

© 2010 Bryana Helen French

NAMING IS POWER! BLACK AND WHITE ADOLESCENTS DEFINE SEXUAL  
COERCION: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

BY

BRYANA HELEN FRENCH

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2010

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Helen Neville, Chair  
Professor Carolyn Anderson  
Professor Jennifer Greene  
Associate Professor Carolyn West, University of Washington at Tacoma

## **Abstract**

This study sought to explore adolescent conceptualizations of sexual coercion (i.e., any unwanted sexual experience) among Black and White girls and women. Adolescents are at significant risk for sexual coercion with over 50% of sexual assault survivors between the ages of 12 and 20 (Catalano, 2005). Smaller studies suggest that nonviolent sexual coercion (e.g., verbal pressure, substance use) occurs more frequently than the threat or use of force (Basile, 2002; Spitzberg, 1999; Poitras & Lavoie, 1995), and are related to deleterious mental health outcomes (e.g., increased depression, lowered self-esteem; Broach & Petretic, 2006; Cecil & Matson; French & Neville, 2008; Testa & Dermen, 1999). Despite existing sexual coercion knowledge, much of the existing research relies primarily on adult White samples. Thus, there is a paucity of research on Black adolescent perceptions of sexual coercion. Given the pervasive nature of sexual coercion, its harmful influence on psychological adjustment, limited research on Black populations, and the overrepresentation of adolescents in sexual victimization, continued research is needed to examine the breadth of adolescent sexual coercion from racially diverse perspectives.

Sexual violence scholars have advocated for research that uncovers socially constructed definitions to acknowledge differences in cultural realities (Kelly & Radford, 1998; Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). Thus, this study uses a social constructionist, mixed methods approach to explore the sexual coercion conceptualizations of Black and White girls and women. Open-ended responses and survey data with 256 Black and White high school and college women were qualitatively analyzed for themes and statistically analyzed using logistic regression to explore relations between responses, race, grade level, and sexual coercion history. Data from 3 semi-structured focus groups with high school and college women were analyzed using thematic and

dimensional analyses to explore the subjective realities of participants. Statistical analyses show relationships within sexual coercion definitions but not between definitions and demographic variables. The following themes emerged in the focus group results: (a) *The Relationship IS the Problem*, (b) *Keep Him Strategies*, (c), *Women Control Relationships*, (d) *Act Your Age*, (e) *Its Not Always Black or White*, and (e) *Coercion in Context*. These findings suggest that sexual coercion for adolescent girls and women encompasses a complex system of coercion that influences and pressures sex from cultural, peer, and internal sources.

*This dissertation is dedicated to the brave young girls and women struggling to find their voice  
and sense of empowerment*

## **Acknowledgements**

Biggest thanks and appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Helen Neville, for selflessly taking me under her wing, believing in me, and nurturing my professional growth. To my dad, Robert French, for always standing in my corner and giving me the confidence and unconditional love to believe in myself. To my mom, Sybil Williams, for being a strong source of support and giving undying encouragement and love throughout this process. Special thank you to my Grandma Helen who made sure I was intellectually stimulated at all times, and for showing me what a strong woman with a big heart looks like. To Aunt Pam in particular and other aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters for supporting me at every stage, preschool to grad school, making sure I was on the right path. Thanks to my family and longtime girlfriends Carnita Cobb, Felicia Brown, and Ann Latney, who kept me grounded and remained patient with me throughout the process. To Drs. Nelson, Clohisy, and the Children's Hospital doctors and nurses that worked miracles and cured my cancer. To my dear friends and colleagues Jioni Lewis, Tiffany Schiffner, Sarah Mebane, Alexis Clarke, and Valene Whittaker for being anchors, helping me revise countless versions of my dissertation, and supporting me through the defense process. To Iris Carillo and Ross Wantland for their extensive wisdom, perspectives, and time in strengthening data analysis through the peer debriefing team. To all of my Champaign friends including Dre, Doug, and Tage who helped me stay sane throughout graduate school. To Ed and Steve for supporting data collection and being models of Black men who care about Violence Against Women. And to the Black Study Group for making sure we all graduated. Special appreciation to the family of activists I have met and grown with in Champaign, including Joe and Laura, Tom Garza, Brooke, Lian, Carol and Aaron, the Peer Ambassadors, my Mentees, GPSOC, and the STOP Coalition; you've helped nurture, feed, and focus my spirit for social change and I am a better

person for it. To the numerous students who've participated in the sexual coercion research project throughout the years, specifically Tommy Cabeza, Jill Barr, Kathy Kordesh, Samantha Richie, Cheryl Cope, and Latifat Odenwu. To my cadre of strong women mentors, Lydia Buki, Deidre Weathersby, Carla McCowan, Joycelyn Landrum-Brown, Karen Simms, and Sharon Kirkland-Gordon who have guided my professional development and success. And to the University of Maryland Counseling Center for supporting the completion of my dissertation during the final hours. Final important thanks to all of the students who shared their time and personal stories with me through their participation in this study, and to the school administrators and teachers who supported and cared about this project. I am forever grateful to all of you.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
<b>Chapter I Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Defining Sexual Coercion.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Methodological Approaches to Sexual Coercion.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Cultural Context of Sexual Coercion.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Rationale and Purpose.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter II Literature Review.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Defining Sexual Coercion.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Operational Definitions.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Sexual Coercion in Context.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Conclusion, Rationale, Design, and Purpose.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Chapter III Method.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Survey Study.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Focus Group Study.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Data Analyses Plan.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Chapter IV Results for Research Question 1.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Survey Study.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Focus Group Study.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Chapter V Results for Research Question 2.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Survey Study.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Focus Group Study.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Meanings Behind the Mix.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Chapter VI Discussion.....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization     of Girls.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Limitations.....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Future Research.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Implications.....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Appendix A Informed Consent.....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Appendix B Surveys.....</b>	<b>146</b>



**Appendix C Focus Group Training & Protocol..... 160**

## List of Tables

Table	Page
1 <i>Public and Legal Definitions of Various Forms of Sexual Coercion</i> .....	11
2 <i>Coded Responses for Sexual Coercion Definitions</i> .....	58
3 <i>Coded Responses for Consensual Sex Definitions</i> .....	59
4 <i>Coded Responses for Sexual Pressure Acceptability</i> .....	60
5 <i>Cross Classification of Sexual Coercion Definition Categories</i> .....	61
6 <i>Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel Statistic for Sexual Coercion Definitions</i> .....	62
7 <i>Loglinear Models for Sexual Coercion Definition Categories</i> .....	62
8 <i>Logistic Regression – Predicting “Force” in Sexual Coercion Definitions</i> .....	81
9 <i>Logistic Regression – Predicting “Manipulation” in Sexual Coercion Definitions</i> .....	82
10 <i>Logistic Regression – Predicting “Alternative” in Sexual Coercion Definitions</i> .....	83
11 <i>Loglinear Models of Sexual Coercion Definitions and Predictor Variables</i> .....	84

## List of Figures

Figure		Page
<i>1</i>	Mixed Methods Data Analysis Plan .....	51
<i>2</i>	Focus Group Conceptual Map.....	65

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Sexual coercion (i.e., any tactic used to engage in sexual behavior with an unwilling partner) is a pervasive problem, particularly for girls and women. Rape statistics are alarming, with 1 in 6 U.S. adult women experiencing rape or attempted rape (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Adolescent girls and women are at unique risk with over half of sexual assault survivors between the ages 12 and 20 (Catalano, 2005). These statistics, however, do not encompass the full extent of sexual coercion as most national data bases only report incidents of rape or attempted rape. Sexual coercion encompasses a broad range of nonconsensual sexual experiences that are not represented in national research. Smaller, individual studies provide important insight into the prevalence of other types of sexual coercion experiences. Findings from these studies have shown that nonviolent strategies to have unwanted sex (e.g., verbal pressure, substance use) occur more frequently than the threat or use of force used in rape (Basile, 2002; Poitras & Lavoie, 1995; Spitzberg, 1999). Such nonviolent sexual coercion experiences are often considered less important or traumatic (DeGue & DiLillo, 2005; Saltzman, 2004), despite their relation to deleterious mental health effects (e.g., increased depression, lowered self-esteem; Broach & Petretic, 2006; Cecil & Matson, 2006; Testa & Dermen, 1999).

Much of the sexual coercion research, with the exception of two important contributions (Cecil & Matson, 2006; French & Neville, 2008), is focused on predominantly White adult samples. Given the pervasive nature of sexual coercion, its harmful influence on psychological adjustment, and the overrepresentation of adolescents in sexual victimization, continued research is needed to examine the breadth of adolescent sexual coercion. By uncovering adolescent sexually coercive experiences, we illuminate the scope of nonconsensual sex and complicate the research from adolescent perspectives. Furthermore, including the lived experiences and

perspectives of Black youth moves away from a White normative analysis of sexual coercion and begins to give voice to underrepresented populations.

This study sought to explore adolescent conceptualizations of sexual coercion among Black and White high school girls and college women as a way to widen the scope of sexual coercion and understand adolescent contexts of this phenomenon. By using a social constructionist approach, this project gained insight into participants' perspectives of sexual coercion from their own developmentally and culturally relevant understandings. As a way to contextualize the current study, I first provide a brief discussion of sexual coercion definitions. Then I review methodological approaches to studying sexual coercion and the limitations within these approaches. I follow with a discussion of the cultural context of sexual coercion and finally, I provide the rationale and purpose for the study.

### **Defining Sexual Coercion**

Definitions of sexual coercion vary widely. Some researchers consider sexual coercion an overarching umbrella term that refers to a variety of tactics used to have sex with an unwilling partner, including but not limited to rape and sexual assault (e.g., Morrison, McLeod, Morrison, Anderson, & O'Connor, 1997; Zimmerman, Sprechler, Langer, & Holloway, 1995). Yet other researchers define sexual coercion in a more restrictive manner, defining it as verbal pressure or manipulation and consider it unique from rape or sexual assault (e.g., Testa & Dermen, 1999; DeGue & DiLillo, 2005). Both definitions acknowledge nonconsensual sexual experiences outside of rape and sexual assault. However, because there lacks consistency in the way researchers define sexual coercion, and research on sexual coercion is limited, the general public also lacks a clear understanding of sexual coercion outside of rape or sexual assault.

Scholars have increasingly discussed the problems with sexual coercion definitions and the narrow constructs of violence against women more broadly (DeGue & DiLillo, 2005; DeKeseredy, 2000; Kilpatrick, 2004; Saltzman, 2004). Prioritizing violent tactics, such as rape and sexual assault, as essential target areas for research and interventions ignores an array of other strategies that lead to unwanted sex. This creates a false and potentially dangerous narrow hierarchy of sexual victimization (DeKeseredy, 2000). By broadening the scope of sexual coercion, we acknowledge the complexity of unwanted or nonconsensual sexual experiences, expose ignored or underreported occurrences, and inform more effective prevention and intervention efforts.

### **Methodological Approaches to Sexual Coercion**

There have been a number of advancements in measurement in the field that have expanded our understanding of sexual coercion. Measures of sexual victimization among adults have begun to assess for a greater range of sexually coercive incidents, extending operational definitions beyond rape and sexual assault. For example, in the National College Women Sexual Victimization survey, Fisher and colleagues (2000) used behaviorally specific items that examined a variety of sexually coercive experiences such as nonphysical punishments, false promises, and continual arguments or pressure. This is a substantial improvement to other national data base research, such as the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey, which primarily assess for rape and sexual assault only. Koss and colleagues (2007) have also made important developments in the widely used Sexual Experiences Survey (SES). The revised SES also includes behaviorally specific items to assess a range of nonconsensual sexual behavior ranging from sexual contact to penetration, and provides

a more descriptive range of coercive tactics including verbal pressure, physical force, and alcohol use. Such advancements in measurement provide a fuller illustration of sexual coercion by assessing for a broad continuum of sexually coercive incidents. However, these improvements have only recently been made and the revised scales have had limited use to date. Furthermore, national measures for youth and adolescents continue to assess only for violent victimization, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, one of the largest national middle and high school behavioral surveys (Center for Disease Control, 2007). Scales measuring sexual coercion originally created for adults have been validated and used with adolescent samples, but there lacks a measure created specifically for adolescent experiences. As a result, the majority of sexual victimization knowledge is based on restricted and narrow operational definitions and measurements.

Given the heavy reliance on quantitative methodologies in social science research, much of the sexual coercion knowledge has been based on survey data and statistical findings. From these methodologies, there have been important findings on the psychological sequelae of sexual coercion and risk factors for perpetration. Interesting vignette studies have also explored the perceptions of acceptable strategies for sexual enticement and coercion (Garcia, Milano, & Quijano, 1989; Haworth-Hoepfner, 1998; Oswald & Russell, 2006; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1991). Although insightful, studies using vignette and survey methodologies restrict the range of sexually coercive experiences to the preconceived notions and operational definitions provided by researchers. Qualitative research, comparatively, provides participants with an opportunity to describe their own experiences, perspectives, and conceptualizations without imposing limits or boundaries. This methodology is particularly relevant when researching a topic that is newly explored and/or with underrepresented

populations. Qualitative research is important to understand the cultural behaviors and worldviews of racially diverse youth from their own rich perspectives.

### **Cultural Context of Sexual Coercion**

Psychological and feminist research on sexual coercion has been rooted in a gendered cultural context. Feminist theories and discourse centers violence against girls and women as a mechanism of gender oppression and a tool of patriarchy that men use to exert power over, and induce fear within, women (Brownmiller, 1979). Studies have found that women live in significantly greater fear of being raped, are much more likely to take precautions to try and prevent rape (Gordon & Riger, 1989) and fear assault from men more so than women (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997). Historically, research on sexual coercion has been conducted and theorized within a framework of White middle class women's experiences.

This focus on White women's perspectives has begun to shift as the writings of sexual violence among Black feminist scholars have gained increasing exposure. Historically, Black women's experiences of sexual victimization have been ignored (Collins, 2000), and contemporary studies continue to utilize predominantly White samples. Empirical research has found that cultural factors influence Black women's understanding of why they were raped (Neville, Heppner, Oh, Spanierman, & Clarke, 2004), interpretations of rape behaviors (Chasteen, 2001), willingness to disclose rape (Washington, 2001; Wyatt, 1992), and perceptions of racial responses to rape (Maier, 2008). Moreover, studies have shown that sexual assault and coercion are understood differently across cultural contexts (Chasteen, 2001; Koss, Heise, & Russo, 1994; Rozee, 1993). To move away from White normative frameworks of sexual coercion, some feminist researchers have advocated for definitions that are socially constructed



to acknowledge the differences in cultural realities and experiences (Kelly & Radford, 1998; Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). This approach to inquiry is necessary for more inclusive definitions and conceptualizations that can empower racially diverse girls and women and give voice to their experiences of sexual coercion.

### **Rationale and Purpose**

Although research on the sexual coercion experiences of girls and women have increased in numbers over the years, there remain several limitations in defining sexual coercion, sexual coercion research methodology, and cultural representations of sexual coercion. With limited definitions, we run the risk of misunderstanding significant experiences of sexual coercion that are out of our awareness. Particularly, the experiences of racially diverse youth are often ignored and thus not fully understood. Relying on quantitative studies that use restrictive coercion measures further confines our knowledge of sexual coercion by utilizing a post positivist paradigm that provides limited exploratory and contextually specific understandings. This research is necessary to provide more developmentally appropriate and culturally congruent intervention and prevention strategies for sexual coercion at various stages adolescent development.

The purpose of this study is to address the gaps in the literature by examining the understandings of Black and White adolescents. Specifically, I explore how Black and White high school and college women conceptualize sexual coercion and how developmental context and race influences these understandings. In this study I adopt a social constructionist conceptual framework. Social constructionism explores ways that meaning is negotiated by participants and the surrounding cultural contexts that influence these meanings (Gergen, 1985). Social

constructionism moves away from objective reality to more subjective understandings of multiple realities. Muehlenhard and Kimes (1999) called for a social constructionist perspective in sexual violence research as a means to transform current approaches that prioritize certain forms of sexual violence and minimize others. By adopting this methodology in the present study, participants' perspectives of sexual coercion are able to be expressed freely and openly without restricted boundaries on preconceived notions of what, when, and how sexual coercion occurs. Existing conceptualizations of sexual coercion in the literature may or may not coincide with the understandings of Black and White adolescent girls in this study. Thus, this approach allows for multiple complimentary and divergent participant constructions of their own realities of sexual coercion.

To date, sexual coercion literature is limited by its reliance on quantitative research which has produced useful findings on prevalence, measurement, and associations, but also has its limitations. For a fuller analysis of lived experiences, and to challenge the overreliance of quantitative methods in psychology research, this study uses a blended mixed methods research design (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). This type of research design seeks elaboration and enhancement from quantitative and qualitative methods for richer understandings. Mixed methods research has rarely been used in psychology or research specific to sexual violence, but has substantial benefits to scientific inquiry in counseling psychology (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterrot, 2005; Hanson, Creswell, Plano, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005).

To implement a mixed method, social constructionist methodology and provide cultural richness to our understanding of adolescent sexual coercion, I used the following research methods. For in-depth contextual understandings of sexual coercion, I conducted three focus groups with high school and college women. I selected a focus group methodology to explore the

lived experiences of individuals while also observing interactions between individuals. Discussion within pre-existing group settings allows participants to build upon each others' statements, provides areas of reflection that may not have otherwise been considered by participants, and allows for a more complex conversation through opportunities for disagreement and convergence (Morgan, 1997). Focus groups are also consistent with feminist research that uses natural social contexts and shifts the balance of power by reducing the researcher's influence (Madriz, 2000; Wikinson, 1998). For quantitative analysis, open-ended responses were collected. Participants described definitions of sexual coercion, consensual sex, and conditions for acceptable sexual pressure. Their responses were categorized and coded then statistically analyzed to explore the relationship between definitions and race, age, and sexual coercion history.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the range and boundaries of sexual coercion conceptualizations among Black and White adolescent girls and women?
2. Do cultural dynamics (i.e., race, developmental level) and sexual coercion experiences matter in the way adolescent girls and women conceptualize sexual coercion? If so in what ways?

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

In this chapter I present the literature on definitions of sexual coercion and the influence of cultural norms on these conceptualizations. After outlining the variety of ways in which sexual coercion is defined in the literature, I discuss the sexual coercion measurement and operational definitions. Next, I discuss the importance of examining sexual coercion across various social identities and contexts, including race and adolescent development. Finally, I provide the rationale and research questions guiding this study.

#### **Defining Sexual Coercion**

What we know about sexual coercion is limited in large part because of its infrequent and inconsistent use in the literature. As DeGue and DiLillo (2005) asserted, “the continued use of varied terminology and ill-defined or overlapping categories of behavior presents a challenge when seeking to understand and synthesize this rather extensive area of literature” (p. 514). In this section, I explore legal and scholarly definitions of rape and sexual assault to discuss the trend in defining nonconsensual sexual experiences. From there I discuss alternative definitions that help to broaden our understanding of violence against girls and women. I then define sexual coercion and outline the ambiguities and problems with sexual coercion definitions. With this, I consider the complexity of consent, desire, and nonconsensual sex. Next I discuss operational definitions of nonconsensual sex and sexual coercion measurement issues by reviewing previously used adult and adolescent surveys. I end this section with a discussion of the limitations in the extant literature.

**Defining rape and sexual assault.** Because sexual coercion is less frequently used and understood, I begin with a review of the definitions on rape and sexual assault to provide a framework for sexual violence broadly. Unlike sexual coercion, the terms *rape* and *sexual assault* are more widely used and understood concepts and have at times been used synonymously with sexual coercion. Historically, definitions of rape have been narrowly defined and create limited public perception of rape. Because our society relies heavily on the criminal justice system to uphold morality, legal definitions become particularly important and influential in shaping mass understanding and perceived importance of what constitutes rape and sexual assault. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) defines forcible rape as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults and attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included [in this definition]” (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2006). This definition restricts rape to refer only to experiences of vaginal penetration by a penis, excluding forced oral or anal sex, penetration by objects, forced sex with men, or women as rapists. The use of the terms “forcible” and “against her will” are also vague as it is unclear whether the victim has to physically resist in order for the incident to be considered rape, and that the use of alcohol or drugs, for example, are not included in this definition. Moreover, an absence of protest implies passive consent by this definition. State definitions are more inclusive and descriptive than the FBI definition stated here. Some states provide more detail to describe various methods of sexual assault (e.g., threat or force, incapacitation) and include a list of sexual behaviors (e.g., oral or anal intercourse). Table 1 provides examples of various definitions of violence against women including federal and state laws as well as public health definitions, which will be further discussed below.

Table 1

*Public and Legal Definitions of Various Forms of Sexual Coercion*

Source	Action	Definition
World Health Organization (2002) <i>World Report on Violence and Health</i> <sup>a</sup>	Sexual Violence	Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. Coercion can cover a whole spectrum of degrees of force. Apart from physical force, it may involve psychological intimidation, blackmail or other threats.
FBI U.S. Department of Justice (2006) Uniform Crime Report, <i>Crime In the United States</i> <sup>b</sup>	Forcible Rape	Forcible rape, as defined in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, is the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults and attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded.
Illinois General Assembly, <i>Illinois Compiled Statutes</i> <sup>c</sup>	Criminal Sexual Assault	Commits an act of sexual penetration by the use of force or threat of force; or commits an act of sexual penetration and the accused knew that the victim was unable to understand the nature of the act or was unable to give knowing consent; or commits an act of sexual penetration with a victim who was under 18 years of age when the act was committed and the accused was a family member; or commits an act of sexual penetration with a victim who was at least 13 years of age but under 18 years of age when the act was committed and the accused was 17 years of age or over and held a position of trust, authority or supervision in relation to the victim.

*Notes:* <sup>a</sup> Jeweks, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno (2002); <sup>b</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation (2006); <sup>c</sup> Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (2004)

Muehlenhard and Kimes (1999) discussed the biased nature of legal definitions of rape and sexual assault. As these authors assert, laws are typically written by legislatures that are predominantly comprised of White men with class privilege and who frame these problems from their own perspectives. As a result, the voices of the people who are most likely the victims of sexual violence are left unheard, such as the experiences of girls and women of color. This is historically evident. For example, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rape of Black women by White or Black men was not considered illegal in the United States, nor was the rape of married or poor

White women (Roberts, 1997; as cited in West, 2006). Thus, laws were written with the purpose of removing legal protection for Black and/or poor women. Legal definitions of rape historically do not reflect the extent of the problem, perpetuate commonly held rape myths, and make it harder to prosecute the crime of rape because of such narrow definitions (Burt & Alpin, 1981).

**Call for broader definitions.** To broaden the scope of violence against girls and women, alternative definitions of sexual violence have been developed to reframe the problem, particularly through feminist scholarship and activism (Roze & Koss, 2001). In his report, Kilpatrick (2004) compared legal definitions of rape and sexual assault with public health definitions. The latter provides an expansive conceptualization of sexual violence including physical, psychological, substance abuse, and mental incapacity coercion strategies. Unlike most legal definitions, public health definitions do not require injury, death or psychological harm to occur; these definitions are more encompassing and independent of the outcome. The World Health Organization considers multiple forms of violence in its definition of sexual violence, including self-directed violence or suicidal behavior, interpersonal violence, and collective or community violence (Jewkes, Sen & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Comparatively, current legal definitions are much narrower and do not include psychological abuse as a criminal act worthy of prosecution. To include nonviolent acts in the public health definition of violence against women, Saltzman (2004) suggested the broader term *violence and abuse against women* to include physical and sexual acts, threats of violence, stalking, and psychological/emotional abuse. A broader definition can provide greater scope of violence against women. This sentiment was echoed at the recent 2008 American Psychological Association (APA) Summit on Violence and Abuse in Relationships as well. Experts at the Summit suggested that the way in which

sexual coercion is defined and operationalized has profound implications for our understanding of the extent of the problem.

Other researchers have also argued for a broader conceptualization of sexual coercion to include experiences that are often ignored in historical and contemporary definitions of rape and sexual assault. A broader understanding of sexual coercion is necessary to uncover potentially understudied or unknown experiences of nonconsensual sex. DeKersede (2000) discussed the considerable public policy implications that narrow definitions of sexual coercion can have, as many programs are only funded and implemented if the need seems great enough. By excluding alternative experiences of sexual coercion, such as verbal pressure or manipulation, we run the risk of trivializing these experiences and thus ignore the realities of many women. Without this awareness, mental health support services and prevention efforts may not reach their full capacity and effectiveness to meet the needs of girls and women. Such minimizing can have significant impact on survivors who may discount a sexually coercive incident, subsequently leading to greater levels of underreporting as well. Given the heavy focus of sexual coercion research on White adult women, little is known about the experiences and perceptions of other groups. Thus, by including understudied populations, such as Black and White adolescents, we begin to explore alternative notions of who, how, when, where, and under what contexts sexual coercion occurs.

**Sexual coercion definitions.** There are two broad but interrelated approaches to the way researchers define sexual coercion. One approach is to conceptualize sexual coercion as the psychological manipulation to have sexual intercourse with an unwilling partner. This definition is different from rape which focuses on the threat or use of physical force to have sex with an unwilling partner (e.g., Testa & Dermen, 1999; DeGue & DiLillo, 2005). DeGue and DiLillo



(2005) offered a conceptual model of sexual misconduct to help clarify the distinction between sexual coercion (i.e., tactics using verbal pressure or manipulation) and sexual aggression (i.e., tactics involving the use of physical force) while also providing a range of sexual contact (i.e., ranging from fondling to intercourse). The other broad approach is to conceptualize sexual coercion as an all-inclusive umbrella term that includes an array of nonconsensual sexual experiences, including sexual assault and rape (e.g., Morrison, McLeod, Morrison, Anderson, & O'Connor, 1997; Zimmerman, Sprechler, Langer, & Holloway, 1995). Even within these two definitional structures, there remains further inconsistency. The criterion for a tactic to be considered sexually *coercive* (e.g., threat or use of physical force, verbal pressure, blackmail, manipulation, use of alcohol or drugs, abuse of authority) varies across studies. Moreover, the behaviors that are considered *sexual* (e.g., kissing, fondling, attempted intercourse, completed intercourse) also varies. Thus, the behaviors that constitute sexually coercive incidents are unclear as some definitions only include behavior related to *sexual intercourse* while others refer only to *sexual acts*, and others still include *any sexual behavior*.

For the purposes of this study sexual coercion refers to an overarching umbrella term to include a variety of nonconsensual sexual experiences with a variety of tactics and behaviors. Because I am interested in understanding diverse adolescent girls and women's conceptualizations of sexual coercion, I adopt a broad, all encompassing definition of the construct. This allows for an expansive exploration of nonconsensual sex that can include a continuum of sexual contact and strategies for coercive sex. Adolescents may have different understandings of what constitutes sexual behaviors than adults.

**Considering sexual compliance and consent.** A particularly important point to consider in understanding sexual coercion is distinguishing the notion of consent and desire. O'Sullivan

(2005) described this challenge of understanding ambiguities in defining *sexual coercion* by delineating between experiences of sexual consent, acquiescence, compliance, and coercion. She explored notions of sexual desire and *unwanted* sexual activity and discussed the complex distinction between what is “unwanted” and what is considered “nonconsensual” (p. 5). Wanting to have sex denotes an internal desire whereas the outwardly expression of an interest in sex refers to consent. In some instances, individuals willingly comply with sexual activity even though they lack desire to; this has been referred to as sexual compliance (O’Sullivan & Allgeier, 1998). To provide greater clarity, consider the following illustration: a girl and her boyfriend are kissing and he asks to have sex. The girl complies but internally she feels like she is not ready. Although consent is given or implied, the girl in this scenario lacks desire to engage in sexual behavior.

Sexual consent and compliance have been empirically examined and most studies suggest that many girls and women are consenting to sex despite a lack of desire to do so. For example, O’Sullivan and Allegier (1998) sampled predominantly White (94%) college students and found that nearly 40% consented to unwanted sexual activity during the two week data collection period. Women did so significantly more than men and the most common reason was to satisfy their partner’s needs and promote intimacy. In a racially diverse sample (41% White, 35% African American) of men and women college students, 46% reported sexual compliance (Vanier & O’Sullivan, 2009); racial differences were not examined. There were no gender differences in experiences of sexual compliance, but men were more likely reported as initiators of compliant experiences. Individuals with compliant experiences reported greater partner control, less enjoyment, and sexual incidents were more unexpected. Participants were also interviewed and shared reasons for consenting; 75% of all participants reported consenting to

unwanted sex because they felt it was a necessary sacrifice to make their partner happy. To illuminate potential reasons for unwanted, consensual sex, Impett and Peplau (2002) explored factors relating to sexual consent and acquiescence among 140 racially diverse college women (27% White, 10% African American). They found that women with higher levels of relational anxiety (i.e., greater concern about rejection and acceptance) were more likely to consent to unwanted sexual intercourse. The level of perceived commitment by their male partner partially mediated this relationship, such that women with high levels of anxiety were more willing to consent to unwanted sex partially because they believed they were more committed than their partner. All of the African American women in this sample reported consent to unwanted sex, compared to one-half to two-thirds of the other women in the sample. These racial differences were not statistically significant given the low number ( $n = 13$ ) of African American participants. Nevertheless, this is an interesting finding that further strengthens the need for studies that explore racial and cultural differences in sexual consent and coercion.

Youth are consenting to unwanted sex as well. Similar rates of unwanted sex were found among a sample of predominantly African American teenage girls at 41% (Blythe et al. 2006). The most frequently reported reason for unwanted sex was to prevent their partners' anger. It is not clear from this study, however, whether participants consented to sex or whether they felt coerced.

Should compliant sexual experiences be considered sexually coercive? The answer to this question is complicated when deciding what constitutes adequate expression of consent. Conceptions of consent range from clear verbal statements to the absence of resistance. In addition, reasons for verbally consenting to unwanted sex may not appear "coercive" in a given incident but could be conceptualized as coercive. For example, if a woman consents to sex in

order to prevent a fight with her partner that has happened in the past, this history of sexual coercion contextualizes her decision to consent. A lack of desire may be influenced by a variety of cultural factors such as societal pressures, beliefs about relationships, gender roles, and individual emotional factors. Muehlenhard and colleagues (1992) discussed the problematic nature of using the term *consent* when defining rape. The way that someone expresses a lack of desire, and whether that expression is considered sufficient communication of consent, influences our understanding of whether or not rape occurred. Given traditional sex scripts and gender expectations, where women and girls' expression of sexuality is discouraged and where men and boys are praised for having heterosexual sexual experiences, it is difficult to determine whether consent was given or not in many instances. Although sexual compliance is commonly normalized as an expected sacrifice in committed relationships, I argue that compliance with unwanted sex runs contradictory to healthy relationships and can be conceptualized as part of a continuum of sexual coercion.

I have provided a discussion of scholarly, legal, and public health definitions on sexual coercion, rape, and sexual assault. As outlined above, there are substantial inconsistencies in how sexual coercion is defined and what is included and excluded in these definitions. Conversations and movements to broaden violence against girls and women have begun particularly in socio-political arenas and among public health advocates. However, the ways that sexual coercion is measured within the research remains limited. There is some debate on whether or not sexual consent and compliance should be considered in sexual coercion definitions and all or most of the studies on sexual coercion are based on researcher definitions. The next section reviews existing operational definitions of sexual coercion and related measurement advances and limitations.

