bisexual women perceive university response to sexual assault more negatively than heterosexual students (Seakbrook, McMahon, Duqaine, Johnson, & DeSilve, 2018), and that LGB students are more likely to perceive the campus response as harmful compared to heterosexual students (Smidt, Rosenthal, Smith, & Freyd, 2018; Smith, Cunningham, & Freyd, 2016). While there is a growing body of work around perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate, there is a gap in the research regarding other factors that contribute to these perceptions.

**LGBTQ Campus Climate.** A robust body of research has explored the environment on college campuses for LGBTQ identified students. Students who identify as LGBTQ often perceive their environment as less welcoming than their heterosexual identified peers (Brown, Clark, Gortmaker, Robinson-Keilig, Evens & Broido, 2002, Garber, 2002, & Rankin, 2010). Scholars have examined factors that contribute to this negative perception of the climate. LGBTQ students are more likely to experience harassment and other types of violence on campus.
(Rankin, 1998, Rankin, 2003, & Rankin 2010). Additionally, perceptions of treatment in the classroom, by faculty and other students, has also found to significantly contribute to perceptions of the overall climate for LGBTQ students (Garvey, Taylor & Rankin, 2014 & Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger & Hope, 2013). Recently, connections between campus climate for LGBTQ identified students and the prevalence of sexual assault within this community has been explored. Coulter and Rankin (2017) found in a national study of LGBTQ college students, that when controlling for demographics and year in school, the more positive the climate was perceived to be in terms of LGBTQ inclusion, the lower the odds of LGBTQ students experiencing sexual assault. Further research is needed to understand the role the LGBTQ campus climate plays in sexual assault victimization and, possibly, the climate related to reporting sexual assault to college officials.

**Theoretical Foundation**

Multiple theoretical frameworks were used to understand interactions between campus climate, victimization, and reporting sexual assault for LGBTQ college students, including ecological systems theory and minority stress theory. Additionally, the concept of institutional betrayal was used to guide hypotheses development and make meaning of findings.

**Ecological Systems Theory.**

The view of sexual assault as a problem that persists due to the individual choices of perpetrators and survivors, is deeply rooted in the cultural narrative around this crime in the United States. Using an ecological systems theory to view sexual assault on college campuses allows one to step back from the individualized perspective and consider how other societal, community and institutional factors may influence the nature of sexual assault, as well as prevention and response efforts.
Ecological systems theory provides a framework to understand how people and communities both adapt to and create their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. xiii). This environment is likened to “a set of Russian dolls” where different systems are nested one within another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). Five different systems are included in the ecological environment; the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. The majority of these systems involve systems, places, and institutions that the individual does not have direct contact, and yet can be deeply influential and affecting to their lived experience (Brofenbrenner, 1979).

Chapter Three utilizes ecological systems theory to explore how social systems relate to reporting sexual assault experienced by LGBTQ students in college. The environment for LGBTQ college students was conceptualized as being comprised of multiple systems that influence the reporting decision making process. Micro-level systems that are in direct contact with LGBTQ survivors included the relationship of the survivor to the perpetrator (i.e., friend, stranger) and specific circumstances of the crime (i.e., type of assault and presence of alcohol). The exo-level system included social structures that function independent of the LGBTQ college student but still impact their immediate environment. This included whether or not they were exposed to training on policy related to sexual assault and whether the survivor connected with campus support systems. Finally, macro-level systems, or the larger cultural context of the campus, were examined as they relate to reporting decisions for LGBTQ survivors. These macro-level systems included race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and the campus climate for LGBTQ students. The discussion of the findings for Chapter Three focus on how college officials, social work practitioners, and activists can influence different social systems to
increase reporting of sexual assault by LGBTQ students and thus support the greater goal of creating just and equitable environments in higher education.

**Minority Stress Theory.**

Research suggests that LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault may have more negative perceptions of the systems in place to respond to sexual violence on campus (Smidt, Rosenthal, Smith, & Freyd, 2018; Smith, Cunningham, & Freyd, 2016). Minority stress theory may provide an explanation for these different perceptions. Theorists have found that LGBTQ identified people live within cultural contexts that are homophobic and transphobic, which leads to the experience of chronic harassment and discrimination (Meyer, 1995). Facing a social landscape rife with harassment and discrimination then causes persistent stress (Meyer, 1995) which results in poor health outcomes and psychological distress (Meyer, 2003).

Scholars have examined different dimensions of minority stress, including the role of stigma. Stigma is the result of environments where a particular identity is considered inferior or negative (Goffman, 1963). As many LGBTQ individuals have experienced persistent stigma directly connected to their gender identity or sexual orientation, this may result in a high level of vigilance, or being on high alert for perceived discrimination or harassment (Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003). Vigilance may undergird why LGBTQ individuals are often skeptical of authorities or agencies, as they are keenly attuned to possible discrimination (Meyer, 1995).

Vigilance and stigma experienced by some LGBTQ college students may have serious implications for risk factors for victimization and the reporting climate that they experience in the college environment. Chapter Two explores how stigma may be related to the victimization of LGBTQ college students. Theorists have explored the deeply harmful impact of stigma on the health, employment, and general well-being of marginalized groups (Link & Phelan, 2001).
Analysis in Chapter Two seeks to better understand, in part, differences in victimization prevalence by LGBTQ subgroup. Chapter Four examines how LGBTQ survivors perceive the sexual assault reporting climate on college campuses. The survivors’ sense of belonging on campus, as well as perceptions of LGBTQ inclusion, and events of discriminations are all examined in regard to perceptions of the reporting climate. Discussion in Chapter Two and Chapter Four explore how the experience of LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault may be influenced by dimensions of minority stress, particularly stigma and vigilance.

**Institutional Betrayal**

Chapter Four was also guided by tenants of institutional betrayal, a concept for understanding the psychological distress experienced by sexual assault survivors when they experience harm within the context of communities and places that they trust to keep them safe (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). Freyd (2008) posits that when a survivor of sexual assault experience a violation of trust by an institution, they may experience more severe psychological harm after the assault, than those who did not. In one study of sexual assault survivors, Smith and Freyd (2013) found that approximately 50% of sexual assault survivors experienced institutional betrayal. Further, research suggests that institutional betrayal exacerbates post-traumatic stress symptoms amongst LGB college survivors (Smith, Cunningham, Freyd, Kengly & Follette, 2016). The discussion of findings in Chapter Four, which explored factors related to variance in the sexual assault reporting climate for LGBTQ survivors, was guided by concepts related to institutional betrayal.

**Review of Articles**

This dissertation consists of three articles, all of which are based on primary data collected from a single study. Chapters Two, Three, and Four contribute to the literature on
campus sexual assault by exploring the experience of LGBTQ college students with sexual assault, campus climate, and reporting to college officials. After receiving approval from the University of Connecticut (UCONN) Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Protocol #: X19=085), data was collected via social media utilizing Facebook ads, Reddit ads, Instagram ads, and Twitter from July 2019 through mid-September 2019. This recruitment method was chosen so as to enhance anonymity and accessibility for participants. Ultimately, a sample of 1,115 current undergraduate students who attend school in the United States and identify as a sexual and/or gender minority was collected. Of the participants, 80% (n = 892) provided the name of the school that they currently attended. Participants in this study were current students at 377 different four-year colleges throughout the United States. The study was funded by the Association of Title IX Coordinators (ATIXA) Research Grant program.

Chapter Two examines risk and protective factors for LGBTQ college students experiencing sexual assault victimization while in college. Specifically, the relationship between race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and inclusion of LGBTQ students with victimization during college was investigated. This study was guided by minority stress theory, and the theoretical assumption that there are psychological consequences for groups that experience social stigma, and that this process often results in negative effects in the lives of marginalized groups (Link & Phelan, 2001). After applying logistic regression analysis, results from this study suggest that Hispanic LGBTQ college students were significantly more likely to experience sexual assault while in college than non-Hispanic students. Transmen were significantly less likely to experience sexual assault than other genders. Additionally, as the amount of harassment/discrimination of LGBTQ individuals witnessed by participants rose, so did the likelihood that they were to experience sexual assault, suggesting an association between
inclusion of LGBTQ students and victimization. Chapter Two discusses, in light of these findings, implications for training, climate studies, and LGBTQ organizations.

Chapter Three is an exploratory analysis focused on factors related to reporting sexual assault to college officials for LGBTQ students. Approximately 37% (n = 409) of participants experienced sexual assault while in college but only 10% (n = 41) reported the assault to a college official. Chapter Three is concerned with factors related to the decision to report sexual assault to college officials. Ecological systems theory guided this study, and was used to organize how different systems may effect reporting decisions. After exploring these relationships through logistic regression analysis, it was found that multiple systems may be associated with the decision to report to campus officials. Survivors in the sample were more likely to have reported to campus officials if the assault involved penetration/intercourse, they had disclosed to a campus support system, they had been exposed to training on sexual assault at their current college, or they had witnessed harassment of LGBTQ persons on campus. Chapter Three discusses the implications for policy, training on campuses, and how the decision making process may differ for LGBTQ students, compared to their cisgender, heterosexual peers.

The third article, Chapter Four, investigates what factors contribute to perceptions of the sexual assault campus climate for LGBTQ college students. Minority stress theory and institutional betrayal were both used to develop hypotheses related to the sexual assault reporting climate and to make meaning of the findings. After conducting hierarchical multiple regression, it was found that when survivors have a strong sense of belonging and inclusion on campus they also have a more positive perception of the sexual assault reporting climate. Additionally, survivors who had reported the assault to college officials had significantly higher negative perceptions of the sexual assault reporting campus climate than those who did not report.
Chapter Four discusses how policy makers, campus administrators, and advocates can improve the campus climate by including LGBTQ survivors in developing reporting protocol and improving transparency of the process.

Conclusion

College campuses across the United States seek to improve sexual assault prevention and response efforts, especially as they apply to groups that have been historically missing from the discussion, including LGBTQ college students. This study delved deeply into the experience of LGBTQ college students with sexual assault victimization, reporting sexual assault to college officials, and perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate. Chapter Five will conclude this work with an examination of implications for research methodology, policy, social work practice, and social work education. Specific recommendations for campus, community, and national level initiatives, such as training on campus grievance procedures for social work practitioners and eliminating mandatory reporting policies at the state and campus level, will be discussed.
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Krebs, C., Lindquist, C., Berzofsky, M., Shook-Sa, B., Peterson, K., Planty, M., Langton, L., &


Chapter Two:

Campus Climate and Sexual Assault Victimization amongst LGBTQ College Students

Abstract

Sexual and gender minority college students are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault in college, however, there is a paucity of research exploring the role of the college environment in victimization. This study explores the relationship of the campus climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) college students and sexual assault victimization. This sample included 1,115 current college students in the United States who identified as a gender and/or sexual minority. Direct logistic regression analysis was performed on victimization as outcome and multiple independent variables related to gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and campus climate. When controlling for all other variables in the model, Hispanic LGBTQ students were more likely to experience sexual assault during college than those who did not identify as Hispanic. Further, transmen were less likely to experience sexual assault than other genders. Also, as the amount of discrimination or harassment of other LGBTQ students witnessed by participants rose, so did the likelihood that they would experience sexual assault in college. Findings support the idea that minority stress may play a role in victimization rates of sexual and gender minorities. Comprehensive climate studies on the campus level, and addressing harassment and discrimination may support efforts to reduce the rate of sexual assault.

Key words: sexual assault, LGBTQ college students, campus climate, risk factors, protective factors

Sexual assault is a social problem on college campuses that affects the safety and well-being of students. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) college
students experience sexual assault victimization during college at disproportionate rates compared to cisgender, heterosexual students (Blosnich & Bossart, 2012, Coulter et. al., 2017, & Krebs et. al., 2016; Rothman & Silverman, 2010). The sexual victimization of LGBTQ college students is situated in the context of academic institutions that can be deeply heteronormative and restrictive of gender expression (Cramer, 2002; Lafleur, 2014). Despite generational improvements in institutional inclusivity (Garvey, Sanders, & Flint, 2017), LGBTQ students continue to experience discrimination and harassment, often in the form of slurs, on college campuses throughout the United States (Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010; Woodford et. al., 2018). In a recent meta-analysis of several national surveys, scholars at the Rutgers Tyler Clementi Center found that only 43% of sexual minority students, and 33% of gender minority students perceived their campus to be safe and secure, and that both groups rated campus safety at significantly lower rates than heterosexual or cisgender students (Greathouse, BrckaLorenz, Hoben, Huesman, Rankin, & Stolzenberg, 2018). Recently, Coulter & Rankin (2017) found in a study of LGBTQ college students that, when controlling for demographics and year in school, the more positive the climate was perceived to be in regard to inclusion for LGBTQ students, the lower the odds of these students experiencing sexual assault while attending college. The aim of this study is to further investigate the relationship between different dimensions of campus climate and sexual assault victimization for LGBTQ college students.

**Theoretical Framework: Minority Stress Theory**

This study was guided by the tenants and assumptions of minority stress theory. Sexual assault victimization, for LGBTQ college students, may be impacted by their experience within the college environment as gender and sexual minorities. This relationship may be altered by how inclusive campus communities are of LGBTQ students. Minority stress theory posits that
LGBTQ identified people live within a culture that is deeply heteronormative, and because of this, they experience persistent and chronic stress that contributes to psychological distress (Meyer, 1995).

Several dimensions of minority stress have been identified in the literature. Of considerable interest to scholars are how internalized homophobia, vigilance, and stigma are related to negative outcomes for LGBTQ persons. Internalized homophobia is conceptualized as the negative judgements that LGBTQ people make of themselves, due to the messages about sexual orientation and gender identity in their environment (Meyer, 2003). Murchison, Boyd and Pachankis (2017) found that internalized homophobia was associated with a greater risk of unwanted sexual experiences amongst LGBQ college students.

Vigilance, due to perceptions of feeling stigmatized, has also been identified as a manifestation of minority stress. Stigma is conceived as stereotypes based on personal attributes, such as one’s race, gender, ability and sexual orientation, that are socially determined and whose meaning is made based on the context of the moment and place in time (Link & Phelan, 2001). Specific attributes are labeled, through social construction, to be negative, or undesirable (Goffman, 1963; Link, 1987). The labeling of personal attributes as undesirable functions to separate groups as “us” and “them” (Morone, 1997; Devine et. al., 1999). An inevitable outcome of this separation based on socially constructed stereotypes, is a loss of status, which ultimately results in discrimination at both the personal and institutional level (Link & Phelan, 2001). As many LGBTQ individuals experience persistent stigma directly connected to their gender identity or sexual orientation they may experience a high level of vigilance, or, being in a high state of alert. This may impact their trust in institutions and people (Meyer, 1995).
Minority stress theory provides a path to better understand risk and protective factors related to sexual assault victimization for LGBTQ students. This study explores the experience of LGBTQ college students with sexual assault through an investigation of how the campus climate, specifically LGBTQ inclusion and sense of belonging for sexual and gender minorities relates to victimization. The following section provides a review of the relevant literature in this area, followed by the hypotheses tested in this study.

**Literature Review**

**Sexual Assault Prevalence and LGBTQ College Students**

LGBTQ college students experience sexual assault at higher rates than heterosexual, cisgender peers (Blosnich & Bossart, 2012, Coulter et. al., 2017, & Krebs et. al., 2016; Rothman & Silverman, 2010). However, research has found differences in victimization rates by sexual orientation and gender sub-group, suggesting that risk and protective factors may differ by group. In a study of nine college campuses, Krebs et. al. (2016) found that 16.1% of non-heterosexual women experienced sexual assault in the previous year, compared to 9.4% of heterosexual women. Mellins et. al. (2017) found that male college students who identified as gay, bisexual or any other sexual minority were more likely to experience sexual assault than those who identified as heterosexual. Coulter and colleagues (2017) explore victimization from data at 120 colleges and they found that bisexual men and gay men had similar odds of experiencing sexual assault as heterosexual and lesbian identified cisgender women. Further, bisexual college women have been found to have a significantly higher risk of victimization than other sexual orientations, with studies finding that they experience sexual assault victimization 2.5 to 5 times as often as heterosexual women (Johnson, Mathews, & Napper, 2016) and that two
out of every five bisexual women experience sexual assault during their four years of college (Ford & Soto-Marquez, 2016).

Cisgender women have consistently been found to experience higher rates of sexual assault compared to cisgender men (Cantor et. al., 2015; Coulter, et. al., 2017; Krebs et. al., 2016). In a major study of twenty-seven college campuses, Cantor and colleagues (2015) found that students who had identified as transgender, genderqueer, gender nonconforming and/or non-binary experienced sexual assault since starting college at slightly higher rates than cisgender women. Approximately 21% of these gender minority students experienced sexual assault in college, compared to approximately 18% of women. Krebs et. al. (2016) found that 15.7% of transgender women experienced sexual assault, compared to 10.2% of cisgender women. In a study of two schools in the Northeast, gender nonconforming students experienced sexual assault at significantly higher rates that either cisgender men or cisgender women (Mellins et. al., 2017). In a recent study that used a purposefully intersectional approach, scholars found that race and ethnicity modified victimization rates by gender and sexual orientation (Coulter et. al., 2017). For example, Black transgender college students had significantly higher rates of sexual assault than White transgender college students. Coulter and colleagues (2017) suggest that groups who experience higher rates of harassment and discrimination, such as Transgender persons and African Americans, may exist in more unsafe environments that could lead to higher prevalence of sexual assault.

