

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-6-2021

Rape myth prevalence among resident assistants at Rowan University

Erin Flynn
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Flynn, Erin, "Rape myth prevalence among resident assistants at Rowan University" (2021). *Theses and Dissertations*. 2894.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/2894>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

**RAPE MYTH PREVALENCE AMONG
RESIDENT ASSISTANTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY**

by
Erin Flynn

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Dept. of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education
at
Rowan University
March 25, 2021

Thesis Chair: Andrew Tinnin, Ed.D.

Committee Members:
Dianna Dale, Ph.D.
Tyrone McCombs, Ph.D.

© 2021 Erin Flynn

Dedications

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my Grandmother for always believing in me, my parents for always supporting me and to my siblings, for always challenging me. To everyone who has helped along the way, this thesis would not have come to fruition without the love and support of my people.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Dr. Andrew Tinnin for his contributions and patience throughout the revision process and to my Thesis Review Board for their expertise.

Abstract

Erin Flynn
RAPE MYTH PREVALENCE AMONG
RESIDENT ASSISTANTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY
2020-2021
Andrew Tinnin, Ed.D.
Master of Arts in Higher Education

College campuses have become the front lines in the battle to end sexual assaults. One in five college-aged women will experience sexual assault during their time in school (Muehlenhard et al., 2017). This study explores whether mandatory reporters may disregard a report of sexual misconduct due to their belief in rape myths. Rape Myths are defined as any belief that exonerates the perpetrator while placing blame on the victim. This study aims to explore the relationship between rape myths and the largest population of mandatory reporters on campus, Resident Assistants.

This study explores the degree of understanding Resident Assistants hold in the behaviors covered under Title IX, their ability to comfort and take information from a student reporting their experience, and whether they were familiar with the protocol to report the incident. This study identifies the most common rape myths held by Resident Assistants as well as the impact that these myths have in the likelihood of Resident Assistants to report the incident, as stated in the requirements of the mandatory reporting policy at Rowan University.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	v
List of Figures.....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Overview of the Problem.....	1
Significance of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Limitations.....	5
Operational Definitions of Key Terms.....	7
Research Questions.....	7
Overview of the Study.....	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	9
Title IX.....	9
Title IX Evolution.....	10
Campus Sexual Assaults.....	11
Barriers to Reporting.....	13
Institutional Betrayal Effects on Survivors.....	14
History of Institutional Betrayal.....	14
Mandatory Reporters.....	15
Opinions on Mandatory Reporting Policies.....	16
Rape Myths.....	17
Classifications of Rape Myths.....	18
Conclusion.....	19

Table of Contents (Continued)

Chapter 3: Methodology	21
Context of the Study	21
Research Questions	21
Methodological Approach	21
Focus Group Design	22
Data Collection Strategies	23
Population and Sample Selection	24
Data Analysis Approaches	25
Chapter 4: Results	26
Demographics	26
Gauging RA Understanding, Comfort, and Familiarity with Title IX	28
Comfortability of Addressing Title IX Incidents in RA Role	30
Familiarity with Title IX Response Protocol	32
Summarizing Knowledge, Comfort & Familiarity with Handling Title IX Incidents	33
Prevalence of Rape Myths in Resident Assistant	35
Rape Myths	37
Implications for Training	43
Chapter 5: Conclusion	45
Summary of the Study	45
Discussion of the Findings	46
Recommendations for Practice	47

Table of Contents (Continued)

Recommendations for Further Research.....47

References.....49

Appendix A: Recruitment Email52

Appendix B: Focus Group Overview53

Appendix C: Consent Form55

Appendix D: Audio Consent Form.....61

Appendix E: Demographics Survey.....63

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1. Racial Demographics.....	26
Figure 2. Gender Distribution.....	27
Figure 3. Understanding Title IX Definitions & Behaviors	28
Figure 4. Comfortability in Handling Title IX Incidents.....	31
Figure 5. Familiarity in Title IX Response Protocol.....	33
Figure 6. Rape Myths Held About Jessica’s Story	39
Figure 7. Rape Myths Held About Mike’s Story.....	41

Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview of the Problem

College campuses have become the front lines in the battle to end sexual assaults. One in five college-aged women will experience sexual assault during their time in school (Muehlenhard et al., 2017). Despite the rampant spread of campus sexual assaults, only 12.5% of assaults on campus are reported to campus authorities (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). There are many barriers that face survivors when looking to report their experiences of sexual violence, however, the low rate of reporting is distressing. This statistic is so alarming, the Obama Administration formed a White House Task Force to conduct a massive investigation into over 100 colleges and universities over allegations of improper handling of sexual assault incidents.

Mishandling assault allegations results in a phenomenon known as Institutional Betrayal. Institutional Betrayal can occur in a variety of ways. From institutions deliberately ignoring reports of violations, to improper sanctions imposed on perpetrators, not valuing due process in the investigations, or not having a clear means to report incidents of sexual violence or gender discrimination. Institutional Betrayal can be deliberate or accidental, but the effects are felt regardless of the intent. Institutional Betrayal leads to higher rates of Post-Traumatic Stress symptoms in survivors (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

One of the ways Institutional Betrayal happens is through the report of sexual misconduct being disregarded by campus authorities designated as mandatory reporters. Mandatory reporters are campus employees who are legally obligated to report instances

of gender discrimination, including sexual violence, to campus authorities, such as the Title IX office or campus police. Mandatory reporting is a common practice employed by institutions to adhere to Clery obligations. The Clery Act requires institutions to release an annual report on crimes committed on institutional property. This report includes everything from arson to armed robbery and it includes sexual assaults. Due to the strict penalties for improper reporting, mandatory reporters hold a high degree of responsibility in their position.

This study explores whether mandatory reporters may disregard a report of sexual misconduct due to their belief in rape myths. Rape Myths are defined as any belief that exonerates the perpetrator while placing blame on the victim. This study aims to explore the relationship between rape myths and the largest population of mandatory reporters on campus, Resident Assistants.

Significance of the Problem

The evolution of higher education in America has been drastic. Higher education has evolved from serving only a small sect of the population to serving millions of students every year. The history of Higher Education in America is fascinating and telling of the evolution and transformation required to better serve all Americans. (Rudolph, 1991) The quantity of students served is not the only aspect that has changed, today's students come from all walks of life and comprise a diverse range of ethnicities, races, genders, and religious creeds. It is no surprise that with this evolution, the services and needs of institutions-have also evolved (Trowler, 2008).

Today's institutions act as independent ecosystems comprised of a wide array of offices and resources to support the growing expanse and needs of students. With enrollments and residential populations growing every year, schools must match this pace of growth with the programs and services essential to meeting expectations and serving the varying needs of their students (Undergraduate Enrollment, 2020). One of the principal responsibilities of an institution of higher education is to provide a living and learning environment that is safe and free from harassment or intimidation. There are several offices on a college campus responsible for ensuring the safety on the campus from Public Safety and police officers to Title IX, Title VII and Student Conduct. All employees in these offices work diligently to ensure every student on campus feels safe and supported in their journey to receive an education.

One way that campuses work to ensure safety is through implementing policies surrounding mandatory reporting. Mandatory reporters are campus employees who are legally and contractually obligated to report certain crimes they are made aware of. For instance, robberies, abuse and sexual assaults and other Clery Act offenses.

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act [Clery] was signed into law in 1990 and aims to provide transparency surrounding crime on college campuses (2018). Named after Jeanne Clery who was a freshman at Lehigh University when she was assaulted and murdered in her residence hall room in a string of attacks on campus in 1986. Jeanne's parents, who championed the bill, argued had they known of the serial rapist and murder's presence on campus, they would never have sent their daughter to school there (Clery Center, 2020). From this bill, most schools adopted mandatory reporting policies to assist administrators in keeping up

with crimes that happened on campus so the school's annual campus safety report would accurately reflect the statistics of crime on campus.

Rowan like every other school in the country is legally obligated to publish a Campus Safety Report to be Clery compliant. In order to ensure the most accurate statistics are being reflected, Rowan has adopted a broad mandatory reporter policy. On campus, every employee, with the exception of counselors in the Wellness Center are deemed mandatory reporters.

Resident Assistants (RAs) comprise the largest group of mandatory reporters at Rowan University. Little is known regarding the beliefs and attitudes held by these crucial players in the war on sexual violence. If Resident Assistants hold false views regarding what constitutes as sexual violence, then there will be discrepancies in which incidents are reported. For example, if a Resident Assistant learns of a sexual assault in which the victim was intoxicated, the Resident Assistant may feel as if there was no crime because they falsely believe it was the victim's fault. If RAs are not reporting the incidents being brought to them, then not only are they not helping the survivor get the resources to begin healing, they are contributing to Institutional Betrayal. Institutional Betrayal occurs when the survivor of sexual assault relies on their institution to protect them, but the institution purposefully neglects its obligation to intervene and bring justice for the survivor.

When a survivor reports their assault to a mandatory reporter, it is the expectation of the survivor that the reporter enacts the proper protocol to begin the formal reporting process. In short, by reporting to a mandatory reporter, the survivor is doing what may seem like their only option to get help and bring the perpetrator to justice. When the

mandatory reporter fails to do their part, the survivor may perceive that as the institution not caring about the experiences of the survivor. Survivors who experience Institutional Betrayal report more severe forms of posttraumatic stress disorder and longer coping times (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). What happens when those designated mandatory reporters hold false beliefs surrounding responsibility and validity regarding a survivors' experience?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to understand the effects of rape myths for Resident Assistants using focus groups. This will allow for administrators to understand the limitations of the training provided to Resident Assistants and highlight additional areas where training can be expanded upon to reduce rape myth prevalence and therefore increase the likelihood that Resident Assistants will report the instances of sexual violence brought to their attention. It will also allow Rowan to become more complaint with its Clery Act responsibilities.

Limitations

This study has a few limitations. The first limitation applies to the population of the study. Knowledge acquired from the results of this study is only relevant to Resident Assistants at the mid-sized, public institution in which data was collected. As with qualitative data, the results describe the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of the research participants in order to better understand the impact of Rape Myths on their likelihood to report instances of sexual misconduct brought to their attention. Qualitative research is the only method of research to allow for such in-depth understanding of the Rape Myth prevalence among the sample population.

