A Narrative Inquiry of Teacher Candidate Experiences of Sexual Violence Prevention Education

By

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence scholars and practitioners in postsecondary and community contexts have long called for K-12 education to join them to take on the challenge of sexual violence prevention, citing school as simultaneously an important factor in addressing sexual violence and a place where it occurs. Meanwhile, teacher education scholars have pointed out there are missed opportunities to provide training for teachers at the earliest point in their training. Teacher candidates' concurrent roles as an at-risk population and as educators and leaders entering schools puts them in an interesting space that is worth investigating. This research uses narrative inquiry to explore teacher candidates' experiences of sex education during their time in school, their emerging understandings of sex and sexual violence, and their experiences learning about sexual violence prevention before and during their teacher education.

Recruitment took place at a medium sized university in Southwestern Ontario, Canada, and data consisted of interviews with fifteen first- and second-year teacher candidates of various specialties and educational backgrounds. Narrative analysis was informed by feminist epistemology and theory, as well as the tenets of feminist methodology and narrative inquiry. Findings indicate the following: 1) experiences of inadequate sex education from teacher candidates' time in K-12 education; 2) learning about sex and sexual violence in the margins of the curriculum; 3) experiences of gendered, risk-based discourses and narrow definitions of sex didn't prepare participants for sexual citizenship; 4) narratives of fragmented understandings of consent and the continuum of sexual violence; 5) participants' own K-12 teachers' discomfort with teaching sex education and addressing sexual violence; 6) stories of not having learned about sexual violence until postsecondary school; 7) teacher training did not prepare participants' to teach about sex education, nor to address sexual violence prevention; 8) the desire to learn

about consent and sexual violence in participants' new roles as teachers entering school and education systems. These narrative themes are discussed in relation to feminist understandings of sexual violence and prevention education, narrative meaning making in teacher education, knowledge mobilization, and directions for future research.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My children, Sajjad and Zainab.

&

My students.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In November 2018, multiple incidences of sexual violence that occurred at St. Michael's College School in Toronto, Ontario, were reported to the news media. Several news organizations received video footage, initially distributed throughout social media, that documented sexual violence. When police began investigating the incident, they learned that the principal of the school had known about it but had not carried out his legal duty to report. This alarming finding was emphasized as a great violation (CBC News, 2018). The Board of Directors issued a statement of support for the principal and president of the school, which read, "They continue to have the full support of the Board for how this situation is being handled. They are both men of the highest integrity and continue to have our trust to lead us forward" (CBC News, 2018 n.p.). In news conferences, the principal put on a defensive front, exclaiming, "This is not what our community is about" (Porter, 2018, n.p.). It soon became clear that it was, indeed, what their school community was about.

Former students came to the news media to disclose their experiences of hazing, bullying, and sexual violence, and attributed it to the all-boys private school's culture, in particular the culture of violent masculinity. One former student pointed out the reluctance of the school and the police to call the incidences sexual assault crimes, instead using terms such as hazing, which do not address the underlying power relations of sexual violence (McKeown, 2018). An especially vocal figure was Jean-Paul Bédard, who dedicated his life to advocating for victims after his experiences at St. Michael's 35 years prior. Telling his own story of nondisclosure and keeping his experience of sexual violence a secret for decades, Bédard spoke eloquently about sexual violence as a problem of power and suggested changes that included the careful handling

of disclosures by schools (Bédard, 2018). Heavily scrutinized by the media and the public, the principal and president of the school resigned the day after the Board of Directors' statement of support (CBC News, 2018).

Canadians from across the country were wondering, *how could this happen in a Canadian school?* and calling for solutions to address this horrifying event (Porter, 2018). In December 2019, three of the accused boys pleaded guilty to charges including sexual assault with a weapon and making child pornography (Hasham, 2019), but were later acquitted of several other charges. In the summer of 2021, the judge that ruled on the case noted the toxic culture of bullying at the school, concluding that, "the criminal behaviour in [the school's] locker room was fertilized by an atmosphere in which bullying was part of the normative culture" (Affleck & Barrison LLP). The statement captures how these behaviours were normalized, it sanitizes the violence perpetuated and reproduced by referring to it as "bullying." Moreover, although some justice has been served, profound, deeply unsettling questions remain. What was the onus on the school administrators, educators, and staff in this case? What are the nuances and complexities of a school culture that facilitated such violent crimes? What types of changes need to occur within schools to prevent sexual violence? This dissertation begins at the intersection of these questions.

In 2004, the leading global health establishment the World Health Organization (WHO) declared sexual violence as a silent health emergency of global importance (WHO, 2002). Most importantly for understanding the context of this study, WHO identified schools as a primary place where the sexual violence occurs. The WHO explained, "For many young women, the most common place where sexual coercion and harassment are experienced is in school" (WHO, 2002, p. 155). It is important to note that even though the WHO's statement brings sexual

violence in schools to the forefront, it does not capture its complexities, which, as the St. Michael's anecdote illustrates, also encompasses the gendered harassment of young men. As will be discussed throughout the next chapter, sexual violence is gendered and deeply tied to hegemonic masculinity. Ultimately, although research has documented that "schools are part of the processes which perpetuate sexual violence" (Maxwell, 2014, p. 106), teacher roles in its effective pedagogy and prevention remains a discouraging gap in the literature.

Teacher Education: A Missed Opportunity

Teaching about consent and sexual violence is no longer taboo in higher education. Scholars from women's studies, psychology, and sociology, have been especially mobile in their advocacy, research, theory making, and practice of moving students "from concern for survivors to an awareness of the social pathologies that maintain the status quo" (Bertram & Crowley, 2012, p. 63). Whole-campus initiatives have emerged throughout North America. For example, bystander approaches to changing campus cultures, which move the focus of prevention efforts from perpetrators and victims to peers and community members, have gained popularity and research has supported their impacts (McMahon & Banyard, 2012; Senn & Forrest, 2016; Forrest & Senn, 2017). Still, the issue of campus sexual violence on Ontario campuses remains concerning, evidenced most recently by the assaults that took place on Western University campus, in which dozens of students were drugged and assaulted during orientation weekend. The event evidenced what has been called part of the "unofficial campus curriculum" and "toxic campus culture" (Orchard, 2021, n.p.). Moreover, while progress has been made in research, policy, and programming on postsecondary campuses, we are still far from a uniform approach to sexual violence prevention. There are important variants in the way prevention is taken up; the most useful are the ones that take up how to handle disclosures, are survivor-centered, trauma

informed, and community-based, and about long-term cultural change (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). That said, there are places in postsecondary education wherein conversations of consent and sexual violence are either scarce or absent.

One of those places is teacher education, which occupies a unique space within the academy for two reasons. In most universities in Canada and the US, teacher education programs are undergraduate programs, which means that the majority of students who enrol in teacher education are ages 18-25 (data from the U.S. Department of Education, 2011-2012, that indicates 75% of teachers begin their first job before the age of 30; No such data was available within a Canadian context). This is the age group that experiences the highest rates of sexual violence (Conroy & Cotter, 2017) and is most likely to benefit from preventative education on it. Secondly, teacher candidates are preparing to become teachers, and they practice teaching at schools in ("practicum") increments throughout the school year. Teacher candidates are thus simultaneously postsecondary students who carry unique risks, documented through the literature on campus sexual violence, and teachers-in-training who operate in the school system. Their concurrent roles as an at-risk population and as educators and leaders entering schools puts them in an interesting space that is worth exploring.

Scholars of teacher education have pointed out there are missed opportunities to provide training for teacher candidates at the earliest point in their training (McKay & Barrett, 1999). Those who work in the field of sexual violence in postsecondary and community contexts have long called for K-12 education to join them to take on the challenge of sexual violence prevention, citing school as simultaneously an important factor in addressing sexual violence and a place where it occurs. As Clarke-Vivier and Stearns (2019) point out, "scholars who study issues with sexual violence in post-secondary contexts call on elementary and high school

teachers to join forces in educating students early, and in the subtle and nuanced ways" (p. 64). Others point out that students often call for teachers to understand and recognize sexual violence and to facilitate purposeful conversation about it (Stein, 1995, p. 160).

Furthermore, prevention educators and researchers are moving toward an ecological approach to sexual violence prevention (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). In the case of bystander interventions, this means that peers and community members address prevention at all three levels: primary, or prior to incidences of sexual violence; secondary, or during sexual violence; and tertiary, or after the occurrence of sexual violence (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). In the case of teacher education, there are opportunities for teacher candidates to receive training to address all three levels, especially primary, such as learning to teach comprehensive sex education (Schneider & Hirsch, 2020) and tertiary, such as learning to respond to disclosures. The Ontario Health and Physical Education (HPE) curricula (MOE, 2015, 2019) address primary prevention by outlining expectations for students to learn about consent, although there are significant gaps in teacher training to implement such lessons. According to the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC), "education on sexual violence goes a long way towards prevention" (n.p.). The OCRCC (2018) argue that K-12 education can make the following contributions, among others, to sexual violence prevention:

> By being prepared to offer information about sexual violence, educators help equip young people with a clear understanding of their bodies, their rights and where to go should they ever need support; Identifying the continuum of sexual violence (from harassment to rape); Supporting young people to challenge sexual assault myths; Knowing the laws concerning sexual assault and consent. (n.p.)

These are all further examples of opportunities for teacher education to address primary prevention. However, also pointedly missing in faculties of education, professional development, and curriculum documents is an approach to secondary and tertiary prevention education. This may include things like disclosure training, and strengthening safety nets for victims of sexual violence after an incident.

Research Questions

The following research questions have guided my dissertation research from when it was first imagined until the results were interpreted and written:

1. How do teacher candidates' own storied experiences learning about sex, in and out of school, influence their perceptions of sex education?
2. How do teacher candidates understand sex, sexual violence, and sexual violence prevention?
3. What have teacher candidates learned, both in their pre-service training and from other sources, about sexual violence prevention?

As I express in the review of the literature, sexual violence is a contested term, thus it is important to state the way in which I interpret it in this research. I understand sexual violence as 1) gendered (Conroy & Cotter, 2017), sexed (Howe, 2008); and based in power and control (Brownmiller, 1975; Johnson & Colpitts, 2013); 2) an insidious phenomenon that is produced and reproduced by systemic and social structures, discursive constructions, and individual behaviours (Gavey, 2005, 2019); 3) an occurrence within a continuum that encompasses its various, interrelated forms (Kelly, 1987; Stout, 1991; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2011).

The ultimate objective of my research, in seeking to understand teacher candidate narratives, is to have a transformative impact by bringing robust methods of sexual violence prevention into teacher education, and eventually, into K-12 education as well. Informed by a feminist epistemology, theoretical framework, and methodology, I seek social change through capacity building for key stakeholders, in this case teacher candidates. In the next chapter, I outline the theoretical underpinnings of my research.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework serves as the blueprint for an investigation and ideally informs every aspect of it, from the literature review to the methodology, methods, to the results and discussion. Consent and sexual violence are feminist issues, and it makes the most sense to address their intersection with education and teaching using feminist theory. Its added appropriateness for this investigation comes from my own positionality as an educator and researcher who adheres to feminist praxis.

Key Ideas of Feminist Theory

Feminist theory, like feminism, is multifaceted, interdisciplinary, and complex. There is no single, agreed upon feminist movement, theory, epistemology, or methodology (Disch & Hawkesworth, 2018; Skelton et al., 2006). Skelton et al. point out that even the core of feminist concern, gender, is a contested construction in feminist discussion. As outlined later in this chapter, the early feminist movement was criticized for centering the experiences of white, middle-class woman (hooks, 1981) and for its unidimensional analysis of social experience (Collins, 2015). Feminist theory has also been criticized for de-centering experiences of those who identify outside of the gender binary (Green, 2006), particularly those of racialized women-identifying individuals (Koyama, 2013). The way I conceive of feminist theory in my research is as 1) a theory that centers gender and the system of patriarchy as categories of understanding and analyzing social experience, and 2) a broad term used by different groups of women to stand for their community's needs. I use the term feminist theory not to denote singularity but rather to refer to feminist philosophical tradition. The key ideas of feminist theory that underpin my

approach to my research and that I discuss in this section are the system of patriarchy, intersectionality, power and power relations, and hegemonic ideology.

Patriarchy

The concept of patriarchy was used in the feminist movement to understand the various contexts that sustain the oppression of women (Beechey, 1979, p. 66; Acker, 1989). Theorizing patriarchy opened the possibility of a shared political goal in understanding and dismantling the structure of female subordination (Acker, 1989, p. 235). Because the concept of patriarchy has evolved since the early feminist movement, its definitions are varied and often contested. Johnson (2014) describes what he calls our 'patriarchy legacy' as a metaphorical 'knot', that in order to be understood, must be unraveled. Johnson contrasts the unraveling of the knot through understanding, with the tightening the knot through defensive reactions and a misunderstanding of patriarchy. He clarifies this metaphor by explaining, "A society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, and male centered," adding that such society "is also organized around an obsession with control and involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women" (p. 5). hooks (2004) provides a similar definition to Johnson in the following quote:

> Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. (p. 18)

Common in Johnson's (2014) and hooks' (2004) definitions is the focus on the function of patriarchy to promote and maintain male domination and female inferiority. Feminist theorists thus see patriarchy as a historical, social, cultural, and political product rather than as a natural

way of order between the sexes or a social necessity (Beechey, 1979; Acker, 1989; hooks, 1981, 2004).

In patriarchal societies, males and females are made out to be innately and fundamentally different, 'opposite' sexes. This sex and gender binary is taken to reflect and replicate androcentric oppositions between mind/body, culture/nature and reason/emotion that have been used to justify women's oppression (e.g., Grosz, 1994). These oppositions function in such way that one side is valued and the other is devalued, with the latter being associated with women (Prokhovnik, 1999). Furthermore, in patriarchal societies, males are the default sex. As Simone De Beauvoir (1953) writes in the widely cited book *The Second Sex*, "Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous human being … She is the Subject; he is the Absolute - she is the Other" (p. xv-xvi). Feminist theorists problematize the sex and gender dichotomies. By troubling sex as a natural, "unproblematic, straightforward, 'common-sense' categorization" (Francis, 2006, p. 11), feminist thinkers illustrate how sex is used as an essentialist analytical category. Critiques of the sex role dichotomy thus "pointed the way toward an 'uncoupling' of the concept of gender from normative definitions of sex" (Dillabough, 2006, p. 48). Feminist thinkers contend instead gender is socially constructed and that "the structure of gender acts through and is inscribed on sexed bodies" (Grant, 1993, p. 185).

In their writings, Johnson (2014) and hooks (2004) point out that patriarchy is a system that men learn to resist acknowledging from early childhood. hooks contends that patriarchy is the most salient and at the same time, widely denied system of oppression.

> …the [system] that we all learn the most about growing up is the system of patriarchy, even if we never know the word, because patriarchal gender roles are assigned to us as

> children and we are given continual guidance about the ways we can best fulfill these roles. (2004, p. 1)

Similarly, Johnson (2014) writes, "Men resist seeing the oppression of their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters because we have participated in it, benefited from it, and developed a vested interest in it" (p. 24). Notably, Johnson (2014) and hooks (2004) urge readers to note that calling out patriarchy is often painted by popular discourse as a way to hate men and blame them for the ills of society, even though a patriarchal social order actually harms both women and men, although disproportionately and in different ways. By the same token, Howe (2008) observes that when activists and scholars make reference to men's violence against women, it is often framed as anti-male.

In relation to sexual violence in schools, patriarchal systems produce and reproduce what is known as rape culture, a feminist concept that will be discussed later in this section. Rape supportive attitudes are seen by feminist theorists as microcosms of the broader patriarchal social order (Feltey et al., 1991). For example, there is an established body of research that demonstrates that communities where there are higher patriarchal norms and sexist and misogynistic beliefs tend to have higher rates of sexual violence (e.g., Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Sanday, 1981; Hines, 2007; Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). Key to this is the understanding that patriarchy works at the structural level, while sexism and misogyny function at the individual level, as social and cultural tools of patriarchal politics (hooks, 2004).

However, patriarchy cannot be understood as separate from other systems of domination with which it is interlocked. hooks (2004) advocates for the consistent use of the phrase White supremacy, imperialism, and capitalism. Although hooks does not include colonization in this list, she later writes in her book *Writing Beyond Race* (2013) that "imperialist colonization

became the belief system that supported the mass murder of Indigenous natives, the blatant stealing of their lands, and the creation of segregated reservations" (p. 4). In Canada and the US, Indigenous scholars have been instrumental in pointing out how colonial powers historically used patriarchy as a central tool of domination, the legacy of which continues to impact Indigenous communities to this day (Anderson, 2016). Although patriarchy is the most prominent context in which sexual violence occurs, it is often simultaneously an instrument of other systems of oppression.

Historically, sexual violence was used as a tool of imperial colonization (Anderson, 2016). Today, Indigenous women are still more likely to be victims of sexual violence than non-Indigenous women (Conroy & Cotter, 2017) and Indigenous youth are less likely to receive comprehensive sexual health education (Maticka-Tyndale, 2008). Patriarchy was perhaps the most important systemic tool that European settlers used to colonize the Indigenous people (Anderson, 2016). Lugones (2010) calls this "brutal imposition of the modern, colonial, gender system" (p. 743) on Indigenous societies and explains that colonialism cannot be understood without an analysis of gender. A fundamental part of this argument is that while white feminists have historically portrayed nonpatriarchal societies as utopian visions, Indigenous scholars point out that such societies actually existed in Indigenous societies prior to European colonization (Gunn Allen, 1993). Lugones (2010) theorizes a decolonial feminism, proposing that "the colonial imposition of gender cuts across questions of ecology, economics, government, relations with the spirit world, and knowledge, as well as across everyday practices that either habituate us to take care of the world or to destroy it" (p. 742). de Finney (2017) reminds us that "In settler states like Canada, sexual violence has been a common practice rooted in colonial logics of the objectification and dehumanisation of Indigenous women and girls" (p. 10). It would thus be

remiss to consider sexual violence as merely a patriarchal phenomenon without understanding the complex interlocking nature of patriarchy and colonization.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a term first coined by American lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw critiqued the feminist tendency to "treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" (p. 139), noting that doing so theoretically erases Black women. Although the term intersectionality was first used by Crenshaw, it was not the first time the issue of multidimensionality was brought up as a more truthful and just alternative to single-axis analyses (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Collins, 2015). It was US Black feminist projects of the 1960s and 1970s, whose experiences within interlocking systems of domination could not be addressed by single category solutions, that paved the way for intersectional analyses of social experience (Collins, 2015, p. 8). The work of Black feminist thinkers, who centered African American women in their intersectional analysis of power relations in the US, eventually provided the framework for analyzing the social, cultural, and political experiences of other marginalized groups around the world (Collins, 2015).

Collins (2015) points out that intersectionality is challenging to define, noting also that it is implicated in the same power relations that it seeks to examine and thus "must pay special attention to the conditions that make its knowledge claims comprehensible" (p. 3). This definitional dilemma may be one of the reasons that intersectionality has become a 'buzzword', prone to being mentioned in research and conversation, at times without adequate reflection on its analytical possibilities. The practice of simply "mentioning" the term intersectionality without situating it in its history and theoretical capability has functioned to erase its meaning (Guidroz & Berger, 2009) and "unwittingly uphold the same complex social inequalities that it aims to

understand" (Collins, 2015, p. 14). Although Collins (2015) asserts that intersectionality eludes strict definitions, she provides a definitional starting point.

> The term intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities. (p. 2)

According to Collins, intersectionality has been taken up as a theoretical framework and an analytical strategy. Particularly relevant to this investigation, Collins writes that intersectionality has been heavily used as a framework for understanding violence against women.

> Solutions to violence against women remain unlikely if violence against women is imagined through mono-categorical lenses such as gender lenses of male perpetrators and female victims or racial lenses that elevate police violence against Black men over domestic violence against Black women. (p. 12)

The analysis of social experience as related to sexual violence must thus be situated within a multi-categorical, intersectional lens, if it is to lead to effective and long-lasting social change.

Black women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence than are white women (Conroy & Cotter, 2017; DuMonthier et al., 2019). In the early days of Western colonization, the myth that Black women were sexual objects was used to justify sexual violence (hooks, 1981). The hypersexualization of Black women and women of colour in the media has continued until the twenty first century (Sanchez, 2005). Black victims of sexual violence are less likely to be seen as credible and more likely to be viewed as responsible for their assault (Harding, 2015), which may be a contributing factor to statistics showing Black women are less likely to report sexual violence. Moreover, research demonstrates that adults view Black girls aged 5-14 as less

innocent and less in need of protection from sexual violence, also known as adultification bias (Epstein et al., 2017). Such beliefs may circulate in the school system, contributing to higher rates of unaddressed sexual violence for Black girls, especially those who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. For instance, Rahimi and Liston (2009) found that teachers often believe that Black girls who were poor were encouraged by their culture to be sexually active and that Black teenage pregnancy was a means of securing welfare. These studies provide evidence for Hall's (2004) assertion although we tend to think of sexual violence in rapist-as-monster and women-as-victim, "not all women are considered equally violable" (p. 13). The 'ideal' victim is constructed as a white, young, middle-class woman (Hall, 2004), while the ideal, or 'natural' perpetrator is constructed a man of colour (Sharpley-Whiting, 1997). These controlling images (Collins, 1991) inform dominant cultural understandings and responses to sexual violence.

As pointed out in the section on patriarchy, Indigenous women and girls also experience rape culture differently and are more likely than non-Indigenous women to experience sexual violence (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). These Canadian statistics are part of a larger problem of gendered violence committed against Indigenous women, who are also currently being missing and murdered at what Anaya (2013) calls "epidemic rates" (p. 9). Given this Canadian reality, Indigenous scholars have called for what Clark (2016) names "Red intersectionality" (p. 46) and "Indigenous intersectionality" (p. 48). Red intersectionality centres gendered colonialism as an analytical category and prioritizes Indigenous sovereignty as a goal. Clarke points out that long before intersectionality was coined as a term and recognized in the academy, Indigenous activists "put together the legal argument of gender, race, and age" and "were central to fighting the issues of violence on the land and on the body as they witnessed it at the turn of the century" (p.

49). Moreover, when it comes to violence against Indigenous women and girls, discourses of risk have been centered at the expense of those of resistance (Clarke, 2016; Anderson, 2016). Although Clarke's research is not focused on a school context, scholars such as Dhillon (2011) remind us that school is experienced differently for Indigenous girls.

> Intersecting forms of structural violence produce a particular configuration of marginalization for Aboriginal young women and girls, who possess a distinct relationship with the state that is anchored in a history of colonization and also the contemporary realities of discrimination that are entangled with broader discussions of indigenous rights. (p. 126)

For Indigenous girls and women, intersectionality should entail that the categorical lenses of gender and patriarchy are not analyzed separately from colonialism, for the two are deeply intertwined.

Hegemonic Ideology

The theory of hegemony was articulated by Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci defined hegemony as the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class, who manipulate the various aspects of the culture of that society so that their worldview becomes the only accepted cultural norm (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci argued that the most prominent mechanism of social control was no longer exercised through physical force, but rather "through the moral leaders of society (including teachers), who participated and reinforced universal 'common sense' assumptions of 'truth'" (Darder et al., 2017, p. 7).

Meanwhile, ideology has been described as "a societal lens or framework of thought, used in society to create order and give meaning to the social and political world" (Darder et al., 2017, p. 11). In education, the notion of ideology has been used to critique curriculum and policy

documents, texts, and practices. For example, critical theorists have used the notion of ideology to understand “the hidden curriculum,” defined by Darder et al. as “a curriculum informed by ideological views that structurally reproduce dominant cultural assumptions and practices” (p. 12). Although the concept of ideology was originally developed to unravel the sociopolitics of class relations, it has since come to encompass other power relations. Feminist theorists have used terms such as patriarchal ideology to understand how the system of patriarchy functions in societies to mediate between the individual and the social order (Connell, 1987; hooks, 2004; Lazar, 2005, p. 8). Moreover, feminists often understand gender as an ideological system: “From a feminist perspective, the prevailing conception of gender is understood as an ideological structure that divides people into two classes, men and women, based on a hierarchical relation of domination and subordination, respectively” (Lazar, 2007, p. 146). Those who study rape culture use terms such as rape supportive ideologies (McMahon & Banyard, 2012) to denote everyday societal frameworks that condone sexual violence.

Hegemonic ideology better illustrates the patriarchal system because, as Lazar (2007) explains, “gender ideology is hegemonic in that it often does not appear as domination at all, appearing instead as largely consensual and acceptable to most in a community” (p. 147). As discussed throughout my research, the terms hegemonic masculinity and masculine ideology are often used interchangeably in the literature to refer to dominant forms of masculinity that circulate in the social world and which are intimately tied to the phenomenon of sexual violence in schools.

Power and Discourse

The concepts of power and discourse are most often attributed to philosopher Michel Foucault (1979; 1980). Even though his work is often at odds with feminist goals, feminist

thinkers frequently use Foucault's articulations to theorize the functions of power and discourse in women's lives. Howe (2008) points out that in Foucault's analysis of sexuality and power, he disregarded and dismissed the phenomenon of sexual violence. Still, as Howe and others contend, it is useful to draw upon Foucault's analyses, and the ways in which feminists have employed them, to understand sexual violence, schooling, and teaching.

For Foucault (1980), power is not merely repressive and imposed by authority, rather "power actually produces social bodies and realities, and does not emanate from one central source, but rather is diffused throughout the social structure" (Cahill, 2000, p. 79). Power operates at the micro level of every day social experience. Rather than being an authoritative force of control and prohibition, power "is a subtle, pervasive, creative force which seeks to influence actions on the level of desire and identity" (Cahill, 2000, p. 47). In much the same way as Foucault, when feminist scholars speak of power as the context in which the oppression of women occurs, they often speak of it at the micro level. For example, when hooks (2015) says that "patriarchy knows no gender," (n.p.) she means that anyone can, and most of us often do at some level, live out patriarchal power relations.

Traditional force does still exist, but the subtler form of control is what Foucault (1979) refers to as discipline. Discipline functions through the circulating social conditions that encourage and sustain conformity in a myriad of ways, including surveillance and reward and punishment, both of the self and of others. Furthermore, for Foucault (1980), power interacts with knowledge in the following way:

> Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it. If it has been possible to constitute a knowledge of the body, this has been by way of an ensemble of military and educational

> disciplines. It was on the basis of power over the body that a physiological, organic knowledge of it became possible. (p. 59)

Power thus produces and is produced by knowledge through the Foucauldian notion of discourse. In their research on the functions of rape culture (discussed in the next section), Gavey and Schmidt (2011) define the Foucauldian notion of discourse as the following:

> …a shared cultural framework of meaning that is patterned by systems of statements, sets of metaphors, and regulated practices that cohere to provide a particular way of understanding an object. Discourses are multiple and fluid and they vary in their authority in different cultural contexts and historical moments. (p. 438)

Lazar (2007) calls the relationship between discourse and the social "a dialectical one, in which discourse constitutes (and is constituted by) social situations, institutions, and structures" (p. 149-150). Lazar further points out in the presence of prevailing discourses such as masculinity and heteronormativity, "deviations from gender-appropriate norms are policed and contained" (p. 148). Such discourses are commonly referred to as "dominant", defined as "those patterns of meaning that appear natural in a particular time and place, and which are both shaped by and inform shared common sense" (Gavey & Schmidt, 2011, p. 438).

In feminist scholarship, the term *dominant* often precedes the terms ideology and discourse, and refers to patterns that preside as 'normal,' 'natural,' or 'common sense.' Similarly, when *counter* precedes words hegemony and discourse, as in the case of counter-hegemony and counter discourse, it refers to forms of resistance. In other words, it is a deliberate way of negating the dominant social order. Burney (2012) defines counter-discourse as a "re-inscription, rewriting and re-presenting in order to reclaim, reaffirm, and retrieve subject peoples' ownership of their own lives" (p. 107). Foucault emphasizes that resistance is a necessary counterpart to

power, meaning that individuals and social groups also respond to power in ways that are not produced by it. Cahill (2000) elaborates that like power, resistance is not limitless: "No embodied subject is capable of resisting any and all expressions of power, for the simple reason that to do so would be to undermine that very subject's ability to act at all" (p. 48). Nevertheless, although total resistance of the power structure is impossible for Foucault, "subjects can express and effect their objections to certain aspects of the dominant discourse, and can even eradicate some" (Cahill, 2000, p. 50). Using the Foucauldian notion of resistance, Cahill elaborates, "If the feminine body is a location whereon the tenets of a sexually hierarchical culture are written, it is also the site where they may be fought" (p. 61). Such is the aim of feminist scholarship and activism, to build individual and community capabilities for resistance and thereby undermine the power structures that support sexually violent cultures.

Foucault's views that bodies exist always in relation to power (1980) and the circulating dominant discourses (1979) are useful for feminist understandings of the political oppression of women. For feminist scholars, sexual violence is intimately tied to the maintenance of a patriarchal social and political order. In addition to the experience of sexual violence, it is the threat and fear of rape that women experience and the rape-related discourses that normalize it, which operate at the micro level of social experience, that contribute to maintaining rape cultures. Cahill (2000) points out that women experience sexual violence or the threat of sexual violence every day, and she argues that women's very beings are "in part formed by the presence of the threat of rape" (p. 58). Feminist scholars often utilize Foucauldian notions of power, knowledge, discourse, and resistance to understand the complex functions of sexual violence in communities and institutions such as schools. For example, Van Roosmalen (2000) contends that power and control play a significant role in constructing the adolescent sexual experience,

especially for girls. Similarly, Lazar (2007) finds that sexual violence can be an overt form of power but is more often "a subtle and seemingly innocuous form of power that is substantively discursive in nature" (p. 148). The notion of discourse is also used to understand the particularities of sex education and sexual violence prevention. For example, Hall (2004) contends that women's safety pedagogy is a "discursive terrain" (p. 13) wherein prevailing discourses, such as women-as-victim, function to teach women fear rather than reinforce their rights to freedom. By the same token, sex education has been criticized for focusing on the discourses of risk, at the expense of those related to desire (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006).

Though they inform my understanding of feminist theory, the key concepts that I have discussed thus far, namely patriarchy, intersectionality, hegemonic ideology, and power and discourse, are not all always commensurate with each other. Theorists of various philosophical orientations use various terminology to reflect differing understandings of power structures. Nevertheless, each of the concepts has influenced my understanding of feminist theory. In the next two sections, I discuss feminist understandings sexual violence and feminist cultural reproductive theory, in particular how they inform my investigation at the intersections of teacher education, sex education, and sexual violence prevention.

Feminist Theory in Education

Using a feminist framework to investigate narratives around sexual violence prevention in schools is important because feminist understandings of sexual violence are by far the most productive in creating social change. In addition, feminists have theorized gendered power relations in education for several decades (Fine, 1988, 1992; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Arnot, 2002; Acker, 1987, 1989; Weiler, 2017). Feminist education scholars have critiqued the ways in

which girls are disadvantaged in schools through the curriculum, the hidden curriculum, and traditional instructional strategies. They have troubled taken for granted ways of understanding popular discourses in education, such as gender neutrality, which erase the power dimension of students' gendered lives (Arnot, 2002; Vendramin, 2012; Weiler, 2017). Michelle Fine (1992), feminist researcher who has done various research projects in American public schools, points out the reluctance of scholars, particularly those working in the field of psychology, to consider gender as an issue of power (p. 1). Similarly, in education, when gender research is centered, it is not always theorized in relation to hierarchal power relations. Vendramin (2012) points out that gender research in education is sometimes apolitical and "perhaps too narrowly focussed on the question of gender discrimination and achievement and is described by, for example, terms such as 'equity research', 'social equality of genders' and 'equal opportunities'" (p. 91). Feminist lenses to research in education, in contrast, bring to the forefront "neglected aspects of social reality," (Vendramin, p. 94) which, in the context of sexual violence research, are particularly important because they consider how systems, institutions, and social actors are implicated in its reproduction.

So far in my writing, I made several mentions to the terms *reproduce* and *reproduction* within the contexts of gender, ideology, education, and sexual violence. These terms can be linked to feminist cultural reproductive theory, which many feminist education scholars use to understand and discuss critical issues in education (e.g., Skelton, 1997; Skelton et al., 2006; Robinson 2000, 2005). In this section, I discuss some of the contributions, criticisms, insights and shortfalls of feminist cultural reproductive theory, and I set the stage for how they inform this investigation.

Feminist Cultural Reproductive Theory

Cultural reproductive theory emerged out of sociology and rose to prominence with Bourdieu and Patterson's (1977) classic text *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. In this text, the authors explore the way in which the ruling ideas of a society are related to structures of class, reproduction, and power, and how they are legitimated and perpetuated through education in the broad sense of the word. It has since been used by education and feminist scholars for decades, and although it has been heavily criticized, it continues to prove its relevance (Štrajn, 2012). Educational theorists interested in cultural reproductive theory investigate "how power and social control work within the educational system and how social relations are produced, reproduced and transmitted through schooling" (Arnot, 2002, p. 2). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) pointed out that behind the everyday practices of schooling, we can find ideologies that govern hierarchal economic and class relations. Arnot notes that early sociological thinkers of the 1970s, who investigated the political contexts of schooling and explored relationships such as that between education and the social class were met with a great degree of controversy, particularly when they discussed the "the 'hidden' and 'unconscious' structuring of the educational system" (p. 2). Scholars have similarly contemplated how schools function as mechanisms for capitalism and democracy. For example, Brosio (2017) names schools as a contested site where the possibility of both capitalist and democratic ideals may be realized but argues that capitalism has proved much more powerful an opponent than democracy. Early cultural reproduction theorists were criticized for their inadequacy in considering the relationship between gender and class relations in education. This was accomplished by scholars such as Connell (1987), who theorized about gender relations in education.