**Campus Climate and LGBTQ Students**

The campus climate for LGBTQ students is generally understood to encompass “the cumulative attitudes, behaviors, standards and practices of employees and students” as it pertains to sexual and gender minority students (Rankin, 2005, p. 17). Students who identify as LGBTQ
consistently perceive the college climate as less welcoming than their heterosexual, cisgender identified peers (Brown, Clark, Gortmaker, Robinson-Keilig, Evens & Broido, 2002, Garber, 2002, & Rankin, Blumfenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010). The environment for LGBTQ college students on their campuses is multi-faceted and for the purpose of this study, the following climate factors were examined: a students’ sense of belonging, LGBTQ inclusion, and witnessing harassment/discrimination of LGBTQ students.

A sense of belonging, for LGBTQ college students, can include connections to family, friend groups, and LGBTQ organization. However, belonging is conceptualized for this study as when students both feel cared for and respected by their school and also care for and respect their school (Whitlock, 2006). An analysis of the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Survey found that LGBTQ college students were substantially less likely to report feeling that they belonged at their university compared to other students (Greathouse, BrckaLorenz, Hoban, Huesman, Rankin, & Stoizenberg, 2018). Further research has found that belonging, as it relates to the college, may serve as a protective factor for LGBTQ students who experience sexual assault victimization. Amongst LGB survivors of sexual assault in college, researchers have found an association between high levels of belonging and less severe psychological distress attributed to the assault (Backhaus, Lipson, Fisher, Kawachi & Padrelli, 2019).

In addition to a sense of belonging, campus climate also encompasses how inclusive, or welcoming, academic institutions are for LGBTQ students. Scholars have examined different dimensions of inclusion. First, experiences of discrimination and harassment on campus, contribute to perceptions of the environment. LGBTQ students are more likely to experience harassment and other types of violence on campus and this is, unsurprisingly, linked to their
perception of the campus community (Rankin, 1998, Rankin, 2003, & Rankin 2010). Perceptions of treatment in the classroom, by faculty and other students, has also found to significantly contribute to perceptions of the overall climate for LGBTQ students (Garvey, Taylor & Rankin, 2014). Students who feel that they have been mistreated in the classroom, due to their gender identity or sexual orientation, or more likely to perceive the campus as a whole in negative terms (Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger & Hope, 2013).

Perceptions of the environment, for LGBTQ students may be associated with the prevalence of victimization within this community. Coulter and Rankin (2017) analyzed data from the 2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People report, which included approximately 2,300 college students from across the entire United States and 478 colleges. Participants who had witnessed harassment of LGBTQ persons on their campus, and participants who perceived their campus to not be inclusive of LGBTQ students, were more likely to have experienced sexual assault.

**Summary and Hypotheses**

LGBTQ college students experience sexual assault at higher rates than their heterosexual peers. Some sub-groups of the LGBTQ community, such as bisexual women and gender minorities, have been found to have higher prevalence of sexual assault than other sub-groups. Research has also found that LGBTQ college students consistently perceive the campus environment as less welcoming than cisgender, heterosexual students. Further, Coulter and Rankin (2017) found that students who perceived a positive climate for LGBTQ students, were less likely to experience sexual assault. The primary aim of this study is to further investigate two major research questions: 1) what sub-groups of the LGBTQ community experience higher rates of sexual assault and 2) what is the relationship between perceptions of the campus climate
for LGBTQ students and sexual assault victimization? The following hypotheses were developed and subsequently examined:

When controlling for all other variables in the model:

H1: Specific sub-groups within the LGBTQ community, transgender and bi-sexual, will have higher rates of sexual assault victimization.

H2: Racial and ethnic minority groups will have higher rates of sexual assault victimization.

H3: Perceptions of the LGBTQ campus climate will be negatively associated with sexual assault victimization.

Methodology

Sample and Procedures

Participants were recruited for this cross-sectional study through an anonymous, on-line survey distributed through social media. On-line recruitment enhances anonymity and accessibility for participants and has been found in studies with LGBTQ adolescents to yield more representative samples compared to traditional recruitment methods (Sterzing, Gartner, McGeough, Leffler, Blachman-Demner, 2018). This method has also been used to recruit participants in studies with LGBTQ college students and found to be successful in reaching targeted samples sizes (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Murchison, Body & Pachankis, 2017).

The researcher received Institutional Review Board approval and then collected data from July 2019 through mid-September 2019. The survey was distributed through targeted Facebook, Instagram and Reddit advertisements as well as Facebook and Twitter posts on LGBTQ related pages. Participants were recruited through the following social media platforms: Facebook (48%, n = 519), Reddit (27%, n = 291), Instagram (23%, n=253), and Twitter (2%, n = 20). In order to be eligible to complete the survey, participants had to be at least eighteen years
of age, a current undergraduate college students, their college must be located in the United States, and they had to identify as a sexual minority and/or a gender minority. No incentive was provided to participants.

A total of 1,115 participants met the criteria to complete the survey. Over half of participants attended public colleges (61%, n = 669) and the remainder attended private colleges (39%, n = 430). Participants attended schools in all fifty states and were equally distributed across each region of the United State; Northeast (25%, n = 274), Midwest (25%, n = 282), South (25%, n = 281), and West (25%, n = 269). A majority of participants (80%, n = 892) provided the name of the college that they attended. College names were coded and removed from the data set so as to ensure anonymity. When college names were provided, researchers cross-checked the school public/private status and location. When the name of the school was provided, researchers also looked up each school to determine religious affiliation. Of these schools, a vast majority did not have a religious affiliation (85%, n = 756), with a smaller minority attending religiously affiliated school (15%, n = 136). Participants are known to have attended 377 different college campuses across the United States.

As the majority of data was collected during the summer of 2019, participants who indicated they were incoming Freshman were excluded from the study. Participants were incoming second year students (30%, n = 333), incoming third year students (30%, n = 339), incoming fourth year students (35%, n = 387), and incoming fifth year students (5%, n = 56). The majority of participants were between the ages of 18 and 20 (60%, n = 667), followed by aged 21 (24%, n = 270) and 22 and over (16%, n = 178). During the previous academic year (2018 – 2019), approximately half of the students lived on campus (55%, n = 609) and the
remainder lived at an off-campus campus apartment or fraternity/sorority house (32%, n = 360) or lived at home (13%, n = 144).

**Measures**

The following measures were utilized in this study:

**College Sexual Assault Victimization Status.** Accurately measuring sexual assault victimization necessitates providing explicit information about behaviors that constitute sexual assault. One question from the Campus Climate Survey Validation Study Final Technical Report (Krebs et. al, 2016) was used to operationalize this concept. Each participant was required to read through the definition of unwanted sexual contact, manually checking off each section of the definition, before proceeding with the survey. The definition included experiences of sexual contact, such as touching of sexual body parts, oral sex, anal sex, sexual intercourse and penetration of a vagina or anus with a finger or object, that the participant did not consent to and did not want to happen. The definition reiterated that unwanted sexual contact can occur in circumstances where there is force, threat of force and/or the victim is in a state of incapacitation. After reading the definition in full, participants were asked if, since they started attending their current college, they had experienced unwanted sexual contact. Response options for this question were “Yes”, “No”, and “Prefer Not to Disclose”.

**LGBTQ Climate.** The environment for LGBTQ students in college was measured using two instruments. First, a modified version of the Campus Climate Scale developed by Coulter and Rankin (2017) specifically for LGBTQ students was used to assesses acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQ students on college campuses. The measure was comprised of three separate sub-scales. The first subscale asks participants to rate their campus in regard to how sexist the campus is, how homophobic the campus is and the overall climate from 0 (positive) to 100 (negative). In
the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for this subscale was .86. Next, three items ask questions about acceptance of gender and sexual minorities within the classroom, using a 5-point Likert scale. Responses included “strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree,” and “strongly agree”. In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for this subscale was .88. The last four items asked participants how often they had witnessed harassment of gender and sexual minorities on their campus. Response options included “never, 1 -2 times, 3 – 5 times, 6 – 9 times and 10 or more”. In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for this subscale was .89.

Next, sense of belonging was measured through the Campus Connectedness Scale (CCS). This nine-item measure was adapted from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health (2002). The construct assesses how respected and valued students feel by faculty and administrators, and how much they respect and value their campus community. Response options for each statement are a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The original, unmodified measure was tested for validity and reliability and found to have a strong internal consistency (cronbach’s alpha = .79) (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002). In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .87.

**Demographics.** The participants were asked questions regarding their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity. First, participants were asked what their gender identity at the time of the survey was. Responses included “female, male, transgender female, transgender male, genderqueer, gender non-conforming” and “other (please specify)”. Participants had the ability to mark multiple responses. Answers in “other “were coded by the researcher and a new category of “non-binary” was created.
Next, a question about sexual orientation was asked. Participants were asked what their sexual orientation is and could mark multiple responses. Responses included “heterosexual/straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning” and “Other (please specify)”. Answers in “other” were coded by the researcher and the following new categories were created: “asexual”, “pansexual” and “queer”.

Two questions were used to operationalize race and ethnicity, respectively. First, participants were asked what their race is (as they define it). Responses included “American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White”. Participants were able to mark all categories that apply. Those that marked multiple categories were re-coded to “Multi-Racial”. Second, participants were asked what their ethnicity is. Responses included “Hispanic or Latino” and “Not Hispanic or Latino”.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, when collecting data the researchers did not ask questions about the sex at birth, of participants. Thus, they were not able to assess whether all individuals who identified as male, or female, were born with the same gender identity. This may have skewed data regarding the transgender population. Second, this study primarily focused on individual perceptions of the campus climate and did not use measures to assess the climate from a macro perspective. This may be an area for future research. And finally, as data was collected through social media a sampling frame was unable to be identified and results cannot be generalized to the LGBTQ college student population.

Data Analysis

First, all variables were examined through descriptive analysis. There was less than 5% of missing data on each variable in the analysis and was handled using pairwise deletion.
Second, tests for reliability, normality and multicollinearity were conducted and assessed prior to further analysis. Next, direct logistic regression was applied to assess if variables in the model (race, gender, sexual orientation, exposure to training, belonging, LGBTQ campus climate) were significantly associated with whether the participant experienced sexual assault at their current college. All analysis was conducted using SPSS 22 software.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent variables were analyzed (See Table 1). The majority of the sample identified as white (86%, n = 949), followed by multi-racial (5.6%, n = 62), Asian (3.8%, n = 42), African American (3.3%, n = 36), and Native American (.2%, n = 9). Regarding ethnicity, almost 9% of individuals identified as Hispanic (n = 97), while the remainder identified as not Hispanic (n = 1,013). Participants represented a wide range of gender and sexual minority identities. Sexual orientation included bisexual (41%, n = 453), gay (19%, n = 210), lesbian (18.5%, n = 206), pansexual (5.5%, n = 61), queer (5.5%, n = 61), asexual (5.1%, n = 57), questioning (3%, n = 33) and another (2.6%, n = 29). Over half of participants identified as female (48%, n = 534), followed by male (20%, n = 220), non-binary (14%, n = 156), transgender male (8%, n = 88), genderqueer, gender non-conforming (6%, n = 64), transgender female (3.3%, n = 37) and another (1.3%, n = 15). Of the participants, 37% indicated that they had experienced sexual assault while attending their current college (n = 409). Participants who answered “prefer not to answer” were excluded from analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Descriptive statistics of categorical variables (n = 1,115)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity (n= 1,114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuous variables related to belonging, and multiple dimensions of campus climate, were examined (see Table 2). Participants were asked about their sense of belonging, in general, to their campus and they reported moderately high levels of belonging (M = 33.15, S.D = 6.07). A variety of variables focused on perceptions related specifically to the environment on campus for LGBTQ individuals. Participants reported a fairly positive climate for LGBTQ students in the classroom (M = 11.34, S.D=3.16). However, when asked about the campus climate, in general, for LGBTQ college students, participants reported less than positive perceptions but
with a wide range (M = 62.83, S.D = 25.44). Most participants also reported witnessing at least some harassment of LGBTQ college students on their campus (M = 7.59, S.D = 3.84).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of continuous variables (n = 1102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33.15</td>
<td>6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate in classroom</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, climate for LGBTQ students</td>
<td>1102</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>62.83</td>
<td>25.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed harassment of LGBTQ students</td>
<td>1102</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Logistic Regression

Direct logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of a number of variables on the likelihood that respondents would report that they had experienced sexual assault victimization while attending their current college. The model contained twenty-two variables that represented race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and campus climate. The full model was statistically significant, $X^2 (22, N = 970) = 125.03$, $p < .001$, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who experienced sexual assault in college and those who did not. The model as a whole explained between 11.6% (Cox and Snell R Squared) and 15.8% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance in victimization and correctly classified 67.6% of cases. As shown in Table 3, only three of the independent variables made a unique, statistically significant contribution to the model (observed harassment, transman, and Hispanic). The strongest predictor of victimization was identifying as Hispanic, recording an odds ratio of 1.72 (OR = 1.72, 95% CI: 1.04 – 2.85, $p = .036$). This indicated that respondents who identified as Hispanic were almost two times as likely to be sexually assaulted in college than non-Hispanic participants, controlling for all other factors in the model. Additionally, transmen were significantly less likely to experience sexual assault than other gender identities, recording an odds ratio of .33 (OR = .27, 95% CI: .07 - .99, $p = .049$). And finally, observing harassment
and discrimination of LGBTQ people in college recorded an odds ratio of 1.16, indicating that when controlling for other predictors in the model, witnessing harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ college students was associated with sexual assault victimization (OR: 1.16, 95% CI: 1.12 – 1.21, p < .001).

Table 3. Logistic Regression ORs and 95% CIs of LGBTQ College Student Sexual Assault Victimization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Sexual Assault Victimization</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus climate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom climate for LGBTQ students</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>[0.94, 1.06]</td>
<td>.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall campus climate for LGBTQ students</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>[0.99, 1.007]</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging on campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>[0.95, 1.004]</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness harassment of LGBTQ students</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>[1.12, 1.21]</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>[0.30, 3.42]</td>
<td>.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>[0.16, 2.17]</td>
<td>.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderqueer (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>[0.51, 6.77]</td>
<td>.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>[0.21, 2.45]</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transman (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>[0.07, 0.99]</td>
<td>.049*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transwoman (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>[0.19, 3.14]</td>
<td>.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual woman (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>[0.74, 2.14]</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual man (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>[0.41, 2.90]</td>
<td>.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>[0.81, 2.81]</td>
<td>.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>[0.40, 1.13]</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansexual (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>[0.47, 1.85]</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>[0.62, 1.81]</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>[0.54, 3.18]</td>
<td>.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>[0.22, 14.18]</td>
<td>.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>[0.33, 19.51]</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>[1.04, 2.85]</td>
<td>.036*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>[0.42, 21.52]</td>
<td>.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (1 = yes, 0 = no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>[0.62, 27.77]</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

* p ≤ .05
** p ≤ .01

Discussion
Previous research has found that LGBTQ students experience higher rates of sexual assault in college when compared to heterosexual, cisgender students (Blosnich & Bossart, 2012, Coulter et. al., 2017, & Krebs et. al., 2016; Rothman & Silverman, 2010). Sexual and gender minorities also consistently perceive the campus climate as less welcoming than the dominant sexual and gender groups (Greathouse, et. al., 2018). This study found that Hispanic LGBTQ college students were significantly more likely to experience sexual assault in college than non-Hispanic LGBTQ students, and that transmen were less likely to experience sexual assault victimization than other gender minorities. Further, witnessing harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ people on campus was associated with sexual assault victimization.

These results may be understood in the context of how minority stress, in particular how stigma due to the social environment for sexual and gender minorities, impacts LGBTQ college students. Hispanic LGBTQ participants in this study were almost twice as likely to have experienced sexual assault as non-Hispanic participants. There is very little research that explores the experience of sexual assault within the Hispanic college student population. Previous research on prevalence by ethnicity is also inconsistent. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005) analyzed seven years of national data and found that there was no significant difference by ethnicity in college student sexual assault victimization rates. However, other studies have found that white, non-Hispanic women and girls were more likely than Hispanic women and girls to experience sexual assault in the general population (Arellano, Kuhn & Chavez, 1997; Sorenson, Stein, Siegel, Golding & Burnam, 1987).

Research focused on the experience of LGBTQ Hispanic college students is also limited. However, Hispanic college students have been found to have different stressors within the college context, than White students. Contrada and colleagues (2001) found that Hispanic
students were more likely to face discrimination at college than White students, and that this impacted their general wellness. Other studies have found that the more discrimination experienced by Hispanic college students, the more likely they are to utilize maladaptive coping strategies, such as binge drinking (Cheng, & Mallinkckrodt, 2015). It is possible that Hispanic LGBTQ college students experience stigma related to both their ethnicity and their gender or sexual minority status. One possible explanation for these findings is that in order to cope with the stigma, some of these students may lean on maladaptive coping strategies that are known to increase vulnerability to sexual assault. That is, systemic racism, homophobia and transphobia endured by Hispanic LGBTQ students may play an important role in creating a context where their environment is more dangerous. More research is needed to better understand this phenomenon.