In order to fully understand the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of Resident Assistants at another institution, the study would need to be replicated using the desired population. Results cannot be applied to any other population without repeating the experiment within that population.

The second limitation applies to the method of research. This study utilized focus groups as the only means to collect data. Focus groups can cause participants to feel less confident in their responses and therefore less likely to respond. This will inevitably lead to those individuals not voicing their true opinions and causing inaccurate information to be obtained.

In order to mitigate the lack of confidence in group settings, the researcher asked participants to arrive 10 minutes prior to the start of the session so the participants can get to know each other a little bit before diving into the research questions. Additionally, the researcher facilitated a quick but effective ice breaker to have participants release some of the tension they may be experiencing leading up to having a group conversation.

The icebreaker which facilitated is called Common Ground. It is played by having the group of six participants pair off into partners of two. From there the partners were given two minutes to find five things they had in common with each other. After the two minutes were up, the partners shared out one thing they had in common with each other and then the partners changed so that everyone got an opportunity to find common ground with all of the participants.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Mandatory Reporters are defined as campus employees who are legally required to report certain crimes which they are made aware of, including but not limited to, campus sexual assaults, dating/domestic violence, stalking and other forms of gender-based harassment.

Rape Myths are defined as false beliefs which exonerate the perpetrator of sexual assaults while simultaneously placing blame on the survivor.

Resident Assistants are undergraduate students who assist other students in acclimating to college and enforce various residential policies within the residence halls on a college campus.

Campus sexual assaults are any attempted or completed sexual violence, including rape or fondling, which occur on a college campus.

Research Questions

The two research questions which will be examined through this study are:

1. What perceptions do Resident Assistants hold toward mandatory reporting on sexual assaults on Rowan's Campus?
2. And what, if any, are the most prevalent Rape Myths held by Resident Assistants?

These research questions will be answered through a comprehensive literature review on topics surrounding campus sexual assaults and mandatory reporting as well as research conducted for this study specifically.

Overview of the Study

The following paper outlines the qualitative research designed to test the aforementioned research questions. Starting with a comprehensive review of relevant

literature on topics associated with rape myths as well as an overview of the original research conducted to test the research questions designed specifically for this research topic.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following literature review covers materials relevant to understanding the relationship between rape myth prevalence and mandatory reporters at Rowan University. Starting with a broad overview of Title IX and working down to more specific topics such as Institutional Betrayal and rape myths. The reader will garner a better understanding of the concepts being tested in this research design by reading the following literature review.

Title IX

Title IX was officially passed in the Education Amendments of 1972. At the time, no one could have foreseen the implications this law would have on institutions of education (Melnick, 2018). In the almost fifty years since Title IX was enacted, the American education system has undergone drastic changes in regards to access and student success. In the Nixon era, when Title IX was passed, college enrollments were 57% male and 43% female. In 2010, those statistics officially flipped, with more females attending and completing undergraduate studies (Melnick, 2018). In 2019, female students made up 58% of enrolled students in American colleges and universities and the trend of females outnumbering their male classmates is projected to continue through the next decade (Digest of Education Statistics, 2019).

Title IX was created as a means to increase female enrollment in institutions of higher education as well as to make sure that female students had the same opportunities as male students. One area of education in which Title IX played a crucial role is in athletics (Senne, 2016). In 1972, there were approximately 30,000 female college athletes

compared to the 170,000 male athletes registered with the National Collegiate Athletic Association, today there are over 200,000 female athletes (Senne, 2016). In an effort to address the inequality in college athletics, President Gerald Ford with the Department of Health, Education, and Wealth Fare signed the 1975 Title IX Regulations into law (Senne, 2016). The 34.C.F.R. Part 106 specifically addresses student athletics:

No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, be treated differently from another person or otherwise be discriminated against in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics offered by a recipient, and no recipient shall provide any such athletics separately on such basis, (“Title IX Regulations”, 1975).

The strongest proof of the success of the 1975 Regulations comes with the growth of female student-athletes. Through increasing scholarships, funding of programs and improving facilities, NCAA registered 190,000 female athletes in 2011- another landmark year for Title IX (Yanus & O’Connor, 2016).

Title IX Evolution

In 2011, the Office of Civil Rights released a 19-page Dear Colleague Letter imploring institutions of higher education to recognize the impact of sexual assaults on students and highlighted the responsibility of the institutions to respond to cases of sexual assaults on their campuses (Yanus & O’Connor, 2016). Summarized in a Washington Post article, the Dear Colleague Letter, “with no advance notice, reinterpreted Title IX as giving the federal government authority to dictate the specific procedures that colleges must use to adjudicate student-on-student sexual assault allegations,” (Johnson & Taylor, 2017, p. 1). That same year, the Obama Administration launched a wide-scale

investigation into colleges and universities on allegations they mishandled investigations and reports of sexual misconduct on their campuses. In 2016, there were still over 100 institutions under active investigations in regards to mishandling Title IX complaints (Weiss & Lasky, 2017).

Title IX is again making headlines under the current administration as well. According to US Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos the Trump Administration is aiming to modify the Title IX regulations to ensure, “every survivor of sexual violence must be taken seriously, and every student accused of sexual misconduct must know that guilt is not predetermined,” (US Department of Education, 2018). Changes include narrowing the definition of sexual harassment, allowing the opportunity for a live cross-examination performed by advisors, and other measures to ensure both the complainant and respondent’s due process (B. DeVos, 2019).

Over the course of the last fifty years, Title IX has undergone multiple transformations, every administration since Nixon’s have left their mark on the law. From its inception, Title IX existed to prevent gender-based discrimination and sexual violence on college campuses across the United States. Today, the law still stands to ensure equal access to educational resources for all students.

Campus Sexual Assaults

According to a nation-wide survey published by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control under the Center for Disease Control, one in five women reported experiencing sexual assault in the United States (Rollero & Tartaglia, 2018). The Office of Civil Rights defines sexual violence as, “physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent,” (“Sex Discrimination”,

2020, p. 1). The statistical probability of a woman experiencing sexual assault is even more alarming when accompanied by a fact published by the American Association of University Women, 75% of colleges and universities reported no incidents of sexual violence taking place on their campuses in the required Annual Safety Reports (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). Only about 12.5% of sexual misconduct incidents are reported to college administrators (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). Most victims of sexual assault do not come forward, leading the number of reported assaults to be a vast underestimate of the true number of assaults taking place every year (Kelly & Stermac, 2008).

A qualitative research study conducted by Perilloux et al. (2011) evaluated the effects of sexual assaults on survivors' lives. The researchers conducted a short survey with 140 participants. After the study, it was reported that both completed and attempted sexual assault survivors felt the most impacted in regards to their "self-esteem, self-perceived value as a romantic partner, and sexual reputation," (Perilloux et al., 2011, p. 4). Survivors of sexual violence are at high risk for developing serious mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and are at a higher risk for attempting or completing suicide ("Sexual Violence", 2020).

In a study conducted to determine the barriers survivors face in reporting sexual violence, it was determined that the barriers have remained consistent over the past thirty years (Sable et al., 2006). Common barriers to reporting for women were found to be feelings of shame, guilt or embarrassment, fear of retaliation, concerns regarding confidentiality and the fear of not being believed (Sable et al., 2006). In order to get survivors the resources they need to feel safe and begin to heal, the barriers to reporting

need to be removed so that survivors feel comfortable coming forward to make their reports.

One of the barriers to obtaining accurate information surrounding the frequency of sexual assaults on college campuses is the rampant under-reporting of incidents. There are many barriers facing a survivor in order for them to report their experiences. Fear of retaliation or being blamed are some of these barriers, but also many times survivors do not report for fear of getting their attacker in trouble (Weiss & Lasky, 2017). The fear of not being believed and having confidentiality broken contribute to the concept of Institutional Betrayal.

Barriers to Reporting

There are two commonly accepted concepts believed to be the leading barriers facing sexual assault survivors in the reporting process. Institutional Betrayal is believed to be one of those factors. A common belief held by survivors is that their institutions would fail to take action or would dismiss their experience. This belief is not unjustified. Across the United States, a student is more likely to get expelled for academic dishonesty than sexual assault (Anderson, 2014). In fact, in 2014 a study commissioned by Senator Claire McCaskill found that 40% of college campuses had not conducted a sexual assault investigation in five years (Dick & Ziering, 2016).

The second leading barrier facing survivors of sexual assaults is Rape Myths. Rape Myths are false beliefs which place the culpability of the assault on the victim and not on the perpetrator. One commonly held Rape-Myth is that survivors' actions or clothes could somehow warrant the assault happening. It is vital to remove these false beliefs from survivors, reporters and advocates in order to assure survivors feel

comfortable and safe to report their experiences to the campus authority who can best assist them.

Institutional Betrayal Effects on Survivors

One of the barriers to sexual assault reporting at colleges and universities is Institutional Betrayal (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). Defined as, “a college deliberately or unknowingly causing harm to an individual who trusts or depends on the institution to keep them safe and treat them fairly” (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017, p. 1). Institutional Betrayal takes a variety of forms on campuses ranging from unclear reporting methods to a complete failure to respond to a report of sexual violence on campus (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). In a study completed by Linder and Myers (2017) it was found Harvard, Columbia, and other elite institutions were named as institutions perpetuating Institutional Betrayal more often than less prestigious institutions. This study indicates institutions regarded as having a strong reputation for excellence, such as Ivy League institutions, are more likely to commit acts of Institutional Betrayal, as they are trying to keep scandals out of their reputation. Despite research implicating elite institutions at a higher rate, Institutional Betrayal can happen at any institution (Linder & Myers, 2017). Institutional Betrayal has more than just ethical concerns. Survivors of Institutional Betrayal are more likely to experience more severe posttraumatic symptoms than survivors who do not experience Institutional Betrayal (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

History of Institutional Betrayal

The United States’ education system has a long history of Institutional Betrayal when handling cases of sexual assaults on college campuses (Stader & Williams-

Cunningham, 2017). The history of mismanagement is so pervasive that in 2014, President Obama created the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (“Task Force”, 2017). The White House Task Force worked to create practical resources for students, staff, administrators and other practitioners who play vital roles in combating sexual assault on campuses (Office of Press Secretary, 2017). The most popular takeaway from the White House Task Force was the It’s On Us Campaign. The campaign aimed to “educate, engage, and empower students and communities across the country to do something, big or small, to end sexual assault” (“Task Force”, 2017).