What emerged is a feminist reproductive theory, which addresses the interconnections of patriarchy and capitalism and how they are produced and reproduced in educational systems. "Feminist reproductive theory is concerned with the ways in which schools function to reproduce gender divisions and oppression" (Weiler, 2017, p. 275). MacDonald (1980) further describes such theory, writing that "the contradictory nature of women's position in society, rather than being resolved through schooling is more likely to be accentuated" (p. 25). An example of this is Dhillon's (2011) research, which demonstrates that Indigenous girls who live in poverty often experience alienation and a lack of support from teachers and administrators. Of this, Dhillon writes, "these young women will continue to experience educational spaces disconnected from their lived experiences and exclusionary social institutions that operate more as sites of social (re)production than spaces of teaching, learning, and respect" (p. 128). Social reproduction, here, is focused on maintaining existing dominant structures within an institution. In particular, among the key questions that feminist reproductive theorists ask are "how is education related to the reproduction of gender divisions within capitalism?" (Arnot & Weiner, 1987) and "to what degree does education function as an ideological force that shapes girls' and women's experiences of education?" (Dillabough, 2003, p. 376). Feminist reproductive theorists use gender as the primary lens of analysis but also regard the intersectional social and cultural factors that impact marginalized social groups.

Arnot's (2002) major contribution to feminist reproductive theory is her discussion of "gender codes," which she defines as "the mode of transmission of gender relations through school knowledge/pedagogic structures" (p. 8). Similarly, Liu (2006) points out that "school inhabitants, especially teachers and students, serve as key 'infrastructural mechanisms', through which masculinities and femininities are mediated and lived out as they actively negotiate and

reproduce gender identities for themselves and others" (p. 426). Teacher candidates are included as actors in the school settings during their practicum experiences and eventual careers. They also bring with them gendered identities and understandings of gendered relations, including from their own schooling experiences, that are continuously negotiated.

According to Dillabough (2003) the strength of feminist reproductive theory was to dispel the liberal myth of democratic education and to highlight how class structures reproduce gendered and racialized divisions in education. She also points out that the theory's weakness is its shortfall in addressing the greater cultural contexts, such as hegemonic masculinity and popular culture, that impact gender inequality. Arnot (2002) locates another weakness in feminist reproduction theory, that it does not adequately address the agency and the production of meaning of women and girls, as well as their resistance to ideological messages that circulate in schools. Arnot points out the need to account for the complex intersections of gender with global economic and state influences and education. Doing so would make feminist reproductive theory "generative" (Bernstein, 1977, as cited in Arnot, 2002), wherein not only micro level phenomena, such as gendered identity, but also macro level influences like the role of education in colonialism, are considered.

Acker (1987) writes that the goal of feminist reproductive theorists is "the potential development, with teachers and pupils, of strategies of resistance or moves towards a curriculum which challenges the dominant hegemony" and emphasizes that for this to be effective, "theorists will have to develop ways of talking to the teachers rather than to each other" (p. 428). Similarly, Weiler (2017) argues that "it is vital for teachers to recognize not only the structural constraints under which they work, but also the potential inherent in teaching for transformative and

political work" (p. 291). She argues that in doing so, teachers can practice the Gramscian concept of counter-hegemony (Weiler, 2017).

According to Deem (2012), schooling does not create hierarchal social relations, but rarely does anything to undermine them and as such, tends to reproduce them. Deem speaks specifically to the tendency of schools to reproduce the structural organization of capitalist societies, thereby perpetuating the gendered division of labour and maintaining gender norms. Weiler (2017) criticizes Deem (2012) for failing to address the role of ideology in maintaining male hegemony and ignoring forms of resistance that teachers and students make from within the system. As Weiler maintains, "what is needed here is an examination of the way in which these meanings and forms of power are negotiated and worked out in the actual lived reality of teachers and students in schools," (p. 279). Chilisa (2006) contends that sex education "includes legitimized knowledge and discourses on sexual behaviors, practices, attitudes and the asymmetrical power relations between boys/men and girls/women that are transmitted through the formal and the informal school curriculum as well as the subsequent resistant discourses that operate in the schools" (p. 49). Her statement borrows from feminist reproductive theory's ideas of transmission, the hidden curriculum, and legitimized knowledges, all of which are useful for understanding sex education within and beyond the classroom.

Another strength of cultural reproductive theory that is worth exploring is that it puts in conversation what happens in schools with what happens in the greater political arena (Štrajn, 2012). Education is often a key point of debate and polarization between politicians, especially during the electoral process. This is particularly true with debates around sex education policy and practice. As will be discussed in the next chapter, sex education in Ontario has been

implicated in such polarized debates during provincial elections, causing significant consequence in public discourses and curricular policy decisions.

Feminist reproductive theorists posit that for change to be deep-rooted and self-perpetuating, it must seek to change individual attitudes, social institutions, and political and governmental models simultaneously. Like any theory, it has its strengths and limitations. Its appropriateness as a lens for my investigation is that it addresses the feminist concern of the reproduction of underlying hegemonic ideological forces that underpin the insidiousness of sexual violence. Feminist theorizations of sexual violence situate it within systematic and institutional power relations. Since school is seen as a microcosm of broader cultural and sociopolitical systems and often reproduces the status quo (Weiler, 2017), all actors who participate in schooling including teachers and students are implicated in patriarchal systems that contribute to the reproduction of sexual violence. Particularly relevant to my investigation, scholars have pointed out that schools have a unique opportunity and responsibility to resist gendered and sexual violence (Fine, 2003; Klein, 2006).

Feminist Understandings of Sexual Violence

Feminist scholars have theorized violence in the lives of girls and women for decades (Brownmiller, 1975; Kelly, 1987, 1988). They have pointed to the social, cultural, and political phenomena that maintain gendered violence. Researchers who study violence in the everyday lives of women often note that it is perpetual and normalized, such as Berman and colleagues (2000) who write that “girls and young women are socialized to expect violence in their everyday lives” (p. 33). They emphasize that all girls are at risk in cultures that condone and perpetuate sexual violence (Brownmiller, 1975; Kelly, 1987; Berman et al., 2000). Furthermore, all experiences of sexual violence, from the low end to the high end of the continuum, are valid

and have real consequences for victims, as will be discussed in the literature review. To understand the occurrence of sexual violence in the context of the school system, I draw on the feminist concepts of the continuum of sexual violence, hegemonic masculinity, and rape culture. I also discuss consent education as it is inseparable from feminist understandings of sexual violence.

The Continuum of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence can include sexist or sexual harassment, sexual coercion, sexual contact with or without force, attempted rape, threat of rape, and rape. The concept of a continuum of sexual violence was first proposed by Liz Kelly in the late 1980s. Her research showed that women experienced many unwanted sexual acts within what could be considered to be consensual relationships both legally and culturally, such as within intimate relationships (Kelly, 1987). The concept of a continuum reflects both the difficulties of defining forms of sexual violence and the complexities and ambiguities of women's experiences (Kelly, 1987). Moreover, Kelly contended that theorizing sexual violence as a continuum means that violent acts of various severity are linked to one another. Prevention efforts must highlight this link and how it functions to reproduce rape cultures.

Furthermore, there exists a relationship between the severity of sexually violent behaviours and the legal and social recognition of their levels of appropriateness. As theorized by Stout (1991) and articulated by McMahon at al. (2011), "at one end of the continuum are those behaviors that are generally considered sexually violent in our society including rape, sexual assault, and criminal sexual contact" (McMahon et al., 2011, p. 118). These more overt behaviours are generally legally recognized as crimes and largely recognized as inappropriate by most people (Stout, 1991). They are also much less prevalent than those considered lower on the

continuum. McMahon and Banyard (2012) suggest that these may be referred to as "high-risk" or "high visibility" as the harm they cause tends to be more documented and easily observed. For Klein (2006), female homicide, or femicide, through school shootings does not exist apart from sexual violence, in fact, it is part of the continuum. In her writing on what she calls 'sexed' violence, Howe (2008) similarly states that femicide as a phenomenon is intimately tied to the sexual violence of men against women. Indeed, the *Canadian Feminicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability* suggests that femicide "is the most extreme form of violence on a continuum of violence and discrimination against women and girls" (n.p.).

Meanwhile, as articulated by McMahon and colleagues (2011), "at the other end of the continuum are behaviors that contribute to the existence of sexual violence that are more commonly accepted, including sexually degrading language, pornography, and harassment" (p. 118). These behaviours are less likely to be recognized as harmful and are thus a normalized part of everyday life and they are the most prevalent (Stout, 1991). McMahon and Banyard (2012) call these behaviours "low risk" in relation to the potential of great harm emerging out of any once instance. Prevention programs that focus on this end of the continuum contribute to more sustaining social change because people in societies begin to trouble commonly accepted and highly prevalent sexually violent behaviours (McMahon & Banyard). An increasingly popular example of such programs are bystander interventions on postsecondary campuses, which serve as a form of sexual violence prevention. Bystander programs are theory-based, and they use the concept of the continuum to teach students how to identify behaviours that support rape culture at various points of severity and to break the perpetual cycle by intervening (Banyard et al., 2009; McMahon & Banyard, 2012).

Rape Culture

Rape culture is a feminist concept that denotes a culture in which all forms of sexual violence are common and in which prevalent attitudes, practices, and media normalize, excuse, tolerate, and accept sexual violence (Brownmiller, 1975; Buchwald et al., 1993; Garcia & Vemuri, 2017; Gavey, 2019). In her monumental text on the social, cultural, and political functions of rape, Brownmiller (1975) asserts that rape is "a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear" (p. 6). Identifying a number of deeply ingrained cultural myths about rape, Brownmiller offers a counter discourse of sexual violence as an act of power that operates to control women and girls. In other words, she argues that sexual violence is fundamental to male domination. Various feminist scholars have followed suit by discussing the function of sexual violence in patriarchal societies. An often-cited definition of rape culture is that of Buchwald et al. (1993):

> It is a complex set of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. (p. vii)

Feminist thinkers have put forward the idea that certain institutional contexts such as higher education campuses are rape cultures. Gavey (2019) writes that rape culture "makes a man's rape of a woman possible and, at the same time, plausibly deniable (it was 'just sex' not 'rape')" (p. 315). Moreover, "it provides an implicit template for gendered sexuality that is skewed in ways that can accommodate male (but not female) sexual urgency, selfishness, and pressure as unremarkable or even normal" (p. 315-316). In rape culture, most occurrences of sexual violence are not named as such or recognized as harmful.

Rape culture involves the normalization of rape jokes, the proliferation of rape myths and victim blaming discourses, and the individualization of perpetrator behaviour. Feminist scholars have pointed to the link between adherence to traditional sex/gender roles, sexist attitudes and beliefs, and the acceptance of rape myths (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; hooks, 2004). Rape myths, a phenomenon first named by Burt (1980) and defined as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists,” (p. 217) are of the cultural fabric of rape culture. Lonsway and Fitzgerald contend rape myths “serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (p. 133). Research has demonstrated that rape jokes and rape myths tend to permeate in youth culture (Berman et al., 2000), be it in school, online or in between. Vital to this is that students who validate rape myths are more likely to commit sexual violence (Abbey et al., 2006; Malamuth et al., 1995) and less likely to intervene as prosocial bystanders (McMahon, 2010).

A defining feature of rape culture is victim blaming discourses. For example, the belief that certain women "ask for it" by their actions such as the way they dress, their flirtatious behaviours, among other things, has been widely documented (Harding, 2015); such beliefs shift responsibility from predators to victims. As a result, in rape cultures, women who report incidents of sexual violence are likely to be met with skepticism and questioning on their ‘roles’ in the incident (Harding). Teachers are implicated in victim blaming discourses in that they tend to hold such beliefs (Robinson, 2005; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2009). Students also hold beliefs related to such discourses (Robinson, 2005). Students and teachers in Robinson’s (2005) study reported that girls who had been rumored to be “sluttish” were considered “fair game” for sexual harassment. Of this, Robinson wrote that misogynist attitudes towards girls were present in the narratives of the boys. Working class girls are more often read in this sexualized manner and

blamed for being sexually harassed (Robinson, 1992; Lees, 1993; Hasinoff, 2014). Such research demonstrates how rape culture and hegemonic masculinity, discussed next, may be weaved within the culture of schools.

Feminist theorizations of rape culture not only point to, but also trouble both victim blaming discourses and individualistic notions of perpetrator behaviour. Both of these tend to ascribe responsibility to the victim or to the sole (pathological) offender, and to refuse cultural accountability. Several scholars and activists have critiqued the dominant tendency to ascribe blame to deviant predators and called for a shift to addressing the role of the community and contextual roots of sexual violence (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006; O'Neil & Morgan, 2010). Fine (1988) writes that sex education programs, especially those that ascribe to abstinence-only frameworks, often portray males as predators and females as victims. Scholars such as Robinson (2005) illustrate how in schools, it is not just individual perpetrators who behave in sexually violent ways, but also peer conformity and teacher passivity that contribute to the reproduction of sexual violence. This, however, cannot be understood outside of a gendered lens. Robinson herself points out that hegemonic masculinity, discussed in the next section, is a key context in which sexual harassment occurs in schools. Robinson's work is among the research that demonstrates how community and cultural beliefs, attitudes, and responses shape experiences of sexual violence.

Research on sexual harassment and student and teacher responses provide insight into how sexually violent behaviours from the lower end of the continuum circulate in schools and are 'normal' occurrences. In her 1995 study, Stein expressed that teachers and administrators do not see sexual harassment as a form of violence. The girls in Stein's research reported that the adults in their school did not see their experiences of sexual harassment as serious enough to

warrant intervention, leading Stein to conclude that this leads to the reproduction of sexual violence in schools (p. 147). Researchers investigating student perspectives on sexual harassment have found that students, predominantly boys, who admit to harassing other students generally see themselves as misunderstood comedians. As Hill and Kearl (2011) explained, “Many students who admitted to sexually harassing others didn’t think of it as a big deal” and “many were trying to be funny” (p. 15). Similarly, Robinson (2005) found that in her study, “Many of the boys could not understand and did not really care about what they considered to be girls ‘over the top’ reactions to what they viewed as ‘a bit of fun’” (p. 25). Berman and colleagues (2000) found that girls often did not name or recognize incidents of violence, and that sexual harassment was often referred to as “teasing” and “just having fun.” Meanwhile, boys in Robinson’s (2005) study believed that girls either liked being sexually harassed or condone it. Robinson troubles these beliefs by pointing out the complexity of girls’ responses given the contextual factors that impact them: “Young women’s decisions may have significant negative effects not just on their welfare, but on their popularity and power amongst their peers, especially with boys, resulting in their own gender and sexual identities being scrutinized” (p. 26). Girls are thus put in positions where if they react negatively to sexual harassment, they receive social retribution, supporting the theory that sexual harassment in school is a tool for policing hierarchal gendered relations (Conroy, 2013).

Subtler forms of sexual harassment tend to go unrecognized by both students and teachers. Robinson (2005) found that boys tended to perceive sexual harassment as a physical phenomenon and to not consider verbal, visual, or written forms of sexual harassment. Those who were more aware of physical and non-physical forms of harassment perceived the latter to be less serious. However, these subtler forms of harassment occur more frequently (Robinson,

2005). As Robinson points out, “this polarization is reinforced through institutional educational practices, when some teachers and administrators consider non-physical harassment more trivial and less worthy of intervention or official deterrents” (p. 24). Robinson’s research illustrates the inverse relationship between behaviours commonly considered to be inappropriate or serious and the frequency of behaviours that form the continuum of sexual violence (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). The unrecognizability of less visible sexually violent behaviours in school contexts (Robinson, 2005) contributes to the normalization and perpetuation of sexual harassment in schools, and as such, contributes to a culture in which more serious forms of harassment and violence are untroubled (Brownmiller, 1975; Buchwald et al., 1993).

The literature on the impacts of rape culture on the mental and physical health of girls and boys is scant, there is a body of work on how rape culture impacts women’s health on postsecondary campuses. Van Roosmalen and McDaniel (1999) found that the pervasiveness of sexual harassment had direct and indirect health effects on young women, including “nausea and sleeplessness, loss of self-esteem, fear and anger, feelings of helplessness and isolation, as well as nervousness and depression” (p. 33) in addition to “lost productivity, limited future opportunities, lost autonomy, increased stress, fear” (p. 37). Moreover, they point out that these effects are often hidden and unacknowledged. In a more recent study, Jordan et al. (2014) documented weaker academic performance in women who have experienced sexual violence, including those who had experienced it as teenagers and those who had experienced it during their first year of postsecondary studies (p. 191). Similarly, young women in Stermac and colleagues’ (2018) study reported decreased engagement and lower grades following experiences of sexual coercion (p. 110). Within this line of inquiry, it is important to consider the point that research on the impacts of rape on women may have a paradoxical role in everyday

understandings of sexual violence (Gavey & Schmidt, 2011). Gavey and Schmidt argue that it can be "reductive, prescriptive, depoliticizing" (p. 449) and advocate instead for "the deferral of epistemological certainty in statements about the impact of rape and openness to complexity and ambiguity" (p. 452). In addition, feminist theorizations of sexual violence highlight that the pervasiveness of sexual violence, even for girls who do not experience it, has various impacts on their health and academic performance.

The digital sphere tends to heighten concerns of safety for women and girls and to contribute to rape supportive ideologies. Part of this can certainly be attributed to the abundance of online pornography and the overwhelming amount of youth who have been exposed to it (Ezzell, 2008; Sun et al., 2016). Although research shows that the majority of youth over 16-years-old have been exposed to pornography and a minority were exposed prior to age 13 (Sabrina et al., 2008), exposure in younger youth may be higher in the past decade with the proliferation of smartphones and various social media platforms. Men and boys consume pornography at higher rates than women and girls (Johansson & Hammarén, 2007; Ezzell, 2008; Sun et al., 2016). Pornography is often attributed with perpetuating sexist and misogynist attitudes and behaviours and supporting sexual violence against women (Zillman & Bryant, 1982; Carr & VanDeusen, 2004; Wright et al., 2016). Feminist scholars posit that boys and men learn sexual scripts through pornography that lead to violence against women. In the context of schooling, researchers have found that boys often use the language of pornography to discuss sex (Haste, 2013). In their research on youth understandings of sexual consent, Coy et al. (2016) found that students use pornography as an instructional manual for sex and to fill gaps in knowledge lacking from sex education. Students in their study often rightly perceived pornography to sexualize sexism. Still, students' understandings of sexual consent reflected the

gendered messaging often portrayed in pornography, namely “men’s entitlement to women’s bodies for sex and the presumed sexual availability of young women” (Coy et al., 2016, p. 8).

Another part of the digital sphere that has interested sexual violence scholars is social media, which can simultaneously be a hotbed for sexually violent behaviours (Louie, 2017; Gavey, 2019) and a means of resistance against rape culture for girls and women (Keller et al., 2018; Mendes et al., 2018; Almanssori & Stanley, 2021). Furthermore, Louie (2017) finds that social media has become a key tool through which Indigenous girls experience sexual violence, while Gavey (2019) explores the ways in which boys use social media to perform dominant masculinity by boasting about their sexual violent behaviours.

Feminist scholars who study sexual violence, such as McMahon and Banyard (2012), maintain that “effective rape prevention efforts must therefore address the underlying assumptions about gender and sexual violence, and change rape supportive ideologies and social norms that will ultimately decrease sexual violence perpetration” (p. 6). This means that for prevention, or primary, education to be successful and self-perpetuating, education stakeholders, including teachers and students, should seek to understand the continuum of sexual violence and the cultural thread – rape culture – that underlies the various behaviours within it. Researchers who study primary sexual violence programming in K-12 (e.g., Fay & Medway, 2006) and postsecondary education (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009) have attested to the benefits of contextualizing sexual violence education.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Men and boys are more likely than women and girls to behave in sexually violent ways (Klein, 2006) and to support sexual violence in various severities and across situations (Feltey et al., 1991, p. 237; Davies et al., 2012). Women are less likely to possess attitudes that support

rape, and to allocate victim blame (Kalof & Wase, 1995; Stephens et al., 2016). Moreover, men are less likely to view incidences of sexual violence as serious, particularly those at the lower end of the continuum (Gunby et al., 2012). According to Klein, schools reproduce what she calls "a continuum of normalized masculinity that sanctions violence against girls." This normalized masculinity is what I discuss next.

Feminist theorists understand that social constructions of dominant masculinity play a crucial role in men's perpetration of sexual violence (Flood, 2011) and that such masculinities are often reproduced in schools (Robinson, 2005; Skelton, 1996, 1997). In the 1980s and 1990s prominent scholars Connell (1987) and Butler (1994; 1999) theorized the pioneering notions hegemonic masculinity and gender performativity, respectively, and how they are used as tools to maintain masculine dominance in patriarchal societies. Connell (1987) defined masculinity as a practice that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women. Hegemonic masculinity involves the imposition of one form of masculinity, the reinforcement of those who ascribe to it, and the punishment of those who stray (Connell, 1987) and those who stand up against it (Robinson, 2005).

However, as Connell (1996) contends, hegemonic masculinity "is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable" (p. 76). To further capture this understanding of masculinity, Butler's (1994; 1999) notion of performativity is especially helpful. According to Butler (1994), performativity is "that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names ... this production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation" (p. 33). As such, everyday performances of hegemonic masculinity establish and continuously reproduce it. The dominant form of masculinity is

performed through acts of toughness, physical and sexual prowess, aggressiveness, and violence (Connell, 1995). In her writing on violence against girls in the context of schools, Klein (2006) exclaims:

> To protect a socially defined Male identity, men often feel compelled to violently defend themselves against charges that they are exhibiting 'feminine' or 'homosexual' qualities and/or in defense of territorial claims to specific girls with whom they may feel attached. (p. 166)

The dominant form of masculinity is maintained through peer reinforcement of masculine performance (Connell, 1987). Within a schooling context, "'doing' hegemonic masculinity becomes a dynamic, socially, and historically sanctioned performance that is generally rewarded with power and popularity for young men in schools and the broader community" (Robinson, 2005, p. 22). Khoja-Moolji (2012) identifies contact sports, detention rooms, and curricular knowledges, as places and practices in schools in which hegemonic masculinity is reproduced. Klein (2006) points out that in hypermasculine communities such as sports teams, sexual violence against girls is considered a common ritual like hazing and bullying. However, classrooms and hallways are also spaces in which masculinities are negotiated, performed, and reinforced.

Hegemonic masculinity and the ways in which it is monitored and reinforced contribute to the ubiquity of sexual violence. Robinson (2000, 2005) asserts that in schools, sexual harassment is a key vehicle through which hegemonic masculinity is performed and by which hierarchal gendered relationships are maintained. This is consistent with research that points to how sexual scripts portray men's sexual interest, readiness, and performance as evidence of their masculinity (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Robinson's (2000) findings that hegemonic masculinity

tends to transcend other hierarchal power structures in schools is especially revealing. Robinson's research on male students' sexual harassment of female teachers in secondary schools tells of the relationship between sexual violence and hegemonic masculinities in schools. She speaks of the gendered power differential between male students and their female teachers can hold more weight than others: "the power differential, socially constructed in masculinity and femininity, can transcend institutional authority in the teacher/student binary relationship and the power that culturally operates in the binary of adult/child" (Robinson, 2000, p. 75). For teachers, the implications of this type of harassment are both professional and personal, and as Robinson points out, they affect the quality of schooling in general. In this article, she also highlights the three factors that impact the hiddenness of this problem as the following: the discourse of the deviant perpetrator, the discourse of the normality of such behaviour, and the construction of children as too naïve and innocent to participate in perpetuating power dynamics (p. 76). The first two factors that Robinson outlines are consistent with feminist understandings of sexual violence, particularly with conceptualizations of rape culture. To address the third factor, the belief of children as too immature to participate in power structures, there is research that demonstrates that children at very young ages learn dominant discourses concerning gender. For example, Skelton (1996) writes that "the perpetuation of stereotypical images of `good, quiet girls' and `tough, naughty boys' could be seen in assemblies, wall displays, stories and the attitudes of some teachers" (p. 195). Her findings are consistent with feminist reproductive theorists' understandings of school cultures, which tend to reflect and contribute to broader culture.

A more complex understanding of hegemonic masculinity also necessitates a discussion of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity has been defined as a cultural way to police behaviours

along gender and sexuality categories (Warner, 1991). It is not merely the privileging of heterosexuality in society, but rather, a force that ties heteronorms to social oppression (Marchia & Sommer, 2019). Within this realm, normative heterosexuality in particular needs to be put under the microscope for impactful sexual violence prevention. Gavey (2005; 2019) writes that discourses of heterosex shape male sexuality and in doing so perpetuate the cultural scaffolding of sexual violence. In other words, dominant heteronormative discourses facilitate socially accepted sexual scripts, and as Gavey points out, these discourses often interlock to produce cultures in which normative sexual experiences constitute sexual violence. In her own words "heterosex routinely works in ways that tend to privilege men's (putative) sexual interests over women's" (p. 92).

Feminist Understandings of Consent

Growing research and public discourse in consent education has emerged in recent years due in part to the growing consensus among educators from elementary to postsecondary schools that sex education must move beyond just learning about disease and unplanned pregnancy to acknowledge sexual violence as a valid "risk" of sexual encounters (Gilbert, 2018). In the 1990s feminist definitions of sexual consent education in North America shifted from a "no means no" model of non-consent, which prioritized women's refusals, to a "yes means yes" model of affirmative consent (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017). Affirmative consent is often part of contemporary comprehensive sex education in North America (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017); however, critics have pointed out that it is an incomplete and decontextualized model of understanding consent. In fact, Hirsch and Khan's (2020) research demonstrates that "promoting affirmative consent is insufficient to prevent sexual assault" (pg. xxv).

Muehlenhard et al. (2016) explain that there are circumstances in which even an explicit "yes" should not be interpreted as consent: verbal or other types of pressure and coercion, insufficient understanding of what one is consenting to, and the effects of alcohol and drugs. In their analysis of research on student understandings of consent, Muehlenhard and colleagues pointed out that in the majority of articles they reviewed, students often use passivity as a consent cue; that is, participants often reported they communicated consent by not refusing. This is consistent with gendered scripts that paint verbal communication as the antithesis of passion. As Garcia and Vemuri (2017) point out, "in a rape culture, how women communicate consent or refusal is constantly negotiated and troubled by sexist gender norms, often leading to victim-blaming, slut-shaming, and disbelief" (p. 14). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that unequal power relations between women and men, and differing gendered expectations for them, complicate consent.

Affirmative models of consent education have also been criticized for perpetuating gendered notions of sexual experience, in which men ask for consent and women give or withhold their affirmation (Halley, 2016). Although girls tend to report a better understanding of the meaning of consent than do boys (Brady et al., 2018), girls and women still often believe it is their responsibility to indicate consent to men (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Coy et al., 2016). Affirmative models of consent education tend to support such beliefs.

Gilbert (2018) problematizes consent education for its paradoxical tendencies, arguing, "the concept of consent brings with it, into education, a procedural logic that misrecognises sexuality as a transparent, communicative, and rational experience and mistakes compliance for learning" (p. 296). Butler (2011) points out that power relations precede consent in that there are power forces that impact the decision-making processes that inform consent and nonconsent. As

Harris (2018) explains, “Consent is anything but simple. It is laden with the broad social context in which people utter ‘no’ and ‘yes.’ A person who refuses sexual activity navigates many cultural, historical, and personal complexities” (p. 159). Acknowledging that consent and sexual violence occur within these complexities and pervade through institutional settings, including schools, is a key first step according to feminist theorists (Gavey, 2019). Moreover, feminist educators have pointed out that in addition to consent, students should learn about nonconsent, coercion, and desire (Fenner, 2017).

Feminist thinkers have often criticized popular discourses that place girls as gatekeepers of sexual experience (Fine, 1988; Gavey, 2019). One issue that has been brought up in feminist literature on schooling is the implicit sexist messaging around school dress codes and the disciplining girls whose dress patterns are “distracting” to boys (Harbach, 2015). For example, Hasinoff (2014) criticized anti-sexualization rhetoric, which “inadvertently blames girls by reinforcing the idea that they can prevent sexual violence,” if they embody a particular type of sexual presentation. Egan and Hawkes (2008) contend that the discourse of sexualization places girls in the role of the passive subject rather than an active negotiator of her life. Egan and Hawkes, whose research focuses on the historical issues of girlhood, find that components of the captivation with anti-sexualization “reproduces historically persistent patriarchal and moralizing beliefs about the compliant and pathological nature of heterosexual female sexuality—particularly the sexuality of poor and working-class women” (p. 294). Egan and Hawkes (2008) thoughts are mirrored by those of Hasinoff (2014) in her assertion that the clothing presentation of girls often described as desexualized is that which is deemed respectable middle-upper class communities. The ‘girls as sexual gatekeepers’ discourse, which is more in line with affirmative models of sexual consent, is often reproduced in schools, both through sex education (Fine,

1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006) and through everyday interactions between peers and between students and school staff.

Conclusion

Feminist theoretical frameworks are generally interested in the unequal power dynamics between men and women, the systems and ideologies that create and reproduce them, and the ways in which to challenge them. My theoretical framework takes from various central feminist ideas: the system of patriarchy, intersectionality, power and power relations, hegemonic ideology. It is also informed by the work of feminist theorists within the field of education, in particular by feminist cultural reproductive theory. Finally, feminist understandings of consent and sexual violence, including the central concepts of the continuum of sexual violence, rape culture, and hegemonic masculinity, serve as analytical anchors for this investigation. The theories, research, and scholarly foundations discussed in this chapter are infused into the remaining chapters of my dissertation.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In my theoretical framework, I brought feminist understandings of sexual violence into conversation with school research such as that on hegemonic gendered relations and sexual harassment. In this chapter, I synthesize literature on the following topics: the various terminology associated with sexual violence, the gendered prevalence of school-age children who experience sexual violence, teacher education in sex education and sexual violence prevention, sex education and programming in global and local perspectives, Ontario's sex education curriculum controversy, and the updated curriculum content of recent years. Within the various sections of my review, I discuss pertinent historical, political, and cultural movements and issues that relate to the present investigation.

Research on sexual violence in schools began to emerge after 1992, when a U.S. Supreme Court decision established that students who experience sexual harassment have the right to sue school boards (Bagley et al., 1997). However, in my review of the research, I found that research on sexual violence in schools is less prevalent than that in postsecondary schools and in the workplace, which is particularly true for literature on the role of teachers and teacher candidates in addressing sexual violence in elementary and secondary schools. There is a myriad of reasons for this, which range from researchers' ethical and legal concerns, to teachers' general discomfort in addressing sexual violence and lack of training in sex education. Lenskyj (1990) points out that Ontario teachers may be discouraged to teach challenging topics such as sexual violence because in Ontario, teachers are required by law to report any suspicion of abuse involving children under the age of 16. Although this study was over thirty years old, the fear of

reporting is still relevant and may continue to contribute to teachers' reluctance to address sexual violence through curriculum expectations and school cultures.

This fear may also add to teachers' hesitancy to participate in research on sexual violence. Researchers who are interested in investigating sexual violence in K-12 often also report obstacles (e.g., Skelton, 1997). It is common for school boards and research ethics committees to withhold access to research in school communities. This is particularly relevant for research that may be deemed sensitive or political, such as sexual violence research. Researchers that investigate such obstacles tend to refer to those who grant access to researchers to conduct studies as "gatekeepers" (Wanat, 2008; Clark, 2010). In the context of schools, gatekeepers exist at various levels of leadership, from school board leaders to school principals (Wanat, 2008). The cooperation of school gatekeepers is influenced by what they perceive to be benefits and threats to participation (Wanat, 2008). According to Wanat, gatekeeper cooperation increases when "projects could provide positive images of the school and tried to avoid projects that dealt with sensitive issues that could portray the school negatively" (p. 201). Considering issues with reporting (Lenskyj, 1990) and the perceived legal and public relations implications of participation (Wanat, 2008), it is not difficult to understand why gatekeepers may be reluctant to allow access to research on sexual violence. Thus, as a result of various levels of gatekeeping and obstacles to gatekeeper cooperation and participant engagement in school research on sensitive topics, researchers often make compromises to the scopes of their investigations (e.g., Fay & Medway, 2006, who investigated rape myth acceptance among students who participated in prevention programming) and may abort their projects altogether if access is too challenging to obtain (Clark, 2010).

Mapping the Terminology

Given the contested nature of sexual violence terminology, it is worthwhile to define each term at the outset. Moreover, mapping the terminology is important because language and words are political. Language is "a site of exploration and struggle" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2000, p. 972) and words hold social and cultural meanings that connect to power and privilege. St. Pierre (2000) further explains that "language does not simply point to pre-existing things and ideas but rather helps to construct them and, by extension, the world as we know it" (p. 483). In the case of sexual violence, this holds particular relevance in that cultural understandings of sexual violence tend to be deeply linked to the language we use to communicate it**.** According to McCartan et al. (2015), terminology surrounding sexual violence "are generated by society from a number of sources including implicit theories (personal experiences, stereotypes) and explicit theories (the media, professionals, peers and social networks)" (p. 101). When such terminology are not explicitly discussed, there is often misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the nature of the phenomenon of sexual violence.