In this study, transmen were found to be significantly less likely to experience sexual assault in college, than other gender identities. Previous literature has often found that transgender college students have a higher risk of experiencing sexual assault (Cantor et. al., 2015; Coulter et. al., 2017). This study is notable in that it did not group all gender minority participants in to one group but instead delineated between transwomen, transmen, genderqueer/gender nonconforming, and non-binary. When controlling for LGBTQ campus climate, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, no other gender identity was significantly associated with victimization. Further research on the experience of transmen is needed to understand the possible protective factors that decrease their risk of sexual assault in college.

When controlling for sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and other campus climate variables, it was found that witnessing harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ persons on campus was associated with sexual assault victimization. Social environments where
certain persons have been identified as deviant will likely include discrimination and harassment of those persons (Phelan & Link, 2001). The experience of discrimination, due to a stereotype about an attribute, leads to negative life outcomes (Goffman, 1963). The findings from this study suggest that environments that discriminate against LGBTQ students are associated with higher rates of sexual victimization of LGBTQ students. It is possible that LGBTQ college students attending school in highly discriminatory environments are exposed to more dangerous environments, increasing their risk of experiencing sexual assault.

In light of these findings, college officials should address complaints of discrimination and harassment against LGBTQ students and students of color in a just and fair manner, and also consider efforts to address underlying stereotypes and prejudice against LGBTQ persons in their environment. Addressing the underlying causes of harassment and discrimination in a college community should be considered part of the sexual assault prevention programming and strategy in the college environment. Comprehensive campus climate studies, at the individual campus level may provide a first step to creating a more equitable environment, which could have positive long-term effects for LGBTQ students.

As colleges seek to end sexual assault in college communities, special attention must be given to the unique experiences of LGBTQ students. These findings suggest that it is important for college officials, advocates, social workers, and activists to consider how stereotypes and prejudice against LGBTQ students may function to create social spaces rife with discrimination, which ultimately is associated with higher rates of sexual assault against this population. Comprehensive climate studies on the campus level, and addressing discrimination and harassment may support efforts to reduce the rate of sexual assault.


Chapter Three:

An Exploratory Analysis of Factors Related to LGBTQ College Students Reporting Sexual Assault to Campus Officials

Abstract

Sexual assault is a problem on college campuses that impacts the safety and well-being of students. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) college students have a particularly high prevalence of experiencing sexual assault in college. This study explores variables associated with reporting sexual assault for LGBTQ identified college students. A sample of 409 LGBTQ participants who experienced sexual assault during college was collected through social media. Logistic regression analysis was applied to examine how circumstances of the crime, exposure to sexual assault training, campus support systems, and the LGBTQ climate on campus are associated with reporting sexual assault to college officials. Survivors were significantly more likely to report a sexual assault to college officials if the assault involved penetration and/or intercourse, they had discussed the assault with a campus support system or they had been exposed to training on sexual assault at their campus. Witnessing harassment or discrimination of LGBTQ persons on campus was associated with reporting sexual assault to campus officials. These findings suggest that higher education officials and policy-makers may be able to support reporting behavior amongst LGBTQ students, a highly vulnerable population, through education, training and enhanced campus support systems.

Key Words: sexual assault reporting, campus climate, LGBTQ survivors, college sexual assault, Title IX
Sexual assault is a persistent problem on college campuses in the United States. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) identified college students are disproportionately victimized compared to their heterosexual peers. Krebs et. al. (2016) found in a climate study of nine campuses that 32.2% of LGBQ students experienced sexual assault in college compared to 19.1% of heterosexual students. The same study found significant differences in prevalence based on gender identity. Approximately 28% of transgender students experienced sexual assault, compared to 20% of cisgender female students. Other studies have found that LGB students are approximately three times as likely to experience sexual assault compared to heterosexual men (Coulter et.al., 2016), transgender students are significantly more likely to experience sexual assault compared to cisgender students (Griner, Vamos, Thompson, Logan, Vazques-Otero, & Daley, 2017; Johnson, Matthews, & Napper, 2016) and bisexual students show the highest prevalence of sexual assault, compared to other sexual minorities (Blosnich & Bossart, 2012; Seabrook, McMahon, Duquaine, Johnson, & Desilva, 2018). While there is a growing body of work that delves into the issue of prevalence within the LGBTQ community, little research explores the experience of these student survivors, on their campus after an assault occurs.

Institutions of higher education in the United States (U.S) have an obligation to respond to students who have experienced sexual assault in their communities. Since 1997, the U.S Department of Education has provided ongoing guidance to college officials regarding how they should address sexual assault that occurs amongst students in order to comply with federal Title IX legislation. In 2014, the Obama-era White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault reiterated in a public report that campuses have a broader responsibility than the criminal justice system in this regard, as they are charged with “providing a safe learning
environment…and to give survivors the help they need to reclaim their education”. Reporting sexual assault to college officials can provide student survivors access to academic accommodations, counseling, support systems and protective measures which may contribute to their college persistence and general well-being. This study seeks to contribute to the knowledge base around sexual assault and college students by exploring how LGBTQ survivors navigate the decision to report sexual assault to campus officials in the United States.

This effort to enhance the broader understanding of LGBTQ college students’ decision to report to college officials is informed by ecological systems theory. The theory posits that an individual’s lived experience is influenced by a variety of systems, each composed of people, places, institutions, social structures and historical timelines (Brofenbrenner, 1979). Individuals are affected by systems that they are in direct contact with on a daily basis, such as family and friends, as well as systems that they are not in direct contact with such as government institutions and broader systems of cultural ideology and perception. These systems influence each other and impact individual lives in a variety of directions (Brofenbrenner, 1979). Scholars have utilized ecological systems theory to understand sexual assault in the campus context (Banyard & Hamby, 2011; Casey & Lindhorst, 2009) and have called for future research to use this lens in order to broaden the knowledge base around this complex social issue (Moylan & Jovorka, 2020).

This study examines how multi-level systems may impact the decision-making process. The micro-level system factors examined include the survivor relationship to the perpetrator and specific circumstances of the crime. Exosystem factors include exposure to training and campus support systems. The macro-level factors consist of the perceived campus climate for LGBTQ
students. The following literature review explores sexual assault and reporting to college officials through an ecological systems lens.

**Sexual Assault and Reporting to College Officials**

In general, few survivors of sexual assault in college report the incident to an authority. In one study of more than 4,000 female college students, only 5% of victims made a report to the police (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000). In fact, college students who experience sexual assault are even less likely than their non-student peers to make such a report (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). Studies have not found a significant difference in the rate of reporting sexual assault by LGBTQ adults, including college students, as compared to their heterosexual peers (Landgenderfer-Magruder, Walls, Kattari, Whitfield, & Ramos, 2016; Eisenberg, Lust, Mathiason, & Porta, 2017). Despite the low rates of reporting, research suggests that college students do believe that reporting to campus officials is important (Cantor, et. al., 2015) which indicates that the decision making process is complex. In the context of intimate partner violence, the decision to report to a college official has been found to be a process that is influenced by factors at multiple different levels (Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra, & Weintraub, 2005). While scholars have explored reporting decisions for sexual assault survivors, limited research has focused specifically on LGBTQ survivors in the college context.

**Circumstantial Factors and Reporting**

Research has found that factors related to the circumstances of the sexual assault may impact reporting decisions of college student survivors. This research has almost exclusively focused on the experience of college women, without indication of sexual orientation, in reporting to law enforcement. Adult female victims of sexual assault have been found to be less likely to report incidents where the perpetrator was a known person as opposed to a stranger
(Koss, Dinero, Seibel & Cox, 1998; Spencer, Stith, Durtschi & Toews, 2017). Also, the type of assault experienced by the survivor may play a role in reporting decisions. Amongst college women, not believing the behavior of the assault as “serious” has been identified as a barrier to reporting (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Spencer et. al., 2017). Several studies have found that the more serious injuries sustained during the assault, the more likely the survivor will report (Pino & Meier, 1999; Macmillan & Gartner, 1995; Wolitzky-Taylor, 2011).

Alcohol usage during the sexual assault, by the survivor, may also influence reporting decisions. The use of alcohol has been found to frequently co-occur with sexual assault within the LGBTQ community (Richardson, Armstrong, Hines, & Reed, 2015) and experiencing sexual assault after drinking alcohol has been found to be higher for transgender young adults than cisgender young adults (Coulter, Blosnich, Bukowski, Herrick, Siconolfi & Stall, 2015). While there is limited research on how alcohol use impacts reporting decisions for LGBTQ college students, there is considerable research exploring how alcohol usage impacts reporting amongst college women. When a survivor has consumed alcohol, this may contribute to feelings of shame and self-blame, which in turn reduces the likelihood of reporting to an authority (Abbey, 2011). Also, Cohn, Zinzow & Resnick (2012) found that the when a survivor consumed alcohol prior to an assault it was related to them not acknowledging that what occurred was sexual assault, and thus reduced reporting. Survivor feelings of self-blame related to alcohol use and sexual assault are associated with persistent cultural mythologies about causes of sexual assault. Women who are intoxicated when assaulted have been found to be more likely to face social blame for the assault, compared to those who were sober (Maurer & Robinson, 2008).

**Training and Reporting**
Throughout the last decade colleges have increasingly provided training to students focused on sexual assault. While there is a growing body of research that assesses the impact of these endeavors on the prevalence of sexual assault and student body perceptions, there is a dearth of information exploring how training impacts reporting. Spencer, Stith, Durtschi & Toews (2017) found, in a sample of 266 survivors of sexual assault during their college years, that participants who had received training on sexual assault were more likely to make a report, specifically, to college officials. The authors controlled for sexual orientation in their analysis but did not have enough transgender identified participants to include them in the study. The findings suggest that training may provide clarifying information which makes it more likely for students to report.

**Social Support and Reporting**

Disclosing and reporting sexual assault are terms that are differentiated in higher education practice and research. Disclosure is widely considered to mean telling another person about a sexual assault, without any expectation of adjudication or further actions taken by the institution. Reporting sexual assault is understood to mean engaging with a formal process for adjudication or other types of response from the college. The process of disclosing a sexual assault to informal sources may have an impact on decisions to report to a formal authority. In a national probability sample of approximately 3,000 women, two-thirds of survivors who disclosed to an informal source were encouraged to report to a formal authority (Paul, Wash, McCauley, Riggiero, Resnick & Kilpatrick, 2014). The majority of disclosure recipients also encouraged survivors to report to police in a sample of college women (Paul, Walsh, McCauley, Riggiero, Resnick & Kilpatrick, 2013). Previous research has found that LGBQ survivors of sexual assault disclose to support services such as rape crisis centers at the same rate as
heterosexual survivors (Long, 2007). Further, studies conducted with college student survivors found that LGBQ survivors were equally comfortable disclosing to campus resources, compared to heterosexual students (Eisenberg, Lust, Mathiasson, & Porta, 2017; Holland, 2019). While this research suggests that disclosure may impact future decisions of survivors, there is little research exploring the relationship between disclosure and actual reporting behavior.

**LGBTQ Campus Climate and Reporting**

Student perceptions of the general campus climate may impact reporting behavior. Spencer, Stith, Durtschi & Toews (2016) found that college survivors of sexual assault were more likely to report the assault to campus officials if they held a positive perception of their campus climate. However, students who identify as LGBTQ often perceive their environment as less welcoming than their cisgender, heterosexual identified peers (Brown, Clark, Gortmaker, Robinson-Keilig, Evens & Broido, 2002, Garber, 2002, & Rankin, 2010). Scholars have examined factors that contribute to this negative perception of the climate. LGBTQ students are more likely to experience harassment and other types of violence on campus (Rankin, 1998, Rankin, 2003, & Rankin 2010). Additionally, perceptions of treatment in the classroom, by faculty and other students, has also found to significantly contribute to perceptions of the overall climate for LGBTQ students (Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger & Hope, 2013).

**Summary and Hypotheses**

Multiple factors have been found to influence the decision to report sexual assault to college officials amongst college women. These factors include the circumstances of the crime, race, social support, training and campus climate. However, there is limited research that explores how these factors specifically influence LGBTQ college students as they navigate the
reporting process. Based on the above review of the literature, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis One: LGBTQ survivor alcohol use prior to the assault, and LGBTQ survivors who perceive a negative climate for sexual and gender minorities will be associated with a decreased likelihood of reporting to college officials.

Hypothesis Two: LGBTQ survivors who were assaulted by a stranger, assaults that included penetration or intercourse, and exposure to training on policy and procedure will be associated with an increased likelihood of reporting to college officials.

Method

Sample and Procedures

LGBTQ college students are an under studied population that is hard to reach through traditional methods, especially if students are not currently “out” regarding their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. On-line surveys that utilize social media as a recruitment tool have been found in some studies with LGBTQ adolescents to result in more representative samples, as they have increased accessibility and anonymity (Sterzing, Gartner, McGeough, Leffler, Blachman-Demner, 2018). Previous studies of LGBTQ college students have found on-line recruitment to be a successful strategy in attaining targeted samples (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Murchison, Body & Pachankis, 2017). Therefore, data was collected for this cross-sectional study through an anonymous, on-line survey administered through social media posts.

Participants indicated that they were made aware of the survey through the following means: Facebook ad (52%, n = 213), Instagram ad (21%, n=87), Reddit post (19%, n = 78), Twitter post (2.7%, n = 11) and from encouragement from friends (3.4%, n = 14). In order to deter participant misuse, no incentive was provided for participation. After receiving approval from
the Institutional Review Board, recruitment efforts were conducted from July 2019 through mid-September 2019.

Eligibility requirements for this study included: 1) current undergraduate student 2) attend a four-year college in the United States, 3) 18 years of age or older, and 4) identify as a sexual and/or gender minority. In total, 1,115 participants met the criteria to participate in this study and completed the survey. Of the total participants, 36.7% indicated that they had experienced sexual assault while enrolled at their current college (n = 409). Only these participants who had experienced sexual assault were included in the current analysis.

Of the individuals who had experienced sexual assault in college, slightly over half attended a public institution (58.4%, n = 234) and the remaining attended a private school (41.6%, n = 167). (See Table 1) Participants attended schools in all fifty states and were evenly distributed throughout four major regions in the United States; Northeast (21.3%, n = 87), Midwest (26.2%, n = 107), South (24.7%, n = 101), and West (26.7%, n = 109). Slightly over half of participants lived on-campus (52.8%, n = 216) and just under half lived either at home or at an off-campus apartment or house (47.2%, n = 193). First-year college students were excluded from participation as recruitment was primarily conducted during the summer of 2019. Incoming fourth year students (41.8%, n = 171) represented the largest academic class, followed by incoming third year students (31.8%, n = 130), incoming second-year students (20%, n = 82), and incoming fifth year students (6.4%, n = 26).

Measures

The following measures were utilized in this study:

**Did the participant report a sexual assault to campus officials?** Respondents were asked whether they made a formal report using campus procedures. Participants had the options of,
“yes”, “no”, or “unsure.” Only participants that marked “yes” were considered to have made a report. Participants that marked “unsure” were excluded from the study. This question was adapted from the University of New Hampshire Unwanted Sexual Experience Survey (Banyard, Cohn, Edwards, Moynihan, Walsh & Ward, 2012).

**What type of unwanted behavior was perpetrated?** Participants were asked a series of five separate questions regarding whether the assault included the following behaviors: “forced touching of a sexual nature, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, or sexual penetration with a finger or object”. Answers included “yes” or “no” and participants could “mark all that apply” (Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-Sa, Peterson, Plante & Langton, 2016). In order to analyze how different types of assaults may be related to reporting to campus officials, responses were then dummy coded as 0 = forced touching of a sexual nature only and 1 = assault included oral sex, anal sex, sexual intercourse and/or sexual penetration with a finger or object.

**Were alcohol/drugs involved?** Participants were asked if they had been drinking alcohol or using drugs in the hours prior to the assault. Responses for both questions included “yes”, “no”, “unsure/don’t know” (Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-Sa, Peterson, Plante & Langton, 2016). Unsure/don’t know was considered missing data.

**Who was the perpetrator?** Participants were asked who was the person/people who had unwanted sexual contact with you? Responses included “stranger, family member, acquaintance, coworker, employer/supervisor, college professor/instructor, college staff, non-romantic friend, casual or first date, current romantic partner, ex-romantic partner, other” (Banyard, Cohn, Edwards, Moynihan, Walsh & Ward, 2012). Responses were dummy-coded as 0 = not a stranger and 1 = stranger.
**LGBTQ Campus Climate.** The environment for LGBTQ students in college was measured in three different ways, based on the Campus Climate Scale developed by Coulter and Rankin (2017) specifically for LGBTQ college students. Questions related to general acceptance of LGBTQ college students on campus (1 item), acceptance and inclusion in the classroom (3 items), and harassment of LGBTQ students (4 items) were utilized. First, a single question asked participants about their perception of the climate for LGBTQ college students from 0 (negative) to 100 (positive). The next three items, related to inclusion and acceptance in the classroom, were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The last four items, related to harassment, have response options of “never, 1–2 times, 3–5 times, 6–9 times and 10 or more”. Both scales were tested for reliability and showed excellent internal consistency with Chronbach alpha’s of .86 and .89 for acceptance and inclusion in the classroom and witnessing harassment respectively.