Mandatory Reporters

Many institutions have implemented policies to ensure accountability and compliance with Title IX regulations (Weiss and Lasky, 2017). One such policy is a practice commonly referred to as mandatory reporting. Mandatory reporting, in reference to Title IX, requires certain employees to report all known or suspected sexual misconduct to designated Title IX coordinators (Weiss & Lasky, 2017).

Mandatory reporting was adopted after the passing of the Clery Act in 1990. The Clery Act was passed to increase transparency with crimes reported on campuses across the country. The Clery Act mandates two important procedures for campuses to follow.

One procedure mandated by the Clery Act is Timely Warnings. These are instantaneous emergency alerts sent to all members of the campus community whenever there is a reported crime which may still pose an active threat to the community. For example, an armed robbery in which the suspects fled running through campus. In that instance, an email and text message would be sent to everyone on campus with a

description of the suspects and brief information on why they are wanted and where fled towards.

Another procedure mandated by the Clery Act is publishing the Annual Campus Safety report. This public report publishes crime statistics from the previous year of every Clery reportable crime which occurred on campus property. To assist administrators in creating the report and tracking crimes which occur on campus property, many institutions implement policies on mandatory reporting. Mandatory reporting requires certain employees to report all known or suspected instances of crime to the proper authority so the report can be investigated. If the report is found to be true, then the crime needs to be counted in the annual report and the institution will typically reach out to the involved parties to offer them support and resources.

Opinions on Mandatory Reporting Policies

Supporters of these policies argue that mandatory reporting will increase a institution's ability to investigate, assist survivors, and reduce the instance of sexual assaults on their campuses. Supporters of mandatory reporting policies cite the culture of acceptance of sexual misconduct on college campuses as the leading cause of needing to make reporting mandatory (Weiss & Lasky, 2017). According to Weiss and Lasky, mandatory reporting policies are meant to eliminate any confusion or beliefs about what constitutes an assault by not solely relying on self-reporting (2017). By having mandatory reporting policies, a trained investigator can sort through all of the reports handed in and determine which reports are actually Title IX violations (Weiss & Lasky, 2017).

Critics of mandatory reporting claim these policies are inconsistent and vague while also stripping survivors of their agency in their healing process (Holland et al.,

2018). In a research study published by American Psychologist, 8% of institutions involved in the study had ambiguous definitions for who on campus is a mandatory reporter (Holland et al., 2018). Unclear reporting processes, including who to report to, can lead to Institutional Betrayal and can lead survivors to not disclose their experiences to anyone for fear of unintentionally sparking an investigation (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

Institutions are not solely responsible for the ambiguity surrounding mandatory reporting practices and policies. The Dear Colleague Letter issued by the Office of Civil Rights in 2011 provided many guidelines for the responsibilities held by colleges and universities, but lacked any recommendations or details on how institutions should implement their guidelines (Vaillancourt & Marin, 2018). By not including these details in the initial guidance, the Office of Civil Rights left the door open for serious ramifications and negative outcomes for survivors.

Rape Myths

Rape Myths are defined as, “false beliefs about rape that encourage blaming the victim and exonerating the offender” (Rollero & Tartaglia, 2018, pp 1-2). The term rape myth was coined in 1975 by Susan Brownmiller in her bestselling book, *Against Our Will* (O’Connor et al. 2018). Researchers believe that rape myths have evolved since Brownmiller first released her book. Researchers now believe Rape Myths exist as more subtle but just as harmful subconscious beliefs (O’Connor et al., 2018). Rape myth acceptance is attributed to a person’s beliefs regarding societal gender-roles. In their qualitative study, Rollero and Tartaglia (2018) interviewed 264 participants and found a correlation between sexist views and acceptance of rape myths. It was found that men

who believe in a more conservative and traditional gender role for females were more likely to believe rape myths.

Classification of Rape Myths

Researchers from Rutgers University and the College of New Jersey conducted research to gauge the presence and intensity of Rape Myths on college campuses today. There were eight rape myths included in the study, six were found to be present after completing six focus groups, these six myths were then categorized into three categories (O'Connor et al. 2018). The first of these groups relate to rape myths that surround the perpetrator. The two myths included in this category are “He Didn’t Mean To” and “He Didn’t Mean To Due to Intoxication” (O'Connor et al., 2018, p. 5). These myths were the most popular rape myths articulated rape myths in the study. In this study, participants who mentioned these myths in their focus groups, were 65% and 64% male. This can be attributed to male proclivity to express the benevolence towards men’s sexism belief under the Theory of Ambivalent Sexism. (Rollero & Tartaglia, 2018).

The second category of Rape Myths identified in this research experiment revolved around the sexual assault incident. The two myths found in this category are “Rape is a Trivial Event” and “Rape is a Deviant Event” (O'Connor et al., 2018, p.7). The presence of these Rape Myths indicates an inconsistency in the belief systems surrounding the frequency of campus sexual assaults. The two conflicting viewpoints indicate ingrained misconceptions surrounding campus sexual assault, with participants believing it happens so infrequently it is not alarming and the contradictory, it happens so frequently it has become a normal college experience. (O'Connor et al., 2018).

The third category of Rape Myths identified during these focus groups surround the victim (O'Connor et al., 2018). These myths are identified as “She Asked for It” and “She Lied” (O'Connor et al., 2018 p. 9). Victims fear a “blame the victim” mentality and reprisal for activities such as underage alcohol use preceding some assaults and this fear is a substantial contributing factor to the international underreporting of sexual assaults (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

Rape Myths have evolved greatly since the term was first used 44 years ago. Rape Myths starting out as blatant victim blaming, quotes like, “she was asking for it” and “did you see what she was wearing” have since turned into, “I mean what can you expect if you get that drunk around guys.” While the overt questioning and outspoken defamation of survivors has been reduced greatly over the last four decades, society still has strides left to take when it comes to eradicating rape myths from our mentalities.

Conclusion

The literature surrounding Title IX and its implications highlight the intersectionality of factors influencing survivors’ ability to cope with experiencing sexual assault. Factors including Institutional Betrayal and Rape Myths are two of the leading barriers facing survivors’ likelihood of reporting their assaults to authorities. Recognizing the barriers facing survivors, and the legal ramifications of institutions not taking action against sexual assault, many institutions implemented mandatory reporting policies.

These controversial policies have increased cases of reported sexual assaults but are criticized for taking away the survivors’ choice in whether to report or not. Proponents argue mandatory reporters remove some of the barriers facing survivors by having someone report the incident for them. Others claim mandatory reporting is just a

way to circumnavigate the cultural and societal barriers without fixing them. Critics believe the only way to truly fix the epidemic of campus sexual assaults and to increase organic reporting by survivors is to deprogram Rape Myths from members of society.

This study looks to test beliefs held by both critics and proponents of mandatory reporting policies to gauge the effect of Rape Myths on Mandatory Reporters. The study will fill in a gap in research to see what happens when Mandatory Reporters believe Rape Myths and if their beliefs will cause them to be another barrier facing survivors. Since Resident Assistants are often “first responders” for incidents of sexual misconduct on college campuses, this study looks to explore the relationship between RAs and Rape Myths.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Context of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the effects of Rape Myths on Resident Assistants (RAs) at Rowan University. Rape Myths are defined as, “false beliefs about rape that encourage blaming the victim and exonerating the offender” (Rollero & Tartaglia, 2018, p. 209). Across the country, Resident Assistants play a vital role in addressing campus sexual assault and are often the “first responders” to students in crisis (Holland et.al., 2019). RAs comprise the largest group of undergraduate mandatory reporters at Rowan and play a pivotal role in addressing sexual assaults on campus.

Despite the significant role that RAs play on campus, nothing is known regarding their perceptions surrounding the responsibility of mandatory reporting. This study aims to gather more information regarding RA perceptions and the likelihood of reporting sexual assaults on Rowan’s campus. This study’s findings provide recommended changes and additional content to be included in the current training given to Resident Assistants.

Research Questions

This study has been designed to answer the following questions:

1. What perceptions do Resident Assistants hold toward mandatory reporting on sexual assaults on Rowan’s Campus?
2. What, if any, are the most prevalent Rape Myths held by Resident Assistants?

Methodological Approach

The aforementioned research questions will be researched through a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is used to gain rich and meaningful data from

participants (Carey et al., 2016). Focus groups are semi-structured, information gathering sessions hosted by a facilitator in which general question guidelines are used to acquire data pertaining to a shared topic among the participants. (Carey et al., 2016).

Focus groups are designed and utilized to gain information about deeply held beliefs which will surface through the conversation. According to Carey et al., (2016), focus groups are beneficial when exploring complex topics or perspectives. Given the sensitive manner of sexual assaults and the fact that RAs will be asked to discuss facets of their employment, focus groups have been deemed the most effective research design to gather the relevant information while making the participants as comfortable as possible. The group setting should allow participants to feel like they are in a supportive environment and not being singled out by a sole interviewer.

Focus Group Design

Each focus group will have no more than six members making it a mini-group to increase participant comfort and likelihood to delve into the sensitive matter being discussed (Greenbaum, 2011). Participants will be recruited through an email recruitment message sent to all Resident Assistants on Rowan's main Glassboro campus. A copy of the recruitment email can be found in Appendix A. Participants will be assigned to a focus group based on their stated availability. Focus groups will be scheduled around 7:30 in the evening as it is the time determined to be the most effective time to host a focus group as well as to accommodate most class schedules (Greenbaum, 2011).

The focus group will start with participants introducing themselves to increase comfortability and ease of communication between participants. Then the moderator will begin by asking questions about participant's experiences with being a Resident Assistant

generally. After approximately 10 minutes, the moderator will switch to reading short vignettes regarding instances of sexual assault. The vignettes will detail less obvious instances of assault and are included in Appendix B. After reading each the vignettes, the moderator will ask the participants questions regarding whether the Resident Assistants believe the instance to be a reportable instance of sexual assault and whether they believe there was any action which could have prevented the instance from happening. Facilitating these conversations will reveal any Rape Myths held by the Resident Assistants and whether these myths might prevent the Resident Assistants from reporting instances of sexual assault. One of the vignettes will describe a more obvious instance of sexual assault to determine whether the Resident Assistants would know to report an obvious sexual assault.