I use the term *sexual violence* because 1) it is most often used in policy and governmental documents to denote a public health problem, and 2) it is most often theorized in feminist thought as a continuum (Kelly, 1987; McMahon & Banyard, 2012) which captures various forms of harm, from jokes and harassment to assault and rape. However, I keep in mind that the term sexual violence itself is not without its flaws. Howe (2008) contends that it fails to account for the gendered or sexed nature of sexual violence. In her book on sexual violence and crime, Howe complicates the term sexual violence and argues that the term "sexed violence" is a more accurate representation of the phenomenon (p. 7). Other contested terms that lie within the intersection of sexual violence and schooling and that I will discuss in this section are: sexuality

and sexuality education, sexual health education, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, gender-based or gendered, sexual harassment, and sexist harassment.

In research, popular discourse, and policy and legal documents, terms associated with sexual violence have been profoundly contested (Young & Maguire, 2003). Sexual violence, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and rape are among the terms often used interchangeably. In the case of child sexual violence, the variation in terminology increases and includes the terms sexual exploitation and molestation that are synonymous and often contested. The Criminal Code of Canada uses the terms sexual assault (RSC, 1985, Section 271), sexual interference (Section 151), sexual touching (Section 152), and sexual exploitation (Section 153). The term rape is commonly understood as a serious form of violence and is often utilized in American and international law (Marcus, 2019). Although they each have separate definitions in the legislation, the criminal acts which the terms represent all fall within the continuum of sexual violence.

The Status of Women Canada report refers to sexual violence as, "specific, usually physical acts, while the word abuse is used to refer to a pattern of behaviour that a person uses to gain or maintain power and control over another" (SOWC, 2018). The strength of this definition is use of the words *power* and *control*, key concepts to understanding sexual violence. However, its emphasis on physical acts is contradicted by governmental and organizational definitions that conceptualize sexual violence as a more encompassing term that *includes* sexual assault. Sexual assault, in turn, becomes a term that is associated with more serious and usually physical forms of sexual violence. The Government of Ontario (2019) website defines sexual violence as "any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or force" (n.p.). Although the government website definition is vaguer and includes no mention of power, under the subheading "Facts About Sexual Violence" (n.p.), the site includes "facts" that represent more nuanced

understandings of sexual violence such as "Rape is about power and control, not sex" (n.p.) and "There are no grey areas it's never okay" (n.p.). These statements represent an awareness of sexual violence that is more reflective of that of feminist theory. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) defines sexual violence in the following way:

> 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. (p. 149)

Although more encompassing of a wide range of sexually violent behaviours than the SOWC and Government of Ontario definitions, the WHO's definition also lacks a mention of power relations.

The term sexual misconduct is used often in the literature (e.g., Russell & Gruys, 2021) and in news publications (e.g., Donovan & Gibson, 2021) to refer to sexual violence of students by teachers. Part one of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) Act is dedicated to detailing the definition of various forms of "sexual misconduct," which is defined as the following, wherein member refers to a teacher or administrator certified by OCT:

> (a) sexual intercourse or other forms of physical sexual relations between the member and the student, (b) touching, of a sexual nature, of the student by the member, or (c) behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature by the member towards the student (OCT Act, 1996, revision 2018)

The definitions provided in the OCT Act represent a broad range of sexually violent behaviours, but still fail to encompass the full continuum of inappropriate behaviours.

The term *gender-based* or *gendered* comes from early feminist theorists such as Kelly (1987, 1988), who also emphasized the importance of understanding childhood sexual violence through a gendered lens. The next year after publishing her ideas about the continuum, Kelly (1988) theorized a definition of childhood sexual violence, emphasizing the importance of considering all forms of childhood sexual violence as valid and recognizing that sexual violence against girls is part of the more general phenomenon. She further emphasizes that “it is by making gender the centre of our analysis that abuse by peers can both be taken account of and be accounted for” (Kelly, 1988, p. 72). Addressing the context of schools, gender, and violence, Connell (2000) further notes that “gender is embedded in the institutional arrangements through which a school system functions” (p. 152). To demonstrate the gendered nature of phenomenon, the statistics presented in the next section demonstrate that the prevalence of childhood sexual violence is overwhelmingly higher for girls than it is for boys, and that boys are the most common perpetrators.

The terms *sexual harassment* and *sexist harassment* exist in education literature and discourse. Interestingly, although researchers have documented its prevalence in schools, sexual harassment is still often conflated with bullying in popular discourse and even in research. It has often been reduced to peer bullying or peer victimization (Ashbaughm & Cornell, 2008). Doing so not only takes the issue of sexual harassment out of its gendered context (Stein & Mennemeier, 2011), but it also erases its relationship to more overt forms of sexual violence and thereby reduces its magnitude. In addition, although bullying has been documented in all age groups, sexual harassment can begin as early as elementary school, but starts to increase in early adolescence (Petersen & Hyde, 2009). The term *sexist harassment* has been defined as “generalized sexist remarks and behaviour… not necessarily designed to elicit sexual

cooperation, but rather to convey insulting, degrading, or sexist attitudes" (Fitzgerald, 1990, p. 25). Sexist harassment is a phenomenon almost always amalgamated with sexual harassment in the research literature, in policy, and in popular discourse; it is rarely conjectured on its own.

Another highly contested term related to sexual violence is *sexuality*, which has been used to refer to a variety of phenomena. According to Cameron and Kulik (2003), the term sexuality "like gender, is intended to underline the idea that we are dealing with a cultural rather than purely natural phenomenon" (p. 1). Sex education is also commonly referred to as sexuality education (Barr et al., 2014) and sexual health education (e.g., Cohen et al., 2012). Some have even referred to it more broadly as health education or school health education (e.g., Barr et al., 2014). These terms are habitually used interchangeably in the scholarly literature as well as in policy documents. More recently, the term *comprehensive* has preceded denotations of sex education, a result of activist calls for the inclusion of typically marginalized teaching topics such as sexual violence, pleasure, and relationships, in curriculum. What is deemed as comprehensive, though, varies widely. In my research, I use the broader term *sex education* as a way of encompassing the discussed terms.

Prevalence of School-Age Children Who Experience Sexual Violence

One in five school-age girls experience sexual assault (Bagley et al., 1997; Pereda et al., 2009). The statistic is markedly lower for school-age boys, but still quite high. A recent metanalysis that covered sixty-five articles and 22 countries showed that 19.7% of women and 7.9% of men report having suffered some form of sexual abuse prior to the age of eighteen (Pereda et al.). According to Statistics Canada, nearly half of victims of sexual violence are women between the ages of 15-24 (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Meanwhile, ninety percent of adult perpetrators of sexual violence are men (McCloskey & Rafael, 2005) and under the age of 35

(Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Studies on the incidence of sexual harassment in schools show similarly staggering rates (Lee et al., 1996; Stratton & Backes, 1997; Hill & Kearl, 2011; Clear et al., 2014). In line with feminist theorizations of sexual violence, Berman et al. (2000) point out that sexual harassment is "one of the most insidious, yet pervasive, forms of violence that affects all girls, not merely those traditionally thought to be vulnerable or at risk" (p. 32).

The consequences of experiencing sexual violence have been documented to have a wide variety of physical and mental health problems. Individuals who experience sexual violence in childhood are at a higher risk of sexual assault as adults (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). The Canadian Center for Justice Statistics found that one in four victims had difficulties with everyday activities, one in six reported experiencing over two long-term emotional consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Sexual harassment correlated with poorer mental and physical health outcomes for middle and high school girls, according to Gruber and Fineran (2007). An Albertan study found that girls who had experienced sexual violence were far more likely to show signs of an emotional disorder and those who experienced it often additionally reported more suicidal behaviours (Bagley et al., 1997). For girls, sexual harassment is often associated with feelings of fear and low bodily self-esteem (Murnen & Smolak, 2000).

Stein (1995) points out that although the majority of victims of sexual harassment are girls, even boys and observers suffer from disruptive educational consequences of it (p. 159-160). Similarly, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) reports from 2001 and 2011 both make a point of acknowledging that sexual harassment has deep impacts on student learning, including difficulty concentrating, poor attendance, disengagement, withdrawal and alienation (Lipson, 2001; Hill & Kearl, 2011). In more recent studies, sexual harassment,

compared to bullying, was found to be a significantly greater predictor of negative educational outcomes, including school engagement, the relationship between students and teachers, and academic achievement (Gruber & Fineran, 2007, 2016). This was particularly true for girls (Gruber & Fineran, 2016).

Teacher Training in Sex Education and Sexual Violence Prevention

Over forty years ago, Herold and Benson (1979) surveyed Ontario teachers and found that most reported inadequate teacher training as one of the key problems in sex education. A 1999 study of Bachelor of Education (BEd) programs throughout Canada revealed that only 15.5% provided compulsory training in sex education; while 26.2% of BEd programs offered optional sex education courses, only a third of teacher candidates took such courses (McKay & Barrett, 1999). More recent research demonstrates that this absence of teacher training continues to hold truth. An Australian study found that little teacher education programs included substantial sex education curriculum and only half included basic sex education curriculum (Carman et al., 2011). Canadian teachers in Ninomiya's (2010) study conveyed an absence of training in sex education. Similarly, in a study conducted by Cohen et al. (2012), only 36% of Canadian elementary teachers reported having received training to teach sexual health education. The lack of preparedness that teachers feel is compounded when they are tasked with teaching students with disabilities. For example, East and Orchard (2014) found that teachers, parents, and health professionals tended to feel inappropriately qualified to teach sex education to youth with physical disabilities and to place the responsibility for doing so on someone else.

According to Barr et al. (2014), "a consequence of little to no pre-service training is that teachers typically avoid teaching subjects that they consider controversial, despite their belief that it is important for sexuality curricula to cover a variety of topics" (p. 397). The scholarly

literature on teacher sex education training, though scant overall, is heavily interested in the teaching of biological processes such as puberty and teaching to prevent teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and other negative consequences of sex (e.g., Barr et al., 2014; Clayton et al., 2018). There is little research that addresses the role of teachers and sex education in sexual violence prevention. Teachers in an American study reported that they received more professional development on bullying than sexual harassment and tended to believe that sexual harassment occurs between adults and/or between adults and students rather than between peers (Charmaraman et al., 2013). Charmaraman and colleagues concluded that when teachers receive little professional development on sexual harassment, they are less likely to understand their role in preventing it.

The need for such research is further illustrated by studies that identify student wishes to learn about sexual violence. Students in a study conducted by Meaney et al. (2009) highly rated the importance of learning about sexual coercion and sexual assault, personal safety, sexual decision-making in dating, and communicating about sex. Furthermore, while 72% of students indicated that they should begin to learn about sexual violence in elementary school, 63% reported having begun to learn about it in secondary school (Meaney et al., 2009). In addition, among the ideas students in the 2011 AAUW report offered to reduce experiences of sexual harassment is having a designated staff member to speak to and holding in-class discussions (Hill & Kearl, 2011). This research points to the need for training teachers to understand sexual violence in relation to their roles, and to facilitate conversations and discussions on sexual communication and ethics with students.

A study conducted in Ethiopia investigated an issue similar to the purpose of my study. Altinyelken and Le Mat (2018) investigated teacher perspectives on definitions, causes, and

causes of sexual violence. They found that teachers displayed little empathy for victims and that they viewed sexual violence as an issue concerning victims only. Feminist scholars trouble this notion, maintaining that sexual violence concerns all actors in a community in which it occurs. Altinyelken and Le Mat also found that teachers saw girls as passive victims and boys and men as perpetrators and that sexually violent behaviours were deemed part of men and boys' nature because they were understood to be hypersexual beings. Such views point to the need for teacher education in sexual violence prevention that is rooted in feminist scholarship. Although Altinyelken and Le Mat's (2018) investigation is outside of a North American context, the findings from their study share a similar thread with findings from Canadian studies on sexual violence.

There is a body of research on teacher understandings of sexual harassment. Anagnostopoulos et al. (2009) found that teachers are more likely to intervene in cases of sexual harassment that are characterized as severe, chronic, public, and outside of dating relationships. This is in spite of the fact that teachers in this study reported that most cases of gendered bullying were subtle (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2009) and means that most of the time, teachers did not intervene when they witnessed sexually violent behaviours from the low end of the continuum. In keeping with these findings, girls interviewed by Berman et al. (2000) reported little to no consequences for sexual harassment, even when it was reported to teachers. Some expressed that when girls fought back, teachers would reprimand them instead of the boys. There was an "overwhelming perception that schools do little to discourage or even discuss this behavior," (p. 42) wrote Berman and colleagues. Along the same lines, Rahimi and Liston's (2009) findings led them to conclude that many teachers saw cases of verbal harassment as compliments by boys who did not mean harm. These reports are consistent with a)

heteronormative social scripts that dictate that attention men and boys give to women and girls should be viewed as a positive occurrence (Gavey, 2005); and b) the feminist theorizations of rape-supportive cultures, and in particular, research on the continuum of sexual violence and the normalization of behaviours from the subtle end of the continuum (Kelly, 1987; Stout, 1991).

Anagnostopoulos et al. (2009) also found that teachers often emphasized female victims as weak, passive, and otherwise vulnerable, and framed their interventions as being *on behalf of* these victims. Besides reprimanding male student perpetrators of gendered sexual harassment, interventions included giving advice to female students to change behaviours that may elicit harassment, such as wearing revealing clothing. This is supported by other research which has found that teachers often hold the view that girls are 'gatekeepers' of sexual experience (Chambers et al., 2004; Rahimi & Liston, 2009), a belief that provides fuel for victim blaming discourses. For example, Rahimi and Liston contend that "teachers may let harassment of so-called bad girls be perpetuated in their classrooms to attempt a kind of moral policing of the sexuality of young women" (p. 529). Victim blaming discourses not only shift accountability away from perpetrators, but they also erase community accountability and the possibility for self-perpetuating change (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). Moreover, teacher understandings of gender-based violence are often "positioned in discourses of individual pathology and causal factors such as poor communication skills or misuse of alcohol" (Ollis, 2014, p. 711). Such understandings are at odds with those of feminist research, which illustrate that sexual violence is a cultural problem that occurs within systemic contexts of oppression.

Teachers often feel that there is not much they can do, outside of punishing certain students and giving advice to others, because their authority and influence is confined by classroom walls (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2009). Community models of prevention education

could be a valuable method of addressing these valid teachers concerns. However, such concerns also point to the institutional constraints in which teachers operate. Related tensions that teachers face are how the responses of students, parents, and administrators, and school and school board policies impact their teaching (Eisenberg et al., 2013). Similarly, teachers in Cahill and Dadvand's (2021) Australian study cited fears that teaching about gender-based and sexual violence was outside their comfort zone, beyond their skills and qualifications, and presented emotional risks for teachers and students. Teachers also expressed fears of evoking parental and community backlash, often expressed through news media, particularly in relation to right-wing expectations that school should be depoliticized (Cahill & Dadvand, 2021). According to Eisenberg et al., such "barriers may affect how much classroom time they spend on a given topic or other aspects of how they teach the topic, versus whether they teach specific topics" (p. 340). Eisenberg et al. found that while 92% of health teachers reported that sexual violence should be taught, 82% reported teaching it. The percentage of teachers who did not report teaching about sexual violence is high. Important to note is that the researchers did not account for how much time was allocated to teaching the topic nor the pedagogical strategies employed. Ultimately, Eisenberg and colleagues (2013) join other scholars by pointing to the need for "additional teacher training specific to sexual violence, mandated reporting, and managing disclosure of personal information," concluding that it "may make teachers more comfortable with the possibility of their students reporting sexual violence" (p. 341).

Although they did not state their theoretical framework to be feminist, Schmidt and Peter (1996) advocate for teacher training that involves self-reflective work on gendered power relations. In their research, which involved working with teachers on the prevention of sexual violence through single-sex and mixed-sex grouped seminars, they found that "self-reflective

work helped them to define their own view-points, reduced anxiety, and unleashed creativity. It taught them that even within the traditional school system it is possible to develop active learning even where 'difficult' issues are tackled" (Schmidt & Peter, 1996, p. 406-407). One of the goals of the project was to help teachers integrate this sexual violence throughout the curriculum, initiate professional groups, and proactively support prevention and intervention work that is gender-based. Of course, a limitation of this multiple decade old study is the lack of a gendered analysis that includes those who identify outside the gender binary.

Although the research discussed thus far demonstrates that teachers feel discomfort and unpreparedness in their roles in addressing sexual violence, male teachers in particular have been shown to be resistant to certain discourses around violence prevention. Ollis (2014) found that male teachers tended to be uncomfortable with the terms gender-based violence and violence against women, but comfortable with the term respectful relationships, which was the name of the teacher professional development pilot project she implemented. This is consistent with research that shows that while most men and boys do not condone sexual violence, many excuse or justify it in various circumstances (Feltey et al., 1991, p. 246; Flood, 2010). Feltey et al. (1991) write that education geared toward men and boys on the sexual oppression of women is necessary for effective prevention education. Meanwhile, Flood (2011) maintains that "men themselves must change, taking both personal and collective action, if men's violence against women is to be eliminated" (p. 262). In the context of this investigation, understanding men's action and inaction is relevant for studying the role of male teacher candidates and teachers in addressing sexual violence prevention.

Supplemental sex education training is available online for teacher candidates and teachers on what has been called "The Fourth R," the outcome of an experimental study

conducted by from an Ontario university (Wolfe et al., 2009). The fourth R represents *relationships,* with the first three being reading, writing, and arithmetic. They explored the impact of a 21-lesson curriculum delivered by teachers with additional training in the dynamics of dating violence and healthy relationships (Wolfe et al., 2009). They found that "dating violence was about 2.5 times greater among control versus intervention students" (p. 693). Wolfe and colleagues mobilized the knowledge of the study to create a website, available to the public, which contains all the lesson plans and other supplemental materials. The program covers a variety of topics, including types of communication; delay, refusal, and negotiation skills; emotional health and wellbeing; and early warning signs of dating violence.

In another context, pointing out the shortage of teacher training courses devoted to sex education, Goldman (2016) suggests the possibility of implementing sex education courses and others aimed at younger students through massive open online courses (MOOCs). However, MOOCs would not adequately tackle the unique space of schooling and match the power teacher-facilitated education. Moreover, MOOCs may not a viable method of training teachers even if they are available to them, as they are unlikely to participate given that they already have mandatory professional development and other, more immediate commitments. This is further support for the need of teacher education programs to address sexual violence prevention.

The literature on teacher training in addressing sexual violence paints a picture of scarcity of sex education training, flawed understandings of sexual violence, and institutional barriers to and personal discomfort in teaching about sex and sexual violence and addressing incidents and disclosures. Perhaps most alarming is research which shows that teachers often reproduce victim blaming discourses, in addition to other features of rape culture.

Sex Education

Theory and research on sex education began to emerge in the 1980s, with notable figures including Michelle Fine and Sara McClelland. Following the sexual liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Snitow et al. (1983) published a book on the politics of desire, highlighting issues such as the impact of the sexual freedom movement on women's liberation. In 1988, Fine wrote a much-referenced article in which she argued that the absence of sex education on desire and sexual risk was contributing to girls' victimization and terror, and that comprehensive sex education could empower girls toward entitlement and autonomy. Nearly two decades later, risk discourses continue to dominate sex education while the discourse of desire is still absent (Fine & McClelland, 2006).

Research suggests that abstinence-only education proliferated in the 1990s and 2000s (Darroch et al., 2000; Landry et al., 1999; Lindberg et al., 2006). Proponents of anti-comprehensive sex education have, for decades, put forward the idea that presenting students with information on sex promotes youth sexual activity and the negative consequences that may come with it. However, numerous investigations have shown that youth who receive comprehensive sex education are more likely to engage in sexual activity at a later age and to use protection when doing so (Kim & Free, 2008; Kohler et al., 2008), and more likely to form healthy, responsible relationships (Ollis, 2014).

Critics of the status of sex education in North America often point out its tendency for "glossing over important topics in favour of moralistic, gendered, abstinence-only, or solely clinical curricula" (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017, p. 15). Inadequate sex education leaves students with limited knowledge on safe and ethical sex (Carmody, 2015) and the desire to learn through alternative means, such as online and from pornography (Coy et al., 2016). Appleton and Stiritz

(2016) contend that inadequate sex education in elementary and secondary schools leaves students in need of corrective lessons that have emerged at the postsecondary level as a result of pressure from Title IX (a civil rights in education law in the U.S., which positions various forms of sexual violence as forms of discrimination that is prohibited) and feminist activists to eliminate sexual violence on postsecondary campuses. As a result of flaws in sex education that is incomprehensive and not based on research, inadequate teacher training to teach about and address gendered and sexual violence, students often graduate secondary school with inadequate knowledge. Muehlenhard et al. (2016) write that students' limited knowledge about sex and their gendered sexual expectations as they enter postsecondary school are among the characteristics of campus life that increase women's risk of sexual violence.

Sexual Violence Programming in Schools

Research on dating and sexual violence programming in schools has also emerged in the past two to three decades. De La Rue et al. (2014) conducted a systematic review on school-based interventions to reduce dating and sexual violence. They found that the interventions had significant impacts on student attitudes and knowledge on dating and sexual violence. Intervention students were also far less likely to endorse rape myths than control students. The differences were far greater than those of students in control groups and sustained at follow-up studies. However, De La Rue and colleagues found little changes in behaviour that resulted from school-based interventions. That said, behaviour, according to De La Rue et al. was simply defined as perpetration and victimization. The research they surveyed did not account for bystander behaviour and they ultimately concluded that "continued work to see how prevention programs influence bystander support, and also how these programs may shift the peer culture are important" (De La Rue et al., 2014, p. 55). Fay and Medway (2006) reported a decrease in

rape myth acceptance decreased in secondary school students who received an acquaintance rape prevention program, which they adapted from the postsecondary work developed by Parrot (1991). Fay and Medway's study and research synthesized by De La Rue et al. (2014) are examples of what Adair (2011) calls one-off interventions, pointing out that the weakness of such programming is that it usually includes little to no follow-up sessions and that teachers and staff are seldom trained to continue the discussions. Furthermore, Adair contends that although the broad goal of prevention programming in schools tends to be to reduce incidences of sexual violence through improving student knowledge, it is generally agreed upon it is difficult to measure of sexual violence incidence reduction.

Sex Education in the Age of #MeToo

Proponents of comprehensive sex education maintain that students are exposed to learning about sexual topics through various sources, and that the role of sex education should be to learn about complex issues with an educator trained to facilitate critical thinking (Bialystok & Wright, 2018). Speaking of sexual violence within the context of higher education, Clarke-Vivier and Stearns (2019) ask, "What do we do as educators doing work in this context when the issue of sexual violence is both so ubiquitous and so politically and culturally charged?" (p. 63). This question is also relevant in a K-12 context. Undoubtedly, political events at local, provincial, and federal levels, as well as global political phenomena such as the #MeToo movement, impact sex education and in particular, education on sexual violence prevention.

Clarke-Vivier and Stearns (2019) cite public pedagogy as one of the major sources of knowledge on sexual violence and consent. Clarke-Vivier and Stearns describe the #MeToo movement as an educational movement, a form of public pedagogy that places "a premium on truth-telling" (p. 55) in a post-truth era, where notions of truth have been compromised "as a

mechanism for asserting political dominance" (McIntyre, 2018, p. xiv). The public pedagogy of the #MeToo movement is important to investigate as it pertains to disclosures because research that demonstrates that women and girls who experience sexual violence often do not name it as such and many do not disclose their experiences to parents, teachers, and peers (Harding, 2015). As described by the World Health Organization (WHO), only a fraction of those who experience sexual violence report their experiences to survey researchers, and an even smaller fraction report to the police (Johnson, 2017). Some victims do not disclose at all, even to those close to them. Because of this, the magnitude of the public health crisis of sexual violence has long remained misrepresented by statistics and in the public imagination. The #MeToo movement tackles this issue by destigmatizing survivorship (Clarke-Vivier & Stearns, 2019).

In 2006, activist and sexual violence survivor Tarana Burke coined the term Me Too on MySpace after an interaction in which she found herself unable to respond to a friend who had disclosed an incident of sexual violence (Burke, 2021). In retrospect, Burke recalled that she wished she would have said, *me too*. On Oct 15, 2017, after the dozens of sexual crimes of film producer Harvey Weinstein began to permeate the news, American actress Alyssa Milano posted a picture on Twitter that read, "Suggested by a friend: If all the women who have ever been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too.' as a status, then we give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem," (Milano, 2017, n.p.) followed by another tweet that read, simply, "Me Too." A number of high-profile celebrities responded, including Ashley Judd, Gwyneth Paltrow, Jennifer Lawrence, and Uma Thurman. What resulted is a viral, global social media phenomenon, popularly referred to as the #MeToo movement.

Soon after the emergence of the #MeToo movement, the organization Stop Sexual Assault in Schools (SSAIS) created a campaign called #MeTooK12, intended to educate

"students, families, and schools about the right to an equal education free from sexual harassment" (SSAIS, 2019, n.p.). SSAIS's website contains #MeTooK12 media articles and resources for teachers. However, no research currently exists about how educators use such tools and/or weave #MeToo into lessons into education on sexual violence in elementary and secondary classrooms.

The #MeToo movement undoubtedly relies on feminist ideologies of patriarchal oppression (hooks, 2004), "the personal is political" (Hanisch, 1969; 2006), and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Collins, 2015). The strength of the movement comes from the diversity of its voices and the validation of individual stories of suffering and healing. Moreover, "as feminist hashtag movements weave intimate truths into wider social stories," they set the motions for a world in which "responsibility for sexual violence can be understood as a social and institutional problem" (Clarke-Vivier & Stearns, 2019, p. 59). Scholars have argued that truth-telling movements such as #MeToo are still limited in that they do not necessarily disrupt power relations, pointedly evidenced by the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court following detailed allegations of sexual violence (Clarke-Vivier & Stearns, 2019). As Clarke-Vivier and Stearns point out, one of the key events that spearheaded #MeToo, the Access Hollywood video of Donald Trump boasting about committing sexual violence against women, preceded his successful election to the presidency of the world's top superpower. In addition, the movement has been criticized for centering the voices of white women, particularly those of high socioeconomic status (Phipps, 2019), even though its origins are rooted in movement for Black girls in the US (Burke, 2021).

Almanssori and Stanley (2021) found that in a post-#MeToo world, youth create and learn various sexual violence dominant discourses and counter discourses through numerous

digital platforms, such as Twitter and YouTube, which they often engage with actively. Scholars have referred to this as feminist networked feminist consciousness and emphasized the cultural shift in collective understandings of sexual violence (Mendes et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the particularities of how the #MeToo movement impacts gendered relations and sex education in the traditional context of schooling, as well as teacher and teacher candidate understandings of sexual violence, remain largely underexplored in the literature.

Ontario's Curriculum Controversy

It was not until the late 1960s that sex education was taken seriously in Ontario (Sethna, 1998). Since then, it has undergone several changes, and is unique from other curricula documents in that it is often deeply implicated in the provincial political climate, especially during election times. In 2010, Ontario, Canada's most populated province introduced but never implemented a new elementary HPE curriculum. In 2015, an updated and revised version of the 2010 document took effect. Resistance to the updated curriculum flooded news channels and other forms of media and influenced public debate on mandatory comprehensive sex education. Many children across the province were removed from school, some for several weeks. Public outrage was centered around the idea that certain topics were too advanced for young children, touting parental rights and childhood innocence.

Much of the public backlash was driven by misinformation about the effectiveness of comprehensive sex education and the contents of the updated curriculum (Bialystok & Wright, 2019). For example, Campaign Life Coalition called the curriculum "radical, child-sexualizing" (n.p.) and urged Ontario parents to push politicians to repeal it (CLC, 2015). A *Toronto Life* journalist reported that an anonymous letter posted around a school board in the Toronto area that contained misinformation on the curriculum, such as "warning parents that kids would learn

to reveal their private parts in Grade 1" and that "Grade 6 is about the promotion of self-discovery through masturbation" (Hune-Brown, 2015, n.p.). While public backlash centered around misinformation and problematic discourses of childhood innocence, which are counter to evidence-based comprehensive sex education, some criticisms of the updated curriculum showed gendered and homophobic undertones. A Toronto principal told CBC News that parents have told him that the curriculum "is a homosexual indoctrination of Ontario" and that Premier Wynne is to blame (CBC News, 2015). Liberal Premier at the time Kathleen Wynne, who is openly gay, was heavily criticized and often deemed personally responsible for changes in the curriculum that were considered outrageous by some.

At the same time, there were racialized undertones to news publications' portrayal of parent and religious protestors. Some news organizations outright criticized protestors, such as a *Windsor Star* journalist who called protestors "ill-informed zealots" and accused them of never having read the curriculum (Brown-John, 2015). Although there were diverse groups of religious opponents to the curriculum, the news coverage painted an image of racialization, several news organizations ran articles with images of Muslim and Sikh protestors and titles such as "New sex ed curriculum difficult for some cultures" (Flora, 2015) and "Muslim parents protest sex-ed curriculum" (Fragomeni, 2015). Bialystok and Wright (2019) went further to analyze Reddit threads that were Islamophobic, concluding that "the 'othering' of non-Whites who appear to depart from 'proper' Canadian values shows the fragility of the Canadian ideal of pluralism" (p. 350). Thus, in addition to moral panic over comprehensive sex education, multicultural panic over race and religion became apparent when Muslim opposition to the new curriculum clashed with anti-Muslim rhetoric in the post-911 era (Bialystok & Wright, 2019). Moreover, as Bialystok and Wright contend, "the nature of public debates about sexuality education often

reveals more about the identities of particular groups and individuals and the cultural narratives they represent than about any pedagogical issues related to youth sexuality" (p. 343). Such cultural narratives tend to occur within the context of Canada's international image as a multicultural, progressive nation (Bialystok, 2016).

The other major theme that emerged from the news articles surrounding the updated curriculum is the public idea that it requires teachers to teach outrageous things to children at ages that are too young. Some of the outrageous things, noted in news articles from across the province, were the teaching of body part names in grade one, sexting in grade four, masturbation in grade six, and contraception in grade seven, among many others. Consent, which is introduced in grade one, was also deemed outrageous. Rallying cries "My child, my choice" reverberated at Toronto's Queen's Park on February 24, 2015, in a heavily attended rally against the curriculum. "It is inappropriate. It is overly explicit, and parents do not want it" shouted one of the protestors (Jones & Leslie, 2015, n.p.). Even given the moral and multicultural panic that was portrayed in the media following the release of the curriculum, research has pointed out that the majority of parents support the new curriculum (McKay et al., 2014).

The 2015 HPE curriculum (MOE, 2015, 2019) includes a thematic thread of consent, healthy relationships, and the social and emotional dangers of new technologies that was generally absent from the 1998 version. Bialystok (2016), who sees the new curriculum as comprehensive, argues that "Every individual student deserves the information and affirmation that relate to their sexual embodiment, and this can only be accomplished through a mandatory curriculum" (p. 8). A mandatory, comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum is particularly protective for vulnerable students, such as girls of colour (Bialystok, 2016; Fine, 1988; Fine &

McClelland, 2006). Important to note is that the degree to which the updated curriculum can be deemed comprehensive by Indigenous communities remains a gap in the research.

More research is needed to provide a picture on how the new curriculum has changed sex education in Ontario. Particular to my investigation, it would be interesting to know how the thematic thread of consent and other such changes to the curriculum change the ways in which teachers and administrators address sexual violence, both through the curriculum and in general. Only 58% of students from the Toronto Teen Survey (TTS), which offers a youth perspective on changes to the updated version of the Ontario HPE curriculum, reported having learned about sexual violence (Larkin et al., 2017). Meanwhile 61% reported learning about communicating about sex. Findings from the survey show that nearly 1 in 4 students wanted to learn more about these topics (Larkin et al., 2017).

In 2018 the provincial government under conservative Premiere Doug Ford withdrew the "Human Development and Sexual Health" component of the curriculum. Ford's government also withheld the entire secondary HPE curriculum, which affected 2.1 million students (McKay et al., 2014). Ford's government promised to re-evaluate the curriculum through continued consultations with parents, and in the meantime, teachers were to revert to using the 1998 version of the curriculum. Non-profit organizations criticized the provincial government's decision. For example, the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) and Ontario Association for the Support of Physical and Health Educators (OASPHE) released a joint statement, stating: "Sexual health education should address current issues facing students including online safety, informed decision making (including consent), self-esteem, mental health, healthy relationships, respect for others, diversity and equity" (OPHEA/OASPHE, 2018). In addition, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) issued an official response to

the government's repeal of the 2015 HPE curriculum, arguing that the document contained "information about equitable and safe relationships, consent, sexual violence and online violence that young people need today" (OCRCC, 2018, n.p.). They further argued, "This is particularly important because we know that young populations are at a high statistical risk of experiencing sexual violence" (n.p.), which of course is substantiated by the feminist literature outlined in the second chapter.