## **Operational Definitions**

The way that research defines sexual coercion greatly influences public understanding of the phenomena. The majority of sexual violence research has used quantitative methodology to explore the research on, and influenced definitions of, sexual coercion. One of the challenges to understanding sexual coercion is the inconsistency in measurement. To better understand the measures used to inform this research, I discuss operational definitions of sexual coercion used most widely in the literature. I review surveys used with adult and college populations as well as the limited measures used primarily with youth.

**Sexual coercion surveys with adults.** There are a number of measures to assess nonconsensual sex in adults. Many large-scale national studies have been criticized for their conservative estimates of sexual coercion. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), one of the largest household surveys of criminal victimization that assesses both reported and unreported crimes, estimated a rape rate of 1.1 per 1000 U.S. adults (Rand & Catalano, 2007). This estimate is considerably lower than the findings found in other national surveys on sexual coercion (e.g., Catalano, 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Part of this discrepancy in prevalence rates relates to the way rape is operationalized. Surveys such as the NCVS assess sexual coercion by asking participants whether or not they have been raped or sexually assaulted. This wording leads to gross underreporting of sexual coercion as many women may not label or identify their experience as rape or sexual assault, despite describing incidents consistent with common rape definitions (Russell & Bolen, 2000).

To provide more descriptive operational definitions, the National Violence against Women Survey (NVAWS; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) restructured its items to be more

behaviorally oriented. Instead of asking if participants were raped, the NVAWS described forced or threatened sexual encounters in detail, without attaching a label to them. For example, this measure used items such as the following “Has a man or boy ever made you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you? Just so there is no mistake, by sex we mean putting a penis in your vagina.” With the behaviorally descriptive NVAWS items, there was a clear increase in the reporting of rape and sexual assault. Although the much needed revision of the NVAWS increased the estimates of rape and sexual assault, it does not assess for sexually coercive tactics other than the threat or use of force, such as the use of alcohol/drugs or verbal pressure/manipulation, nor do the items include sexual behaviors outside of intercourse.

A similar behaviorally descriptive approach was used in the National College Women Sexual Victimization study (NCWSV; Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000). Fisher et al. (2000) used a scale that included behaviorally specific items and examined a variety of sexually coercive experiences such as nonphysical punishments, false promises, and continual arguments or pressure. This is a substantial improvement to other national surveys in the literature. Studies like the NCWSV study allow for a more complete understanding of sexual coercion by assessing the prevalence of a continuum of sexually coercive incidents. One limitation of the NCWSV study was its large sample of non-Hispanic White college women (80%) compared to non-Hispanic African American (7%) or Hispanic (6%) women, and gave no consideration to potential cultural differences.

The widely used Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski 1987; Koss & Oros, 1982) is another measure that explores multiple methods of sexual coercion. This scale measures an array of sexual experiences ranging from incidents of consensual sex to completed rape, and sexual behaviors ranging from kissing to intercourse. The

SES assesses for nonviolent sexual coercion tactics by asking participants whether they have given into sex play (i.e., fondling, kissing, or petting but not intercourse) and attempted or completed sexual intercourse (i.e., penetration of a woman's vagina, no matter how slight, ejaculation not required) when they didn't want to because of overwhelming pressure and continual arguments from a man, or because of a man's position of authority. The items all have "yes" or "no" response options. The SES and findings from its authors have been used to inform the creation of revised measures in national prevalence studies for a more inclusive assessment, such as the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

The original scale has some limitations. Although this measure provides an important assessment of sexual pressure, these items are somewhat vague and exclude other coercion tactics such as flattery, manipulation, and alcohol or drug use. To address some of the limitations in the scale, researchers have revised the SES (Koss et al., 2007). The revised SES includes behaviorally specific items to assess a range of nonconsensual sexual behavior including sexual contact and penetration, and has greater clarity on the reference period. It also expands on tactics of nonconsensual sex including verbal pressure, physical, and alcohol use. For example, a series of nonconsensual sexual experiences are asked separately (e.g., kissing/fondling, oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex, other penetration), each followed-up with questions assessing the nature in which the act was obtained (e.g., telling lies, verbal pressure, criticizing, threatening force, using force). The revised scale also has separate measures for perpetrators (SES-SFP) and victims (SES-SFV). To date, the revised SES has only been used in an unpublished Master's thesis (Anthony, 2008). It showed acceptable reliability estimates ( $\alpha = .92$  SES-SFV and  $\alpha = .91$  SES-SFP) among a sample of racially diverse college students.

**Sexual coercion surveys with teenagers.** Considerably less is known about the breadth of sexual coercion among youth. The Center for Disease Control's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007), the largest national survey of adolescent behavior, assesses experiences with sexual coercion by asking one question: whether or not participants were forced to have sexual intercourse. The wording of this item is problematic for a number of reasons. It is not clear what the question assesses by asking about "force," as they do not define or delineate between pressure, physical force, threat of force, etc. It does not assess for non-physically threatening or "forceful" experiences such as verbal manipulation or alcohol/drug abuse. In addition, this item asks about "intercourse" but does not define this term, thus participants may be not be clear with what they are asking and only respond to vaginal intercourse, excluding experiences with oral or anal intercourse. Other sexual acts are also excluded from this survey including penetration with objects, kissing or fondling. Given that this is essentially the only government sponsored national survey of adolescents, our understanding of the national prevalence of sexual coercion in a variety of forms among adolescence is severely limited.

Smaller individual studies have used measures to assess other forms of sexual coercion besides the threat or use of physical force. Most scholars researching sexual coercion among teenagers use the SES or an adapted version for their studies (e.g., Biglan, Noell, Ochs, Smolkowski, & Metzler, 1995; Poitras & Lavoie, 1995; Noell, Rohde, Seely, & Ochs 2001; Zweig, Sayer, Crockett, & Vicary, 2002). Findings provide psychometric support for a modified version of the original SES with White adolescent samples (e.g., Biglan Noell, Ochs, Smolkowski, & Metzler, 1995) and African American adolescent girls (Cecil & Matson, 2006).



Although the SES shows adequate psychometric properties with adolescent populations, using a scale originally created for adults has limitations. This approach assumes that the experiences common in adulthood occur in adolescence. Although there may be common parallels, teenage dating practices are unique in nature given the social dynamics and sexual inexperience of adolescence. The way that dating is experienced, understood, and talked about likely differs at various developmental levels. It is possible that existing adult and college used scales exclude experiences that teens encounter. Teten and colleagues (2005) began to address this limitation in the literature by creating the Acceptance of Coercive Sexual Behavior (ACSB) scale. This scale uses multimedia video depicting various teenage dating scenarios to assess adolescents' perceptions of sexual coercion. The ACSB showed acceptable reliability and convergent validity among a sample of 220 predominantly White high school students.

**Strengths and limitations of measures.** Existing surveys and measures on sexual coercion, and their revisions for improvement, provide initial information about the scope and boundaries of unwanted sexual experiences. One limitation to this method of assessment is the reliance on measures with predefined definitions of sexual coercion. No matter how sexual coercion is defined, the current literature is lacking by its limited measurement of unwanted sexual experiences. By using standardized measures, experiences are named and categorized for participants. Although these measures may capture a range of unwanted sexual experiences across developmental and cultural contexts, there may be aspects that are missing for non-White adolescents. By relying on expert definitions of the construct and excluding voices from community members themselves, we not only risk missing critical experiences, but we also potentially silence the voices of underrepresented women in scholarly research.

In sum, sexual coercion is gaining greater attention nationally with improvements in measures of unwanted sexual experiences and critical discussions to expand sexual coercion definitions. However, our knowledge of the prevalence, experiences, and definitions of sexual coercion broadly is limited. Large scale studies fail to assess a range of sexual coercion; most studies focus primarily on incidents resulting from the threat or use of physical force but neglect less violent tactics or sexual behaviors other than vaginal intercourse. The NCWSV and Revised SES are two exceptions, but data from the NCWSV sampled predominantly White college women and the Revised SES has been minimally utilized. Thus, to broaden our understanding of sexual coercion's breadth and complexity among understudied populations, we need to widen our definition of what is considered, acknowledged, and examined as sexual coercion.

Research to date uses "expert" definitions of sexual coercion to understand this phenomenon, with little research exploring the conceptualizations of non-experts. Feminist psychology scholars argue against this top-down analysis that results in a removed and distant examination in favor of a more interpretivist and constructivist approach (See Morrow, 2007 for a review). Moreover, it is necessary that diverse experiences and perspectives are heard and understood to challenge White normative understandings. It could be that the ways researchers define sexual coercion inadequately reflects the ways diverse adolescents understand, experience, and define sexual coercion themselves. In this study, voices of Black and White adolescent girls and women are presented through their own conceptualizations of sexual coercion.

## **Sexual Coercion in Context**

In this section I examine sexual coercion in relation to adolescent sexual development and culturally specific factors of Black girls and women. First, I discuss historical and contemporary representations of African American women and its impact on sexual coercion. In this subsection, I provide a review of the empirical literature examining cultural influences on sexual victimization and discuss the limited knowledge on perceptions of sexual coercion among African American women. Next, I discuss adolescent development in general and then review the literature on sexual coercion in high school and college environments. Within the conversation on adolescence, I provide a discussion of unique contextual factors related to high school and college respectively, review existing research on sexual perceptions, and highlight prevalence rates. Finally, I end with a review of the literature on previous sexual coercion history and its impact on perceptions and definitions of sexual violence.

**Racialized context of sexual coercion for Black girls and women.** Sexual coercion exists within a gendered cultural context where violence against women is used a form of power to oppress and induce fear among women (Brownmiller, 1979). Brownmiller's seminal work on rape served as an important starting point for deconstructing rape from feminist perspectives. The traditional feminist approach to violence against women, and Brownmiller's work specifically, has been criticized for its exclusion of Black women's experiences of sexual violence and perpetration of racist rape myths (Davis, 1981). Black feminists and cultural theorists assert that violence against Black women is more than a problem of sexism but instead exists within intersecting oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism (e.g., Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1995). In part because of the White middle-class feminist perspectives, social science and feminist research on sexual coercion has focused on White women and girls experiences.

Omitted from empirical and theoretical work are the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities, including Black girls and women (hooks, 2000; Walker, 1983).

As a result of this exclusion, experiences and perceptions crafted by White women are assumed to translate to those of Black women. The political decision to name sexual coercion every woman's problem was necessary to recognize rape as a societal problem, as opposed to an individual concern. However, this paints a false picture of unity and inclusion in a traditionally White dominated feminist movement (Richie, 2000). Sociocultural realities shape the ways that Black girls and women make sense of experiences with sexual coercion and their responses, including whether or not they seek support, consider the experience as rape, and psychological sequelae of the coercion (see West, 2002 for a review). Gail Wyatt (1992) asserted that "definitions of rape vary by culture and national origin. Economic and legal factors have influenced cultural definitions of sexual assault for American women, and especially for women of African descent" (p. 77-78). Thus, Black girl and women's sexual coercion definitions likely vary by cultural contexts as well.

The historical context of Black girl and women sexual violence is important to consider. Black girls and women have been historically viewed as sexual products. In antebellum slavery, enslaved Africans had no civil or human rights and were used for the financial profit of the slave owner. Sexual reproduction was a vital aspect of this financial profit (West, 2006). Enslaved Africans were forced to procreate to increase slave owners profit and production. Because Black women lacked the basic human rights as people, White men often took sexual conquest of Black women, exerting power and violence over grossly disempowered women. Black women who were raped had no protection from their White rapists, nor did they have protection from the rape of Black men (West, 2006). Scholars have discussed contemporary sexual images of Black

girls and women (Stephens & Phillips, 2003; West, 2008). The pressure to fit into these stereotyped expectations of Black girl/womanhood could influence Black girls' understanding of what constitutes sexual coercion and who can be coerced.

***Empirical findings on sexual coercion and black women.*** Empirical research illuminates the consequences of the historical sexualization of Black women in response to rape and attempted rape. Neville and colleagues (2004) tested an ecological model of recovery among Black (46%) and White (54%) mostly college women rape survivors, and specifically tested the impact of the *Jezebel* myth (i.e., historical image of Black women as sexually promiscuous and incapable of being raped). They found that Black women were significantly more likely to attribute cultural perceptions of their racial group (e.g., Black women are sexually loose) to reasons why they were raped, more so than White women. These findings, in turn, related to lower levels of self-esteem. The findings presented above show initial support for potential differences in the ways that Black and White women conceptualize rape and attempted rape. This research has also provided significant additions to the field of violence against women to begin to unpack cultural differences of Black women for a more complex understanding of Black women's experiences with rape. Gaps in the literature remain. There is a significant gap in the literature examining a continuum of sexual coercion among Black women to include experiences other than rape. Moreover, nearly all of the studies examining predominantly African American samples are conducted with adult women. We know very little of the sexual coercion experiences and perceptions of Black adolescent girls. In the next section, I review the literature on adolescent contexts and understandings of sexual coercion.

**Adolescent development and sexual coercion.** Adolescence is a time of identity searching, autonomy, confusion, exploration, and belonging (e.g., Arnett, 1999). Neuroscientists

have learned that the brain is not fully formed until age 20 (Strauch, 2003). Further, experts in adolescent development are now conceptualizing adolescence as extending beyond the teenage years into early adult hood, with some documenting adolescent development ending around 22-years-old (Arnett, 2000). An important aspect of many adolescent developmental experiences is sexual and romantic development and exploration (Miller & Benson, 1999). As the interest, and pressures, to become involved in sex increases, so does the risk for sexual coercion. In this section, I explore developmental aspects of sexual coercion in adolescence and outline the context of specific risks for sexual coercion within high school and college environments.

### ***Sexual coercion in high school.***

*Prevalence of sexual coercion in high school.* The prevalence rates of sexual coercion in high school are high. Over 50% of sexual assault victims are under the age of 18 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006) or between the ages of 12 and 20 (Catalano, 2005). Moreover, statewide high school surveys have found that 20% - 30% of girls and 7 - 10% of boys experience sexual assault (Coker, McKeown, Sanderson, Davis, Valois, & Huebner, 2000; Shrier, Pierce, Emans, & Durant, 1998). With regards to the type of sexually coercive tactics used in adolescence, physical force, verbal pressure and manipulation, statutory rape, and alcohol or drug use have been consistently cited (e.g., Cecil & Matson, 2005; Poitras & Lavoie, 1995).

*High school context.* The teenage years are marked as a time of identity development, peer group formation, and transition. As adolescents learn who they are, they also search to belong. Thus friendships and dating play an important role in the lives of teenagers, particularly during high school years, when teens shift to spending more alone time with peers than with family and adults (Steinberg, 2005). With more access to romantic relationships and opportunity for sexual encounters comes an increased risk for sexual coercion.

White and Farabutt (2001) discussed the developmental effects of adolescence on violence against girls and women in their conceptual article. These scholars used a feminist perspective to discuss the gendered violence that happens as teens are exposed to images of girls and women as sexual objects and boys are socialized to be aggressive and relate to women for sexual conquests. As White and Farabutt argued, adolescent dating scripts are such that girls are expected to be sexual gatekeepers. They are expected to be “good girls” yet also pressured to be sexually attractive (Tolman, 1994); thus if nonconsensual sex happens, it is considered their fault. Consequently, adolescence is a particularly turbulent period for girls as it relates to sexual concerns; at times negatively affecting their mental health. For instance, girls between the ages of 15-19 have higher rates of depression, hopelessness and shame than their male counterparts (see Rosenblum & Lewis, 2006 for a review). The importance of belonging and romantic relationships, lowered sense of self-worth, increased autonomy, inexperience, experimentation, and preexisting gender stereotypes and norms all contribute to teenage girls’ susceptibility to sexual coercion.

*Specific sexual coercion risks in high school.* One unique risk for adolescent girls is the increased vulnerability for coerced sexual experiences particularly with substantial older partners, commonly known as statutory rape. Sex with a substantially older partner among adolescents is sexually coercive in nature as young adolescents are incapable of consenting to sexual activity, simply as a function of their age and developmental capacity. Adult partners have a level of maturity and dating experience that can be sexually manipulative and exploitive to adolescent girls. Oberman (1994, 2000) addressed the concept of consensual sex with adolescent girls through an examination of statutory rape laws and argued that girls are assumed to be mature enough to make independent decisions about sexual behavior; however, girls are

“uniquely vulnerable to coercion and exploitation in their sexual decision making” (Oberman, 1994, p. 53). Lowered self-esteem, difficulty with self-assertion, and body image issues contribute to adolescent vulnerability to unwanted sexual advances (Oberman, 2000).

Adolescent sexual behavior and statutory rape laws are complex, as not every instance of sexual behavior with a “minor” is considered criminal in a court of law. Deciding which sexual incidents are consensual and permissible among peer teen relationships, and which are criminal, is a challenge for law makers and enforcers (Oberman, 2000). However, as Oberman (2000) asserted, adopting a more complex conceptualization of sexual activity, ranging from desired consent to forcible rape strengthens the need for laws to protect vulnerable adolescents. The legal age of consent differs from state to state but ranges from 13 to 18. In Illinois, criminal sexual abuse is considered sexual penetration with a victim between the ages of 13 and 17 and an offender less than 5 years older; whereas aggravated criminal sexual abuse requires an offender to be at least 5 years older (Norman-Eady, Reinhart, & Martino, 2003). These laws are designed specifically to protect minors from exploitive sexual relationships, which occurs with older, more mature and experienced partners (Davis & Twombly, 2000).

Empirical research has supported the notion that adolescent sexual coercion increases with older partners. Studies have found that sexual activity with older male partners is linked to sex while intoxicated (Gowen, Feldman, Diaz, & Yisrael, 2004) and unwanted sexual activity (Abma, Driscoll, & Moore, 1998; Marin, Coyle, Gomez, Carvajel, & Kirby, 2000). For example, Marin and colleagues (2000) found, among a large sample of ethnically diverse (sample break down not provided) sixth grade heterosexual girls, that girls who had boyfriends two years older or more were more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than girls with boyfriends who were the same age and girls without a boyfriend. In addition, Gowen and colleagues (2004)



found in their racially diverse sample (35% White, 19% Hispanic, 2% Black) that girls with older partners (3 years older or more) were more likely to experience attempted sexual coercion and have sex under the influence of alcohol or drugs than girls with similar aged boyfriends. These findings show that sexual coercion among adolescent girls is often experienced with older male partners.

*Perceptions of sexual coercion among high school students.* The literature on perception of sexual coercion in adolescence is limited. The majority of studies that examine sexual coercion with high school samples focus on prevalence and correlates of coercion, and less on adolescent conceptualizations. Although not explicitly examining sexual coercion, Tolman (1994) conducted an important qualitative study on the sexual desire of diverse high school girls. Through individual interviews, some girls discussed ways their sexual desires were compromised as they felt internally obligated or externally pressured to have consensual sexual activity. One participant described having sex to make her boyfriend happy even though he was not nice to her and she did not want to have sex. Other participants discussed ways they felt a need to suppress their sexual desire for fear or worry of being called a “slut” (Tolman, p. 332).

Hird and Jackson’s (2001) study is one of the few qualitative explorations of sexual coercion among adolescents. They conducted focus groups with New Zealand and British boys and girls to explore discourse around heterosexual sexuality and their experiences with sexual coercion (for girls) or as sexual coercers (for boys). Verbal and physical coercion strategies were discussed both among boys and girls as a means for boys to gain sexual access. Girls, comparatively, struggled with dichotomies of being labeled a “slut” or “angel”. Some of the girls in this study felt they didn’t have a right to refuse sex or that it would be easier to comply with sexual requests than to resist. The word “love” was also discussed as a form of verbal coercion to

engage in sexual intercourse. Statements such as “if you really love me, you’d have sex” were used most often by boys as a method of persuasion with girls (p. 38). Such false professions can influence the common belief of equating sex with love, leading girls to engage in sexual behavior out of romantic obligation. Boys in this sample threatened to leave their partner for someone who would be willing to have sexual intercourse and girls often felt pressured to engage in sexual activity, fearing that they would otherwise lose the relationship. Many male participants stated if the girl protested verbally but not physically, then there could be more opportunity for negotiation and persuasion to have sex. Such accounts of adolescent sexuality illustrate the dynamics of adolescent heterosexual dating in this culture. It is likely that similar experiences happen among youth in the United States but more research is needed to explore this.

Both of these studies begin to capture the perceptions of sexual coercion among adolescents and provide interesting explorations of the lived experiences of teens through qualitative data. Although there are a growing number of studies on the prevalence of sexual coercion among adolescents, the research on sexual coercion perceptions among high school students is severely lacking. It is imperative that we understand what adolescents consider to be sexually coercive in their eyes and ways they experience pressured or coerced sex. This information could help inform researchers, mental health providers, and educators in the development of prevention strategies to promote healthy consensual sexual activities among adolescents.

### ***Sexual coercion in college.***

*Prevalence of sexual coercion in college.* There have been ample studies assessing sexual coercion prevalence rates among college students, however most studies examine rape and attempted rape but not other sexual coercion experiences. Rates of rape have ranged from 12-

20% (see Rozee & Koss, 2001 for a review). Rates of sexual coercion experiences other than rape have ranged from 15% to 69% (Fisher et al., 2000, Humphrey & White, 2000; Tyler, Hoyt, & Whitbeck, 1998). Rates on college campuses are comparable with non-college populations. For example, Wyatt (1992) found in a community sample of over a thousand Black and White adult women, 20% and 25% reported attempted or completed rape, respectively.

*College context.* Like high school students, college students face unique risks for sexual coercion as well. Colleges and universities are no longer considered safe-havens as violent crimes students have increased and studies have shown large reports of sexual coercion on campus (Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu, 1999; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). The common age of college students, 18-24, consists of the final stages of adolescent development. The college experience is a unique developmental period with the opportunity for greater autonomy, less monitoring, exposure to diverse opportunities, and increased responsibility. As a result, young adults are able to delve deeper into identity exploration and dating experiences. With this increased autonomy come cultural norms specific to campus life that make the college population uniquely vulnerable to sexual coercion.

*Specific sexual coercion risks in college.* Unique to university students' experiences is the heightened risk for sexual coercion within fraternities. Scholars have discussed the misogyny and sexism that often pervades fraternity organizations and participates in rape myth supported attitudes (O'Sullivan, 1993; Schwartz & DeKersedy, 1997). Boswell and Spade's (1996) qualitative study lends insight into the social interactions of college fraternities that were identified as high and low risk for sexual assault, and aspects that contribute to a rape prone culture within these environments. They described numerous incidents of sexual objectification, and disrespect for women within high risk fraternities and bars, and showed more experiences of

sexual aggression than low risk places. Race or ethnicity was not reported in this study. Similarly, Humphrey and Kahn (2000) found that men in their predominantly White sample associated with identified fraternity and athletic groups high in risk for sexual aggression were more likely than those participants associated with similar low risk groups or with no association. Members of perceived high risk groups also showed more hostility towards women and had greater peer support for sexual assault against women than members of other groups. Thus, not all fraternities were linked to greater sexual aggression and the authors warn against making broad generalizations. One gross limitation of these studies is the lack of racial diversity in the samples. Thus, it is not clear what other cultural influences may or may not be at play in these interactions. It could be assumed that the fraternities were predominantly White, given that the researchers are from a predominantly White private institution. However, little research has been conducted to examine sexual assault within Black Greek organizations. Other predominantly social groups in college have been linked to increased sexual violence and coercion. Male college athletics is another group that has been related to greater sexual perpetration and adherence to rape myths (Crosset, Benedict, & McDonald, 1995; Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006; Koss & Gaines, 1993).

Another factor unique to the college environment is the increased use and abuse of alcohol on college campuses. Alcohol is being recognized as a significant sexual coercion tool and has been linked to an increase risk for unwanted sexual experiences (see Abbey 2002; Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2001 for reviews). Because it is more difficult to be assertive and defend oneself while intoxicated, it is often assumed that women who use substances are more sexually available to men (e.g., George, Cue, Lopez, Crowe & Norris, 1995). In a nationally representative sample (racial demographics not reported), Ullman and

colleagues (1999) found that over half of the college women who experienced sexual coercion reported that the assailant consumed alcohol prior to the incident and over 40% of the women did as well. Not only do offenders take advantage of people who are under the influence, but alcohol or drugs are also used as a direct means to have sex with an unwilling partner (Johnson, Hamilton, & Sheets, 1999; Tyler, Hoyt, & Whitbeck, 1998). On many college campuses, heavy drinking is normalized and casual sex is expected and encouraged, making this environment particularly susceptible to coerced sexual experiences.

*Perceptions of sexual coercion among college students.* Explorations of sexual coercion perceptions among college students began in the late 80's and early 90's and used primarily vignette methodology. Findings from these studies generally suggest that the more overt and physically forceful the strategy, the more likely participants were to consider it sexually coercive. For example, in Garcia's and colleagues' (1989) study, over 60 university men and women were given a series of vignettes and were asked to indicate the amount of coercion used and their negative or positive feelings toward the incident. Inviting their victim to their house and encouraging drinking were considered among the least coercive tactics and physical force and threatening loss of employment were considered most coercive. Significant gender differences emerged where women perceived an event as more coercive if the victim was male and men perceived higher coercion with a female victim. Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1991) conducted a similar study where college students were asked to rate the acceptability of various sexually coercive incidents. Women in the study were more likely to rate incidents as less acceptable than men, but were more accepting of verbal coercion strategies when the couple already had sexual intercourse.

Although the majority of vignette studies do not examine racial and ethnic differences, one study found did explore interpretations of rape among racially diverse women (Chasteen, 2001). Participants were provided a vignette that described an incident where a woman was vaginally penetrated by her partner while sleeping. Black women in her study more frequently identified the incident as raped compared to White women in the sample (50% vs. 35% respectively), and none of the Black women in the study questioned whether an incident was considered rape or not, compared to nearly one third of White women. Differences in what constituted rape were also found. Some women believed rape happened only if the woman fought back, whereas others believed any nonconsensual sexual experience was considered rape.

These studies show consistent gender differences in the perceptions of sexual coercion; women were more likely to perceive an incident as coercive. Also, verbal pressure was considered less coercive than physical force. Chasteen's (2001) research highlights racial differences in ways Black and White women perceive rape, which suggests there may be racial differences in perceptions of sexual coercion. These findings provide important beginnings to examining student perceptions of coercion and strengthen the need for qualitative research to continue to explore an array of sexual experiences that may not be captured in vignette methodology. The existing literature utilizes predominantly White samples; as a result, little is known about the sexual coercion perceptions of racial and ethnic minorities broadly and even less on Black adolescent girls and women.

**Previous history and perceptions of sexual coercion.** Not only are cultural and development variables related to sexual coercion experiences and perceptions, but previous history of coercion impacts the way it is defined as well. Personal history with sexual assault likely influences the ways people define sexual coercion. Chasteen (2001) found that women's

perception of rape varied on a number of sociodemographic variables, including race as described above, as well as the woman's rape history. Women who experienced rape were more likely to consider that the vignette constituted rape compared to women with no rape histories. Women who were not raped were more likely to deny the woman in the vignette was a victim of rape. Rape scripts have also been explored in relation to previous sexual assault history. Bondurant (2001) and Kahn and colleagues (1994) found that rape survivors were more likely to use a rape script with less violence in them. Comparatively, non-acknowledged rape survivors were more likely to use violent rape scripts, which are more stereotypical and consistent with common rape myths. From the findings on rape, we can infer that one's experience with sexual coercion broadly may influence the way women conceptualize sexual coercion.

### **Conclusion, Rationale, Design, and Purpose**

The ways that girls and women understand sexual coercion varies by a number of factors including developmental level, race and culture, and sexual assault history. Sexual coercion has been situated within a White women's framework, leaving the experiences of Black girls and women minimized. Findings indicate that racial oppression and cultural beliefs impact Black women's understandings for why they are sexually victimized, their definitions of rape, and their response to their victimization. Developmental contexts also matter as research suggests that the context of sexual coercion varies across high school and college environments. High school girls are at risk for exploitation due to sexual immaturity and complex social expectations of adolescence. College women experience unique cultural expectations on college campuses including expectations related to alcohol consumption, Greek systems, and sexual expression. Important gains have been made in broadening the populations sampled in sexual coercion

research and have begun to explore the breadth of sexual coercion definitions. However our understanding of adolescent sexual coercion remains limited, with the voices of Black girls and women left relatively absent from existing research.

**Conceptual approach and research design.** This study adopts a social constructionist conceptual framework to explore intersecting cultural contexts and constructed realities. To employ this framework, a blended mixed methods research design was used. Social constructionism focuses on how meaning is negotiated and how culture influences knowledge. As Gergen (1985) argued, “The terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people” (p. 267). Social constructionism does not adopt an objective view of reality with only one truth, but instead sees reality as unique to the cultural context and individual (Bohan, 1993). Particularly, a universal definition of a construct such as sexual coercion does not exist. In this study, I adopt a social constructionist perspective to better capture girls and women’s voices and to explore the role of race and adolescent development on understandings of sexual coercion. Taking a social constructionist approach to understanding sexual coercion recognizes the diversity within experiences, as opposed to universalizing all sexually coercive experiences of women as the same.

To better understand the breadth of sexual coercion, Muehlenhard and Kimes (1999) called for a social constructivist perspective that is less interested in objective realities and more concerned with the complexity of meaning and context that cultural dynamics play in subjective realities. Meanings given to a phenomenon are complex and too often “depend on who gets to define them; thus definitions reflect the interests of people in power” (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999, p. 234). With respect to sexual coercion, the way in which the term is typically defined prioritizes certain acts of violence and minimizes others (Muehlenhard & Kimes). For example,



in addition to prevalence rates, understanding ways that gender and racial experiences inform the context of sexual coercion across social identities is equally if not more important than knowing how many people experience sexual coercion. Expanding definitions to include perceptions and experiences attempts to create change and begins to question what is deemed as coercive and what are considered serious experiences worthy of exploration (Kelly & Radford, 1998).

**Research design.** To employ a social constructionist approach into my exploration of adolescent definitions and conceptualizations of sexual coercion, I used a *blended* mixed-method design (Greene 2007), where data are collected concurrently and results from the focus group discussions will be used to enhance and potentially challenge results from the open-ended data. My main purpose for mixing is for *complementarity*, which seeks elaboration and enhancement from one method to the next for richer understanding (Greene, Caracelli, & Garaham, 1989). In this study, quantitative and open-ended survey data were analyzed and integrated with focus group discussions for a more enriched understanding of how sexual coercion is conceptualized among diverse adolescents.

Mixed-methods research is growing in the area of social science and its benefits have been widely discussed (e.g., Greene et al., 1989; Teddlie & Tashakkorie, 2003). In counseling psychology, quantitative research has dominated the field and scholars have recently begun to call for greater use and appreciation for both qualitative and mixed methods research (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005; Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). In particular, mixed-methods research is being increasingly favored for the various strengths it provides to inquiry. Mixed-methods research helps to answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative data alone. It also provides a more comprehensive study and understanding of a given phenomenon by providing strengths to offset some of the

weaknesses inherent in primarily quantitative or qualitative designs. Furthermore it encourages the use of multiple worldviews, research paradigms, and methods to address a research problem (Reichardt & Cook, 1979).

Mixed-methods research encourages the use of qualitative methods and recognizes its strengths in a field heavily reliant on quantitative methodologies. Qualitative research in mixed-methods studies strengthens our knowledge base of adolescent sexual coercion. Qualitative research designs are particularly appropriate when little is known about variables being examined, such as with neglected populations in the literature (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1992). Focus groups specifically are a useful qualitative data collection procedure for their ability to explore the lived experiences and perceptions individual while also capturing the interaction between individuals within a group setting, an aspect that individual interviews do not provide (Morgan, 1997). Focus groups allow for peer discussion to better tap into similarities and differences both within and between groups, offering a broader understanding of perceptions than individual one-on-one interviews alone. This methodology also allows for exploration of the topic within pre-existing social groups, where connections and relations have already been formed and interactions, disagreements, and confirmations, can be observed. Wilkinson (1998) discussed the beneficial use of focus groups in feminist research and Madriz (2000) highlighted its use specifically for women of color for the naturalistic quality, use of social contexts, and shifting the balance of power by reducing the researcher's influence. By using this contextualized methodology, I was able to have discussions about ways that sexual coercion takes place in participants' high schools and colleges while in their natural environments.