Data Collection Strategies

The sample was divided into same-gendered focus groups of no more than six RAs and before beginning the focus group, each participant was asked to fill out a short demographics survey to better understand the identities in the group as well as how long the participant has worked as an RA (Appendix D). The focus groups will be same gendered to limit any discomfort with discussing sexual violence with members of a different gender. Demographic information includes gender, race, age, and how many on-campus positions designate them as mandatory reporters. Definitions of all demographic groups were listed on the survey to avoid confusion or misrepresentation.

Each focus group lasted approximately an hour and was split into two parts. The first twenty minutes covered the following topics: consent, Title IX definition, what behaviors were prohibited under Title IX, and the purpose behind the RA position. The

next ten minutes had the participants read 2 short, sexual assault vignettes. The first vignette detailed the story of a female residential student who was assaulted by a male friend after drinking to the point of inebriation. The second story detailed a male residential student who was assaulted by his male date after inviting him back to his dorm room after their date.

After reading both vignettes, the participants were asked to indicate on a piece of paper which incident they would report as a sexual assault. After the pieces of paper were collected, the participants were asked to discuss their responses as to which of the situations constituted sexual assault. From these conversations, information regarding Rape Myths believed by the participants was collected.

The researcher in the role of focus group facilitator, did not directly ask about Rape Myths but instead focused on whether the participants believed an assault had occurred and if the RAs would report the offenses. Then the researcher/facilitator probed into the reasoning behind their decisions for classifying it as an assault or not and reporting or not reporting. The goal of utilizing this approach was to reduce the likelihood of self-censoring or conforming in the participants. Information gathered from the focus groups was transcribed by the researcher/facilitator after each focus group concluded.

Population and Sample Selection

Participants in this research were recruited through email outreach. An email was sent to every Resident Assistant on campus with a brief overview of the study. Attached to the email will be a Google Form for interested RAs to fill out, expressing their interest to participate as well as a space to indicate their availability. In order to gain

statistically significant results, the target sample size should be 10% of the 170 Resident Assistants on campus.

Before hosting the focus group, each confirmed participant met with the researcher/facilitator individually to discuss the topics being covered in the focus group. Participants were given the opportunity to ask the researcher/group facilitator questions in order to be confident in their decision to participate. Once the participant knows the topics being discussed, the researcher/facilitator had the participant sign an informed consent to participate in the focus group (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis Approaches

Data analysis comprised of the researcher/facilitator coding the information gathered from the focus groups to identify the Rape Myths present. Flick (2004) defines content analysis as the “systemic examination of communicative material” (p. 266) in order to fully understand the implications of the results. The most prominent limitation of this study is the inherently broad array of results gathered from the focus groups. According to Flick (2004), one of the biggest limitations facing qualitative research analysis is trying to categorize the data gathered. Each Rape Myth found in the transcriptions was identified, labeled, and categorized to indicate which aspect of the sexual assault incident it pertained to. The categories identified if the myth was held about the victim and their behavior, or whether the incident qualified as a reportable offense. The information derived from the focus groups highlighted the prevalence of Rape Myths reported by the RAs. The information gathered from this research will provide important insights to be used when evaluating the training received by RAs.

Chapter 4

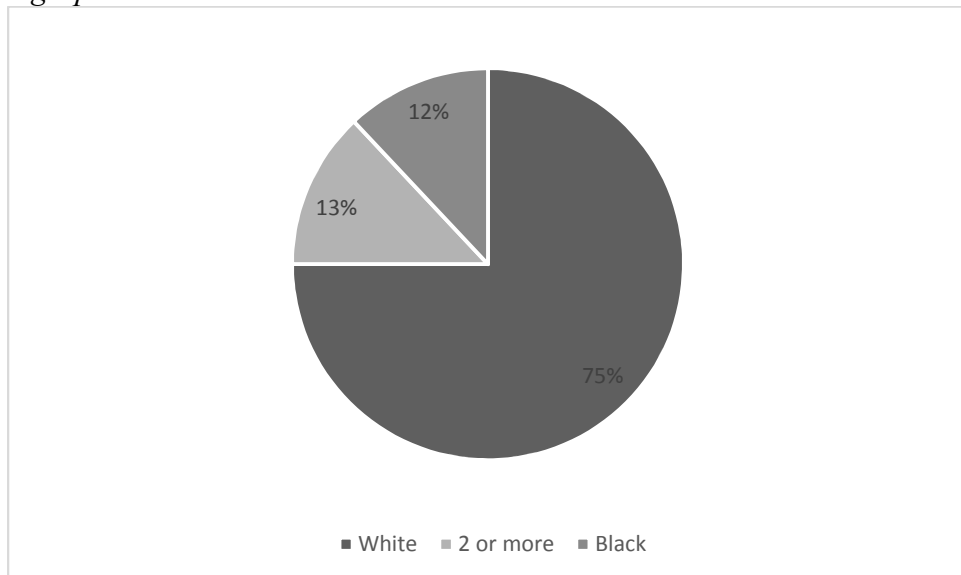
Results

Demographics

In total, 16 Resident Assistants participated in the focus groups. The participants comprised 11.5% of the total Resident Assistant population. Twelve of the participants, or 75% of the total number of participants identified as white or Caucasian. Two of the participants identified as African American (12.5%) and two participants identified as two or more ethnicities (12.5%). There was a lack of representation from Asian-American and Hispanic participants, meaning that the sample did not accurately represent the diversity present in the Resident Assistant pool.

Figure 1

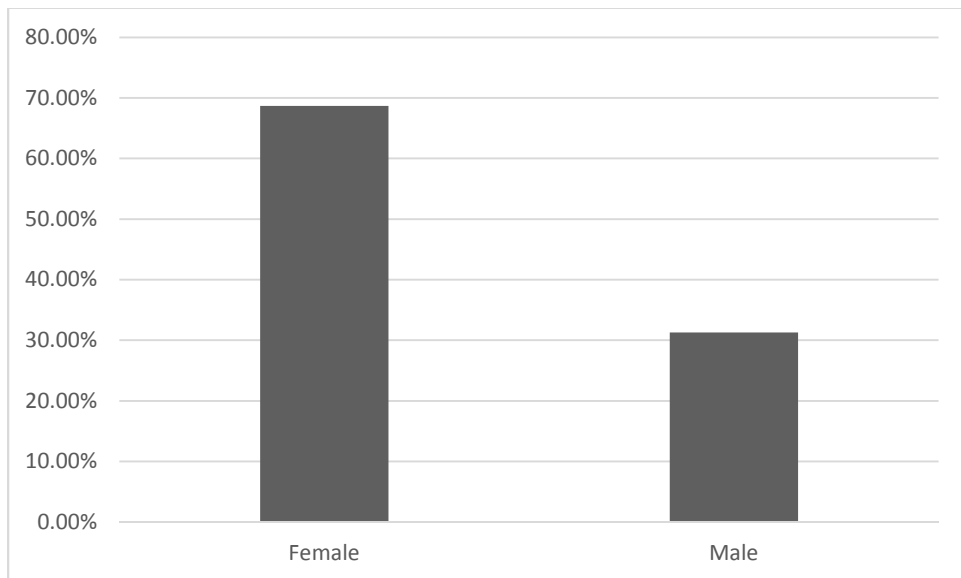
Racial Demographics



The majority of participants (68.7%) identified as female and 31.3% of participants identified as male. There were no transgender or non-binary participants which limits the perceptions of the participants by only including cis-gendered participants.

Figure 2

Gender Distribution



Half (50%) of the participants in this study were first-year Resident Assistants, 31.3% of participants were second year Resident Assistants and 18.7% of participants had been on staff as Resident Assistants for three years. This is noteworthy as the first-year Resident Assistants were given a consolidated version of the typical Resident Assistant training that the second and third-year Resident Assistants were given due to the COVID 19

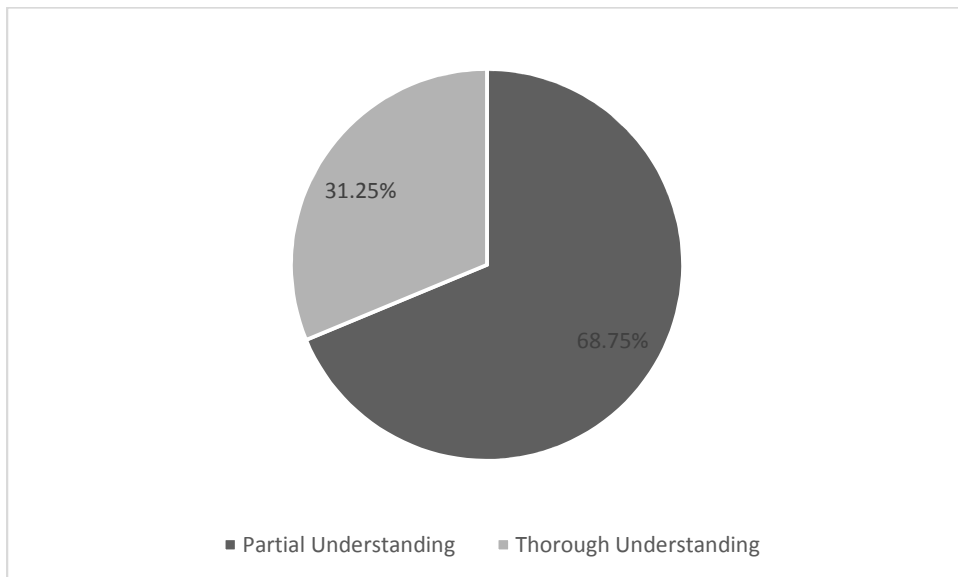
pandemic. The second-year Resident Assistants had one year of a two-week training covering materials related to sexual misconduct and Title IX and the third year Resident Assistants had two years of the two-week training. This should mean that the second- and third-year Resident Assistants would have a more thorough understanding of Title IX.