**Exposure to Training.** Training was measured through two questions. The first question asked whether, since the participant began attending their current college, they has attended training on policies and procedures related to sexual assault. The second question asks whether the participant has attended training on prevention of sexual assault since starting college. Choices were “yes” and “no.” (White House Task Force, 2014.) A composite question was then created and answers dummy coded. Participants who answered “yes” to either training question were identified as being exposed to training and those that answered “no” to both questions were identified as not exposed.

**Disclosure to campus support systems.** Participants were asked who they told about the assault. Responses included “roommate, close friend other than roommate, parent or guardian, other family member, counselor, faculty or staff, residence hall staff, police, romantic partner, campus advocate, other” (Banyard, Cohn, Edwards, Moynihan, Walsh & Ward, 2012.) Responses were
dummy coded in to two separate separate items. First, $1 = $told a counselor and $0 = $did not tell a counselor. Second, $1 = $told a residence hall staff and $0 = $did not tell residence hall staff.

**Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation.** The participants were asked what their current gender identity is. Responses included “female, male, transgender female, transgender male, genderqueer, gender non-conforming and other (please specify).” Answers in “other” were coded by the researcher and the following new categories were created: “non-binary”, and “another”.

The participants were asked about their sexual orientation. Responses included “heterosexual/straight”, “gay”, “lesbian”, “bisexual”, “questioning” and “Other (please specify).” Answers in “other” were coded by the researcher and the following new categories were created: “queer”, “another”, “asexual”, and “pansexual”.

**Data Analysis**

Initial analysis of the data set included examination of all variables through descriptive analysis. After excluding all participants who did not meet the criteria of the study ($n = 1,613$), it was determined that approximately 623 participants completed less than 60% of questions. A series of t-tests were performed to compare the missing data with completed data on all independent and dependent variables. Ultimately it was found that the data was missing at random and there was no significant difference between the participants who did not complete the questions and those that did. Participants who completed less than 60% of questions were removed from the sample. All variables under analysis had less than 5% missing data. Missing data was handled using pairwise deletion.

Tests for reliability, normality and multicollinearity were conducted and assessed prior to further analysis. Next, three separate logistic regressions were run to determine if variables were
significantly associated with whether the participant made a formal report to campus authorities. Establishment of these three models was theory driven and they were grouped by circumstances of the crime (perpetrator relationship to survivor, use of alcohol, and type of assault), campus support systems (exposure to training, disclosure to counselor), and campus climate (sense of belonging, observed harassment/discrimination, perceived inclusion on campus, perceived inclusion in the classroom). Predictors that were significant at the .05 level were then tested in a single model. A Bonferroni Correction (p < .017) was used to assess the results of the final model and limit Type 1 error. All analysis was conducted using SPSS 22 software.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, a cross-sectional research design was used so analysis is unable to determine causation between variables and reporting. Results can only display associations between these factors and reporting sexual assault. Second, due to the data collection method of using social media, a sampling frame is unable to be determined, and results cannot be generalized to the wider population. Also, participants self-selected in to the study on social media. This may have drawn participants who knew more about sexual assault on college campus or who had strong feelings about the issue. Finally, due to the low prevalence of reporting to campus officials, there were few survivors in this sample who had reported to their campus (n = 41). This low number of reports limited the number of variables that could be included in logistic regression models.

Results

First, descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent variables in this study were examined (see Table 1). Participants represented a range of sexual orientations: Bisexual (44.7%, n = 183), Gay (18.6%, n = 76), Lesbian (16.9%, n = 69), Questioning (3.2%, n = 13),
Another (2.2%, n = 9), Asexual (3.4%, n = 14), Queer (5.6%, n = 23) and Pansexual (5.1%, n = 21). A majority of the sample identified as female (51.3%, n = 210) or male (17.6%, n = 72), followed by Non-Binary (13.4%, n = 55), genderqueer/gender non-conforming (8.6%, n = 35), Transgender (7.4%, n = 30), and another (1.7%, n = 7). The sample was primary white (86.6%, n = 354), with only a small portion identifying as a person of color (12%, n = 49). The majority of the sample were between 18 and 21 (82.7%, n = 338), with only a few participants aged older than 21 (17.4%, n = 71).

**Table 1** Demographic characteristics of LGBTQ College Student Survivors (n = 409)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Identity (n= 407)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderqueer/gender non-conforming</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation (n = 409)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race (n= 403)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person of Color</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (n = 409)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 20</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 plus</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categorical variables related to circumstances of the crime, training, and disclosure were examined (see Table 2). Approximately 25% of participants indicated that a stranger had
assaulted them (n = 105). Participants were asked detailed questions about the sexual assault. Approximately half of participants, 50.1%, indicated that the sexual assault involved unwanted intercourse or penetration that included oral sex, anal sex, sexual intercourse and/or penetration by a body part or object (n = 205). When asked, 45.7% of participants reported that they had been under the influence of alcohol during the assault (n = 187).

A majority of participants had participated in training related to sexual assault. 83.4% had received training focused on sexual assault since beginning college at their current institution (n = 341). Very few participants utilized campus employees and counselors as support services after the assault with on 19% of survivors indicating that they disclosed to a counselor (n = 78).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Descriptive statistics of categorical variables (n = 409)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting decision (n = 409)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor reported to campus official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor did not report to campus official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator status: stranger (n = 409)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator was stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator was not a stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of assault (n = 409)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault involved unwanted penetration / intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault did not involve unwanted penetration / intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use (n = 409)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor under influence of alcohol during assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor was not under influence of alcohol during assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received training related to SA (n = 409)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosed to Counselor (n = 409)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceptions related to the environment for LGBTQ college students were also examined (See Table 3). When asked about their perception of the overall climate for LGBTQ students on their campus, participants were moderately positive, however there was considerable variance in
the response (M = 58.54, S.D = 25.09). Participants were fairly positive about the climate for LGBTQ students in the classroom (M = 10.85, S.D = 3.23). Participants did indicate that they had observed harassment of LGBTQ individuals on campus, and that these observations occurred fairly frequently (M = 8.90, S.D = 4.17).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Descriptive statistics of continuous variables (n = 403)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate in classroom</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed harassment</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, climate for LGBTQ students</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, logistic regression was performed to test the hypotheses developed for this study.

**Logistic Regression Results**

*Circumstances of Crime and Reporting*

First, a model that included only circumstances of the crime (type of assault, perpetrator status, and involvement of alcohol) was tested. Participants were 3.84 times as likely to report a sexual assault to campus officials if the assault included unwanted intercourse or penetration than if the assault only included unwanted sexual touching (OR: 3.84, 95% CI: .162 – 7.77, p < .01). In this model, whether a survivor was drinking alcohol and whether the perpetrator was a stranger or known person were not significant factors in reporting to college officials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>Logistic Regression ORs and 95% CIs of LGBTQ College Student Reporting to College Officials by Circumstances of the Crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumstances of assault</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator was stranger</td>
<td>.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use by survivor</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault involved penetration/intercourse</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

*p ≤ .05
**p ≤ .01

**Training, Support Services, and Reporting**

Campus support services were significantly associated with reporting behavior. Participants that disclosed to a counselor were 4.46 times as likely to report the sexual assault to a campus official than those who had not disclosed to a counselor (OR: 4.46, 95% CI: 2.18 – 9.12, p < .001). Exposure to policy training and prevention training was also a significant factor. Survivors exposed to training on sexual at their college were 3.76 times as likely to report to a campus official compared to those who had not (OR: 3.76, 95% CI: 1.05 – 13.44, p = .042).

**Table 5. Logistic Regression ORs and 95% CIs of LGBTQ College Student Reporting to College Officials by Training and Campus Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposed to training</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>[1.05, 13.45]</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosed to counselor</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>[2.18, 9.12]</td>
<td>&lt; .001**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.
*p ≤ .05
**p ≤ .01

**Campus Climate and Reporting**

Multiple factors related to the environment on campus for LGBTQ students were analyzed as they related to reporting behavior. The climate for these students in the classroom and their perceptions of the climate for LGBTQ students on campus were not associated with reporting to campus officials. However, a history of observing harassment of LGBTQ students on campus had a significant positive relationship to reporting (OR: 1.15, 95% CI: 1.05 – 1.26, p = .002).

**Table 6. Logistic Regression ORs and 95% CIs of LGBTQ College Student Reporting to College Officials by Campus Climate**
Final Model Logistic Regression Results

Four variables (type of assault, exposure to training, disclosure to a counselor, and observed harassment/discrimination) were found to have a significant association to reporting to campus officials in the initial three logistic regression models. Direct logistic regression was then performed to assess the impact of these four variables on whether a LGBTQ survivor of college sexual assault would report to college officials. The final, full model containing all four independent variables was statistically significant $X^2 (4, n = 409) = 38.17, p < .001$, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who reported and did not report sexual assault to a campus official. The model as a whole explained between 14.9% (Cox and Snell R square) and 24.7% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in reporting, and correctly classified 85.2% of cases. As shown in Table 7, all four of the independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model, with an adjusted alpha of .017 to account for previous model testing. The strongest predictor of reporting to campus officials was exposure to sexual assault raining, recording an odds ratio of 6.48. This indicated that survivors exposed to training on sexual assault at their college were over six times as likely to report as those who had not been exposed to training, controlling for other variables in the model.

Survivors who had experienced an assault involving penetration or intercourse were more than three times as likely to report to college officials than those who did not experience that type of assault.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTQ Climate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived LGBTQ inclusion on campus (general)</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>[.99, 1.03]</td>
<td>.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed harassment of LGBTQ students</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>[1.05, 1.26]</td>
<td>.002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom climate for LGBTQ students</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>[.99, 1.03]</td>
<td>.979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

*p ≤ .05

**p ≤ .01
assault. Additionally, survivors were three times as likely to report to college officials if they had disclosed to a counselor and their odds of reporting increased significantly the more discrimination or harassment of LGBTQ students witnessed on campus by the survivor.

### Table 7. Final Model ORs and 95% CIs of LGBTQ College Student Reporting to College Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assault involved penetration / intercourse</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>[1.49, 8.03]</td>
<td>.004**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed harassment of LGBTQ students</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>[1.05, 1.25]</td>
<td>.003**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosed to counselor</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>[1.41, 6.62]</td>
<td>.005**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposed to sexual assault training</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>[1.66, 25.28]</td>
<td>.003**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval.

* *p ≤ .017
** *p ≤ .01

### Discussion

Results from this analysis inform the knowledge base related to the decision making process for LGBTQ identified college students who report a sexual assault to college officials. These findings suggest that multiple systems may influence this decision. For LGBTQ identified college students micro-level factors of crime circumstances, exosystem factors of campus support systems and the macro-level factor of the LGBTQ campus climate, were all significantly associated with survivors’ decision to report.

In this sample of 409 LGBTQ identified survivors of sexual assault only 10% (n = 41) made a formal report of the incident to campus officials. While research has begun to focus on the rate of reporting on college campuses (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014) there is limited information about the rate of reporting amongst LGBTQ students. The vast majority of LGBTQ college student survivors do not formally report to college officials and this suggests that many survivors are not receiving the academic, and safety accommodations that they are entitled to under federal Title IX law. While this study examines multi-level factors related to the decision
to report to campus officials, low reporting rates may also be indicative of structural issues within the reporting process itself, and the meaning it has for survivors, that this study did not investigate.

When analyzing circumstantial factors, survivors who had experienced penetration and/or intercourse during the assault were more likely to report to college officials than those who had experienced unwanted sexual touching only. This confirms previous research conducted with college women that has found that survivors often choose not to report because they don’t think that what happened during the assault was serious enough (Pino & Meier, 1999; Macmillan & Gartner, 1995; Wolitzky-Taylor, 2011). However, other circumstantial factors contradict previous research. Research focused on female college students has found that survivors are more likely to report to an authority if attacked by a stranger than an acquaintance (Koss, Dinero, Seibel & Cox, 1998; Felson & Pare, 2005; Spencer, Stith, Duntschi & Toews, 2017) and that alcohol is a barrier to reporting (Cohn, Zinzow & Resnick, 2012). Logistic regression analysis found that the type of perpetrator (i.e stranger or known) and alcohol usage by the survivor were not found to have a significant relationship to reporting in this exploratory study.

These contradictions to previous research may have multiple explanations. First, approximately 26% of survivors in this sample identified that they were assaulted by a stranger (n = 105). This is significantly higher than previous studies of predominately heterosexual, cisgender students, that have found that approximately 10% of survivors were assaulted by someone that they identified as a stranger (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Krebs et. al., 2016). It is possible that how college students identify who is a stranger may be evolving as technology, and dating for LGBTQ college students has changed with the introduction of app based dating sites. This factor should be further investigated within the LGBTQ community, to better
understand the experience of these survivors and to further define what a “stranger” means to them.

Alcohol and drug use of survivors, in the hours prior to the assault, did not prove to have a significant impact on reporting decisions, which also contradicts previous research. Approximately half of the participants (n = 187) had been drinking alcohol or consuming drugs in the hours prior to the assault. Previous research has found that survivors who were drinking of consuming drugs before an assault were more likely to blame themselves, and that this impacted reporting (Abbey, 2011). These contradictory findings may be a result of concerted efforts on campuses, from national non-profits, campus activists and the federal government to assuage these feelings of blame and explicitly reiterate that individuals who drink are not responsible for being assaulted. Breaking down myths about alcohol and consent have become common aspects of sexual assault prevention training on college campuses. It is possible that a broader, cultural shift is destigmatizing the role of alcohol in sexual assault and influencing how survivors process that aspect of their experience.

Multiple elements of the LGBTQ environment were examined, including participant perception of the general climate for LGBTQ students, the climate in the classroom for these students, and observed harassment. Interestingly, witnessing harassment or discrimination of LGBTQ persons on campus was positively associated with reporting to campus officials. There is sparse research that explores how observing other crimes impacts reporting, however, there are possible explanations for this dynamic. Students who have observed harassment and discrimination against other LGBTQ individuals on their campus may also be more likely to have learned about how and where those discriminated against reported the incidents. This improved understanding of reporting options is one possible explanation between the observed
harassment and increased reporting. This area deserves further exploration to better understand this relationship.

Exposure to training on sexual assault at their college was significantly associated with reporting to college officials for LGBTQ survivors of college sexual assault. This supports previous research on the impact of policy related training on college students reporting sexual assault (Spencer, Stith, Durtschi & Toews, 2017). While this study was limited in that it was not able to ascertain what type of training students experienced, these results signal that providing training to students is a path to reporting to college officials and that this should be considered when designing and implementing such trainings.

Finally, these results suggest that disclosing to campus support services is associated with reporting to campus officials. LGBTQ survivors who disclosed to campus counselors were significantly more likely to report to campus officials. Previous research has found that survivors who disclose are often encouraged to report (Paul, Walsh, McCauley, Riggiero, Resnick & Kilpatrick, 2013) but this finding shows that within the context of college campuses, disclosure is also associated with reporting to campus officials. It is important to note that due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, researchers are unable to ascertain whether individuals disclosed to counselors prior to reporting to campus officials, or afterwards.

These findings may provide insight as to improve practice and policy related to reporting for LGBTQ identified college students. First, in training college students on sexual assault, college officials should reiterate complete definitions of sexual assault, including unwanted sexual touching and reinforce that support and reporting options are available to students who experience this behavior. Second, as campus support services are closely associated with reporting sexual assault, campus leadership should invest in training these professionals in the
reporting process so that they can provide accurate and complete information to survivors during the decision making process.

Institutions of higher education across the United States seek to improve and bolster their response to sexual assault, both to comply with policy and law, and for the well-being of their students. While LGBTQ college students are disproportionately impacted by sexual assault, they are often missing from discussions at the policy and practice level. Reporting sexual assault to college officials may open the door to educational accommodations and support services that can help survivors persist in their educational goals. As evidenced through this study, how LGBTQ survivors navigate the decision to report may differ from heterosexual, cisgender survivors. College officials and advocates who are interested in improving pathways to reporting should consider the varied experiences of LGBTQ students and the systems that impact them.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are multiple areas for future research on reporting and LGBTQ college students. Several factors related to reporting for LGBTQ survivors contradict research previously conducted with general college student samples. Further investigation regarding the experience of survivors who were assaulted by a stranger and how harassment of other LGBTQ students on campus is influencing reporting behavior will be helpful in building a more nuanced knowledge base in this area. Additionally, more research is needed on the experience of LGBTQ survivors of color who may also experience campus systems and environments in a unique way. And finally, as so few LGBTQ survivors report sexual assault to college officials, an understanding of reporting dynamics would greatly benefit from larger data sets of students who have reported. This would enable researchers to have the statistical power to apply more rigorous analysis.


Chapter Four:

The Role of LGBTQ Inclusion and Reporting Sexual Assault in Perceptions of the Sexual Assault Reporting Climate for LGBTQ College Students.