Survey data were also analyzed to determine how sexual coercion definitions relate to demographic variables and sexual coercion experiences. Participants provided their own written

understandings of sexual coercion, consent, and pressure that were coded for themes and statistical analysis. The quantitative data and statistical analyses in this study were used to examine the broad classification of sexual coercion definitions across multiple social identities and exploring the predictability of sexual coercion experiences on sexual coercion definitions. This method allows for greater generalizability to show patterns across groups, it reduces information from large samples, and provides summaries valued in policy for prevention and intervention support.

**Rationale.** The existing research on sexual coercion among adolescents provides important findings on the prevalence of sexual coercion among college students and, to a lesser extent, high school students. The literature examining psychological outcomes related to various types of sexually coercive experiences is also growing. This knowledge base has been achieved primarily using preexisting definitions of sexual coercion which are narrow in scope, focusing primarily on rape or attempted rape, and are crafted from adult experiences. Such narrow definitions limit our understanding of adolescent sexual coercion by imposing preconceived notions that may not fully encompass the lived realities of racially diverse adolescents. Moreover, the perspectives of youth of color are nearly omitted from existing research on sexual coercion. The overreliance on White samples creates a white normative understanding where alternative perspectives and experiences are rarely heard. Allowing diverse perspectives of adolescent sexual coercion experiences is necessary to give voice to marginalized communities while informing effective culturally and developmentally appropriate responses to sexual coercion. Using a contextual analysis to include the experiences of Black and White high school students targets an area of developmental significance when dating starts and the possibility for sexual coercion begins. Furthermore, including a contextual analysis of Black and White college

students furthers our understanding of racial influences on sexual coercion while comparing developmental progression between high school and college.

**Purpose and research questions.** The purpose of this study is to address the gaps in the literature by examining the ways that Black and White adolescent girls and women conceptualize sexual coercion. I am particularly interested in understanding the potential influence that social identity has on these conceptualizations. Using a social constructivist framework and a complementarity (Greene, 2007) mixed method design, I will explore how Black and White adolescent girls and women conceptualize sexual coercion and how their developmental context (i.e., high school vs. college) and race influence their understandings of sexual coercion. Two research questions are specifically explored:

1. What are the range and boundaries of sexual coercion conceptualizations among Black and White adolescent girls and women?
2. Do cultural dynamics (i.e., race, developmental level) and sexual coercion experiences matter in the way adolescent girls and women conceptualize sexual coercion? If so in what ways?

## Chapter III

### Method

#### Survey Study

**Survey participants.** Data for the present study were collected as part of a larger study about sexual coercion and psychosocial adjustment. A total of two hundred and fifty-six participants were recruited from three different schools. Data were collected from two Midwestern high schools ( $n = 62$ ; 24%), including a primary high school from a rural town ( $n = 28$ ) and a magnet high school in a large metropolitan city ( $n = 34$ ), and from a large public Midwestern university ( $n = 194$ ; 76%). Participants ranged in age from 14 to 22 years ( $M = 18.3$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ ) with 89% age 19 or younger. The sample consisted of 127 (50%) Black participants ( $n = 26$  high school,  $n = 101$  college) and 129 White participants ( $n = 36$  high school,  $n = 93$  college). The break down in grade is as follows: 9<sup>th</sup> grade  $n = 8$  (3%), 10<sup>th</sup> grade  $n = 13$  (5%), 11<sup>th</sup> grade  $n = 1$  (.4%), 12<sup>th</sup> grade  $n = 39$  (15%), and college first year  $n = 71$  (28%), second year  $n = 106$  (41%), third year  $n = 7$ , (3%), fourth year  $n = 10$  (4%); missing value:  $n = 2$ . The mean grade point average (GPA) for high school students was  $M = 3.83$  ( $SD = 0.39$ ) and college students was  $M = 3.22$  ( $SD = 0.49$ ). Significant racial differences were found for GPA (Black:  $M = 3.18$ , White:  $M = 3.51$ ;  $t = -4.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Information on social class indicators was collected by parental education level and financial assistance. Fifty percent of participant's fathers were at least college graduates; 45% of mothers had this level of education. Significant racial differences for fathers education level were found: (Black college graduates: fathers = 40%, mothers = 43.2%; White: fathers = 60%, mothers = 48%;  $t = -2.66$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No significant educational differences were found (high

school: fathers = 38%, mothers = 44%; college: fathers = 54%, mothers = 46%). Sixty percent of participants qualified for financial assistance (i.e., high school: free or reduced lunch, college: need-based financial aid). Significant racial differences were found for financial assistance (Black 82%, White 38%;  $t = 7.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and educational differences (college 65%, high school 40%;  $t = -3.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### **Measures.**

***Sexual coercion definitions: Open ended data.*** To assess participants' definitions of sexual coercion, participants were asked to answer three open-ended questions: "Using your own words, what do you think sexual coercion is?", "Using your own words, how would you describe consensual sexual activity?", and "Is it ever alright to pressure someone to have sex? Please explain your answer".

***Sexual coercion experiences.*** To assess participants' experience with sexually coercive incidents, a significantly modified version of the Sexual Coercion Inventory (SCI; Waldner, Vaden-Goad, & Sikka, 1999) was administered to participants. The revised SCI is a 17-item instrument that assesses various methods of sexually coercive tactics including the use of alcohol and/or drugs (e.g., "My partner encouraged me to drink alcohol and then took advantage of me), the use of verbal pressure and threats (e.g., "My partner threatened to stop seeing me"), and the threat or use of physical force (e.g., "My partner threatened to use or did use a weapon"), as a means to have unwanted sexual activity. Participants were asked whether or not they experienced 17 different types of incidents. Because the type and severity of sexual coercion experience was not the focus of this study, the SCI was modified to create a dichotomous variable. Participants were coded as a "1" if they endorsed experiencing any sexually coercive incident; participants who did not experience sexual coercion were coded as "0".

**Procedures.** Human subjects' approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board Human Subject approval prior to data collection. Data for the present study were collected as part of a larger investigation examining the relation between sexual coercion and various attitudes and psychosocial and behavioral outcomes. Several procedures were used for data collection. University students were recruited from three different sources. Invitations to participate in the study were sent via email to all sophomore students at the University who then completed the survey in an internet electronic format at their own convenience ( $n = 49$ ). Students were also recruited from an African American studies course and completed the survey in paper-and-pencil format in a classroom setting ( $n = 82$ ). Finally, participants were recruited through an Educational Psychology subject pool and completed the paper-and-pencil survey on their own time, returning the completed survey to researchers one to two weeks later ( $n = 63$ ). Surveys were distributed to students at the beginning of their Educational Psychology course by the principal investigator and returned to their counseling psychology instructor in an enclosed envelope. Participants who completed the survey online were not asked to describe consensual sexual activity in their open-ended response because this question was added to the survey after the online format closed. Participants 18 years of age or older provided written consent. Parental consent and youth assent to participate in the survey were provided for participants under 18 years of age. All high school participants completed a paper-and-pencil survey within their school classrooms during regular school hours. Investigators remained present during data collection for all high school participants in case questions or concerns arose. Participants completing paper-and-pencil surveys were provided with opaque sheets of paper to cover their answers for greater anonymity and a resource list with informational websites, books, and local victim advocate agencies were provided at the completion of the survey.

Remuneration was provided to participants, high school teachers, and high school sites. All high school participants received a gift certificate for a local store in the amount of \$5.00 immediately following survey completion. University participants recruited through email had the option to receive a \$5.00 check mailed to their home or a \$5.00 gift certificate. These participants were instructed to email the researcher with their remuneration preference and address upon completion of the survey. University participants recruited through college courses received either course credit for the educational psychology course, or a drawing for two students to win a \$50 check for the African American introductory course. Finally, both participating high schools were given \$250 and teachers who allowed for recruitment from their classes received gift certificates in the amount of \$20. Preliminary findings were provided to each high school and the principal investigator offered to present the final findings to teachers and/or students.

### **Focus Group Study**

**Participants.** Focus group participants were recruited through samples of convenience from various classrooms at the same high schools and university where survey data were collected. The rural high school focus group consisted of four sophomores (2 Black biracial and 2 White girls); the urban high school focus group had 15 Black juniors and seniors. The university focus groups consisted of six women (3 Black and 3 White women) ranging from freshmen to seniors.

**Researchers.** I am a biracial Black American woman who has also conducted research examining sexual coercion among racially diverse adolescents. I am actively involved in sexual coercion awareness raising and prevention, particularly among women and men of color, and



have worked closely with university and community organizations. I currently co-lead a therapy group for women survivors of relational violence and work with individual survivors of sexual trauma in a therapeutic capacity. Finally, my identification as a sexual coercion survivor provides additional insight and sensitivity into this work. As feminist researcher Michelle Fine (1994) discussed, we do not merely give voice to the work we do, we select, edit, and decide how to present aspects of voice to present our arguments, and always bring ourselves into the work.

I engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process. I worked through my own personal reactions as I journaled my feelings of frustrations, curiosity, and excitement; consulted with trusted colleagues. I spent time considering the lens I bring to this work and the results I found in this study specifically. I did this in a number of ways. During data collection and focus group facilitation, I worked hard to give participants freedom to name sexual coercion as they saw it, asking clarifying questions but being cognizant not to influence their discussion with my own interpretations or reactions. When re-listening to the recordings and reading the transcriptions, I recorded my reactions to things they were saying, questions I had, and emotional reactions as they arose. This helped me become aware of my own biases and interpretations of participants words. When going through the coding process and identifying themes, I consulted with a number of colleagues to talk through my reactions. By doing this, I heard multiple perspectives and was able to process my responses separately from the words of the participants, so that the results could stay as true to the data as possible, being mindful not to omit or slant portions of the discussion given my own biases and assumptions. This process challenged and changed my own perceptions of what constitutes sexual coercion and ways that girls perceive the source and where they place responsibility.

The research team for this investigation consisted of seven racially/ethnically diverse women and men including: five African American women (a counseling psychology doctoral student and the primary researcher of this project, a full professor in counseling psychology who serves as the chair of this dissertation and principal investigator for the project, a counseling psychology doctoral student who served on the peer debriefing team, and two undergraduate psychology majors interested in race and sexual violence); two White women (both undergraduate psychology majors who served as research assistants and one of whom cofacilitated the university women's focus group), a Mexican-American woman (who served on the peer debriefing team and is an experienced qualitative researcher in rape and Latina women); and a White man (a doctoral student and assistant director of Women's Programs who served on the peer debriefing team and was actively involved in psychoeducation and prevention of male violence against women). All of the researchers have a commitment to social justice and a specific interest in intersections between race and gender.

**Interview protocol.** An interview protocol was developed to guide the focus group discussions (see Appendix E). The interview protocol was grounded in extant literature on adolescent sexual experiences and consisted of seven broad questions to guide the discussion. The questions were carefully constructed to assess participants' understanding and perception of sexual coercion, without asking about their own personal experiences with sexual coercion. Sample questions included: "What do you think of when you hear the term sexual coercion?," "Are there different tactics or methods that boys and girls use to pressure someone to have sex or engage in sex acts?," "Do you think that race or ethnicity has anything to do with people's experiences with sexual coercion?," and "Do you think sexual coercion is a problem at your school?"

**Data quality.** I took steps to ensure data quality during data collection and analysis (i.e., credibility, transferability, and dependability; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). My experience in the sexual coercion area and in group dialogue facilitation helped to establish rapport more easily and to enhance communication between facilitators and participants, contributing to the credibility of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morrow, 2005). In addition, facilitators were chosen who met the social identity of the focus group participants and had experience and comfort in working with African American and White adolescents and young adults to increase the comfort of participants and community collateral of facilitators. During the focus groups, facilitators asked participants to elaborate on their statements, summarized their statements verbally, and asked for feedback to establish mutual understandings (see Morrow, 2005). At the conclusion of the focus groups, informants were given the opportunity to reflect on the topics discussed and add additional information they considered important that had not been discussed prior. During data analysis, I conducted peer debriefing sessions with researchers in sexual assault and/or Black women's issues who are also familiar with qualitative data analysis. This forum served to hold the researcher accountable by clarifying that the themes identified from the focus groups are an accurate representation of the data.

**Procedures.** Focus group procedures and protocol followed recommendations by Krueger (1994). Three focus groups were conducted, two with high school girls and one with university women. The focus groups lasted approximately 90 minutes; all focus groups were conducted in classroom settings and were audio taped for transcription purposes. Focus group members were asked to identify a pseudonym to use this pseudonym prior to speaking for the first couple of times so that their voice can be identified on the transcription. An icebreaker was conducted and light refreshments were provided to create an informal and comfortable

atmosphere. Participants under 18 years of age were required to provide active parental consent for participation as well as youth assent at the time of the focus group discussion in order to participate. High school students 18 years of age or older were allowed to participate if they provided written consent. All university participants were required to be 18 years of age or older and provided written informed consent to participate. Consent and assent forms informed parents, guardians, and participants of the nature of the study, their right to withdrawal participation at any time without penalty, and provided the investigators university affiliation and contact information. Participants received a \$10.00 gift certificate for a local store immediately following the discussion.

The principal investigator served as the primary facilitator for all focus groups and was assisted with one co-facilitator who was either a Black woman psychology professor or a White woman undergraduate student, both with facilitation experience and research interests in women's issues. Focus groups were purposefully conducted by women facilitators with similar racial identities as participants to help create a safe environment for participants to feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues related to sexual activity and sexual coercion. Facilitators were trained in focus group facilitation. Training consisted of orienting facilitators to the purpose and focus of the study and the goal of the focus groups (see Appendix E). Specific training on group dialogue was provided, emphasizing respect for participants, active listening, and observing group dynamics. Assistant co-facilitators were instructed to take process notes to keep record of main themes throughout the group discussion, gather information about group interactions, seating arrangements, and nonverbal communication. Co-facilitators also provided a summary of the main points of discussion for participant approval, clarification, and correction as needed. Survey data were collected by the principal investigator of the project.

## **Data Analyses Plan**

To answer each of the research questions guiding this study, a series of quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. I organize the data analysis plan by research question, beginning with analytical strategies for the survey data and then presenting focus group data (see figure 1).

### **Research question 1.**

*Survey data.* To answer the first research question: *What are the range and boundaries of adolescent conceptualizations of sexual coercion*, open-ended questionnaire responses assessing participants' perceptions and definitions of sexual coercion, consensual sex, and acceptable pressure for sex, were coded for quantitative analysis. Using a *data transformation* method of mixed method analysis (Caracelli & Greene, 1993), open-ended responses to each of the three questions were numerically coded by carefully extrapolating themes that emerge within and between responses. Codes were identified by reading and re-reading the data to identify common themes across responses for categorization. Themes were initially identified by the author and a team of two African American undergraduate women interested in sexual violence. I then consulted with a research lab, comprised of undergraduate and graduate students interested in research related to race/ethnicity and my dissertation advisor, to clarify themes and create broad codes for parsimonious categorization. Numerous diverse categories and rich patterns in the open-ended responses were identified initially. However data were reduced purposefully to be better able to explore differences in definitions between race, grade level, and sexual coercion history. Data were then independently coded by two undergraduate researchers to ensure reliability and consistency in coding across analyses.

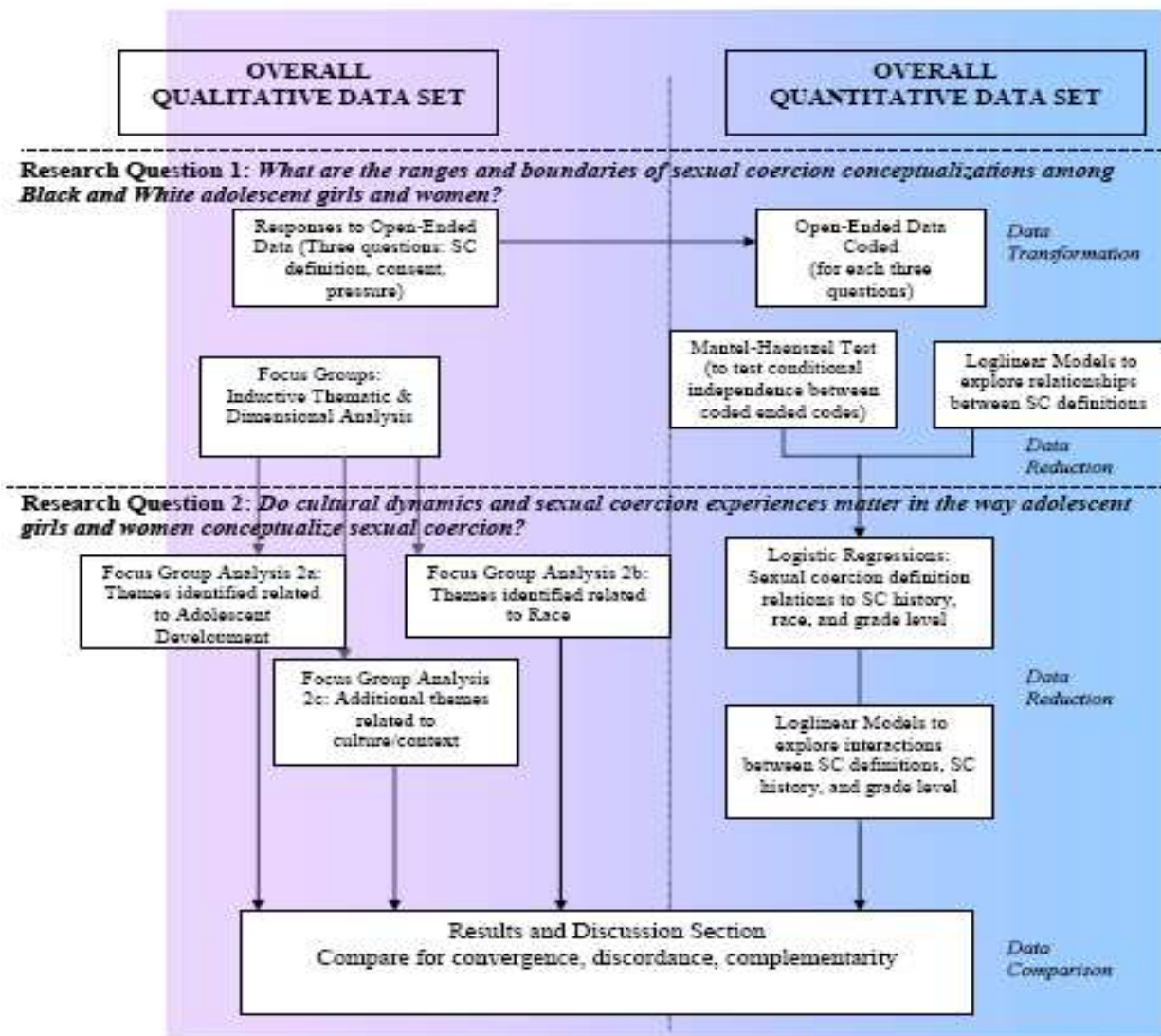


Figure 1: Mixed Methods Data Analysis Plan (adapted from Li, Marquart, & Zercher, 2000).

The coding analysis for the first open-ended question (i.e., *Using your own words, what do you think sexual coercion is?*) resulted in three thematic codes (i.e., force, verbal, alternative; these codes will be described in greater detail in the results section). To explore the relationships between these coded responses, I conducted a test of conditional independence. The Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel (CMH) test is used when researchers want to explore two groups while adjusting for a third control variable (Agresti, 2007). For the current study, this test allowed me to examine how two of the coded responses related to each other when controlling for the third. Low  $p$  values for CMH statistics and odds ratio farther from 1 indicate significant association between variables.

***Focus group data.*** Focus group data were transcribed initially by two White women undergraduate research assistants and checked for accuracy by the principal investigator and two Black women undergraduate research assistants. To ensure the accuracy of transcriptions, transcribers were trained in transcription quality, following guidelines by Polland (2002). Specifically, they were instructed to stay true to the words of participants, regardless of grammatical errors, repetitive words, stutters, etc. Transcribers were asked to pay careful attention to intonation and punctuation, indicating when words were inaudible, and noting process comments in the margins. A total of 219 pages of text was generated for the focus group transcriptions (rural high school = pp. 70, urban high school = pp. 83, Midwest university = pp. 66).

Focus group data were analyzed primarily thematic analysis (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & McCormack-Steinmetz, 1997) while incorporating analytical techniques from dimensional analysis that provides a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I specifically followed guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) on

conducting thematic analysis in psychology research. Boyatzis (2000) characterizes thematic analysis as a tool to use across different methods. I used thematic analysis from an inductive approach where themes identified were linked to the data themselves, rather than fitting within a preexisting theme. The first step of thematic analysis is to *familiarize myself with the data*. I did this by re-reading the transcripts and re-listening to the audio recordings, while taking note of initial ideas, assumptions, and reactions. From there, I engaged in the second step of thematic analysis, *generating initial codes*. During this phase, I conducted open-coding analyses by initially examining the data word-for-word and line-by-line to create summaries for each line of transcription and broader concepts within each page of transcription. *Open coding* refers to a process where data are named and categorized into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This created several initial codes that provided a list of ideas about what the data are saying.

After this process was completed for the entire text, I began the third phase of thematic analysis, *searching for themes*. During this process, I sorted codes into potential themes, considering how different codes connect to an overarching theme. Codes were further complicated by exploring its dimensions and attributes, specifically asking what the categories represented, how they related similarly or differently to other concepts, and under what context the concept occurred for participants. This follows dimensional analysis' *axial coding* process where categories and subcategories were created by exploring various dimensions, contexts, and consequences of a given concept. To help make sense of the relationships between codes and themes I created visual representations through conceptual mappings of the initial data codes, where symbols were located and sized to represent their significance and relationships. From here, I turned to the fourth phase, *reviewing themes*. I repeatedly explored visual representations



and turned back to the data to identify new and/or revise existing themes. Through this process, I looked for coherent patterns and saliency of a theme within the discussion. A constant comparison process occurred where I explored ways that themes and subthemes related to each other and represented unique, or similar, phenomenon. To help make sense of initial and subsequent themes and subthemes, I turned to research lab participants who served as peer debriefing teams. This consultation proved valuable in talking through my initial conceptualizations and refining themes to group data that were connected and eliminate themes and subthemes that were not salient or had enough data to support them.

In the final stage, themes were *defined and named*. I remained diligent in sticking to the data during this process, defining a theme by describing the essence of its purpose as participants discussed them while being careful not to infer additional meaning to their words. I worked to write a story of the theme when defining it, characterizing themes by what it consists of and what it excludes. In identifying names for the themes, I tried to use direct quotes from participants to stay connected to the data themselves and keep participant voices in the forefront.

### **Research question 2.**

**Survey data.** To answer the second research question: *Do cultural dynamics and sexual coercion experiences matter in the way adolescent girls and women conceptualize sexual coercion* with coded survey responses, two types of statistical analyses were conducted: logistic regressions and loglinear modeling. All statistical analyses were run using SAS statistical software. Because of missing data for the *Describe consensual sex* responses and low variability in the *Is it acceptable to pressure sex* responses, only one open-ended question was included in the statistical analyses: *Using your own words, what do you think sexual coercion is*. Logistic regression is typically used when the goal is to describe differences of group membership into

categories of dichotomous response variable (Agresti, 2007). Each of the three dichotomously coded responses for this question (i.e., force, verbal, alternative) were treated as a response variable in separate regression models. Race, grade level, and sexual coercion history were entered simultaneously into the model as the predictor variables. I conducted exploratory analysis with the  $k > 2$  predictor variable grade level (i.e., grade level) by analyzing as both a nominal variable and as an ordinal variable to explore potential differences in variable ordering. Wald statistics, likelihood ratios, odds ratios, and 95% confidence intervals were examined to explore the effects of individual predictor variables.

Given the high association between coded variables, loglinear models were conducted in exploratory analyses for a more complex and potentially informative statistical analysis. Contingency tables are used to explore the association between categorical variables (Agresti, 2009). Contingency tables were formed to detect higher order interactions and allow for concurrent examination of pairwise interactions between predictor and response variables. A series of hierarchical loglinear models were created that explored various combinations of associations between variables, based on relationships hypothesized from existing research. Models were selected using a backwards elimination strategy and examined for goodness of fit. To determine whether a given model was a good fit of the data, several tests were conducted including chi-square statistics, adjusted residuals, Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC), and confidence intervals for odds ratios. If the likelihood chi-square ratio was *not* significant, then the model was a good representation of the data. However, with small samples, this test is not always accurate. Thus, small adjusted residuals (less than 2; Agresti, 2007) also indicate a good model for the data. If more than one model fit the data, the *least* complex model with the smallest number of interactions was selected. When choosing between models, I computed BIC

statistics, looking for the smallest values. Once a model was selected, I explored odds ratios between interaction and main effects variables; narrow 95% confidence intervals indicate greater accuracy in findings; as well as statistical significance of the odds ratios.

***Focus group data.*** To answer this second research question from focus group data, I examined themes and subthemes created from the thematic analyses described above. Specifically, I looked for themes that related to concepts of race and age or adolescent development. Focus group themes that explored the influence of other cultural contexts were also selected and analyzed to answer this second research question.

**Mixed methods analyses.** In the final step of data analysis, results from the quantitative findings were compared and contrasted with results from the qualitative focus group analyses. In this process, I looked for ways that the two data sets compliment and contradict each other in relation to each research question. Identified open-ended codes were compared to focus group themes to understand how participants defined and conceptualized sexual coercion. Culture and context were explored by comparing statistical findings on the associations between race and development on sexual coercion definitions with the themes generated from focus groups that explored race, age, and culture. This process of mixing the analysis occurred within the discussion section where I make sense of the combined qualitative and quantitative findings, and explore ways their differences and similarities contribute to our understanding of adolescent sexual coercion.

## Chapter IV

### Results for Research Question 1

In this chapter, I outline the analyses to answer the first research question: What are the ranges and boundaries of sexual coercion conceptualizations among Black and White girls and women?

#### Survey Study

**Coded categories.** To explore how adolescent girls and women defined sexual coercion, open-ended responses were analyzed for general patterns and coded into broad categories. In Tables 2 – 4 are the name, definitions, and examples, and frequencies for the themes of each question.

**Statistical analyses.** To examine the associations between coded responses, I tested the conditional independence of the variables. Because of the large number of missing data in the consensual sex responses, and the low variability across acceptable pressure responses, statistical analyses were only conducted for the responses to the sexual coercion definition question. To make the data more parsimonious, categories for *sexual lure*, *drug/alcohol*, *peer/social/internal*, and *power abuse* were combined to create one “alternative” category. Each category (i.e., force, manipulation, alternative) was coded as a dichotomous variable (i.e., 1 = yes, 0 = no). Table 5 provides a contingency table of the cross classified definitions.

A Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel (CMH) test was conducted to examine the associations between the three categories, controlling for force (see Table 6). When conditioning on *force*, there was a significant association between *manipulation* and *alternative* categories ( $CMH = 45.82, p < .01$ ; see table 6). When *force* was not included in the definition, the odds of a

Table 2

*Coded Responses for Sexual Coercion Definitions*

Category	Definition	Example	Frequency
Manipulation	The use of pressure, persuasion, guilt, obligation, money, services, or other manipulative means (but not including physical force) to have sexual activity.	“It is strongly encouraging someone to partake in sexual activity by means of guilticizing, threats, force.”	137 (54%)
Force	The use of force to have sexual encounters. Can include the word “force” or descriptions of physical force or violence.	“I think sexual coercion is forcing someone to perform a sexual activity without consent.”	128 (50%)
Sexual Lure	Deliberately enticing someone sexually (e.g., arousal, seducing) into having sexual activity	“Sexually luring someone to do something that they do not agree to do or want to do on their own terms.”	5 (2%)
Drug/Alcohol	Using alcohol or drugs to have sexual activity, either purposefully or taking sexual advantage of an intoxicated person	“When you are not freely giving in to sexual intercourse and the other party uses other means to inhibit one, such as giving drugs or alcohol.”	5 (2%)
Peer/Social/Internal	Pressure from peers or societal expectations about relationships, gender, and/or sexual activity	“When you have sex but you really don’t want to but you did it anyway.”	4 (1.5%)
Power Abuse	Using someone’s position of power, authority, or status to have sexual activity	“Sexual coercion is when someone of a higher authority (e.g., boss, professor) has sex with employee/student in a threatening manner.”	3 (1%)
Don’t know	Respondent does not know what the definition is	“I have no idea.”	15 (6%)

*Note:* Missing data:  $n = 28$ , Rater consistency 82%

Table 3

*Coded Responses for Consensual Sex Definitions*

Category	Definition	Example	Frequency
No Pressure	The definition provided describes being free from pressure or force to have sexual activity	“When the word No or Stop is not involved. It involves mutual touch and play by both partners. Now this could be true at some degree and the person can later resist, so what I mean is that there's no degree of resistance at all.”	29 (11%)
Shared Consent	Explicitly states that partners involved want to have sexual activity, whether by implicit or explicit means. Can also include a verbal declaration or behavioral action of want or desire	“When both partners are in agreement with what sexual activity they want to engage in.”	165 (63%)
Shows Love	When sexual activity happens within an intimate or committed relationship	“Consensual sex is when you've known someone for a comfortable amount of time, and you both want to have sex. You ‘consent’ to have sex.”	5 (2%)
Other	Respondent seems to have misunderstood the question.	“Force sex”	5 (2%)
Don't Know	Response showed uncertainty, didn't know	“Uh...”	5 (2%)

*Note:* Missing data:  $n = 78$ , Rater consistency 83%

Table 4

*Coded Responses for Sexual Pressure Acceptability*

Category	Definition	Example	Frequency
No			
Violation	Response describes pressure as some form of violation to the person (e.g., it is morally wrong, disrespectful, rape, abuse).	“No, there should be consent from both partners otherwise it is rape in any form”	78 (33%)
Individual Choice	Sex is a personal, individual choice that should not be pressured.	“No. Sex is something that a person needs to be ready for and no one should be able to make them do it before they are ready or want to”	82 (35%)
Should Consent	States that sex should happen when it is consensual or wanted by both people	“No because the other person really doesn’t want to have sex, if it does happen one person will enjoy it more than the other”	40 (17%)
Consequences	Pressuring someone for sex leads to emotional, physical, legal, or other types of damage/consequences	“No it is not because someone can have emotional scars that will haunt them for the rest of their life.”	14 (6%)
Have Love	Sex should happen between people who love each other/have emotional intimacy. The word “love” <u>does not</u> have to be used for this category.	“No! When one chooses to do something sexual it’s because they want to because they usually love the other person.	9 (4%)
Just “No”	Only says “No” with no elaboration	“No, never”	
Yes			
Victim’s Responsibility	It is the victim’s, or person being pressured, responsibility to defend themselves from sexual advances	“It is alright to pressure others as long as the other person is strong enough not to give into the pressures and know that they do not have to deal with it if they don’t feel comfortable with the pressure.”	4 (2%)
Exceptions	Respondent gave exceptions for why it might be acceptable to pressure someone to have sex. Can also state “No, but…” or something comparable.	“I feel that the only time someone is not wrong for pressuring their partner into sex is when they are married and one of them wants a kid, they shouldn’t force of course but a little pressure for the sake of having a child wouldn’t hurt.”	3 (2%)
Yes Other	Response is a “Yes” but does not fit into any above category	“Sometimes people inadvertently pressure people and I guess that’s ok but it shouldn’t be purposefully and exclusively done.”	3 (2%)
Don’t Know	Respondent didn’t know		1 (.4%)

*Note:* Missing data:  $n = 23$ , Rater consistency 66%, Rater consistency for general “No”/“Yes” responses: 94%

respondent including manipulation coercion in their definition was 38 times the odds of including alternative coercion in their definition. When  $force = 1$ , there was not statistically significant association between verbal and alternative. The odds ratio was 1.05, showing little significance in the association between endorsing alternative coercion and verbal coercion when force is endorsed. In sum, findings suggest that sexual coercion definitions were not independent of one another. Moreover, when participants considered sexual coercion forceful, they were less likely to define sexual coercion as manipulative or other characteristics. A Breslow-Day test was conducted to test the homogeneity of odds ratios. Results were significant, indicating that there was significant differences between the odds ratios on types of coercion (Breslow-Day  $X^2 = 24.48$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

I also conducted loglinear models of the sexual coercion definitions to further explore the relationships and look for independence between categories. Models were selected using backwards elimination, starting with the most complex interactional model first. None of the loglinear models fit the data (see Table 7). Given the small sample and cell sizes, I also

Table 5

*Cross Classification of Sexual Coercion Definition Categories*

Force	Manipulation	Alternative		Total
		No	Yes	
No	No	9 (26.3)	21 (18.8)	30
	Yes	66 (48.8)	4 (6.3)	70
Yes	No	61 (43.8)	0 (2.3)	61
	Yes	64 (81.3)	3 (0.8)	67
Total		200	28	228

Note: Expected values in parentheses



Table 6

*Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel Statistic for Sexual Coercion Definitions*

Force Definition	CMH Chi-Squared	<i>p</i> value	OR	95% CI for OR
No	44.68	<0 .01	0.03	[0.009, 0.10]
Yes	2.01	0.15	6.62	[0.33, 130.83]

Table 7

*Loglinear Models of Sexual Coercion Definition Categories*

Model	<i>df</i>	$G^2$	$X^2$	<i>p</i> value	<i>Adjusted Residuals Ranges</i>
(FMA)	0	0	0	----	
(FM, FA, MA)	1	18.47	40.32	< .01	-6.34 – 6.34
(FM, FA)	2	49.10	49.08	< .01	-6.80 – 6.80
(FM, VA)	2	61.77	55.62	<.01	-7.45 – 7.45
(MA, FA)	2	40.23	37.98	<.01	-5.28 – 5.28
(F, MA)	3	69.16	57.23	<.01	-6.28 – 6.28
(M, FA)	3	56.49	50.74	<.01	-6.02 – 6.02
(A, FM)	3	78.03	107.91	<.01	-10.3 – 10.3
(F, M, A)	4	85.43	93.79	< .01	-6.97 – 7.38

F = *force* definition, M = *manipulation* definition, A = *alternative* definition

examined the adjusted residuals were examined. All were substantially large (i.e., > 3), also signifying an ill fitting model. Thus, I can conclude that the sexual coercion definition categories were highly related and dependent (e.g., the relationship between alternative and manipulation definitions depends on force definitions).