Gauging RA Understanding, Comfort and Familiarity with Title IX

In this study, Resident Assistants were asked questions designed to gauge their understanding of Title IX, including behaviors covered under Title IX, their comfort in handling a Title IX incident in their capacity as an RA and if they were familiar with the proper protocol for reporting a Title IX incident. The following chart details the responses of the participants.

Figure 3

Understanding Title IX Definitions & Behaviors



In order to gauge whether participants had an understanding of behaviors covered under Title IX, participants were asked the following questions.

“What is your current understanding of Title IX and the behaviors covered underneath it?”

Out of the 16 participants, five (31.3%) articulated all of the behaviors covered under Title IX and explained the history and legal implications of Title IX for both respondents and institutions. This was coded by participants’ responses that were considered to be thorough, comprising 31.3% of all respondents. These respondents understood that Title IX covered stalking, sexual assault, gender-based harassment, domestic and dating violence. They were also able to articulate that Title IX has legal origins and implications such as lawsuits and the potential for criminal proceedings to run concurrently but independently from school proceedings.

“For me, I know Title IX, it's prohibiting sex-based discrimination and especially in education programs that receive federal funding, and it kind of allows people to have both men and women to have the same opportunity field for everything” (Participant 016).

The remaining, 11 (68.7%) respondents expressed varying degrees of understanding of Title IX and the behaviors covered underneath it. Nine of the 11 participants (81.8%) thought that Title IX only covered sexual assaults, one thought (9.9%) Title IX covered sports teams and one thought (9.9%) it covered only sexual assaults and stalking. These responses were coded as partial understanding of Title IX

definition and behaviors as the training Resident Assistants receive covers the entire gamete that is covered under Title IX protections.

Comfortability of Addressing Title IX Incidents in RA role

Resident Assistants are expected to respond to incidents of Title IX violations that are brought to their attention. RAs are trained on the protocol for responding, but are rarely asked how comfortable they are responding to these incidents. In order to better understand the holistic ability of Resident Assistants to respond to instances of Title IX violations brought to their attention, the RAs in this study were asked to speak to the level of their comfort in knowing how to respond to these incidents. They were asked the following question to assess their comfortability.

Would you say that you are comfortable with responding to incidents of Title IX violations brought to your attention?

Of the 16 participants in the study, 11 (68.7%) stated they would be comfortable handling an incident brought to their attention. These respondents indicated varying levels of comfort, with some drawing on previous experience in handling incidents of Title IX violations as RAs while other relied on previous personal experiences.

“So in the beginning, I didn't feel super comfortable with then after doing it for the first time, I feel very comfortable” (Participant 015).

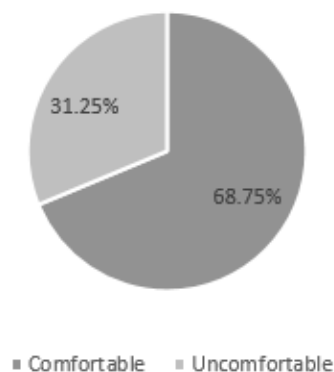
“ I think myself and experiences that my friend has gone through and like I heard other like that the victim's side of the story before, I think that kind of prepared me a little bit emotionally for how I could be there for her” (Participant 007).

The remaining five (31.3%) respondents stated that they did not feel confident handling instances of sexual violence or misconduct brought to their attention. The respondents stated varying reasons for feeling uncomfortable, ranging from lack of experience to not feeling emotionally equipped to help someone process an event like this. One respondent stated that being faced with a Title IX incident is there, “worst nightmare” (Participant 014). The participants indicated that the training they received helped them understand the logistics behind handling a Title IX incident such as who to call and how to disclose their status as a mandatory reporter but expressed the shortcomings of training in how to respond in the moment to the student reporting the infraction.

“So I think. In my experience, in being prepared to handle the actual paperwork, what to do, like we're trained on that. But what you're not necessarily trained on and you kind of have to figure out as you go on is how you work with that person after the incident” (Participant 013).

Figure 4

Comfortability in Handling Title IX Incidents



The RAs who responded indicating they were uncomfortable handling Title IX incidents all shared feeling unprepared as the main reason they felt uncomfortable.

Familiarity with Title IX Response Protocol

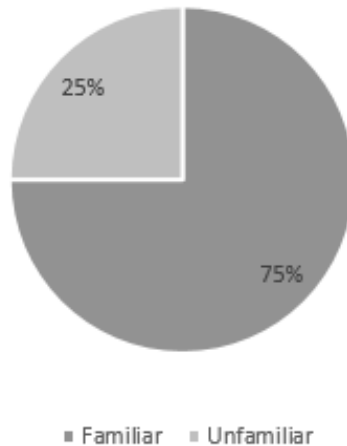
The majority (75%) of participants in this study reported feeling comfortable in understanding the protocol for responding to the instances of Title IX violations. This section looks to understand the thoroughness and effectiveness in teaching the procedural response to reports of Title IX violations. Whereas the previous section explored RA comfort in addressing the situation or knowing what to say to the reporting party, this section seeks to answer whether an RA would know who to call when faced with a report of Title IX misconduct. The overwhelming majority of respondents stated they were confident in knowing who to call, citing the correct response of calling the On Call Coordinator. Many thought the actual process of reporting the incident was a simple and straightforward process.

“I was able to also become comfortable with the steps once I fully understood, like, OK, this is what I have to do. I need to call the O.CC and then from there I get told kind of how I'm supposed to be handling this” (Participant 016).

The Resident Assistants who were unfamiliar with the process of reporting (25% of respondents) cited not knowing which reports needed to be elevated to the On Call Coordinator, not having the emergency phone numbers saved in their personal phones, and not remembering who they were supposed to call for Title IX incidents versus regular incidents as the leading causes for not feeling familiar with the reporting process.

Figure 5

Familiarity in Title IX Response Protocol



The Resident Assistants who reported feeling unfamiliar with the reporting process were all first year RAs, which could indicate that the consolidated training the first-year RAs received as a response to COVID19 pandemic may not have been effective in teaching the reporting process. Half of all first-year RAs who participated in this study were unfamiliar with the reporting process for Title IX incidents whereas none of the returning RAs felt unfamiliar.

Summarizing Knowledge, Comfort, and Familiarity with Handling Title IX Incidents

This study sought to understand the perceptions of Resident Assistants, as the largest group of mandatory reporters on Rowan’s campus, surrounding reports of Title IX violations brought to their attention. To begin to understand the perceptions of Resident Assistants and any misconceptions they may hold, it is first important to gauge the level of knowledge that RAs hold towards understanding what a Title IX violation entails.

Only 31.3% of Resident Assistants in this study had a thorough understanding of all of the behaviors covered under Title IX and the implications Title IX has for students and institutions. This information is covered in RA training every year, indicating a failure by the Residents Assistants to retain the information covered in their Title IX training.

Additionally, this study sought to ascertain whether Resident Assistants were comfortable in handling reports of Title IX violations. Meaning, were RAs confident in knowing how to respond to students when the student is detailing their experiences surrounding sexual misconduct. The majority of RAs (68.7%) stated they felt comfortable reassuring that student and knowing how to respond to the individual, despite most RAs not fully understanding what constitutes a Title IX violation. One RA states that a supplemental training, one not designed for responding to Title IX incidents was the reason that they felt comfortable responding to students in need,

“I think about it very often. Just like how to intervene in situations. They helped me intervene with situations, what words to use and everything” (Participant 15).

Another RA stated that talking to returning RAs and RAs who had experience in crisis intervention as the reason they felt comfortable in handling their first incident in Title IX.

“I don't know if it was in training as much as it was with my staff and a returning R.A. from last year who told us you have to be very blunt and upfront. So I took what she told me about that and kind of applied it here and was very open about having a conversation so she could have a conversation with me so that the training for my staff and then walking through calling O.C.C. and like

kind of handing the power over to the victim that I got from training.”

(Participant 007).

The third element this study sought to evaluate was whether RAs were familiar with the process and protocol for reporting incidents of Title IX violations. The majority of the participants, 75% were familiar with who needed to be called when a student disclosed an experience of Title IX behavior. As compared to the 25% of respondents who were unfamiliar with who to call.

“I feel like it's not a very complex set of directives. It's usually as complicated as just bypassing the grad on duty and contacting the on call coordinator and then they tend to handle the incident” (Participant 012).

In summary, Resident Assistants are comfortable handling incidents of Title IX in the moment with the reporting party and generally know the reporting process. The area of concern for RAs is knowing which incidents and behaviors warrant the appropriate steps to be taken. While most RAs were comfortable in handling and reporting Title IX violations brought to them, only 31.3% had a thorough understanding of all of the behaviors covered under Title IX.

Prevalence of Rape Myths in Resident Assistant

The main purpose of this study was to identify any Rape Myths held by the Resident Assistants and any implications these beliefs would have on the mandatory reporters' likelihood to report. The questions posed by this study were:

1. What perceptions do Resident Assistants hold toward mandatory reporting on sexual assaults on Rowan's Campus?

2. What, if any, are the most prevalent Rape Myths held by Resident Assistants?

These questions were answered by Resident Assistant's participating in this study by having them read vignettes and then answer a series of questions pertaining to the content of the vignettes.

To identify the perceptions of RAs as it relates to their position as mandatory reporters, the question, "Would the situation described above require you to take action as a RA? Why or Why not?" was posed to them after reading two short vignettes detailing sexual misconduct. This question yielded results about why the RA believed they had to take action and how the RA felt about their role as a mandatory reporter. Out of the 16 respondents, eight (50%) viewed their role as a means to provide campus resources to the reporting party. The sentiments of these respondents can be surmised in the following quote.

"It's about getting them like the attention necessary and resources that they need"
(Participant 007).

An additional six (37.5%) respondents viewed their role as an opportunity to get the respondent help to immediately connect them with medical/ law enforcement services if needed. One cited the potential need for a forensic examination if it was reported immediately after the incident took place.

"They want to get a rape kit, like they want to make sure you don't take a shower, like stuff like that." (Participant 005).

A few RAs misunderstood the requirement of being a mandatory reporter. Three RAs claimed to not be able to report the incident unless the reporting party gave consent to the

RA. This accounts for 18.7% of respondents. An additional 12.5% of respondents expressed concern that mandatory reporting policies may cause the reporting party to experience an additional lack of control relating to their experiences. While these RAs still expressed a need to report the incident, they expressed a desire to thoroughly explain the reporting purpose as a means to try and make the reporting party more comfortable with their situations being reported to additional people.