In the summer of 2019, an updated HPE curriculum was finally released. Ontario residents from across the province pointed out that new curriculum contains insignificant content changes from the 2015 version that was suspended in the prior year by the Ford government (Laucius, 2019). In addition to some minor changes and additions to the curriculum, the government has issued a memorandum that necessitates school boards develop a policy and procedure which will allow parents to exempt their children from instruction that connects to the Human Development and Sexual Health component. Teachers will be required to "give parents a minimum 20 days' notice" (Laucius, n.p.) prior to teaching lessons related to the component. This a challenging requirement for teachers for various reasons such as that it disallows cross-curricular integration, even though it is as a pedagogical strength, and that it gives the added labour of planning alternative instruction for students whose parents choose the opt-out option. Perhaps most alarmingly, the opt-out option threatens to compromise teacher agency in curricular decision-making. Bialystok (2018) maintains that the option is a band-aid solution, writing, "the opt-out strategy is a merely formal solution, which appears to be indifferent to both the strength of the justification for sex education and the content of the grounds on which parents oppose it" (p. 11). She further argues that there are ways of honouring parents' right to involvement in their children's education that do not come at the cost of ceasing to deliver a

mandatory curriculum. The exemption clause was criticized by teacher unions such as the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

Ontario's Updated Curriculum Content

Sex education in Ontario is encompassed within the HPE curriculum, comprised of two documents, one for elementary school (grades one to eight) and one for secondary (grades nine to twelve). The elementary curriculum is usually taught by general education teachers, whereas the secondary curriculum is taught by specialist teachers; that is, teachers who have had "teachable" training in health and physical education methodology.

Table 2 represents my quantitative content analysis of the elementary and secondary HPE curricula, which shows that sexual violence terms from throughout the continuum are mentioned throughout both documents. The content analysis involved an initial read of both elementary and secondary documents and an identification of sexual violence-related terms, followed by a quantitative analysis of the number of times each term is mentioned in each document.

Table 2

Sexual Violence Terms in the Ontario HPE Curriculum (MOE, 2015, 2019)

	Number of Times Mentioned	
Term	Elementary	Secondary
Sexual Violence	0	1
Gender-Based Violence	9	6
Racially-Based Violence	2	0
Sexual Abuse	1	2
Sexual Harassment	3	6
Sexual Assault	2	3
Rape	1	0
Sexual Exploitation	2	1

Violence in Relationships/ Violence in Intimate and Sexual Relationships	2	2
Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour	1	1
Dating Violence	2	3
Consent	44	17
Sexual Coercion/Coercive Behaviour/ Coercion (within a sentence that alludes to sexual coercion)	4	2

Consent is the most frequently used sexual violence-related term. Sexual abuse, harassment, exploitation, and coercion are all mentioned in the curriculum; however, the broader term sexual violence was only mentioned once in the secondary document and not in the elementary one. The curriculum document is based on the concept of *scaffolded learning*, a term initially theorized by education scholar Lev Vygotsky (1978). Scaffolded learning involves using a variety of instructional techniques to move students progressively toward stronger understanding greater independence in the learning process (Belland, 2014). For example, in the elementary curriculum, the concept of consent is discussed from Grades 1 to 8, starting in Grade 1. At that stage, students are expected to demonstrate "the ability to recognize caring behaviours and behaviours that can be harmful to physical and mental health and describe the feelings associated with each, as well as appropriate ways of responding, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of consent" (MOE, 2019, p. 107). By Grade 7, the scaffolded expectation moves to:

> explain the importance of having a shared understanding with a partner about the following: delaying sexual activity until they are older the reasons for not engaging in sexual activity; the concept of consent, the legal age of consent, and how consent is

> communicated; and, in general, the need to communicate clearly with each other when making decisions about sexual activity in a healthy, loving relationship. (MOE, 2019, p. 254)

The particularities of consent and non-consent, as reviewed toward the beginning of this review, are not addressed in the curricula in a nuanced manner that considers the various contextual factors in which sexual negotiation takes place.

There are a variety of sexual violence terms in the Ontario HPE curriculum, though with the exception of consent, the number of times each term is mentioned is small. There is mention of gender-based violence in both elementary and secondary documents, however only the elementary curriculum mentions race-based violence. There is no mention of the systemic contexts in which sexual violence occurs. My content analysis of sexual violence terms in the Ontario HPE curriculum demonstrated that while the document provides a framework for addressing a variety of sexual violence topics, it falls short in approaching them from an anti-oppressive and intersectional manner. This is in spite of research that demonstrates that sexual violence prevention should be contextualized, theory-based (McMahon & Banyard, 2012), and address structural factors and underlying causes of social problems (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009, p. 97).

Bialystok and Wright (2018) call this a “critical sexuality education” and argue that it “must go beyond ‘comprehensive’ education to anti-oppressive education that is framed by intersectional approaches” (p. 354). They elaborate, “Without appropriately addressing power-laden dynamics at the levels of family, community, and state, a curriculum document may fail to resonate with students’ positionalities, or worse, unconsciously perpetuate oppressive relations” (p. 354). Likewise, Whitten and Sethna (2014) call for an anti-racist sex education, maintaining

that "contemporary Canadian sex education omits crucial anti-racist work, and foundational anti-racist education frameworks are silent about the sex education curriculum" (p. 414) and that anti-racism work should be included in sex education given that "sexual health curricula are an increasingly politicised example of potentially transformative education" (p. 414). Although Whitten and Sethna's analysis was published before the new and revised HPE curricula had been implemented in Ontario, the arguments they make still hold truth in the context of the new curricula. My content analysis reveals some mention of race in the curriculum; however, there is certainly much room for improvement.

Conclusion

The literature review for my investigation provided an interdisciplinary overview on the intersections of teacher education and sexual violence prevention. The objective of my dissertation research, in investigating teacher candidate narratives of sex education, understandings of sexual violence and its prevention, and experiences learning how to address it in their roles as future teachers, is to bridge the gap between feminist prevention efforts and teacher education. The present investigation will take place in Ontario, a province which has often seen heated debates on sex education that most often transpire with the waves of political elections.

The review of the literature takes several avenues, chosen with intention and purpose, that ultimately meet in the intersection where they inform my proposed research project. In addition to discussing the terminology associated with my proposed research, I brought together literature on teacher training in sex education in general and on teacher education around sexual violence in particular. I reviewed the literature on sex education and its changed contexts in the age of #MeToo. Research on the gendered prevalence of school-age children who experience sexual

violence was discussed. Within a provincial context, I integrated a discussion on research and policy on sexual violence in Ontario schools. The literature was situated within Ontario's curriculum controversies of the past few years, and the recent updated curriculum content. The various topics of the review of the literature provide the basis for my study by one, highlighting where it fits in with the research and two, drawing attention to the gap that it seeks to fill. At the same time, I provided a case for why a feminist epistemological framework is the most fruitful way of addressing this gap.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Feminist Methodology

Many early feminist philosophers operated under three distinct feminist epistemologies, which Harding (1987) identified as feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemology, and feminist postmodern epistemology. However, as Harding herself predicted and Doucet and Mauthner (2005) point out, the three epistemologies are "inadequate to reflect the wide variety of feminist research since much of it falls between and joins elements of two or three frameworks" (p. 38). In the more recent state of feminist scholarship, feminist researchers often blur the lines between the early frameworks that Harding outlined. My investigation is thus informed not by a specific feminist methodology; rather, I follow the tradition of feminist scholarship that has features which build on the work of feminists from diverse disciplines and activist orientations, and which in turn informs my approach to narrative inquiry.

These features are summarized by Doucet and Mauthner (2005) in the following five categories. One, feminist researchers conduct and advocate for research that is on women, for women, and with women. Two, feminist scholars transform complex methodological matters, troubling popular ways of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data. For example, feminist researchers have emphasized the role of emotion in research, pointing out that positivist ways of conducting research often neglect addressing emotion as both a topic of inquiry in the goal of understanding experience and a way of conducting ethical research. In contrast, feminist methodologies "reflect an ethic of respect, collaboration, and caring" (Campbell & Wasco, 2000, p. 775). Three, feminist scholars are interested in social change (Doucet & Mauthner, 2005) and their research is rooted in political activism (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Feminist inquiry

"begins from the premise that the nature of reality in western society is unequal and hierarchical" (Skeggs, 1994, p. 77). The present research begins from the premise that sexual violence is a phenomenon based within social, cultural, and political inequities, that requires attention in teacher education. Four, feminists are concerned with the complicated intersections of power and knowledge; in particular, feminist researchers are interested in "*how* power influences knowledge production and construction processes" (Doucet & Mauthner, 2005, p. 40, italics in original) and in "the dangers of presuming to know, speak for, or advocate for others" (p. 41). Accountable and responsible knowing shape this characteristic (Doucet & Mauthner, 2005). Along the same line, widely cited feminist scholar Donna Haraway (1988) argues that our research projects are "situated knowledges," emphasizing that knowledge is always partial, given its embeddedness in broader social structures. Finally, five, feminist researchers practice reflexivity, which involves reflecting on how our social locations and the roles we hold in relation to our participants impacts the research process and the knowledge that is ultimately created (Doucet & Mauthner, 2005). I delve into these fourth and fifth characteristics later in this section.

Epistemic Responsibility

Feminist epistemology approaches knowledge in ways that are not exclusive to feminism; they are also present in other epistemologies, though a key contribution of feminism to epistemology is that of epistemic responsibility (Vendramin, 2012). Feminist researchers do not necessarily agree on what it means to practice epistemic responsibility. There is rich and varied literature on responsible knowing in methodological, philosophical, and feminist journals. Doucet and Mauthner (2002) present two arguments on what constitutes epistemic responsibility in research. The first is relationships, which they explain in the following way:

> …those who are involved in the processes of knowledge production have an ethical responsibility to those from whom / for whom knowledge is produced as well as to others who are involved in the production of theory, knowledge and policy. (p. 2)

In my research, I have a responsibility not only to my research participants, but also to teacher candidates in general, teachers, students, and other stakeholders in teacher education and K-12 education.

The second argument is that of accountability, where Doucet and Mauthner (2002) suggest that a wider understanding of reflexivity is needed. Reflexivity should be practiced "not only in terms of social location, but also in terms of the personal, interpersonal, institutional, pragmatic, emotional, theoretical, epistemological and ontological influences on our research" (p. 3). For research on sexual violence, such influences must be accounted for throughout the research process. Reflexivity begins at the inception of an inquiry. For example, my theoretical framework and literature review involved mindful analysis of the various contexts in which my inquiry occurred. Keeping in my mind that epistemic responsibility involves accountability to my participants in addition to the broader community that my research will touch, as well as accountability in knowing the broader influences on my work, I turn to discussing reflexivity in more detail.

An important tenet of feminist epistemology is addressing the role of the researcher in constructing knowledge and the practice of continuous reflexivity throughout the research project. Understanding reflexivity is paramount to feminist methodology. Reflexivity is not a simple statement of one's social location and relational role. It is an active and ongoing self-inquiry on how these positions, whether they are personal, institutional, or epistemological impact the various stages of research and knowledge production. As such, Patai (1991) urges us

to consider the dangers of self-positioning that stops at naming our social locations without continued active reflection on their impacts on the research process.

According to Christianakis (2008) "academics have benefited from a hierarchy in education that places them above teachers, thus distancing themselves from teachers and teacher education" (p. 102). As a researcher, I exist within this distance, however, since I am also a teacher, I am simultaneously in the positions of both insider and outsider to the community wherein my research takes place. I am an insider in that I share a similar professional role as the participants that will be in my study – they are studying to become teachers and I am a teacher. As a woman of colour who teaches among overwhelmingly white, middle class, teachers and administrators, I am always aware of my difference. My work as a teacher provides me with the lived experience that when combined with my theoretical and research training allows for heightened understanding and ability to contemplate issues in schooling as one who is deeply implicated within it. However, I am also an outsider in my role as an academic. I recall that when I was a teacher candidate, I found employed teachers to be impressive. They were able to obtain a job in a field where jobs were scarce, and permanent employment was achieved by years of hard work. Now that I am a permanently employed teacher, I recognize the privilege that I have, and I am intentional in using it to empower teacher candidates, particularly those who do not fit with the typical mold of a teacher: white, young, and middle class.

My participants and I are both agents in the school system, although in different ways. Vendramin (2012), in outlining a feminist approach to research in education, provides a suggestion that is alternative to what Christianakis (2008) names as the hierarchy between researchers and teachers. Vendramin contends that we should investigate "the ways in which we – as teachers, students, researchers and writers – are positioned 'inside' the social and

educational phenomena which are the objects of our inquiries" (p. 93). As such, I continuously reflect on my roles and on the ways in which I am implicated in the cultural phenomena that I study. Moreover, by practicing feminist approaches to research, I aim to implement a "caring research environment" (Campbell & Wasco, 2000, p. 787) by being attentive to the various struggles of teacher candidates and conducting research that is ultimately of benefit to them.

Pillow (2003) encourages qualitative researchers to interrupt our use of reflexivity as a methodological tool for sound research and forefront the reflexive process as a key part of engaged research. She argues that we "work within and against parameters of comfortable research, moving toward what I would term 'reflexivities of discomfort'… a reflexivity that seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous" (p. 188). Following in the footsteps of feminist researchers, my research project involves the use of various techniques, such as keeping a journal to document my affective and cognitive reactions during the research project, which will allow me to confront the problematics of the research process. St. Pierre (1997) elaborates on such efforts by contending that "we might consider why we read and respond in the ways we do," adding that this involves "theorizing our own lives, examining the frames with which we read the world" (p. 186) and considering ethics as a responsibility of both researchers and readers. The emphasis on continuous reflection is fundamental to feminist ways of knowing because reflexivity is an unfinished project and that full reflexivity can never be accomplished (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003).

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative is both a methodology and method. Narrative inquiry involves a series of methodological decisions, which unite in their prioritization of storied experience as a way of understanding our participants and the social world. Narrative researchers view "meaning

making through the shaping or ordering of experience, a way of understanding one's own or others' actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time" (Chase, 2013, p. 56). They assume that "people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2) and that researchers collect and write about people's narratives of experience.

In discussing the relationship between narrative inquiry and the quest for personal and social change, Chase (2013) explains that narrators may have a sense of urgency to explore the therapeutic aspects of telling one's story, the desire to have others hear that story, and the need to story experience that is part of a larger collective with the goal of social change. She also writes that researchers often desire for their work to stimulate public interest and dialogue that leads to social change. Researchers in education have long approached teacher experiences as storied phenomena (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986, 1988), built out of "an understanding of teacher knowledge as narratively lived, told and retold" (Whelan et al., 2001, p. 44). In fact, in 1992, Clandinin advocated for this to be extended to teacher education:

> Too often we look at teacher education as separate from the ongoing lives of teachers and student teachers… We do not create spaces to acknowledge either the ways they have already written their lives prior to teacher education and to the ways they continue to live their stories in context of teacher education. (p. 121)

In contrast, seeing teacher education through the lens of narrative inquiry involves an understanding that what teachers learn in their initial training is deeply connected to various parts of their lives and how they understand their experiences.

Integrating Narrative Feminist Methodology and Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry and feminist methodology intersect in their attention to voice and to the relationship between the researcher and the participant as key components of conducting research. In this work I aim to bring forth the voices of teacher candidates, as they reflect on their sex education experiences and what they've learned about sexual violence prevention both in their training and from other pedagogical sources. I hope to gather, interpret, and represent this insight in a way that highlights voices of participants and in addition, to practice the feminist methodological tenet of writing myself into the research (Presser, 2005). The common tenets of voice and relationality thus come together in the way I approach my interviews, the phases of my analysis, and during the stages of writing and publishing.

Narrative inquiry, like feminist methodology, does not presuppose a distance between the researcher and the participant. As Clandinin (2006) explains, "Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process" (p. 47). The researcher should thus enter the conversation with the intention of listening and knowing that what we hear is also informed by our own stories and respective positions. The narrator-listener relationship, which involves the work of active listening, should be extended to the interpretive stages of analyzing interview data (Chase, 2005). In fact, narrative inquiry devotes greater attention to deep listening of the voices within each interview than to locating themes across interviews, even if the researcher chooses to develop narrative themes (Chase, 2013).

Narrative inquiry is flexible in that researchers are allowed freedom in deciding the parameters of what they study, including a spectrum of those who let narratives speak for

themselves to those who account for the contexts in which narratives come to be. My analysis is at the latter end of the spectrum. An important part of my feminist narrative inquiry is situating narratives in the immediate contexts of the research situation and the broader contexts outlined in my theoretical framework. Gubrium and Holstein (2009) write that the relationship between people's narratives and their local environments and circumstances requires deep consideration of "the communicative mechanisms, circumstances, purposes, strategies, and resources that shape narrative production" (p. vii - viii). It is also important to consider that the parameters of the research setting may limit or otherwise distort how participants tell their stories. They may even invite the opportunity for positive or improved narratives, in part by simply encouraging them to be told (Chase, 2005). Furthermore, for Hiles and Cermák (2008), the discursive context is just as important to narrative analysis as the research setting:

> The events that are narrated are placed in a double context. On the one hand, the re-told events are placed within their story context, i.e. within the context of the 'whole story'. While on the other hand, there is the discursive context of the situated-occasion of this re-telling of the story. … An important part of the analysis of a story is then the description and understanding of how this double-contextualizing process is operating. (p. 151-152)

In looking into how teacher candidates understand sex, sex education, sexual violence, and sexual violence prevention, I must also consider how these phenomena are shaped by systemic, institutional, discursive phenomena. As Presser (2005) articulates, "The researcher's goal is not to emancipate the authentic story of the narrator—none exists—but rather to expose as much as she can of the relations that influence the construction of the story that is told" (p. 2087).

The Three Commonplaces

The form of narrative analysis I conducted is not Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) guide, which involves attention to temporality, place, and sociality (the three commonplaces) throughout the coding, interpreting, and writing stages. However, I do use the three commonplaces to inform my analysis in a broader goal of bridging narrative inquiry with feminist methodology as they help me to situate my project within various contexts. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) maintain that experiences, personal and collective, are temporal. Seeing experience as temporal means inquiring about the past, present, and (implied) future of experience, and understanding it as always moving and shifting. Temporality refers not only to situating experience in time, but also to contextualizing experience in broader narratives that shift over time. My interpretation of temporality is thus tied to the feminist methodological concern of situated and partial knowledge (Haraway, 1988). All narratives are partial and fragmented: "narratives...neither begin nor end in the research setting: they are part of the fabric of the social world" (Lawler, 2002, p.243). That they are fragmented does not mean, however, that they do not impart much to us about the social world; to the contrary, partial knowledge is given great value in both narrative and feminist inquiry. It is a deep inquiry that does not presume to generalize, but rather promises to tell us something important about the phenomena we study while not claiming to be the only way to know.

In narrative research, place is a key part of the analysis because people, place and stories are inextricably linked. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) define place as "the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of place where the inquiry and events take place" (p. 480). As an interpretive component, place asks researchers to first consider reflecting on our own places, both physical and metaphorical, particularly as related to our

inquiries (Clandinin, 2013). It asks to think about "how institutional narratives, stories of school and stories of universities, have shaped us" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 112).

Narrative researchers attend to personal conditions, or, "the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480) and at the same, the social conditions of experience. "These social conditions are understood, in part, in terms of cultural, social, institutional, familial, and linguistic narratives" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 40). Sociality also encompasses the relational component of narrative inquiry" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 40). Here, in addition to attending to the sociality of the participants' experiences, we are asked to interpret the relationship between our lives and our participant's lives. I attended to sociality by keeping a researcher journal as a method of continuous reflection along the research process. I see this component of narrative analysis as an opportunity to integrate the feminist methodological tenets of reflexivity and relationality. In staying true to my methodological commitment to lessen the hierarchal tendencies of the research participation experience, it had been my goal that when my participants read my research, they would see not only my interpretation and organization of their storied experiences in relation to each other, but also in relation to myself.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined various feminist methodological traditions that I sought to follow in my dissertation research. These include positionality (Patai, 1991; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003), reflexivity and responsible knowing (Pillow, 2001), relationality and an ethic of care (Campbell & Wasco, 2000), and social change (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002, 2005). I chose to investigate the intersections of teacher education and sexual violence with the ultimate feminist goal of contributing to positive social change by piercing the reproductive cycle. In the first four

chapters, I outlined the need for more research on teachers and sexual violence prevention in impacting institutional, systemic, and ideological transformation. I work within the recognition that knowledge is always partial and that my project is "situated" (Haraway, 1988) and seeks to contribute to an ongoing conversation. Throughout my project, I actively reflected on how power and power relations influence who can know and what we can know. In doing so I practiced conscious and ongoing reflexivity. These features of feminist methodology make research epistemically responsible.

I turned to discussing the methodological tenets of narrative inquiry, which centers participants' storied experiences, voice and relationality. Finally, I integrated feminist methodology and narrative inquiry and discussed how they informed my analysis.

If epistemology is the study of how and what we know, methodology is the procedures we use to approach knowledge, and methods are the tools and techniques we use to acquire it. In her classic text on feminist methods, Reinharz (1992) writes, "feminism supplies the perspective and the disciplines supply the method. The feminist researcher exists at their intersection" (p. 243). Narrative inquiry can be seen as a bridge that connects feminist methodology to interview methods and analytical tools. My method, outlined next, is interview research and narrative analysis.

CHAPTER V

METHODS

In this chapter, I detail how I recruited participants and collected interview data, all of which was in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I address my ethical commitments, including anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent, and the risks and benefits for the participants in my research. Finally, I outline the steps and complexities of my analytical method: narrative analysis. Each of these components is informed by my commitments to feminist methodology.

Recruitment and Data Collection

Conducting Social Research in a Pandemic

On June 1, 2020, the University of Windsor implemented the UWindsor Framework for the Resumption of Research "to facilitate the orderly and phased-in reopening of research facilities and on-site access under the evolving conditions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic" (University of Windsor, 2020, n.p.). Several months after its initial implementation and with the incoming third wave of the pandemic, my research had remained in Phase One. I thus conducted my semi-structured interviews through a format alternative to traditional, in person interviews. My interviews took place through Microsoft Teams, a videoconferencing application. All students at the University of Windsor have free access to Teams. It is a platform that is considered safer and more secure than Zoom. Gray et al. (2020) published a timely study, in which they make the following suggestions for conducting interviews through virtual means, including the following: 1) test online platform ahead of interview, 2) provide technical information, 3) have a backup plan, 4) plan for distractions, 5) provide a direct link to meeting,

and 6) manage consent processes (p. 1296). These suggestions informed my effort to facilitate a smooth online interview experience.

Conducting research through an alternative format presented challenges for my feminist investigation by putting into question various methodological issues. Some of the questions I asked are: How do I attend to power dynamics between the researcher and the participant, when the research takes place through a mediated reality? What are the complexities of in-depth interviewing in a non-traditional setting? How do I work within these complexities while remaining committed to feminist methodology and narrative inquiry? These are questions that I was intentional in navigating throughout the recruitment and collection of data phases of my investigation, discussed next.

Data Collection

An invitational email from the Faculty of Education's Preservice Program Office was sent to all teacher candidates in the Bachelor of Education program (Appendix B). In addition, pre-established networks and rapport within the Faculty of Education were utilized to assist with recruitment strategies. In particular, I asked several faculty members to share my recruitment email with their students. I contacted the first 20 teacher candidates who responded to the invitation email to set up a time to meet. Of the 20 teacher candidates who emailed me indicating their interest to participate, 15 booked interview times and proceeded to participate in interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews via Microsoft Teams. The interview questions (Appendix C) were informed by my theoretical framework as well the review of the literature. They were open-ended and accompanied by prompts to elicit long and rich responses from the participants. Prior to the start of each interview, I allowed the participants time to thoroughly read the digital consent forms for participating in research (Appendix D)

and audiotaping (Appendix E). The forms were shared through the "Share Screen" function and participants were able to ask me questions and indicate their consent verbally. Once the audio-recording began, participants were once again asked if they consent to the terms outlined in the forms, in order to record verbal consent, which was alternative to signing. They were then sent copies of the consent forms following the end of the interview. The participants were then asked to make up a pseudonym (i.e., a false name of their choosing) which they would henceforth be referred to in the transcripts of the interview and in the following written findings. Once the participants indicated to me that they understood the instructions and indicated verbal consent form, I asked them to complete a short demographics questionnaire.

I explained to the participants that I would be asking a series of open-ended questions. I assured them of the confidentiality of their responses and reminded them that they should feel free to express any thoughts, ideas, or feelings that come to mind. I began by asking the first question, used the outlined prompts, and continued until the last question. If the situation called for it, I asked the participants to further elaborate on a statement or idea. Here, I was guided by Hesse-Biber's (2007) common ways to employ probing, including the following: the silent probe, the echo probe, the uh-huh probe, and probing by leading the participant (p. 126-127). I made brief notes during and after the interview in my researcher journal, which included notes about my own reactions to participants' narratives. In-depth interviewing involves active listening and is of particular importance for narrative inquiry as it prioritizes listening as a phased process that begins during data collection.

Each interview was audiotaped using a tape recorder, and later transcribed verbatim, using the tape recorder to play the recorded interview and Microsoft Word to type it out.

Instances of laughter, giggling, long pauses, and other such utterances were also be noted in brackets within the transcript to assist the research in contextualizing the surrounding narrative. Following the completion of this transcription phase, each participant was emailed a typed transcript of their recorded interview and given the option of reviewing the transcript to make changes or to correct omissions. They were told that they are allowed one week from the time I sent them the transcript to make changes or additions. Only one of the participants requested changes, which were quite minor and grammatical in nature.

Researcher Journal

In keeping with the feminist methodological tradition of reflexivity, I kept a researcher journal that I began to use at the time of data collection and continued until the final stages of analysis. In this journal, I noted personal reactions of both the emotional and intellectual type. This journal served as a complementary data source, a way for me to be transparent about my "plans, hunches, hypotheses, ideas, insights, points of view and convictions" in my writing (Kilbourn, 2006, p. 536). This allowed me to write about my responses and eventually contributes to the reader's ability to better understand my research in relation to me. The researcher journal assisted in maintaining ongoing reflexivity and ultimately, contributed to the feminist methodological goal of responsible knowing.

Ethical Commitments

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was protected by the confidentiality agreement. The tape recorder was in a password-protected safe, accessible only to me. The interview data, including audio files, transcripts, and background information, was stored electronically on a private, password-protected, and secured server, again, only accessed by me. Real names were not associated

with respective interviews in any way. To protect the confidentiality of participants and bystanders, all identifiable information, including names of bystanders, schools, and place of work, were kept confidential and replaced by pseudonyms as needed. The electronic recordings of the interviews were erased from the tape recorder once the study was completed, and participants have verified the transcript for accuracy.

Informed Consent

Participants learned of the nature of the investigation and that the results will be used to inform my dissertation and the subsequent publications that result from it. The title of the project in the recruitment email and consent form was "Teacher Candidate Experiences in Sexual Violence Prevention Education," so no deception was involved in concealing the nature of the study. The recruitment email also contained information about narrative-inquiry, and participants were informed prior to participating that they will be asked to share story-based responses. Participants were informed that they would be allowed to withdraw from the study, and without penalty, up until they review (or decline the opportunity to review) their transcripts. Up until this time, they were informed that they may choose to withdraw participation and keep their data with me, and they may also choose to withdraw their data. None of the participants withdrew from the study.

Risks and Benefits

Potential risks include discussing experiences that may be emotionally challenging in nature. Although I had prepared a list of questions, participants had the right not to answer any question that might make them feel uncomfortable. They also had the right to answer these questions with as much or as little detail as they want and were encouraged to ask questions at any time. Participants were assured that if the interview experience becomes uncomfortable for

them, they will be able to withdraw at any time and still receive full compensation for their participation. If they chose to withdraw from the study, they also had the option of withdrawing any data that they have contributed. Following the interview, participants were emailed a list of counselling services, with both on and off campus options (Appendix F), which includes the Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct Office referral form (Appendix G). In addition, participants were given a list titled “Dispelling Myths and Misconceptions about Sexual Assault” (Appendix H).

Although there were no direct material benefits to participants for their involvement with this study, ultimately, I witnessed benefits such as self-exploration and an enhanced commitment to social change, including solidifying their commitment to sexual violence prevention and positive sex education. Potential benefits to the scholarly community that may result from their participation in this study include the following: 1) contributing to a larger body of research on teacher education and sexual violence prevention; and 2) contributing to educational and policy changes that may result from the research. In addition, as compensation, interview participants were compensated via a $10 virtual gift card to an online store of choice for their participation.

Data Analysis

Like other qualitative analyses, narrative analysis involves coding for themes. My analysis follows Crossley’s (2007) six analytic steps to narrative analysis: 1) reading and familiarizing; 2) Identifying important concepts to look for; 3) Identifying ‘narrative tone’; 4) Identifying narrative themes and images; 5) Weaving everything together into coherent story-based themes; and 6) Writing-up as a research report. (p. 144). The first step, according to

Crossley, is to repeatedly read through the data several times to obtain familiarity and begin thinking about potential themes.

Borrowing from McAdams (1993), Crossley (2007) outlines the following important concepts to look for in the second step: narrative tone, imagery, and themes. In the third and fourth step, the researcher moves from *looking for* to *identifying* the three concepts. Narrative tone "is conveyed both in the content of the story and also the form or manner in which it is told" (Crossley, 2007, p. 140). Looking for imagery, on the other hand, involves coding for words and phrases that involve image-related expressions. Crossley refers to the third concept, themes, as patterns of meaning that capture something important as related to the research question. "It is useful to look for both imagery and themes together. This is because they overlap, and the use of certain images and imagery tends to point towards and be indicative of particular themes" (Crossley, 2007, p. 141). The advice that McAdams (2012) gives on finding narrative themes assisted me in the coding process: "In order to cast the widest possible exploratory net, the researcher needs to read the narrative passages with an open and discerning mind, searching for ideas that strike the ear as especially salient, recurrent, surprising, or potentially revealing" (p. 18). As part of the second, third, and fourth steps, I also looked for and identified elements of temporality, sociality, and place within each transcript. I also used the analytical tool of restorying, which involves the act of the re-telling participants stories in a way that provides order and sequence (Creswell, 2012), to introduce each participant and set the stage for the thematic narrative findings.

The final steps involve weaving everything together into coherent story-based themes and writing the final research report. As Crossley (2007) expresses, "in this kind of qualitative analysis, the division between analysis and writing-up is arbitrary because analysis continues

during the actual process of writing" (p. 141). Moreover, the writing stage involves creativity and imaginativeness that is often characteristic of narrative research. In the final two stages, I believe it is also important to consider validity. "A valid narrative is held to be well-grounded in the data, supportable with examples and should be developed by a continuous recursive process of shuttling between categories of analysis and raw data" (Harbison, 2007).

A Balance Between Inductive and Deductive

Any researcher conducting qualitative analysis of interview data needs to address where their analysis stands in the continuum from inductive to deductive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) write that narratives can speak for themselves in revealing something about the individual and the world. In contrast, Lawler (2002) views narrative as a social product and writes that narratives circulate in the social world, from which people can produce their own stories. My epistemological position lies in the middle. Although Gunnarsson (2018) studies discourse analysis, I see her views as holding relevance for narrative researchers as well. Gunnarsson (2018) believes that there exists a dialectic between dominant discourses on sex and sexual violence and how people discuss these phenomena. I share Gunnarsson's dialectical perspective, which she elaborates on using the following three points: "(1) non-discursive processes also shape experiences; (2) even though experiences are partly discursively constituted, the experiential is nonetheless ontologically distinct from the discursive; and (3) experiences are not only constituted by discourses but also resist and shape them" (p. 5). Accordingly, I think of discourse as a dialectical process between experience and the discursive interpretation of it. "Although experiences do indeed have an objective side (what actually happened)," Gunnarsson (2018) points out, "they are also fundamentally a matter of subjective meaning, which is shaped through the available discourses" (p. 16). For research related to

sexual violence, the discursive is an important component to consider, and it need not be viewed at odds with narrative research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, after writing about the specificities of conducting social research in a pandemic, I outlined the steps I took to recruit participants and the procedure for my virtual, semi-structured interviews. My ethical commitments, including informed consent, confidentiality, and risks and benefits, were discussed. This chapter provides the details of my analytical method: narrative analysis following the six steps outlined by Crossley (2007) and with a balance between inductive and deductive coding. In the next chapter, I write about my findings, and in the final chapter, I reflect on how my methodology and methods shaped the knowledge of this study.

Chapter VI

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Fifteen teacher candidates participated in this study, eight of whom identified as women, six as men, and one as non-binary. Five identified as Black, seven as white, one as South Asian/Muslim, one as Asian, and one as half Indian and half white. Their age ranges were from 20 to 41 years, with most participants being in their 20s. Seven teacher candidates were in the primary and junior teaching division program, two were in the junior and intermediate teaching division program, and six were in the intermediate and senior teaching division program. A teachable subject, henceforth referred to using the colloquial term "teachable," is the area of focus that teacher candidates specialize in, receive instruction on, and are ultimately qualified to teach. Primary/junior teachers are qualified to teach kindergarten to grade six, do not have teachables, and are generalist teachers; junior/intermediate teachers are qualified to teach grades seven to ten, have one teachable, and are also generalist teachers for grades seven and eight; intermediate/senior teachers are qualified to teach grades nine to twelve and have two teachables, Teachables included English literature, social sciences, history, geography, hospitality and tourism, visual arts, math, and biology. Interesting to note is that none of the participants had a teachable subject of health education. There was a range of consecutive and concurrent teacher candidate participants in various years of the program.