## Focus Group Study

In this section, I present the focus group results that explore the ranges and boundaries of sexual coercion for high school and college girls and women. I first describe the large meta-theme, *It's a Push!*, overarching all focus group discussions and subsequent subthemes that describes the overall understanding of sexual coercion across these groups. I then describe three broad interrelated subthemes in relation to this research question: *The Relationship IS the Problem*, *Keep Him Strategies*, and *Women Control Relationships*? Within two of the broad subthemes (i.e., *Keep Him Strategies* and *Women Control Relationships*) there are additional categories that further organize the subthemes. Although, I present the themes as independent, discrete themes, it is important to note they are not mutually exclusive, linear representations of participants' experiences. There is considerable overlap within and between themes (see Figure 2).

### Meta-theme: "It's a Push!"

I think it's more of a forced thing because I don't think anybody really wants to until somebody pushes them to say 'Oh come on, it's not that bad' and stuff. And then they do it but then... I don't really think it's more of a like they wanna do it so they tell somebody that they want to do it. I think it's more of a push – Lucky Charms (White, Rural Township High School)

As girls from Central Urban High exclaimed:

*Sasha*: It's around you a lot so it's like, it will draw you in (cuz) your environment is constant, its always there and you start thinking about it and you might find yourself doin' all types of stuff

*B.F.*: So you kind of find yourself going against what you would usually do because everyone else is doing it-kind of thing?

*Sasha*: Yeah, or you could like find yourself turn into something that you're interested in all of a sudden because it's [sex] always in.

*Alexis*: I get what she's tryin' to say that it's around you so much that it feels like it's normal ALL of a sudden

It was difficult for girls to articulate this type of coercion and where it came from, but they noticed themselves doing things or becoming interested in sex without understanding why.

Sexual coercion was also expressed as a direct force that pushed them into sexual behaviors against their will. This type of push was often experienced by boys and men who manipulated, verbally pressured, or physically forced them to have sex. Friends and peers also directly pushed girls to be sexual by pressuring, setting expectations, and participating in competitive contexts with each other.

The theme of being “pushed” is further distinguished into three descriptive subthemes of sexual coercion understandings that emerged from the focus group discussions. The first subtheme of being “pushed” to have sex is *The Relationship IS the Problem*. This subtheme discussed direct sexual coercion strategies and experiences that take place within romantic relationships such as manipulation, guilt, and violence. The subtheme *Keep Him Strategies* referred to the focus and determination girls and women had to obtain and hold on to romantic relationships with boys and men. This seemed to show up in two main ways: *Girls Want Love*, *Boys Want Sex* explored the ways that girls and women felt compelled and pressured to have unwanted sex in order to meet the sexual needs of boys and men for companionship and emotional intimacy in return. *Girls Compete* was the other type of *Keep Him Strategy* that highlights the competitive nature of girl relationships that are centered on the desire to have a

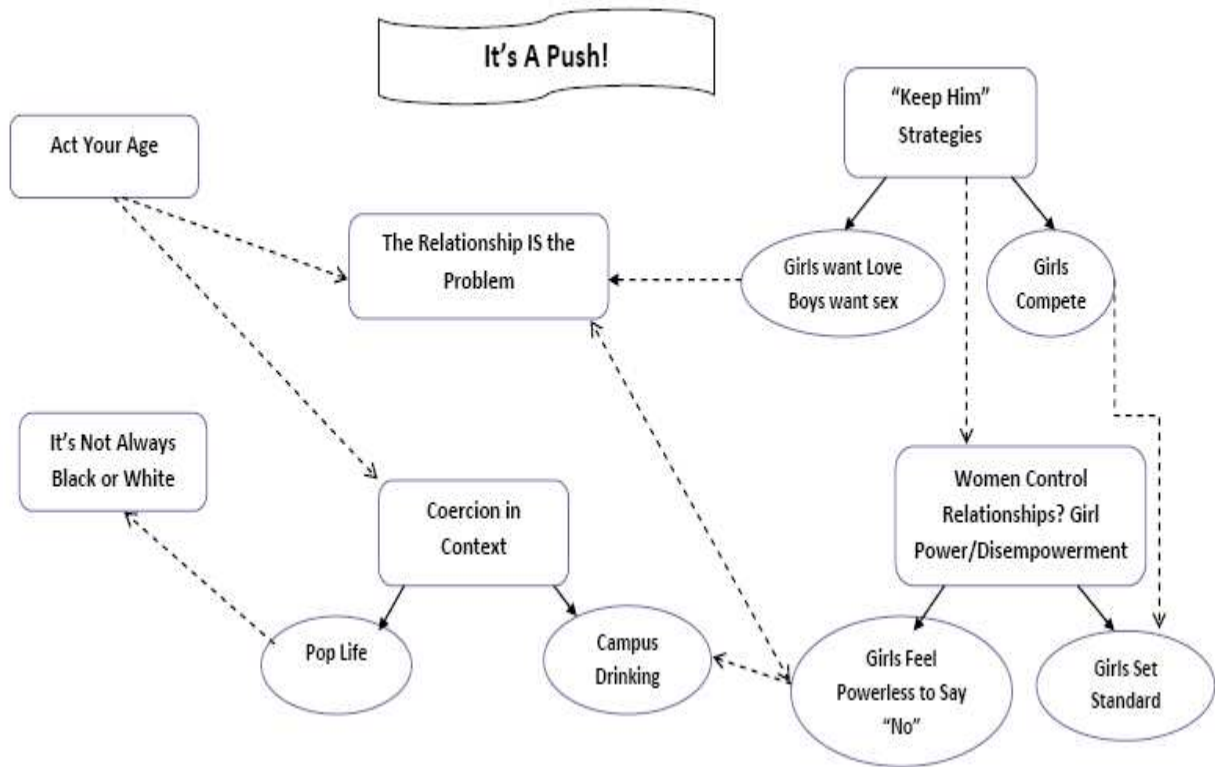


Figure 2. Focus Group Conceptual Map. Rectangles represent meta-theme, rounded rectangles represent subthemes, ovals represent categories within subthemes. Solid lines indicate direct connections between subthemes and categories, dashed lines represent indirect connections between and within subthemes and categories.

boyfriend and push girls to have sex in order to keep up with the sexual behaviors of girls around them. The final subtheme, *Women Control Relationships? Girl Power/Disempowerment* explored ways that girls and women felt responsible and able to prevent sexual coercion from happening, while also uncovering a lack of power they had in romantic relationships. The focuses of this subtheme *Girls Set the Standard* and *Girls Feel Powerless to Say No* describe these dynamics. Below I describe each subtheme and its connection to the range of sexual coercion conceptualizations in detail.

### **The relationship IS the problem.**

Some girls don't even realize that they're in an abusive relationship. Or that the actions that they're doing with their partner, aren't, it's not OK. So some girls don't even recognize that that is a problem. Like their relationship IS the problem to begin with. And they need to get out of it or it's unhealthy. – Claire (Black, University of Midwest)

The Relationship IS the Problem subtheme described the direct coercion strategies that girls and women experienced within casual and committed heterosexual relationships with boys and men. Manipulation, emotional abuse, and physical violence were mentioned as direct strategies that they observed boys and men employ to gain sexual access in relationships. These focus group discussions served as opportunities for girls and women to discuss potentially coercive relationship dynamics. Highlighting and identifying the abuse within relationships provided space for girls and women to discuss an array of sexually coercive techniques.

Manipulation was a commonly discussed form of sexual coercion that all of the groups identified. Participants perceived that boys and men were well aware of the desire among girls and women to have a relationship, and believed they used this knowledge to manipulate sex from their partner. Girls and women identified verbal strategies that boys and men used such as declarations of love as a way to obtain sex. Rainbow and Riku of Rural Township High discussed the dynamic where boys assume that girls will have sex if they say they love them:

*Rainbow:* Or they're just telling you they are in love with you so you'll have sex with them because you know, they know that you think it's right, it's ok for you to have sex with him.

*Riku:* And then if they don't like it or whatever, they're just using it for that time being. They'll probably leave you in the next couple days.

In this exchange, the girls highlighted sex as disposable; they learned that sex needs to be of a certain quality in order for the boy to stick around. College women discussed a similar deceit where love was used as a bargaining tool for sex among their male peers. Claire explained how she perceived men to directly exclaim that sex is expected in loving relationships:

*Claire:* Or it could be like mental though too like if someone is in a relationship like "Oh if you love me or whatever you'd have sex." Or something. So it could just be like a guilt trip, or just kind of a way to threaten a relationship?

Even if the word "love" was not used explicitly, participants noted that boys and men falsely communicated an interest in a committed relationship. Participants expressed ways that guys would pretend to be more interested in a serious commitment to make girls and women more open to having sex. Jane of the University of the Midwest described this dynamic:

*Jane:* I would say it could be even in the beginning stages of a relationship. Like let's say a guy starts dating a girl in order to have sex with her and doesn't really intend for it to be, you know kind of makes it seem more than it is and kind of romances her and does all those nice things for her to make her fall for him and then kind of uses her for sex. I think that is sexual coercion but it's more cowardly... When the girl is planning on how many kids they're going to have and the guy is just kind of working around you know weekend by weekend.

Not only did participants perceive a manipulation of love and relationships to have sex, but they also discussed direct threats males used to manipulate them into having sex. In all three focus groups, participants discussed the threat that a boy or man would leave them if they didn't have sex for another girl or woman who would. As Tracy stated, "He said that he talk(ed) to this girl, because... she would do things for him that I wouldn't do."

The women in the University of Midwest group unpacked the idea of manipulation a bit further. They discussed manipulation as a part of the context of unhealthy relationships, and ways that this emotional manipulation can feed a vicious cycle of abuse. Jennifer described her thoughts on this dynamic in detail.

*Jennifer:* Not realizing that you're in an unhealthy relationship it kind of plays on the whole manipulation factor and the emotional side of things because the reason they don't realize they're in an unhealthy relationship is because that partner has like manipulated them and manipulated them and their emotions and their mind into not realizing that the truth, and their kind of completely like shut out from reality. And, therefore they feel trapped and therefore they feel that there's no real way out and they don't actually realize the extent of their abuse. Whether it's mental, sexual, or physical. And therefore they're kind of trapped in this very manipulative kind of cycle.

For Jennifer, manipulation was considered part of a larger experience of abuse where girls and women are caught in an unhealthy situation without even realizing it. The manipulation that occurs within emotional abuse happens in context of committed relationships and can get to a point where girls and women may have difficulty realizing that the relationship itself is the problem.

Among the young girls in Rural Township High, rumor spreading (i.e., sharing sexual information about girls to peers in school, regardless of its factual accuracy) was identified as another sexually coercive tactic. As girls proclaimed, boys would discuss real or falsified sexual experiences with girls which in turn were perceived to have negative consequences on girls. Girls perceived this as a sexually coercive tactic because it created a dynamic where girls were intimidated not to give into boys' sexual requests yet also created additional pressure from boys when they did give into these requests.

*Rainbow:* You feel like "Well we had sex or whatever, and he's supposed to be with me." And, it seems like when they have sex it really doesn't change the guy but it changes the girl dramatically. Because then they're like labeled as a slut or stuff like that and, it's hard!

*Lucky Charms:* And then like it'll probably get around the guys like after they break up with that girl then they'll go tell their friends or whatever, "Yeah I had sex with her, she she's a freak, she won't, she loves having sex". And then like other guys try to get with you and then they just only use you.

*Rainbow:* And he'll go spread around to his boys and tell 'em everything and they'll be like "What?"

*Bobbi Jo:* You don't really have to have sex for people to spread rumors like that. Like there's other—like giving head or something as in stuff like that. If you give one guy that, then they're going to tell all their friends and then everybody else is going to try to do that with you.

Rumor spreading seemed to be used as a manipulative sexual coercion tactic that gave boys considerable power. As earlier discussions indicated, participants felt directly and indirectly pressured to be sexual with boys and men in order to obtain and maintain their interest. However, there was a looming risk that sex with boys can also have detrimental influences on their peer relationships and self-image, at least for the Rural Township group. A gender double-standard was present.

Not only did girls and women experience manipulative sexual coercive tactics, but also experienced physical intimidation, threats, and violence. Across focus groups, girls and women discussed ways that male size and strength posed a threat to girls and women. Jennifer of the University of Midwest described rape and abuse that can happen within relationships. In a conversation within Rural Township High on older boys, Rainbow identified the potential for violence to be used in sexually coercive situations:

*Rainbow:* She's feeling guilty because she let him touch her. And then like, if it happens again she doesn't want him to touch her and she's like pushing away and stuff like that, he can get really mad or something. And most guys they turn abusive sometimes.

In addition to being physically forceful, sexual coercion was experienced from boys and men as ignoring girls' and women's protests. Some of the girls from Urban Central High discussed a



coercive dynamic where boys ignored the word “no” and kept engaging in sexual behavior even after girls expressed their discontent.

*Desire:* I was talking to [a friend] last night and [asked] what happens if . . . some girl says “no” or whatever. You know I guess mean when they’re kissin you know and stuff like that... He was like “well, when a girl says ‘No’, you just, you just let her say ‘no’ and then you keep on” . . . That’s just what they tell me, because they said it works. And I’m like . . . ok, that’s just great.

*BF:* If there’s been a clear statement that the girl does not wanna continue, and the guy will keep, like, seducing?

*Desire:* Yeah

**Keep him strategies.** Girls and women in each of the three focus groups talked about the longing and desire to be in a committed, heterosexual relationship and the way this influenced their conceptualizations of sexual coercion. The importance placed on having a boyfriend and the desire to keep him as a committed romantic partner resulted in unwanted sexual experiences. Girls and women across groups expressed the belief that in order to keep a boy or man interested, they had to be sexual regardless of whether or not they wanted to. This manifested in pressure within romantic relationships and between other girls. Sexual coercion for them was heavily connected to this “push” to be in a relationship and the unwanted sexual experiences they had as a result. Strategies to keep a boy interested and/or committed showed up in two main ways, which I describe below.

***Girls want love, boys want sex.*** There were a number of concrete behaviors participants identified where they felt social pressure and direct pressure from boys and men to engage in sex. The longing for a committed romantic relationship for girls and women was connected to a sense of emotional intimacy. There was an understanding that boys and men, comparatively, were interested in sex. In order to get this emotional intimacy, girls then believed that they had to provide sexual intimacy. This assumed gender dichotomy where boys want sex and girls want

love was an active force in the ways that sexual dynamics played out. Cassie, from Urban Central High, discussed this dichotomy:

*Cassie:* Girls have that emotional attachment. And guys get more attached, generally, from the physical attachment... so you feel like in order for your relationship to grow that's where pressure comes in making you feel like you need to go farther just, since they're satisfying you emotionally and you satisfy him physically.

In order to receive emotional intimacy and validation, girls and women engaged in sexual behavior in hopes of keeping a boy interested. Dressing sexier and participating in sexual acts were some of the ways girls and women performed sexuality in inauthentic, pressured, and unwanted ways. The following conversation with the girls from Rural Township High illustrates this conflict:

*Rainbow:* Like if you're self conscious and you're like going out with a guy and you feel like you can't do better, then like you'll do the things that he wants you to do 'cause you don't want to lose him?

*BF:* Okay

*Rainbow:* Because you can't get anyone else

*Riku:* Like if you were going out with him and, you told him that you wouldn't have sex with him so he like broke up with you. And then you'll probably start wearing sluttier things and like short skirts and you'll come to school and then make him think that now you'll want to have sex with him to get him back.

*Lucky Charms:* Yeah people think that if... that's the only thing that they want and you really like that person then they think that that's what they have to do to keep that person. Like if he says I want you to have sex with me and she says no and he breaks up with her then she's gonna think that that's the only way I can be with him and I really like him so I'm gonna do it... And that may not be her decision but she wanted to do it just to make him happy

The exchange above highlights the ways in which participants felt pressured to engage in unwanted sexual activities by their boyfriends and by society. They learned that if they did not give in to these pressures, their boyfriend would end the relationship. Some of the participants

noted that caving into these pressures presented challenges to their values and morals. In the below quote, Tracy from Urban Central High talks about the pressure to compromise her values:

*Tracy:* I feel like, sometimes, like for girls it is peer pressured to BE like, Say that like in a relationship with a guy or something, and like, each time you know, you trying to keep him, he's trying to make you, make love to you, and you like "no I'm not ready" you got rules, it's so easy for, like, dudes to be like, "I just so happy that she's goin' (to have sex)"... It's like pressure for that girl, to be like, you know, "maybe I need to step up my game", in a sense? Just because you have values, if you have, you're not gonna do certain things, or whatever, it's pressure for a girl to have to change how SHE thinks.

In addition to feeling pressure to have sex for the first time with their boyfriends, these "keep him" strategies were also discussed within the context committed heterosexual relationships where sex may have already occurred. In this context, sex was seen as a way to keep their partner happy, committed, and to keep the peace. This dimension was primarily expressed by college women. Jane of the University of Midwest discussed how women may feel guilty for not having sex within a committed relationship and then obligated to give her partner "what he needs." Part of "keep him" strategies included engaging in sex to avoid conflict in relationships.

*Jane:* I think that guilt is one of the biggest parts actually in sexual coercion especially in marital relationships... Let's say the person, they're just you know not getting along, their marriage is rough. And then the person will say you know "let's have sex" but then at the same time you're thinking "no I don't feel close to you right now." You know you just when you don't feel close to someone you don't want to have sex with them. And um, and then that other person that kind of give guilt for that... It's just the attitude. And then like I think it can really um tear down somebody who constantly will give in because it gives away your pride. Because it's saying well "I'm not getting what I need but I'm gonna give them what they need."

The risk of not giving into the perceived needs of their boyfriend was great. Girls and women across groups worried that their boyfriend would have sex with someone else. Nicole discussed the fear that their partners would be unfaithful if they didn't have sex, in turn making women feel obligated to have sex regardless of their desire to.

*Nicole:* Some women might also be doing it like because of fear that their, whoever they're with will cheat on them. Like if they can't get it from them then they might get it from someone else and they might look at it that way also.

***Girl competition.*** The pervasive interest in finding and keeping a relationship was common across focus groups and permeated not only girl and women perceptions of boys and men but also how they perceived girl relationships with each other as they fought to keep hold of boys they were interested in. This theme only emerged with the two high school groups. Girls saw competition with other girls as they fought for the attention of boys, to hold on to their boyfriends, and to appear more alluring than other girls. The struggle between girls had direct and indirect influences on the ways participants' described sexual coercion. Participants observed that the competition with other girls was in large part due to rivalry for the romantic interest of boys. As a result, girls often felt placed in positions where they needed to be sexy and sexual to compete with other girls around them. The following conversation from Rural Township High discusses some of the ways participants observed girls competing with one another to get boys interested in them.

*Rainbow:* A lot of people in the school like, if they like your boyfriend, you have to compete with them to KEEP you boyfriend. Because they, they'll go up to your boyfriend and touch him and rub him and, hug him and do this, and flirt with him...

*BF:* Mmhhh. So you feel like you have to stay in the game a little bit, is that..?

*Rainbow:* Yeah, you have to keep up... Like you wanna do it at your own pace and, have your own pace of doing things, but you can't because you have to keep up with everyone.

Riku continued the conversation on competition a little later.

*Riku:* Well, let's say that they broke up. And they've been going out for a really long time and in that time they have had sex more than once. And then the other girl that she's heard about this guy that he's like GOOD at sex or whatever so, she'll try to get with him and she thinks he's cute or whatever. So she heard that they had just broke up so then she'll go over and try to hook up with him and essentially they end up going out. And then the other girl, she misses the guy and she didn't know that the girl was gonna get with her—get with her guy, then she like gets angry. And then all end up fighting over

competition, yeah. Competing to get this guy back, but using sex with it. And then that girl will probably go to that girl's ex-boyfriend and try to, and they just end up, ruining their lives.

For this group, girls felt in direct competition with each other to be liked and wanted by boys. Many of the participants' responded to this type of competition by trying to "one-up" the other girl in a contest for who can be more sexually alluring. This in turn placed girls in positions where they did sexual things not because of a genuine desire but as a means to an end.

### **Women control relationships? Girl power/disempowerment**

What women don't understand is that guys, what they do is for the female. Everything they do is, women control relationships! That's where women don't understand their strengths. – Tracy (Black, Urban Central High)

This subtheme explores the power that girls and women perceived to have and their ability, or lack thereof, to fight the "push" to have sex. For some participants, girls and women felt responsible for the "push", that the reason why they were sexually coerced was because of their behavior or attitudes. This sense of responsibility was disillusioned for other participants who expressed ways they were not able to control their sexual experiences. This *Women Control Relationships* subtheme is comprised into two areas of focus: *Girls Set Standard* and *Girls Feel Powerless to Say No*.

***Girls set the standard.*** Across all groups, participants expressed some level of expectation that girls and women should resist the pressure to have sex and to take responsibility for their experiences. For them, sexual coercion existed or happened because girls created an expectation for sex. This was a central theme within the Urban Central High group. Some very vocal participants demanded a sense of responsibility that other girls should have to resist the pressure to have a boyfriend and the subsequent pressure to have sex. There was a common thread that ran through the focus group discussion that focused on holding girls accountable for

their actions and ways they are perceived to contribute to the sexual coercion that all girls experienced.

*Alexis:* I think with girls, I think girls set the standard too because it's so many girls that, you know, are doin' it [sex]? And then there's when there's the ones that's not doin' it? Then there be like, you know...

*BF:* Surprised?

*Alexis:* Yeah, surprised in that sense. It's like, not pressuring, I feel like if girls set the standard of all girls, you know, learn to, you know, not open their legs like that, then guys won't think like that...

Responsibility was also placed on girls to choose the right boyfriend in order to resist sexual coercion.

*Shay:* I think the reason why we, uh, end up in these situations is because, uh, we always fall for the guys who we know isn't right... Like, you knew from the beginning, before you even started liking this guy, what his intentions were. What his mindset was. But, that just seems to always be the guy you fall for. So then, you get placed in these situations and you have to decide. And you know, hopefully you are strong enough and you do have the sensibility to make the right decision, but then its like, you, you still have to go through that.

The notion that girls and women are and should be sexual gatekeepers influenced girl relationships and contributed to a victim blaming attitude. Similarly, Tracy strongly believed that girls and women had power to control their relationships; if girls would not give in to sexual pressure, then boys would stop pressuring them.

*Tracy:* Well Like, if you in a relationship and you tell a guy "I'm not having sex with you, I'm gonna respect myself" if this guy really wants to be with you, then he's gonna do what you say. He's gonna go off what, what you're saying just because he's not, I mean, just because he's gonna do what he needs to do to prove to you that he really wants to be with you, if you put yourself in the situation, you know shouldn't be there in the first place, now you're, like, in an awkward situation. Or uncomfortable with this person. There are some assumptions that are not explicitly stated in Tracy's quote about self-

respect; one such assumption is that respecting yourself means not engaging in sexual behaviors.

Not engaging in sexual behaviors was seen as a strategy to fend off male sexual pressure. The

meaning behind Tracy's statement is unknown. She could mean that respect means not having sex when you don't want to, and it could also refer to a denial of sexual desires in order to prevent male sexual pressure.

There was a clear split throughout the Urban Central High discussion between girls who were having sex, labeled as "goers" or "hos" (i.e., girls who engaged in sexual activity), and girls who withheld sex or remained a virgin. Because many girls in this discussion believed that they were responsible for preventing sexual coercion, there was a tone of animosity expressed towards girls who were sexually active. From this perspective, girls who had sex, and did not resist the pressure, were blamed for creating a dynamic where boys expected sex and pressured girls for it. Thus, girls who were sexually active were seen negatively as a result. The following exchange highlights the difficulty for sexually active girls to receive support from other girls.

*Beyonce:* If a girl's not a virgin but she realizes somewhere down the line like "Ok, this is not for me" or, you know? Try things like, "this is not worth, it" And like, you could try to be like, you know, you can just find a new, sense of self, for herself? Other females around her won't let her do that. And other males won't let her do that. And, I think, part of it is the fault of the other females because, females are petty. All the time, I mean we all know this. And it's always something that's going to be said by females...

*BF:* Ok, like having a hard time making space for growth or change, development?

*Sasha:* Right, because they won't allow change.

*Beyonce:* They tear each other down

*Raina:* I agree with her

One participant disagreed with this perspective and believed that girls who are sexually active deserve whatever consequences they received.

*Tracy:* Everything you've done, whether it comes out or you kept it to yourself. You created that for yourself. If you was once a ho you can't go and say, "oh I was a ho in my past." No! I mean, like, you a ho, I mean if you was sleeping around with everybody then, everybody's gonna be like "oh she's a changed woman, she's goin' to church." No! That's just not, that's just not the way it is. Um, that's just not the way it is. So,

everything that you do you create for –your- self... Everything that you did, it got out because YOU DID IT... No, whoever you had sex with? That means either you or that person told somebody. So you shoulda been, um, protecting yoself, making sure you did it with the right person.

For this group, girls who were sexually active ran the risk of considerable social consequences in how they were perceived. The label of “Ho” or “Goer” was one that stuck with girls for a long time. Where some girls believed that this negative branding by other girls was unfair and detrimental, others believed it necessary to hold girls accountable for their actions.

***Girls feel powerless to say no.*** Related to the power dynamics of girl- and womanhood in sexual relationships were related to the lack of power they felt. They found it extremely difficult to resist against the sexual “push”. Participants expressed feelings of disempowerment as they struggled to find a voice in relationships with men. For them, part of sexual coercion included the difficulty to refuse sex. The inability to resist sexual coercion proved challenging for all the groups but was spoken about explicitly in the Urban Central High and University of the Midwest groups.

One way this disempowerment was expressed was within the context of committed relationships where sex has already occurred. Participants expressed frustration that women often feel compelled to comply or acquiesce to sexual requests from their partners despite their lack of desire to do so. Women in the University of the Midwest discussion believed that men had the power and autonomy to verbalize when they wanted sex or not, whereas women felt they lacked the ability to do that. For them, men seemed to lack the same sense of obligation that women felt to comply with the sexual needs of their partner. As Jennifer described:

*Jennifer:* Society’s convention is that men always want sex and they have a high sex drive. And therefore, um, generally like speaking to other women, who are either in relationships... If their partner wants sex, then they would never ever even think of turning them down. Even if they weren’t in the mood or like, like they just didn’t really feel like it, or anything was on their mind and they just didn’t really feel like sex. I, from



what I've, kind of experienced, women will never turn down like their partner's sex. This is in a relationship. Whereas um the other way around I've kind of had a lot of frustration and kind of annoyance where the women want sex but then the guy has no problem saying like "no" or being like "no I'm not in the mood." But then the women get kind of frustrated because they would never do that the other way around... They're more assertive with their sexual like prowess like whether they want to. Like they're assertive and they want to have sex, they want to have sex.

Because men are expected to have high sexual appetites, women then felt obligated to comply with their sexual desires to fulfill their needs regardless of her own level of desire. The sexual assertion Jennifer described was expressed for men but not for women. Men, comparatively, were believed to have little difficulty refusing sex when unwanted.

Sexual disempowerment also manifested in a restricted range of sexual experiences. Participating in any sexual act was perceived as a gateway for sexual coercion. The option for girls and women to change their mind in sexual encounters was a privilege that girls and women did not have. For some participants, they felt unable to participate in any sexual behavior for fear that the boy would assume she wanted to have complete intercourse and take it further. Girls and women were expected to withhold from any physical intimacy, with little room for exploration out of fear that the boy would get the wrong idea and pressure or coerce them. The expectation to be clear and unchanging about their sexual wants or desires was discussed among the Urban Central High group.

*Raina:* So its kinda like, if you keep saying "no", the more that you say "I don't do this", like, then once you do it you really don't, show you mean "No", you can't get mad.  
*Sasha:* If you saying "no" but you're still letting him get you in a position where it's just you two and you're both attracted to each other. Why would you put yourself in that position? That's how you really really really feel, then don't be put in that position. You know? Like, um, then you don't wanna go to his house or their house or you know, somewhere in his room or his parents room or somethin.

For these girls, the ability to say "No" and have that honored and respected was not possible once any physical intimacy occurred. Their voice seemed to be lost once they showed any sexual

interest. Furthermore girls and women were expected to place boundaries on their experiences, limiting the level of interaction and closeness in order to prevent sexual coercion from happening. The disempowerment to say “No” was further discussed as participants remarked on the ways they saw boys invalidate and ignore their sexual protests.