Abstract:

Sexual assault is a problem on college campuses that disproportionately impacts lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) students. Federal law requires that colleges have a grievance procedure in place for students who experience sexual assault, nevertheless, few survivors report to college officials. This study explores factors related to how LGBTQ student survivors of sexual assault perceive the sexual assault reporting climate. Approximately four-hundred LGBTQ identified survivors were recruited through multiple social media sites. Hierarchical regression was conducted to examine how sense of belonging, the LGBTQ campus climate, exposure to training, affiliation of the perpetrator, and whether the survivor made a formal report to the campus were associated with the sexual assault reporting climate. Analyses indicated that a sense of belonging and a positive LGBTQ climate were associated with a positive perception of the reporting climate. LGBTQ survivors who were assaulted by a person affiliated with their college, and those who made a formal report were more likely to have a negative perception of the campus climate. These findings suggest that campus administrators, advocates, and policy-makers can improve the quality of the campus climate by collaborating with advocates for LGBTQ students, increasing transparency about the reporting process, and including LGBTQ survivors in developing campus protocol.

Keywords: LGBTQ college students, sexual assault, Title IX, campus climate

Sexual assault is a pervasive problem on college campuses (Cantor et. al., 2017; Fedina, Holmes & Backes, 2018; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher & Martin, 2007). Lesbian, gay,
bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) college students experience higher rates of sexual assault victimization in college than their cisgender, heterosexual peers (Blosnich & Bossart, 2012, Coulter et. al., 2017, & Krebs et. al., 2016). In a national survey, Coulter et. al. (2017) found that LGB college students were three times as likely to experience sexual assault during college compared to heterosexual students. Using data from the National College Health Assessment, scholars also found that transgender students were approximately nine times more likely to experience sexual penetration without consent than male students, and had significantly higher odds of victimization than female students (Griner, Vamos, Thompson, Logan, Vazques-Otero, 2017).

When students experience sexual assault during college they have several informal and formal reporting options, including filing reports with law enforcement and/or their campus administration. College campuses in the United States (U.S) are currently required to have a procedure in place to respond to reports of sexual assault brought to their attention by students per Title IX, federal civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity that receives federal funding. Title IX is part of the Education Amendments of 1972. Under this law, sexual harassment, including sexual assault, is considered a form of sex discrimination that could create barriers to accessing education for those victimized (Office of Civil Rights, 1997). While students that experience sexual assault have a civil right to report the incident to the college and receive assistance to support their academic persistence and personal well-being, very few survivors report to college officials (Fischer, Cullen, Daigle & Turner, 2003; Moore & Baker, 2016).

Research has found little difference in the reporting rates between the LGBTQ community and cisgender/heterosexual students (Landgenderfer-Magruder, Walls, Kattari,
Whitfield, & Ramos, 2016; Eisenberg, Lust, Mathiaso, & Porta, 2017). However, there is some evidence that LGB students are more likely to perceive that their university responds poorly to incidents of sexual assault, than heterosexual students (Smith, Cunningham, & Freyd, 2016; Smidt, Rosenthal, Smith, & Freyd, 2019). This study seeks to further explore how LGBTQ college students who were assaulted while in college perceive the sexual assault reporting climate on college campuses and what factors may contribute to these perceptions, including: whether the survivor made a formal report to college officials, whether the person who was sexually aggressive was affiliated with the college, exposure to sexual assault training, students’ sense of belonging on campus, and the general climate for LGBTQ students.

Theoretical Framework

To explore the sexual assault reporting climate for LGBTQ college students, this study was guided by two primary theoretical frameworks: minority stress theory and betrayal trauma theory.

Minority Stress Theory

Minority stress theory posits that LGBTQ identified people live within a culture that is deeply heteronormative and because of this, they experience persistent and chronic stress that contributes to psychological distress (Meyer, 1995). Several dimensions of minority stress for LGBTQ identified persons have been identified in the literature, including the role of stigma. Stigma is experienced by this population as the result of a cultural context where sexual and gender minorities are considered inferior or negative (Mink, Lindley and Weinstein, 2014). One way that individuals cope with stigma is through vigilance, or being in a constant state of high alert. Vigilance has been found to be associated with the expectation that one will experience discrimination and rejection from people and institutions (Major & O’Brien, 2005; Meyer,
Vigilance is also related to situations where a seemingly minor event may have been perceived as discriminatory (Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003) and may underlay why LGBTQ individuals can be skeptical of authorities or agencies that promote themselves as inclusive of the LGBTQ population (Meyer, 1995). Minority stress theory guided hypotheses for this study related to the relationship between LGBTQ inclusion, belonging on campus, and the sexual assault reporting climate.

**Institutional Betrayal**

The concept of institutional betrayal provides a path to consider questions related to the relationship between individual survivors and institutions when sexual assault occurs. The concept is generally understood to occur when an institution such as a school, the military, or a faith based center “…deliberately or unknowingly causes harm to an individual who trusts or depends on that institution to keep them safe and treat them fairly…” (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017, p.198). This concept is rooted in the psychological theory of betrayal trauma, which occurs when a person or institution that holds a significant amount of trust, harms those that depend on and believe in the trustworthiness (Freyd, 2008). Institutional betrayal has been primarily used to explain reactions to sexual assault victimization on college campuses. It is theorized that college can create a sense of betrayal through both overt actions such as punishing people who report sexual assault, or through perceived failures to act, such as not preventing sexual assault that occurs (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Studies have found that survivors who experience a sense of institutional betrayal report significantly increased anxiety, dissociation and trauma specific sexual symptoms, compared to those who did not (Smith & Freyd, 2013). Additionally, when this concept has been measured, LGB college students have been found to experience higher levels of institutional betrayal compared to heterosexual
students (Smidt, Rosenthal, Smith & Freyd, 2018) suggesting that sexual orientation is playing a role in survivors’ relationship to and perception of, their campus. The concept of institutional betrayal was used to develop hypotheses related to the association between reporting sexual assault, training exposure, affiliation of perpetrators, and the sexual assault reporting climate.

The following literature review will further explore the variables under investigation for this study, and outline the hypotheses.

**Literature Review**

**Sexual Assault Reporting Climate**

Campus climate as it is related to sexual assault is broadly considered to include both the prevalence of sexual assault and “attitudes among students, faculty, staff, and/or administrators about the campus atmosphere regarding sexual assault” (White House Task Force, 2014, p.2). That is, the sexual assault campus climate encompasses social norms in a particular community, as it pertains to this crime. Campus climate is differentiated from the campus culture, another construct often used in understanding educational environments. Campus culture refers to how a campus functions, while campus climate refers to how individuals feel about the environment (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

Scholars are beginning to delineate different aspects of the sexual assault climate, including the climate as it pertains to reporting sexual assault in that campus community. In a study of approximately 6,000 college women at a single university, researchers found that, bisexual women perceived the university response to sexual assault less positively than their heterosexual counterparts (Seabrook, McMahon, Duqaine, Johnson, & DeSilva, 2018). In an exploratory study with approximately 300 hundred college students, Smith, Cunningham & Freyd (2016) found that LGB students, compared to heterosexual students, were more likely to
perceive that the institution responded inadequately to sexual assault. Further, Smidt, Rosenthal, Smith & Freyd (2018) found in a study of 5,000 college students at a single university that sexual minority students who experienced sexual assault during college were more likely to perceive the response from their university as negative and harmful, than heterosexual students who had also experienced sexual assault. Previous research has not explored what factors may contribute to these differences in perceptions. Additionally, there is limited research on the relationship between campus climate and sexual assault victimization reporting behavior.

**Reporting Sexual Assault**

LGBTQ college students report sexual assault to campus officials at similarly low rates as heterosexual, cisgender survivors (Eisenberg, Lust, Mathiason, & Porta, 2017). However, LGBTQ students face unique barriers in the aftermath of sexual violence. This may have implications for survivor perceptions of the reporting process. LGBTQ students may have concerns about systemic discrimination and bias within reporting agencies (Gentle warrior & Fountain, 2009). They may also have internalized negative stereotypes about their own gender identity or sexual orientation that increase shame (Brubaker, Keegen, Guadalupe-Diaz & Beasley, 2017), or fear being “outed” by authorities which could lead to negative implications in other aspects of their lives (Cruz, 2003; Mendez, 1996; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). Additionally, support services for survivors of sexual assault, which may provide education and guidance on the reporting process, are less likely to conduct outreach to the LGBTQ community (Barret & Logan, 2002). Even when organization do conduct outreach to this community, LGBTQ persons may be more likely to have distrust for such organizations (Todahl, Linville, Bustin, Wheeler, & Gau, 2009). Due to these reporting barriers related to the campus climate, it is hypothesized (h1)
that formally reporting sexual assault to campus officials will be associated with a positive perception of the reporting climate.

**Affiliation of Perpetrator**

Research has found that certain characteristics of people who are sexually aggressive impact reporting decisions of survivors. In particular, college student survivors have been found to be more likely to report sexual assault when the perpetrator is a stranger (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003) and that this is related to perceptions of whether or not authorities will believe the report. Whether the perpetrator is affiliated with the campus, as a student or employee, may also affect perceptions of the reporting process. Research suggests that students may (wrongly) believe that colleges have no jurisdiction over perpetrators not affiliated with the campus (Spencer et al., 2017). Despite these findings, there is limited research exploring how the affiliation of perpetrators impacts perceptions of the reporting process, especially as it pertains to LGBTQ students. However, within the context of previous research, it is hypothesized (h2) that a perpetrator being associated with the campus as a student or employee will be associated with a positive sexual assault reporting climate.

**Training**

Colleges in the U.S must comply with federal, and in some cases state, laws regarding the provision of sexual assault prevention and awareness training to students. While campuses across the country have had an increased focus on such programming throughout the last decade, these efforts often focus exclusively on the experience of heterosexual women (Potter, Fountain, & Stapleton, 2012). Interestingly, while LGB students have been found to be more supportive of sexual assault awareness programming than heterosexual students (Worthen & Wallace, 2018),
they are also more likely to consider training that they attend on campus to lack impact or be biased (Krebs et al., 2016; Worthen & Baker, 2014).

However, there is some evidence to suggest that exposure to training may have an impact on reporting decisions amongst college survivors, in general. Spencer, Stith, Durtschi & Toews (2017) found, in a sample of 266 survivors of sexual assault during their college years, that participants who had received training on sexual assault were more likely to make a report specifically to college officials. It is possible that training efforts could provide clarifying information on reporting procedures, which may impact perceptions of reporting and reporting behavior. While the scholarship in this area is complex and still emerging, it is hypothesized (h3) that exposure to training in the prevention of sexual assault or policy related to sexual assault will be associated with a positive perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate.

**Sense of Belonging**

In addition to reporting behavior and training exposure, other dimensions of the campus climate may be associated with the reporting climate for LGBTQ students. A sense of belonging has been found to play a role in multiple constructs related to student success and well-being. It has also been found to be associated with perceptions of the campus environment for LGBTQ college students. A sense of belonging, sometimes referred to as “connectedness” or as a “sense of community”, is when students both feel cared for and respected by their school and where they in turn also care about and respect their school (Whitlock, 2006). Amongst college students, belonging is associated with social acceptance and academic efficacy (Freeman, Lynley, & Johnson, 2010), as well as academic persistence (Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007).
Colleges may play a role in creating, or hindering, a sense of belonging for LGBTQ students. In a qualitative study at one university, researchers found that belonging was engendered for first-year LGBTQ college students, through messaging, both explicit and implicit, sent by university officials that they were welcome and safe on campus (Vaccaro & Newman, 2017). Strayhorn (2008), also found through in-depth qualitative interviews that African American gay men actively sought belonging from their university, and often found it through connections, relationships, and groups on campus.

Belonging has also been found to be associated with sexual assault in several dimensions. Backhaus, Lipson, Fisher, Kawachi, & Pedrelli (2019) have found that belonging was a protective factor in regard to sexual assault victimization for LGBQ college students. Additionally, belonging is associated with helping others who may be in danger of experiencing sexual assault (Banyard, 2008) and a perception that one can help influence change within an academic institution (Banyard, Rizzo, Bencosme, Cares & Moynihan, 2018). As the literature in this area suggests that a sense of belonging positively impacts many areas of college students’ relationship with their campus, it is hypothesized (h4) that a high sense of belonging will be associated with a positive perception of the sexual assault reporting climate.

**LGBTQ Campus Climate**

In addition to exploring belonging, perceptions of how inclusive college campuses are for LGBTQ students, was of interest in this study. Students who identify as LGBTQ have been found to perceive the college environment as less welcoming than their heterosexual identified peers (Brown, Clark, Gortmaker, Robinson-Keilig, Evens & Broido, 2002; Garber, 2002; Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer 2010). Scholars have examined factors that contribute to this negative perception of the climate. LGBTQ students are more likely to experience
harassment and other types of violence on campus (Rankin, 1998; Rankin, 2003; Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010). Additionally, perceptions of treatment in the classroom, by faculty and other students, has also found to significantly contribute to perceptions of the overall climate for LGBTQ students (Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger & Hope, 2013). It is hypothesized (h5) that a positive LGBTQ campus climate will be associated with a positive sexual assault reporting climate.

Method

Sample and Procedures

LGBTQ college students are an under studied population that is considered hard to reach (Ellard-Gray, Jeffrey, Choubak, & Crann, 2015). Increasingly, on-line surveys that utilize social media as a recruitment tool have been found to successfully attain representative samples of LGBTQ persons (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Murchison, Body & Pachankis, 2017; Sterzing, Gartner, McGeough, Leffler, Blachman-Demner, 2018). For this study, an on-line, anonymous survey was administered through social media to collect data. After receiving approval by the Institutional Review Board, recruitment efforts were conducted. Data was collected from July 2019 through mid-September 2019. Participants were recruited through several means: sponsored social media posts, social media posts shared by relevant organizations to closed and/or open groups, and individual social media users sharing the recruitment information with their peers. Ultimately, participants were recruited from the following social media platforms: Facebook (55%, n = 213), Instagram (22%, n=87), Reddit (20%, n = 78), and Twitter (3%, n = 11). In order to deter participant misuse, no incentive was provided for participation.

Eligibility criteria for the study included the following: at least eighteen years of age, currently attending a four-year college or university located in the United States, a current
undergraduate student, and to identify as a gender and/or sexual minority. A total of 1,113 individuals ultimately qualified to participate in the study. Of these participants, 37% had experienced sexual assault while attending their current college (n = 409). This analysis was solely focused on the experience of LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault, therefore, only data from the participants who had experienced sexual assault was utilized. Participants were screened for sexual assault victimization in college through a single question on the Campus Climate Survey Validation Study: Final Technical Report (Krebs et. al., 2016). All participants were required to read through a definition of sexual assault that included unwanted sexual touching, oral sex, anal sex, sexual intercourse and penetration of a vagina or anus with a finger or object. Only after checking off each section of the definition could participants answer a question regarding whether they experienced sexual assault in college. Responses included “yes”, “no”, and “prefer not to disclose”. Participants who selected “prefer not to disclose” were excluded from the analysis.

The sample of participants who had experienced sexual assault in college attended colleges throughout the four major regions in the United States; Northeast (21%, n = 87), Midwest (26%, n = 107), South (25%, n = 101), and West (27%, n = 109). Approximately half of participants attended a public institution (58%, n = 234) and the remaining attended a private school (42%, n = 167). Slightly over half of participants lived on-campus (53%, n = 216) and just under half lived either at home or at an off-campus apartment or house (47%, n = 193). First-year college students were excluded from participation as recruitment was primarily conducted during the summer of 2019. Students entering their fourth year (42%, n = 171) represented the largest academic class, followed by students entering their third year students (32%, n = 130), second year (20%, n = 82), and fifth year (6%, n = 26) in college.
Measures

The following measures were utilized in this study:

**Sexual Assault Reporting Climate (SARC):** The dependent variable in this study was measured through the participant’s score on a Perceptions of Leadership, Policies and Reporting Scale. This scale was adapted, by the White House Task Force, from a scale developed by the Department of Defense, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) (2014). Participants were asked a total of twelve questions regarding how likely it was that campus authorities, other students and alleged perpetrators would respond in a fair and sensitive manner if someone were to report a sexual assault to a campus authority. Response options for each statement ranged from ‘very likely’ to ‘not at all likely’ on a four-point Likert Scale. While different iterations of this scale have been used with military personnel for some time, the scale has not been tested for reliability or validity with any population, including LGBTQ college students. In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .87.

**Connectedness Scale (CCS).** This nine-item measure was adapted from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health (2002). The construct assesses the level of belonging students feel on their campus, as well as how respected and valued they feel by faculty and administrators. Response options for each statement are a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The original, unmodified measure was tested for validity and reliability and found to have a strong internal consistency (α = .79) (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002). In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .87.

**LGBTQ Campus Climate.** The environment for LGBTQ students, specifically in regard to perceptions of inclusion on campus, was measured using a single item. Participants were asked how they would describe the climate for LGBTQ students on their campus. To respond,
participants could slide a tab on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Negative (0 – 10) to Positive (90 – 100). This question was adapted from a comprehensive climate scale developed by Coulter and Rankin (2017).

**Did the participant report a sexual assault to campus officials?** Respondents were asked whether they made a formal report using campus procedures. Participants had the options of, “yes”, “no” or “unsure”. Only participants that marked “yes” were considered to have made a report. Participants that marked “unsure” were excluded from the study. This question was adapted from the University of New Hampshire Unwanted Sexual Experience Survey (Banyard, Cohn, Edwards, Moynihan, Walsh & Ward, 2012).