Participants

In this section, I give a brief account of each participant's narrative of how they came to teacher education as well as their experiences of sex education. As tied to these experiences, I paid special attention to the details of temporality, place, and sociality. In addition, restorying, rather than direct quotations, was used as an analytical tool to assist in the presentation of

narratives. This section thus sets the stage for the upcoming narrative theme findings, where direct participant quotations are provided to shape findings.

Charlie

Charlie is a white woman who at the time of the study was in her mid-twenties and in the second year of the consecutive program. Charlie told me that she pursued a teaching career because of her experiences volunteering in schools, through which working one-on-one with students scaffolded "lightbulb moments." She recalled a specific memory of a student who was able to learn a challenging math lesson, making both the student and her happy and hopeful. Charlie felt that school had the powerful potential to be a "safe haven for so many students."

Charlie's first experience in formal sex education was in grade seven or eight, when a nurse visited her class to talk about contraception. She recalled the nurse performing the classic condom on a banana demonstration. Further than that, she did not have any other formal sex education experiences until secondary school in the mandatory health class that everyone has to take. In university, Charlie majored in sociology, and took several courses in women's and gender studies as well as in criminology, which exposed her to learning about gender-based violence for the first time. She also pursued extra-curricular learning opportunities that were available on campus. What struck me about Charlie was her passion for learning, in particular that which can help her to better support students, and that she was engaged in the theoretical and the practical aspects of teacher education.

Abdullah

Abdullah is South Asian and Muslim man who at the time of our interview was in his late twenties and in the first year of the consecutive program. His teachable was English literature. Abdullah moved from a large urban area after his wife was accepted into graduate school in the

city in which the study took place. Out of work, he stumbled upon a teaching position at a private Islamic school and fell in love with his work. In particular, Abdullah felt that although the bonds he built with his students were very strong, he didn't necessarily have the pedagogical tools to be an effective educator. He had wanted to do his BEd for a long time, but always needed to work to support his family. He told me that it was the COVID-19 pandemic and the move to everything virtual that propelled him to apply to pursue teacher education, finally giving him the possibility of working and studying at the same time.

Abdullah was another teacher candidate that loved the theoretical aspect of teacher education, which balanced the practical experience he had from teaching at the private school. He often articulated his experiences using academic terms, such as "socially constructed," "pedagogically," and so on, and frequently referenced conversations with his wife as key informal learning experiences in sexual violence prevention education. Abdullah recalled his first formal sex education experience was a "hands-off policy" that was introduced but not enforced. Abdullah impressed me in that as he storied his experiences, he also critiqued them, such as when he situated them within the hierarchies of race and sex, as well as pointing out faulty pedagogy.

Rose

Rose is a white woman who at the time of the study was in her early twenties and in the third year of the concurrent program. She grew up with many teachers in her family and had always loved working with children. However, it was her passion for compassionate leadership, her struggle with mental health, and her desire to help youth who struggle with similar experiences that propelled her to pursue teaching.

Rose attended Catholic school from K-12 and had her first formal sex education lesson in grade six, with the introduction of the Fully Alive curriculum, which, according to the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario website, “is intended to pass on a distinctively Catholic view of human life, sexuality, marriage, and family” (n.p.). She told me she had an abstinence-only model of sex education, and often times criticized it, such as when she felt that she didn’t learn “how to navigate through difficult situations.” Rose recalled varied experiences of sexual harassment from her time in secondary school, recalling both her own and those of her girl peers. As will be delved into in the next section, my interview with Rose was particularly compelling in that she storied the ways in which poor sex education in the formative years of elementary and secondary education can continue to negatively impact a person’s life, and she so desired to break the reproductive cycle of gendered sexual violence by empowering herself with knowledge and skills.

Denise

Denise is a white woman in her early twenties and in the third year of the concurrent program at the time she participated in the study. Her teachables were social sciences and history. Despite being pushed in the direction of science and math by those who saw her intellectual potential, Denise told me that her relationship with her grandfather, who loved history and had always wanted to be a teacher but couldn’t afford to pursue teacher education, propelled her to pursue teacher education.

Like Rose, Denise also went to a Catholic school that assigned the Fully Alive textbook, but there were no formal sex education lessons in school; instead, she was sent home with the book and her parents tasked with teaching its contents. In secondary school, she had the mandatory grade nine health class, which she remembered covered “the basics.” Denise recalled

experiencing gender-based violence in school from a very young age, and also vulnerably shared that she was a secondary school sexual assault survivor. When she shared this with me, I reminded her that the purpose of our interview was not to talk about personal experiences, and that I would not ask her to elaborate in any way, but Denise reassured me that she was very comfortable discussing it. Although she did pursue justice through the court system and the perpetrator was convicted, he now attends the same university as she does.

Jane

Jane is a Black woman who at the time of our interview was in her late twenties and in the first year of the consecutive program. She told me that she decided to become a teacher after having experienced what she perceived to be injustices against her sons from school staff who wanted to place them in special education, when she felt that they just needed more time to develop. Jane had six children overall, and an infant in her lap during our interview. Though brief, our chat about pregnancy, mothering, teaching, and studying in a pandemic was delightful, because we related to each other; specifically, we spoke about the invisible load of motherhood and how it was exacerbated in the COVID-19 era, and about the desire to pursue higher education out of a passion for social action.

Jane had moved from British Colombia to Ontario five years before our interview, recalling that she missed the warmer winters and the mountains. Her experience in sex education began and ended in grade six, when her class learned about human reproduction. Beyond that, Jane did not have any other formal sex education, but described the ways in which learning about sex from peers and events such as girls in her school getting pregnant.

Miriam

Miriam is an Asian woman who at the time of the study was in her early fourties and in the second year of the technology stream program. Her teachables were hospitality and tourism. Miriam decided to become a teacher after she was laid off from the vehicle production industry at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. She turned a difficult experience into an opportunity to grow and was very glad she did so. Part of her trade life was the valuable experience gained through her role as a women's advocate in her former union, wherein she supported women who experienced domestic violence.

Miriam was another teacher candidate who recalled reading the Fully Alive textbooks as a young student, and told me that her daughters also learned sex education through the same curriculum, which had been updated. Miriam was able to give her daughters corrective lessons based on her involvement working with women who had been assaulted. With her experience of sex education so far in the past, she had a hard time recalling specific lessons, but did remember it being an abstinence-only model, much to her disappointment. When I asked her questions about her learning about sex and sexual violence, she often referred to her experiences from her union work, rather than pulling stories from formal education.

Bucky

Bucky is a Black non-binary person who at the time of our interview was in their late twenties and in the second year of the consecutive program. They decided to pursue teacher education after completing their undergraduate degree in psychology, not knowing what to do next, and then finding work at an after-school centre which they enjoyed. They jokingly recalled loving working with children but wanting more paperwork, so teaching was the natural next step. Bucky identified as neurodivergent and told me they had ADHD. They were passionate about teaching students how to develop emotional regulation.

Bucky's first and only memory of sex education was the grade nine mandatory health class, and they recalled that it was limited to sexual anatomy. As will be discussed in the next section where their testimony serves to support a theme that emerged from my analysis, Bucky recalled learning about sex, gender, sexuality, and sexual violence from the internet; specifically, from time spent in online communities and reading fan fiction. Also discussed in the next section, Bucky was among the minority of teacher candidates in this study that was able to speak to the intersectional connection between race, sex, and sexual violence.

Josephine

Josephine is a half Indian and half white woman who at the time of the study was in her early twenties and in the third year of the concurrent program. Her teachables were biology and math. Her decision to pursue teacher education was a practical one: "I felt like [it] would give me a good chance at a job." She applied to teacher education directly from secondary school and was happy that she got accepted into the program, having always enjoyed helping people. Josephine notably recalled that her female teachers were the most influential in her life.

Like Denise, Josephine narrated personal experiences of gender-based and sexual violence from her time in school and told me how the staff and administration had handled it "poorly, to say the least." Josephine's experience in formal sex education began in grade two and during her years in elementary school she learned about sexual and reproductive anatomy, contraception, and STIs. When I asked her about her secondary school sex education experiences, Josephine told me that she didn't have any, and she critically reflected on the impact that that had in her life, as will be delved into in the next section.

Olu

Olu is a Black man, who when I interviewed him was in his early twenties and in the first year of the consecutive program. Olu told me that he wanted to become a teacher because his father was a professor and because he found through his coaching experience that he loved spending time with students. Olu's responses were often brief but nevertheless enlightening.

Olu was first introduced to sex education in grade seven and was limited to human reproductive anatomy. His distinctively remembers a TV being rolled in and watching videos on the topic. Of all the participants, Olu had a particularly hard time recalling memories from his time in school. Although he did tell me that he learned about gender-based violence in certain optional classes, he could not recall specific lessons. When I asked him if they were social science courses, he said "only girls take those courses" but reflected that they should perhaps instead be mandatory for boys to take, adding "A guy, we would choose to take a spare over a course like that."

Tchalla

Tchalla is a Black man who at the time of the study was in his mid-twenties and in the first year of the consecutive program. He had always wanted to pursue a career through which he could make a difference. He recalled his dream job as a child was to become the prime minister, and he laughed when I said he could still do that and pointed out that Justin Trudeau, our current prime minister, used to be a teacher.

Tchalla's first experience in sex education was in grade six and it covered "the basics" of human reproductive anatomy and STDs. In secondary school, he took optional health classes in his senior years and had a handful of lessons on sex and consent. At the time of our interview Tchalla lived in a large city and had not moved to the city in which the study took place because the pandemic and virtual learning allowed him to stay home. He told me that he did

administrative work for a governmental health organization, which had influenced his understandings of sexual violence. When I inquired on how, Tchalla only commented that it opened his eyes to the prevalence of abuse and that he began to see incidences of women being treated inferiorly to men.

Molly

Molly is a white woman who at the time of our interview was in her mid-thirties and in the second year of the consecutive program. Her teachables were social sciences and biology. Prior to entering university, Molly attended college and majored in advertising and marketing. While completing her diploma, she held a tutoring position at the college, and narrated a time when she tutored a student to success. She told me that it was her love for tutoring that pushed her to pursue teaching, though she had not previously considered it as a career path.

In grade five, Molly was first exposed to formal sex education, a one-day lesson where the teachers split up the boys and girls. That being her only elementary school formal lesson, Molly also recalled only one lesson in secondary school: a health class in her mandatory grade nine HPE course. In both one-day classes, human reproductive anatomy was covered, though in a bit more detail in grade nine than in grade five. Molly recalled most of her learning about sex and sexual violence was learned in postsecondary school, and often brought up her friendship with a doctoral student who studies sexual violence as a key source of learning.

Peter

Peter is a white man who at the time of the study was in his mid-twenties and in the first year of the consecutive program. His teachables were social sciences and history. Peter told me that his teaching degree was his third one and that he really enjoys learning and the educational

environment. In the initial attempt his application to teacher education was rejected, but he re-applied after trying other career paths that didn't work out.

Peter's first sex education experience was in grade seven, when he recalled learning "the mechanics of it" but within an abstinence-model, given that he attended Catholic school. Towards the end of our interview, Peter disclosed that he had worked for the military, and much to my intrigue, we spoke briefly about military culture and sexual violence. He commented that there was "a huge thing aimed at getting rid of the sexualized culture in the military," however he did not elaborate much on how this experience has influenced his understanding of sexual violence or his role as an emerging teacher.

Joe

Joe is a white man who at the time of our interview was in his mid-twenties and in the second year of the consecutive program. His teachables were social sciences and geography. Although Joe had considered a teaching career since his teenage years, it wasn't until his postsecondary school experience working as a teaching assistant (TA) that he solidified his decision to pursue teacher education. One thing that stood out to me was when at the very beginning of our conversation, Joe told me that he has come to learn the ways in which he has benefited from being a man. It struck me, because I have found in my experience as a teacher educator and from my reading of the literature, that white male teacher candidates and teachers often struggle to or resist understanding their own privilege (Jupp et al., 2016).

Joe remembered his first formal sex education lesson being in grade three or four and encompassing lessons on the human reproductive system. Like other participants, his last sex education lesson was the health class that was covered in his HPE class. In retrospect, Joe recalled that these lessons did not have any "contextual relevance" for him, given that they were

all before he became a teenager and he felt that he was too young to pursue romantic relationships then.

Samantha

Samantha is a white woman, who when I interviewed her was in her early twenties and in the third year of the concurrent program. For Samantha, teaching had been a lifelong goal. What solidified her decision to pursue teacher education directly after secondary school was a cooperative education placement in a grade one class. The experiential learning experience captured her interest in child development and the learning processes of young children.

Samantha recalled having "next to no education" on sex in elementary school. It wasn't until secondary school, specifically in the grade nine health portion of her HPE class, that she had formal sex education lessons. Even then, and as will be delved into in the next section, Samantha's sex education experience was quite limited. Throughout my interview with her, Samantha recalled several instances of sexual violence, from across the continuum, that she witnessed in her time in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary school. What was illuminating was her ability to make the connection between sex education and sexual violence prevention, a finding that was echoed by other participants.

John

John is a Black man, who at the time of the study was in his early twenties and in the first year of the consecutive program. His teachables were visual arts and English literature. John told me that throughout his elementary school years, he never really enjoyed or excelled in school. He narrated stories in which his teachers ostracized, embarrassed, and otherwise excluded him. It wasn't until secondary school that John began to establish strong relationships that facilitated success. These relationships were with teachers of colour who curated curriculum and pedagogy

around student interests. John realized that he was a part of many "students of colour who experience a lot of being marginalized by their teachers and being marginalized within the classroom."

John's first formal sex education experience was in grade six, and he recalled that it was abstinence-based, heteronormative, and focused on the harmful consequences of sex. John pointed out that he learned more important lessons in family studies than he did in health class, recalling lessons on consent and healthy relationships. He appreciated that it was integrated "gender-wise" and that he had more "takeaways" from family studies than he had from sex education.

It is my aim that readers keep in mind these brief introductory narratives as they move through the narrative themes. These themes were analyzed according to the Crossley's (2007) steps of narrative analysis that were detailed in the previous chapter. As McMahon and Watson (2013) articulate, "as individuals tell their stories, locate them in particular contexts and identify various influences, they come to understand their stories in a different way through a process of meaning making. In this process, emerging themes within and between their stories are identified" (p. 279). In the following section, I move to the thematic findings of my analysis.

Narrative Themes

The most prominent narrative themes that emerged from my analysis can be encapsulated into the following eight categories, presented in this chapter: 1) experiences of inadequate sex education from teacher candidates' time in K-12 education; 2) learning about sex and sexual violence in the margins; 3) gendered, risk-based discourses, and narrow definitions of sex didn't prepare participants for sexual citizenship; 4) fragmented understandings of consent and the continuum of sexual violence; 5) teacher discomfort with teaching sex education and addressing

sexual violence; 6) stories of not having learned about sexual violence until postsecondary school; 7) teacher training did not prepare participants' to teach about sex education, nor to address sexual violence; 8) the desire to learn about consent and sexual violence in participants' new roles as teachers.

Experiences of Inadequate Sex Education

Participants critiqued their experiences of sex education in school as inadequate, and their stories displayed their dissatisfaction with the lack of key learning experiences. Some said that sex education felt like a series of boxes to check, rather than a place of deep and nuanced discussion. Still, several participants, including Charlie, Olu, Tchalla, Samantha, Rose, Jane, and Josephine, expressed that even within this experience, many or most boxes were not checked. Charlie articulates the lack of sex education by recalling only a handful of lessons on the topic from throughout her time in K-12 education.

> *Charlie: So, I think it was grade seven or eight, I remember us having a nurse come in and talking about sexual health, I feel like it was-mostly regarding male protection, because that's what I remember. And actually, she also talked about female contraception because I remember her showing the NuvaRing. And then in high school, I remember learning about it in health class. This would have been like grade nine or ten, and I just feel like it was, like stepping on glass. I don't remember there being many classes about it. One or two at the least. It always seemed to be covered last or a "one and done deal" type of situation. I definitely felt like it was top down. Like it was just like, hey, we hit the curriculum expectations and then the next day, we were back in the gym or back to learning like social studies or something, right? Yeah.*

In using the image of "stepping on glass," Charlie stories her experience of sex education as an uneasy one. Moreover, by saying it was "a one and done deal," Charlie demonstrates how sex education was disconnected from the rest of the curriculum, an obligation that had to be fulfilled, but generally devoid of meaningful thought from her teachers or school. Olu and Tchalla recalled that the content of their sex education was inadequate, and both felt discomfort and said that it wasn't taken seriously by their classmates and their teachers.

> *Olu: So I remember it was very uncomfortable to talk about it. And that even grade 7, grade 8, it was kind of just brushed upon like, it wasn't too serious. It was more like, this is what sex is, this is how the body works type of things. And like wet dreams are normal. Some girls might be like experiencing periods, it's normal, like stuff like that.*
>
> *Tchalla**:** Yeah, so the first time I've learned about it was in grade 6 in physical education. They've introduced it a bit in grade 4 and 5. But most of the time, as a kid, I would giggle when that topic comes in, and the teacher will always give us an option to like leave the class, or stay and well, I would stay, but then I would laugh so much with my guy friends and get kicked out. But in terms of introducing it, well, I had to research it myself. There's not much info that the teachers provide, you know, so.*

Olu and Tchalla told me that sex education was not taken seriously by their educators, who were also uncomfortable with the topic. Their narratives demonstrate that sex education did not receive the pedagogical concern nor the student engagement that it might have, had it been taken more seriously. Tchalla's testimony struck me in that it points to how student disengagement with sex education learning may be tied to the maintenance of gender codes (Arnot, 2002) for boys. The giggling and laughing, which eventually led to exclusion from the lesson, was reinforced by his male peers. Indeed, his narrative reinforces findings that dominant forms of

masculinity are often reproduced in various spaces within schools (Skelton, 1996; Khoja-Moojli, 2012; Robinson, 2000, 2005).

Participants criticized abstinence-based discourses and told stories of how they harmed them and their peers growing up. This was particularly relevant for students who attended Catholic schools, all of whom referenced the Fully Alive curriculum, except for Samantha who said she did not receive any sex education in her elementary Catholic school. She recalled, “they explained like a period and they explained how sperm was created. And then they basically said sex is for marriage, you don't need to know anything about that.” Samantha switched to the public board in secondary school, and at that time she was introduced to sex education, but even then, the lessons she was able to recall were quite limited. Denise shared that her Catholic school sent the Fully Alive textbook home and tasked parents with teaching sex education, and recalled that her mom went over the basics with her, but was largely uncomfortable.

The most often storied experience among teacher candidates in this study was the lack of lessons on consent and healthy relationships, a finding that is supported by the literature (Larkin et al., 2017). Denise and other participants who attended Catholic schools felt that consent was not taught because it was perceived by their educators to go against the abstinence model of sex education promoted by the Catholic school system.

> *Denise**:** Consent was not brought up. Because I don't think it was ever something that my school wanted to encourage you something you would do for enjoyment. It was like, this is something you're going to save for marriage. Like I remember my teacher saying that, like, well, none of you are going to be having sex, so you don't need to worry about this.*

This finding reflects scholarship which suggests that sex education in Ontario is often the ground of moral debate, particularly on the basis of religion (Bialystok & Wright, 2019). Bucky’s

narrative provides further insight into the moral debate that occurred at the time the HPE curriculum was released:

> *Bucky: I remember the first time like the brand new sex ed curriculum came out, everybody was like, flipping out, because, oh, my God, they're teaching kids about sex, blah, blah. But the thing is teaching children about consent is not equivalent with teaching them about sex. I feel like it says a lot that that's like the first place that people go to as far as the lack of education that people have in regards to sexual education in general, and the curriculum as well.*

In fact, all of the teacher candidates in my study felt that consent was a largely absent topic in their time in K-12 education, and when it was brought up, it was not delved into in any complexity.

Rose, Denise, Josephine, Samantha, and Tchalla recalled that consent was not talked about enough, and that that had caused significant and troublesome consequences for them and their peers. Rose felt that understanding how to set boundaries is still a challenge she experiences.

> *Rose**:** Yeah, probably a lot of experiences in high school where I've noticed things going like from people I've talked to, consent never really was like, it's just not talked about enough, I guess. I know a lot of people who have been sexually assaulted, not fully, like, raped, but things just going way further than they wanted them to go. And there was never like, full consent, because both parties were drunk. So yeah, consent is very like just a wishy washy kind of thing when it comes to high school students and parties that hooking up and like alcohol is involved, I guess. So I feel like my experience with consent,*

> *there's just never been super like clear boundaries. And just knowing how to like set those clear boundaries can be hard sometimes.*

In reflecting on certain memories that have disturbed her, Rose demonstrates her understanding of the complicated relationship between consent and alcohol. In Hirsch and Khan's (2020) focus groups, there tended to be gendered differences in how men and women understood sexual violence. In particular, "men imagined that rapes were contexts where women were screaming 'no' and fighting for their lives." (p. 11). Furthermore, "incapacitated" assaults are disproportionately committed by acquaintances. (p.13-14). Rose recalls that the lack of knowledge many of her peers had on what constitutes consent led to many experiences of sexual violence. She links these early memories to her current experience, in which setting boundaries remains difficult for her. This finding is supported by the research on consent education, which Harris (2018) notes should be approached with complexity, recognizing that sex occurs within a complicated political context (Gilbert, 2018). Similarly, Jane reflected on how valuable lessons on consent would have been for her and her peers:

> *Jane**:** I wish I'd learned more about consent, more about the woman's body, the more about just everything. I feel like I we could have used a lot more information about how to go about your first time or how to consent. And if you don't feel like you want to do something, but that's okay, too. And just stuff like that. A lot of the stuff that they're teaching now, I feel like that would have been useful back then for a lot of students.*

Josephine's narrative was particularly jarring. Although I emphasized to all participants that they are not asked to talk about any personal experiences related to sexual violence, Josephine felt compelled to reflect on her own experience of assault and assured me that she felt comfortable with sharing it.

Josephine: I wish. I do wish they talked more about healthy relationships and like consent. Because in high school, that's when I was sexually assaulted, and I didn't even really realize what happened. I broke down crying at the time, and I knew something was wrong, but I thought wasn't normal. So I didn't really know what to do. And I feel like if there had been a conversation about consent, and more conversations about sex, and what's okay, and boundaries, I probably could have just put a stop to that, in that relationship altogether before anything got worse.

Her repetition of the statement "I wish" told me that she placed an emphasis on the role of school in arming students like herself with the knowledge of how to recognize harmful situations in relation to sexual violence, to trouble the normalized, and to intervene both in their own lives and in those of their peers. This finding is supported by the research that suggests that comprehensive sex and consent education has a large role to play in sexual violence prevention (Bialystok, 2016 Carmody, 2015; Schneider & Hirsch, 2020). Samantha's narrative bares resemblance to Josephine's in this respect:

Samantha: And now that sexual assault is coming out more, and there's a lot more talk about that, I definitely wish that they talked to us about the risks around sexual assault and the statistics around sexual assault and how some men go about it, even women go about it. You know what I mean? I wish they even dived deeper in that and explained, you know. Even self defense mechanisms, I wish that they talked about that more. I feel like we were really unprepared in that sense. And consent, they never talked about anything about consent. So that would have been nice to know about as well, instead of feeling you have to do something.

Samantha's narrative was telling and revealed her reflections on how learning about consent and sexual violence could have served a protective purpose in her life and in the lives of her peers, particularly the females.

Tchalla articulates that when we don't teach kids about consent and sexual violence, they seek to fill the gap in knowledge.

> *Tchalla: I wish that they like addressed more about consent, more about sexual abuse. I'm afraid because like, you know, with the lack of knowledge that the kids, well, I mean, I guess today or even from our generation, like, I'm sure we're the same age. I'm afraid about like websites like porn, because porn, there's like some really extreme things that degrades women, and even men.*

He thinks about young kids today, but acknowledges the relevance of his statement for kids from mine and his generation, in pointing out that there are harmful sources of knowledge such as pornography. Tchalla's reflection is in fact supported by the research in this regard; pornography is indeed a source of sex education for youth (Ezzell, 2008; Sun et al., 2016), especially for boys and plays a key role in the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity (Johansson & Hammarén, 2007). Particularly troubling to prevention scholars is when pornography is the only source of learning, with the absence or inadequacy of sex education (Coy et al., 2016; Haste, 2013; Carmody, 2015). School-based comprehensive sex education can serve a protective factor in the face of proliferation of other sources of sex education such as social media and pornography (Schneider & Hirsch, 2020).

As demonstrated by the quotes above, several participants expressed that they wished they had learned about consent, and that it would have helped them and their peers in their relationships. Participant narratives of inadequate sex education mirror the literature that

suggests that North American youth tend to receive little sex education (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017), at later grades than they prefer (Meaney et al., 2009), and that this inadequacy leaves them with limited knowledge on safe and ethical sex (Carmody, 2015) and with the need to find such education in troublesome places such as pornography (Coy et al., 2016; Haste, 2013). This theme also supports previous research that young people want sex and violence prevention education that moves beyond the "mechanics of sex" and "just say no" approaches (Carmody & Willis, 2006).

Learning About Sex and Sexual Violence in the Margins

Teacher candidates in this study often pointed out that they learned more about sex, consent, and sexual violence "in the margins" of their schooling experiences – in the hallways, from their friends and peers, and online. As Olu put it, he learned about sexual harassment "through conversations, through people getting suspended for different situations that happened in school, through locker room conversations, like even guys touching guys, weird type of stuff which wasn't wanted." This theme is deeply connected to feminist reproductive theory, its concept of the hidden curriculum, and its emphasis on the role of education in reproducing gendered and racialized hierarchies (Weiler, 2017; Dillabough, 2003; Deem, 2012). Arnot's (2002) notion of gender codes is also helpful in understanding the various lessons that participants recalled learning in the margins. Participants reflected on several unsettling experiences, of the presence of sexual violence in their schools growing up, and how they felt these experiences served to teach them and their peers lessons that were harmful. At times, these reflections were connected to new learning that they had had in teacher education.

Abdullah expressed that in the schools he attended, there was a "hands-off policy," but that it was not enforced in any substantial way by teachers and staff.

> *So it was more I suppose, in theory than in practice. And even in theory, it was not really delved into very deeply; keep your hands to yourself, if you touch someone else, you got in trouble. And so there isn't an idea there of like, what are those things that could possibly happen. Maybe that's wisdom. Doesn't seem like it to me that it'll give kids ideas, right, but then also to not penalize it kind of shows that.*

Reflecting on how this impacted him and his peers, Abdullah recalls that the rule didn't serve its intended purpose, and that it didn't decrease incidences of gendered sexual harassment. He went on to detail a troubling experience:

> *When I was in grade 7, the boys had made the game that was basically that they would go around, and they would slap the girls on their behinds, right. And so this was something that as a kid, you're kind of thinking like, you know, and the way that the girls would react, I think is a socially constructed, like they would laugh. Of course, they were uncomfortable, but they didn't communicate that clearly, because I think that that's just how the conditioning is.*
>
> *So there's all this behaviour that occurs behind the teacher's back, right? That is, especially when you're like you're male, you're hanging out with males or it's in my experience, there was a lot of sexualization of our classmates. And that was like okay to do. It was like weird if you didn't do it.*

In retrospect, Abdullah is able to recognize that girls' responses to sexual harassment may have come off as consent, but that these girls were actually uncomfortable. John shared a similar story:

> *John: I think so a little bit. Because I remember in high school walking down the hallways, there be like some touching or remarks that men would, like the male students*

> *would make to female students. And I found that sometimes a lot of female students didn't know what to say, or were kind of just like, okay with it, because this is the reality that we live in, right? But reality is, no one should be able to touch you without your consent or do anything to you without you being okay with it. So I definitely think there are times where that has happened. And I feel like it has affected the people I viewed.*

There are complex peer dynamics present that impact how girls react to harassment; that is, Abdullah's narrative demonstrated that there are consequences to not brushing it off, and so explicit reactions of discomfort are rare. The feminist literature on consent points to the critical understanding that power relations mediate experiences of consent and nonconsent (Muehlenhard et al., 2016; Garcia & Vemuri, 2017; Gilbert, 2018; Butler, 2011; Harris, 2018). As Robinson's (2005) research demonstrates, girls who report face social retribution, which often takes the form of scrutiny in their own gender and sexual identities. These findings support Conroy's (2013) theorization of sexual harassment, which functions as a tool for policing gender conformity and heterosexuality and for asserting male dominance. Moreover, when teachers do not notice nor respond to incidences of gendered sexual harassment, it serves to reinforce them. A more frequent and less immediately risky behaviour, such as those described by Abdullah, "if recognized at all, is dismissed as unproblematic in the large scale of [school] events, often becoming 'invisible' through the naturalization of the everydayness of these performances" (Robinson, 2005, p. 27). As Tchalla reflected, "I just wish we could have done things more differently in terms of addressing sexual violence and things like that." The social reproductive cycle is thus not broken, but is rather strengthened.

Like Abdullah and John, several other participants reflected that sexual violence was very present at school and within school contexts when they were growing up. The following excerpts

from my interviews with Rose and Joe demonstrates the ways in which sexual violence was a deeply gendered experience.

> *Rose: There was a lot of sexual violence at school: people making comments, calling people names for things that they did, but it was very gender biased as well. Like the guys would participate in the same like, I don't know. Example, my friend was talking to this one guy in high school, and he had asked her to send nudes, and he was participating in the same act, but everyone called her names, called her a slut and stuff like that, but he was never made fun of for it. So, stuff like that through online, and then things were brought in class, and then as well as like on the weekends at parties.*
>
> *Joe: In high school, definitely. Yeah, definitely, there were jokes going around sexist jokes or commentary, like pardon my use of the term, but things like make me a sandwich, or classic sexist comments or sexual comments that really were, I think a little bit more part of the culture 10 years ago than they are now. But yes, I have seen and experienced and never even thought probably too much about it when I was in high school. Because, like I said, a little ashamed to admit but it was part of the culture, and it was what was around me all the time.*

Rose recalled the sexist backlash that girls received from their peers for sending nudes and that boys who were doing the same thing received no criticism. This double standard is emblematic of the policing of female but not male sexuality, and in turn, the reproduction of patriarchal gender norms. As Lahelma (2002) points out, “sex-based harassment acts as a form of social control that constitutes a way of maintaining and policing gender boundaries and hierarchies” (p. 2002).

Participants spoke exclusively of boys perpetrating sexual violence against both girls and boys, which is consistent with findings from across the literature (Hill & Kearl, 2011; Gruber & Fineran, 2016). Take, as examples, the following excerpts from Denise, Olu, and Peter's transcripts:

> *Denise: I remember in my area, do we have like, we do look May 24 celebrations and we live kind of near a beach area that everybody rents tents out and does that and that kind of seemed to be where everybody was first doing those things. Like if you were going to be having sex at a young age, you're probably going to be having it there first. I remember one of the first times that, I think I even heard about sex in school was from this kid that was sitting like kitty corner to me, behind me, talking about how he was so excited to pin a girl down just like those tents, and how the men would go from tent to tent to tent. Like it was just, it disgusted me, like made me kind of like scared to have sex, thinking of that what it is. It's like they just go in and out, in and out like from one person to the next.*

The detailed memories that Denise had from the annual celebrations she references had a tremendous impact on her emerging understanding of what sex was. As she recalls, one of the first times she learned about sex was from a peer who told her stories about violating girls. Denise's first times learning about of sex was made up of a story that constituted sexual violence; this learning instilled fear in her.

Meanwhile, Olu spoke about sexual scripts in which boys, including those of various races, attained achievements for having sexual relationships with women of different races. In his recollection, Olu was able to see how such practices involved sexist behaviours towards girls.

Olu: I know some guys that for example, certain guys, they think it's a badge of honour to do certain things with a particular race. So even while I mean it varies based on race, I'd say because I know some white guys have done that, I know black guys have done that. Arab guys that have done that. But there are certainly ways that they look at different types of women. So like Muslim women, or white women or Black women and say like, well, there was like a Black girl before, let me get my black belt. And they'll go out of their way to get a black girl to sleep with them and then just brag about that. Even some Muslim women, girls in hijabs like, oh, she's Muslim I haven't done with a Muslim girl like, let me try and mess with her and her religion type of things like compromise her values for me, and then just degrading girls, like they treat them like garbage and stuff and we see a lot of that too.

In a similar manner to Olu, Peter recalled the "predatory" ways that boys treated girls in his secondary school. He told me about a specific story in which a peer detailed an assault against a girl that involved using alcohol.

Peter: I remember I knew some guys in my high school who just the way they would interact with girls and viewed girls was probably somewhat predatory. I remember having a conversation with this guy once in grade 12, me and him weren't close friends or anything. And I think we're just talking, and he was talking about how he would go to parties and he would like, have one beer the whole time that he would just slowly slip on and then wait till some girl got super drunk. And I remember being kind of like, hey, what the fuck! Like, why are you telling me this?

The story that Peter remembered reflects many in which alcohol is used as a key weapon in the perpetration of sexual assault (Tamburri & Samson, 2014). The question Peter asked, "why are

you telling me this?" reflected his alarm at his peer's apparent pride and the ease by which he told the story. However, it may also reflect adherence to hegemonic masculinity in that Peter did not reflect on the inappropriateness of the act, but only his alarm that his peer boasted about it.

