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The Impact of Social Norms on Bystander Behaviors to Prevent Campus Sexual Violence

Kelly Collins

DePaul University, kellycollins112@gmail.com

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The Impact of Social Norms on
Bystander Behaviors to Prevent Campus Sexual Violence

Defense of Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Department of Psychology

DePaul University

By

Kelly Collins

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SOCIAL NORMS AND BYSTANDER BEHAVIORS

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Abstract

High incidence rates of sexual violence (SV) on college campuses and the limited effectiveness of traditional prevention programs has created a need for innovative prevention programming. In recent decades, bystander intervention approaches that target broader campus community norms have gained popularity. These programs aim to prevent SV by equipping student bystanders with the skills to intervene before, during, and after instances with the risk of SV. Student bystanders' ability to effectively intervene hinges on their ability to recognize SV risk situations as problematic and worthy of intervention. However, situational ambiguities and mixed social norms messages often create challenges to recognizing SV risk situations.

To better understand how perceived social norms and peer communication influenced students' perceptions during these initial stages of bystander intervention, the current study asked about their lived experiences in situations with risk of SV. The current study analyzed qualitative data from interviews with 17 undergraduate students from a midsize university in Chicago, Illinois. Participants identified two primary types of SV risk scenarios: sexual situations involving alcohol and unwanted sexual advancements. In any one situation, participants identified various social norms that influenced the extent to which they perceived the situation as problematic. This study indicates how important it is for bystander intervention programs to equip students with a clear, operational understanding of what SV is and the ability to recognize SV risk scenarios in the context of their own lives. In situations where the level of risk is ambiguous, students need actionable strategies for engaging in a process of information gathering in order to identify problematic SV risk situations.

Introduction

Sexual and Relationship Violence on College Campuses

Legal definitions typically identify rape as non-consensual sexual penetration obtained through coercion, force, threat of harm, or when the victim cannot give consent, for example when intoxicated or unconscious (Ullman, 2010). Sexual violence refers to a broader category of victimizations including rape, unwanted sexual experiences without physical contact, and stalking (Breiding et al., 2015). In the United States, an estimated 43.9% of women and 23.4% of men experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetimes, and 19.3% of women and 1.7% of men have been raped (Breiding et al., 2015). Victimization rates are highest among young women, and 29.4% of woman victims report their first victimization happened during their college-age years (i.e., 18-24 years old; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Women attending college are five times more likely than women from the general public to report experiencing rape in the past year (Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti, & McCauley, 2007).

The potential negative and long-term impacts of sexual violence on survivors' mental, physical, and social health have been extensively documented (Campbell, Sefl & Ahrens, 2003; McMahon & Banyard, 2012). Experiences of sexual violence are associated with a multitude of negative outcomes including chronic illness and headaches, depressive symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder, stress, fatigue, and poor academic performance (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2005; Campbell et al., 2003).

While college is intended to be a time of personal growth, self- discovery, and knowledge acquisition, rates of sexual violence expose an unacceptable reality- women are not safe on college campuses. Staggering rates of sexual violence on college campuses lead many to question why and how this is possible and, ultimately, what can be done to prevent the issue.

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Lonsway and Kothari (2000) note the “virtual explosion” in the number of rape prevention programs on college campuses in recent decades as activists, researchers, campus administrators, and policy makers have begun to prioritize effective innovations, and campus-based education programs have become popular on campuses nationwide (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). To enhance the effectiveness of prevention programs, it is important that ongoing efforts are guided by empirical evidence.

Traditional Campus Sexual Violence Prevention Efforts

Reviews of the literature indicate most programs approach campus sexual violence prevention through student education, and teaching men to abstain from perpetration and women to avert victimization (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Breitenbecher, 2000; Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2010). Though traditional sexual violence prevention efforts vary in terms of program audiences (e.g., Greek members, mixed gender, single gender), facilitators (e.g., peer, professional), duration (e.g., single vs. multiple sessions), and delivery method (e.g., lecture based, theater performance, social marketing campaign) program content typically aims to reduce rape supportive attitudes and rape myth acceptance (i.e., stereotyped and false beliefs about sexual assault, victims, and perpetrators), and build awareness and knowledge of sexual assault (Breitenbecher, 2000; Vladutiu et al., 2010).

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses provide a useful empirical record of the effectiveness of traditional sexual violence prevention programs. Breitenbecher (2000) analyzed data from 38 studies of college-based sexual violence prevention programs, evaluating the following six major outcome areas: attitudes, behavioral intentions, self-reported behavior, directly observed behaviors, self-reported victimization, and self-reported sexual aggression. In 2005, Anderson and Whiston conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies, adapting the outcomes

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measured by Breitenbecher (2000), to examine the following seven outcome areas: rape attitudes, rape empathy, rape-related attitudes, rape knowledge, behavioral intentions, rape awareness behaviors, and incidence of sexual assault. Taken together, these reviews suggest the majority of college sexual violence prevention programs produced immediate decreases in rape supportive attitudes and rape myth acceptance, and increased awareness and knowledge about sexual assault (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Breitenbecher, 2000). Despite illustrated positive outcomes, however, experts have identified limitations to traditional approaches to college sexual violence prevention.