**Was the perpetrator affiliated with the college you attend?** Participants were asked two questions regarding the perpetrator’s affiliation with their college. First, they were asked whether the person (or any of the people) were a student at their college. Next, they were asked whether the person (or any of the people) were an employee, staff, or faculty member of their college. Responses for both questions included “yes”, “no”, and “unsure” (Banyard, Cohn, Edwards, Moynihan, Walsh & Ward, 2012). Responses were dummy-coded as 0 = “no affiliation with the college” and 1 = “affiliated with the college”.

**Exposure to Training.** Training was measured through two questions adapted from the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault’s Climate Survey Toolkit (2014). The first question asked whether the participant has attended training on policies and procedures related to sexual assault. The second question asks whether the participant has attended training on prevention of sexual assault since starting college. Responses include “yes” and “no.” Participants who responded “yes” to either question were considered to have been exposed to training on sexual assault.
Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation. The participants were asked what their current gender identity is. Responses included “female, male, transgender female, transgender male, genderqueer, gender non-conforming and other (please specify)” As more than three people identified as non-binary in the “other” category, this was added an additional category. Ultimately, responses were dummy-coded as 0 = “cisgender” and 1 = “gender minority”. The participants were also asked about their sexual orientation. Responses included “heterosexual/straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning and other (please specify)”. Answers in “other” were coded by the researcher and new categories were created when more than three participants identified the same category. The new categories were asexual, queer, and pansexual.

Race and Ethnicity. Two questions were used to operationalize race and ethnicity. First, participants were asked what their race is (as they define it). Responses included “American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White.” Participants were able to mark all categories that apply. Responses were dummy coded 0 = “White” and 1 = “Person of Color.” Racial groups were dichotomized in this manner so as to maintain statistical power in analysis. However, this is a limitation of the study. Second, participants were asked what their ethnicity is. Responses included “Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino.”

Student Status and Housing. Participants were also asked about demographics related to their student status. As recruitment for the study was conducted during the summer, questions were developed to best understand their relationship to their campus. First, students were asked about what best described their living situation the past academic year. Responses included “on-campus, off-campus (apartment, sorority/fraternity house)”, and “off-campus (at home).”
Answers were dummy coded as 0 = “off campus” and 1 = “on campus.” Second, students were asked what their academic status would be in the forthcoming academic year. Responses included “first year undergraduate student, second year undergraduate student, third year undergraduate student, fourth year undergraduate student” and “other.” Participants who selected “other” were able to write in answers which were primarily “fifth year undergraduate student” and coded in to a new category.

**Open Ended Questions**

Two open ended questions were utilized in this study. First, all participants were asked, “What recommendations do you have for college officials that might improve the reporting process for LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault?” Next, all participants who indicated that they did report a sexual assault to campus officials were asked, “What else would you like to share with us about your experiencing reporting sexual assault to college officials?” Participants could either open-ended question or write an answer.

**Analysis Plan**

First, a correlation analysis was conducted to determine if there were significant relationships between the dependent variable (sexual assault reporting climate), independent variables (belonging, LGBTQ climate, having reported a sexual assault to college officials, affiliation of perpetrator) and control variables (gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, academic status, housing). Next, a hierarchical multiple regression was run, also using SPSS 22 to explore whether the independent variables contributed to the variance in the sexual assault reporting climate when the sample was statistically controlled for the demographic and student status variables. Gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, academic status, and housing status variables were entered at step one in the regression so as to control for any
confounding effects. Missing data were handled using pairwise deletion during all statistical analysis. All statistical analysis was conducted in SPSS 22. After completing the statistical analysis, two open-ended questions related to the sexual assault reporting process were analyzed for themes using an open-coding system (Padgett, 2016; Saldana, 2013). This methodological triangulation was not used as a validation tool but, rather, to provide a deeper understanding of the various phenomenon suggested by the statistical analysis.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

First, descriptive statistics of both the dependent variable and all independent variables were examined (see Table 1). Participants represented a variety of different sexual orientations. The largest sexual orientation group was participants who identified as Bisexual (45%, n = 183), followed by Gay (19%, n = 76), Lesbian (17%, n = 69), Queer (6%, n = 23), Pansexual (5%, n = 21), Asexual (3%, n = 14), Questioning (3%, n = 13), and another (2%, n = 9). A majority of the sample identified as cisgender female (51%, n = 210) or male (18%, n = 72), followed by non-binary (13%, n = 55), genderqueer/gender non-conforming (9%, n = 35), Transgender (7%, n = 30), and another (2%, n = 7). The sample lacked racial and ethnic diversity. Participants were primary white (87%, n = 354), with only a small portion identifying as a person of color (12%, n = 49). The majority of the sample were aged between 18 and 21 (83%, n = 338), with fewer participants older than 21 (17%, n = 71).

Table 1 Demographic characteristics (n = 409)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity (n= 407)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderqueer/gender non-conforming</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another 7 1.7

Sexual Orientation (n = 409)
Bisexual 183 44.7
Gay 76 18.6
Heterosexual 1 .2
Lesbian 69 16.9
Questioning 13 3.2
Another 9 2.2
Asexual 14 3.4
Queer 23 5.6
Pansexual 21 5.1

Race (n= 403)
People of Color 49 12
White 354 86.6

Ethnicity (n = 403)
Hispanic 43 10.5
Not Hispanic 364 89

Age (n = 409)
18 – 20 220 53.8
21 118 28.9
22 plus 71 17.4

Descriptive statistics of training, perpetrator affiliation, and reporting were also assessed (Table 2). Many students in this sample had been exposed to training in sexual assault prevention and their university policies since attending their university. Approximately 83% of participants had been exposed to training on sexual assault since starting school at their current college (n = 341). All participants in the sample (n = 409) had been sexually assaulted since they started attending their college and a majority of these survivors, 72.5%, had been assaulted by a person who was affiliated with their university as a student or employee, at the time of the assault (n = 264). However, only 10% of participants indicated that they had made a formal report regarding the sexual assault to a campus official at their college or university (n = 41).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of categorical variables (n = 409)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting decision (n = 409)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survivor reported to campus official | 41 | 10
Survivor did not report to campus official | 368 | 90
Perpetrator affiliation with school at time of assault (n = 364) |  | 
Perpetrator was affiliated as student or employee | 264 | 72.5
Perpetrator was not affiliated as student or employee | 100 | 27.5
Received training in sexual assault (n = 409)
Yes | 341 | 83.4
No | 68 | 16.6

Several variables related to the climate on campus were also analyzed (see Table 3). When asked about their perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate, participants reported believing that it was only slightly to moderately likely that their campus would handle the report seriously, appropriately, and with sensitivity (M = 30.47, SD = 7.16). Students perceived the climate for LGBTQ students, overall, to be moderately positive (M = 58.54, SD = 25.09) however there was a high variance in their response. Finally, participants indicated that they felt a moderate sense of belonging related to their campus (M = 32.17, SD = 6.15).

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics of continuous variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault reporting climate</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30.47</td>
<td>7.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, climate for LGBTQ students</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>58.54</td>
<td>25.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation**

The relationship between all variables under consideration were investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (see Table 4). Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. First, the relationship between the reporting climate and key demographic characteristics was explored. The reporting climate had a strong negative correlation with gender identity (r = -.180, p < .001), with highly positive perceptions of the reporting climate being associated with cisgender participants. Reporting climate also had a strong negative
correlation with sexual orientation, \((r = -0.128, p < 0.001)\). There was no significant correlation between the reporting climate and race, ethnicity, housing status, or student status (year in school). Exposure to training did have a significant relationship with the sexual assault reporting climate \((r = -0.188, p< 0.001)\).

Variables related to reporting behavior were also examined for associations with the reporting climate. Perpetrator affiliation had a strong negative correlation with the reporting climate \((n = -0.102, p < 0.001)\) indicating that being assaulted by a person affiliated with the school was associated with a negative perception of the campus climate. Interestingly, whether a student reported a sexual assault also had a negative correlation to the reporting climate \((r = -0.191, p < 0.001)\) indicating that not reporting to a campus official was associated with a positive perception of the campus reporting climate.

Other climate variables were also examined in relation to the reporting climate. Both the overall LGBTQ climate and belonging had strong positive correlations with the reporting climate. Positive perceptions of the LGBTQ climate were associated with positive perceptions of the reporting climate \((r = 0.396, p < 0.001)\). Similarly, positive perceptions of belonging were correlated with positive perceptions of the reporting climate \((r = 0.559, p < 0.001)\).

Additionally, there were various associations between other independent and control variables. Belonging was significantly associated with multiple independent variables, including gender, sexual orientation, race, exposure to policy training, exposure to prevention training, and the LGBTQ climate. The LGBTQ climate was also found to be correlated to sexual assault training.
Table 4 Correlation matrix of independent, control and dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
<th>(9)</th>
<th>(10)</th>
<th>(11)</th>
<th>(12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault reporting climate (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.180**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.197**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.044</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>-.139**</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing status (6)</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student status (7)</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>.347**</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Training (8)</td>
<td>-.188**</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>-.157**</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting status (9)</td>
<td>-.191**</td>
<td>.125*</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator affiliation (10)</td>
<td>-.102**</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.203**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging (11)</td>
<td>.559**</td>
<td>-.220**</td>
<td>-.148**</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.086**</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT Climate (12)</td>
<td>.396**</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>-.159</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.137**</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>.443**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of several control measures (belonging, LGBTQ climate, reporting status, training, and perpetrator affiliation,) to predict perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate, after controlling for race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing status, and school status (See Table 5). Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing status, and school status were entered at Step 1, explaining 5.9% of the variance in the sexual assault reporting climate. After entry of belonging, LGBTQ climate, reporting status, perpetrator affiliation, at Step 2 the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 38.9%, \( F(10, 187) = 11.103, p < .001 \). The five primary measures explained an additional 35.5% of the variance in the sexual assault reporting climate, after controlling for race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing status, and school status, \( R^2 \) squared change = .353, \( F \) change (4, 187) = 23.364, \( p < .001 \). In the final model, six measures were statistically significant. Belonging recorded the highest beta value (beta = .47, \( p < .001 \)), followed by race (beta = .184, \( p < .01 \)), the affiliation of the perpetrator (beta = -.148, \( p < .05 \)), sexual assault reporting behavior (beta = -.141, \( p < .05 \)), exposure to training (beta = .137, \( p < .05 \)) and LGBTQ climate (beta = .134, \( p < .05 \)).

Table 5 Hierarchical Regression Results for Sexual Assault Reporting Climate (n = 409)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>95% CI for ( B )</th>
<th>( SE )</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( LL )</td>
<td>( UL )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>32.769</td>
<td>27.73</td>
<td>37.811</td>
<td>2.556</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-2.450</td>
<td>-4.80</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>1.190</td>
<td>-.149*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sexual Orientation  -.220  -.609  .170  .197  -.080  
Race  3.547  -.198  7.29  1.899  .134  
Ethnicity  -.253  -3.81  4.31  2.059  -.009  
Housing status  .961  -1.23  3.15  1.112  .065  
Academic status  -.581  -1.84  .676  .637  -.068  

Step 2

Constant  17.001  9.44  24.57  3.84  .389  .353***
Gender Identity  -.806  -2.78  1.17  1.00  -.049  
Sexual Orientation  .098  -.231  .426  .167  .036  
Race  4.842  1.75  7.93  1.57  .184**
Ethnicity  -1.975  -5.33  1.38  1.70  -.069  
Housing status  -.883  -2.72  .957  .933  -.060  
Academic status  -.618  -1.65  .412  .522  -.073  
LGBTQ Climate  .040  .001  .078  .020  .134*
Belonging  .579  .413  .745  .084  .465***
Reporting status  -2.667  -4.91  -.421  1.138  -.141*
Perpetrator affiliation  -2.398  -4.29  -.505  .959  -.148*
Exposure training  2.911  .372  5.44  1.287  .137*

Note: CI = Confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit
*p < .05. ** p < .01. ***p < .001

Ultimately, two of the five hypotheses were supported in this analysis. Belonging (h4) and the LGBTQ climate (h5) both have significant, positive relationships with the sexual assault reporting climate. While reporting status (h1) and the affiliation of the perpetrator (h2) both contributed to the model at significant levels, their relationship to the sexual assault reporting climate differed from the hypotheses, as they had negative relationships with the reporting
climate. Exposure to training (h3) also maintained a positive relationship to the reporting climate, and therefore hypothesis 3 was supported.

**Open-Ended Questions**

After completing correlation and hierarchical regression analysis, two open-ended questions were explored to further understand the relationships between various variables. First, all students in the sample (n = 409) were asked the following question: “what recommendations do you have for college officials that might improve the reporting process for LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault?” Approximately 50% of participants provided a written answer to this question (n = 206). As only a small portion of these participants (n = 41) had officially reported a sexual assault, researchers believed that exploring this question may give further insight into the sexual assault reporting climate.

Written answers were reviewed by the researcher using an open-coding technique (Saldana, 2013) and then assessed for specific themes (Padgett, 2016). First, a number of participants (n = 61) wrote explicitly about the need for their college or university to include the experience of LGBTQ college students with sexual assault in campus wide trainings. These students indicated that sexual assault in the LGBTQ community is not addressed by their college, creating an appearance that sexual assault only occurs between cisgender, heterosexual individuals. For example, one student wrote in response to this question regarding improving the reporting process, “Stop ignoring us. At the beginning of college, they talk to us about consent. Straight consent. We’re always left out.” Second, students also identified that acknowledging that there are LGBTQ students on campus, and providing support to these students, would improve the reporting process for survivors of sexual assault (n = 28). A written answer that exemplifies these responses was, “Create a culture where it is okay to be out in all ways.” Underlying these
responses is a perception that when LGBTQ students are not welcomed on campus, and when their experience of sexual assault is not part of the narrative of sexual assault communicated by campus officials, perceptions of the reporting process are more negative. These two themes provide more nuanced information regarding the outcome of the hierarchical logistical regression whereby a positive climate for LGBTQ students was associated with a positive sexual assault reporting climate.

A second open-ended question was also explored to better understand the relationship between reporting sexual assault to campus officials and the reporting climate. All participants who reported sexual assault to campus officials (n = 41) were asked to respond to the question: “What else would you like to share with us about your experiencing reporting sexual assault to college officials?” More than half of these participants responded to the question (n = 26). Overall, the open ended written answers expressed a highly negative experience with reporting to campus officials. Participants wrote of feeling more unsafe after reporting to campus officials, that the process appeared to take an inordinate amount of time, and that campus officials were not perceived to have an understanding of sexual assault in the LGBTQ community. Notably, 14 participants wrote explicitly and at length about how their campus failed to hold their offender accountable, most often by finding the offender responsible for sexual assault but giving them an outcome perceived as too lenient by the reporting party. Answers to this question further explains the hierarchical regression finding that reporting sexual assault to a campus official was significantly associated with negative perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate.

Limitations

As with any academic research, this study has several limitations. First, as recruitment was conducted on-line, researchers were unable to assess a sampling frame so findings cannot be
generalized to the wider population. Second, this is a cross-sectional survey so information was only collected at one point in time, limiting the researcher’s ability to determine causation. Thirdly, this sample lacked racial and ethnic diversity. Future research should consider how to increase participation of racial and ethnic minorities. Finally, some of the questions asked were limited, particularly as it relates to prevention training. Questions asked did not illicit any information on what type of training was experienced, the duration, and how long ago it was received.

Discussion

Federal civil rights legislation, Title IX, is clear that sexual assault is a form of sex discrimination and that colleges must have a grievance procedure in place to address reports, and support the academic success and well-being of survivors (Office of Civil Rights, 1997). This legislation is rooted in an attempt by the U.S government to support equity and inclusion within higher education. While colleges across the country have sought to comply with on-going guidance from the U.S Department of Education so as to improve response efforts, few student survivors report sexual assault to college officials (Fischer, Cullen, Daigle & Turner, 2003; Moore & Baker, 2016). Little is known about how survivors perceive the reporting climate, especially within the LGBTQ population. Findings from this study provide insight into factors that contribute to perceptions of the reporting climate for LGBTQ survivors, and has implications for college officials, victim advocates and policy makers.

When LGBTQ college students feel a sense of belonging to their campus, and that their campus is a welcoming place for gender and sexual minorities, they perceive the reporting climate as more positive. That is, they believe that college officials will respond to reports in a fair, measured way and provide appropriate support to survivors. It is notable that in answering a
qualitative question regarding the reporting process, many participants focused on issues related to acknowledging the presence and experience of the LGBTQ community. Using minority stress theory to understand this relationship, the findings suggest that LGBTQ students who do not experience a persistent stigma on their campus for their gender identity or sexual orientation, will not be positioned to cope through vigilance, and ultimately distrust campus authorities. Belonging and inclusion matter in how LGBTQ college student survivors perceive the reporting process. Educators and advocates who are invested in creating a climate where LGBTQ students feel positive about the reporting climate should consider campus efforts to reduce bias and discrimination on a community-wide level, and take stock of how belonging is engendered between these students and the college. Cross-collaboration between advocates for survivors, campus administrators, and advocates for LGBTQ equity on campus could be a possible path towards creating a reporting climate that is positive for this community.