A particularly staggering finding was participants reflecting on how the harmful and fragmented lessons they learned on the margins impacted them negatively later in life.

> *Jane: I think like, that's such a big problem. Like I know, for me, personally, my parents weren't around like that to teach me about anything like that. So you I grew up just listening to the advice of my friends, and that is so bad. And then you get yourself in situations that you regret for the rest of your life, right, and its hangs over you. And I feel like there's so many students like me, who don't have parents who are right there attending to their every need or telling them everything that they need to know, and they're just getting information from their friends to help them.*

For others, what they learned in the margins was helpful and taught them more about sex and consent than did school. Tchalla recalled, "I learned about healthy relationships from my parents too, well, my mom, mostly. Like you got to take care of the woman and treat her right." His conversations with his mom exposed him to a wider range of lessons on how to enter into and maintain healthy romantic relationships. For Bucky, much of their sex education was obtained in online communities:

> *Bucky: I guess I'm sort of lucky in so far as like, I definitely spend a lot of time on the internet, and there are a lot of things that I learned about like sex, sexuality, gender, etc, that I guess would not have learned at that time or in school or whatever. So I think having access to knowledge and stuff like that has definitely yielded way more like better effects than what I did in school. I don't think it was like specifically research necessarily*

> *either. I want to say it was after high school. And it was kind of just somewhat a byproduct of me spending a lot of time online, and I guess the circles I kind of like, well, can't run, but in the circle I ran with. Because I had like internet friends.*

Bucky told me of that within these online communities, such as those within the platform Tumblr, they learned lessons that shaped the way they understood sex and gender in complex ways. An example is when Bucky told me that they wish that they had learned certain lessons in school, rather than from the Internet, as they felt like by the time they had access to such learning online, it was too late:

> *Bucky: I remember, I know, personally, I don't really like wearing stuff that's probably fitting. But I remember that in high school and early university, there was a time where I was like, I made myself rules. I was like, okay, you can only wear one baggy thing, you can wear baggy pants, or a baggy shirt, because I wanted to portray like that stereotypically, like I guess decidedly like kind of like feminine look or whatever. And I really wanted to be like an emo kid. But in hindsight, I could have just been a boy emo kid. But that for some, I guess, wasn't really on my radar. And so there's a boat that I missed, I guess in that aspect.*

Bucky's *missing the boat* sentiment was reflected in other participants' narratives as well, with a prominent feeling that once they had learned about something, they reflected *why didn't I learn this sooner?*

For most participants, the unsettling experiences they had in and around school contexts served as more profound learning experiences than the sex education they received in school through formal lessons. They often learned from conversations with their peers and parents, discussions amongst peer groups, and from conducting their own research. Participants often

criticized the lessons that they learned in these spaces, recalling incidences of normalized sexual violence from across the continuum, and reflecting on the need for formal sex education to combat troublesome lessons. Their narratives evidence the learning of sexual scripts through the informal curriculum, evidenced for example, when John and Abdullah trouble girls' seemingly passive responses to sexual harassment from boys. In this case, the problematic but normalized sexual script is that passivity and lack of response to sexual harassment means acceptance and consent (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Another instance is when Rose reflected on the sexist backlash that girls received when participating in the same acts that the boys did; here, the faulty sexual script is that boys are hypersexual and it is normal for them to engage in sexual behaviours but girls are sluts for engaging in the same behaviours (Gavey, 1989). These sexual scripts often work to shape dominant understandings of sex and contribute to what Gavey (2005) calls the "cultural scaffolding of rape," or an understanding that "normative heterosex is patterned or scripted in ways that permit far too much ambiguity over distinctions between what is rape and what is *just sex*" (p. 2, italics in original). Moreover, they reproduce patriarchal gendered relations through the hidden curriculum of sex education (Chilisa, 2006).

Learning Gendered, Risk-Based Discourses, and Narrow Definitions of Sex Led to Lack of Preparation for Sexual Citizenship

Several participants shared stories of how learning gendered, risk and fear-based, discourses, as well as narrow definitions of sex created challenges for themselves and their peers as they grew up and entered relationships. The term sexual citizenship is also helpful in situating this theme, particularly as the participants often reflected that their experiences in sex education did not prepare them for the diverse and complicated world of sex, and how to go about their own sexual lives. The term was introduced by Hirsch and Khan (2020) in their book *Sexual*

Citizens. They define sexual citizenship as "the acknowledgement of one's own right to sexual self-determination and, importantly, recognizes the equivalent right in others" (p. xvi). Participants recalled receiving lessons that were gendered in a way that was unhelpful – that is, targeted girls and boys in stereotypical ways rather than engaging all genders in understanding the complexities sex and consent – and lessons that were risk-based and/or risk-focused, at the expense of lessons on consent, pleasure, and healthy relationships. In fact, John articulated this in his criticism of the traditional splitting up of boys and girls during sex education lessons, asking the question *why shouldn't we all learn about periods?* This intriguing question was followed by the upcoming sentiment: "they are things that male men go through and things that females go through, and then of the day, we live together. So there's stuff that we should all be taught about that we weren't taught about and we had to learn it on our own." John pointed out that this often leads to perpetuating shame around particular gendered experiences, such as periods.

Risk-based and risk-focused lessons covered STDs and STIs, drugs and alcohol, contraception and pregnancy, and the participants were taught that these were the bad outcomes of sex and should be avoided at all costs. Many participants recalled that abstinence was the only option they were taught about in terms of keeping safe from the harmful consequences of sex. This was particularly prominent in the narratives of participants who attended Catholic schools.

> *Rose: I went to a Catholic school, so the way that sex education was talked about was always, I don't know how to explain it, but any of the teachers that I had, like it was kind of just seen that like sex was like a bad thing. And it wasn't talked about in a way that like, we need to educate or talk about certain things like STDs, or stuff like that wasn't talked about enough, I guess. There wasn't enough like preventative talk or talk about consent. It was just always like, a very black and white type of mindset, I guess. Like, oh,*

> *you have sex when you are married. That's it. … It was, kind of all encompassed as like, sex, drugs, alcohol, violence is all like bad, so just stay away from it all type of thing. It was just like, a lot of fear tactics.*

Rose’s narrative demonstrates her critique of fear-based lessons. Imagery is utilized to paint a “black-and-white” picture of her experience of sex education discourses: the overarching message from school was *sex is bad and stay abstinent until marriage*. Throughout my interview with her, she reflected on the harms of this limited sexual narrative. The black and white image is also reflected in other participants’ responses, such as Denise who troubled the negative undertone of her sex education lessons.

The following excerpts from Denise, Miriam, Josephine, and John’s transcripts provide further insight into what Rose describes as “black-and-white” messaging around sex.

> *Denise: It was definitely more risk than pleasure. Like, it was almost scaring you out of having sex, if anything, right. Like, if you have sex, you could get pregnant. If you had sex, you could get a disease and you could die. Yeah, it was all just like the negatives of sex and none of the positives.*
>
> *Miriam: We did not talk about pleasure in my Catholic school. Definitely not. Definitely not. [laughs]… So we would have those risk-based lessons. They weren't like a huge focus because I think they're more like push was on abstinence, like teens are never going to have sex, which was unrealistic when I'm looking at my classmates.*
>
> *Josephine: They talked a lot about STIs and contraception, but they never really talked about like, oh, this is when you should leave a relationship, this is when a relationship is good for you, this is the purpose of a relationship in your life.*

Peter: I think that then, they called them STDs, but they for sure talked about that and pregnancy. And I suspect they may have talked more about the risks and less about ways to prevent them other than abstinence.

John: They really talked about abstinence. They made that the biggest point about – being abstinent. And they talked about the options of birth control. They talked about using condoms, anything like that, but they made it very clear that if you have sex, the possibility of being pregnant is the number one issue.

The narratives above demonstrate participants' critical mindsets around the abstinence-based education they received growing up. Denise recalled that lessons were focused on the harms of sex and neglected the positives parts of having a sexual life, and Miriam laughed as she told me that pleasure was certainly not on the teaching agenda in her Catholic high school. Rose and John reflect that lessons about sex were negative, fear-based, and otherwise limited.

Rose: I don't know like, since sex is always talked about in the negative, but it was always talked about as a fear factor, I guess, more so than building healthy relationships and talking about things like that, it kind of impacted how everyone acted on the weekends, I guess.

John: It was mostly, if you have sex, you're going to get pregnant, or you're going to have a child and you're not ready for a child, instead of talking about, you know, maybe consent. Or if you do have sex, and these are the things that you want to know about, this is why we could educate you on or asking questions on what us as kids who are eventually going to do that stuff would want to know. It was kind of limited, I found.

As Carmody (2015) points out, "for too long, STIs, fear of pregnancy, and sexual assault have been used to narrate sex negatively, to the exclusion of the positive aspects of sex and what this

means to many young people" (p. 5). When students leave school without lessons on having healthy sexual lives, they often struggle to negotiate consensual, pleasurable, and safe sexual experiences; this has been especially documented on postsecondary campuses (Hirsch & Khan, 2020).

Sexual violence was portrayed within the individual, deviant perpetrator discourse (Anderson, 2007; Estrich, 1987; Robinson, 2000, 2005), or otherwise targeted girls in lessons of what to be careful of and what to watch out for. As Charlie pointed out, such lessons were not couched in any helpful analysis of consent. Miriam felt that risk-based lessons that targeted girls painted a limited, insufficient, picture of how to prevent sexual violence.

> *Charlie: For some reason, I feel like [sex education] always tied into like stranger danger. And when you had like substance abuse, because they would tell you like, "oh, you have to know who's safe to talk to" and whatnot, and then consent got thrown in there. I feel like there wasn't much explanation or follow up with that. It was always just like, don't do this, don't do that, and then you're kind of left wondering.*
>
> *Miriam: Well, I think, like, statistically, women are more likely to experience gender-based violence. And I think in many ways, the stats are almost taken as those are a given, like that is like to be expected. Still, our young women are taught various ways on how to protect themselves. And we are not focusing the conversation on all these ways that a young woman or any person can protect themselves from rape and less about, like, don't rape people! Right?*

Miriam felt that teaching girls' self-protection is important but should not be taught while excluding lessons on the roles of perpetrator and community. The emergence of cutting-edge prevention research, such as that on bystander education (McMahon et al., 2011; McMahon &

Banyard, 2012), is consistent with Miriam's observation. Rather than providing a helpful gendered context of sexual experiences and violence, gendered lessons were couched in binary sexual scripts that position girls as gatekeepers of sexual experience and boys as perpetrators of violence. This also came out in John's narrative when he told me his class learned "that men are kind of the ones that are chasing the woman and you have to be the one to say no, instead of having a man be able to understand that a woman needs to consent and understand, as well, and vice versa." Moreover, as Collins (2015) emphasizes, gendered lenses that are mono-categorical and exclude the intersections of race, class, and other social categories will always be limited in providing solutions to violence prevention.

Also within the participants' stories is the ever presence of a narrative of feeling abandoned in a state of unknowing, seen above in Charlie's quote, but also throughout the narratives of other participants. Even more powerful was the participant who vulnerably shared with me her narrative of how her experience in sex education could have prevented suffering related to her own experience of sexual violence.

> *Denise: I think that would have played a big role in my assault, if I understand what a healthy relationship looked like. And if I had learned anything about like grooming, or things like that, yeah, and I think if I learned about consent, and that sex can be pleasurable too, I wouldn't have felt so guilty about it for such a long time either, like participating in something you probably shouldn't be participating in any ways because it's not for enjoyment. And I think that stuck with me for a long time afterwards.*

Denise's narrative in the above touched me quite significantly, and I often thought about it throughout my analysis and writing my dissertation. It was compelling in that it demonstrated the power of comprehensive sex education and thoughtful, intentional pedagogy to serve as a factor

in primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions of sexual violence. In particular, she powerfully articulates the relationships between pleasure, consent, sexual violence, and the aftermath of assaults for victims. Denise's narrative supports scholarship which demonstrates the importance of teaching girls about desire and pleasure (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006) when she points out that if she had known that sex should be pleasurable, it may have prevented her assault. In patriarchal societies, gendered sexual scripts emphasize the urgency of male, rather than female, desire (Gavey, 2005).

Abdullah, Rose, and John articulated the limits and harms of teaching narrow definitions of sex and sexual violence to young students.

> *Abdullah: And I also think that when we're teaching grade 7, 8, 9 about sex, like, that's not a majority of their experience. If they're going to a Co-Ed public school, a majority of their experience is interacting with their friends, and classmates, and interacting with them in a quasi-platonic level, or on relationship level, but still, most of that relationship is not sex. So a greater focus could be paid to every single day interactions and how to add into those rather than when you're at the moment where you're about to have sex with somebody, here's what you do. That's a very specific situation. So it might be important, but it's the minority, it's like, 1% of what you, if you're doing it, you know.*

In the above excerpt from Abdullah's narrative, he reflects that sexual relationships often begin far before first experience that would be recognized as having sex for the first time. In other words, youth often have romantic relationships where they might interact in increasingly intimate ways that do not necessarily constitute sex. The various sexual acts that youth engage in are absent from the curriculum, and sex is constituted in a way that limits its definition to vaginal-penile intercourse. Although Abdullah did not specifically speak to this, his narrative

also highlights the heteronormative framing of sex in education, which surely serves to alienate LGBTQ students. This is especially important given, as Hirsch and Khan (2020) point out, "[i]n addition to the overall decline in delivery of key topics [in sex education] that would help cultivate sexual citizenship, some of the most disadvantaged are getting the least information. Only 6% of LGBTQ youth—those most at risk of assault—report that their sex education included information on LGBTQ topics" (pg. xviii).

Abdullah and Rose also both reflected on the harm of teaching about rape and not situating it within the diverse continuum of sexual violence.

> *Abdullah: And again, I think that we sometimes teach can be extreme, then that's it. So like we were taught about rapes, now as an 11 year old boy, that that is a word that culturally rightfully so carries baggage that's terrifying. And you're 11, so you are not going to find yourself in that situation. Also, because it carries a negativity to it, right, when you find yourself in a precarious situation, if that happens, unfortunately, generally, you're going to be on your own side. So if you are telling me that this thing looks like this where someone is kicking and screaming, and you are violating them, then if I was to find myself in a situation where it was consent was dubious, theoretically, I would be able to be like but that's not me. That's not what I'm doing, because you only taught me this very, very extreme example of this thing. It would be the same as if I was to teach my students that the reason that they shouldn't fight each other is because murder exists, there's a disconnect there.*
>
> *Rose: I think it was always seen that like, sexual assault was always very a black and white type of thing, that if it wasn't rape, than it was like, then that wasn't fully sexual*

> *assault. But there was many other forms of sexual harassment taking place in high school, and even grade school, I guess, so just how to navigate those negative emotions.*

Abdullah's powerful comparison – teaching that sexual violence is rape is like teaching that violence is murder – highlights the significance of the issue at hand. Abdullah's observations also speak to the gendered perceptions of assault. In fact, Hirsch and Khan (2020) highlight that these gendered ideas of assault serve as barriers for male victims, as it's "hard for many heterosexual men to see themselves as victims of sexual assault—how could it be assault if they were not afraid or were never physically overpowered?" (p. 21). Using the black-and-white image once again, Rose criticized education that positioned sexual violence as merely rape, while neglecting any teachings about sexual harassment.

The teacher candidates I interviewed criticized abstinence-only sex education and risk-based and risk-focused discourses that emphasized only the negative consequences of sex, usually taught with the goal of delaying youth sexual activity. As Hirsch and Khan (2020) powerfully articulate:

> If sexual shame produces vulnerability, so does silence. And it's not just young people's silence we're talking about here, it's our own: failure to talk to them about sex, to articulate a vision for what their projects might be, to lay the groundwork for them to own their sexual citizenship. The refusal to acknowledge young people as legitimate sexual beings causes harm. (p. 25)

Risk-based discourses also included the dominant deviant perpetrator discourse (Anderson, 2007; Estrich, 1987; Robinson, 2000, 2005) and the girls as gatekeepers of sexual experience discourse (Chambers et al., 2004; Valenti, 2009). Moreover, participants' narratives provide support that risk- and fear-based discourses that position males as perpetrators and females as

victims often neglect factors such as peer conformity and teacher passivity, which are key contributors to the reproduction of sexual violence (Robinson, 2005). Robinson illustrates this in her point that "[peer] conformity and lack of intervention operates only to condone and reinforce sexual harassment as an acceptable and legitimate social practice" (p. 30).

The teacher candidates in this study felt that sex education should be about "increasing their confidence in ethical negotiation of sex" (Carmody, 2015). They troubled "black-and-white" (Rose) messaging around sex and narrated powerful examples of why narrow definitions of sex (e.g., sex is merely penetration) and sexual violence (e.g., sexual violence is merely rape) set students up for failure in engaging in ethical sexual negotiations. Carmody's (2015) notion of sexual ethics comes out here, particularly her argument that violence prevention should value pleasure as much as it acknowledges danger, which follows Fine's (1988) pioneering suggestion and subsequent scholarship that shows that pleasure and desire are missing from sex education (Fine & McClelland, 2006).

Fragmented Understandings of Consent and the Continuum of Sexual Violence

Understandings of consent and the continuum of sexual violence varied among participants. Some had very limited understandings and others articulated sophisticated explanations of consent and sexual violence. Peter, for example, felt that everyone already knows what consent and sexual violence are, and it is the deviants of society that choose to commit harmful acts, despite knowing better. This type of thinking undoubtedly fuels the dominant, deviant perpetrator discourse (Anderson, 2007; Estrich, 1987; Robinson, 2000) and thereby serves to maintain hegemonic masculinity and rape culture. It halts the possibilities of engaging in critical conversations on community and peer group accountability for sexual violence prevention (Flood, 2011). When I asked him why he believes that, Peter simply responded that it

was the truth and signaled to me that he did not wish to further discuss. Abdullah, on the other hand, used stories to articulate his complex understanding of consent, as demonstrated in some excerpts from his interview that were used in the themes discussed thus far. Like several other participants also highlighted, he began by telling me of the cultural shift in our collective understandings of consent.

> *Abdullah: When I was younger, consent was not as much of an issue culturally as it is now. So they did tell us no means no, right? It wasn't focused on, and gray areas were not highlighted at all, which I think they're more so highlighted now. Right? And if I'm remembering correctly which I think that I am, it was always in the case of like sexual intercourse. You see what I'm saying? And so that would start, I think, in like grade 9 or so, which is that, like, if you are trying to have sex with somebody, and they say no, don't have sex with them, which excludes everything before that, right?*

Abdullah criticized his experiences learning about consent in school by pointing out that sexual experience is not limited to intercourse, and highlights that this is particularly relevant for youth when they begin exploring their sexual lives. His narrative provides insight into the issue that at these early stages in their lives, teaching youth about sex as merely intercourse between a man and a woman limits their knowledge of the variety of sexual acts and in doing so restricts the pathway for learning about the complexities of consent. Furthermore, in limiting the continuum of sexual expression, it perpetuates heteronormativity (Gavey, 2005; Marchia & Sommer, 2019).

Several participants narrated understandings of the continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1987), though some were able to do so more readily and with greater detail than others. When asked if she thinks that sexual harassment is related to sexual assault, Miriam responded, “I do. I do because I think it's a continuum and it's a continuum of dehumanizing people.” Similarly,

Bucky said “It's that kind of slippery slope thing where like, if you don't care about one thing that's just like a little thing, like, where exactly do you draw the line?” Miriam’s *continuum of dehumanization* and Bucky’s *slippery slope* are images that indeed reflect feminist understandings of sexually violent incidences as rooted in systemic injustices and connected along a continuum. Abdullah called this a *spectrum of normalization* and articulated the relationship between the frequency of sexually violent acts and where they are located along the continuum.

> *Abdullah: Of course. They are on the spectrum of the normalization of that behaviour. And so, sexist joke might be innocuous, right. You may tell it in a vacuum, it may hurt nobody outside of that room. ... it's kind of like the normal curve thing, I guess where like, a lot of people are going to make the jokes, right. Less and less people are going to do those more extreme things. But it's still in the same category. ... I'm talking about violence against the disempowered, right, sexual violence, like, there is a societal… like, this is nothing, it’s not a big deal, don’t worry about it.*

Abdullah continues by providing a storied example of the normalization of inappropriate behaviour on one side of the continuum contributes to cultural acceptance of inappropriate behaviours on the latter end of it.

> *Okay, so to go back to what I was talking about, with the girls getting slapped, right, like they felt like if I told them these people, I am going to be socially maligned. Or nothing will happen for me. And so that's a proof, it's an evidence of it’s not that big of a deal, right. So you objectify your classmates… it's not a big deal. Okay. Then on top of that sounds like you have a female partner and you lie to them about this and nothing that you do. It's not a big deal, because whatever. And okay, so you're in a situation that's*

precarious and sexual and the person that you are with is not wanting to do that, but you really want to do it, right. And if I can just try to make this work for me, that is great, because it's not a big deal. And I think that that comes from like, because we're better than them, aren't we? You know what I'm saying?

Within feminist cultural reproductive theory as well as feminist understandings of sexual violence, this can be understood as a mechanism for how school facilitates and reproduces rape culture. When the behaviours in Abdullah's story – the girls getting slapped and it is dismissed as not a big deal by themselves, their peers, and their teachers – are dismissed as 'no big deal,' it reverberates to experiences later in life as students engage in various relationships and sexual experiences. Olu's response was along the same lines:

Olu: If you joke about something, you don't take it as seriously most of the time, so it'll lead you to your actions which obviously won't be like, they'll be just doing what you want to do because you already don't take it seriously. And when everyone's joking about it, then no one's going take it seriously. So when sexual violence happens, it's just going to be like a normal thing happening.

The trivialization of behaviours at the lower end of the sexual violence continuum by students and teachers indeed functions to polarize collective understandings of what constitutes sexual violence (Robinson, 2005).

Joe was the only participant to mention the term rape culture, recalling that rape jokes and sexist comments contribute to cultural acceptance of sexual violence:

Joe: I've heard the word before rape culture and how that kind of implies making jokes about or to making sexist comments kind of implies that it is okay. And that it is part of

> *the unspoken, unconscious discourse about how men and women interact, and it is kind of in a way gives the green light to sexual violence…*

Speaking to the unconscious and the unspoken aspects of heteronormative sexual scripts, Joe understands how they can lead to sexual violence. Samantha told me a powerful story about her friend experiencing sexual harassment in her first year of university. The perpetrator was a male professor, and Samantha spoke of the power differential between her friend and the professor, and the challenge her friend experienced because she wanted to succeed in the course and she needed the professor's help. She then reflected:

> *And it becomes this little construct where they're just completely putting their power over you and their dominance over you. And in subtle ways that is like, oh, this can be overlooked, right? Like think of it as oh, I'm not sexually hurt, like I'm not doing anything sexual necessarily. I'm not raping you necessarily, right? So they think that it's okay and they think that they can get away with that even though it's unconsented touching and like inappropriate things like that.*

Samantha also articulated that "sexual harassment is the doorway to rape." In this way, she uses the imagery of the doorway to explain the cultural connection between sexual harassment and rape, recognizing that when we normalize the latter, we open the door for more harmful acts to be more readily accepted.

All of the teacher candidates in this study narrated experiences of the connection between gender and sexual violence. There was not one who did not see it as a gendered phenomenon. Some even made the connection to power more broadly.

> *Josephine: In fact, a lot of the time, and I don't think it's just gender, I think it's connected to the idea of power very closely. Because usually, when someone is looking to abuse*

someone, or gain something from someone, they go for someone they perceive as weaker than them. So I've heard a lot of cases about police officers abusing trans folk that they would find on their way home. So they pull someone over, find that it would be a man cross-dressing or a transgender woman. Either way, because you can never know how that person identifies. But if they would see that person, and they'd be like, this is my opportunity, because who are they going to tell and what are they going to say? Are they going to say they were cross-dressing, and then report them? So they'll take that advantage. Or they'll take advantage of people who don't speak English as well, new immigrants to the country?

John: I definitely think that there's definitely a power dynamic and a power level that has to do with it: men being perceived as stronger or more dominant than women. And that I feel like that psychologically can take a toll on women as well, because they have to worry about, are they going to be safe going to these places? Or they have to worry about the way they dress or the way they act so they don't feel attacked or harmed. And I think that's kind of toxic, that's terrible for… I mean, I know that could be like really damaging mentally.

Josephine's explanation illustrates her understanding that the experience of sexual violence is intimately tied to power and how it circulates in the social world. She uses the example of a police officer to represent hierarchal power in addition to institutional privilege, and the example of a transgender woman as someone with little power in society. Along similar lines, John articulates the daily psychological impacts women experience living in a world in which sexual violence exits, even for women who are not victims, demonstrating some understanding of the relationship between power and sexual violence.

When asked if they have any experiences that speak to the connection between race and sexual violence, some of the white teacher candidates in this study said that they were either unsure, such as Samantha who did not have any experiences to speak to, or that they did not believe there was one, such as Peter and Molly who felt that it was connected other social categories rather than race.

> *Samantha*: *I would want to say I'm not sure [that sexual violence is related to race]. I grew up in a very small rural town. Most of us are Caucasian. Well, I didn't grow up in a very ethnically diverse community and I wasn't in an ethnically diverse community until I moved to Windsor and really had more friends that were ethnically diverse and more people that I knew, so I don't really know.*

Peter recalled, “I would suspect that most economically disadvantaged groups would be like, even by race, like Black people, for example. But I think that probably has a lot to do with economics rather than just race.” Meanwhile, Molly said, “Not so much related to race. I haven't really heard that as much. I would say gender more than race.” In contrast, although John, who is Black, did not have any experiences to draw from in relation to the relationship between race and sexual violence, he was certain that there was one.

> *John: I do. To an extent. I think race is something that has to do with, there's multiple layers of race in general, and a lot of different things. And I definitely think that there are ways that race can be exploited to really bring upon sexual violence in multiple ways. I've never really seen anything like that happen, but I'm sure it does happen. But I specifically don't have any experiences of that.*

Other participants also said that they did see a connection between race and sexual violence.

> *Tchalla: Yeah. I mean, from what's been going on in our society for decades now, the black community for sure, like black women… when we look at a 100 meter race, we look out white privilege, white women, they're ahead of the race compared to our black women. So for sure, like, it could be from Asians, Spanish, you know, I feel like they have to work a bit more to get where, or just the simple like, male is. So I think race definitely has an impact, but yeah.*

In the above excerpt, Tchalla talked about race and systemic inequities in general and concluded that surely, sexual violence is no exception to the disproportional rates by which certain groups experience harm.

This theme captures the varied understandings of sex and consent that the participants narrated in their conversations with me. Several spoke to the normalization of behaviours at the lower end of the sexual violence continuum as key in its perpetuation within the context of schools, as is consistent with prevention research (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). All the participants saw sexual violence as a gendered phenomenon, though not all were as sure that it was a racialized problem. Some were unsure, while others held the conviction that other factors such as economic disadvantage, rather than race, were at play. That teacher candidates in this study were better able to articulate an understanding and bring in experiences to speak to the gendered rather than racialized connections between gender and sexual violence is a noteworthy finding. Interestingly, all the participants who were Black and racialized articulated to some degree the relationship between race and sexual violence. It may be the case that their lived experiences of systemic marginalization on the basis of race exposed them to ways of knowing that were not available to the white teacher candidates. It may also point to "privileged resistance" (Welton et al., 2015, p. 564), a form of resistance, enacted by white students, to

seeing race as an intersecting factor in social inequities. Certainly, this finding points to the need for sex education and sexual violence prevention programming that is situated within intersectional lenses that address systemic marginalization and privilege.

Teacher Discomfort with Teaching Sex Education and Addressing Sexual Violence

Throughout my interviews with them, the teacher candidates in this study reflected that when they were elementary and secondary school students, their teachers often seemed to be uncomfortable teaching sex education as well as addressing incidences of sexual violence when they were aware of them. Teacher discomfort in this area can result from a number of factors, including lack or limited pre-service and in-service training in sex education (Ninomiya, 2010; Cohen et al., 2012), especially for topics such as sexual violence (Charmaraman et al., 2013; Eisenberg et al., 2013). Participants also expressed concern when they reflected that their teachers did not always intervene when they witnessed or were aware of incidences of sexual violence at school and were at times even complicit in perpetuating it. This finding is supported by literature that suggests that teachers are more likely to intervene in cases at the infrequent and more widely recognized end (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2009) of the sexual violence continuum (Kelly, 1987;1988; Stout, 1991).

For Rose, the teacher discomfort and consequent avoidance of the topic contributed to "shame, guilt, and embarrassment" about sex.

> *Rose: When you could tell the teacher was uncomfortable talking about these things. Well, it impacted the students. And I had a lot of teachers who honestly didn't even talk about certain things. My grade seven teacher didn't even teach sex education that year, because he was uncomfortable. So that's one thing. But yeah, I think obviously, removing*

> *that like shame, guilt, and embarrassment about the topic is going to definitely change, like impact student's lives, which is really important.*

Tchalla reflected that although he considered his teacher "a great teacher", his discomfort was seen amongst the students he taught.

> *Tchalla: Well, my teacher would say like, I know it sounds bad, but he would joke those things and I'm like, no, you shouldn't do that. He's a great teacher, like he would teach the subject, because he felt uncomfortable. He felt uncomfortable himself, and you can see it.*

He felt that it was inappropriate for his teacher to joke about the topic of sex as a result of his discomfort. Joe similarly recalled that his teacher didn't take sex education seriously, and that as a result, the students didn't take the lessons seriously either.

> *Joe: So yeah, sex ed is covered in the physical education curriculum. Grade nine it's a class with 29 or 30 other people who are all boys. And it was really like, loose and informal and the teacher didn't really seem to take it all that seriously. And yeah, I don't remember talking about that much. I remember grade nine, some graphic images, a lot of people thought were funny, you know, it kind of got the class excited. And I did mention that the teacher didn't seem to take it super seriously. But I think that was just his way of trying to relieve the tension and keep it light and not get too serious about uncomfortable topics which I can kind of understand in a way.*

There were also reflections, such as the following from John, on how teachers were not seen by students as adults that were safe to approach with disclosures of sexual violence, because they were uncomfortable or unprepared to handle them, especially when the violence was occurring at school.

John: I think, because a lot of times students don't know what to say to their teachers, or sometimes they think it's okay. And I think it's hard sometimes for teachers to even have those conversations with their students, because sometimes students don't see their teachers as somebody they can talk to in that sense if it's not academically related.

John also told me that if his teachers had taught sex education in skilled, careful, and intentional ways, students would have been more comfortable with approaching them to disclose incidences of sexual violence in school, and that that would aid in breaking the cycle in which these incidences pass as normal.

The stories that some teacher candidates told me evidenced that their teachers were not only uncomfortable with teaching sex education, but sometimes also complicit in perpetuating sexual violence, either directly, or indirectly by not intervening even when they witnessed explicit incidents. Samantha and Abdullah, in the following quotations, speak to the teachers' lack of intervention despite their awareness of what was happening. Samantha attributes the absence of intervention to the deficiency of teacher training in this area.

Samantha: There was an instance where there was a guy actually calling out a girl in the hallway about something that had happened, and he was making very inappropriate slurs towards her because of things. Like I saw the teachers standing outside the classroom watching the thing happening, and they never stepped in. They just watched. It was like the teacher was just as bad as the students being bystanders when I really thought that a teacher would step in, they never did. And I feel like that kind of attributes to the lack of education that teachers get about sexual assault too. Like they don't know how to step in, they just watch and hope for the best.

Abdullah: Right. Yes, they were all aware. But in this way of girls were telling on boys, so to speak, infrequently. So there's this kind of thing that you have to manage of how will people see me? If I'm the only girl that goes up to the teacher… and then the few times that it did happen, it was very slap on the wrist. Nobody really got in trouble for it, right? You may have gotten detention or something like that, but there weren't, in my opinion, appropriate measures taken to curb that behaviour.

Previous research in this are paints a similar picture: girls often report little to no consequences for sexual harassment, even when teachers are aware of it (Berman et al., 2000) and teachers often do not see incidences at the lower end of the continuum as constitutive of sexual violence (Rahimi & Liston, 2009). Elsewhere in my interview with her, Samantha remembered a secondary school teacher who sexually harassed girls in his math class.

Samantha: In high school, there was a math teacher I had that would harass a lot of the girls in the class. And it's almost like you had to do something for him in order to get help. Or you had to be pleasing to him to get the help that you needed. And if you weren't looking the nicest that day, he wouldn't look at you, he wouldn't talk to you, he wouldn't help you, he wouldn't answer your questions… Your teachers were supposed to be really supportive, and you feel really nervous. And it's like, I don't want to go to school, I don't want to go to this class anymore because I'm not getting the help I need, I'm not learning anything, and I'm just uncomfortable the whole time. And I know that if I'm not wearing what he likes, I'm not going to get my help. So I know that year I really struggled with my math mark.

The harassment made her and the girls in her class uncomfortable, and furthermore, served to hinder their math learning and overall education. She told me that "there were a couple teachers

like that throughout high school that were really uncomfortable. And they would comment on different things you were wearing in a negative way or in an inappropriate way that you wouldn't want." Samantha poignantly reflected that she didn't want to go to the class anymore, and in fact, that she didn't want to go to school at all. Students, particularly girls, who experience sexual violence in school have adverse mental health and educational consequences (Stein, 1995; Gruber & Fineran, 2016).