Limitations to Traditional Campus Sexual Violence Prevention Efforts. While many traditional campus sexual violence prevention programs report positive findings, these findings are typically related to intermediate programmatic outcomes and not actual reduced rates of sexual violence, which have gone largely unmeasured or unsupported (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Breitenbecher, 2000). Lonsway (1996) critiqued the untested assumption that changes in rape supportive ideologies will lead to decreased incidence of sexual violence. Her sentiment is supported by a lack of evidence that traditional prevention programs reduce the incidence of college sexual assault (Breitenbecher, 2000; Lonsway, 1996; Vladutiu et al., 2010).

Only one of the 38 studies reviewed by Breitenbecher (2000) found partial evidence for effectively reducing sexual assault victimization. Specifically, Hanson and Gidycz (1993) observed decreased rates of self-reported victimization among women who attended the program compared to the control group at a 9-week follow-up; although these findings were not consistent for women with a history of prior victimization. However, subsequent evaluations of an adapted version of the same program did not observe significant decreases in victimization (Breitenbecher & Gidycz, 1998; Breitenbecher & Scarce, 1999; Gidycz et al., 2001).

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Additionally, even the limited positive outcomes reported by most programs are short term while long-term changes remain elusive (Breitenbecher, 2000). While many programs observe immediate favorable changes in attitudes and knowledge, only a fraction found the improvements were sustained beyond two-weeks, and most found students returned to their pre-program scores within one to five months (Breitenbecher, 2000). Students may be less likely to experience long-term improvements in attitudes toward sexual assault when they do not find the message personally relevant and are less motivated to participate, indicating the importance of programming that is personally and culturally relevant to students (Heppner, Good, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & Hawkins, 1995; Heppner, Neville, Smith, Kivlighan, & Gershuny, 1999). Traditional approaches that aim to prevent sexual assault by teaching women how to avoid victimization and men how to avoid perpetration may miss out larger groups of students who are unable to actively identify as either (e.g., Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993).

Furthermore, traditional sexual violence prevention program effectiveness is likely stunted by their sole focus on individual level factors. In an introductory statement by the American Psychological Association's Committee on Women in Psychology's Task Force on Male Violence Against Women, authors discuss the social and cultural foundations of violence against women, including women's traditional unequal and subordinate roles. They state, "the problem of violence against women will not be solved until psychologists, other social scientists, and policymakers work a fundamental change in the social attitudes and institutions that perpetuate men's violent acts against women" (Goodman, Koss, Fitzgerald, Russo, & Keita, 1993, pp. 1056). To do this, researchers must consider the broader social context of sexual violence and create prevention efforts that target change beyond individual-level factors (Banyard et al., 2005; Koss & Harvey, 1991).

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The Ecological Model

One theory used to understand the broader social context impacting sexual violence is Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model (1979). Analogous to a nested set of Russian dolls, the model is used to understand how human behavior is shaped by multiple, interactive levels of social context. Applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological model provides a theoretical foundation for conceptualizing sexual violence as a result of individual, situational, and sociocultural factors (Heise, 1998). At the center of the ecological model are individual factors associated with sexual violence. For example, individuals' adherence to rape myths and rape-supportive attitudes are associated with increased likelihood to perpetuate sexual violence (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2001; Maxwell, Robinson, & Post, 2003). The next levels highlight the influence of social relationships, such a peer approval of sexual aggression, that are linked to higher levels of sexual aggression and hostility towards women (Humphrey & Kahn, 2000). At the community level, norms supporting hostility towards women are also linked to higher rates of sexual assault (Hines, 2007). The final level of the ecological model accounts for societal-level influences such as patriarchal social structures and gender-segregated economic and political institutions (Sanday, 1981).

Using a review-of-reviews approach that encompassed four areas of prevention programming (i.e., substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, school failure, and juvenile delinquency and violence), Nation and colleagues (2003) found one of the key factors for effectiveness was comprehensive programming that targeted multiple outcomes (e.g., attitudes and behaviors) at multiple ecological levels (i.e., individual, social, community, societal). Many experts are calling for prevention programs that go beyond individual-level change to address factors and multiple ecological levels and assist the community to develop new, healthy norms

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around the issue of sexual violence (e.g., Banyard et al., 2005; Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003; Koss & Harvey, 1991; McMahon, 2015). One approach that is quickly gaining attention, founded on the belief that all community members play a critical role in sexual violence prevention, is the bystander approach.

Bystander Approaches to Sexual Violence Prevention

Bystanders are defined as witnesses to crimes, emergencies, or high-risk situations who are neither the victims nor perpetrators (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011). Bystanders have the opportunity to interrupt situations that may lead to campus sexual violence, speak out against rape culture, and shift social norms in favor of sexual violence prevention (Amar, Sutherland, & Laughon, 2014; Banyard et al., 2005; Coker et al., 2011). The majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by an acquaintance of the victim, often in a party or dating setting (Brecklin & Ullman, 2005; Breiding et al., 2015; Fisher, Cullen, Turner, & National Institute of Justice, 2000), suggesting bystanders are often present in the events leading up to assaults, and can minimize potential negative consequences by taking action before, during, or after an incident of sexual violence. Bystander approaches encourage all students to take an active role in sexual violence prevention. By approaching students as valuable community members within a third party (i.e., bystander) role, bystander approaches may avoid student defensiveness that can be elicited in traditional prevention approaches in which students are targeted only as either potential victims or perpetrators (Banyard et al., 2005; Berkowitz, 2004).