*Larissa:* I think the word no has been rendered ineffective by girls that think it’s cute to say, “no, stop”. So when you say it seriously, he gonna take it seriously.

*Alexis:* The shit is crazy. Like the boys even when you say “No”, like they don’t get it! For some reason. Like you have to like really (interrupted by laughter). You have to get away from them!

Saying “No” wasn’t enough, there was a certain way girls and women had to say the word and an accompanying body maneuver that needed to be displayed in order for their “No” to be taken seriously.

Resisting the sexually coercive “push” contributed to interesting power dynamics with girls and women. Across groups, there was a need to find ways to feel in control of their relationships and take responsibility for their actions. It seemed this positioning toward sexual coercion helped girls and women feel more empowered in their sexual experiences. Such that if they could find some way they could change their own behaviors, then they could prevent sexual coercion from happening and resist the “push”. At other times, girls and women felt very disempowered and unable to resist the “push”. Because of societal expectations that men naturally have higher sex drives, and perhaps out of the desire to hold onto relationships as expressed in other themes, women lacked the ability to voice their own dissent and complied with sexual requests. There was also the ineffective use of the word “No” where girls and women’s words of protest were considerably devalued. To express any disinterest was not enough, girls and women learned that they had to be forceful and physically defensive to resist unwanted sex.

## Chapter V

### Results for Research Question 2

In this chapter, I outline the analysis to answer the second research question: Do cultural dynamics and sexual coercion experiences matter in the way adolescent girls and women conceptualize sexual coercion?

#### Survey Study

**Logistic regression.** To test whether cultural dynamics and sexual coercion experiences were related to participant definitions of sexual coercion, I ran three separate logistic regression analyses. Each of the three codes for sexual coercion definitions (i.e., force [yes, no], verbal [yes, no], alternative [yes, no]) were dummy coded and treated as response variables. The predictor variables included grade level (i.e., 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16), race (i.e., Black, White), and sexual coercion experience (yes, no). None of the logistic regression analyses were significant, regardless of nominal or ordinal ordering. Some odds ratios were relatively large, but 95% confidence intervals were exceptionally wide (see Tables 8-10). One odds ratio approached significance. For high school seniors, the odds of including manipulation in their definition was 11 times *less* than the odds of high school freshmen ( $p = 0.0125$ ; 95% CI: 0.01, 0.60).

**Loglinear models.** For further, more complex, analyses of the associations between sexual coercion definitions and predictor variables, I explored various loglinear models using backwards elimination. None of the models fit the data well (see Table 11). Although some of the joint independence and conditional independence models had large  $p$  values, these results

Table 8

*Logistic Regression – Predicting “Force” in Sexual Coercion Definitions*

Variable	Estimate	SE	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	OR	95% CI
Race (Black)	0.23	0.28	0.70	0.40	1.25	[0.73, 2.20]
Race (White) <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 10	0.99	1.04	0.91	0.34	2.69	[0.35, 21.10]
Grade 11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 12	0.61	0.92	0.44	0.51	1.84	[0.30, 11.24]
Grade 13	0.80	0.90	0.79	0.37	2.22	[0.39, 12.93]
Grade 14	0.47	0.88	0.29	0.59	1.59	[0.29, 8.93]
Grade 15	0.44	1.16	0.14	0.71	1.55	[0.16, 15.18]
Grade 16	-1.20	1.30	0.79	0.37	0.30	[0.02, 1.75]
Grade 9 <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0
SCI (No)	-0.03	0.27	0.01	0.92	0.97	[0.56, 1.66]
SCI (Yes) <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: SCI = Sexual Coercion Inventory; <sup>a</sup> Level of comparison

Table 9

*Logistic Regression – Predicting “Manipulation” in Sexual Coercion Definitions*

Variable	Estimate	SE	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	OR	95% CI
Race (Black)	0.11	0.30	0.14	0.71	1.12	[0.48, 0.97]
Race (White) <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 10	-0.13	0.99	0.02	0.90	0.88	[0.13, 6.11]
Grade 11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 12	-2.38	0.95	6.23	0.01	0.09	[0.01, 0.60]
Grade 13	-0.65	0.83	0.61	0.43	0.52	[0.10, 2.66]
Grade 14	-0.48	0.81	0.36	0.54	0.61	[0.62, 3.00]
Grade 15	-0.63	1.11	0.32	0.57	0.53	[0.05, 4.75]
Grade 16	-1.54	1.11	1.91	0.17	0.22	[0.02, 1.89]
Grade 9 <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0
SCI (No)	0.03	0.29	0.01	0.91	1.03	[0.58, 1.82]
SCI (Yes) <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: SCI = Sexual Coercion Inventory; <sup>a</sup> Level of comparison

Table 10

*Logistic Regression – Predicting “Alternative” in Sexual Coercion Definitions*

Variable	Estimate	SE	$\chi^2$	p	OR	95% CI
Race (Black)	-0.26	0.43	0.37	0.54	0.77	[0.32, 1.80]
Race (White) <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 10	0.70	1.18	0.35	0.55	1.99	[-0.20, 20.00]
Grade 11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 12	1.28	1.04	1.52	0.22	3.60	[0.47, 27.60]
Grade 13	1.43	0.99	2.07	0.15	4.18	[0.59, 29.40]
Grade 14	1.28	0.93	1.86	0.17	3.60	[0.57, 22.41]
Grade 15	0.20	1.25	0.03	0.87	1.25	[0.10, 14.14]
Grade 16	1.20	1.36	0.78	0.38	3.32	[0.23, 47.90]
Grade 9 <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0
SCI (No)	0.02	0.42	0	0.97	1.10	[0.45, 2.29]
SCI (Yes) <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: SCI = Sexual Coercion Inventory; <sup>a</sup> Level of comparison

must be interpreted with caution given the small cell sizes. Adjusted residuals can provide better analysis of the data and model fit. These were all large, a good fitting model has adjusted residuals less than or equal to 2 (Agresti, 2007).

**Focus Group Study**

The following three subthemes describe aspects of culture and development that emerged in the focus group discussions; these subthemes are part of the larger meta-theme *It’s A Push!* described in Chapter 4. *Act Your Age* highlighted the ways in which participants perceived coercion occurring among younger girls due to level of maturity and stage of adolescent development. *Not Always Black or White* explored ways that aspects of sexual coercion were

Table 11

*Loglinear Models of Sexual Coercion Definitions and Predictor Variables*

Model	<i>df</i>	$G^2$	BIC ( <i>N</i> = 224)	Adj. Residual
All 3-Way Interactions (GRS, GFM, GFA, GMA, RFM, RFA, RMA, SFM, SMA, SFA)	142	93.91	-674.54	5.24
All 3-way w/o SMA	143	93.92	-679.94	3.28
All 3-way w/o SFA	143	94.94	-678.92	5.10
All 3-way w/o SMF	143	99.82	-674.04	4.29
All 3-way w/o RMA	143	94.04	-679.82	4.56
All 3-way w/o RFA	143	97.27	-676.59	4.69
All 3way w/o RFM	143	94.02	-679.84	4.44
All 3-way w/o GMA	148	103.81	-697.11	7.45
All 3-way w/o GFA	148	102.16	-698.76	5.54
All 3-way w/o GFM	148	98.05	-705.872	3.19
All 2-way and w/ Predictor 3-way (GRS, GF, GM, GA, RF, RM, RA, SF, SM, SA)	169	205.01		
All 2-way w/o SA	170	205.01		
All 2-way w/o SM	170	205.04		
All 2-way w/o SF	170	205.01		
All 2-way w/o RA	170	205.13		
All 2-way w/o RM	170	205.19		
All 2-way w/o RF	170	205.76		
All 2-way w/o GA	175	212.43		
All 2-way w/o GM	175	215.84		
All 2-way w/o GF	175	213.62		
Independence (GRS, FMA)	189	146.38	-876.42	3.42
Joint Independence from SCI (S, RG, FMA)	202	158.14	-935.01	3.98
Joint Independence of Race (R, SR, FMA)	202	164.85	-928.30	5.16
Joint Independence of Grade (G, SR, FMA)	207	173.07	-937.14	5.21

*Note:* G = grade level, R = race, S = Sexual Coercion Inventory (SCI), F = *force* definition, M = *manipulation* definition, A = *alternative* definition; BIC = Bayesian Information Criteria

perceived to differ across racial lines. Finally, *Coercion in Context* discussed specific social contexts that the groups identified in relation to sexual coercion. This subtheme is divided into two focus points, *Pop Life*, a discussion on the media's influence toward sex; and *Campus Drinking*, a reflection on alcohol use and partying as contexts for sexual coercion.

**Act your age.** The Act Your Age subtheme explored ways that age influenced girls and women's experiences with sexual coercion. Each of the groups shared the connections they saw between sexual coercion and adolescent development; however, each focus group reflected on different perspectives. Younger girls discussed the perceptions of older boys' "unique" power to sexually coerce them, whereas older girls shared expectations to have sex because they were seniors in high school.

Participants discussed sexual coercion within the context of adolescent development. Younger adolescents were perceived to be particularly susceptible to sexual coercion, as discussed in two of the focus groups. One participant in the University of Midwest group shared her observations of middle school girls being pressured to have sex.

*Mary:* I think it's also, it also happens with young children... With teenagers or young adults like in grade school, I've seen it happen a lot. Actually it happened when I was in school. It's not even just the peer pressure, it's just the feeling of you have to do it because of what's going on right now. So its not considered like sexual coercion, but it really is because these guys are like playing on these girls' self-esteem, which is very like... sensitive at that point in time. Like 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, you know like freshman year in high school. So they don't understand, because they don't know about themselves they don't understand how, how important that sexual act is to that person, that female's self esteem at the time... And it's getting like younger and younger. They don't consider it rape and things like that but, you know they have the little get togethers at houses and stuff like that when parents are gone. And they just make girls feel as though this is something you should be doing. Because you know you're either physically developed or, you know, this is the time to be doin' it. So... it happens then too. It's just the title that we give it.

Mary articulated ways that younger teen girls are vulnerable to sexual coercion. From this perspective, the combination of identity development and lowered self-esteem were believed to



make it easier for boys to manipulate girls during this time. From this perspective, sexual development and body shape also played a roll in her understanding of why girls are sexually coerced at this age.

Younger teen girls in the Rural Township High group highlighted their own experiences and observations of manipulative sexual coercive tactics from older boys. For these girls, relationship dynamics between freshmen girls and senior boys often included abusive and coerced sexual experiences. Because senior boys were more mature and experienced, girls who dated them ended up feeling manipulated to have sex. Rainbow and Lucky Charms reflected on ways they saw or personally experienced sexual coercion in this context.

*Rainbow:* Like you're dating people that's like, a year older than you or two years older than you and, it's really hard because they're more experienced than you are. And if a freshman were to date a senior, they can... not saying that they're naïve or whatever, but they can be manipulated into doing a LOT of different things. Because they're, they don't know the high school atmosphere just yet.

*Lucky Charms:* Last year I was a freshman and I dated a senior because I really, really liked him. And he tried to force me to do things. And I wouldn't do it with him. So he told a lot of people different stuff and it wasn't true. But they listened to him because he's a senior, I'm a freshman "What did" like, they pretty much thought "What did she know" and, he pretty much made it crap for me at that school that I went to. So, I learned that lesson not to go for older guys.

In these examples, freshmen girls were particularly vulnerable to sexual coercion from senior boys. Given their lack of dating experience and the newness of high school, they were more easily manipulated by older boys who used their maturity to exploit knowledge of dating expectations.

Participants also discussed a process of male socialization that contributed to the sexual coercion of girls; this socialization was linked to heterosexual gender expectations about transitioning from a boy to a man. Participants noted that as boys progressed through high school, they seemed to gain social clout. Freshmen and sophomore boys tried to befriend juniors

and seniors in order to gain popularity by learning acceptable expressions of masculinity and tools for sexual conquest. Girls in Rural Township High tried to make sense of coercive dating and reflected on their observations of male socialization throughout high school.

*Lucky Charms:* I remember the first year of high school for me like all the guys, all the freshman guys were really nice and then now that I'm a sophomore? Most of those guys turned into total jerks because they see what they have. Like they have power and what they can get and what they want. And when you're a freshman, you're just getting into high school and you're just wanting to have fun and you don't care what people think pretty much, but then after that first year things change a lot.

*Riku:* When you're up in freshman it's like freshman year, we didn't really know anybody around the school so we just stuck with our own sophomore group, um freshman group, and we didn't really talk to a lot of juniors and seniors and sophomores. And then now that they've been through there they think, "Oh I'm big and I'm in high school, I'm not a baby, I want to be a MAN"... Most like freshman guys when they get here they want to hang out with fresh—like with the senior guys so they can move on up and be considered and not freshmen but more mature. If the senior guys accept them not pick on 'em. So since they hang out them more they learn stuff from them and they tell them stuff, give 'em hints on what to do and how to get girls and stuff.

In this conversation Lucky Charms and Riku observed the ways in which boys are perceived to learn the rules of dating. For girls, these rules often translated into disrespectful relationships and a male sense of entitlement or power.

One participant made an interesting observation of her understanding of sexual coercion and age. The perception of, and experiences with, sexual coercion for older girls were perceived to be different for her. For Shay, a senior at Urban Central High,

*Shay:* I think the whole pressure thing gets worse as you get older? Especially because, by the time you're 18 and stuff, people expect you to have like, been through those experiences, you know. Guys you're dealin' with will say like, "Yeah, you know, oh most of the girls that I've dealt with, you know weren't virgins or whatever so that's how I expect you to be, so yeah, I had to like wait three months or whatever to get with them cuz you know they was Goin' so, who are you to tell me that you're not" and stuff. So at the age of 18 I think, to me it's like even worse because... I'm dealing with guys who have dealt with more girls who have experience. So, they're not coming at me necessarily disrespectfully, but it's because they've dealt with people who they're used to like, having experience or whatever, that's just... the norm.

Because Shay was 18, and perhaps considered an “adult”, there was an expectation that she already had sex. Boys she dated were sexually active and the girls they dated were too. As a result, this placed pressure on her to also be interested in having sex. This pressured expectation to have sex also came from friends as well as dating partners. Being a virgin was considered childish after a certain age. It was also viewed negatively to go to college without having had sex, so girls felt rushed to be sexually active for this reason.

*Shay:* I was just gonna say, that, I was thinkin’ about something, and most of my pressure... Or, whatever... Or coercion as far as like, sex has been mostly from my friends. Not necessarily pressure from them but, they’re just makin’ comments like “you can’t go to college a virgin” ... But like, our friends, they might not have been like completely serious but in the back of their heads they were thinkin’ like, “yeah you know, like what are you doin’ you, you’re 18 and you ain’t, ...like why are you waiting?” In this subtheme, girls’ were pressured to “act their age” when it came to sex. For

younger adolescent girls, participants perceived boys to use the girls’ lack of experience and naiveté to pressure and manipulate sex. Participants observed ways that boys were socialized by older boys to manipulate girls to have sex. For older adolescent girls, they were expected to be sexually active because of their age. Both friends and dating partners held this expectation. The “push” to have sex was uniquely experienced at different stages of adolescent development in high school.

**Not always black or white.** This subtheme explored ways the groups discussed racial differences and similarities in their conceptualizations of sexual coercion. The influence of perceived racial differences and stereotypes on sexual behavior was expressed across groups. For some participants, racial dynamics seemed to directly influence the way they experienced or observed sexual coercion strategies. For other participants, racial differences were visible in some of the underlying mechanisms contributing to a sexually coercive environment.

Racial stereotypes were present in all of the focus group discussions. The belief that Black people are more violent than other racial groups was expressed in the Rural Township High and University of Midwest groups. For the sophomore girls, they saw racial differences not in the sexual coercion of girls by boys, but rather in the competition between girls to have a boyfriend. This group believed that Black girls become more violent and physically fought more often when competing for boys compared to White girls who were described as fighting emotionally by spreading rumors and ending friendships. Riku and Rainbow (both of whom are Black and White biracial) shared their experiences and perceptions of Black girl conflict in relation to the competition for boys.

*Riku:* I think it's like more like serious with Black girls. Because they like this gangsta Black guy. And they really actually try to kill you over the guy. This one girl, she told me how when she lived in (Large Midwestern City) ... she said girls had to come, they came to school with like razors under their tongue. And they fought and it just got really, really, it was a very bad school but like here, like they'll fight and they like, they'll hold a grudge and they'll try to fight you and gang up on you with their friends if they hear that you're trying to get their boyfriend or whatever.

*Rainbow:* Oh that's a big thing. A really huge thing like, if you, like I've seen, last year I seen like this one Black girl she had like a whole group and it was against me and my sister and they were like "Well you were with my boyfriend" like "Whatever" and me and my sister, since we're sister(s) we're gonna be together, we're gonna fight together. And I was raised like if one of your family members fight, then you fight. And if not, you're gonna get in trouble when you get home. So, me and my sister are like best friends and when they wanted to fight then I had to be there for my sister. No matter what, I don't care who says what anyone says, I'm going to be there for my sister no matter what. And they're like "Well you were with my boyfriend Friday night." And I'm like "Friday night? I was at home asleep Friday night, what are you talking about?" And my sister was like "Well don't be getting up in my sister's face or whatever like that cause you don't know her like that." And I had just came to school, I'm a freshman and I'm like "I don't know these people.", So say like a girl she's dating a guy and they're Black then another girl she's like wanting that girl's boyfriend, they're Black then it's going to be like a big ol' different conversation cause they like to fight with like guns and stuff like that, from what I've seen. And then if it's like Japanese or something like that, they may handle it much different.

*Riku:* I think they take it more seriously, like "you just offended me greatly by trying to take my guy."

Riku and Rainbow saw ways that Black and White girls competed differently to hold onto romantic relationships. The cultural differences they noticed seemed in part based on stereotypes of Black youth as violent or “gangstas”, but also rooted in their own personal experiences with racial differences in conflicts with other girls. Although not a direct pressure to have sex, their observations suggest that the *Keep Him Strategies* are expressed differently between Black and White girls. These participants believed that Black girls in their experience were more committed to having and keeping a boyfriend.

Similarly, the college women also discussed perceptions of Black violence. Their reflections focused on their perception of Black men as aggressive. An African American woman in the group remarked on ways that she noticed the men in the Black community use physical force, but White men more often use alcohol as coercive methods. This led Jennifer, a White English international student, to comment on differences and stereotypes she observed in the porn industry where Black men are depicted as more dominant and White women are depicted as fragile.

*Jennifer:* I think it's perpetuated in the like porn industry? So there is this certain area of porn which is like the kind of name for it on the thing is Black on Blond. And it's like these really large like African American men and these kind of small petite blond women. And I think that perpetuates some kind of stereotype that the large African male, African American man is like dominant over the small, petite like Caucasian girl. And that's the only stereotype I've ever seen... not that I believe it but I've seen that perpetuated like through the porn industry. Because you generally would never see like it kind like of the other way around. It always seems to be a large African American male and small petite, innocent vulnerable Caucasian woman.

*Jayla:* Yeah you're pretty much right. It's not the opposite.

Participants also observed sexual stereotypes between racial groups, where Black and White girls were perceived to engage in different sexual behaviors. Participants connected this dynamic to the type of sexual coercion girls experience because boys seemed to have unique

sexual expectations for Black girls and White girls. Some of the expectations were rooted in appearance and differences in body type between Black and White girls. Black girls in this group believed they received more sexual attention because of the way Black women are depicted in the media. These assumptions are shown in the following conversation at Urban Central High:

*Sasha:* Maybe there's, maybe Black girls are pressured like the girls in the movies?...  
*BF:* How Black women are portrayed in the Media?

*Sasha:* Yeah! You know. And then there might be a girl who, who likes attention a lot and she want attention and desires attention from guys. And then she sees that Black women, in order to be able to have these things that that's what she should use. 'Cause then if she use what she has...

*Alexis:* That's what I'm sayin' like the pressure is different, mainly because of what out there I know, Black people versus that a White person. White girls will, like make a comment about "oh I hate these thighs" or how they feel about a Black person. But they have two different types of bodies. So, that makes it, the pressure different... Black women hear it more 'cause they have more.

*BF:* Kinda like sexual harassment stuff that you hear?

*Alexis:* I mean... stuff like booty girls, all that.

Participants also reflected on the assumptions that boys believed White girls will engage in sex more readily than Black girls. Earlier in the conversation, a few girls in the group stated that they perceived differences in the type of sexual acts Black and White girls engage in. As Shay commented: "Because I have like, Caucasian friends or whatever?.. It's like oral sex is like nothing to them. Like oral sex is like kissing to them". This stereotype seems to have influenced the sexual expectations of boys. From this perspective, White girls may have been uniquely pressured or expected to have sex.

*Melissa:* Guys that can like, get it. So. They're like, OK... "it would be nice to have sex with her, but it might be better to have more sex with a Caucasian woman". And my Caucasian friends, also there's stereotype that, they'll be with a guy for a short period of time? They're willing to do more most of the time? And what they tell me is then most likely Black people are not like that. Like they'll be like "well", not to say time determines the path of your relationship, but it's been like "Oh it's been two months I'ma

go ahead and do this” are not like, “eww why would you do that” and we’re feel like we’re not gonna do this. So it’s different culturally.

Racial stereotypes and cultural assumptions were infused in the sexual experiences of girls. Black girls in this group were approached with different expectations by boys than their White counterparts. In some ways, girls were influenced by the ways Black women were portrayed in the media and felt compelled to use their bodies to gain male attention. This sexual representation of Black girls and women created a surrounding “push” where they felt infiltrated by these images and were expected to live up to these standards. Cultural differences in body shape also influenced the sexual attention they received from boys. Girls felt like they were approached and coerced more frequently because of their body shape and “having more” curves meant they were coerced more. Assumed racial differences were observed in the sexual acts between Black and White girls. White girls were believed to engage in oral sex more readily than Black girls, which seemed to influence their relationships with boys. As a result, the amount and type of sexual attention they received “pushed” them to have sex in some ways, and may have sexually “pushed” White girls in other ways. This “push” was connected to stereotypical beliefs and assumptions about sex based on race.

**Coercion in context.** This subtheme explored sexual coercion in relation to the surrounding social context. Two of the focus groups explored aspects of their lived cultural experiences that provided a context that “pushed” them to have sex. Below I describe each of these discussions on social context. They encompassed two separate foci: *Pop Life* and *Campus Drinking*. Although the Rural Township High group may have likely been influenced by social contextual factors, these were not directly identified and discussed among the girls.

**Pop life.** The influence of popular culture and media on sexual coercion was a core theme for the Urban Central High group. This conversation included considerable discussion about the

media and how girls felt overexposed to sexual material. This overexposure made them desensitized to sex in many ways. Before they realized it, participants found themselves intrigued by sex which seemed coming out of nowhere. They described this as a surrounding atmosphere of sex that constantly permeated their daily lives as opposed to direct pressure by an individual to engage in sexual behavior. The exposure to sex through television shows, movies, and the radio made them intrigued by sex before they realized it or necessarily wanted it. They found themselves engaging in potentially sexual behavior with people who remind them of their favorite artists. The following conversation between Sasha and Shay of Urban Central High described this pervasive exposure.

*Sasha:* I think it comes from more like, just your environment, maybe on, like, the weekend? And, you know what people see on a, on a daily basis. What you see on T.V., what you hear on the radio, um movies that come out. Everything that's around you, and like now, a LOT of young people are really interested ...listen to the radio or watchin' videos all day... And if you see it all the time, especially if it's somebody that you love to listen to. And you see it all the time and you find yourself doin' what everybody else is doin'. Or you'll find somebody who look like the person that you just LOVE seein' on T.V. and then all of a sudden, you want, you know, to express those feelings.

*Shay:* I just think we've become so desensitized to certain things? Where, like, everyone else was saying it's acceptable. Things that, you know, you might have been taught was wrong, you personally may believe are wrong, because you're constantly exposed to it. Whether it be through the media or through your friends, it becomes ok... "It" meaning sex, drugs, whatever, just pretty much everything that's out there becomes ok because, you're used to it.

This atmosphere of sex created by popular culture made a number of participants want to have sex before they felt aware or ready and made it hard for them to find their own true voice and identity.

Girls in this group noticed behavior changes amongst themselves and one another as a result of exposure to images in the media. Participants observed girls dressing in ways that fit with the expectations of popular culture to be sexy.



*Alise:* You see, like, celebrities, and their bodies just like, you know nice, you be like “oh that’s what, that’s I want too?” It’s like people sometimes feel pressured ta um, look a certain way.

*Jasmine:* You see all these different people around you every day, that are trying to achieve? Maybe? A certain look or a certain way that they go about, you know, living their life, and, you see everybody heading in the same direction and you’re trying to find your own path, and you know trying to find your own creative side, determining who you really are. It’s kind of hard ‘cause you get to the point where, if you see everybody doing the same thing, you’re the only one doing something different, so you see yourself sticking out like a sore thumb.

*Melissa:* Girls usually do like, no one, I mean, everybody wears tall heels and leggings and short skirts, and nobody wears things like long skirts, or nobody tries to be less revealing.

*Raina:* Guys look for the video-girl look. If you don’t, you know, have on, you know, fitted clothes and, you know, if you don’t look like what they’re used to seeing all the time. You know guys, they make, it seems like it’s a lot of pressure with the girls and like, you know, the way that they look.

The influence of popular culture on heterosexual dating relationships was noticeable.

Raina discussed the superficial relationships that she experienced as a result of exposure to the media, where what matters most are appearance and status. She expressed her frustration that relationships lacked depth because boys mostly cared about appearance and sex, not about personality or values.

*Raina:* I think it goes back to um like the influence from the media... anything that you take in to, your thoughts or whatever, like it becomes a part of your life... Guys now, like, you can listen to any kind of song and the things that you listen to all the time, once you listen to it so much it kinda becomes a part of you. And now, if you listen to a song about a guy that’s trying to get with a girl, it’s not like, “I like somethin’ about you other than how you look.” It’s just like, “oh she walked past me she looked good, she’s fine, I’m a hit that,” that’s the end of the song... Like and then that’s all guys see... But girls usually wanna know more than that.

For this group, the “push” of sexual coercion seemed heavily influenced by a social context. The overexposure of sex in popular culture created a pervasive atmosphere that bombarded many of the Central Urban High students with sex all the time. The media’s focus on

sex influenced their own sexual interests and behaviors. Girls found a need to change who they were to fit the social norms displayed in the media in order to be seen as attractive and feel wanted by boys. They found themselves considering sex before they were aware or ready. It also influenced dating relationships where all that seemed to matter was appearance. Girls were attracted to boys who favored their favorite artists, boys wanted girls who looked like music video models and who they might enjoy having sex with. As a result, relationships seemed to lack emotional connection and focused more on physical attraction.

### *Campus drinking.*

But on campus I think alcohol is like the major factor when considering that. I mean across all races I think alcohol is like one of the major things, and that happens a lot and people don't consider it sexual coercion because they're under the influence like "Ok she went along with it." Yeah a lot of times females are, you know, taken advantage of because of that. You know they may be just having a nice time but guys use that. – Mary, Black, Midwest University

The social context that the University of Midwest group identified was a culture of drinking that was normalized on college campus. This was a central theme for these women as they spent a lot of time discussing the role that alcohol and a party lifestyle played in sexual coercion. This campus drinking and partying culture created a unique "push" for sex among these college women.

Women in this group discussed a variety of ways they saw alcohol being used as a tool for sexual coercion. They discussed ways that men take advantage of women who are already drunk, get girls drunk purposefully to have sex, and who get themselves drunk to relieve the responsibility of obtaining consent.

*Mary:* They seek out fast like "You're drunk? Ok well I'm bout to, be around her cuz I know she acts like this" you know, "She's gonna open up more so lets bring alcohol in here." You know guys will bring alcohol in, like you just say we're having a get together and people always wanna involve alcohol. And most often it's the males, because they know how females tend to open up more, and act more sexual.

*Nicole:* I think like there's like two ways that guys can like use alcohol to influence, I mean to get sex or whatever? I think it's like either they can get the girl drunk or they can get themselves drunk as well because like if they get themselves drunk they can use that as an excuse like "Oh I was just drunk so I wouldn't have normally done that" or whatever. And like they just basically just want to get drunk so they can have that excuse.

*Jane:* I think about the stereotype of the person, uh that get's like really drunk people typically associate with more loose than a person who is more conservative sober. You know you always have that pathetic friend of yours and you're like "Oh she's drunk", you know..... Um there's a girl that's like passed out on the couch and he's kissing her and stuff.

There was considerable debate between participants about whether alcohol was regarded as a sexual coercion tool. Some women believed that the act of having sex while intoxicated was sexually coercive given the inability to fully consent when drunk. Other participants believed that women were aware of their behavior when intoxicated and used this as an excuse to engage in sexual behaviors they did not feel comfortable doing when sober. The following conversation illustrates these conflicting perspectives.

*Claire:* I don't feel that if you're drunk that you can consent.... I just don't think that you can. I mean. Science has proven that your inhibitions are down. You can't make, I think, important decisions. So I don't feel that someone who's drunk can say "I want to have sex."

*Nicole:* Um I think, I disagree kind of 'cause I think that just because you're drunk, you're still a little aware of what's going on. And you, like I'm not saying that it's ok to get raped, but you did put yourself in that position and if you know that you give in easily then you should obviously like surround your... not saying you shouldn't drink but like Jennifer said, surround yourself with other friends and stuff. And also, I just really don't think, I mean I know alcohol is an affect, I just really don't think that you're like not aware of what you're doing. Also I just think that alcohol just brings out something that you already wanted to do but you never like had the nerve to do it. But it's like deep down it's what you wanted to do from the beginning.

*Jennifer:* I agree with Nicole because, um, people use alcohol I think as like an excuse? Like I said about the guys... basically there's a lot of people that drink alcohol to get more confidence because it does lower your inhibitions. And so it brings out like a more kind of less tight side or whatever.

Claire believed that women may not realize what they're doing when they're drunk and can not make clear decisions while inebriated. Comparatively, Nicole and Jennifer believed that women were responsible for preventing sexual coercion when drinking and knew what was happening while drunk. An interesting point was made by Jennifer that women may use alcohol purposefully to lower their sexual inhibitions. This further complicated the notion of alcohol as a coercive tool. If women are intending to get drunk in order to feel more relaxed and less nervous before sex, then it becomes challenging to decipher consent and desire during sex while intoxicated.

In addition to alcohol specifically as a sexually coercive tactic, participants also explored the coercive atmosphere that takes place at parties. Within bars and clubs, women discussed ways that men take advantage of the environment for their own sexual arousal. Because clubs are dark and people are typically engaged in close dancing, men use the context as an opportunity to engage in physical sexual contact. Jane describes her observations of this dynamic:

*Jane:* I think it's funny about like the bars on campus and stuff, let's say you're just dancing with your friends and stuff and then its like some really scrawny gross guy comes up and starts grinding from behind you. And you're just, it's just a really weird way of like, it's college right. But if this was a bar in (Metropolitan City) people would get pepper sprayed... So like in a normal place that would never happen. And then all of a sudden there's this person behind you and you're like "No! I'm not interested!" But it's just I think it's just strange and it has the whole, it's kind of what you're talking about—sexual coercion... It's just weird like especially when it's like from behind you. It's not like they come up in front of you and start dancing... that's more like human. Like from behind it's just like Chester the Molester.

The social context of the night club normalizes the type of front-to-back dancing that Jane describes where men are able to rub against the backsides of women in the nature of dancing, without asking for permission or consent. This context allows men to gain access to women's bodies in a sexual manner and is excused as part of the perceived expectation for college students.