“Explaining the situation before they go too far into it, I might stop them and say that I'm a mandatory reporter and information you tell me I may have to report up. I'm not going to report it to other people. It's just my bosses will need to know the information. I'm going to have to call them just too kind of see what the best next steps are and then follow through with calling and getting those next steps.”

(Participant 16).

This is consistent with literature surrounding mandatory reporting policies. While the majority (81.3%) understood the requirement to pass the information up to the On Call Coordinator, only 68.7% of participants viewed this requirement clearly and as a positive resource for reporting parties.

Rape Myths

The second primary research question of this study looks to identify commonly held Rape Myths held by the Resident Assistants on Rowan's campus. There are two categories of Rape Myths, beliefs placing fault on the victim and beliefs creating misconceptions surrounding the events or situation in which the offense took place. Based on the conversations held during the focus groups, Rape Myths of both categories were identified.

In order to discover whether Resident Assistants held false beliefs surrounding incidents of sexual violence, two vignettes were created for the use of this study. Each vignette is attached in appendix B. One of the vignettes details an example of nonconsensual sex between a boyfriend and his girlfriend. In this story, Jessica and Chris go out to a friend's apartment and Jessica gets too drunk and blacks out. The next morning, she wakes up in bed with her boyfriend and is pretty sure that she had sex. From this vignette, 18.7% of Resident Assistants exhibited false beliefs surrounding the fault of this event belonging to Jessica. All of these misconceptions surrounded Jessica drinking too much alcohol and blacking out. Quotes include "Maybe not drink as much", "drink less or leave earlier", "she should've been a little more cautious." These sentiments shift the blame on to Jessica for drinking too much and away from Chris for taking advantage of Jessica's inebriation.

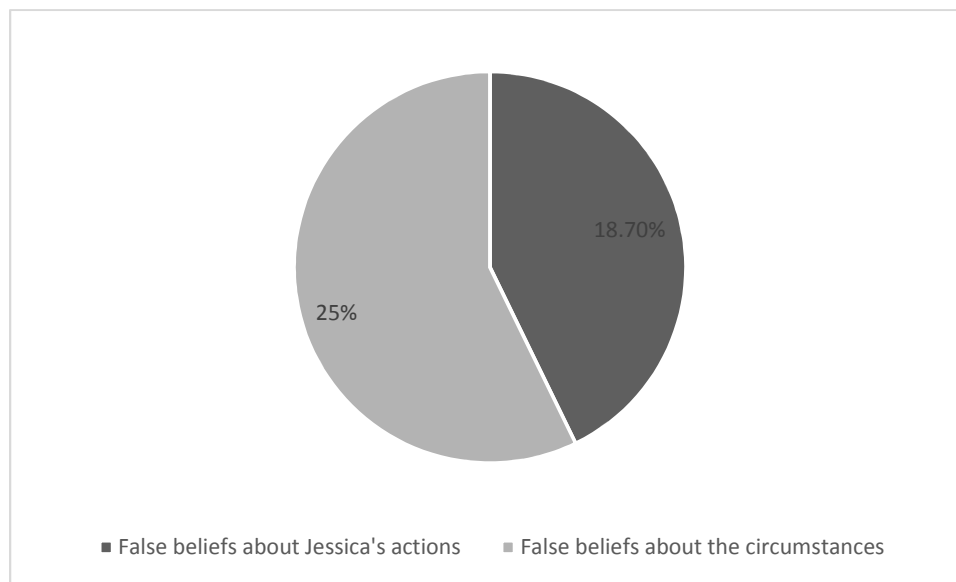
The danger in these beliefs is that if Resident Assistants place the blame on victims instead of the perpetrators, then it is possible that RAs would not feel compelled to report these incidents. Mandatory reporters failing to report incidents of sexual violence can lead to feelings of Institutional Betrayal. Survivors of Institutional Betrayal are more likely to experience more severe posttraumatic symptoms than survivors who do not experience Institutional Betrayal (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

From the same vignette, 12.5% of participants expressed false beliefs surrounding the events of the night leading to Jessica waking up in bed the next day. These beliefs centered around two themes. The first theme blamed Jessica for not having a buddy or friend designated to ensure she got home safely. The second theme centered on the

validity of the assault being dependent on Jessica's comfort level regarding the events. A portion (25%) of RAs believed that it was only assault or nonconsensual sex if Jessica felt uncomfortable after waking up the next morning. This problematic belief fails to address Chris' disregard for consent. This disregard would inhibit any efforts to educate Chris on the need to get clear, sober, and enthusiastic consent from his partners. Whether Jessica was upset or not after this event does not change the events that took place.

Figure 6

Rape Myths Held About Jessica's Story



The second vignette in this study details another instance of a failure to attain consent for sexual activities. In this vignette, Mike and Steven go out on a date and afterwards Mike invites Steven back to his room, where Steven pressures Mike into sex, despite Mike saying he wanted to stop.

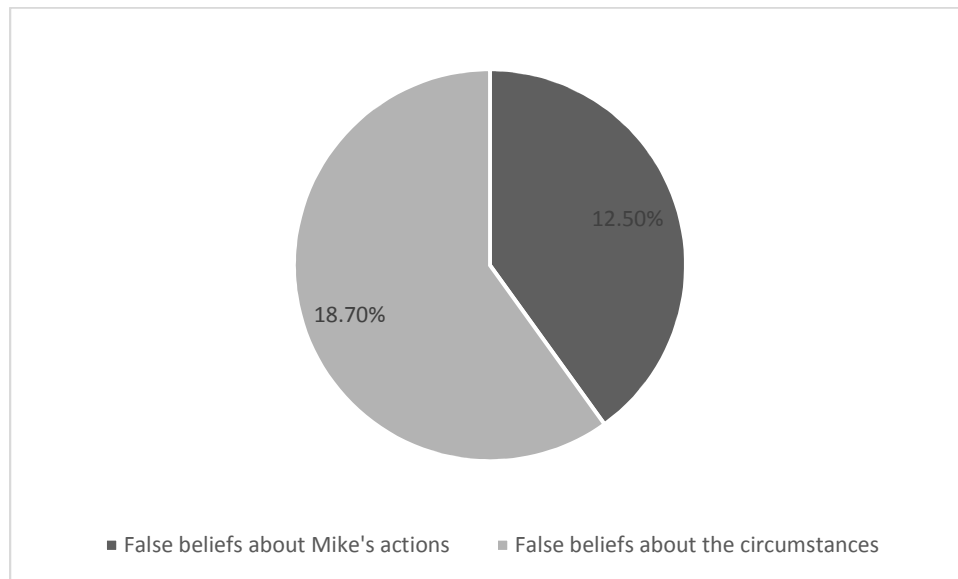
From this vignette, Rape Myths from both categories, surrounding the actions of the victim and the circumstances of the assault, were expressed. There were less total Rape Myths expressed in the reactions to this scenario. In this scenario, 12.5% of respondents articulated false beliefs surrounding Mike being responsible for the actions of Steven. One participant said that Mike, “sent the wrong signals” and another expressed that Mike should have “been more firm in saying ‘no.’” These problematic beliefs wrongly place the blame on Mike for Steven’s actions. Saying that Mike sent the wrong signals to Steven shifts the blame entirely from Steven and onto Mike, who is not at all responsible for Steven’s behavior. If these beliefs are held by RAs when Mike would come to report the incident, it could lead to the RA expressing this belief to Mike. There is research which indicates victims of sexual assault choose to not seek help from formal, established systems because they fear these systems will cause further harm by not believing or placing blame on the victim (Patterson, 2009).

The second type of Rape Myth articulated in this vignette was in regards to the circumstances; specifically did a Title IX violation truly occur? This misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the circumstances was-present in the responses of 18.7% of the Resident Assistants in this study. The same Rape Myth found in Jessica’s story was also present in Mike’s story; it was only a violation if Mike felt uncomfortable afterwards. The remaining 81.3% of respondents understood that in their capacity as a mandatory reporter, it was their responsibility to report any instance of nonconsensual sex, whether the student was comfortable or not. The sentiments of the 81.3% of respondents who thought they would report can be surmised in the following quote.

“I don't think people come forward about experiences for you to decide if they're good or if it's traumatic or not” (participant 015).

Figure 7

Rape Myths Held About Mike's Story



This false belief, similar to the effects it may have had in Jessica's situation, could prevent an RA from reporting a violation of Title IX if they falsely believe that Mike's reaction to the incident is the qualifying factor as to whether it needs to be reported.

In total, there were six RAs who iterated Rape Myths in responding to both Jessica's and Mike's story. These false beliefs were categorized into two categories; false beliefs surrounding the victim's responsibility and false beliefs surrounding the validity

of the report. This comprises 37.5% of respondents in the study. This is a substantial portion of the population.

This study also found some commonly held Rape Myths in Resident Assistants' understanding of instances of sexual violence. The most common myth centered on the use of alcohol in nixing consent. In a vignette that detailed nonconsensual sex between a girlfriend and boyfriend, 18.7% of RAs participating in this study blamed the victim for being too drunk. This belief incorrectly places the impetus of blame on the survivor and away from the perpetrator. The second most commonly held belief regarding that scenario was to blame the girlfriend for not having an established partner to ensure she was not taken advantage of. Two of the RAs, comprising 12.5% of the population believed that Jessica should have had a friend designated to look out for her, despite her being out with her significant other.

In another scenario, which detailed nonconsensual sex between two males. RAs expressed beliefs which blamed the victim, saying that the victim "sent the wrong signals" by inviting his date back to his room. This belief wrongly held by 12.5% of RAs assumes that victims owe their attackers sexual relations based due to signals or actions the attackers believe they received. Again, this shifts the blame away from the perpetrator and onto the victim. This false belief could inhibit an RAs likelihood to believe a victim's experience as sexual misconduct. Below, this study explores the correspondence between holding false beliefs and the RAs likelihood to report the experiences brought to them.