Bystander intervention programs aim to increase students' knowledge and awareness of sexual violence, commitment to sexual violence prevention, prepare them to become active bystanders, and address psychosocial factors impacting bystander intention and action (Banyard et al., 2005; McMahon, Postmus, and Koenick, 2011). Bystander approaches to sexual assault

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prevention have emerged from Latané and Darley's influential work for understanding the impact of psychosocial factors on bystander behaviors (1968). Before reviewing the effectiveness of bystander approaches to sexual violence prevention, Latané and Darley's (1968) bystander effect will be discussed.

The Bystander Effect. In 1968, Latané and Darley published one of the first studies on bystander behaviors, coining the now widely recognized psychosocial phenomenon: *the bystander effect*. Latané and Darley (1968) found bystanders in emergency situations were less likely to act when other bystanders were present. In 1970, Latané and Darley developed the following five-stage model of bystander intervention: 1) notice the event, 2) interpret it as an emergency, 3) feel personally responsible, 4) possess skills and resources to act, and 5) decide to act. To take effective action, a bystander must successfully progress through each stage.

Since the initial studies on the bystander effect, researchers have found that bystander experiences are impacted by a multitude of situational factors. In a 2011 meta-analytic review of the bystander effect literature, Fischer and colleagues found the presence of other bystanders can work to either help or hinder effective bystander action, given various contextual factors. The situational factors that impact bystander intentions and behaviors have important implications for a variety of harm prevention programs, including sexual violence prevention. The bystander intervention model is useful for understanding bystander behaviors in the context of campus sexual violence, as these same barriers have been associated with decreased bystander action (Bennett, Banyard, & Garnhart, 2014; Burn, 2009)

Barriers to Bystander Intervention. Corresponding to the bystander intervention model, researchers have identified barriers to effective bystander action at each stage including failure to notice the risk situation, label it as an emergency, take responsibility to act, or failure to

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intervene due to skills deficit or audience inhibition (Burn, 2009; Latané & Darley, 1970). In Burn's 2009 study, undergraduate participants completed an anonymous questionnaire that measured the impact hypothetical barriers at each stage of the model (e.g., "In a party or bar situation, I think I might be uncertain as to whether someone is at-risk for being sexually assaulted"). In the first stage of the model, Burn (2009) found students' failure to notice the situation was one of the largest barriers to bystander action to prevent sexual violence, and explains this may be due to self-focus or distractions caused by social activities or intoxication. Further, even after noticing a situation, at stage two, students may perceive the risk of sexual violence as ambiguous, such as a lack of clarity as to whether sexual touching is consensual, resulting in a failure to label a situation as problematic or an emergency (Burn, 2009). Two meta-analyses looking at bystander behaviors broadly (i.e., not specific to sexual violence) found evidence that ambiguity regarding the level of risk present or failure to recognize a situation as an emergency increases the bystander effect (i.e., bystander inaction; Fischer et al., 2011; Latané & Nida, 1981). Latané and Darley (1970) found that when the ambiguity of an emergency situation prevails, bystanders will act neutral as they look to those around them for cues about whether the situation is problematic and worthy of intervention.

Often, through a phenomenon called *pluralistic ignorance*, bystanders misinterpret other bystanders' nonchalant behaviors as a lack of concern, causing them to mislabel the situation as a non-emergency despite the presence of risk (Latané & Darley, 1970). Misavage and Richardson (1974) identified the importance of verbal communication among bystanders, finding group size was negatively correlated with bystander action only when there was not communication among them. The interactive groups of bystanders were able to more accurately evaluate each other's reactions, reinforce helping norms, and provide other useful information.

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At the third stage, taking responsibility to act, it is not surprising that a personal sense of responsibility is linked to bystander action (Chekroun & Brauer, 2002; Cramer, McMaster, Bartell, & Dragna, 1988). Without this inherent sense, the presence of other bystanders can lead each to assume another will take responsibility to act, in a process known as *diffusion of responsibility* (Chekroun & Brauer, 2002; Latané & Darley, 1970; Latané & Nida, 1981). Research indicates that the more a behavior is perceived as abnormal, or in violation of cohesive social norms, the more likely bystanders are to label the situation problematic and feel personally responsible and intervene (Brauer & Chaurand, 2010; Gibbs, 1981). Students may be more or less willing to intervene to prevent sexual violence depending on their relationship to the potential victim or attributions of victim worthiness (Burn, 2009).

In the final stages, bystanders must possess the skills to intervene and decide to act, and may fail to do so due to skills deficit or audience inhibition. Latané and Darley (1970) identified *audience inhibition*, or that bystanders are less likely to intervene if they are afraid of looking foolish in front of others. The impact of audience inhibition is strongly tied to the dominant social norms in the situation (Rutkowski, Gruder, & Romer, 1983). One of the largest barriers to sexual assault bystander intervention among students was a lack of effective bystander skills or confidence in their ability to intervene effectively (Banyard, 2008; Burn, 2009). A lack of intervention skills or knowledge, including identifying if a situation is problematic, may be linked to increased fear of awkwardness or other negative social consequences.

