

Sexual Assault Prevention and Advocacy Training Program (SAPAT)

Individuals who experience sexual violence can experience negative psychological consequences that are important to the work of counseling psychologists and social justice advocates. These consequences can include the following: sense of anxiety, anger, fear, depression, or worthlessness, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

It was found that in the college population, 37.4% of female rape victims were first raped between ages 18-24. Rothman and Silverman (2007) found that 20-25% of women and 3% of men are assaulted during their college years. However, this is likely an underestimate as sexual assaults often times go unreported. Consequently, these rates reinforce the need to look at this problem for a college population and utilize the proposed Sexual Assault and Advocacy Training (SAPAT) program to provide support to sexual assault survivors as well as provide advocacy training to the college population. Specifically for the Midwestern university in which the SAPAT program would be implemented, the rates for reported sexual assault have increased over the past four years. The Office of Victim Services and College Counseling Center expressed a further need to address the increase in sexual violence on campus.

A meta-analysis on the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs by Anderson and Whiston (2005) revealed that programs were successful at increasing knowledge and decreasing rape myth endorsement. The body of research on sexual assault and college programming targeting pertinent information for this issue have been successful but express that more research needs to be conducted successful (see Ahrens, Rich, & Ullman, 2011; Anderson & Whiston, 2005; and Rothman & Silverman, 2007).

The proposed SAPAT program is four hours in length and will be offered twice per academic semester. The program will consist of four key areas to sexual assault prevention and advocacy: general knowledge of sexual assault, rape myth awareness, bystander intervention, and resources and advocacy. A variety of approaches will be employed, including psychoeducation, an interactive panel presentation, survivor simulation, and video with discussion.

A quasi-experimental separate-sample pretest-posttest design will be used to evaluate the program. The control group will complete the pretest and the experimental group will take the posttest immediately after the training. Both groups will complete the six-month follow-up assessment using the same measures. This design is strong for an evaluation as it includes a control group and randomization.

Three repeated measures mixed ANOVAs will be used to test each hypothesis. The independent variables are group (experimental vs. control) and time. The dependent variables are rape myth acceptance, bystander attitudes, and awareness and knowledge. We hypothesize that the training will result in decreased endorsement of rape myths, increased positive attitudes toward bystander intervention, and increased awareness and knowledge related to sexual assault and prevention. Additionally, it is hypothesized that these results will be maintained as evidenced by the six-month follow-up assessment. The anticipated date of completion is Spring 2015. However, if the training is deemed successful in meeting its goals, it will likely continue along with additional data collection.