Findings related to the affiliation of perpetrators may be helpful to college officials who are actively working in the reporting process. Ultimately, survivors who were sexually assaulted by a person who was affiliated with the college, as a student or employee, had more of a negative perception of the sexual assault reporting climate than those assaulted by someone unrelated to the college. The concept of institutional betrayal posits that students (and their families) view colleges as safe places, where they will be protected and so can experience betrayal trauma when sexual violence occurs in this context (Freyd, 2008). This may explain the difference in perceptions of the campus climate based on perpetrator affiliation. LGBTQ survivors assaulted by someone who is also a part of their college, a place that they believed to be safe, may shift their general level of trust with the college, including in regard to the reporting climate. Title IX and student conduct officials may be entering the reporting process with survivors who already
feel a sense of broken trust with the institution. Administrators may be able to bolster trust and safety, countering the impact of betrayal, for LGBTQ survivors by committing to transparency in discussing how sexual assault is resolved in campus and by continued efforts to protect LGBTQ survivors through flexibility in response efforts (Smith & Freyd, 2014).

One interesting finding from this study is that race was a significant factor in explaining the variance in perceptions of the reporting climate. Students of color were more likely to have positive perceptions of the reporting climate than white students. This finding is limited in that, due to the small number of participants in each racial minority group, the race variable was dichotomized in order to retain statistical power. More research should be conducted to better understand how race may play a role in perceptions of campus officials and sexual assault.

Exposure to training on sexual assault at college was also found to have a positive relationship to the sexual assault reporting climate for LGBTQ students. This suggests that the more contact and information students have with college officials, regarding this specific topic, the more positive they feel about how college campuses will respond to reports. College officials should continue to invest in discussing this topic, and providing detailed information on the reporting process, so as to create a climate where students believe campus officials can appropriately handle reports. However, this area is also limited in that this study did not have further questions about the type, duration, or time-frame of trainings completed.

Of particular note in the findings of this study is that LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault who formally reported the incident to college officials were significantly more likely to have negative perceptions of the campus climate. Qualitative responses from the few (n = 41) students who made reports overwhelmingly expressed negative experiences with the process. In particular, these students addressed perceptions that offenders were not sanctioned appropriately
after being found responsible for the incident. The triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative data supports the possibility that experiencing the sexual assault reporting process for LGBTQ students actually has a negative effect on their relationship with campus administrators and the college itself. These findings are not limited to a single campus. Participants attend schools in all fifty U.S states and represent public, private, and religiously based institutions.

Often, when college campuses receive negative feedback about the reporting process, it is individual Title IX officials and student conduct officers who are held to account, often through public censure or removal (Brown, 2019). However, the negative perceptions and experiences related in these findings cannot be attributed to any one particular administrator. Rather, it suggests that across the country, the sexual assault reporting process may not be meeting the needs of LGBTQ survivors. This has implications for policy and protocols, many of which are written by campus attorneys who intend to ensure that the campus is in compliance with state and federal laws. In order to address this disconnect, it is important that LGBTQ survivors, and their advocates, are included in developing and revising policy and protocol at both the campus, state and federal level. If the purpose of Title IX civil rights legislation is to support access to education that is free of sex based discrimination, in order to create equity and inclusion within higher education, policy-makers must consider how to fulfill both the letter and the spirit of the law.
References


reporting sexual assault to police and university officials: Results of a self-report survey.

*Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* DOI: 088626051663235.


Worthen, M., & Wallace, S. (2018). "Why should I, the one who was raped, be forced to take training in what sexual assault is?" Sexual assault survivors' and those who know survivors' responses to a campus sexual assault education program. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, DOI: 886260518768571.
Chapter Five:

Conclusion and Future Directions

This body of work is focused on understanding how different dimensions of the campus climate at institutions of higher education were related to sexual assault victimization and reporting sexual assault to college officials for LGBTQ students. Results from this study illustrate that witnessing harassment or discrimination of LGBTQ persons on campus is associated with both sexual assault victimization and of reporting sexual assault to college officials. Additionally, perceptions of LGBTQ inclusion and a sense of belonging were found to be positively associated with the sexual assault reporting climate for participants. However, LGBTQ students who had reported sexual assault to college officials indicated overall negative perceptions of the reporting climate. These findings were then discussed in regard to their implications for policy, social work practice, and social work education.

Review of Major Findings

Chapter Two explored the experience of LGBTQ college students with sexual assault by investigating how different dimensions of the campus climate served as risk or protective factors for sexual assault victimization. This chapter was strongly influenced by the recent work of Coulter and Rankin (2017), which found that the more positive the campus climate was perceived to be for LGBTQ students, the lower odds they had of experiencing sexual assault in college. For the purpose of this study, campus climate was conceptualized in several different ways: sense of belonging, observing harassment of LGBTQ students on campus, perceptions of inclusion for LGBTQ students on campus, and inclusion of LGBTQ students in the college classroom. A total of 1,115 LGBTQ college students were included in this analysis. Approximately 37% of participants (n = 409) experienced sexual assault while attending their
current college. Direct logistic regression was performed to determine the relationship between specific variables (gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, campus climate) and LGBTQ college student victimization. Ultimately, when controlling for all other variables in the model, three variables (transmen, observed harassment of LGBTQ students, and Hispanic LGBTQ students) were significant factors in victimization for LGBTQ students. Transmen were significantly less likely to experience sexual assault than other gender identities (OR = .77, 95% CI: .07 - .99, p = .048), witnessing harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ people in college was positively associated with victimization (OR: 1.16, 95% CI: 1.12 – 1.21, p < .001), and LGBTQ students who identified as Hispanic were 1.72 times as likely to experience sexual assault in college than non-Hispanic LGBTQ students (OR = 1.72, 95% CI: 1.04 – 2.85, p = .036).

Chapters Three and Four investigated the experience of LGBTQ participants who had experienced sexual assault while in college. A told of 409 participants (37%) had experienced sexual assault while attending their current college. Chapter Three was an exploratory study that focused on how the campus climate, support services, and the circumstances of the sexual assault may have influenced decisions to report the incident to college officials. The campus climate, in this analysis, was conceptualized in multiple dimensions, including LGBTQ inclusion in the classroom, observing harassment or discrimination of LGBTQ persons on campus and general perceptions of LGBTQ inclusion on campus.

Three separate theory driven logistic regression models were run to help determine variables to include in a final model with reporting to campus officials as outcome. Ultimately, four variables (type of assault, observed harassment, disclosure to counselor, and exposure to training) were included in a final logistic regression model. When controlling for all other
variables in the model, LGBTQ college survivors who disclosed to a counselor were 3 times as likely to report to college officials, compared to those who did not (OR: 3.05, 95% CI: 1.41 – 6.62, p = .004). Those who experienced unwanted penetration or intercourse during the assault were 3.46 times as likely to report as those who experienced unwanted sexual touching only (OR: 3.46, 95% CI: .1.49 – 8.03, p = .004). LGBTQ college student survivors who were exposed to training on sexual assault at their college were 6.48 times as likely to report to college officials than those who were not exposed to training [OR: 6.48, 95% CI: 1.66 – 25.28, p = .003]. And, finally, the more harassment of LGBTQ students observed by participants on campus, the more likely participants were to report sexual assault to campus officials (OR: 1.14, 95% CI: 1.05 – 1.25, p = .003). Due to the exploratory nature of this study, initial model testing was utilized to determine variables to include in the full model. In order to limit Type 1 error derived from this process, a Bonferroni Correction was applied and the alpha was adjusted to .017.

Chapter Four continued to explore the experience of LGBTQ survivors of college sexual assault through an investigation of how these participants perceived the sexual assault reporting campus climate. This dimension of the campus climate is conceptualized as the perceptions that LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault have regarding how college officials would respond to reports of sexual assault. Hierarchical regression was utilized to assess how students’ sense of belonging, the climate for LGBTQ persons on campus, exposure to training, affiliation of the perpetrator and whether the survivor made a formal report to campus officials, contributed to the sexual assault reporting campus climate, when controlling for race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, housing status and year in school.

Several variables significantly contributed to the sexual assault reporting campus climate within this model. Both the LGBTQ climate (beta = .13, p < .05). and sense of belonging (beta =
had a significant, positive relationship to the sexual assault reporting climate. Additionally, survivors who had been exposed to sexual assault training at their college had a more positive perception of the reporting climate (beta = .137, p < .05). Survivors assaulted by someone affiliated with the campus were more likely to have a negative perception of the sexual assault reporting climate (beta = -.15, p < .05). And, notably, survivors who did report sexual assault to campus officials were significantly more likely to have a negative perception of the reporting climate (beta = -.14, p < .05). As this was a cross-sectional research project, hierarchical regression was unable to explain the relationship between reporting and the reporting climate. In order to further understand this particular finding, open ended questions related to the reporting process were examined and coded. Participants who had reported sexual assault to a campus official overwhelmingly expressed negative perceptions of the reporting process. Survivors who reported to campus officials remarked that perpetrators were rarely held accountable by the school and that the process ended up making them feel less safe.

**Strengths and limitations**

This research project is unique in that it focuses exclusively on the experience of LGBTQ college students with sexual assault, when the vast majority of literature in this area focuses on the experience of cisgender, heterosexual female survivors. As prior research has found that LGBTQ students experience sexual assault at higher rates than cisgender, heterosexual students (Blosnich & Bossart, 2012, Coulter et. al., 2017, & Krebs et. al., 2016), inquiry that centers this group is important for broadening the understanding of this social problem. This study also widens the knowledge base in the area of sexual assault on college campuses, by investigating how LGBTQ inclusion and acceptance on campus is associated with victimization and reporting. By exploring interactions between campus climate and victimization and reporting, this study
uses a macro-system lens to understand this persistent social problem which led to new implications for policy and practice.

This study also has multiple limitations. First, as recruitment was conducted via social media it is not possible to calculate a sampling frame, thus, the results cannot be generalized to the general population. Also, due to the recruitment strategy participants self-selected into the study which could lead to selection bias. Participants in this study may have had stronger feelings related to sexual assault than those who did not participate. Next, this study was a cross-sectional survey so results are not able to assess causation between variables. Also, despite concerted efforts to recruit racial and ethnic minorities, the sample is primarily white. This lack of racial and ethnic diversity limited the type of analysis that could be conducted to assess the relationship between race and ethnicity with the dependent variables. Finally, Chapter Three was an exploratory study. As a limited number of participants reported sexual assault to college officials, this also limited the statistical power of the analysis. The results in Chapter Three are exploratory in nature and meant to guide future hypothesis and theory building around reporting sexual assault to college officials for LGBTQ college students.

Implications for Methodology

This study highlights several implications for research methodology when examining the experience of LGBTQ college students with sexual assault and reporting. First, no incentive was utilized to recruit participants for this study and a large data set was still attained within a short time period. This suggests that LGBTQ college students, an understudied population, are open to sharing information with researchers on their experiences with sensitive topics. Also, the use of social media to recruit participants was effective in reaching LGBTQ college students across the United States. However, it did not result in a racially/ethnically diverse sample. Different
methods may need to be used to reach these populations, such as invitations to participate from already trusted sources. Finally, researchers interested in studying reporting decisions for LGBTQ survivors of college sexual assault will want to consider how to attain extremely large data sets, or to use sampling strategies that over sample survivors who reported to campus officials, as so few LGBTQ college students do report to college officials.

**Implications for Practice**

Social work practitioners are regularly involved in working with survivors of sexual assault as counselors, victim advocates, and prevention specialists within higher education. Results from this study can inform social work practice in multiple different areas. First, as found in Chapter Three, LGBTQ survivors who disclosed to a counselor were 3 times as likely to also formally report the incident to college officials compared to those who did not disclose the assault to a counselor. Regardless of whether the disclosure to a counselor occurred before or after the report to campus officials, it may benefit how social work practitioners work with LGBTQ survivors to seek out information about the reporting process on college campuses, which is often less understand than the law enforcement reporting process. Social workers should seek out training at college campuses in their area so as to be informed of the process in these particular communities. This knowledge may help counselors support LGBTQ survivors through the reporting process, and its aftermath.

Chapter Four found that LGBTQ survivors often have a very negative perception of the reporting process and how college campuses respond to LGBTQ survivors. Some LGBTQ survivors believe that the reporting process made them feel less safe. This is important information for social work counselors and advocates, who may be assisting LGBTQ survivors in making the decision as to whether or not to report to campus officials. In addition to seeking
information on the reporting process, social workers working with these survivors may want to consider how to have honest and transparent conversations about both the potential benefits and downfalls to reporting to their college. When possible, social work practitioners should seek out avenues at relevant colleges where students can receive accommodations and safety measures without pursuing a formal reporting process.

Social workers involved in sexual assault prevention efforts on college campuses may also want to consider how LGBTQ inclusion and acceptance can be incorporated into these efforts. LGBTQ inclusion and acceptance proved to be a factor in all three data-driven Chapters. This variable was shown to be a significant factor in victimization, reporting, and the sexual assault reporting climate. Social workers that are involved in primary prevention should consider how they can support LGBTQ inclusion and acceptance as a direct part of these efforts. In particular, on campuses where harassment of LGBTQ persons occurs, social workers should take note that this is highly relevant to matters related to sexual assault. Also, for social workers involved in prevention and response efforts, the experience of ethnic and racial minority subgroups of the LGBTQ community should be centered, as they may have considerably higher rates of victimization than other groups. Social workers may involve these students in developing trainings, sitting on school committees, and giving feedback on campus policies. It may be beneficial for LGBTQ survivors to be involved in both the development and implementation of these efforts.

Implications for Policy

Federal, state, and campus policies all govern how institutions of higher education respond to and prevent sexual assault. Currently, the U.S Department of Education under the Trump administration have proposed new regulations for Title IX, which are proceeding through
the rulemaking process. Findings from this body of work may have implications for the proposed changes to Title IX. As noted in Chapter Three, 10% of LGBTQ college students who experienced sexual assault at their current college made a formal report to the school. This low reporting rate is consistent with research on heterosexual, cisgender women (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000). Some of the proposed changes to Title IX regulations, such as the requirements of a live hearing and cross-examination by attorneys, may further complicate the decision making process for LGBTQ survivors. The proposed Title IX regulations would also require a presumption of innocence throughout the grievance process, as opposed to a neutral process where the accused student is presumed neither innocent or guilty (U.S Department of Education, 2019). In Chapter Four, survivors noted that the formal reporting process rarely led to accountability, and that this created a negative experience for them. Shifting the burden of proof to the reporting party, especially in a campus process that does not have the same technology or resources to collect evidence as law enforcement, may make it more difficult for schools to find perpetrators responsible and for survivors to find justice.

Several states, and some college campuses, have passed laws that require university faculty and staff who receive disclosures of sexual assault from students to report this information, including student names, to Title IX Coordinators (Mores, Sponsler, & Fulton, 2015). When Title IX Coordinators receive this information, it can lead to formal adjudication proceedings, regardless of whether the survivor has chosen to engage with this process. Findings from this body of work may have implications for these mandatory reporting policies. As is suggested in Chapter Three, the decision to report sexual assault to college officials is a complicated one for LGBTQ survivors. The campus climate and circumstances of the crime all impact the decision. Further, LGBTQ students who do report sexual assault to college officials
often have negative experiences with the process. In order to fully support LGBTQ survivors, state governments and college campus policy makers should consider dismantling mandatory reporting policies. Instead, campuses may institute policies where faculty and staff can inform the Title IX office that they did receive a disclosure, without providing any names, so that officials can make a record of it and provide the employee with information on the reporting process, counseling services, and possible accommodations for the survivor. This would provide the employee with the ability to pass on services and options to LGBTQ survivors, rather than forcing them to engage with a process that may not, ultimately, benefit them.

College campuses do have some discretion in creating policies for their community, as long as they comply with their state and federal regulations. College campuses invested in preventing sexual assault in their communities may want to consider the policies they have focused on harassment based on gender and sexual orientation. Throughout this body of work, harassment of LGBTQ students on campus was a significant factor. College officials should develop strong policies prohibiting such harassment and hold students and employees who break this policy firmly accountable. This type of policy may help create a shift in the campus climate for LGBTQ students, which could have positive effects on their safety and well-being.

**Implications for Social Work Education**

One of the twelve Grand Challenges for Social Work is to build healthy relationships to end violence. For the social work profession to seriously address interpersonal violence, this is an issue that must be addressed in social work education at every level. Centering communities that are highly vulnerable to sexual assault, such as LGBTQ college students, may be an effective means towards meeting the goal of this Grand Challenge. Social work educators should consider how they teach issues related to sexual assault and trauma, which are topics
discussed throughout the social work curriculum. While much of the literature and public discourse on these topics focuses on heterosexual, cisgender women, social work educators should include the experiences of LGBTQ college students in these discussions so as to adequately prepare future clinicians to meet the needs of LGBTQ persons. Findings from this research show that sexual assault within the LGBTQ community is not only an issue that can be taught and discussed in clinical classes focused on the individual but can also be an important aspect of macro classes that focus on policy, community wide interventions and social change.

Additionally, this study also highlights the many ways that social work professionals may be working on college campuses to address sexual assault, as advocates, counselors and prevention specialists. Social work educators can include higher education as a community of practice and help to prepare social workers to assist vulnerable populations and create change in the context of college campuses. As social workers are trained to work with individuals, groups, and communities they may be uniquely positioned to respond to sexual assault and help prevent it in higher education.