As the incorporation of bystander approaches in campus sexual violence prevention is becoming increasingly common, the bystander intervention model and corresponding barriers provide a useful theoretical framework for understanding factors that impact bystander behaviors. To overcome the multitude of barriers to sexual assault bystander intervention,

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programs address the psychosocial factors at multiple ecological levels, such as campus community norms, that impact bystander behavior by positively changing knowledge and attitudes towards sexual assault, increasing student commitment to sexual violence prevention, and equipping students with the tools they need to become active bystanders (Banyard et al., 2005; McMahon et al., 2011).

Sexual Violence Bystander Intervention Programs. In their 2013 meta-analysis, Katz and Moore examined six outcomes assessed in 12 in-person bystander-based sexual violence prevention programs: bystander efficacy, rape-supportive attitudes, bystander intentions, rape proclivity, bystander behaviors, and perpetration behaviors. Compared to control groups, students who attended programs had increased bystander efficacy, intentions, and behaviors, and decreased rape myth acceptance and proclivity. However, effect sizes varied across type of outcome and program. For example, while bystander efficacy and intent to help showed moderate effect sizes, they found smaller effects for bystander behavior and none for perpetrations rates. These findings reflect patterns found in Anderson and Whiston's (2005) meta-analysis of traditional sexual violence prevention programs, suggesting programs often have stronger positive impacts on attitudes than behaviors. Interpreting these patterns is challenging due to the limited number of empirical evaluations of bystander sexual assault prevention programs and lack of theoretical understanding of the underlying processes that transform bystander intentions into actions (Banyard et al., 2005).

While evidence indicates the importance of social norms in both bystander intentions and behaviors, social norms may be particularly influential for the latter. McMahon (2015) points out that bystander approaches to campus sexual assault prevention, while framed as community-level interventions, largely measure individual-level change. She encourages experts to go beyond the

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individual to assess additional levels of social context that “are critical to fostering campus environments that support pro-social bystander intervention action to prevent sexual violence” (McMahon, 2015). One framework recognized as useful for understanding the link between prevention efforts and successful attitude and behavioral change is social norms theory.

Social Norms Theory

Social norms create a script, or set of unwritten rules, that define socially acceptable attitudes and behaviors within a group or community of people. Behaviors are shaped by anticipation of positive or negative reactions from other members in a given group. Through anticipated positive or negative reactions from group members, social norms shape human behaviors (Batson & Powell, 2003), including those related to bystander action. Social norms are particularly predictive of behavior in environments where individuals are more highly susceptible to peer influence, such as college campuses. As students gain independence from their parents, they increasingly look to their peers for emotional support and intimacy, role models, and social opportunities (Borsari & Carey, 2001). Research indicates a strong predictive relationship between college students’ attitudes and behaviors and social norms (e.g., Berkowitz, 2004; Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Fabiano et al., 2003; Rimal & Real, 2005; Schwartz, DeKeseredy, Tait, & Alvi, 2001).

Social norms theory (SNT) is a theoretical model developed by Berkowitz and Perkins in the 1980s to understand the relationship between individual behavior and social norms. SNT distinguishes between *perceived norms*, or beliefs about what is normal or typical in a group, and *actual norms*, or reality of what is normal or typical in a group (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1987; Perkins, 1997). In reviews of the literature, Berkowitz (2004) explains that student behavior is

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strongly predicted by perceptions of social norms that often erroneously overestimate unhealthy or negative peer attitudes and behaviors.

Social norms approaches have been effective in a variety of campus health promotion and prevention programs to deter risky behaviors, such binge drinking or tobacco use, by exposing students to actual, more desirable, social norms (Schroeder & Prentice, 1998; for review see Berkowitz, 2004). Researchers have noted the promising ability of social norms approaches to target community-level change (Neighbors et al., 2011). The approach has more recently has been applied to campus sexual violence prevention.

Social Norms Approaches to Sexual and Relationship Violence Prevention

College men overestimate peers' attitudes and norms as more supportive of sexual violence than they actually are and underestimate peers' levels of discomfort with sexist language and behaviors (Kilmartin et al. 2008; Stein, 2007). Schewe (1999) found that college men report little personal motivation or desire to commit acts of sexual violence, but believe their male peers do, and reported they thought they were significantly more willing to prevent sexual assault than their peers (Stein, 2007). These misperceptions are linked to less willingness among students to intervene as a bystander to prevent sexual violence (Brown, Banyard, & Moynihan, 2014; Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Fabiano et al, 2003; Stein, 2007). Additionally, evidence suggests the influence of social norms on bystander behaviors increases throughout their time in college (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Brown et al., 2014).

Research demonstrates perceptions of male social norms are the strongest predictor of male students' willingness to intervene against sexual violence (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Burn, 2009; Fabiano et al, 2003; Hust et al., 2013; Stein, 2007). Brown and Messman-Moore (2010) found that male students' perceptions of their close friends' attitudes towards

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sexual assault was the strongest predictor of their bystander intentions, even after controlling for their own attitudes. In two qualitative studies, male students report masculine norms, such as not wanting their peers to see them as “weak”, “gay”, or “cock blocks,” created barriers to bystander action (Carlson, 2008; Casey & Ohler, 2012). Using a mixed-gendered group of participants, Banyard and Moynihan (2011) also found a significant relationship between perceived peer support of sexual aggression and intentions to act as a bystander.