In my interview with Olu, he mentioned that he has done volunteer coaching within the past few years. Although it is not his own schooling experience, he was alarmed at the way the secondary school teachers in an OFSAA out of town trip talked openly about their sex lives in front of their students.

> *Olu: And I've even been like, even recently, when I was coaching actually, we went away for OFSAA and I was with a couple, like men that were teaching at the time. And I noticed the way they were even speaking at breakfast, it was 6am, like, they were talking about a lot of sexual related things, and it kind of threw me off. And different things that happened within the school, like the school that one of them used to teach at. And now he's at this school talking about this person, sleeping with this person, and even the way they just talk, it was very interesting, because it was very sexual oriented.*

Olu was unsettled by this experience. He felt that this behaviour was inappropriate, and that teachers had the responsibility to act within the professional parameters of their roles even when they were not within the four-walls of a school building.

Participants reflected on their teachers' discomfort in a critical way, acknowledging that it hindered their sex education knowledge and severed lines of student-teacher communication for when students did experience sexual violence. They felt that this was particularly alarming

because students were experiencing sexual violence in school, and there were often no consequences for perpetrators. Research on teacher discomfort suggests that it is due to the lack of teacher training (McKay & Barrett, 1999; Cohen et al., 2012; Barr et al., 2014; Charmaraman et al., 2013), and limited understandings of sexual violence (Rahimi & Liston, 2009), particularly the lower end of the continuum (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2009; Berman et al., 2000). Moreover, teachers face institutional barriers such as parental and community responses, and school and school board policies (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Cahill & Dadvand, 2021), all of which are often connected to political and news media debates around sex education (Bialystok & Wright, 2019).

Education About Sexual Violence was Introduced in Postsecondary School

The teacher candidates I interviewed expressed that they did not learn about sexual violence in any complexity until they entered postsecondary school. When the phenomenon of sexual violence in postsecondary campuses, in which women and those who are outside of the gender binary experience sexual violence at rates dramatically larger than they do in the general population (Muehlenhard et al., 2017; Senn et al., 2014), began receiving increased attention, scholars and activists raised concern that inadequate sex education for students in K-12 was one of the largest factors (Muehlenhard et al., 2016; Hirsh & Khan, 2020). As a result, prevention efforts often targeted first-year postsecondary students (McMahon et al., 2011; McMahon & Banyard, 2012). Most participants said that they had participated in the three-hour bystander intervention workshop (Forrest & Senn, 2017; Senn & Forrest, 2016) in their first year at university. Some also mentioned taking part in some capacity in the Flip the Script program, an intensive program that focuses on young women and develops their skill sets to resist sexual violence in their everyday lives (Senn et al., 2015; Senn et al., 2021). Based in the strong evidentiary data of a robust experimental trial, the Flip the Script program, also called EAAA

(Enhance, Assess, Acknowledge, Act), involves building campus specific tools for resisting sexual violence. Especially since social change in the form of bystander programming, though vital in combination with resistance education, tends to be a slow process (Radtke et al., 2020), and women on campus are being assaulted at epidemic rates (Senn et al., 2014). The term *Flip the Script* references teaching the group that is most often targeted, women, to resist cultural norms and sexual scripts that constitute coercion and assault, but which are seen as normal in rape cultures.

Participants reflected on critical, valuable learning they gained through those workshops and programs. John told me that the bystander workshop transformed his thinking of sexual harassment when he heard a story of a man being sexually harassed, recalling that he didn't previously view that as a possibility. Olu, who took the workshop twice during his undergraduate experience, recalled that he felt empowered to act as a bystander in various contexts. Denise mentioned learning about concrete ways to avoid assault in situations that are specific to the undergraduate experience, such as watching your drink when you are out a bar. Joe mentioned that he took the bystander workshop and expressed that the learning he gained from it could be used to inform his teaching practice.

> *Joe: And I will say, this was not during the B.Ed. program, but in undergrad, I did take "Bring in the Bystander" and I enjoyed it. And I still have my certificate somewhere. But I enjoyed it and I remember that it was a good learning experience for me. Talking about gender-based violence, just as a general issue, talking about violence against transgender people, talking about rape culture, and talking about, there was one more, oh, consent and healthy relationships, I think very easily any of those four topics, not*

limited to those four topics could be developed into full lessons or series of lessons easily in a social science class.

In the following quotation, Rose reflects that the bystander workshop she attended allowed her to see sexual violence as encompassing a variety of different acts, not just rape, as she had previously thought it was when she was a secondary school student.

> *Rose: I'm just thinking about the one that I did last year or two years ago, actually, before the Faculty of Education in my university experience, the Bystander Initiative was really impactful. I thought that was a really good program that they had done. And I learned a lot from that, just the different forms of like assault and the impact of like being a bystander. Yeah, that was really incredible. There was a lot. I wish, you know, I would want to do more with that. It kind of opened my eyes to seeing that different experiences, even if it wasn't just rape, like, are actually considered forms of sexual assault and the impact that it has on people. So then before that, being in high school, I always just saw things as oh, like it's either you got raped or you didn't get raped. It was kind of like a black and white perspective I had on it. But going to that workshop, I realized how many different forms there are of sexual assault.*

Shifting her thinking on sexual violence from a "black and white perspective" to one allows for complexity and nuance was a significant learning experience for Rose.

In Molly's narrative, she repeatedly stresses that as a K-12 student, she didn't learn much of anything about sexual violence. She then told me that she was only exposed to that learning as an undergraduate student through various avenues, including advertisements, conversations with a friend who studied sexual violence, and the women's and gender studies courses she took. Finally, Molly expressed disappointment that that learning wasn't extended to teacher education.

Molly: I would say more in my postsecondary education, I've seen a lot of ads for sexual violence. Or like the school in general has been trying to let us know more about it. So that's where I learned a lot about it there. A friend of mine, well, she graduated from women's studies, and she's doing a lot of work in that kind of field, and so I've learned a lot through her as well and through her research. So that's been really great to learn more about it, because I feel like since like growing up in K-12, I haven't really learned much. I did take some women's studies courses and we did talk a lot about that as well. But through K-12, I really didn't hear much about it. They didn't really talk about it much. Especially at the time I went to school again, I've been graduated for about 13 years, so in that period of time from K-12, I really didn't learn much about it. In my women's studies courses I took is where I really started to get interested in the topic; and then teacher's college, kind of disappointed me in that sense where that they didn't really talk about it.

Charlie also mentioned taking courses in women's and gender studies when she was an undergraduate student.

Charlie: I feel like definitely in my undergrad courses. I did my undergraduate degree in sociology. In our fourth year. I took a Criminal Studies in Women or something like that, and we talked a lot about gender-based violence. And yeah, the university I went to was very supportive and like open to and supportive of gender differences. Like I know, there was always events going on, symposiums, like workshops that were just educational based and like inviting for people to again, start those conversations and feel comfortable being themselves and as a community as well.

Like Charlie, several participants talked about educational opportunities on gender-based and sexual violence were widely available throughout their undergraduate experience and reflected on their value. Like Molly, they were frustrated that such opportunities didn't extend to their teacher education.

No Sex Education and Sexual Violence Prevention in Teacher Education

Teacher candidates in this study unequivocally expressed disappointment in the teacher education program, all recalling receiving no training in sexual violence prevention nor in teaching sex education through the curriculum. Participants strongly believed that learning about sex and sexual violence prevention should be integrated into lessons throughout the curriculum and not just limited to HPE methodology classes. However, even within their HPE methodology courses, for those (all P/J and J/I students) who were required to take them, sex education methodology was absent.

Josephine felt that sex education lessons would have been more valuable than some of the topics covered in teacher education: "I don't think they mentioned it period. It's actually funny, because they taught us so much stuff that's pretty useless, but they didn't teach us sex education. And you know, some of this stuff they teach us is just like… [laughs]." Unlike Josephine, Charlie articulated that she does not buy into the popular notion that there was no valuable learning in the teacher education program. She recalled learning a lot in the program but pointed out that topics such as sexual harassment could have been integrated into the art methodology curriculum, among others.

> *Charlie: I just feel like some people in the program felt like the two years was a waste of time, and that they didn't learn a lot this year. But I feel differently, because we did learn a lot, I just think it could there could have been more focus on topics such as sexual*

> *harassment. And I think it needs to be carried into every course. You know, you don't just leave art as art, you bring in those discussions if they come up and stuff like that. So, yeah, I do think there could be some reframing of bringing in these topics.*

John and Molly felt that certain topics, such as managing behaviour, teaching digitally, and creating lesson plans, are centered in teacher education curricula, and that specific topics such as sexual violence are either mentioned on the margins or neglected.

> *John: I think that it's mentioned, but I don't think that's something that's really taken super seriously as something like behavioural issues, which I think it should be held to the same standard as well, definitely. There's been whole courses or classes I've had about how to deal with behaviours, manage student behaviour. And not once has sexual harassment or rape or how to deal with a student being sexually harassed how to deal with it. And I think those things lead to definitely behavioural issues. So they're all interconnected and linked.*
>
> *Molly: And thinking back, there wasn't really any courses that were required that we talked about that really. It was more so just focusing on either like digital aspects of teaching, or how to teach specifically, how to create lesson plans. It was just more basic, rather than a topic like that. Like, I think, if we were to do something like that, that would be a great course for teachers. Because it is something that when I was going into my practicums, I did feel like students experienced, and especially nowadays, it's more talked about and more prominent than it was when I was in high school.*

John's experience highlights the question of what is considered a "behaviour issue," as he rightfully troubles the exclusion of sexual harassment within the parameters of behaviour to-be-managed. Within Molly's narrative, the disappointment at this curricular neglect is compounded

by the realization that her practicum experiences revealed the relevance of teaching about sex and sexual violence. Indeed curricular integration of sex education and other subjects, such as family studies and media literacy, is supported in the literature as a key to transformative learning opportunities (Moorehouse & Brooks, 2020; Russell et al., 2020).

A finding that emerged from all of the interviews was that teacher candidates were required to take a two-hour mandatory module called *Commit to Kids: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training for Those Working with Children*. They all recalled that it was insufficient in that it only addressed how to recognize evident signs of abuse and professional standards such as duty to report.

> *Samantha: But essentially, they just talked about the different kinds of abuse, so like physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse happening at home. And then it was the same thing that I've been told the whole time, just call CAS [Children's Aid Society] if you notice something, these are the signs. I didn't go into sexual education at all. And the concepts that we should be teaching children, it was just essentially committing to calling CAS.*
>
> *Abdullah: We've learned about proper conduct, as I was mentioning before, with your students, right? We haven't learned about how to manage that situation. We've been learning about it very, very cursorily. So like, they'll say, like, if something happens, you got to call the parents because these are the kind of procedural steps that you have to take.*
>
> *Tchalla: I mean, there was a training we had to do, again, with everything being online, it's kind of like I understand it was difficult to get all that knowledge and things like that*

> *and just teach it. But yeah, this year, I haven't really learned sexual consent and the violence and things like that. No.*

Some appreciated the module, recalling at least it was *something*, however all participants knew that it was inadequate in addressing what they felt should be required learning. Participants often echoed Samantha's thought that she learned nothing about sex and sexual violence in her teacher education: "All I know is that if there's something going wrong, I'm supposed to call CAS."

Miriam, who is in the technical studies teaching steam, emphasized that she and her peers in the teacher education program would not know where to begin in addressing sexual violence in their roles as teachers.

> *Miriam: No. And you know what, we were talking about this, as like our class was kind of talking about that a little bit. Like, there's so many, like, there's the curriculum you get taught, and the procedures you get taught, but you don't necessarily, like some of my classmates, they are… one of them is a mechanic, and he's like I don't know how to have these conversations with them. Like if I didn't have them with teenage girls when I was a teenager, and now I'm like 40, I don't know what to say. And you're like, oh, this would actually be helpful for a teacher candidate to like, okay, where do you send kids for more information? And how do you help them access these resources? Because most of us are not teaching that at all, right or expecting to teach that unless you're going into physical education and health. It's not really in your general wheelhouse, right?*

Miriam felt that perhaps lessons about teaching sex education and addressing sexual violence were targeted at generalist teacher candidates, or those whose teachable is HPE, but not those in the technological studies program. Still, she felt that it was important learning for all teacher candidates, as they will need to know what to do if students need more information.

However, the generalist teacher candidates in this study expressed that even the HPE methodology course they were required to take, the sex education strand was completely skipped over. Bucky's narrative was particularly telling in this regard:

> *Bucky: We weren't really taught anything, I think. But yeah, I literally don't even know, I feel like it should been taught in health, because we were taught a lot about teaching, the breaking down stuff in gym to teach kids how actually move. I think people when we were allowed to pick like anything out of the strand, a lot of people pick like mindfulness. And we weren't really taught about I guess anything that had to do with like sex ed.*

Bucky's narrative provides insight into what lessons receive the most attention in HPE methodology courses, which in their case were the movement and mental health strands, at the expense of neglecting the sex education strand. Charlie recalled that in one of her in-school placements, she was asked by her associate teacher to teach health lessons, but that she told her not to tackle the sex education strand because it was a sensitive topic.

Molly told me that she has some comfort in teaching about sex education and sexual violence because of all the learning she had gained outside of teacher education. However, she was concerned about her peers, who are uncomfortable with the topic because they did not have sufficient education themselves, then compounded by its absence in teacher education curricula. In my interviews with teacher candidates, I found that they regularly echoed Molly's observations. Take the following excerpts from two separate parts of my interview with Samantha as examples:

> *Samantha: I don't know how I'm going to go about it. I still don't know how I'm going to go about it, and I'm going to have to figure it out. But it makes me really nervous*

> *bringing that stuff up in the classroom with students and teaching them about that, because I don't have much experience with that at all.*
>
> *I feel like people are open to learning about it. It's just they think it's a taboo, and they don't focus on it. But so many people are open to learning about it, and I think that it should be enforced more. It would be really, really beneficial, because I know, even looking at some of my friends that are teacher candidates, I know that they won't know how to go about it at all. And I think that we deserve to have that background information.*

Molly, one of the participants whose teachable subject was social sciences, said that even though gender studies was part of the secondary social science curriculum, that course was completely skipped over: "It's interesting. It's more so like the food nutrition courses they talk about in social sciences, or even just like budgeting and stuff like that. They don't really talk about the gender studies courses as much." In keeping with Molly's observation, Vanner (2021) found that there are opportunities to teach about gender-based violence throughout the secondary school curriculum, but that most of these courses were optional for students. Russell et al. (2020) write that sexuality education should be integrated into family studies (also a part of the social sciences teachable that Molly and other participants have) curricula, arguing that educating about sex in the context of family studies will strategically enhance both fields. However, if teacher candidates are not receiving any training in teaching about gender-based and sexual violence through such courses, this is troubling. Certainly, the teacher candidates I interviewed were troubled by this lack. It is not enough to expect that some teachers may have this knowledge and skill from learning they have done independently.

Feminist reproductive theory tells us that certain knowledges are legitimated through educational institutions, while others are either neglected or only touched upon and mentioned in the margins (Dillabough, 2003). The teacher candidates in my study were concerned with sex education and sexual violence prevention being left out of teacher education curricula and questioned why these important lessons were not considered legitimate. Indeed, given that the phenomenon of sexual violence disproportionately impacts women and girls, particularly those whose social locations are tied to intersecting marginalities, it is safe to theorize the exclusion of such lessons from teacher education as playing a part in reproducing patriarchal gendered relations.

Desire to Learn About Consent and Sexual Violence in New Teacher Roles

All the teacher candidates I interviewed expressed their desire to learn more about consent and sexual violence prevention in their roles as new teachers. They were eager to learn more so that they can be comfortable to support students who experience sexual violence, from the low to the high ends of the continuum, and to handle disclosures appropriately. Some participants expressed that they sought educational experiences outside of the BEd program, while others admitted and often regretted that they had not done much to learn and grow in this realm. Several participants told me that they were not comfortable with where they were now, in terms of knowledge, skills, and confidence to teach the topic, but that they wanted to do better than their own teachers did.

In the following narratives, participants reflected on their eagerness to learn more and their plans to spend time doing so. While admitting that she did not yet feel prepared, Denise's narrative demonstrated her commitment to teach in a way that is intentional, that eliminates the

shame that surrounds the topic of sex and to “teach it right,” which for her meant emphasizing topics such as pleasure, healthy relationships, and boundaries and consent.

> *Denise: I think I would want to spend a lot of time, because I want to teach it right. Like, I want to teach boundaries, and I want to teach consent, and I want to teach sexual violence prevention and what a healthy relationship should look like and what the relationship with the person you're doing that with should look like. And that it should be about love and the connection with that person. And it can be for pleasure. It doesn't have to be solely for reproducing. It's something natural. It's something not to be ashamed of. And like, I think I understand that, but I don't know how to teach that to like 10 year olds. I don't know how to tackle that yet.*

Similar to Denise, Josephine identified several topics in relation to sex and sexual violence education that she wanted to continue to learn about. She acknowledged that because of deficiencies in the sex education she received growing up, she was still learning about issues concerning sex that impact her life as an adult, and that she was trying to make sense of public debates surrounding sexual violence.

> *Josephine: Learning about healthy relationships and boundaries, that's something I'm still figuring out as an adult. And I'd love to like take courses and read more about healthy relationships. It's stuff I've been actually trying to read about recently. I've tried reading studies on healthy relationships, and when it’s a good time to cut things off. And sexual compatibility relationships because it's really interesting. And consent is a big one. Like, there's a lot of debate on consent issues. For one, a lot of people would call coercion rape, but a lot of people would also disagree and say coercion isn't rape. So*

learning more about that, and trying to figure out how to identify when these things are happening as well, it's something I'd be interested in.

Though she did not state her own stance on such public debates, she did reiterate a commitment to delving into deeper learning.

Charlie also recalled wanting to learn more, but stressed that we can never know everything, and that teachers have the obligation to continue to learn throughout their careers to best support their students.

Charlie: I'm always so eager to learn, and I don't think there's ever an end to these conversations, especially these topics. And like I said, being a teacher, you may not know it all, but I think you have to be comfortable enough that you can support the students and say, hey, I don't have the answer like right at this moment, but I'm going to get you the help or I'm going to look until I find what you need, right?

Towards the end of my interview with him, Tchalla moved me by vulnerably admitting that he felt like his responses to my questions reflected his lack of knowledge in this area. Though he felt insecure with this deficiency, he was committed to doing better than his teachers did by learning more.

Tchallah: See, next year, if you interview me again, my hope that I would learn more regarding, because like I don't want my students to be like what I felt, because I like, right now I feel like clueless. Like, I just don't know. And after this interview, it's not that like, I feel compelled. But I feel like, I need to do more because my questions, were just, I feel like, I'm just still in the unknown. That's what I feel right now.

Molly identified several key questions that she has about sexual violence prevention and how to go about addressing it as a teacher. In the following quotation, she speaks to primary (having

conversations about sexual violence), secondary (how to identify when a student has been assaulted), and tertiary forms of prevention (what to do after the fact when you know a student has been assaulted):

> *Molly: So I guess what are the best approaches to starting a conversation like that? What are the signs? What are the signs of sexual violence? What leads to it? What can we do [about] it? How can you prevent it? And what do you do if you see someone that…?*

In her narrative, Molly also recalled learning a lot about mental health and taking part in a mandatory suicide prevention workshop and said that she knew that sexual violence related to these topics. She felt that given its direct connection to the topics of mental health and suicide, sexual violence prevention education should have been integrated into these learning experiences.

Some participants told me that they took constructive steps to learn about sex education and sexual violence prevention on their own time and through various avenues. Throughout my interview with him, Abdullah often recalled that his conversations with his wife were instrumental in his understanding of sexual violence and the power structures that underly the experience, particularly for women.

> *Abdullah: The most instructive thing has been talking to my wife about it. You know, of course, I can be like, yeah, I read these articles, or watch a documentary about it, but getting to know a woman that you can't see their experience until you try to understand them and with empathetic ear, right. And, like, lucky for me, I like her a lot. So I really wanted to understand, and that was very helpful.*

His wife's lived experiences opened Abdullah's eyes and heart to learning that was at times difficult. Rose was grateful for the learning that she had sought independently through reading articles and watching documentaries.

> *Rose: I think they're really impactful because I went out and I learned them on my own, because they were things I was interested in and wanted to understand more to just be a more compassionate person towards other people who had those experiences, because I haven't had like experiences to be; it's not to like invalidate my own issues, but to the extent that some people have experienced. I have a lot of friends who have experienced sexual harassment from various aspects of the spectrum. So yeah, just to educate myself on how to be a better listener, I guess, or better advocate for other people, and almost has definitely shaped how I view those issues.*

In her narrative, Rose conveyed her commitment to continuing to seek learning opportunities in sex education and sexual violence prevention. She wanted to be a better ally to survivors to translate that allyship into her role as a teacher so that she can support her students and her community.

Though I did not inquire about the topic, several participants brought up the issue of handling student disclosures of sexual violence. They felt that they were insufficiently prepared to respond effectively and sensitively to disclosures and told me that they need to learn more to be more confident with doing so. The following excerpt from Miriam's narrative highlights this finding:

> *Miriam: Any sort of disclosure, right, like how to react to that? Because in your head, you're like panicking, like oh, my gosh, like who do I have to tell like, legally what are my responsibilities? Is this kid safe? But also, like first aid where you run through the*

situation, talk about like, hey, what am I going to say? Like, what do I say in this situation and practice those things. So that when you have that situation, you're like you will probably still question if you said or did the right thing, right. Yeah, like even those would be so helpful, if not in the actual programs, then in as a sort of, in-service…

Disclosure training has been documented by feminist sexual violence educators as a key tertiary component of sexual violence prevention (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). How educators respond to survivors after the fact is of tremendous importance, and trauma-informed responses can reverberate into the lives of patients in transformative ways (McMahon et al., 2011; McMahon & Banyard, 2012). For example, Campbell and colleagues' (2009) research states that the care survivors receive from the first person they tell can be a powerful predictor of how they recover from their assault and their willingness to seek professional help.

A suggestion that came up in several of my interviews with teacher candidates was to bring the bystander initiative to the teacher education program. Some even said that bystander education should be introduced in K-12 education. The following excerpt from John's narrative demonstrates this sentiment:

John: I think the bystander program should be mandatory in the BEd program. I think that's something that would really help, because it is a subject that's kind of hard to talk about with everyone. And I think, also, it definitely should be taught in high schools. I think that's not even something that I really thought about in high school a lot. And I think a lot of times it was made a joke. I think sexual harassment was made a joke. So that's something that's serious for maybe like grade 11 and 12. Making it a whole course, that would be really interesting. Because that's a reality that a lot of people have to deal with, especially younger people that have to deal with.

John and Joe both recalled key learning experiences, such as being introduced to the concept of rape culture and discussing prosocial bystander behaviour peers using specific scenarios, that they obtained through the bystander initiative. As John recalled in the above quote, young people in secondary school are already experiencing features of rape culture that are often being dismissed, and important learning opportunities that could be introduced through programs like bystander education are missed.

Participants identified principal issues that they desire to learn about to best support their students and to do better than their teachers did in teaching about sex and addressing sexual violence prevention. The narrative excerpts used to support my presentation of this theme demonstrate participants interest in a variety of topics, including consent, healthy relationships, and boundaries; pleasure, desire, and the ‘positive’ aspects of sex; in addition to recognizing the signs of sexual violence and having complex conversations about it, handling disclosures, and becoming an advocate and ally for survivors. Within the literature on comprehensive sex education and sexual violence prevention, all the topics within this theme are identified as critical to fracturing reproductive cycles that perpetuate rape culture and building student capacities for sexual ethics (Gilbert 2018; Harris, 2018; Fine & McClelland, 2006; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; Carmody, 2015; Schneider & Hirsch, 2020) and sexual citizenship (Hirsch & Khan, 2020).

Conclusion

The findings that emerged from my analysis trace the experiences from several decades of participants’ lives: from their time in K-12 education, their initial undergraduate education, and their teacher education. In general, teacher candidates narrated dissatisfaction in their sex education experiences, or lack-thereof, from when they were growing up, providing further

evidence that K-12 sex education tends to be inadequate and to leave youth with the need for corrective lessons in postsecondary school (Appleton & Stiritz, 2016). In their time in elementary and secondary school, participants recalled learning more about sex and sexual violence in the margins, such as from their peers and the media, including lessons that were faulty and normalized sexually violent cultures. Teacher candidates in this study troubled their own teachers' discomfort in teaching about sex and addressing sexual violence, often recalling that education related to these topics was not taken seriously. In the participants' experiences, this discomfort, lack of appropriate intervention, and at times even complicity, often served to perpetuate the reproductive cycle of gender-based and sexual violence in school; this finding is supported by previous research conducted in K-12 education (e.g., Robinson, 2000, 2005). A telling finding was that participants' recollections that gendered, risk-based discourses and narrow definitions of sex and sexual violence didn't prepare them and their peers to negotiate sexual ethics (Carmody, 2015) and sexual citizenship (Hirsch & Khan, 2020), providing evidence for the importance of comprehensive sex education as key to sexual violence prevention (Schneider & Hirsch, 2020).

Just as researchers have documented the limited knowledge postsecondary students have about consent negotiations (Muehlenhard et al., 2016), most teacher candidates in this study had narrow, fragmented understandings of consent and sexual violence, though some did articulate more sophisticated knowledge about these topics. The most valuable learning on these topics for many occurred during their first years of postsecondary school, often through workshops, many of which were recommended (such as the bystander workshop; Forrest & Senn, 2017; Senn & Forrest, 2016), and courses offered on campus, which were often optional. However, they were all disappointed in the lack of training in their teacher education programs on teaching sex

education and addressing sexual violence. Accordingly, participants desired to learn more about these topics in relation to their new roles as teachers, identifying several key topics of interest and plans for inquiry, some of which emerged as a result of my conversations with them throughout the interview. In the next chapter, I discuss the implications of these findings on teacher education and sexual violence prevention.

CHAPTER VII

METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Meaning in Narrative

Participants' critiques of their own school-based sex education experiences reflect an important part of narrative meaning making involved in emerging into their new roles as teachers. As Barrett and Stauffer (2012b) articulate, teacher education is a space wherein "identities are in transformation," and, in turn, "stories are compelling" (p. 159). Narrative is often used as a tool for pedagogy and inquiry. In one of my research journal entries, I wrote a reflection on my time in teacher education:

> *When I was a teacher candidate, I experienced the cognitive dissonance and emotional distress that accompanied seeing my schooling experiences through new lenses. At the time, I took agency in shaping my teaching philosophy around feminist pedagogy. I had been introduced to critical pedagogy through my classes in the BEd program, and I was intrigued, but also found myself more interested in its intersections with feminist theory. In doing so, I saw my schooling experiences through my newfound knowledge, including analyzing the bullying I experienced as tied to systems of oppression and prevailing norms, and in this seeing, I was able to create my emerging teaching philosophy. This early reflective period in my emergence into my teacher role continues to inform my practice.*

I wondered how my interviews with teacher candidates served a similar purpose: in storying their experiences in sex education and the ways in which they experienced sexual violence prevention, the participants came to deliberate how they might go about creating change so as not to play into the reproductive cycles of education that they experienced.

Several of them told me that through talking to me about the topic, they were made aware of how much they didn't know. Some even said that their motivation for responding to my recruitment email was to learn more and to provide any insight they can because they felt that it was important to do so, and so they can help me achieve my goal of bringing sexual violence prevention into K-12 and teacher education. Moreover, when they talked about their troublesome experiences, including inadequate sex and consent education, and so on, the teacher candidates came to realize that they were robbed of important learning experiences that may have transformed their lives. These examples evidenced the power of story to shape and re-shape our lives and stood out to me as a strength in using narrative inquiry. As Barrett and Stauffer (2012a) articulate, "the very act of telling or storying is an experience of meaning-making" (p. 5). The empowering function that narrative serves to allow participants to make meaning of important experiences thus assisted me when I stumbled on methodological challenges I discuss later in this chapter. Huber et al. (2013) draw on the work of several narrative inquirers to contend that part of the methodological goal of narrative work is to help emerging teachers to come to know and tell their own stories and how they shape their educational philosophies and ethical commitments. Considering this finding and keeping central the relational component of narrative inquiry, the shared conviction that the participants and I had about the importance of sex education in students' lives deserves recognition as a key highlight of my conducting the interviews and presenting this research in a way that we can all feel is of value to our careers and our students' lives.

Reflecting on the Three Commonplaces

Attending to temporality involves necessitating that experiences are "contextualized within a longer-term narrative" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 19). In an educational context,

this idea of continuity is particularly intriguing and ultimately a strength of using narrative inquiry as a methodological guide to approach this investigation. The ways in which we emerge into our roles as teachers and continue to shape our teacher identities is informed by our past educational lives, from childhood and on. My asking participants about their early experiences in school thus served the purpose of continuity in that it highlighted the ways in which they were shaped by their experiences, their memories of them, and their critiques of them now that they were becoming teachers. Greene (1995) writes of the necessity of teachers revisiting childhood landscapes to discern multiplicity in the "shapes of childhood.” Huber et al. (2013) find that this is particularly important “for narrative inquirers focused on the continual motion of experience and of the potential of retelling stories of our lives through attending across time, place, and situations” (p. 221).

Sex, sex education, and sexual violence prevention are highly politicized topics, especially through the lens of a feminist researcher. As such, they are best contextualized in life histories, specifically those that relate to institutions such as schooling, and in relation to dominant and resistant perspectives. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) powerfully articulate, “We are therefore not only concerned with life as it is experienced in the here and now but also with life as is it is experienced on a continuum — people’s lives, institutional lives, lives of things” (p. 19). By inquiring about participants own experiences in sex education, I was able to then wonder how these experiences exist temporally in relation to their experiences in elementary and secondary school, post-secondary school, and teacher education. The finding that the teacher candidates in this study experienced inadequate sex education growing up was connected to their realization that key lessons in topics such as consent, healthy relationships, and sexual violence, would have transformed their lives and the lives of their peers. Given that

comprehensive sex education has been established as a critical tool for primary prevention of sexual violence (Schneider & Hirsch, 2020), it is no wonder that participants felt deprived of this education. Moreover, participants extended this realization to critically reflect on the absence of teacher training on teaching about sex and addressing sexual violence, and present in their desire to learn more is their aspiration to do better for their own students. When I asked them questions, participants were able to make these connections themselves as they narrated their lives. Then, as I interpreted the interviews in the analytical stages, I considered how the narratives within each interview, in addition between the interviews, existed in relationship to each other. I was the second narrator of their stories.

As sociality connects to the tenet of relationality in feminist methodology, I was able to connect relationally to the teacher candidates in my study by disclosing to all of them that I am also a teacher. I also shared stories of my time in teacher education and the beginning of my career, and we often laughed together and related to one another. For most of my interviews, I felt that my young age at the time that I conducted this study also contributed to their comfort in discussing certain topics with me. I was 30 years old at the time I conducted my interviews and analysis, and most of my participants were in their 20s and early 30s. During my interview with Jane, her infant daughter cried in the background, and when she apologized, I shared that I am also a mother. I was also pregnant during my interviews, and I had shared that with her as well and we talked a little bit about pregnancy and mothering in a pandemic. This encounter is an example of my attempt to build relationships that center care and interest in participants' full lives, not only what they can offer me in data. Moreover, the relationship between the researcher and the participant is important, because as Clandinin and Connelly's (2000, 2006) attest,

narrative inquirers do not exist separately from the narratives that are produced throughout data collection, analysis, and representation.

Place was perhaps the most challenging component of narrative inquiry to work into my methodology. In addition to inquiring on place within the stories themselves, place requires that we inquire on the physical components of the interview for both ourselves and our participants. As our interviews were virtual, we were all in our own homes during the duration of our conversation. This undoubtedly had influence on what was said and not said, though understanding *how* is more complicated. In contemplating this reality, I wonder how my findings might have been different if the interviews took place in person: would relationality have been enhanced? Might being physically at the university campus where many of their experiences took place have influenced what they remembered, triggering certain recollections in addition to how they narrated such memories? It is indeed possible that the answers to these questions is *yes*, however, it is difficult to ascertain what changes may have resulted from being on campus. Moreover, my experience of being able to develop caring relationships through virtual interviews is a testament that this technologically-mediated mode of conducting research may not be as limited for a feminist investigation as I had previously thought it might me. In fact, there was indication that being at home may have made participants feel safer to share their stories with me in that it could have facilitated greater willingness to reflect on the institutional power dynamics, given that their physical locality was not in the immediate nexus of the power relations of school, be it elementary, secondary, or postsecondary.

Methodological Reflections

Throughout this investigation I often reflected on what Russell (2003) calls the methodological gap between desires and practices. Like Russell, I often wondered what steps I

took during the research process that would constitute my work as *feminist* and *narrative*, as opposed to other methodologies. In fact, a methodological challenge I stumbled upon was the impending feeling that I might be imposing narrative tone on participants' responses to my interview questions. Take the following excerpt, transcribed from my researcher journal, as a starting point to this reflection:

> *Sometimes I feel like my interviews are not necessarily narrative. A story to me is full of detail, feeling, highs and lows, and so on, features that are not present in all the responses I am getting. Some participants had a really difficult time recalling events from their past, which was understandable. At times, I felt bad because some of them apologized to me for not remembering, and often found myself reassuring them that it was okay.*

I often came back to the literature on narrative inquiry and education and found helpful scholarship that positions the lives of teachers and students as storied, and stories in the research context as leading to possibilities of resistance and change.