Findings from this research are also relevant to social work education because it is focused on college students at the undergraduate level. Faculty and staff, including those in Social Work programs across the United States, play an integral role in the campus climate at institutions of higher education. These employees are in a unique position to advocate for programming and policies that are inclusive of LGBTQ students, and that hold perpetrators of sexual assault, discrimination and harassment accountable on their campuses.

**Future Research**

There are several areas of future research that will build on this research project. First, there is a need for samples of LGBTQ college students that are racially and ethnically diverse,
throughout each sub-group of the LGBTQ community. This project utilized social media to recruit participants, and actively recruited diverse participants. However, social media may not be the most effective means to recruit LGBTQ college students who are African American, Asian, Native American, or Hispanic. Future research should consider building connections with LGBTQ centers at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions to recruit students. Second, future research should consider LGBTQ students at community colleges. Many participants were excluded from this study because they did not attend a four year institution. Next, to further explore factors related to reporting sexual assault to college officials bigger data sets will be necessary to apply more rigorous statistical analysis. And finally, more in-depth research on the experience of LGBTQ students who proceed through the formal reporting process at college campuses may provide important answers to how policy and practice can support these students education, safety, and well-being. A qualitative research project focused on this area will add to the literature on the experience of LGBTQ college student survivors of sexual assault.

Conclusions

LGBTQ college students experience sexual assault at higher rates than heterosexual, cisgender students. This body of work centered the experience of LGBTQ college students and their experience with sexual assault victimization and reporting sexual assault to college officials. Throughout three data-driven articles, it was found that the climate for LGBTQ college students impacts victimization rates, reporting decisions, and perceptions of the sexual assault reporting climate. Additionally, LGBTQ college students who do report sexual assault to college officials often perceive the reporting process negatively. These findings have implications for the currently proposed Title IX regulations, and for state mandatory reporting laws. Social work
practitioners should consider how to further educate themselves on the reporting process within college campuses so as to best support LGBTQ survivors and social work educators should include their experience in curriculum on trauma and violence. Future research focused on LGBTQ college students and sexual assault should seek racially and ethnically diverse samples and consider including community college students. More in-depth, qualitative research on the reporting process would also benefit the knowledge base. Research should continue to shine a light on the experience of LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault in college in order to support equity throughout the system of higher education.
References


Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Start of Block: Default Question Block
Principal Investigator: Cristina Wilson, PhD
Student: Sarah Dodd, MSW
Title of Study: The Impact of the Sexual Assault Reporting Climate on Reporting or Disclosing Sexual Assault to College Officials for LGBTQ Identified Students

You are invited to participate in this survey of LGBTQ college students in the United States. I am a PhD candidate at the University of Connecticut, and I am conducting this survey as part of my dissertation. I am interested in finding out the perceptions and experiences of LGBTQ identified college student regarding sexual assault while in college.

Your participation in this study will require completion of this on-line survey. This should take approximately 20 minutes of your time. Your participation will be anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. This survey does ask questions about your own experience with sexual assault, which may cause discomfort. Should you feel any discomfort or distress while taking this survey please seek confidential support services, via chat line or phone, at www.rainn.org.

While we do not expect any direct benefit to you for taking the survey, the benefits of your participation may impact society by helping increase knowledge about LGBTQ college students experiences with sexual assault so as to improve response efforts, prevention and support services on college campuses throughout the country.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer for any reason. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me, Sarah Dodd (the student) at 978-855-4719 or my advisor, Dr. Cristina Wilson at (959) 200 - 3674. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 860-486-8802. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Thank you.

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Screening Questions
Q1 How old are you?
   ○ Under 18  (1)
   ○ 18  (2)
   ○ 19  (3)
   ○ 20  (4)
   ○ 21  (5)
   ○ 22  (6)
   ○ 23  (7)
   ○ 24  (8)
   ○ 25  (9)
   ○ 26  (10)
   ○ 27  (11)
   ○ 28  (12)
   ○ 29  (13)
   ○ 30  (14)
   ○ 31 or older  (15)

*Skip To: End of Survey If How old are you? = Under 18*

Q2 Are you currently enrolled as a student at a four-year college?
   ○ Yes  (1)
   ○ No  (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Are you currently enrolled as a student at a four-year college? = No*

Q3 Is the college you attend in the United States?
   ○ Yes, the college I attend is in the United States  (1)
   ○ No, the college I attend is outside the United States  (2)
Q4 Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student?
   - Undergraduate student (1)
   - Graduate Student (2)

Q5 What is your current gender identity?
   - Female (1)
   - Male (2)
   - Transgender Female (3)
   - Transgender Male (4)
   - Genderqueer/gender noncomforming (5)
   - Non-binary (6)
   - Another (please specify) (7)

Q6 Which term best describes your sexual orientation?
   - Bisexual (1)
   - Gay (2)
   - Heterosexual (3)
   - Lesbian (4)
   - Questioning (5)
   - Another (please specify) (6)

End of Block: Screening Questions

Start of Block: Demographics
Q7 Is the four-year college you attend, public or private?
- Public (1)
- Private (2)
- I'm not sure (3)

Q8 What is the name of the school you attend?
________________________________________________________________

Q9 What is your current student status?
- First year undergraduate student (1)
- Second year undergraduate student (2)
- Third year undergraduate student (3)
- Fourth year undergraduate student (4)
- Other (please specify) (5) __________________________________________

Q10 Do you currently take any classes on-line?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: Q68 If Do you currently take any classes on-line? = Yes
Skip To: Q69 If Do you currently take any classes on-line? = No

Q11 Which best describes how many classes you take online?
- All of my classes are online (1)
- Most of my classes are online (2)
- About half of my classes are online (3)
- A few of my classes are online (4)
- Other (5) ________________________________
Q12 Which of the following best describes your current living situation?

- On Campus (1)
- Off-campus (2)

Q13 What is your race (as you define it)? Please mark all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaskan Native (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)
- White (5)
- Another (please specify) (6)

Q14 What is your ethnicity (as you define it)?

- Hispanic or Latino (1)
- Not Hispanic or Latino (2)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: School Connectedness

Q15 Please indicate your level of agreement, as it pertains to the college that you currently attend, to the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
I feel valued in the classroom / learning environment. (1)

Faculty, staff, and administrators respect what students on this campus think. (2)

I think faculty are genuinely concerned about my welfare. (3)

I think administrators are genuinely concerned about my welfare. (4)

I feel close to people on this campus. (5)

I feel like I am a part of this university. (6)

I am happy to be at this university. (7)

The faculty, staff, and administrators at this school treat students fairly. (8)
**End of Block: School Connectedness**

**Start of Block: Trust in the College Support System**

Q16 Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At my college, campus officials (administrators, campus police) should do more to protect students from harm. (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a crisis happened on my campus, officials would handle it well. (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At my college, campus officials handle incidents in a fair and responsible manner. (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My campus does enough to protect the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
End of Block: Trust in the College Support System

Start of Block: Sexual Assault Reporting Climate

Q17 If someone were to report a sexual assault to a campus authority at your college, how likely is it that:

- safety of students. (4)
- There is a good support system on my campus for students going through difficult times. (5)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus officials would take the report seriously. (1)</th>
<th>Very Likely (1)</th>
<th>Moderately Likely (2)</th>
<th>Slightly Likely (3)</th>
<th>Not at all Likely (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus officials would keep knowledge of the report limited to those who need to know in order for the university to respond properly. (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus officials would forward the report outside the campus to criminal investigators. (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus officials would take steps to protect the safety of the person making the report. (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus officials would support the person making the report. (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus officials would take corrective action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault. (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus officials would take corrective action against the offender. (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Campus officials would take steps to protect the person making the report from retaliation. (8)

Students would label the person making the report a troublemaker. (9)

Students would support the person making the report. (10)

The alleged offender(s) or their associates would retaliate against the person making the report. (11)

The educational achievement/career of the person making the report would suffer. (12)

End of Block: Sexual Assault Reporting Climate

Start of Block: Community readiness

Q18 Please rate how aware you are of the following items:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all aware (1)</th>
<th>Very little (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat (3)</th>
<th>Very much aware (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are efforts (i.e. programs, policies) in my campus community to address sexual assault among LGBTQ young adults (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard LGBTQ peers in my campus community discussing sexual assault among LGBTQ young adults (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard heterosexual peers in my campus community discussing sexual assault among LGBTQ young adults (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard about medical and mental health professional in my campus community discussing sexual assault among LGBTQ young adults (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have heard about teachers and coaches in my campus community discussing sexual assault among LGBTQ young adults (5)

I have seen educational materials (e.g. brochures, posters) in my campus community about how LGBTQ young adults can get help if they experience sexual assault (6)

I have heard about programs in my campus community that help promote healthy relationships among LGBTQ young adults (7)

I have heard about campus community resources that are available to help LGBTQ young adults who have been sexually assaulted (8)
I have heard statistics about sexual assault among LGBTQ young adults in my campus community (9)

End of Block: Community readiness

Start of Block: Availability of Resources
Q19 Are the following services available on your campus?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>I don't know (1)</th>
<th>No (2)</th>
<th>Yes (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault education workshops that focus on LGBTQ students (1)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ sexual assault peer educators (2)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of LGBTQ sexual assault issues into the course curriculum (3)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training about sexual assault for LGBTQ young adults (4)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty four hour community hotline for LGBTQ young adult survivors of sexual assault (5)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis intervention counselors for LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault (6)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training about sexual assault among LGBTQ young adults for professionals (e.g., doctors, counselors, law enforcement, teachers) (7)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to community based sexual assault programs, including shelter services for LGBTQ young adults (8)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
End of Block: Availability of Resources

Start of Block: Outness

Q20 How out are you, on your campus, about your sexual orientation?
   - Not at all out (1)
   - Somewhat out (2)
   - Very out (3)
   - I don't know (4)

Q21 How out are you, on your campus, about your gender identity?
   - Not at all out (1)
   - Somewhat out (2)
   - Very out (3)
   - I don't know (4)

End of Block: Outness

Start of Block: Training

Q22 At your college, have you received training in policies and procedures regarding incidents of sexual assault (e.g., what is defined as sexual assault, how to report an incident, confidential resources, procedures for investigating)?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)

Q23 At your college, have you received training in the prevention of sexual assault (i.e., bystander intervention, conversations on consent)?
   - Yes (1)
   - No (2)

End of Block: Training
**Start of Block: LGBTQ Climate**

Q24 Overall, how homophobic is your campus?

- Not at all homophobic
- Slightly homophobic
- Moderately homophobic
- Very homophobic
- Completely homophobic

Q25 Overall, how sexist is your campus?

- Not at all sexist
- Slightly sexist
- Moderately sexist
- Very sexist
- Completely sexist

Q26 Overall, how would you describe the climate for LGBTQ students on your campus?

- Negative
- Somewhat negative
- Neutral
- Somewhat positive
- Positive
Q27 Please rate how strongly you agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The classes I have taken on my college are accepting of women who are gay/lesbian/bisexual/queer (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The classes I have taken at my college are accepting of men who are gay/lesbian/bisexual/queer (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The classes I have taken at my college are accepting of people who are gender variant (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
Q28 How often, in the past year, have you observed the following on your campus?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never (1)</th>
<th>1 - 2 times (2)</th>
<th>3 - 5 times (3)</th>
<th>6 - 9 times (4)</th>
<th>10 or more times (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men who are not heterosexual being harassed because of their sexual orientation (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who are not heterosexual harassed because of their sexual orientation (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are gender variant harassed due to their gender identity (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are gender variant harassed due to their gender expression (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

End of Block: LGBTQ Climate

Start of Block: Unwanted Sexual Contact Definitions

*
This section asks about times when you may have experienced unwanted sexual contact. In these questions, unwanted sexual contact is sexual contact that you did not consent to and that you did not want to happen. Remember that sexual contact includes touching of your sexual body parts, oral sex, anal sex, sexual intercourse, and penetration of a vagina or anus with a finger or object. Please check off each point as you read through these descriptions. Unwanted sexual contact could happen when:

- someone touches or grabs your sexual body parts (e.g., butt, crotch, or breasts); (1)
- someone uses force against you, such as holding you down with his or her body weight, pinning your arms, hitting or kicking you; (2)
- someone threatens to hurt your or someone close to you, or (3)
- you are unable to provide consent because you are incapacitated, based out, unconscious, blacked out, or asleep. This could happen after you voluntarily used alcohol or drugs, or after you were given a drug without your knowledge or consent. (4)

Please keep in mind that anyone—regardless of gender—can experience unwanted sexual contact. Also, the person who does this could be a stranger or someone you know, such as a friend, family member, or person you were dating or hanging out with. When you answer the questions in this section, please count any experience of unwanted sexual contact (e.g., touching of your sexual body parts, oral sex, anal sex, sexual intercourse, and penetration of a vagina or anus with a finger or object) that you did not consent to and did not want to happen since you became a student at your college, regardless of where it happened.

End of Block: Unwanted Sexual Contact Definitions

Start of Block: Victimization Status

Q29 Since you began attending your current college/university, has anyone had unwanted sexual contact with you?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Victimization Status

Start of Block: Type of Assault
The next questions ask about this incident(s) of unwanted sexual contact that you experienced since you began attending your college/university. The questions ask when the incidents
happened, if/how you know the person who did it, and whether you sought services after the incident.

Q 30 For this next question, please think about the time since you entered the college where you are currently a student. At any point since you entered the college where you are currently a student, has anyone had any of the following types of unwanted sexual contact with you (i.e., sexual contact without your consent and that you did not want to happen)?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forced touching of a sexual nature (forced kissing, touching of private parts, grabbing, fondling, rubbing up against you in a sexual way, even if it is over your clothes) (1)</th>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (2)</th>
<th>Unsure (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral sex (someone’s mouth or tongue making contact with your genitals or your mouth or tongue making contact with someone else’s genitals) (2)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal sex (someone putting their penis in your anus) (3)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse (someone putting their penis in your vagina) (4)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual penetration with a finger or object (someone putting their finger or an object like a candle or bottle in a vagina or anus) (5)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q31 For the following set of questions, please think of the **most serious** incident of unwanted sexual contact that you have experienced since you became a student at your college.

**End of Block: Type of Assault**

**Start of Block: Alcohol Use**

Q32

Had the person(s) who had unwanted sexual contact with you been drinking alcohol or using drugs?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unsure/ Don't Know (3)

**End of Block: Alcohol Use**

**Start of Block: Perpetrator Status**
Q34 Who was the person/people who had unwanted sexual contact with you?

- Stranger (1)
- Family member (2)
- Acquaintance (3)
- Coworker (4)
- Employer/supervisor (5)
- College professor/instructor (6)
- College staff (7)
- Non-romantic friend (8)
- Casual or first date (9)
- Current romantic partner (10)
- Ex-romantic partner (11)
- Other (please specify) (12) ________________________________________________

Q35 Was this person (or any of the people) a student at your college?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

Q36 Was this person (or any of the people) affiliated with your college, as an employee, staff, or faculty member?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

End of Block: Perpetrator Status

Start of Block: Report/Disclosure of Sexual Assault
Q37 Did you tell anyone about the incident?
   ○ Yes (1)
   ○ No (2)

Skip To: Q63 If Did you tell anyone about the incident? = No

Display This Question:
   If Did you tell anyone about the incident? = Yes

Q38 Who did you tell about the incident? (Mark all that apply?)
   ○ Roommate (1)
   ○ Close friend other than roommate (2)
   ○ Parent or guardian (3)
   ○ Other family members (4)
   ○ Counselor (5)
   ○ Faculty or staff (6)
   ○ Residence hall staff (7)
   ○ Police (8)
   ○ Romantic partner (9)
   ○ Campus sexual assault advocate (10)
   ○ Other (11) _______________________________________________________________
Q39 Which of the following groups / organizations were notified of the incident(s) that occurred?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group / Organization</th>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators, officials or staff at the college/university (e.g., Title IX Coordinator, Student Conduct Officer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A crisis center or helpline, or a hospital or health care center at this school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A crisis center or helpline, or a hospital or health care center not at this school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus police or security at this school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local police not at this school, such as the county or city police department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q40 Did you formally report the incident to your college?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Did you formally report the incident to your college? = No*
Q41 Who did you formally report the incident to at your college?
- Title IX Coordinator (1)
- Student conduct official (2)
- Police officer / safety officer (3)
- Faculty member (4)
- Other college administrator (5)
- Other (6) ____________________________

Q42 Did the college's formal process help you deal with the problem?
- Didn't help me at all (1)
- Helped me a little bit (2)
- Helped, but could have helped more (3)
- Helped me a lot (4)
- Completely solved the problem (5)

Q43 What else would you like to share with us about how your experience formally reporting did, or did not, help you deal with the problem?
________________________________________________________________

End of Block: Report/Disclosure of Sexual Assault

Start of Block: Final Open Ended Questions

Q44 What do you think college officials can do to improve sexual assault prevention and support services for LGBTQ students on college campuses?
________________________________________________________________

Q45 What recommendations do you have for college officials that might improve the reporting process for LGBTQ survivors of sexual assault?
________________________________________________________________

End of Block: Final Open Ended Questions