In addition to the influence of perceived social norms regarding sexual violence, students’ willingness to intervene is influenced by how likely they believe their friends would be to intervene as well (Brown et al., 2014; Fabiano et al., 2003; Stein, 2007). Similarly, evidence suggests one of the strongest predictors of male students’ willingness to intervene is what they think their friends would do in a similar situation (Fabiano et al., 2003; Stein, 2007). Brown and colleagues (2014) found both male and woman students’ willingness to intervene was predicted by their perceptions of peer attitudes toward bystander intervention.

Campus community norms can make it harder for student bystanders to label situations as a problematic violation of social norms and ultimately identify SV risk situations (Abbey, 2002; Deming, 2013; Pugh, Ningard, Vander Ven & Butler, 2016). Such norms include victim blaming or the normalization of what students perceive to be “intoxicated sexual activity” as acceptable, despite the absence of consent due to intoxication, therefore fitting the legal definition of sexual assault. In a review of research on the relationship between alcohol and campus sexual assault, Abbey (2002) found that alcohol increased of sexual assault for multiple reasons, including social norms that encourage heavy drinking and forced sex. When presented with multiple hypothetical rape scenario vignettes, Deming (2013) found female undergraduate students used a variety of rape myths and norms to interpret the scenarios. Participants in the study often excused

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the behavior of the fictional male rapist, viewed the female victim as responsible for navigating social situations in a way that would protect them from sexual victimization, and failed to identify situations that meet the legal definition of sexual assault as such. Pugh et al. (2016) conducted qualitative interviews, with questions based on Burn's (2002) study that identified barriers at each stage of the bystander intervention model, asking students about how the barriers would impact their decisions in a hypothetical bystander scenario. Their findings indicate social norms lead participants to view "alcohol-fueled sexual encounters" as consensual, therefore not labeled by students as sexual assault. Pugh et al. also found that participants often determined if there was a risk of sexual assault based on their evaluation of the potential victim rather than the situation. In some situations, participants acknowledge the potential victim was "at risk", but were responsible for the situation due to their past sexual promiscuity or level of intoxication and therefore not worthy of help.

Due to the evident role of social norms on bystander behavior, there is increasing focus on the role of social norms in sexual violence prevention and programs have begun to incorporate multi-level social norms approaches (Gidycz et al., 2011). Research indicates revealing accurate, pro-social social norms can increase college students' willingness to intervene and bystander behaviors (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Berkowitz, 2004). One program that incorporates social norms and bystander approaches to targets multi-level change is the Men's Project. The program has been shown to increase male students' positive attitudes and behaviors to prevent SV long term. In a longitudinal study, male students were asked to complete open-ended questionnaires examining changes in their attitudes and behaviors as a result of their participation (Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010). Two years after attending the program, four out of five men reported sustained attitude and behavioral change. Another evaluation of The Men's

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Project conducted by Gidycz, Orchowski, and Berkowitz (2011) found the men who participated had decreased association with sexually aggressive peers and increased perceptions of peer willingness to intervene.

Rationale

High incidence rates of sexual violence on college campuses and the ineffectiveness of traditional prevention programs have created a need for innovative programs that target community-level norms. Having gained popularity over the last few decades, bystander intervention approaches have shown promise in their ability to shift to a model of community responsibility that recognizes every student as part of the solution in preventing SV, and address community norms enabling SV to occur. The bystander approach hinges on college students' ability to identify instances with the risk of or occurrence of SV.

Evidence shows there are higher rates of sexual violence in communities with higher levels of sexist beliefs and norms (see Casey & Lindhorst, 2009 for a review), indicating how important it is for bystander intervention approaches to recognize and address these norms in order to be effective. Bystander intervention literature shows the influence of social norms on bystander behaviors, broadly speaking. More specifically, there is solid evidence supporting the connection between perceived norms about SV and bystander intervention with students' willingness to act. Previous research has shown that perceptions of peers' willingness to intervene is the strongest predictor of college men's own willingness to do so (Brown et al., 2014; Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Fabiano et al, 2003; Stein, 2007), and how those perceptions are often based on erroneous overestimations of peer rape myth acceptance, willingness to perpetrate SV, and underestimations of peers' positive attitudes toward bystander

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intervention and discomfort with SV-supportive language and behaviors (Kilmartin et al. 2008; Stein, 2007). However, less is known about how perceived social norms impact students' ability to identify risk situations as problematic.

Without the ability to successfully move beyond this early stage in the bystander intervention model, students are unable to take successful bystander action. Burn identified barriers to bystander action at each of the five stages of Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention model. Burns application of the stage model to sexual violence situations illustrated how social norms create unique barriers and facilitators to action at each stage. For example, norms such as "not my business" may prevent bystanders from taking responsibility to act (or stage three). On the other hand, different norms may influence student bystanders' ability to notice a sexual violence risk situation as problematic. Social norms are particularly important in these initial stages because bystanders' ability to engage in any of the other stages hinges on the ability to recognize what the risk of SV looks like in the context of their lives.