Discussions on party life extended past the bars and clubs and into the realms of the Greek system. Jennifer was vocal throughout the discussion about Greek life and the role that fraternities play in sexual coercion.

*Jennifer:* Especially with like the frat parties and stuff. Like I heard um, when I first came here how they like spike the drinks and there's a lot of date rapes in frats. And I know one frat called Skulls that's kind of uh renowned for date raping. Which seems so strange to me because, if it's renowned for date raping everyone seems to know, which they do, and then somehow they can still get away with it. Cause apparently they put um Benadryl and something else in the uh... jungle juice. Mmhmm, yeah. And so it makes them really drowsy. Or they use Rohypnol. And it seems that, like, all these like innocent vulnerable girls like want to get with all these like frat guys and all the frat guys are like rushing to be in a frat because then they get so much status and they get more girls and it's like a cycle. And therefore the sorority type girls will always go for the fratty boys. And then they're put into a situation with loads of alcohol and then you get into situations with, like, sexual coercion and stuff.

Jennifer described a terrifying experience where a particular fraternity she was aware of purposefully used chemical substances to subdue women and rape them. There was confusion and anger when she spoke as she questioned why this behavior was allowed to continue. She discussed the vulnerability of young women in these situations and the social context that set up the sexual coercion where perpetrating fraternity members were sought after and had ample access to women.

Although experienced differently, both groups identified ways a broader social context influenced their experiences and perceptions of sexual coercion. Cultural expectations from pop culture, and the normalization of drinking and partying, "pushed" each group to have sex without their desire or consent. Both descriptions describe a culture of sex that normalizes physical intimacy and sets up expectations to be sexy, gain sexual access, and engage in sexual behavior.

### **Meanings Behind the Mix**

The focus group themes are both consistent with and divergent from the categories from the open ended responses. The most frequent category in responses to the sexual coercion definition was *manipulation*. Within the focus group themes, manipulation was frequently discussed as a sexually coercive tool, particularly within *The Relationship IS the Problem* subtheme. *Force* was also a frequently endorsed category within responses. Although physical force was not as salient in the focus group discussions, participants did discuss ways boys and men used their size to intimidate or threaten girls and women. Interestingly, only 2% of participants defined sexual coercion with the *drugs/alcohol* category. However alcohol coercion was a substantial theme in the sexual coercion definitions for college women. Similarly, *peer/social/internal* pressure was included in less than 2% of survey participants, however this theme was also considerably salient for all of the groups. Although the frequency of definitions are low, the fact that participants included these themes in their definitions provides initial validation that these aspects matter in how high school and college women define sexual coercion.

Not surprisingly, the majority of participants' definitions of consensual sex fit within the *shared consent* category, where partners explicitly or implicitly indicated a desire to have sex. What is interesting about these findings is that participants did not provide descriptions of how consent was obtained. Comparatively, only 11% of participant definitions included a lack of pressure in their consensual sex definitions. These findings add interesting information to inform focus group results. Within the *Women Control Relationships?* subtheme was the restriction on girl sexuality, where girls believed that engaging in any level of physical intimacy would give boys the wrong idea and communicate an interest in sex. Responsibility was placed on girls to express consent or not, and to not participate in any sexual act unless they wanted sex to happen.

This not only restricted girl sexuality, but also constructs consent as unilateral – girls have to make it clear that they *don't* want sex. Responsibility is not placed on the other person to ensure that their partner is fully engaged and consenting.

The majority of participants did not believe pressuring someone to have sex was acceptable. This converges with much of the focus group results, as participants were vocal across groups about ways they felt wrongly pressured to have sex before they felt ready. However, within some discussions there were some opposing viewpoints to the existence of some forms of sexual coercion. For example the Central Urban High's conversation on girl responsibility and the disagreement about alcohol coercion at the University of the Midwest showed ways pressure maybe condoned.

## Chapter VI

### Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore the conceptualizations of sexual coercion among Black and White girls and women. The findings contribute to the extant literature in a number of ways. The results provided insight into the lives of adolescents and expanded existing conceptualizations of sexual coercion. The study also suggested that current definitions may not fully capture the ways that adolescents experience pressure to have sex. Participants identified a complex, multilevel system of sexual coercion from cultural, societal, peer, and internalized sources. The existing literature is scarce in studies that focus on Women and Girls of Color; this study enhances the field greatly by providing a focus that includes Black girls and women.

The main findings from this study highlight the breadth of adolescent conceptualizations of sexual coercion which were rooted in societal, peer, and internal pressures or “pushes” to have sex. These conceptualizations were both consistent with and divergent from existing definitions of sexual coercion in the field. Unlike existing definitions of sexual coercion, adolescents in this study considered it more than direct pressure from or the use of force by a partner to have sex. It included a multitude of complex factors that influenced their experiences with unwanted sex. In addition to the pressure and manipulation they observed from boys and men, they also felt coerced by group pressures and cultural norms to have sex before they were interested in or ready to engage in sexual behaviors. The main meta-theme found in the focus groups was a pervasive and expansive “push” to have sex. This overarching theme consisted of several subthemes which described the source and consequences of the “push” including *The Relationship IS the Problem* (i.e., coercive strategies within relationships), *Keep Him Strategies* (i.e., coercion through the desire to be in a relationship), *Women Control Relationships?* (i.e.,



ways that girls both felt responsible for, and disempowered from, sexual coercion), *Act Your Age* (i.e., developmentally specific sexual coercion), *Not Always Black or White* (i.e., racialized pressures and expectations for sex), and *Coercion in Context* (i.e., sexual coercion within cultural context).

### **American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls**

Findings from this study are consistent with recent trends in national research and initiatives on girl sexuality. Adolescent sexual coercion fits within this framework. The Women's Program Office of the American Psychological Association (APA) recently created the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007). The goals of the task force are to examine the role that media and other cultural influences have on sexualizing girls and the psychosocial consequences of this exploitation. Similar to the conceptualization of sexual coercion from adolescents in this study, the Task Force proposes that the sexualization of girls manifests in three spheres: (a) societal and cultural norms, expectations, and values; (b) interpersonal peer and group encouragement; and (c) self-sexualization where girls internalized the messages to be sexual. The Task Force's notion of sexualization is consistent with findings from the present study, as participants conceptualized a complex system of sexual coercion that was evident in various forms and at multiple levels of social and environmental context. I use the framework presented by the Task Force to structure the discussion on the findings.

**Societal and cultural contexts.** Adolescent conceptualizations of sexual coercion were located within a broader cultural context that contributed to a pervasive atmosphere where girls and women were expected to be sexually available. For participants, much of the "push" to be

sexual came from a culture of sex that permeated their daily lives. Media exposure and normed group behavior created a general social context where sex was encouraged and expected.

***Racial and ethnocultural issues.*** Racial stereotypes were present in all the discussions. There was a belief that Black boys and men utilized more sexually aggressive coercive strategies whereas White men utilized alcohol coercive techniques more readily. The historical stereotype that Black men are aggressive and violent is a pervasive and most likely affected participants' perception of Black men as sexual aggressors (Collins, 2004). The belief that White men utilize alcohol coercion strategies may be culturally linked to the fact that binge drinking is more common among White college students than Black college students (Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport & Castillo, 1995; Siebert, Wilke, Delva, Smith, & Howell, 2003).

For the urban high school seniors, race emerged in their conceptualizations of sexual coercion in different ways. They perceived that Black and White girls engaged in different sexual behaviors. White girls were perceived to engage in and normalize oral sex where Black girls considered oral sex a negative behavior that was “nasty” or “dirty.” Their observations of sexual coercion were also related to sexual stereotypes as they saw boys approach Black and White girls differently because of sexual assumptions. Media images were a substantial source of sexual coercion. Black girls felt pressured to behave and present like women in the music videos and commented on the sexual attention they received as a result. Because of the pervasive sexual exposure they received from the media, they felt surrounded and engulfed by sex. At the same time, they also felt pressured to *not* be sexual and “keep their legs closed”.

Stephens and Phillips (2003) discussed contemporary sexual images of Black girls and women pervasive in music, television, and cinema. These representations provide a stereotypical framework that Black adolescent girls feel they have to compete with in their intimate and social

relationships. For example the “freak” embodies the historical sexually insatiable “Jezebel” stereotype where Black girls and women are believed to want sex in any place, in any position, and with any person. Current media representations of young Black women in hip hop, for example (e.g., rapper Lil’ Kim, video vixens), portray this sexual script freak. West (2008) considers the psychosocial influence that internalizing these images can have on Black girls. Through these representations, standards of beauty and constructions of feminism become increasingly narrow, exoticized, and sexualized with the potential for significant risk to girls self-image.

At the same time, the Urban Central High girls communicated a resounding commitment and expectation to stay true to their values, show that they respect themselves by not having sex, and hold girls accountable who did not follow these rules. Their commitment to “keeping their legs closed” resembles the politics of respectability and culture of dissemblance that Hine (1989) and Higginbotham (1993) write about. Specifically, Black women sought to challenge stereotypes of Black women as immoral and sexually deviant by pushing expectations to behave respectably in order to preserve the self-image, dignity, and racial pride of African Americans. The “culture of dissemblance” was another response that consisted of a self-imposed secrecy and invisibility to present as clean, polite, and sexually pure. Higginbotham argued that by adopting the culture of dissemblance, Black women protected their sexual identities and attempted to protect themselves from (the inquiry of) sexual assault. The girls in this focus group had a similar approach to navigating the hypersexualized messages they received in the media, by silencing their experiences of coercion and placing responsibility on other girls to maintain a moral image.

The quantitative findings on racial differences were mixed. When running logistic regression analyses, race was not a significant predictor of the way participants defined sexual coercion. Such that Black and White participants did not differ in whether they defined sexual coercion as being forceful, verbally manipulative, and/or included alternative tactics. Perhaps racial differences are not present in how participants perceived sexual coercion in general, but that the context of when and how they observe sexual coercion happening across racial lines does differ. Another explanation to this non-significant finding could be because of the method employed. The open-ended question was asked as part of a larger survey that included an inventory of sexual coercion experiences. Thus, participants were already asked questions about their own experiences with sexual coercion and thus the way they wrote their own definitions likely mirrored the information they read in the surveys.

*Campus culture.* A unique cultural experience was discussed in the college focus group. For university participants, alcohol use and the pervasive culture of drinking and partying that the college women experienced was central to their conceptualization of sexual coercion. The frequent exposure to alcohol created contexts in which women were often faced with sexual coercion through intoxication. They described a number of ways they saw alcohol being used as a tool by men to have “sex” with women. This included getting women drunk purposefully to have sex, seeking out women who were already drunk, and getting themselves drunk so they had an excuse for coercing sex. These findings are consistent with existing literature on alcohol use and sexual coercion in college settings (Abbey, 2002; Ullman, Karabatsos, & Koss, 1999), where alcohol was linked to an increase in unwanted and coerced sexual experiences. Interestingly, night clubs were also seen as a cultural space where coerced or nonconsensual sexual contact

was normalized. Women reflected on how they felt violated as men rubbed on their bodies while attempting to dance.

Although the majority of the college women agreed that alcohol was used as a coercive tool, not everyone in the group agreed that sex while intoxicated was sexually coercive. Some participants believed that women were well aware of their actions while intoxicated and could readily consent to sex. The assumption seemed to be that unless a woman was unconscious or completely blacked out, then she was aware enough to consent to sex or prevent sex from happening. What was not discussed in this conversation was the inability to fully consent when intoxicated, not because a woman is unconscious but because her judgment is impaired and she is not fully mentally present. While she may be alert and awake, her ability to make conscious, intentional decisions while intoxicated is limited.

It is clear that alcohol coercion is not a clear cut concept. The responses on the open-ended question also highlighted some of this ambiguity. Only five participants included alcohol or drug use in their definitions of sexual coercion. The main aspect that participants identified when conceptualizing sexual coercion was manipulation and physical force. The low frequency of alcohol or drug responses signifies how little recognition this form of coercion receives and perhaps the confusion around whether sex while intoxicated is and should be considered coercive.

### **Interpersonal peer and group pressure.**

*Direct coercion strategies.* Subthemes focused on direct interpersonal and group sexual coercion that girls and women discussed. Participants described ways that they saw boys and men use sexual coercion in their relationships with girls and women. In the focus groups, participants witnessed false professions of love, claims to be interested in a committed

relationship, and threats to leave a relationship or have sex with someone else. There was a male sense of entitlement that accompanied sexual coercion dynamics as girls talked about ways that boys ignored their protests and continued to try to seduce them despite verbalizations of dissent.

Manipulative tactics such as those listed above were the most frequently endorsed category in participants' written definitions of sexual coercion. This finding is consistent with existing literature that defines sexual coercion as a continual pressure and manipulation to have sex (e.g., DeGue & DiLillo, 2005; Koss & Dinero, 1988) and with other focus group studies among teens (Hird & Jackson, 2001). Statistical analyses showed significant associations between various sexual coercion definitions that point to interesting findings. Participants who defined sexual coercion by including the threat or use of physical force were less likely to include verbal and alternative strategies. Perhaps because physical force is the most recognized and most violent method to have sex with an unwilling partner, participants who defined sexual coercion as with this definition may have considered physical force the only way that sexual coercion could be experienced. Comparatively, participants who did not define sexual coercion by including physical force were more likely to include a multitude of sexually coercive tactics in general, including verbal coercion and alternative methods outside of verbal pressure or physical force.

***Sexual coercion in age and development.*** Sexual coercion related to adolescent development was present in high school romantic and peer relationships as well. Freshmen girls observed significant pressure and manipulation to have sex from senior boys. They also described the male socialization process as changing nice boys to “jerks” who believed they had power over girls. Girls observed ways boys used their maturity, status, and dating experience to manipulate girls into having sex before they were ready. This is consistent with extant literature

that highlights the coercive nature that significant age differences can have on minor adolescents (Abma, Driscoll, & Moore, 1998; Marin et al., 2000). In these studies, adolescent girls who dated significantly older boys were more likely to have unwanted, coerced, or forced sexual experiences. Among high school upperclassmen, sexual coercion was perceived differently because they were older. Senior girls faced expectations from friends and romantic partners to be sexually active. The pressure not to go to college a virgin was present as was the competition with other girls who were having sex. They questioned saving their first sexual experience as they got a certain age, when it seemed like everyone else had already had that experience.

Quantitative results did not mirror the focus group findings. Findings from the logistic regression analyses indicated that age did not predict sexual coercion categories. The potential for differences based on grade level were present with relatively large odds ratios, but because the confidence intervals were so wide, conclusive results could not be made. Similar to the quantitative results on race, this could be because of the method used in which participants were primed about the scope of sexual coercion. The lack of significant findings could also be the result of low power.

***Girl competition.*** Sexual coercion affected group relationships as well. Not only did participants observe manipulative dynamics in relationships with boys and men, but girls also created a competition with one another that led to coercive sexual experiences. They fought for male attention by performing sex and tried to be more sexually alluring and attractive than the next girl. This emerged primarily for the rural high school group. Part of the reason for this fight was the high demand of boys and a ranking system that left girls feeling like their dating options were limited. As a result, girls felt pressured to out-do the other girls in order to gain male attention. This indirectly created a peer pressured sexual coercion for participants.

### **Self-sexualization.**

*Internalized gender expectations.* The sexual socialization girls and women were exposed to seemed so pervasive that boys and men did not necessarily have to pressure girls and women to have sex. The subtle and overt societal messages that girl worth lies in their relationships with boys, and that sex is essential to having this relationship, were enough to create a cultured coercion that they then seemed to internalize. Common across focus groups were the gender socialization messages that girls and women received in regards to romantic relationships. They learned at some point in their lives that having a boyfriend is important to their happiness and internalized this message. Seeking emotional intimacy, girls and women believed that they had to provide physical intimacy in order to keep their male partner connected to them. This trade off of sexual engagement for emotional intimacy denied their own sexual desires by prioritizing the sexual requests of men and boys. Brown and Gilligan (1992) discussed this dynamic and ways that girls learn to see themselves through male eyes and internalize messages that girls should put boys' needs ahead of their own.

This internalized expectation led to a sense of obligation that quieted the ability for girls to be true to themselves and their real sexual urges, or lack thereof. The desire to be in a relationship seemed so strong that girls and women felt compelled to do nearly anything to hold on to the relationship. This often meant engaging in sexual behavior or striving to be sexually enticing in order to spark male interest and give into their partners' sexual desires, regardless of their own interest to have sex. As a result, girls felt unable to say "no" to boys, and "consented" to sex when they did not want to.

Acquiescing to undesired sex to please a partner has been found in other studies among high school (Erickson & Rapkin, 1991) and college students (Lanmann, Gagnon, Michael, &



Mmichaels, 1994). Walker (1997) discussed this dynamic in her conceptual article on consensual and unwanted sex among girls and women. In her review of the literature, she described ways that gender socialization, sexual scripts, and the pressure to be in a relationship made it difficult for girls and women to refuse sexual advances when not desired. Shotland and Hunter (1995) also researched reasons for women's acquiescence to sex, finding that women comply with sexual advances early in relationships to get their partner attached, and continue to comply later in relationships to avoid disappointment. Three quarters of participants in another study complied with sexual requests when they didn't want to to make their partner happy (Vanier & O'Sullivan, 2009).

***“Consensual” unwanted sex.*** The notion of complying with unwanted sex complicates our understanding of consent and coercion. Interestingly, consensual sex was defined by nearly all participants through open-ended responses as having some level of shared consent, whether explicit or implicit. However, many of the participants did not indicate a clear declaration of consent. Responses such as “When two people are both in the right state of mind” for example, do not provide a clear indication of how consent was expressed or obtained. It could be that participants did not elaborate in their written responses, but it is also curious how consent is displayed within sexual experiences. Defining consensual sex as not being pressured, comparatively, was only found in 16% of the responses. Thus, conceptualizations of consensual sexual activity were focused only on desire, and not on communication of that desire or desire free from coercion.

There is some controversy in the literature over the scope of consent and coercion. Muehlenhard and colleagues (1992) discussed the problematic nature of using the term *consent* when defining rape. The way that someone expresses a lack of desire, and whether that

expression is considered sufficient communication of consent, influences our understanding of whether rape occurred or not. Given traditional sex scripts and gender expectations where girls' and women's expression of sexuality is discouraged and where men and boys are praised for having heterosexual sexual experiences, it is difficult to determine whether consent was given or not in many instances. Although sexual compliance is commonly normalized as an expected sacrifice in committed relationships, the obligation girls and women feel to comply with sexual requests seems to be part of a larger system of sexual coercion.

Although not directly assessed, the possibility and acknowledgement of consensual and desired sex among girls and women was rarely discussed in the focus groups. Participants reported few opportunities to be sexual in heterosexual relationships without the added pressure of doing so to keep a male interested or committed, or meet the expectations and norms of peers. During the times the high school participants did talk about consensual sex, they identified significant consequences from others who ostracized girls that were sexually active and labeled them a "ho" or "goer". The group dynamics of the Urban Central High discussion may have influenced the way that sex was discussed, however. There was a dominant voice of dissent against sexually active girls within the discussion and some girls remained silent throughout the conversation. Thus it is plausible that dominant group members may have made it difficult for participants in the group who were engaging in desired sex to share their perspective, and thus this experience was left unheard.

For the college women, when a desire to be sexual was expressed, it was accompanied by a concern of being rejected by men and frustration that men seemed privileged with the ability to refuse sex. In her important early study, Michelle Fine (1988) discussed the lack of sexual agency or ability to freely consent to having sex among adolescent girls. Sex education

curriculum focused on male pleasure and arousal and spent little time exploring female desire. As she found, young women seemed to lack a sense of sexual or social entitlement and held traditional notions of what it means to be female: self-sacrificing and passive. Tolman (1994) continued to explore female desire in her research and found similar dichotomies and confusion among the high school women in her study. Most of her sample disclosed sexual feelings but felt confused with how to manage them, as they struggled with maintaining a “good girl” image but also gave in to the requests and desires of their sexual partners. These findings are similar to the participants in the present study where acting on sexual desires seemed to risk real consequences.

### **Limitations**

This study is not without limitations. Although focus groups offer many advantages, they may have provided some challenges for girls and women to discuss their beliefs about sexual coercion openly; individual interviews or dyads may have offered more anonymity. Interesting developmental and racial and ethnocultural findings emerged in the focus groups, however comparative analyses across focus groups should be interpreted with caution. Each of the focus groups was conducted with different age groups, in different geographic locations, at different types of schools, and at different time points. Thus, differences across focus groups could be due to a number of reasons not related to the racial or developmental uniqueness of each group. Two of the focus groups were racially mixed and it is difficult to determine what influence this “mixture” may have had on responses. Sexual coercion history was not collected with focus group participants. Whether or not a girl or woman was coerced may have influenced how she talked about sexual coercion in the discussion. Finally, the Urban Central High focus group was significantly larger than the other two focus groups. With 15 participants in 90 minute

discussion, it was challenging to have everyone's voice heard. Many of the girls in the group were silent, so the perspectives that were most vocal may not have been representative of everyone in that group. One way this may have occurred is that girls who were sexually active did not feel comfortable participating in the discussion because of the other vocal group members disdain towards sex.

The open-ended responses were likely influenced by a priming affect. In the larger survey, participants were exposed to operational definitions of sexual coercion. There is a strong possibility that their definitions of sexual coercion, sexual pressure, and consensual sex closely resembled the operational definitions provided. Finally, quantitative results cannot be generalized outside of the geographical and school context in which data were collected, and focus group results can not be generalized outside of participants experiences.

### **Future Research**

Future research would benefit from continued examination of adolescent peer sexual coercion experiences and perceptions. Research on sexual coercion in middle school is limited although youth at this age are engaging in sexual activity. Qualitative exploration of male perceptions of sexual coercion is also essential. Although important, by focusing solely on girls and women, sexual victimization becomes framed as a woman's problem. Understanding what boys and men perceive as coercive can provide greater insight into sexual coercion perpetrated against girls as well as male victims of sexual coercion. Shifting the focus to sexual desire and consent particularly in adolescence is an area of research with limited exposure. Helping uncover how desire is communicated and how consent was derived can slow down the process, clarify communication strategies, and help achieve desired healthy sexuality before it becomes coercive.

Finally, research should continue to examine cultural complexities of sexual coercion to move away from unidimensional, White heteronormative understandings. Studies exploring within and between-group differences of various racial and ethnic groups, sexual minorities, social class lines, and ability statuses will begin to provide more complex and integrative analyses and inform relevant interventions.

### **Implications**

Despite these limitations this study offers important advancements in adolescent sexual coercion literature. Mental health professionals and educators can provide effective interventions at various stages of adolescent development that challenge sexual expectations, gender and racial socialization, and work towards healthy sexuality and power dynamics between girls and boys. Challenging notions of feminism and patriarchy early on can help empower girls and women to put their own desires at the center. Although this study did not examine the sexual coercion perceptions of boys and men, it is essential to include them in dialogues on consensual and coerced sexual experiences. Mental health interventions and educational curriculum can help bring light to male privilege and patriarchy and deconstruct notions of masculinity and male socialization. By learning about how to communicate consensual, desired sex and developing psychological capacity to accept and respect refusals for sex, teens can have healthier sexual development.

Developmentally appropriate interventions can be gleaned this study. Having ongoing conversations in sexual education curriculum and mental health interventions throughout high school about sexuality, desire, consent, and coercion is essential. These conversations can help girls navigate the transition to high school, challenge gendered expectations that silence girl

desires, and help to build a sense of empowerment within the self and across girl relationships. For college women, supportive services, prevention efforts, and mental health services can continue to deconstruct expectations in committed relationships and ways this connects to sexual disempowerment. Continuing to examining the role of alcohol in college campuses relationships is essential while having honest open dialogue about the complexity and confusion around sexual coercion and intoxication.

Culturally congruent responses to sexual coercion are also essential. Interventions and prevention efforts can work to deconstruct representations of Black women in popular media with young Black girls and women and provide a space to challenge expectations for Black girls to be hypersexual. Critical media literacy can help empower Black girls to resist toxic portrayals of themselves and create healthy self- representations. Having historically and culturally relevant discussion on Black women's sexuality can help girls and women find ways to fight racist and sexist oppression at the intersection; including critical analysis of race and gender. With a space to explore the pervasive message Black girls and women are inundated with while acknowledging historical and cultural relevancies, there is more opportunity for healthy girl relationships that can reduce victim blaming and increase a sense of agency and activism. Moreover, prevention efforts should focus on changing the images represented in broader media and reducing the sexualization of girls and women broadly.

## **Conclusion**

The quantitative and qualitative findings of this study show that existing conceptualizations and operational definitions of sexual coercion are not fully encompassing of adolescent perceptions of the problem. Participants defined sexual coercion as including physical

force or verbal pressure and manipulation in their open-ended written responses. This is consistent with existing measures of sexual coercion (e.g., SES; Koss et al., 1987). Findings from the focus groups, however, show a much richer and nuanced understanding of sexual coercion that is not captured in current definitions of the construct. What adolescent girls seem to be struggling with the most are the combined effects of societal, group, partner, and internal pressure. Living in a society which overemphasizes girl and women sexuality, prioritizes male desires over women's, and pushes the belief that girl happiness relies on heterosexual romantic partnership creates a dynamic that makes it difficult to have consensual, desired, genuine, healthy sexual experiences. While some researchers would argue that "consenting" to undesired sex is not considered sexual coercion, others question the utility of including consent in definitions of violence against women. Restructuring our understanding of sexual coercion to include societal and cultural expectations and internal obligations broadens the scope of the problem and brings to light issues of unwanted sex that may otherwise be ignored. It also places responsibility on communities to change the pressure girls are faced with on a larger scale, rather than encouraging girls to be stronger and better resist the pressure so they don't feel obligated to have sex when not wanted.

## References

- Abbey, A., Zawacki, T., Buck, P. O., Clinton, M., & McAulsan, P. (2001). Alcohol and sexual assault. *Alcohol Research & Health, 25*, 43-52.
- Abbey, A. (2002). Alcohol-related sexual assault: A common problem among college students. *Journal of the Study of Alcohol, Supplement 14*, 118-128.
- Abma, J., Driscoll, A., & Moore, K. (1998). Young women's degree of control over first intercourse: An exploratory analysis. *Family Planning Perspectives, 30*(1), 12-18.
- American Psychological Association (2007). *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-full.pdf>
- Anthony, E. R. (2008). Normative violence? The impact of gender-neutral language on self-reported rates of sexual violence victimization and perpetration (Master's thesis). Retrieved from [http://etd.gsu.edu/theses/available/etd-11202008-133453/unrestricted/Anthony\\_Elizabeth\\_200812\\_Masters\\_3.pdf](http://etd.gsu.edu/theses/available/etd-11202008-133453/unrestricted/Anthony_Elizabeth_200812_Masters_3.pdf)
- Agresti, A. (2007). *An introduction to Categorical Data Analysis*, (2nd ed). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Arnett, J.J. (1999). Adolescent *storm* and stress, reconsidered. *American Psychologist, 54*, 317-326.
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*, 469-480.;
- Basile, K.C. (2002). Prevalence of wife rape and other intimate partner sexual coercion in a nationally representative sample of women. *Violence and Victims, 17*, 511-524.
- Biglan, A., Noell, J., Ochs, L., Smolkowski, K., & Metzler, C. (1995). Does sexual coercion play a role in high-risk sexual behavior of adolescent and young adult women? *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 18*, 549-568.
- Blythe, M.J., Fortenberry, J.D., Temkit, M., Tu, W., & Orr, D. (2006). Incidence and correlates of unwanted sex in relationships of middle and late adolescent women. *Archives of Adolescent Pediatric Medicine, 160*, 591-595
- Bohan, J. S. (1993). Regarding gender: Essentialism, constructionism, and feminist psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 17*, 5-21.
- Bondurant, B. (2001). University women's acknowledgement of rape. *Violence Against Women, 7*, 294-314.
- Boswell, A. A. & Spade, J. Z. (1996). Fraternities and collegiate rape culture: Why are some fraternities more dangerous places for women? *Gender and Society, 10*, 133-147.



- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Broach, J. L. & Petretic, P. A. (2006). Beyond traditional definitions of assault: Expanding our focus to include sexually coercive experiences. *Journal of Family Violence*, 21, 477-486.
- Brown, L. M., & Gilligan, C. (1992). *Meeting at the crossroads: Women's psychology and girls' development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women, and rape*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Burt, M.R. & Alpin, R.S. (1981). Rape myths, rape definitions, and probability of conviction. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 11, 212-230.
- Caracelli, V. J. & Greene, J. C. (1993). Data analysis strategies for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15, 195-207.
- Catalano, S.M. (2005). *Criminal Victimization, 2004*. (NCJ Publication No. 210674). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey.
- Cecil, H. & Matson, S.C., (2005). Differences in psychological health and family dysfunction by sexual victimization type in a clinical sample of African American adolescent women. *Journal of Sex Research*, 42, 203-214.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007). *2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/yrbss>
- Chasteen, A. (2001). Constructing rape: Feminist, change, and women's everyday understandings of sexual assault. *Sociological Spectrum*, 21, 101-139.
- Coker, A.L., McKeown, R.E., Sanderson, M., Davis, K.E., Valois, R.F., & Huebner, E. (2000). Severe dating violence and quality of life among South Carolina high school students. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 19, 220-227.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Collins, P.H. (2004). *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1995). The intersection of race and gender. In K. Crenshaw, N Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.) *Critical race theory: Key writings that formed the movement* (pp. 357-383). New York, NY: New Press.

- Crosset, T. W., Benedict, J. R., McDonald, M. A. (1995). *Journal of Sports & Social Issues*, 19, 126-140.
- Davis, A. Y. (1981). *Women, Race, & Class*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Davis, N.S., & Twombly, J. (2000). *State legislators' handbook for statutory rape issues*. American Bar Association (NCJ No. 178238). Retrieved from National Criminal Justice Reference Service website:  
<http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/abstractdb/AbstractDBDetails.aspx?id=178238>
- DeGue, S. & DiLillo, D. (2005). You would if you loved me: Toward in improved conceptual and etiological understanding of nonphysical male sexual coercion. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 10, 513-532.
- DeKeseredy, W. S. (2000). Current controversies on defining nonlethal violence against women in intimate heterosexual relationships. *Violence Against Women*, 6, 728-746.
- Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & McCormack-Steinmetz, A. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*. London, UK: The Falmer Press.
- Erickson, P. I., & Rapkin, A. J. (1991). Unwanted sexual experiences among middle and high school youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 12, 319-325.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, (2006). Crime in the United States. Retrieved on January 10, 2008 from  
[http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/violent\\_crime/forcible\\_rape.html](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/violent_crime/forcible_rape.html).
- Fine, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, 29-53.
- Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 70-82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F.T., & Turner, M.G. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women*. (NCJ Publication No. 182369). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.
- Fisher, B. S., Sloan, J. J., Cullen, F. T., & Lu, C. (1999). Crime in the ivory tower: The level and sources of student victimization. *Criminology*, 36, 671-710.
- Forbes, G.B. Adams-Curtis, L.E., Pakalka, A.H., & White, K. B. (2006). Dating aggression, sexual coercion, and aggression-supporting attitudes among college men as a function of participation in aggressive high school sports. *Violence Against Women*, 12, 441-455.