Out of the 16 RAs who participated in this study, seven of them held false beliefs classified as Rape Myths. This equates to almost half of the participants (43.8%). Of the

43.8% of RAs who believed the Rape Myths, 42.9% of them would let it influence whether they reported the incident or not. The justification that all three RAs used was that they would only report the violation if they heard it directly from the victim and if the victim was “extremely upset” by the incident. Failure to report incidents, even when the victim does not want to, is a violation of the mandatory reporter obligation. RA training needs to be more explicit and clearer when explaining the requirements of the position as it relates to mandatory reporting policies and expectations.

Implications for Training

The-Rape Myths found in this study have implications regarding Resident Assistants’ ability to perform to the expectations set forth for them. Only 31.3% of Resident Assistants could accurately articulate all of the behaviors covered under the Title IX umbrella. The training all RAs are given fully covers the behaviors covered under Title IX indicating a lack of retention from the training for both new RAs who received a condensed training and returning RAs who received one to two years of a two-week training. Future trainings should seek to find new ways to engage RAs in teaching them all of the behaviors covered under Title IX.

While only a small portion of RAs were able to articulate all the behaviors covered under Title IX, the majority of RAs (68.7%) expressed that they were comfortable talking to the student in the moment that they are detailing their experiences. Yet, the minority of RAs who were uncomfortable in that moment cited feeling unprepared as the reason. Trainings do not include tips on how to speak to students when they are reporting, an oversight which leaves some RAs feeling inadequate and

unprepared. Training should include common pitfalls and suggestions for ensuring victim experiences are positive when reporting incidents. This would reduce the likelihood of RAs perpetuating incidents of Institutional Betrayal experienced by their residents. Institutional Betrayal occurs in a variety of way is mandatory reporters not taking their cases seriously. (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017).

It may also be beneficial to create a handout for RAs to hang on their door detailing the behaviors covered under Title IX, helpful tips on how to respond to a student detailing their experiences and a chart on who to call.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

College campuses have become the front lines in the battle to end sexual assaults. One in five college-aged women will experience sexual assault during their time in school (Muehlenhard et al., 2017). Despite the rampant spread of campus sexual assaults, only 12.5% of assaults on campus are reported to campus authorities (Stader & Williams-Cunningham, 2017). In order to address the low rates of reporting, many institutions have adopted mandatory reporting policies. Rowan utilizes mandatory reporting policies in which designated employees are required to report any and all instances of sexual violence and misconduct which are brought to their attention. On Rowan University's campus, the largest group of mandatory reporters are Resident Assistants. There has been little to no research into the perceptions that RAs hold in regards to be mandatory reporters.

Summary of the Study

This study sought to respond two questions surrounding RAs perceptions of mandatory reporting policies as well as investigate if RAs believed in Rape Myths. Furthermore, this study explored whether believing in Rape Myths would hinder the RAs likelihood to report instances of sexual violence brought to their attention. This study utilized a qualitative approach to better understand the holistic experience of Resident Assistants in their capacity as mandatory reporters. This study found that Resident Assistants held false beliefs surrounding instances of sexual violence which may hinder their effectiveness as the largest group of mandatory reporters on Rowan's campus.

Discussion of the Findings

The following results were gathered from this study. Most RAs (68.7%) included in this study were not fluent in understanding the behaviors covered under Title IX. Despite this, most RAs (68.7%) were comfortable addressing students' needs while the student detailed their experience and three quarters of RAs in this study were familiar with the reporting protocol for Title IX incidents. Training should look to expand upon the sessions covering Title IX behaviors and seek new ways of creating engaging educational materials for this topic. Additionally, most RAs (68.7%) viewed their role as mandatory reporters favorably, citing it as an opportunity to connect survivors with resources aimed to alleviate stress and feelings of isolation.

There were two categories of Rape Myths identified in this survey. The first category relates to the blame placed on survivors for the events leading up to and during their assault. Combining the results from both vignettes presented, 62.5% of the Rape Myths identified placed blame on the victim for their assault. Indicators of these beliefs are demonstrated in the following quotes.

“She probably shouldn't have drank that much” (Participant 004)

“She should've been a little more cautious” (Participant 016)

“He sent the wrong signals by inviting him back to his room” (Participant 002)

The second category of Rape Myths identified relates to the belief of RAs as to whether or not the situation presented in the vignettes detailed a Title IX violation. The main take away from the conversations surrounding this false belief was that RAs believed it was only a violation if the victim was upset or uncomfortable after the

incident took place. Of all the myths identified, this belief proved to be the myth most likely to stop an RA from reporting the incident. Of the RAs who held false beliefs surrounding whether or not the incident was a title IX violation, 66.7% would not report the incident of a Title IX violation unless the victim was clearly upset or uncomfortable with the situation.

Recommendations for Practice

RAs as mandatory reporters are legally required to report incidents that constitute violations of Title IX. The need for additional and improved training for RAs regarding Title IX and its associated Rape Myths has been clearly demonstrated in this study. Trainings need to encompass defining all behaviors that violate Title IX and dispelling Rape Myths. Failure to do so will compromise Rowan University's full compliance with Title IX and significantly impact victims' access to the resources and support needed to help them heal.

Recommendations for Further Research

Additional research is required to fully understand the depth and pervasiveness of the Rape Myths held by Resident Assistants on Rowan's campus. Future researchers should place an emphasis on identifying the specific rape myths held by Resident Assistants so that additional and supplemental trainings can be crafted to address the most prevalent Rape Myths and reduce the likelihood of an RA not reporting or misreporting incidents brought to their attention.

This study looked to gather a preliminary finding regarding the presence of Rape Myths held by Resident Assistants on Rowan's campus. Resident Assistants comprise the largest group of mandatory reporters on Rowan's campus, and are vital in addressing

incidents of gender-based discrimination, including sexual assaults, that happen on campus. This study used vignettes detailing incidents of sexual assaults to gauge whether an RA would report the incident and whether the RA knew how to report the incident. The findings of this study can be applied to better understand the need to tailor trainings to address the false beliefs that these student-reporters hold.

References

- Anderson, N. (2014, December 15). Colleges often reluctant to expel for sexual violence — with U-Va. a prime example. *Washington Post*.
- Briefing Room, Briefing Room (2017). Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/05/fact-sheet-final-its-us-summit-and-report-white-house-task-force-protect>
- Carey, M. A. (2016). Focus Groups—What is the same, what is new, what is next? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(6), 731-733. doi:10.1177/1049732316636848
- Carroll, C., Dahlgren, M., Grab, K., Hasbun, M., Hayes, M., & Muntis, S. (2013). Implementing the Dear Colleague Letter: A title IX case study for university compliance. *Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University*, 45-63. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/jiuspa/article/view/3673>
- Clery Center. (n.d.). Retrieved December 03, 2020, from <https://clerycenter.org/about-page/>
- Digest of Education Statistics, 2019. (2019). Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_303.10.asp
- Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§1681 - 1688 (2018).
- Flick, U., Kardorff, E. V., & Steinke, I. (2004). *A companion to qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Greenbaum, T. L. (1998). *The handbook for focus group research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Holland, K. J., Cortina, L. M., & Freyd, J. J. (2018). Compelled disclosure of college sexual assault. *American Psychologist*, 73(3), 256-268. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000186>
- Johnson, K., & Taylor, S. (2017, January 31). The path to Obama's 'Dear Colleague' letter. *The Washington Post*.
- Kelly, T. C., & Stermac, L. (2008). Underreporting in sexual assault: A Review of explanatory factors. *Baltic Journal of Psychology*, 9(1), 30–45. Retrieved from http://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/bitstream/handle/7/1317/BalticJournPsychol-2008-Vol-9_No-1-2.pdf?sequence=1#page=30

- Linder, C., & Myers, J. S. (2018). Institutional betrayal as a motivator for campus sexual assault activism. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 11(1), 1–16. doi: 10.1080/19407882.2017.1385489
- Melnick, R. S. (2018). The Strange evolution of title IX. *National Affairs*, 36, 19–35.
- Oconnor, J., Cusano, J., McMahon, S., & Draper, J. (2018). Students articulation of subtle rape myths surrounding campus sexual assault. *Journal of College Student Development*, 59(4), 439–455. doi: 10.1353/csd.2018.0041
- Perilloux, C., Duntley, J., & Buss, D. (2011). The cost of rape. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41(5), 1–9. doi: 10.1007/s10508-011-9863-9
- Rollero, C., Tartaglia, S. The effect of sexism and rape myths on victim blame. *Sexuality & Culture* 23, 209–219 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-018-9549-8>
- Rudolph, F. (1991). The American college and university: A history. In *The American college and university: A history* (pp. 241-264). Athens: Univ. of Georgia Pr.
- Sable, M. R., Danis, F., & Mauzy, D. L. (2006). Barriers to reporting sexual assault for women and men: Perspectives of college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 55(3), 157–162. doi: 10.3200/JACH.55.3.157-162
- Secretary DeVos: Proposed title IX rule provides clarity for schools, support for survivors, and due process rights for all. (2018, November 16). Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-proposed-title-ix-rule-provides-clarity-schools-support-survivors-and-due-process-rights-all>
- Senne, J. A. (2016). Examination of gender equity and female participation in sport. *The Sport Journal*, 1–8. Retrieved from [http://www.icsspe.org/system/files/Senne, J.A. - Carroll,](http://www.icsspe.org/system/files/Senne,J.A.-Carroll)
- Sex Discrimination. (2020, January 10). Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/sex.html>
- Sexual Violence. Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC. (2020, January 17). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/index.html>
- Stader, D.L., Williams-Cunningham, J.L., (2017). Campus sexual assault, institutional betrayal, and title IX. *Clearing House*, 90(5/6), 198-202 <https://doi-org.ezproxy.rowan.edu/10.1080/00098655.2017.1361287>
- Trowler, P. (2008). *Cultures and change in higher education: Theories and practices*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Undergraduate Enrollment. (2020, May). Retrieved December 03, 2020, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cha.asp

- White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. (2017, January 4). Preventing and addressing campus sexual misconduct: A guide for university and college presidents, chancellors, and senior administrators. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Documents/1.4.17.VAW.Event.Guide.for.College.Presidents.PDF>
- Writers, S. (2020, July 17). A history of privilege in higher education: BestColleges. Retrieved December 03, 2020, from <https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/history-privilege-higher-education/>
- Yanus, A. B., & O'Connor, K. (2016, June 27). To comply or not to comply: Evaluating compliance with title IX of the educational amendments of 1972. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1554477X.2016.1188601>

Appendix A Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Erin Flynn and I am one of the Resident Directors in Holly Pointe Commons as well as a graduate student here at Rowan in the Higher Education Administration/ Student Affairs program. As part of my academic program requirements, I have to conduct research to complete a thesis and I am reaching out to see if you would like to be a participant in the research study. The title of the research study is "Rape Myth Prevalence in Resident Assistants" with the principle investigator being Dr. Drew Tinnin. The study looks to aim at your experiences as a Resident Assistant at Rowan and specifically your experiences of navigating Title IX incidents. The focus group will last approximately one hour and is completely voluntary.