Burn (2009) identified potential barriers to effective intervention at each stage of Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention model, including barriers related to situational ambiguity within the initial stages in which bystander notice and recognize a situation as problematic (i.e., "Bystander's failure to notice a situation in which there was a potential for sexual victimization" and "Bystander's failure to determine a situation necessitates intervention"). Social norms dictate what students view as acceptable behavior. Brauer and Charaurand (2010) found that the more a behavior was perceived as "uncivil", the more it was identified as a problematic violation of social norms, increasing the likelihood for bystanders to act. Additional research shows how campus community norms such as victim blaming and the normalization of alcohol fueled sexual activity make it challenging for students to identify

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occurrences of SV (Abbey, 2002; Deming, 2013; Pugh, Ningard, Vander Ven & Butler, 2016). However, how social norms impact students' ability to recognize SV risk in bystander situations has yet to be examined. To become effective bystanders, students need tools that allow them to recognize risk of SV and identify these situations as problematic and worthy of intervention. When there is ambiguity regarding the problematic nature of a situation, perceived social norms and communication among bystanders and/or the individuals directly involved (i.e., potential victim and perpetrator) can be used to identify potential SV on campus. Students must interpret messages through various forms of communication with their peers that impact the extent to which they identify a situation as problematic.

In order to successfully empower students to take an active role in SV prevention, bystander programs need to increase perceptions of pro-social peer norms that empower students to identify instances of SV and take bystander action. Giving students the tools to communicate and interpret social norms that support student bystanders in these pursuits should be a central aim of SV prevention programs. To teach these tools, it is essential to understand the social processes that lead to identification of risk or occurrence of SV, including the relationship between communication among peers and perceived social norms (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011; Brown et al., 2014; Casey & Lindhorst 2009). While previous research has examined the impact of social norms on bystander behavior in general and hypothetical barriers at each stage of Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention model, studies have yet to explore how social norms influence bystander behavior during the initial stages in an actual scenario. This stage model has proven useful for understanding situational barriers to student sexual assault bystander intervention. As researchers continue to use the model to inform sexual assault prevention programming, it is important to understand how social norms influence students' bystander

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behavior at each stage. Yet to date, no one has examined how communication with peers and perceived social norms influence student bystander perceptions during the initial stages of an actual situation containing risk of SV as students' process if the situation is problematic.

Additionally, of the limited research on social norms and SV bystander action, the majority of studies have examined small samples of white men (e.g., Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010). To gain a deeper understanding of how social norms impact diverse groups of students, our study will include college men and women from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The current study used qualitative methodology to interview college women and men from diverse backgrounds to gain a deeper understanding of how social norms influence bystander perceptions when exposed to risk of SV. Campbell and Wasco (2005) explain qualitative approaches may be particularly helpful in understanding process questions such as 'how' and 'why.' Limited prior literature on the processes through which social norms influence bystanders' perceptions of SV validates the use of qualitative methods to examine these questions (Morse & Field, 1995).

Students were asked about their experiences as bystanders in situations with risk of SV to understand how perceived social norms influenced the student bystander's thoughts during the initial stages of bystander intervention model, in which students notice the situation and determine whether or not it is problematic.

Research Questions

1. How do social norms influence whether or not college students recognize bystander situations related to sexual violence as problematic?
2. How do college students communicate and interpret social cues that inform their perceptions of social norms and how do these cues influence whether or not college

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student recognize bystander situations related to sexual violence as problematic?

Method

Research Participants

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 23 undergraduate students from a midsize university in Chicago, Illinois. The interviews are a portion of a larger evaluation of the university's Office of Health Promotion and Wellness' bystander intervention workshops. The recently developed workshop aims to increase students' basic knowledge and awareness of sexual and relationship violence, and teach skills to become active bystanders to prevent these issues within their campus community. Workshop attendance was mandated for various groups of student leaders and for all student athletes, and was offered to the broader campus community. The current study analyzed data from 17 participants who reported witnessing a high-risk bystander scenario (involving sexual violence, threat of sexual violence and/or active sexual harassment). Demographic information is provided in table 1. Of the 17 participants 24% (N=4) were freshman in college, 18% (N=3) sophomores, 24% (N=4) juniors, and 35% (N=6) were seniors. The majority identified as heterosexual (71%, N=12), 77% (N=13) as female, and 53% (N=9) were white. Data from the remaining 6 participants was not included because they either did not identify a risk situation (N=4) or identified a low-risk situation (i.e., situations that involved use of sexist or derogatory comments; N=2). The demographic information for the 6 participants excluded from analysis were not distinct as the majority also identified as heterosexual, female, and white.

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Characteristic	N=17
Age in Years (M)	20
Student Status	

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	Freshman	4 (24%)
	Sophomore	3 (18%)
	Junior	4 (24%)
	Senior	6 (35%)
Gender		
	Female	13 (77%)
	Male	4 (24%)
Sexual Orientation		
	Heterosexual	12 (71%)
	Bisexual	3 (18%)
	Homosexual	1 (6%)
	Missing Data	1 (6%)
Racial/Ethnic Background		
	White	9 (53%)
	Black	2 (12%)
	Asian	2 (12%)
	Latino	1 (6%)
	Biracial	1 (6%)
	Other	1 (6%)
	Missing Data	1 (6%)

Interview participants were recruited from the larger group of students who attended the workshop. To have been eligible for participation in the current study, students must have attended the bystander intervention workshop, have witnessed a situation involving risk for sexual or relationship violence since the workshop, and be 18 years of age or older. The study used purposive sampling, in which qualitative researchers intentionally choose participants with specific experiences to participate in interviews, to achieve sufficient breadth of understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdown, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). Consistent with this purpose, the recruitment process was revised to obtain participation from students who witnessed high-risk bystander scenarios and to increase the gender diversity of the sample, thus achieving greater depth of understanding of this area. Detailed description of these procedures is included in the following section. While students who did not witness such scenarios were still eligible to participate, those who indicated higher risk scenarios (e.g., “See