- French, B. H. & Neville, H. A. (2008). Black teenage girls' experiences with sexual coercion: Context, coping, and consequences. *Black Women, Gender, & Families, Fall, 2*.
- Garcia, L., Milano, L., & Quijano, A. (1989). Perceptions of coercive sexual behavior. *Sex Roles, 21*, 569-577.
- George, W.H., Cue, K.L., Lopez, P.A., Crowe, L.C. & Norris, J. (1995). Self reported alcohol expectancies and postdrinking sexual inferences about women. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 25*, 164-186.
- Gergen, K.J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist, 40*, 266-275.
- Gordon, M.T. & Riger, S. (1989). *The female fear*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Gowen, L., Feldman, S., Diaz, R., & Yisrael, D. S. (2004). A comparison of the sexual behaviors and attitudes of adolescent girls with older vs. similar-aged boyfriends. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 33*, 167-175.
- Greene, J. C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11*, 255-274.
- Guba, Y. S. & Lincoln, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Petska, K. S., Creswell, J. D. (2005). Mixed method research designs in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 224-235.
- Haverkamp, B. E., Morrow, S. L., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). A time and place for qualitative and mixed methods in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 123-125.
- Haworth-Hoepfner (1998). What's gender got to do with it: Perceptions of sexual coercion in a university community. *Sex Roles, 38*, 757-779
- Heppner, P. P. , Kivlighan, D. M., & Wampold, B. E. (1999). *Research design in counseling*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Hickman, S. E., & Muehlenhard, C. L. (1997). College women's fears and precautionary behaviors relating to acquaintance rape and stranger rape. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21*, 527-547.

- Higginbotham, E. B. (1993). The politics of Respectability. In *Righteous Discontent: The women's movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*, 185-230.
- Hine, D. C. (1989). Rape and the inner lives of Black women in the Middle West: Preliminary thoughts on the culture of dissemblance. *Signs*, *14*, 912-920.
- Hird, M. J. & Jackson, D. (2001). Where 'angles' and 'wusses' fear to tread: sexual coercion in adolescent dating relationships. *Journal of Sociology*, *37*, 27-43.
- hooks, b. (2000). Sisterhood: Political solidarity among women. In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Humphrey, J. A. & Kahn, A. S. (2000). Fraternities, athletic teams, and rape: Importance of identification with a risky group. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *15*, 1313-1322.
- Humphrey, J. A. & White, J. W. (2000). Women's vulnerability to sexual assault from adolescence to young adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *27*, 419-424.
- Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (2004). Criminal sexual assault act. Retrieved on October 20, 2007 from [http://www.icasa.org/uploads/law\\_book\\_2004.pdf](http://www.icasa.org/uploads/law_book_2004.pdf).
- Impett, E. A. & Peplau, L. A. (2002). Why some women consent to unwanted sex with a dating partner: Insights from attachment theory. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *26*, 360-370.
- Jeweiks, R., Sen, P., & Garcia-Moreno, C. (2002). Sexual Violence. In E.G. Krug, L. L. Dahlberg, J. A. Mercy, A. B. Zwi, & R. Lozano (Eds.), *World Report on Violence and Health* (pp. 149-181).
- Johnson, T. J., Hamilton, S., & Sheets, V. L. (1999). College students' self-reported reasons for playing drinking games. *Addictive Behaviors*, *24*, 279-286.
- Kahn, A. S., Marthie, V. A., & Torgler, C. (1994). Rape scripts and rape acknowledgement. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *27*, 233-242.
- Kelly, L. & Radford, J. (1998). Sexual violence against women and girls: An approach to an international overview. In R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash (Eds.), *Rethinking violence against women* (pp. 53-76). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kilpatrick, D. G. (2004). What is violence against women: Defining and measuring the problem. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *19*, 1209-1234.
- Koss, M.P., Abbey, A., Campbell, R., Cook, S., Norris, J., Testa, M., Ullman, S., West, C., White, J. (2007). Revising the SES: A collaborative process to improve assessment of sexual aggression and victimization. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *31*, 357-370.

- Koss, M. P. & Gaines, J. A. (1993). The prediction of sexual aggression by alcohol use, athletic participation, and fraternity affiliation. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 8, 94-108.
- Koss, M.P. & Gidycz, C.A. (1985). The Sexual Experiences Survey: Reliability and validity. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 53, 442-423.
- Koss, M.P., Gidycz, C.A., & Wisniewski, N. (1987). The scope of rape: Incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of higher education students. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55, 162-170.
- Koss, M. P., Heise, L., & Russo, N. F. (1994). The global health burden of rape. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 18, 509-537.
- Koss, M. P. & Oros, C. J. (1982). The Sexual Experiences Survey: An empirical instrument investigating sexual aggression and victimization. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 55, 162-170.
- Krueger, R. A. (1994). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lanmann, E. O., Gagnon, J. H., Michael, R. T., & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Larimer, M. E., Lydum, A. R., Anderson, B. K., & Turner, A. P. (1999). Male and female recipients of unwanted sexual contact in a college student sample: Prevalence rates, alcohol use, and depression symptoms. *Sex Roles*, 40, 295-308.
- Maier, S. L. (2008). Rape victims advocates perception of the influence of race and ethnicity on victims' responses to rape. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 6, 303-334.
- Madriz, E. (2000). Focus groups in feminist research. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 835-850). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marin, B. V., Coyle, K. K., Gomez, C. A., Carvajal, S. C., & Kirby, D. B. (2000). Older boyfriends and girlfriends increase risk of sexual initiation in young adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 27, 409-418.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, B. C., & Benson, B. (1999). Romantic and sexual relationship development during adolescence. In W. Furman, B. B. Brown, & C. Feiring (Eds.). *The development of romantic relationships in adolescence* (99-121). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Morrison, T. G., McLeod, L. D., Morrison, M. A., Anderson, D., & O'Connor, W. E. (1997). Gender stereotyping, homonegativity, and misconceptions about sexually coercive behavior among adolescents. *Youth & Society, 28*, 351-382.
- Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in Counseling Psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 250-260.
- Muehlenhard, C. L. & Kimes, L.A. (1999). The social construction of violence: The case of sexual and domestic violence. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 3*, 234-245.
- Muehlenhard, C. L., Powch, I. G., Phelps, J. L., & Giusti, L. M. (1992). Definitions of rape: Scientific and political implications. *Journal of Social Issues, 48*, 23-44.
- Neville, H. A., Heppner, M. J., Oh, E., Spanierman, L. B., & Clark, M. (2004). General and culturally specific factors influencing Black and White rape survivors' self-esteem. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 28*, 83-94.
- Noell, J., Rohde, P., Seeley, J., & Ochs, L. (2001). Childhood sexual abuse, adolescent sexual coercion and STI acquisition among homeless female adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 25*, 137-148.
- Norman-Eady, S., Reinhart, C., & Martino, P. (2004). Statutory rape laws by state. *OLR Research Report 2003-R-0376*.
- Oberman, M. (1994). Turning girls into women: Re-evaluating modern statutory rape law. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 85*, 15-79.
- Oberman, M. (2000). Regulating consensual sex with minors: Defining a role for statutory rape. *Buffalo Law Review, 48*, 703-784.
- Oswald, D.L., & Russell, B.L. (2006). Perceptions of sexual coercion in heterosexual dating relationships: The role of aggressor gender and tactics. *The Journal of Sex Research, 43*, 87-95.
- O'Sullivan, L. F. (2005). Sexual coercion in dating relationships: Conceptual and methodological issues. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy, 20*, 3-11.
- O'Sullivan, L.F., & Allegier, E.R. (1998). Feigning sexual desire: Consenting to unwanted sexual activity in heterosexual relationships. *The Journal of Sex Research, 35*, 234-243.
- O'Sullivan, C. (1993). Fraternities and the Rape Culture. In E. Buchwald, P. Fletcher, & M. Roth (Eds.), *Transforming a Rape Culture* (pp. 23-30). Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

- Poitras, M. & Lavoie, F. (1995). A study of the prevalence of sexual coercion in adolescent and heterosexual dating relationships in a Quebec sample. *Violence & Victims, 10*, 299-313.
- Polland, B.D. (2002). Transcription quality. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rand, M., & Catalano, S. (2007). *Bulletin: Criminal victimization, 2006*. (NCJ Publication No. 219413). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Reichardt, C. S. & Cook, T. D. (1979). Beyond qualitative *versus* quantitative methods. In T.D. Cook & C. S. Reichardt (Eds.), *Qualitative and quantitative methods in evaluation research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richie, B. E. (2000). A Black feminist reflection on the antiviolence movement. *Signs, 25*, 1133-1137.
- Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Rosenblum, G., & Lewis, M. (2006). Emotional development in adolescence. In G.R. Adams & M.D. Berzonsky (Eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Adolescence* (Ch. 13, pp. 260-289). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rozee, P. D. (1993). Forbidden or forgiven? Rape in a cross-cultural perspective. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 17*, 499-514.
- Russell, B. L., & Oswald, D. L. (2002). Sexual coercion and victimization of college men. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*, 273-285.
- Saltzman, L.E. (2004). Issues relating to defining and measuring violence against women: Response to Kilpatrick. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19*, 1235-1243.
- Schwartz, M. D., & DeKeseredy, W.S. (1997). *Sexual Assault on the College Campus: The Role of Male Peer Support*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Siebert, D. C., Wilke, D. J., Delva, J., Smith, M. P. & Howell, R. L. (2003). Differences in African American and White college student drinking behaviors: Consequences, harm reduction strategies, and health information sources. *Journal of American College Health, 52*, 123-129.
- Shotland, R. L., & Hunter, B. A. (1995). Women's "token resistant" and compliant sexual behaviors are related to uncertain sexual intentions and rape. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21*, 226-236.

- Shrier, L. A., Goodman, E., & Emans, S.J. (1999). Partner condom use among adolescent girls with sexually transmitted diseases. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 24*, 357-361.
- Spitzberg, B.H. (1999). An analysis of empirical estimates of sexual aggression, victimization, and perpetration. *Violence and Victims, 14*, 241-260.
- Steinberg, L. (2005). *Adolescence* (7<sup>th</sup> ed., Ch. 5, pp. 173-197). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Stephens, D. P & Phillips, L. D. (2003). Freaks, gold diggers, divas, and dykes: The sociohistorical development of adolescent African American women's sexual scripts. *Sexuality & Culture, 7*, 3-49.
- Strauch, B. (2003). *The Primal Teen*. New York, NY: First Anchor Books
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. New York, NY: Sage.
- Struckman-Johnson, D. & Struckman-Johnson, C. (1991). Men and women's acceptance of coercive sexual strategies varied by initiator gender and couple intimacy. *Sex Roles, 25*, 661-676.
- Teddlie, C. & Tashakkori, A. (2003). Major issues and controversies in the use of mixed methods in the social and behavioral sciences. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 3-50). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Testa, M. & Dermen, K.H., (1999). The differential correlates of sexual coercion and rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14*, 548-561.
- Teten, A. L., Nagayama Hall, G. C., & Pacifici, C. (2005). Validation of acceptance of coercive behavior (ACSB): A multimedia measure of adolescent dating attitudes. *Assessment, 12*, 126-173.
- Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. (NCJ Publication No. 183781). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.
- Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (2006). *Extent, nature, and consequences of rape victimization: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. (NCJ Publication No. 210846). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.
- Tolman, D.L. (1994). Doing desire: Adolescent girls' struggles for/with sexuality. *Gender and Society, 8*, 324-342.



- Tyler, K. A., Hoyt, D. R., & Whitbeck, L. B. (1998). Coercive sexual strategies. *Violence and Victims, 13*, 47-61.
- Ullman, S. E., Karabatsos, G., & Koss, M. P. (1999). Alcohol and sexual assault in a national sample of college women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14*, 603-625.
- Vanier, S.A. & O'Sullivan, L.F. (2009). Sex without desire: Characteristics of sexual compliance in young adults' committed relationships. *Journal of Sex Research, 46*, 1-11.
- Waldner, L. K., Vaden-Goad, L., & Sikka, A. (1999). Sexual coercion in India: An exploratory analysis using demographic variables. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 28*, 523-538.
- Walker, A. (1985). *In search of our mothers' gardens*. Orlando, CA: Hartcourt Books.
- Washington, P. A. (2001). Disclosure patterns of Black female sexual assault survivors. *Violence Against Women, 7*, 1254-1283.
- Weschler, H., Dowdall, G. W., Davenport, A., & Castillo, S. (1995). Correlates of college student binge drinking. *American Journal of Public Health, 85*, 921-926.
- West, C. M. (October, 2006). Sexual violence in the lives of African American women: Risk, response, and resilience. Harrisburg, PA: VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence/Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Retrieved from <http://www.vawnet.org>
- West, C. M. (Ed.) (2002). *Violence in the Lives of Black Women: Battered, Black and Blue*. New York, NY: Hawthorne Press.
- West, C. M. (2008). Still on the Auction Block: The (S)exploitation of Black Adolescent Girls in Rap(e) Music and Hip Hop Culture. In S. Olfman (Ed.) *Sexualization of Childhood*. Praeger Press.
- White, J.W. & Frabutt, J.M. (2006). Violence against girls and women: An integrative developmental perspective. In J. Worell & C.D. Goodheart *Handbook of Girls' and Womens' Psychological Health*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY.
- Wilkinson, S. (1998). Focus groups in feminist research: Power, interaction, and the co-construction of meaning. *Women's Studies International Forum, 21*, 111-125.
- Wyatt, G. E. (1992). The sociocultural context of African American and White American women's rape. *Journal of Social Issues, 48*, 77-91.
- Zimmerman, R. S., Sprecher, S., I. anger, I.. M., & Holloway, C. D. (1995). Adolescents' perceived ability to say "no" to unwanted sex. *Journal of Adolfsamt Research, 10*, 383-399.

Zweig, J.M, Sayer, A., Crockett, L.J., & Vicary, J.R., (2002). Adolescent risk factors for sexual victimization: A longitudinal analysis of rural women. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *17*, 586-603.

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent

#### UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research  
Institutional Review Board  
528 East Green Street  
Suite 203  
Champaign, IL 61820



June 8, 2010

Helen Neville  
Educational Psychology  
188U Education Bldg  
M/C 708

RE: *Naming is power! Black and White adolescents define sexual coercion - A mixed methods analysis*  
IRB Protocol Number: 05194

Dear Helen:

You have indicated that your continuing project entitled *Naming is power! Black and White adolescents define sexual coercion - A mixed methods analysis*, Institutional Review Board (IRB) case number 05194, is undergoing data analysis only and that you are no longer gathering data from human subjects. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign IRB has approved, by expedited continuing review, continuation of your project for data analysis only; the approval expires on 06/07/2011. Certification of approval is available upon request.

**Note: Previous IRB approval for this protocol expired on 04/02/2010. All research activities should have ceased between 04/03/2010 and 06/07/2010. Data collected during this period may not be used.**

Because this approval is only for data analysis, you are *not authorized* to involve human subjects in any aspect of the protocol and we have not returned any consent forms related to the project. IRB approval must be obtained to reinstate enrollment of human subjects in this protocol.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our Web site at <http://www.irb.illinois.edu>.

Sincerely,

Sue Keehn, Director, Institutional Review Board

c: Bryana French

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research  
Institutional Review Board  
528 East Green Street  
Suite 203  
Champaign, IL 61820



April 3, 2009

Helen Neville  
Educational Psychology  
188U Education Bldg  
M/C 708

RE: *Naming is power! Black and White adolescents define sexual coercion - A mixed methods analysis*  
IRB Protocol Number: 05194

Dear Helen:

You have indicated that your continuing project entitled *Naming is power! Black and White adolescents define sexual coercion - A mixed methods analysis*, Institutional Review Board (IRB) case number 05194, is undergoing data analysis only and that you are no longer gathering data from human subjects. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign IRB has approved, by expedited continuing review, continuation of your project for data analysis only; the approval expires on 04/02/2010. Certification of approval is available upon request.

Because this approval is only for data analysis, you are *not authorized* to involve human subjects in any aspect of the protocol and we have not returned any consent forms related to the project. IRB approval must be obtained to reinstate enrollment of human subjects in this protocol.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our Web site at <http://www.irb.illinois.edu>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Keehn', written over a white background.

Sue Keehn, Director, Institutional Review Board

c: Bryana French

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research  
Institutional Review Board  
528 East Green Street  
Suite 200  
Champaign, IL 61821



May 28, 2008

Helen Neville  
Educational Psychology  
188U Education  
M/C 708

RE: *Naming is power! Black and White adolescents define sexual coercion - A mixed methods analysis*  
IRB Protocol Number: 05194

Dear Helen:

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in your continuing project entitled *Naming is power! Black and White adolescents define sexual coercion - A mixed methods analysis*. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the protocol as described in your IRB-1 application, by expedited continuing review. The expiration date for this protocol, UIUC number 05194, is 04/13/2009. The risk designation applied to your project is *no more than minimal risk*. Certification of approval is available upon request.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) has also reviewed the request for a minor modification. I will officially note for the record that the minor modification to the original project, as noted in your correspondence received April 8, 2008, changing the title of the project from "Contextualizing Sexual Coercion: Examining the Experiences of African American Girls" to "Naming is power! Black and White adolescents define sexual coercion - A mixed methods analysis" to reflect the current focus of the research and to meet dissertation requirements, has been approved.

Copies of the enclosed date-stamped consent forms must be used in obtaining informed consent. If there is a need to revise or alter the consent forms, please submit the revised forms for IRB review, approval, and date-stamping prior to use.

Please note that additional modifications to your project need to be submitted to the IRB for review and approval before the modifications are initiated. To submit modifications to your protocol, please complete the IRB Research Amendment Form (see <http://www.irb.uiuc.edu/forms/amendment.asp>). Unless modifications are made to this project, no further submittals are required to the IRB.

We appreciate your conscientious adherence to the requirements of human subject research. If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our Web site at <http://www.irb.uiuc.edu>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Keehn".

Sue Keehn, Director, Institutional Review Board

Enclosures

c: Bryana Helen French

telephone 217-244-2670 • fax 217-244-0405 • email IRB@uiuc.edu

## PARENTAL CONSENT FORM - SURVEY

Dear parent(s) and/or guardian(s):

My name is Bryana French and I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am working with Dr. Helen Neville on a project examining high school students' social practices, including potential sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can serve to better understand adolescents' social experiences and can educate youth about safer practices. If your child takes part in this project, he or she will complete a paper-and-pencil survey during school hours, and it should take 40-50 minutes to complete. Your child will complete the survey on school grounds on \_\_\_\_\_ during their classroom period. The risks of participating in the discussions are no more than experienced in daily life or conversations. Some students may experience some emotional discomfort at remembering painful events in their past and a Ph.D. level psychology faculty member or doctoral student trained in conducting therapy will be present at all times in case discomfort arises. A copy of the survey will be available in the school office for your review.

Your child's participation in this project is completely voluntary. In addition to your permission, your child will also be asked if he or she would like to take part in this project. Only those children who want to participate will do so, and any child may stop taking part at any time. You are also free to withdraw your permission for your child's participation at any time and for any reason without penalty. Your child's choice to participate or not will not impact his or her status at school. Children who participate in this project will receive \$5.00 gift certificate as a token of appreciation. Whether or not you want your child to participate in the project, please fill out the attached form and ask your child to return it to his or her homeroom teacher. Your child will not be allowed to participate in this project without your signed consent.

Data from this project will be used for future research or secondary analysis. Findings will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, no identifiable information related to any student, Whitney Young, or the Chicago Public Schools will be used. All of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential and will not become a part of your child's school record. In fact, your child's name will not appear on the paper-and-pencil survey he or she completes. Your child may be asked at a later date to participate in a small group discussion about adolescent social practices. Students will be randomly chosen for this discussion. Researchers will notify you for consent for your child's participation in this discussion at a later date if applicable. The consent you provide today IS NOT for the small group discussions.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me by email [bbfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bbfrench@uiuc.edu) or you can contact my research advisor, Dr. Helen Neville, by e-mail at [hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) or you may call collect by telephone (217-244-6291). You may also call Anne S. Robertson collect at the Office of School University Research Relations (217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtsn@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtsn@uiuc.edu)) or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217-333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu)) with additional concerns. Parents/guardians will be given a copy of this consent form for their records.

Sincerely,

Bryana French  
Doctoral Student Counseling Psychology

**PARENT RESEARCH RESPONSE FORM**

**Please indicate whether or not you want your child to participate in the Social Practices project.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I **do** give permission for my child to participate in the project described on the previous page.

\_\_\_\_\_ I **do not** give permission for my child to participate in the project described on the previous page.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please ask your child to return the form to his or her teacher (the one that distributed the forms) on or before \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
VALID UNTIL

**APR 13 2009**

## **Youth Assent (Survey)**

Bryana French, a doctoral student at the University of Illinois, and her advisor, Dr Helen Neville, are doing a project in your school about high school students' experiences with social practices including potential sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can benefit other teens by helping us better understand adolescents' social experiences so that we can educate youth about safer practices.

If you do this project, you will complete a brief paper-and-pencil survey in class. The survey should take about one hour to complete. The risks of participating in this survey are no more than experienced in daily life, however some sensitive questions about unwanted sexual experiences will be asked. Should emotional discomfort occur, a doctoral student or faculty psychology member with clinical training and experience will be present at all times in case this arises.

Your participation in this project is voluntary-this means that you can decide whether or not you want to participate. If you want to stop doing the project at any time, you can stop. How you answer these questions or whether you decide to participate in the project won't go on your school record or count toward your grade in class. As a token of our appreciation, we are giving all students' who participate in the project a \$5 gift certificate and will provide an informational sheet and resource list for your information.

Findings from these discussions will result in a paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, no identifiable information related to any student or the school will be used. All of the information collected during this research project will be kept strictly confidential and will not become a part of your school record. All surveys will be securely stored in a locked cabinet with restricted access.

If you have any questions about the current project, you can email Bryana French at [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu), or Dr. Helen Neville at [hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) (217-244-6291) or the Institutional Review Board Office (217-333-2670), [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu). You may call collect if you live outside of the local calling area.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
#12100111

**APR 13 2009**

**KEEP THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS**



## Youth Assent

Bryana French, a doctoral student at the University of Illinois, and her advisor, Dr Helen Neville, are doing a project in your school about high school students' experiences with social practices including potential sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can benefit other teens by helping us better understand adolescents' social experiences so that we can educate youth about safer practices.

If you do this project, you will complete a brief paper-and-pencil survey in class. The survey should take about one hour to complete. The risks of participating in this survey are no more than experienced in daily life, however there is a small chance that you may experience some emotional discomfort remembering potentially painful events. Should emotional discomfort occur, a doctoral student or faculty psychology member with clinical training and experience will be present at all times in case this arises. You may also choose to skip a question should you become upset by that question. You will be provided with an informational sheet consisting of support services in the community as well as relevant books or websites that may be of interest for your information.

Your participation in this project is voluntary-this means that you can decide whether or not you want to participate. If you want to stop doing the project at any time, you can stop. How you answer these questions or whether you decide to participate in the project won't go on your school record or count toward your grade in class. As a token of our appreciation, we are giving all students' who participate in the project a \$5 gift certificate.

Findings from these discussions will result in a paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, no identifiable information related to any student or the school will be used. All of the information collected during this research project will be kept strictly confidential and will not become a part of your school record. All surveys will be securely stored in a locked cabinet with restricted access.

If you have any questions about the current project, you can email Bryana French at [bfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bfrench@uiuc.edu), or Dr. Helen Neville at [hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) (217-244-6291) or the Institutional Review Board Office (217-333-2670), [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu). You may call collect if you live outside of the local calling area.

**By signing below, you are agreeing to the following statement: "I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study"**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name: Print Name

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
VALID UNTIL

APR 13 2009

**RETURN THIS COPY TO RESEARCHERS**

### CONSENT FORM (UIUC AFRO 100 STUDENTS)

You are invited to participate in a small group discussion as part of a study examining the social practices of youth and young adults conducted by Bryana French, doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program, and Helen Neville, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology faculty member, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This project examines students' sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can offer benefits to the larger society by serving to better understand social experiences among youth and young adults and can help to inform safer practices among youth and young adults. We expect that findings from the study will help to inform the development of culturally relevant intervention and prevention efforts related to sexual coercion among young adults.

Participation consists of completing a survey outside of class that should take about 20 – 40 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to complete the survey. Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation decision will have no effect on your grade in the AFRO 100 course, nor on your status at, or relationship with, the University of Illinois. The risks of completing this survey are no more than normally encountered in daily living, however there is a small chance that you may experience some emotional discomfort remembering potentially painful events. In the event that I become upset by an item, I may choose to skip the item. Also, I will be given a resource list consisting of support services available on campus and in the community as well as relevant books or websites that may be of interest.

Findings from this study will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, you will not be identified as an individual and all of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear on the survey that you complete. As a token of appreciation, you will have a chance to participate in a drawing to win a \$50 check or a \$25 check upon completion of the survey; if everyone in the class participates. There will be about a one in 75 chance of winning one of the cash awards.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Bryana French (217.352.0233 [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu)) or Dr. Helen Neville ([hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) 217-244-6291). For additional information regarding the rights of human participants, you may contact Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtsn@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtsn@uiuc.edu); or the Institutional Review Board Officer: (217) 333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu), with additional concerns.

**By signing below, you are agreeing to the following statement: "I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study"**

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this Copy to Researchers**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED COAELVT  
KALIS UNITS

**APR 13 2009**

## CONSENT FORM (UIUC AFRO 100 STUDENTS)

You are invited to participate in a small group discussion as part of a study examining the social practices of youth and young adults conducted by Bryana French, doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program, and Helen Neville, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology faculty member, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This project examines students' sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can offer benefits to the larger society by serving to better understand social experiences among youth and young adults and can help to inform safer practices among youth and young adults. We expect that findings from the study will help to inform the development of culturally relevant intervention and prevention efforts related to sexual coercion among young adults.

Participation consists of completing a survey outside of class that should take about 20 – 40 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to complete the survey.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation decision will have no effect on your grade in the AFRO 100 course, nor on your status at, or relationship with, the University of Illinois. The risks of completing this survey are no more than normally encountered in daily living, however there is a small chance that you may experience some emotional discomfort remembering potentially painful events. In the event that I become upset by an item, I may choose to skip the item. Also, I will be given a resource list consisting of support services available on campus and in the community as well as relevant books or websites that may be of interest.

Findings from this study will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, you will not be identified as an individual and all of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear on the survey that you complete.

As a token of appreciation, you will have a chance to participate in a drawing to win a \$50 check or a \$25 check upon completion of the survey; if everyone in the class participates. There will be about a one in 75 chance of winning one of the cash awards.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Bryana French (217.352.0233 [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu)) or Dr. Helen Neville ([hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) 217-244-6293). For additional information regarding the rights of human participants, you may contact Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtsn@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtsn@uiuc.edu); or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217) 333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu), with additional concerns.

**Retain this Copy for Your Records**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED DOCUMENT  
VALDUIBNTI

**APR 13 2009**

### CONSENT FORM (UIUC EPSY 220 STUDENTS)

You are invited to participate in a small group discussion as part of a study examining the social practices of youth and young adults conducted by Bryana French, doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program, and Helen Neville, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology faculty member, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This project examines students' sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can offer benefits to the larger society by serving to better understand social experiences among youth and young adults and can help to inform safer practices among youth and young adults. We expect that findings from the study will help to inform the development of culturally relevant intervention and prevention efforts related to sexual coercion among young adults.

Participation consists of completing a survey outside of class that should take about 20 – 40 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to complete the survey. Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation decision will have no effect on your grade in the EPSY 220 course, nor on your status at, or relationship with, the University of Illinois. The risks of completing this survey are no more than normally encountered in daily living, however there is a small chance that you may experience some emotional discomfort remembering potentially painful events. In the event that I become upset by an item, I may choose to skip the item. Also, I will be given a resource list consisting of support services available on campus and in the community as well as relevant books or websites that may be of interest.

Findings from this study will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, you will not be identified as an individual and all of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear on the survey that you complete. As a token of appreciation, you will receive course credit for participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Bryana French (217.352.0233 [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu)) or Dr. Helen Neville ([hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) 217-244-6291). For additional information regarding the rights of human participants, you may contact Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtsn@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtsn@uiuc.edu); or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217) 333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu), with additional concerns.

**By signing below, you are agreeing to the following statement: "I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study"**

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this Copy to Researchers**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
FORM

APR 13 2009

## CONSENT FORM (UIUC EPSY 220 STUDENTS)

You are invited to participate in a small group discussion as part of a study examining the social practices of youth and young adults conducted by Bryana French, doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program, and Helen Neville, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology faculty member, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This project examines students' sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can offer benefits to the larger society by serving to better understand social experiences among youth and young adults and can help to inform safer practices among youth and young adults. We expect that findings from the study will help to inform the development of culturally relevant intervention and prevention efforts related to sexual coercion among young adults.

Participation consists of completing a survey outside of class that should take about 20 – 40 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to complete the survey. Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation decision will have no effect on your grade in the EPSY 220 course, nor on your status at, or relationship with, the University of Illinois. The risks of completing this survey are no more than normally encountered in daily living, however there is a small chance that you may experience some emotional discomfort remembering potentially painful events. In the event that I become upset by an item, I may choose to skip the item. Also, I will be given a resource list consisting of support services available on campus and in the community as well as relevant books or websites that may be of interest.

Findings from this study will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, you will not be identified as an individual and all of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear on the survey that you complete. As a token of appreciation, you will receive course credit for participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Bryana French (217-352-0233 [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu)) or Dr. Helen Neville ([hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) 217-244-6291). For additional information regarding the rights of human participants, you may contact Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtsn@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtsn@uiuc.edu); or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217) 333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu), with additional concerns.

**Retain this Copy for Your Records**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
M115-0176

**APR 13 2009**

**CONSENT FORM – UIUC FOCUS GROUPS**

(Date)

You are invited to participate in a small group discussion as part of a study examining the social practices of youth and young adults conducted by Bryana French, doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program, and Helen Neville, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology faculty member, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This small group discussion will explore perceptions of sexual coercion among young adults. You will not be asked nor required to talk about your personal experiences. This project can offer benefits to the larger society by serving to better understand the perceptions of sexual coercion among youth and young adults in order to inform future prevention programs and help stop sexual coercion. Participation consists of participating in a small group discussion with 6-10 other participants and 1-2 facilitators, one of which will be a Counseling Psychology faculty member or doctoral student. The discussion will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour and should be only students who are at least 18 years old are allowed to participate. To further ensure confidentiality, we ask that you not speak to other about the discussions had during the focus group sessions. We cannot guarantee, however, that other focus groups participants will not speak about these discussions with others.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no negative consequences if I decide not to participate. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw participation will have no effect on your status at, or relationship with, the University of Illinois. The risks of participating in this discussion are no more than experienced in daily life or conversation; however should some emotional discomfort occur, a doctoral student or faculty psychology member will be present at all times in case this arises.

Each discussion will be audio taped for accuracy, however, no identifiable information will be used about any student. Researchers will immediately transcribe the discussions without using names or other identifiable information and then erase all audio tapes. Results from this study may be used for future research or secondary analysis. Findings will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, you will not be identified as an individual and all of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. As a token of appreciation, you will receive a gift certificate in the amount of \$10.00 for a store of my choosing upon completion of the survey.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Bryana French (217-352-0233 [bfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bfrench@uiuc.edu)) or Dr. Helen Neville ([hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) 217-244-6291). For additional information regarding the rights of human participants, you may contact Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtso@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtso@uiuc.edu); or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217) 333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu), with additional concerns.