Consider, for example, the following quote from Clandinin and Connelly (1998), in which they discuss the relationship between story and education:

> We see living an educated life as an ongoing process. People's lives are composed over time: biographies or life stories are lived and told, retold and relived. For us, education is interwoven with living and with the possibility of retelling our life stories. As we think about our own lives and the lives of teachers and children with whom we engage, we see possibilities for growth and change. As we learn to tell, to listen and to respond to teachers' and children's stories, we imagine significant educational consequences for children and teachers in schools and for faculty members in universities through more

> mutual relations between schools and universities. No one, and no institution, would leave this imagined future unchanged. (p. 246-247)

The idea that Clandinin and Connelly bring up in the quote above, concerning mutual relationships between K-12 and postsecondary education, is highly relevant for this investigation because sexual violence prevention has received far more attention on campuses than it has in elementary and secondary schools. Mutual relationships in this area can have a transformational impact for both institutions in terms of sexual violence prevention. Clandinin and Connelly's view that educational lives are inherently storied thus helped me to reconcile my methodological fear of imposing narrative tone onto the interviews. Although participant narratives often did not have a *beginning, middle, and end*, so to speak, they nevertheless were reflections of experience, in addition to how experience influences understandings of sex, consent, sex education, sexual violence, and sexual violence prevention.

Another methodological concern was my attention to positionality (Patai, 1991; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003) and how my social location and epistemological lens impacted my research at various stages. It is a given that my epistemological position as a feminist researcher shaped the lens through which I approached and conducted the interviews and then analyzed the narratives I gathered. As I had written in my first chapter, I understand sexual violence as a continuum that encompasses interrelated forms, and as an insidious phenomenon that is rooted in systemic inequities, discursive constructions, and individual behaviours. Surely, this lens shaped the way I analyzed and interpreted narratives in various ways; for example, to ask the question of how certain discursive constructions produced in sex education contribute to the "cultural scaffolding of rape" (Gavey, 2005), which came out most prominently when participants described the sex education lessons they learned in the margins of the curriculum. Moreover, part

of my epistemological lens is to view K-12 and postsecondary schools as institutions that often reproduce dominant patriarchal discourses but also as places where resistance and transformation is possible (Weiler, 2017).

The second part of this methodological concern involved my awareness that my position as a woman of colour, and one who wears the hijab, may have impacted my interviews and the way the participants perceived and interacted with me. Abdullah found my Muslim identity a point of connection and felt comfortable talking to me about his experiences of Islamophobic violence, as well as his community work in the local mosque. Other participants who were racializes disclosed that they were comfortable talking to me about certain issues, given my visible difference. There were indications throughout my interviews with the women in my study that they felt inclined, given our shared identities as women, to share experiences of sexist discrimination and sexual violence that had affected them both directly and indirectly. These narratives contributed greatly to my investigation, allowing me to make meaningful connections between personal experiences of sexual violence and educational experiences of sex education. Other than these reflections, I had no other indications of how my social location may have impacted the interview process.

I reflect on my commitment to epistemic responsibility, constituted by relationships and accountability (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002). As I reflected in the last section, I practiced the ethic of care (Campbell & Wasco, 2000) that I committed to in my methodology chapter by sharing my own stories of becoming a teacher and telling stories of how I came to be interested in this topic. Moreover, I have tried to produce a work that fruitfully adds to the literature on this topic, but also that is of value to the teacher candidates that graciously participated in my study, as well as more broadly to teacher education and sexual violence prevention stakeholders. Some

participants, at the end of our time together, asked me what the goals of my research were, and were delighted when I explained that I aim for my work to have transformative impact by bringing sex education and sexual violence prevention training into teacher education.

Another issue that continuously troubled me was the degree to which my analysis could be considered deductive in the way that I had committed to in my proposal. Ultimately, I feel that I achieved my goal of striking a balance between allowing narratives to speak for themselves in revealing things in relation to my inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) and delving deeper into how narratives operate within the existing structures of the social world (Lawler, 2002), especially in relation to dominant discourses related to sexual violence and how participants constitute their experiences relative to them (Gunnarsson, 2018). Finally, as I write this section of my dissertation, I am reminded that my desire to do so stems from my feminist commitment to reflexivity, which I see as involving transparency and an openness to critique: to vulnerably share my methodological struggles, and in doing so to invite conversation amongst my peers and readers.

Implications for Teacher Education

Perhaps the most substantial implication for teacher education emerges from the finding that the teacher candidates in this study recognize the importance of comprehensive sex education as an integral part of sexual violence prevention education. They desire to learn about how they can provide this education to their students and to gain confidence in doing so, and they believe that Bachelor of Education should prioritize this learning. Participants wanted these action-oriented learning opportunities and sexual violence prevention researchers substantiate its importance and urgency (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Schneider & Hirsch, 2020; Hirsch & Khan, 2020). We must therefore mobilize in the face of this missed opportunity for

social change. We can do so by creating both mandatory integration and optional, service-learning courses, in addition to occasional workshops, that center sex education and sexual violence prevention using existing cutting-edge research and pedagogy. One such program from postsecondary school is bystander education (McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2011), which is already present at the university in which the current investigation took place (Forrest & Senn, 2017; Senn & Forrest, 2016) – this was also a direct suggestion of more than one of my participants. Bystander curriculum can be adjusted to fit within the teacher education program by prioritizing topics that address K-12 curriculum, pedagogy, and issues.

Another implication of my findings for teacher education is the need for sex education pedagogy and sexual violence prevention training to be rooted in feminist concepts such as patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, intersectionality, rape culture, and gender codes. In storying their experiences in sex education, the teacher candidates in this study articulated the importance of key lessons that are so often absent from curriculum and pedagogy on sex and sexual violence: consent, healthy relationships, pleasure and desire, and sexual violence across the continuum. Their narratives also demonstrated the importance of contextualizing these lessons, given prevailing power relations, particularly around gender. For example, in their reflections they pointed to the problematic lessons they learned in the margins of the curriculum and the hidden curriculum, which often served to reproduce patriarchal gendered relations. Especially striking were the narratives of Denise and Rose, among others, who told me that certain lessons, such as those on consent and female desire and consent and alcohol, would have changed their lives and the those of their female peers, reducing the prevalence of sexual violence and/or transforming the (often re-traumatizing) experiences of victims in its aftermath.

Although an understanding of the relationships between sexual violence and race and other social categories were not as prominent in their narratives, scholars have emphasized intersectional approaches to sexual violence prevention are the most cutting-edge in leading to deep-rooted social change. Indeed, perhaps participants' shortage of understanding in this regard is in fact a reflection of the need for education on the intersections between sexual violence, race, class, and so on. Thus, teacher education on this topic should be rooted in feminist concepts, an implication which is also supported by existing scholarship in other contexts (McMahon & Banyard, 2012).

Limitations and Future Directions

I feel compelled to point out that the limitations of this study are its small sample size, but that is not considered a limitation in qualitative research. I am also compelled to point out that the narratives that shape this research are not reflective of the points of view of all teacher candidates, but as a feminist researcher, I also do not deem this a limitation. In following the traditions of feminist scholarship, I hold the understanding that all knowledge produced in research is partial and situated (Haraway, 1988) within the context in which it is conducted, analyzed, interpreted, and engaged with by readers.

Perhaps the most prominent limitation of this study is that recruitment took place in one Ontario university. It would certainly provide considerable insight to conduct a similar investigation with teacher candidates across the province and country. A worthy future direction would thus be to inquire on the experiences of teacher candidates in other universities and to situate their narratives within the contexts of those places. Another key limitation is the limited diversity in voices as they exist in relation to social categories and systemic oppression and privilege. There was an adequate mix of men and women, and one gender non-binary participant

(Table 1), which is important given the established knowledge within the prevention literature of men's hesitancy to get involved in sexual violence education projects and prevention efforts (Flood, 2011). Although there was some representation of Black, white, and racialized participants, particularly in relation to the general population of teacher candidates, there were no Indigenous participants in this study. Future research on the perspectives of Indigenous teacher candidates and teachers would add greatly to the knowledge of this study. Indigenous perspectives on sex education and sexual violence prevention, particularly within the contexts of K-12 education and teacher training, are largely underexplored in the literature and are an essential part of social change.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the complexities of narrative meaning making within the context of this dissertation. Narrative inquiry is not a one-size-fits-all methodology and I have reflected on the strengths and challenges of using it as a methodological lens in integration with feminist theory. As I reflected on my methodological concerns and the ways in which I sometimes struggled to fulfill the commitments I had laid out in my proposal, I ultimately found that transparency, vulnerability, and openness to critical engagement is of utmost importance. Finally, implications for teacher education and sexual violence prevention, in addition to the limitations of this research and suggested directions for future research were discussed.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Demographic Information

Name*	Gender Identification	Racial Identification	Year (Consecutive or Concurrent)	Teachable(s)**
Charlie	Woman	White	2nd (Consecutive)	N/A
Abdullah	Man	South Asian/ Muslim	1st (Consecutive)	English Literature
Rose	Woman	White	3rd (Concurrent)	N/A
Denise	Woman	White	3rd (Concurrent)	Social Sciences & History
Jane	Woman	Black	1st (Consecutive)	N/A
Miriam	Woman	Asian	2nd (Consecutive)	Hospitality & Tourism
Bucky	Nonbinary	Black	2nd (Consecutive)	N/A
Josephine	Woman	Indian & White	3rd (Concurrent)	Biology & Math
Olu	Man	Black	1st (Consecutive)	N/A
Tchalla	Man	Black	1st (Consecutive)	N/A
Molly	Woman	White	2nd (Consecutive)	Social Sciences & Biology
Peter	Man	White	1st (Consecutive)	Social Sciences & History
Joe	Man	White	2nd (Consecutive)	Social Sciences & Geography
Samantha	Woman	White	3rd (Concurrent)	N/A
John	Man	Black	1st (Consecutive)	Visual Arts & English Literature

Notes: *Names have been changed to participants' assigned pseudonyms
**Primary/Junior teachers are qualified to teach K-6, do not have teachables, and are generalist teachers; Junior/Intermediate teachers are qualified to teach 7-10, have one teachable, and are also generalist teachers for 7 & 8; Intermediate teachers are qualified to teach 9-12 and have two teachables

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Email

Dear teacher candidates,

I am emailing you to request your participation in a voluntary study about teacher candidate narratives of their experiences learning about sexual violence prevention. I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor and I will be using the interview data to inform my dissertation.

This email serves as an invitation to participate in an in-depth interview. All teacher candidates who participate in an interview will receive a $10 gift card to an online store of choice. As we are still within the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews will take place remotely, through Microsoft Teams. Should you be interested in participating, I will coordinate a convenient time for an interview and assist you with logging onto Teams and with any digital concerns you may have. Each interview will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The types of questions I will ask will be story-based, which means that I will inquire about participants' personal experiences learning about sexual violence prevention, both in their K-12 education and in their time in the BEd program.

The interview data will serve as a large portion of my dissertation research. Participation is completely voluntary, and your responses will remain strictly confidential. This study has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in participating, you are welcome to email me at almans@uwindsor.ca to indicate your interest.

Thank you,

Salsabel Almanssori

APPENDIX C

Demographics Survey & Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Demographics Survey

1. What is your gender identification?
   a) Man
   b) Woman
   c) Non-binary, genderqueer, agender, or a similar identity
   d) Indigenous or other cultural gender identity (e.g., two-spirit)
   e) Preferred self-identification [text box]
   f) I prefer not to answer

2. What is your racial identification?
   a) [text box]
   b) I prefer not to answer

3. What is your current teaching degree classification?
   a) Primary/Junior
   b) Junior/Intermediate
   c) Intermediate/Senior
   d) Other [text box]

4. What are your "teachable(s)," if applicable?
   [text box]

5. Please choose a pseudonym: [text box]

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

I am going to begin by asking you a series of questions, and if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you can choose to pass and not answer a question, or withdraw from the study. Because my research is within the realm of narrative inquiry, I am going to ask you questions and I want you to think of storied experiences that you may have. Please keep in mind that I am not asking you to share anything related to your own personal experiences of sexual violence. In addition, I ask that you please refrain from providing any identifying information or situations that could identify other individuals, such as other students, instructors, and other types of bystanders.

A. Beginning the conversation

1. Tell me a story about why you decided to become a teacher.
2. Reflecting on your own past, do you think that gender has impacted your experiences in education? Do you have a story that speaks to this?

3. I'm going to state some terms and I want you to tell me a story, either from your own school experiences, or from your practicum experiences, that you think speaks to each term. They don't have to be personal or deep, just whatever comes to your mind.
   - Bullying
   - Gender-based violence
   - Sexual harassment
   - Sexual assault
   - Sexual violence
   - Consent

B. Experiences in sex education from teacher candidates' time in school

1. Thinking back on your education, can you tell me a little about your experiences learning about sex in school?

   Potential follow up questions
   - Tell me a story of when and where you were, when you first learned about sex in school?
   - Were there any informal ways in which sex was being discussed?
   - What concepts were covered in your time in school? For example, did you learn about healthy relationships? Consent? Pleasure? Can you tell me more about these experiences?
   - What type of lessons did you have that were related to risk? For example, did you learn about STIs and STDs?
   - What was that like for you?

1. Did you learn about consent and sexual violence in school? If so, what did you learn?

   Potential follow up questions
   - Tell me how this may have impacted you.
   - Are there things you wish you had learned about? Can you tell me about them?

D. Understandings of sexual violence

Teaching about sexual violence in school is now seen as an important component of comprehensive sex education. I'm going to ask you some questions to inquire about how

you understand sexual violence. Again, if you can think of an experience you've had that illustrates your understanding, that would be very helpful.

1. Do you see various forms of sexual violence as related to gender?
   - What makes you think that?
2. Do you see various forms of sexual violence as related to race?
   - What makes you think that?
3. Do you see sexist jokes and sexual harassment as connected to each other?
   - What makes you think that?
4. Do you see sexual harassment and rape as connected to each other?
   - What makes you think that?

E. Experiences learning about sexual violence prevention

5. Describe your experiences learning about sex education in your new role as a teacher candidate.
   - Were you prepared to teach particular topics from the Ontario HPE curriculum? If so, what type of preparation have you received?

     Consent (boundaries, respectful/healthy relationships)

     Sexual harassment/sexual assault
6. Have you had any exposure to sexual violence prevention education?
   - If so, what did you learn?
   - What was the source of such learning?
7. What resources have been available to you as a teacher candidate regarding sexual violence prevention?
   - From the Faculty of Education
   - From the schools in which you teach (your practicums)
   - Online

F. Ending the conversation

- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX D

Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Teacher Candidate Experiences in Sexual Violence Prevention Education

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Salsabel Almanssori** from the **Faculty of Education** at the University of Windsor, the results of which will contribute to a doctoral dissertation.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact **Salsabel Almanssori** at almans@uwindsor.ca or **Dr. Christopher Greig** at cgreig@uwindsor.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of teacher candidate experiences of sex education and sexual violence prevention education, both in their own schooling experiences and in their time at the BEd program. Research shows that teachers have significant roles to play in addressing sexual violence through both the curriculum and in their everyday interactions with students. However, the intersections between teacher education and sexual violence prevention has been understudied. This study aims to fill that gap.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

After logging on to your Teams student account, you will click on the Calendar tab, and click on our meeting to join the interview. The first thing you will be asked to do is to complete a brief background information questionnaire. Once you have answered the background questions you will be asked if you want to proceed with the interview. If you choose to proceed with the interview you will be asked to choose a pseudonym that will be used during the interview; the pseudonym, rather than your own name, will be used whenever you are referenced in the research. Transcripts of this interview and any reports will also use this pseudonym and never use your own name. If you do not feel comfortable continuing it is completely acceptable for you to withdraw your participation at this time without penalty. The interview will take approximately fourty five minutes to an hour.

Following the interview, you may choose to review a typed transcript of your interview to make changes or to correct omissions. If you would like to have an electronic copy of your interview, or a copy of the typed transcript, for your own records, this can be arranged.

Finally, if you desire, you will be contacted following the completion of the research project and will be provided with a summary of the results.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Talking about sexual violence can be an emotional and challenging experience and you may experience some distress as a consequence of this. However, your comfort during this process is of the utmost importance. Although I have prepared a list of questions that I will ask you, you have the right not to answer any questions that makes you feel uncomfortable. You also have the right to answer these questions with as much or as little detail as you want. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time. If you need to take breaks during the interview that is completely fine. If the interview experience becomes uncomfortable for you, you are able to withdraw at anytime and still receive full compensation for your participation. If you withdraw from the study, you will also have the option of withdrawing any data that you have contributed. The interview will be completely confidential, and my supervisor Dr. Christopher Greig and I will be the only people with direct access to your full interview. Other potential risks include economic, social, data, and bystander risks. To mitigate these risks, all identifiable information, including names of bystanders, schools, and place of work, will be kept confidential and replaced by pseudonyms as needed. All transcripts and audio files will be placed in an encrypted, password protected folder on Salsabel Almanssori's laptop.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant from your involvement with this study. Potential benefits to the scholarly community include that may result from your participation in this study: 1) contributing to a larger body of research on teacher education and sexual violence prevention; and 2) contributing to educational and policy changes that may result from the research.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

For your time and effort in participating in the interview, you will be compensated via a $10 virtual gift to an online store of choice. Once you have indicated your preference, the gift card will be emailed to your student email account.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. The interview data and background information will be stored in locked file cabinets in the research office of the researcher and her supervisor. Electronic files will be password protected and stored on a private, secured server. Your real name will not be associated with your interview in any way. The

electronic recording of your interview will be erased once the study is complete and you have verified the transcript for accuracy. Information will not be provided to a third party for any reason, unless you disclose the current and ongoing sexual abuse of a minor, which I am obligated by law to report.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. If you withdraw at any time during the interview, and up to the week following when I send you your transcript for verification. and you will still receive $10 gift card. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. You also have the option to remove your data from this study at any time, up until you review (or decline the opportunity to review) the typed transcript of your interview.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS
A summary of the findings of this study will be available by April 31, 2022. At this time, you will be able to access the summary at the following website: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/).

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **Teacher Candidate Experiences in Sexual Violence Prevention Education** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

____
Name of Participant

____________________________________ ____________________
Signature of Participant Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

____ ______________________

Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX E

Consent for Audiotaping Form

CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING

Research Participant Name: ____________________________

Title of the Project: Teacher Candidate Experiences in Sexual Violence Prevention Education

I consent to the audio-taping of interviews, procedures, or treatment.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that taping will be kept confidential. Tapes are filed by number only and stored in a locked cabinet.

The destruction of the audio tapes will be completed after transcription and verification.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the audio tape will be for professional use only.

This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

_______________________________   _____________________
(Research Participant)   (Date)

APPENDIX F

List of Counselling Services

The Student Counselling Centre

The Student Counselling Centre at the University of Windsor provides registered students free, confidential **mental health counselling** delivered by trained mental health professionals. Students in crisis will be provided support and counselling. Although attending university can be an exciting and dynamic experience, it can also present some challenges. Outside of the obvious academic pressures, students may have to deal with stresses related to:

- Physical or mental illness (e.g., depression, anxiety)
- Family issues
- Identity confusion
- Time management
- The end of important relationships
- Illness or death of a loved one
- Moving away from home
- Financial concerns

Sometimes coping with one or more of these stresses can prove to be overwhelming. The professional staff of the Student Counselling Centre are here to help! The University offers short-term counselling and therapy services to students who may be experiencing a number of emotional and or behavioural difficulties during the Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer semesters. If a student has a need for long-term counselling, the University may provide referrals to assist the student in accessing resources in the community.

The Student Counselling Centre is following the University of Windsor's Emergency Academic Plan and is now closed to all in-person appointments, effective March 18th. If you wish to make an appointment, the staff are working remotely by offering telephone and/or video conferencing. Please email scc@uwindsor.ca and they will contact you back within 24-48 hours.

MySSP: My Student Support Program

All UWindsor students will now have access to 24/7 counselling services with the campus-wide launch of the My Student Support Program (MySSP), a program offered by a partnership between the University of Windsor and the University of Windsor Students' Alliance (UWSA).

Reach by phone: Call 1-844-451-9700. Outside of North America? Call 001-416-380-6578. Download My SSP on your mobile device. Available on Google Play and Apple App Store.

- Support when you need it. Anytime, anywhere
- Free confidential counselling by licensed counsellors

- Available 24/7 via call or text
- At any given time, students have access to 35+ languages/cultures.
- Program supports 140+ languages/cultures across their entire clinical network (access within 24-48 hours)
- App downloadable in simplified Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Spanish, English, and French (with Hindi to be added soon!)
- Resource library for common student concerns (e.g. relationships, homesickness)
- International phone number for when traveling abroad

Good2Talk

Good2Talk provides confidential support services for post-secondary students in Ontario. Call 1-866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868.

Student Health Services

Student Health Services are your family physician's office while on campus. They provide confidential, student-centred health care, including comprehensive medical care, counseling, and referrals. Please be aware that all patients must be registered University of Windsor students. Even if you opt-out of the student drug plan you are still welcome to see our dedicated team of physicians, nurses and administrative staff.

Student Health Services is following the Ministry of Health Guidelines to reduce the risk of COVID-19. Changes to services are as follows:

- Please call the office for any concerns or to book a telephone appointment. Call: 519-973-7002
- You will be assigned a telephone appointment with your primary care provider; our clinic phone may display as “blocked number” or “private number”. Please ensure your phone settings allow unknown callers.
- We will continue to renew prescriptions for patients residing in Canada, but we are asking all patients to defer non-essential appointments.
- If we determine the need for an in-person assessment or treatment we will discuss options with you.

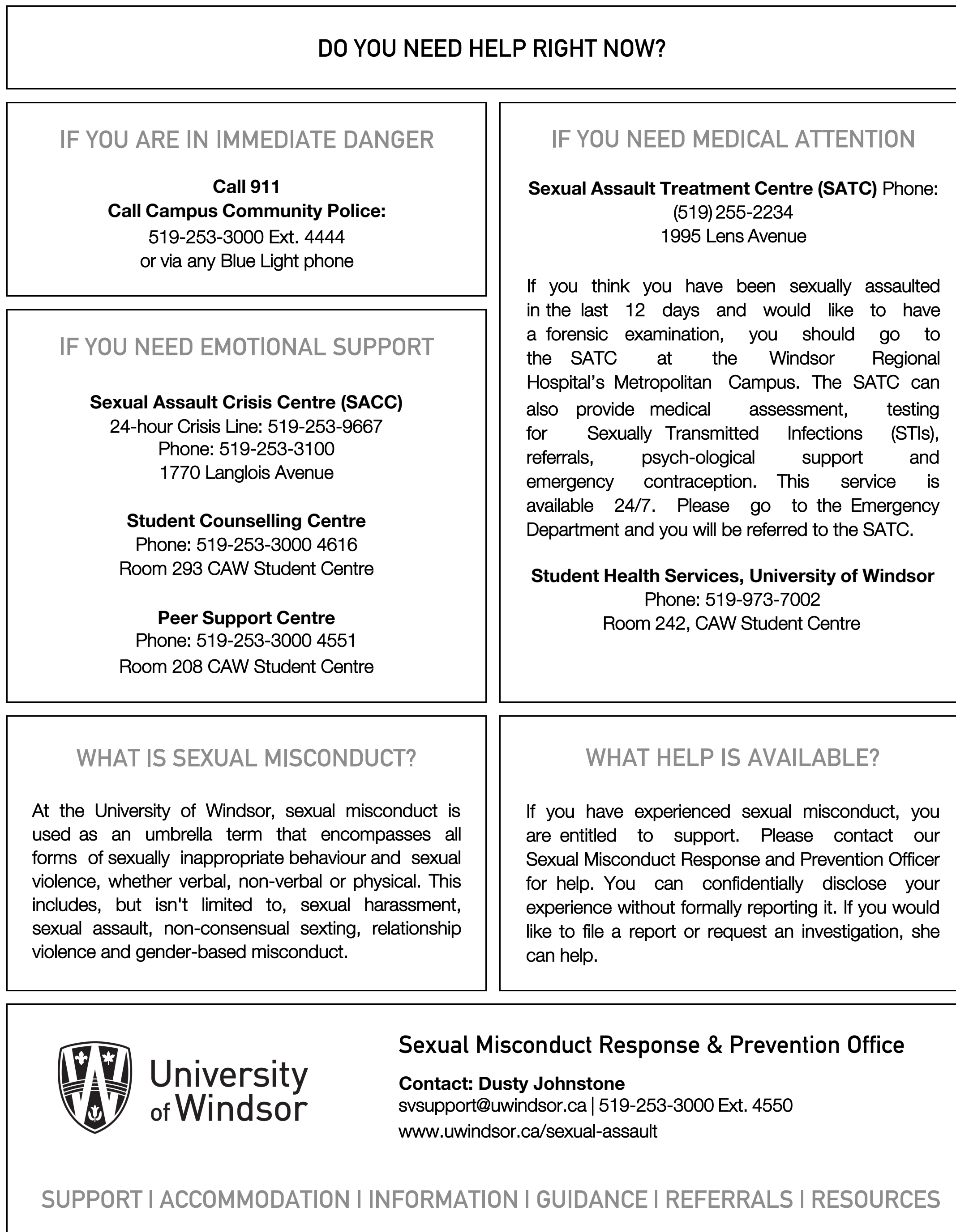
Please visit https://www.uwindsor.ca/studenthealthservices/ for up to date information.

Distress Centre of Windsor-Essex County
Free, anonymous, confidential helpline that provides emotional support by trained volunteers 365 days/year via phone, text, and online chat. Hours vary by service.
https://www.downtownmission.com/distress/

Sexual Assault Crisis Centre
Free, confidential support and crisis intervention for survivors of sexual violence provided by specialized professional counsellors.
24/7 Crisis Line: 519-253-9667
https://saccwindsor.net

APPENDIX G

University of Windsor Sexual Misconduct Response & Prevention Referral Sheet



DO YOU NEED HELP RIGHT NOW?

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Call 911
Call Campus Community Police:
519-253-3000 Ext. 4444
or via any Blue Light phone

IF YOU NEED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (SACC)
24-hour Crisis Line: 519-253-9667
Phone: 519-253-3100
1770 Langlois Avenue

Student Counselling Centre
Phone: 519-253-3000 4616
Room 293 CAW Student Centre

Peer Support Centre
Phone: 519-253-3000 4551
Room 208 CAW Student Centre

IF YOU NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION

Sexual Assault Treatment Centre (SATC) Phone:
(519) 255-2234
1995 Lens Avenue

If you think you have been sexually assaulted in the last 12 days and would like to have a forensic examination, you should go to the SATC at the Windsor Regional Hospital's Metropolitan Campus. The SATC can also provide medical assessment, testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), referrals, psych-ological support and emergency contraception. This service is available 24/7. Please go to the Emergency Department and you will be referred to the SATC.

Student Health Services, University of Windsor
Phone: 519-973-7002
Room 242, CAW Student Centre

WHAT IS SEXUAL MISCONDUCT?

At the University of Windsor, sexual misconduct is used as an umbrella term that encompasses all forms of sexually inappropriate behaviour and sexual violence, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. This includes, but isn't limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, non-consensual sexting, relationship violence and gender-based misconduct.

WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE?

If you have experienced sexual misconduct, you are entitled to support. Please contact our Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention Officer for help. You can confidentially disclose your experience without formally reporting it. If you would like to file a report or request an investigation, she can help.

Sexual Misconduct Response & Prevention Office

Contact: Dusty Johnstone
svsupport@uwindsor.ca | 519-253-3000 Ext. 4550
www.uwindsor.ca/sexual-assault

SUPPORT | ACCOMMODATION | INFORMATION | GUIDANCE | REFERRALS | RESOURCES

APPENDIX H

Dispelling the Myths and Misconceptions about Sexual Violence

DISPELLING THE MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Myth	Fact
It wasn't rape, so it wasn't sexual violence.	Sexual assault and sexual violence encompasses a broad range of unwanted sexual activity. Any unwanted sexual contact is considered to be sexual violence. A survivor can be severely affected by all forms of sexual violence, including unwanted fondling, rubbing, kissing, or other sexual acts. Many forms of sexual violence involve no physical contact, such as stalking or distributing intimate visual recordings. All of these acts are serious and can be damaging.
Sexual assault can't happen to me or anyone I know.	Sexual assault can and does happen to anyone. People of all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds are victims of sexual assault, but the vast majority of sexual assaults happen to women and girls. Young women, Aboriginal women and women with disabilities are at greater risk of experiencing sexual assault.
Sexual assault is most often committed by strangers.	Someone known to the victim, including acquaintances, dating partners, and common-law or married partners, commit approximately 75 per cent of sexual assaults.
Sexual assault is most likely to happen outside in dark, dangerous places.	The majority of sexual assaults happen in private spaces like a residence or private home.
If an individual doesn't report to the police, it wasn't sexual assault.	Just because a victim doesn't report the assault doesn't mean it didn't happen. Fewer than one in ten victims report the crime to the police.
It's not a big deal to have sex with someone while they are drunk, stoned or passed out.	If a person is unconscious or incapable of consenting due to the use of alcohol or drugs, they cannot legally give consent. Without consent, it is sexual assault.
If the person chose to drink or use drugs, then it isn't considered sexual assault.	This is a prominent misconception about sexual assault. No one can consent while drunk or incapacitated.
If the victim didn't scream or fight back, it probably wasn't sexual assault. If the victim does not fight back, the sexual assault is their fault.	When an individual is sexually assaulted they may become paralyzed with fear and be unable to fight back. The person may be fearful that if they struggle, the perpetrator will become more violent.
If you didn't say no, it must be your fault.	People who commit sexual assault/abuse are trying to gain power and control over their victim. They want to

Myth	Fact
	make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for their victim to say no. A person does not need to actually say the word "no" to make it clear that they did not want to participate. The focus in consent is on hearing a "yes".
If an individual isn't crying or visibly upset, it probably wasn't a serious sexual assault.	Every individual responds to the trauma of sexual assault differently. They may cry or they may be calm. They may be silent or very angry. Their behaviour is not an indicator of the experience. It is important not to judge an individual by how they responds to the assault.
If someone does not have obvious physical injuries, like cuts or bruises, they probably were not sexually assaulted.	Lack of physical injury does not mean that a person wasn't sexually assaulted. An offender may use threats, weapons, or other coercive actions that do not leave physical marks. The person may have been unconscious or been otherwise incapacitated.
If it really happened, the victim would be able to easily recount all the facts in the proper order.	Shock, fear, embarrassment and distress can all impair memory. Many survivors attempt to minimize or forget the details of the assault as a way of coping with trauma. Memory loss is common when alcohol and/or drugs are involved.
Individuals lie and make up stories about being sexually assaulted; and most reports of sexual assault turn out to be false.	According to Statistics Canada, fewer than one in 10 sexual assault victims report the crime to the police. Approximately 2% of sexual assault reports are false. The number of false reports for sexual assault is very low. Sexual assault carries such a stigma that many people prefer not to report.
Persons with disabilities don't get sexually assaulted.	Individuals with disabilities are at a high risk of experiencing sexual violence or assault. Those who live with activity limitations are over two times more likely to be victims of sexual assault than those who are able-bodied.
A spouse or significant other cannot sexually assault their partner.	Sexual assault can occur in a married or other intimate partner relationship. The truth is, sexual assault occurs ANY TIME there is not consent for sexual activity of any kind. Being in a relationship does not exclude the possibility of, or justify, sexual assault. A person has the right to say "no" at ANY point.
People who are sexually assaulted "ask for it" by their provocative behaviour or dress.	This statement couldn't be more hurtful or wrong. Nobody deserves to be sexually assaulted. Someone has deliberately chosen to be violent toward someone else; to not get consent. Nobody asks to be assaulted. Ever. No

Myth	Fact
	mode of dress, no amount of alcohol or drugs ingested, no matter what the relationship is between the survivor and the perpetrator or what the survivor's occupation is, sexual assault is always wrong.
Sexual assault only happens to women	Not true. The majority of sexual assaults are committed against women by men, but people of all genders, from all backgrounds have been/can be assaulted.
Sexual abuse of males is rare.	According to Statistics Canada, six per cent of males 15 or over reported that they had experienced sexual victimization. Sexual assault/abuse occurs in every economic, ethic, age and social group.
If you got aroused or got an erection or ejaculated you must have enjoyed it.	It is normal for your body to react to physical stimulation. Just because you became physically aroused does not mean that you liked it, or wanted it or consented in any way. If you experienced some physical pleasure, this does not take away the fact that sexual abuse happened or the effects or feelings of abuse.

From https://www.stclaircollege.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/svp-myths-and-misconceptions.pdf

VITA AUCTORIS

NAME:	Salsabel Almanssori
PLACE OF BIRTH:	Medina, Basra, Iraq
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EDUCATION:	University of Windsor, Hons. BA, Windsor, ON, 2012
	University of Windsor, B.Ed., Windsor, ON, 2014
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