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someone who looks drunk and s/he goes to a room with someone else at a bar or party”) were prioritized. In order to increase the sample diversity by gender, of the participants who indicated witnessing high-risk scenarios, men were targeted until a minimum of 7 male participants was reached. Interviews were conducted until an acceptable balance of gender diversity and saturation were reached, for 23 interviews in total. *Saturation*, was defined as the point at which no additional information or themes were observed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Procedure

Recruitment. At the end of each workshop a research assistant asked all attendees to complete an “agree to be contacted” form (Appendix A), to indicate if they were willing to be contacted by the research team at a later date to complete an in-depth interview. The research assistant explained aloud that the interviews examine participants’ experiences in the workshop and as a bystander, and emphasized that the form indicated their willingness to be contacted by the research team and is not an agreement to participate. The form provided space for students to indicate if they were interested in being contacted. Students placed completed forms in a sealed envelope to maintain confidentiality. Participant recruitment began three months after students attended the workshop. Waiting until three months after students completed the bystander-based program allowed investigators to examine how social norms impacted their experiences as bystanders in situations containing a risk for sexual violence.

Initially, all of the roughly 75 students that agreed to be contacted were recruited to participate. Over time, it became evident that many students had not witnessed an event or had witnessed less severe events (such as sexual harassment) and few men were participating. Therefore, revised recruitment procedures were utilized for the final 8 interviews. Specifically, a screener was conducted over the phone or via a brief 2-minute Qualtrics survey in which people

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who were interested in participating were asked about 20 potential situations they witnessed in the three months prior (Scenario List Appendix A).

Recruitment procedures were informed by research on successful recruitment strategies outlined by Dillman (2011). Recruitment methods alternated between telephone calls and emails (see Appendix B for sample telephone recruitment script, and Appendix C for sample recruitment email) at various times and days of the week until participants were scheduled for an interview, informed the research team of their decision not to participate, or it became clear they would not be able to participate within a reasonable time frame. Scheduled participants were given a reminder call or email the day before the interview occurred.

Interviewing procedures. The investigator conducted all interviews. The investigator was trained on qualitative interviewing techniques such as probing by the thesis advisor and by conducting practice interviews. Additionally, the thesis advisor provided ongoing training and support through weekly check-ins and monitored audio recordings for quality. While interviews were primarily and preferably conducted in-person, telephone interviews were available to accommodate students' lives. All interviews were conducted in a private study room in the university's library or the private research team lab.

To begin, the interviewer thanked participants for their time and spent a few minutes building rapport. To clarify their own position and encourage honest reflection from the participant, the interviewer explained they were working to evaluate the workshop, and are not a member of the office hosting the workshops. The interviewer had participants read the consent form (Appendix D) and asked for any questions once they indicated they were finished. The interviewer highlighted key pieces of the consent form, such as the confidential nature of the interview and the participant's right to skip any questions or leave at any time they wished.

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Participants were provided a brief explanation of the interview process to create an open, honest tone, and increase awareness of what to expect (e.g., first section the longest, interviewer offers break after first section, may ask participant to explain something seemingly obvious to enhance mutual understanding). The interviewer asked for permission to turn on the recorder before moving to the interview guide questions (Appendix E). The interviews took an average of 60-90 minutes to complete, and participants were given \$30 as a 'thank you' for their time.

Interviewing protocol. The investigator and thesis advisor worked together to develop the interview guide. Pilot interviews were conducted to assess the content and flow of the interview, and were used to refine the guide. Interview questions specific to the current study include: 1) if the interview participant was a bystander in a situation with risk for sexual violence (e.g., "Since the workshop, have you witnessed a situation in which there might have been a risk for sexual violence?"), 2) the context of that situation (e.g., "Can you tell me about the situation?"), 3) their behavior and how the situation ended (e.g., "What ended up happening?"), 4) how perceived social norms impacted their thoughts and behavior in the situation (e.g., "How do you think the people you were with, considering their beliefs and what is normal behavior for them, influenced what you were thinking and feeling?"), 5) any communication they had with other bystanders or the potential victim or perpetrator (e.g., "How did you communicate with others in the situation?"), and 6) their demographic information. Participants were initially asked to recall a situation involving potential risk of sexual violence they witnessed in the time since attending the workshop in which there might have been a risk of sexual violence (i.e., "Since the workshop in MONTH, have you witnessed a situation in which there might have been a risk for sexual violence?"). Students who were unable identify to a scenario were given a list of 20 potential bystander scenarios with the severity ranging from the low (e.g., "Hear someone make

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a joke about sexual assault or relationship violence” to high (e.g., “See someone who looks drunk and s/he goes to a room with someone else at a bar or party”) end of the violence spectrum. All interviews were fully transcribed using professional transcription services. To maximize accuracy, trained undergraduate research assistants double-checked transcriptions.

Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative interview data. With the goal of identifying theoretical meaning of the data (Saldaña, 2013), the investigator followed a detailed analysis process including open coding, codebook development and maintenance, and disconfirming case analyses. Throughout the analysis process, strategies recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were incorporated to enhance the confirmability, credibility, and dependability of the findings (see specific examples below).