**By signing below, you are agreeing to the following statement: "I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study including a small group discussion which will be audio taped for accuracy."**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
IRB 02 0174

**APR 13 2009**

## CONSENT FORM

(Date)

You are invited to participate in a small group discussion as part of a study examining the social practices of youth and young adults conducted by Bryana French, doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program, and Helen Neville, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology faculty member, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This small group discussion will explore perceptions of sexual coercion among young adults. You will not be asked nor required to talk about your personal experiences. This project can serve to better understand the perceptions of sexual coercion among youth and young adults and can help to inform future prevention programs. Participation consists of participating in a small group discussion with 6-10 other participants and 1-2 facilitators, one of which will be a Counseling Psychology faculty member or doctoral student. The discussion will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour and should be only students who are *at least* 18 years old are allowed to participate. To further ensure confidentiality, we ask that you not speak to other about the discussions had during the focus group sessions. We cannot guarantee, however, that other focus groups participants will not speak about these discussions with others.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no negative consequences if I decide not to participate. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw participation will have no effect on your status at, or relationship with, the University of Illinois. This discussion will pose no more than minimal risk to participants; however should some emotional discomfort occur, a doctoral student or faculty psychology member will be present at all times in case this arises.

Each discussion will be audio taped for accuracy, however, no identifiable information will be used about any student. Researchers will immediately transcribe the discussions without using names or other identifiable information and then erase all audio tapes. Results from this study may be used for future research or secondary analysis. Findings will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, you will not be identified as an individual and all of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. As a token of appreciation, you will receive a gift certificate in the amount of \$10.00 for a store of my choosing upon completion of the survey.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Bryana French (217.352.0233 [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu)) or Dr. Helen Neville ([hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) 217-244-6291). For additional information regarding the rights of human participants, you may contact Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtsn@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtsn@uiuc.edu); or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217) 333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu), with additional concerns.

**KEEP THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
VALID UNTIL

**APR 13 2009**

## PARENTAL CONSENT FORM (FOCUS GROUPS)

(Date)

Dear parent(s) and/or guardian(s):

My name is Bryana French, M.A., and I am an advanced doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am working with Helen Neville, Ph.D. on a project examining high school students' perceptions of unwanted sexual practices among youth. This project can serve to better understand adolescents' social experiences and can educate youth about safer practices.

To gain further insight into the perceptions of sexual coercion in high schools, two (2) small group discussions with students and facilitators will take place as a part of this project. The small groups will consist of 6-10 adolescents and two facilitators. Each discussion should take approximately 1.5 hours. The students will be asked about their perceptions of high school students social practices in general and will not be asked about their own personal experiences. Hearing students' accounts of their take on the problem of sexual coercion can help inform researchers of the scope of the problem and can assist in future prevention and intervention efforts within the schools and community. The risks of participating in the discussions are no more than experienced in daily life or conversations. However, a psychology faculty member or doctoral student trained in conducting therapy will be present at all times in case discomfort arises.

Your child's participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. In addition to your permission, your child will also be asked if he or she would like to participate in the discussion. Only those adolescents who want to participate will do so, and participants may stop taking part at any time. You are also free to withdraw your permission for your child's participation at any time and for any reason without penalty. Your child's choice to participate or not will not impact his or her status at school. Adolescents who participate in this project will receive a \$10.00 gift certificate as a token of appreciation and refreshments will be provided for the discussion. Please fill out the attached form and let us know whether or not you grant permission for your child to participate in small group discussion. For your convenience, we have enclosed a postage paid return envelope. Your child will not be allowed to participate in the small group discussion without your signed consent.

Each discussion will be audio taped for accuracy. However, no identifiable information will be used about any student. In fact, researchers will immediately transcribe the discussions without using names or other identifiable information and then erase all audio tapes within one year. Data from this project will be used for future research. Findings will result in a dissertation paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, no identifiable information related to any student or the school will be used. To further ensure confidentiality, we ask that students not speak to others about the discussions had during the focus group sessions and use pseudonyms to identify themselves. We cannot guarantee, however, that other focus groups participants will not speak about these discussions with others. All of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential and will not become a part of your child's school record.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me by email [bhrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhrench@uiuc.edu). You can also contact my research advisor, Helen Neville, by e-mail at [hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) or you may call by telephone (217-244-6291). You may also call collect Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations (phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtan@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtan@uiuc.edu)) or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217-333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu)) with additional concerns. Parents/guardians will be given a copy of this consent form for their records.

Sincerely,

Bryana French, M.A.  
Doctoral Student  
Counseling Psychology Program



## PARENT RESEARCH RESPONSE FORM

Please indicate whether or not you want your child to participate in the Social Practices, audio taped small group discussion.

\_\_\_\_\_ I **do** give permission for my child to participate in the project described on the previous page and to be audio taped.

\_\_\_\_\_ I **do not** give permission for my child to participate in the project described on the previous page.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to researchers in the postage paid enclosed return envelope on or before \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED COPIES  
RRL10 (6/11)

APR 13 2009

## Youth Assent (Focus groups)

April 8, 2008

Bryana French, M.A., a doctoral student at the University of Illinois, and her advisor, Helen Neville, Ph.D., are doing a project in your school about high school students' perceptions of sexual coercion. This part of the project will consist of you participating in a small group discussion about your perceptions of social practices among high school students. You will not be asked about your own personal experiences. Participating in this discussion can help us better understand sexual coercion in high school so we can work to stop sexual coercion and unwanted sex from happening. The discussion should take about one hour to complete. As a token of our appreciation, you will receive a \$10.00 gift certificate.

Your participation in this project is voluntary-this means that you can decide whether or not you want to participate in the discussion. If you want to stop participating at any time, you can stop. How you participate or whether you decide to participate in the project won't go on your school record or count toward your grade in class. If you decide not to do this project, please raise your hand and inform the facilitators that you would like to stop participating and you will be allowed to leave the small group. To further ensure confidentiality, we ask that you not speak to other about the discussions had during the focus group sessions. We cannot guarantee, however, that other focus groups participants will not speak about these discussions with others.

The risks of participating in this discussion are no more than experienced in daily life or conversation. Students will not be asked to share their personal experiences with sexual coercion and will not be forced to share their opinions. A Ph.D. psychology faculty member or advanced doctoral student will be present in case students need to talk after the focus group. By participating in the discussion, you will have the opportunity to help researchers and educators tackle some of the problems associated with sexual coercion. You will also discuss safer practices that can be beneficial in the experiences of you and your friends/peers.

Findings from these discussions will result in a paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, no identifiable information related to any student or the school will be used. All of the information collected during this research project will be kept strictly confidential and will not become a part of your school record. To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you not use names of your classmates. Audio tapes will be securely stored in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after the tapes are transcribed. Transcriptions will also be stored in a secured, locked location.

If you have any questions about the current project, you can email Bryana French at [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu), or Dr. Helen Neville at [hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) (217-244-6291) or the Institutional Review Board Office (217-333-2670), [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu). You may call collect if you live outside of the local calling area.

**By signing below, you are agreeing to the following statement: "I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study including a small group discussion which will be audio taped for accuracy."**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT FORM  
04/10/09

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name: Print Name

**RETURN THIS COPY TO RESEARCHERS**

**APR 13 2009**

## Youth Assent (Focus groups)

(Date)

Bryana French, M.A., a doctoral student at the University of Illinois, and her advisor, Helen Neville, Ph.D., are doing a project in your school about high school students' perceptions of sexual coercion. This part of the project will consist of you participating in a small group discussion about your perceptions of social practices among high school students. You will not be asked about your own personal experiences. Participating in this discussion can help us better understand sexual coercion in high school so we can work to stop sexual coercion and unwanted sex from happening. The discussion should take about one hour to complete. As a token of our appreciation, you will receive a \$10.00 gift certificate.

Your participation in this project is voluntary-this means that you can decide whether or not you want to participate in the discussion. If you want to stop participating at any time, you can stop. How you participate or whether you decide to participate in the project won't go on your school record or count toward your grade in class. If you decide not to do this project, please raise your hand and inform the facilitators that you would like to stop participating and you will be allowed to leave the small group. To further ensure confidentiality, we ask that you not speak to other about the discussions had during the focus group sessions. We cannot guarantee, however, that other focus groups participants will not speak about these discussions with others.

The risks of participating in this discussion are no more than experienced in daily life or conversation. Students will not be asked to share their personal experiences with sexual coercion and will not be forced to share their opinions. A Ph.D. psychology faculty member or advanced doctoral student will be present in case students need to talk after the focus group. This study offers benefits to future youth. By participating in the discussion, you will have the opportunity to help researchers and educators tackle some of the problems associated with sexual coercion. You will also discuss safer practices that can be beneficial in the experiences of you and your friends/peers.

Findings from these discussions will result in a paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, no identifiable information related to any student or the school will be used. All of the information collected during this research project will be kept strictly confidential and will not become a part of your school record. To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you not use names of your classmates. Audio tapes will be securely stored in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after the tapes are transcribed. Transcriptions will also be stored in a secured, locked location.

If you have any questions about the current project, you can email Bryana French at [bfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bfrench@uiuc.edu), or Dr. Helen Neville at [hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) (217-244-6291) or the Institutional Review Board Office (217-333-2670), [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu). You may call collect if you live outside of the local calling area.

**KEEP THIS COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
VALID UNTIL

**APR 13 2009**

## CONSENT FORM (UIUC STUDENTS - ONLINE)

You are invited to participate in a small group discussion as part of a study examining the social practices of youth and young adults conducted by Bryana French, doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Program, and Helen Neville, Ph.D., Counseling Psychology faculty member, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This project examines students' sexual interactions and potential substance use. This project can offer benefits to the larger society by serving to better understand social experiences among youth and young adults and can help to inform safer practices among youth and young adults. We expect that findings from the study will help to inform the development of culturally relevant intervention and prevention efforts related to sexual coercion among young adults.

Participation consists of completing a survey outside of class that should take about 20 – 40 minutes. You must be at least 18 years of age to complete the survey. Participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate will have no effect on your status at, or relationship with, the University of Illinois. The risks of completing this survey are no more than normally encountered in daily living, however there is a small chance that you may experience some emotional discomfort remembering potentially painful events. In the event that I become upset by an item, I may choose to skip the item. Also, I will be given a resource list consisting of support services available on campus and in the community as well as relevant books or websites that may be of interest.

Findings from this study will result in a thesis paper and may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. However, you will not be identified as an individual and all of the information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear on the survey that you complete.

You may be contacted at a later date to participate in a small group discussion related to this study; however, I will be given an opportunity to provide consent to that aspect of the study at that time.

As a token of appreciation, you will receive a gift certificate in the amount of \$5.00 for a store of your choosing upon completion of the survey.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Bryana French (217.352.0233 [bhfrench@uiuc.edu](mailto:bhfrench@uiuc.edu)) or Dr. Helen Neville ([hneville@uiuc.edu](mailto:hneville@uiuc.edu) 217-244-6291). For additional information regarding the rights of human participants, you may contact Anne S. Robertson at the Office of School University Research Relations phone: 217-333-3023, e-mail: [arobrtsn@uiuc.edu](mailto:arobrtsn@uiuc.edu); or the Institutional Review Board Office: (217) 333-2670, email: [irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu), with additional concerns.

**By clicking "OK" you are agreeing to the following statement: "I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study"**

**Please print this page for your records**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
APPROVED CONSENT  
VALID UNTIL

**APR 13 2009**

## **Appendix B**

### **Surveys**

#### **Youth Survey**

##### **Social Practices Survey**



**Eryana French & Dr. Helen Seville**  
**Department of Educational Psychology**  
**University of Illinois**

**Directions:** Please tell us about yourself by filling in or circling the following information as completely as possible:

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female
3. What year are you in high school?  
a. Freshman  
b. Sophomore  
c. Junior  
d. Senior
4. What is your primary racial identification (circle all that you identify with)?  
a. Asian/Asian American  
b. Black  
c. Latino/Hispanic  
d. White  
e. Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)  
f. Biracial/Multiracial (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
5. What is your primary ethnic background (for example, African American, Filipino, Chinese, Taiwanese, French, Mexican American, Italian, Haitian, English, Cuban, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your approximate GPA? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please indicate the highest level of education completed by each of your parents:
- |                              | <u>Mother</u> | <u>Father</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Less than high school        | A             | A             |
| High school/GED              | B             | B             |
| Some college or AA           | C             | C             |
| College graduate (B.A. /B.S) | D             | D             |
| Some graduate school         | E             | E             |
| Graduate degree              | F             | F             |
| Don't know                   | G             | G             |
8. Do you qualify for free or reduced lunch (please circle your answer)?                      Yes                      No

**Directions:** Please note that the directions to this section may seem long and a bit cumbersome. However, as you complete the items below, things will become much clearer. Sometimes in a relationship, one partner wants to become more sexually involved than the other does. For the following list, indicate whether you have ever been pressured by a peer to engage in sexual behaviors (meaning vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse) even though you did NOT want to participate. For this survey, only refer to sexual experiences with a non-relative peer (such as a boyfriend/girlfriend, friend, acquaintance, etc. but do not include potential sexual experiences with a family member).

Indicate if the event resulted in kissing and/or fondling, attempted sexual intercourse, and completed sexual intercourse. Answer "yes", "no", or "n/a" (not applicable) for each of these results. We also ask that you provide some brief information about the most severe incident (if there was only one incident, please comment on that incident). We are specifically interested in your age and the age and sex of the other person that was involved. If you have had more than one experience with an incident that resulted in the same level of severity (such as two different people have threatened to stop seeing you if you didn't have sex and they both resulted in completed sexual intercourse) please provide the information for the last event that occurred.

*\*It is important that you answer all questions honestly to the best of your ability. All information you provide will remain confidential.\**

No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you		Has happened and resulted in: Kissing and/ or fondling		Has happened and resulted in: Attempted Sexual Intercourse		Has happened and resulted in: Completed Sexual Intercourse		Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
1	A sexual partner has threatened to stop seeing me.	Yes	No	N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
2	A sexual partner has given me alcohol without my knowledge and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes	No	N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
3	A sexual partner has threatened to tell lies about me.	Yes	No	N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	

No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you	<i>Has happened and resulted in: Kissing and/ or fondling</i>	<i>Has happened and resulted in: Attempted Sexual Intercourse</i>	<i>Has happened and resulted in: Completed Sexual Intercourse</i>	Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident
		Please circle	Please circle	Please circle	Please circle			Please circle
4	A sexual partner has threatened to tell private things about me.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
5	A sexual partner has encouraged me to drink and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
6	A sexual partner has said things to make me feel guilty (it's your duty).	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
7	A sexual partner has begged me and would not stop until I agreed.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
8	A sexual partner has given me drugs without my knowledge and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
9	A sexual partner has encouraged me to use drugs and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
10	A sexual partner would not let me leave although I wanted to go.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A



No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you		<i>Has happened and resulted in: Kissing and/ or fondling</i>		<i>Has happened and resulted in: Attempted Sexual Intercourse</i>		<i>Has happened and resulted in: Completed Sexual Intercourse</i>		Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident	
		Please circle		Please circle		Please circle		Please circle				Please circle	
11	A sexual partner has tried to interest me by touching me sexually but I was not interested.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
12	A sexual partner has made false promises (e.g., "We'll get married").	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
13	A sexual partner has said things that later proved to be untrue (e.g., "I love you").	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
14	A sexual partner has physically held me down.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
15	A sexual partner has threatened to use or did use a weapon.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
16	A sexual partner has threatened to use physical force (e.g., slapping, hitting).	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
17	A sexual partner has used physical force.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	

No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you	Has happened and resulted in: Kissing and/ or fondling		Has happened and resulted in: Attempted Sexual Intercourse		Has happened and resulted in: Completed Sexual Intercourse		Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident
		Please circle	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Please circle
18	I felt it was my duty as a girl or boy to do sexual things with my partner.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No						Male Female N/A
19	I felt that participating in sexual activities was expected in relationships.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No						Male Female N/A
20	My friends or acquaintances pressured me to do sexual things with my partner.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No						Male Female N/A
21	I thought that I should do sexual things because my friends were doing them.	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No						Male Female N/A

Using your own words, what do you think sexual coercion is?

---

---

---

Using your own words, how would you describe consensual sexual activity?

---

---

---

Is it ever alright for someone to pressure someone to have sex? Please explain your answer.

---

---

---

Do you have any comments about the survey that you would like to share? If so, please record these below.

---

---

---

---

Thank you so much for your participation!!

# ADULT SURVEY

IC# \_\_\_\_\_

## Social Practices Survey



**Eryana French & Dr. Helen Neville**  
**Department of Educational Psychology**  
**University of Illinois**

**Directions:** Please tell us about yourself by filling in or circling the following information as completely as possible:

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. What year are you?

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior
- e. Other

4. What is your primary racial identification (circle all that you identify with)?

- a. Asian/Asian American
- b. Black
- c. Latino/Hispanic
- d. White
- e. Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- f. Biracial/Multiracial (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

5. What is your primary ethnic background (for example, African American, Filipino, Chinese, Taiwanese, French, Mexican American, Italian, Haitian, English, Cuban, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your approximate GPA? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please indicate the highest level of education completed by each of your parents:

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
Less than high school	A	A
High school/GED	B	B
Some college or AA	C	C
College graduate (B.A. /B.S)	D	D
Some graduate school	E	E
Graduate degree	F	F
Don't know	G	G

8. Do you receive or are you able to receive need based financial assistance (e.g., Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Direct Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, University of Illinois Loan (UIL), etc. )?

Yes

No

**Directions:** Please note that the directions to this section may seem long and a bit cumbersome. However, as you complete the items below, things will become much clearer. Sometimes in a relationship, one partner wants to become more sexually involved than the other does. For the following list, indicate whether you have ever been pressured by a peer to engage in sexual behaviors (meaning vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse) even though you did NOT want to participate. For this survey, only refer to sexual experiences with a non-relative peer (such as a boyfriend/girlfriend, friend, acquaintance, etc. but do not include potential sexual experiences with a family member).

Indicate if the event resulted in kissing and/or fondling, attempted sexual intercourse, and completed sexual intercourse. Answer "yes", "no", or "n/a" (not applicable) for each of these results. We also ask that you provide some brief information about the most severe incident (if there was only one incident, please comment on that incident). We are specifically interested in your age and the age and sex of the other person that was involved. If you have had more than one experience with an incident that resulted in the same level of severity (such as two different people have threatened to stop seeing you if you didn't have sex and they *both* resulted in completed sexual intercourse) please provide the information for the *last* event that occurred.

*\*It is important that you answer all questions honestly to the best of your ability. All information you provide will remain confidential.\**

No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you		Has happened and resulted in: Kissing and/or fondling		Has happened and resulted in: Attempted Sexual Intercourse		Has happened and resulted in: Completed Sexual Intercourse		Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
1	A sexual partner has threatened to stop seeing me.	Yes	No	N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
2	A sexual partner has given me alcohol without my knowledge and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes	No	N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
3	A sexual partner has threatened to tell lies about me.	Yes	No	N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	

No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you	<i>Has happened and resulted in: Kissing and/ or fondling</i>	<i>Has happened and resulted in: Attempted Sexual Intercourse</i>	<i>Has happened and resulted in: Completed Sexual Intercourse</i>	Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident
		Please circle	Please circle	Please circle	Please circle			Please circle
4	A sexual partner has threatened to tell private things about me.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
5	A sexual partner has encouraged me to drink and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
6	A sexual partner has said things to make me feel guilty (it's your duty).	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
7	A sexual partner has begged me and would not stop until I agreed.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
8	A sexual partner has given me drugs without my knowledge and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
9	A sexual partner has encouraged me to use drugs and then took advantage of me sexually.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A
10	A sexual partner would not let me leave although I wanted to go.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A			Male Female N/A

No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you		<i>Has happened and resulted in:</i> Kissing and/ or fondling		<i>Has happened and resulted in:</i> Attempted Sexual Intercourse		<i>Has happened and resulted in:</i> Completed Sexual Intercourse		Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident	
		Please circle		Please circle		Please circle		Please circle				Please circle	
11	A sexual partner has tried to interest me by touching me sexually but I was not interested.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
12	A sexual partner has made false promises (e.g., "We'll get married").	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
13	A sexual partner has said things that later proved to be untrue (e.g., "I love you").	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
14	A sexual partner has physically held me down.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
15	A sexual partner threatened to use or did use a weapon.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
16	A sexual partner has threatened to use physical force (e.g., slapping, hitting).	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	
17	A sexual partner has used physical force.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			Male	Female
				N/A		N/A		N/A				N/A	



No.	Item	Has this ever happened to you	Has happened and resulted in: Kissing and/ or fondling		Has happened and resulted in: Attempted Sexual Intercourse		Has happened and resulted in: Completed Sexual Intercourse		Your age at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Age of the other person at the <u>most severe</u> incident	Sex of the other person involved at the <u>most severe</u> incident
		Please circle	Please circle	Please circle	Please circle	Please circle	Please circle	Please circle			
18	I felt it was my duty as a girl or boy to do sexual things with my partner.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A					Male Female N/A	
19	I felt that participating in sexual activities was expected in relationships.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A					Male Female N/A	
20	My friends or acquaintances pressured me to do sexual things with my partner.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A					Male Female N/A	
21	I thought that I should do sexual things because my friends were doing them.	Yes No	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A	Yes No N/A					Male Female N/A	

Using your own words, what do you think sexual coercion is?

---

---

---

Using your own words, how would you describe consensual sexual activity?

---

---

---

Is it ever alright for someone to pressure someone to have sex? Please explain your answer.

---

---

---

Do you have any comments about the survey that you would like to share? If so, please record these below.

---

---

---

---

Thank you so much for your participation!!

## Appendix C

### Focus Group Training & Protocol

#### SEXUAL COERCION FOCUS GROUP TRAINING

##### Outline of training session:

1. Project Overview
2. Tasks Involved in Focus Groups
3. Discussion of what things may influence the focus group process
4. Interview protocol and process
5. Interview questions

#### Project Overview

The purpose of the focus groups is to understand racially diverse youth's definitions of sexual coercion – what is it, are there different types, who does it, and why? The information obtained from the focus groups will be used to inform a larger project examining the context and consequences of sexual coercion among youth.

#### Tasks Involved in Focus Groups

##### Moderators (co-facilitators)

- ✓ There will be two co-facilitators in each group. The most important quality that a focus group moderator should have is the moderator's respect for the participants. The moderator must believe that the participants have wisdom that can only be obtained by intently listening to them.
- ✓ There will be a primary facilitator and an assistant facilitator. The moderator is concerned with directing the discussion, keeping the conversation flowing, and taking a few notes. Moderator notes are there to jot down a few key ideas that can be used later in the discussion. The assistant takes more comprehensive notes, operates the tape recorder, handles the environmental conditions (refreshments, seating, lighting, etc.) and responds to unexpected interruptions. Near the end of the discussion, the primary moderator will ask the assistant if he/she has any additional questions or anything else that needs following up. The assistant may also be asked to give a summary of the ideas presented in the group.

##### Process note-takers

- ✓ We may choose to have one process note-taker in each group. The note-taker is to be introduced in the beginning of the group, but is not a part of the discussion. This person is an observer, who gathers notes about the group as a whole and the interactions between the members. There does not need to be a focus on explicit details of the conversation, because this is the job of the audio equipment. Instead, the process note taker is there to record the overall ideas that were presented in the session, body language of the participants, and any other impressions that will only be able to be seen by a live recorder.

## FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE

### 1. Welcome (5 minutes)

- Greet members as they come in
- Invite them to help themselves to the refreshments
- Ask them to complete assent form
- Have them complete name tag (Participants should select a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes)

### 2. Introduction and Overview (5 minutes)

- Formally welcome and thank participants once the focus group begins
- Introduce co-facilitators and respective roles
- Outline purpose of the focus group: to understand more about the dynamics and process of learning about diversity of the Intersections residents

"Hi everyone and welcome to the small group discussion we are having about appropriate and inappropriate sexual interactions among peers. My name is \_\_\_ and I am here with \_\_\_ from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. \_\_\_ will be our note-taker, and s/he will be sitting to the side. We'd like to thank you again for participating in tonight's discussion, as it is very important that your perspective be heard. It is important tonight that everyone feels respected and that your opinion matters. The purpose of tonight's focus group is for us to understand more about how youth your age understand and define sexual activities like sexual coercion. We would like to have an open discussion about this sensitive topic. After that, we'll take some time to summarize the information you shared tonight, and disburse the gift certificates as a token of our appreciation for your participation. Are there any questions about tonight's agenda? Again, we very much appreciate you coming tonight, and we know that you probably have some very interesting things to share. **We will not discuss your individual responses with anyone, but we will speak broadly of what emerged from both focus groups.** Now, tonight's focus group will run about an hour, so we're going to start by briefly outlining our agenda for what we'll be doing tonight so that we can get through all that we have planned.

Tonight's agenda: (1) logistics of focus group; (2) ice-breaker; (3) ground rules for discussion; (4) small group discussion; (6) summary and wrap-up; (7) disbursement of incentive

### 3. Logistics (3 minutes)

- Tape record discussion
- Reiterate consent
- Use names written on name tag as way to protect confidentiality

OK, before we get started, we would like to speak briefly on the logistics of this focus group, specifically 3 points. (1) The focus group will be recorded on audiotape. These tapes will be kept in a cabinet in Dr. Neville's lab space and will only be accessible by research assistants directly working on this project, thus anything you say tonight will be kept safely. (2) You have authority over whether or not to give consent/assent for any information you provide during tonight's discussion to be used for research purposes. (3) We will use the names you've written tonight on your name tags in future presentations as a way to protect your confidentiality. This will ensure that there is no way to combine your responses with your real names. Are there any questions about tonight's logistics?

**4. Ice-breaker (2-5 minutes)**

Pick a partner. In your dyads (or triad if appropriate) – introduce yourself using your pseudonym or fake name and then tell the person one thing that most people in the room don't know about you. You will then come back together in a larger group and introduce your partner to the group.

**5. Ground Rules (2-3 minutes)**

In order to facilitate tonight's discussion and to ensure that people feel safe and understood, we will establish ground rules for the focus group. Ground rules are the directives we will all follow in order to encourage an open discussion of opinions and a feeling of safety within the group. We have 3 ground rules in mind. One is that each person speaks one at a time, and that is so that people can complete their thoughts and that others do not interrupt. Two is confidentiality, which means that things that are said here should not be discussed or taken outside of this discussion. Third is that there are no right or wrong responses. All of your comments, including positive and negative ones, should be shared. Does anybody have more ground rules to add?

- The ground rules will be posted on newsprint for everyone to see.
- Underscore that this is an informal discussion, and it is okay to eat during the discussion

**6. Focus Group Questions (40 minutes)**

**7. Summary/Wrap-up (5-8 minutes)**

- 3-minute summary of the discussion by co-facilitator
- Ask participants if it is accurate and if changes should be made
- Thank everyone for participating
- Distribute incentive (\$10)

**8. Facilitator Processing (after completion of focus group)**

**FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS** (co-facilitator will record responses on flip chart)

This evening we will be talking with you about your understanding of terms related to appropriate and inappropriate sexual interactions among peers. Again, we would like everyone to participate. We also want you to be able to respond to what other people are saying, so if you feel like adding to someone else's comment, we'd like you to go ahead and do that. If there are no questions, let's get started.

To help us keep track of who is speaking, please state your pseudonym or fake name every time before you talk. Thanks.

- **What do you think of when you hear the term "sexual coercion"?**
  - How would you define sexual coercion?
  - Are there different types of tactics or methods that people use to pressure someone to have sex or engage in sex acts? What are they?
  - Can both girls and boys be victims of sexual coercion? What about perpetrators?
  - Are there different tactics or methods that boys and girls use to pressure someone to have sex or engage in sex acts?
  - Do you think that race and/or ethnicity have anything to do with people's experiences with sexual coercion? This could involve being a victim, perpetrator, outcome of the acts, how people respond, etc.
    - Have the students complete the sexual coercion survey or to review the items on the survey if they have already completed it
  - After the discussion thus far and after completing (reviewing) the brief survey, what additional thoughts do you have about sexual coercion?
    - Co-facilitator should provide a brief summary of the discussion so far– does anyone have anything to add to this discussion?
- Is it ever okay to pressure someone to have sex or engage in sex acts?
- Do you think that sexual coercion is a problem at your school? In your community? Tell us more.
- How do you think we can help stop sexual coercion from happening?
- If you or someone you know were sexually coerced by a peer, what would you do? Who would you tell?
- Without using names, do you know someone who has experienced sexual coercion? Tell us about what you know about the incident(s). What were the outcomes?
- Without using names, do you know someone who has committed an act of sexual coercion? Tell us about what you know about the incident(s). What were the outcomes?
- Co-facilitator should provide summary of the small group discussion and ask:
  - "Does anyone want to add anything before we end?"
  - Do you have any questions for us?

**Provide Closure to the Discussion**

- Thank you for your time; the discussion has been extremely helpful to us.
- Now, \_\_\_\_ will give you the gift certificate; s/he has a form for you to sign first.

## What things may influence the focus group process?

Brainstorm with team and also think of ways to combat these

- (1) What if participants have pre-existing relationships?
  - a. Allow for multiple points of view, and probe to see if friends are only agreeing because of being friends with someone else; "Friendships are important and may have an influence on your own opinions, but we'd like you to really speak from your own experience."
- (2) How do we negotiate the fact that we are outsiders?
  - a. We will disclose our positions and roles as clearly as possible and emphasize that the focus group is to help us understand youth's perspectives. We are not there to judge their comments.
- (3) What if people are being too politically correct?
  - a. Again, allow for multiple points of view and invite people who are not participating or who may be afraid to dissent.

### Tips for Process Note-Takers

- Take notes throughout discussion
- Capture word for word (to the extent possible) well-said quotes
- Note both verbal and nonverbal activity
- Make a sketch of the seating arrangement
- Note the time each segment begins. Note the time at which the audiotape begins recording and at what time the audiotape ends.

### Tips for Facilitators:

- What else do I need to ask to understand this respondent's statement?
- Probe and follow-up, especially when there is silence.
- Are some people dominating the conversation? How can I encourage or invite people who haven't spoken up to state their view?
- Am I hearing everything I need to know to understand the problem and answer the objectives of the research?
- Am I communicating to the speaker that I am listening (verbally and/or non-verbally)?
- How much time do I have left? Will I have enough time to cover all questions? If not, what question can I omit?
- Encourage participants to be honest – they don't have to give an answer they think we want, or that is politically correct.

### Potential Probes to Unclear Responses

- "Can you tell me more?"
- "Would you explain further?"
- "Would you give me an example of what you mean?"
- "Is there anything else?"
- "Please describe what you mean."

#### **Inquiring about Differing Points of View**

- Does anyone see it differently?
- Are there any other points of view?

#### **Facilitator Processing and Note Taking Tips**

- What are your general reactions (cognitive & affective) to the focus group?
- What information or processes are not captured in the summary?
- What went well and what did not?

#### **CHECKLIST**

- ✓ Test tape recorders to make sure they are functioning
- ✓ Prior to starting focus group, collect all completed assent forms/make sure we have parental consent forms as well
- ✓ Listen to tape recorders and make sure tapes are turned over at the appropriate time
- ✓ Type process notes immediately following focus group

#### **THINGS NEEDED. . .**

- ✓ 2 tape recorders, with external microphones (OET)
- ✓ 120 minute tapes
- ✓ Flip chart
- ✓ Tape
- ✓ Black marker
- ✓ 20 assent forms
- ✓ 20 \$10 gift certificates
- ✓ 20 gift certificate receipt forms
- ✓ 20 Sexual Coercion Surveys (plus demographic form)
- ✓ 20 Resource lists
- ✓ Name tags
- ✓ Pens

Notes taken from Krueger [1994] and Krueger & Casey [2000] Focus groups (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Eds.) California: Sage.