If you are interested in participating, please fill out this Doodle with your availability for the next two weeks. https://doodle.com/poll/pwduemwxbnrve4zu?utm_source=poll&utm_medium=link

Please respond to this Doodle by Friday January 8th

Looking forward to hearing back from you soon,

Erin

This Study has been approved by Rowan University IRB (Study # PRO 2020-208.)

Rowan University
PRO-2020-208
Approved on 1-16-2021
Expires on 1-15-2022

Appendix B Focus Group Overview

General introduction & Focus group overview

Hello, my name is Erin Flynn and I am one of the Resident Directors in Holly Pointe as well as a graduate student in the Higher Education program. As part of my program, I am conducting a research study to look at rape myth prevalence in Resident Assistants at Rowan. I am researching this to determine if there is a high level of belief in rape myths so that we can better access the training given to RAs to help dispel these myths.

In no way shape or form will your participation in this focus group affect your employment with the department. Your answers are not a reflection of you, but rather of the training you've been given. Please feel as comfortable as you can answering questions and engaging in conversations because this is important for our department moving forward.

Beginning questions

How long have you been a Resident Assistant?

What's your favorite part of being an RA?

What's your least favorite part of being an RA?

How do you think being an RA has shaped your college experience?

What is your understanding of Title IX?

Do you feel comfortable confronting situations of gender discrimination, including sexual assaults, in your capacity as an RA?

Are you confident in understanding what the proper protocol is for addressing incidents of sexual assault in your role as an RA?

Vignette #1

Jessica went out with her boyfriend and some of their mutual friends to a party at one of their friends apartments. At the party, Jessica played flip cup and beer pong with her friends and took birthday shots to celebrate their friend, Amanda's birthday. After hours of drinking, Jessica and her boyfriend, who was not as drunk as Jessica head back to Jessica's room to go to sleep. Jessica wakes up the next morning in bed with her boyfriend Chris, with no recollection of leaving the party. Jessica is pretty sure that her and Chris had sex but can't remember clearly what happened.

Follow up questions

Do you believe what happened to Jessica would warrant you taking action as an RA? Why or why not?

What, if anything do you think Jessica could have done to prevent this from happening?

Version 2

Rowan University PRO-2020-208 Approved on 1-16-2021 Expires on 1-15-2022

What, if anything, is Jessica responsible for in this event taking place?

What would you say to Jessica when she tells you her story?

Vignette #2

Mike went out on a date with someone he met on Tinder to a local bar just off campus. Him and his date, Steven were having a lot of fun and before they knew it, the bar was closing. Mike didn't want the night to end so he invited Steven back to his dorm room. Mike's roommate was home for the weekend and Mike knew they would have privacy. After hanging out for another hour, Steven and Mike started to make out in Mike's room. Steven is being pushy and Mike tries to tell him to slow down but Steven doesn't listen and Mike goes along with having sex because he doesn't want Steven to think less of him.

Follow up questions

Do you believe what happened to Mike would warrant you taking action as an RA? Why or why not?

What, if anything do you think Mike could have done to prevent this from happening?

What, if anything, is Mike responsible for in this event taking place?

What would you say to Mike when he tells you his story?

Version 2

Rowan University PRO-2020-208 Approved on 1-16-2021 Expires on 1-15-2022

Appendix C Consent Form

Consent

KEY INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

ADULT CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

TITLE OF STUDY: Rape Myth Prevalence in Resident Assistants at Rowan University

Principal Investigator: Andrew Tinnin

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide key information that will help you decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study.

Please carefully read the key information provided in questions 1-9 and 14 below. The purpose behind those questions is to provide clear information about the purpose of the study, study specific information about what will happen in the course of the study, what are the anticipated risks and benefits, and what alternatives are available to you if you do not wish to participate in this research study.

The study team will explain the study to you and they will answer any question you might have before volunteering to take part in this study. It is important that you take your time to make your decision. You may take this consent form with you to ask a family member or anyone else before agreeing to participate in the study.

If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask the study team and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

Version #2
Version Date: January 11, 2021

Rowan University
PRO-2020-208
Approved on 1-16-2021
Expires on 1-15-2022

You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

The Principal Investigator, Andrew Tinnin, or another member of the study team will also be asked to sign this informed consent.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between rape myths, or false beliefs which exonerate the perpetrator while placing blame on the victim of sexual assault and Resident Assistants likelihood to report instances of sexual assault reported to them while serving as Resident Assistants.

2. Why have you been asked to take part in this study?

You have been selected to participate in this study because you are currently serving as a Resident Assistant at Rowan University who is in good professional standing with the Department of Residential Learning and University Housing.

3. What will you be asked to do if you take part in this research study?

You will be asked to participate in a same-gendered focus group talking about your experiences as a Resident Assistant, specifically any experiences relating to Title IX incidents, including but not limited to sexual assaults, fondling, incest, and dating/domestic violence. The focus group will be divided into three sessions, the first one will include introductions between focus group members. The second part will be an overview conversation surrounding your experiences as a Resident Assistant. The third and final section will specifically address experiences surrounding Title IX hypothetical incidents.

4. Who may take part in this research study? And who may not?

Only current Resident Assistants in good standing with the department of Residential Learning and University Housing are eligible to participate in the study.

5. How long will the study take and where will the research study be conducted?

Version #2
Version Date: January 11, 2021

Rowan University
PRO-2020-208
Approved on 1-16-2021
Expires on 1-15-2022

There will be a brief survey conducted at the start of each focus group that will take less than 5 minutes to complete. Each focus group will last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be conducted over Zoom.

6. How many visits may take to complete the study?

This is a one-time research session.

7. What are the risks and/or discomforts you might experience if you take part in this study?

The subject matter being discussed in this focus group may be seen as sensitive or triggering for certain participants. Conversations may include mentions of sexual assault, dating violence and domestic abuse.

8. Are there any benefits for you if you choose to take part in this research study?

By participating in this study, you are contributing to the overall information gathering for assessment of Resident Assistant training and development.

9. What are the alternatives if you do not wish to participate in the study?

Your alternative is not to participate in the study.

10. How many subjects will be enrolled in the study?

Each focus group will contain 5 participants of the same gender. There will be four focus groups conducted totaling 20 participants.

11. How will you know if new information is learned that may affect whether you are willing to stay in this research study?

During the course of the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted.

12. Will there be any cost to you to take part in this study?

There is no cost associated with participating in this study.

13. Will you be paid to take part in this study?

You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.

Version #2

Version Date: January 11, 2021

Rowan University
PRO-2020-208
Approved on 1-16-2021
Expires on 1-15-2022

14. Are you providing any identifiable private information as part of this research study?

Your identifiable information will not be used in any of the future research projects or disclosed to anyone outside of the research team.

15. How will information about you be kept private or confidential?

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be given out, if required by law. Presentations and publications to the public and at scientific conferences and meetings will not use your name and other personal information.

Future Use of De-Identified data.

Your personal information will be de-identified. De-identified means that any research data collected during the course of this study will not include any personal information collected or be linked in any way where your identity can be known. Any future use and analysis of the research data collected about you in this study will be de-identified, as permitted by law.

16. What will happen if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you later decide not to stay in the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to *Andrew Tinnin*, tinnin@rowan.edu

Version #2
Version Date: January 11, 2021

Rowan University
PRO-2020-208
Approved on 1-16-2021
Expires on 1-15-2022

If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

17. Who can you call if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research related injury, you can call the Principal Investigator:

Andrew Tinnin

Educational Services & Leadership

856-256-4909

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

Office of Research Compliance

(856) 256-4058– Glassboro/CMSRU

18. What are your rights if you decide to take part in this research study?

You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the entire information about the research study, research risks, benefits and the alternatives, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed.

All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered and I agree to volunteer to participate in the study.

Subject Name: _____

Subject Signature: _____ Date: _____

Version #2
Version Date: January 11, 2021

Rowan University
PRO-2020-208
Approved on 1-16-2021
Expires on 1-15-2022

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

This Study has been approved by Rowan University IRB (Study #Pro2020-208)

Version #2
Version Date: January 11, 2021

Rowan University PRO-2020-208 Approved on 1-16-2021 Expires on 1-15-2022

Appendix D Audio Consent Form

**ROWAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AUDIO/VIDEOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM (SAMPLE)**

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Andrew Tinnin. We are asking for your permission to allow us to use audiotapes as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for analysis by the research team

The recording(s) will include your name and discussion within the focus group.

The recording(s) will be stored in a secure file in a Google Drive and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the entire information about the research study, research risks, benefits and the alternatives, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed.

All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered and I agree to volunteer to participate in the study.

Subject Name: _____

Subject Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

1

Version #:2
Version Date:1/11/21
Creation/Revision Date: 10-26-2020

Leave Blank for IRB

Rowan University PRO-2020-208 Approved on 1-16-2021 Expires on 1-15-2022

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

This Study has been approved by Rowan University IRB (Study #Pro2020-208)

2

Version #:2
Version Date:1/11/21
Creation/Revision Date: 10-26-2020

Leave Blank for IRB
Rowan University
PRO-2020-208
Approved on 1-16-2021
Expires on 1-15-2022

Appendix E Demographics Survey

This information will remain confidential

Your name _____

Gender _____

Race/Ethnicity _____

This is my _____ year as an Resident Assistant

Version number 1

Rowan University PRO-2020-208 Approved on 1-16-2021 Expires on 1-15-2022