The investigator began the analytic process with open coding. During the open coding phase, the investigator read each transcript to identify segments of text relevant to the research questions, note potential codes, and make analytic memos (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Burnard, 1991). Analytic memos complimented codebook development by providing a space for the investigator to think critically, reflect on, and document emerging thoughts, questions, and insights (e.g., potential patterns or connections, personal reflection) throughout the coding process (Saldaña, 2013).

These initial codes were used to create a codebook. The codebook maintained an organized hierarchical framework of all codes and sub-codes, including definitions and examples of each. To develop the codebook, the investigator compared and sorted the initial codes (Saldaña, 2013). Throughout this reflective process the investigator considered how codes needed to be revised and restructured (e.g., broken down into more specific or refined sub-codes,

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or merged to explain broader categories) over multiple iterations of the coding framework (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Burnard, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Saldaña, 2013). The codebook was piloted on half of the interview transcripts until no more major revisions were needed. This final codebook was then applied to all transcripts. Additionally, the thesis advisor provided ongoing reviews of codebook drafts for quality and clarity. These reflective coding processes enhanced confirmability, or the degree to which the analyses accurately reflects the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The investigator used the qualitative data analysis software package NVivo to apply the coding framework using hierarchical labels. During analysis, the investigator reviewed the coded data to look for disconfirming evidence, or cases that do not fit or discredited the themes. This structured process supported the critical examination of themes that further enhanced the confirmability and credibility (i.e., confidence the data accurately reflects the truth) of the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

After coding was completed, the thesis advisor and investigator met regularly to continue discussing the analysis and write-up of the results (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In the meetings, the investigator debriefed the thesis advisor on progress from the past week, asked questions and requested the thesis advisor review materials when necessary. Adapted from Lincoln and Guba's (1985) peer debriefing process, these meetings enhanced credibility by allowing the investigator to reflect upon her implicit thought process, discuss and defend emergent themes, and identify potential issues such as overlooked themes or logical errors. The investigator was also the study coordinator. As such, I conducted all of the interviews and led the analysis process with oversight from my thesis advisor. I identify as a white woman who grew up and attended college in Michigan. While studying Psychology and eventually Women's and Gender Studies at a large, state university, I became interested the issues of SRV and participated in events such as Take

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Back the Night and helped to organize annual SRV prevention programs for my student housing group. Having seen the negative impacts of SRV and as a feminist and academic researcher, I believe campus sexual assault is a critical issue that all community members should work to address. With that being said, I understand the complex and conflicting social norms that can make doing so difficult for students.

Results

Overview

When asked about their experiences as bystanders in situations with a risk for sexual violence, participant bystanders identified two scenario types: *sexual situations involving alcohol* and *unwanted sexual attention*. Sexual situations involving alcohol include scenarios in which two individuals (i.e., the potential victim and the potential perpetrator), one or both of whom were drinking, were either currently engaged in some form of sexual activity (e.g., kissing), behaviors that often lead to sexual activity (e.g., going home together from a party, entering a private bedroom) or stated their intentions to engage in sexual activity in the future. Unwanted sexual attention refers to scenarios in which a victim was subjected to the unwanted verbal (e.g., sexual jokes or comments) or physical (e.g., close dancing, touching) sexual attention of a perpetrator.

The person that participants saw as being at risk of being sexually assaulted are referred to as *potential victims* (PV), whereas the individual who initiated the act are referred to as *potential perpetrators* (PP). All situations reported involved heterosexual pairs, therefore references to the pair directly involved will often mention a male as the PP and a woman as the PV involved. It is important to emphasize that, while individuals are referred to as PV or PP

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throughout this report, these individuals are potentially involved but do not necessarily qualify as victims or perpetrators yet. The term *participant bystander* (PB) refers to the interview participants who were bystanders in the scenario. To protect respondents' identities, pseudonyms were used for PBs, PVs, and PPs throughout the results section.

Within each scenario type, patterns of perceived social norms that influenced the degree to which PB identified a sexual risk situation as problematic emerged. In the sexual situations involving alcohol, participants described intoxicated sexual activity as a social norm among college students and endorsed norms that support women's ability to choose to engage in sexual activity while intoxicated, yet participants also acknowledged increased risk for SV these situations. In situations with ambiguity about whether the PV wanted to engage in sexual activity and was sober enough to make that decision, participants questioned if the situation was problematic. To reduce this ambiguity, participants relied on the following sources of information: communication with PV or other bystanders, their prior knowledge of PV's typical behavior and the relationship (or lack thereof) between PV and PP. Additionally, the PBs used their perception of how trustworthy the PP was to determine to extent to which the situation was problematic.

In unwanted sexual attention scenarios, participants explained men's unwanted attention toward women as commonplace, particularly in social settings involving alcohol such as a bar or party; however, these were indicative of generally unhealthy norms related to men's entitlement to sexual activity and the objectification of women. These norms often resulted in assessment of the situations as problematic due their perception that a woman was being made uncomfortable by unwelcome sexual advances. Similarly to situations involving alcohol, PBs relied on verbal and nonverbal cues and communication from PV in the moment as well as their familiarity with

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PV, or what they understood to be PV's typical behavior, to determine PV's level of comfort or discomfort and therefore whether the situation was problematic.

Sexual Situations Involving Alcohol

Eleven participants identified situations involving intoxication and sexual activity in which there may have been a risk of sexual violence. These situations involved sexual activity such as two people kissing or making out, or behaviors that typically precede sexual activity, such as entering a private room together.

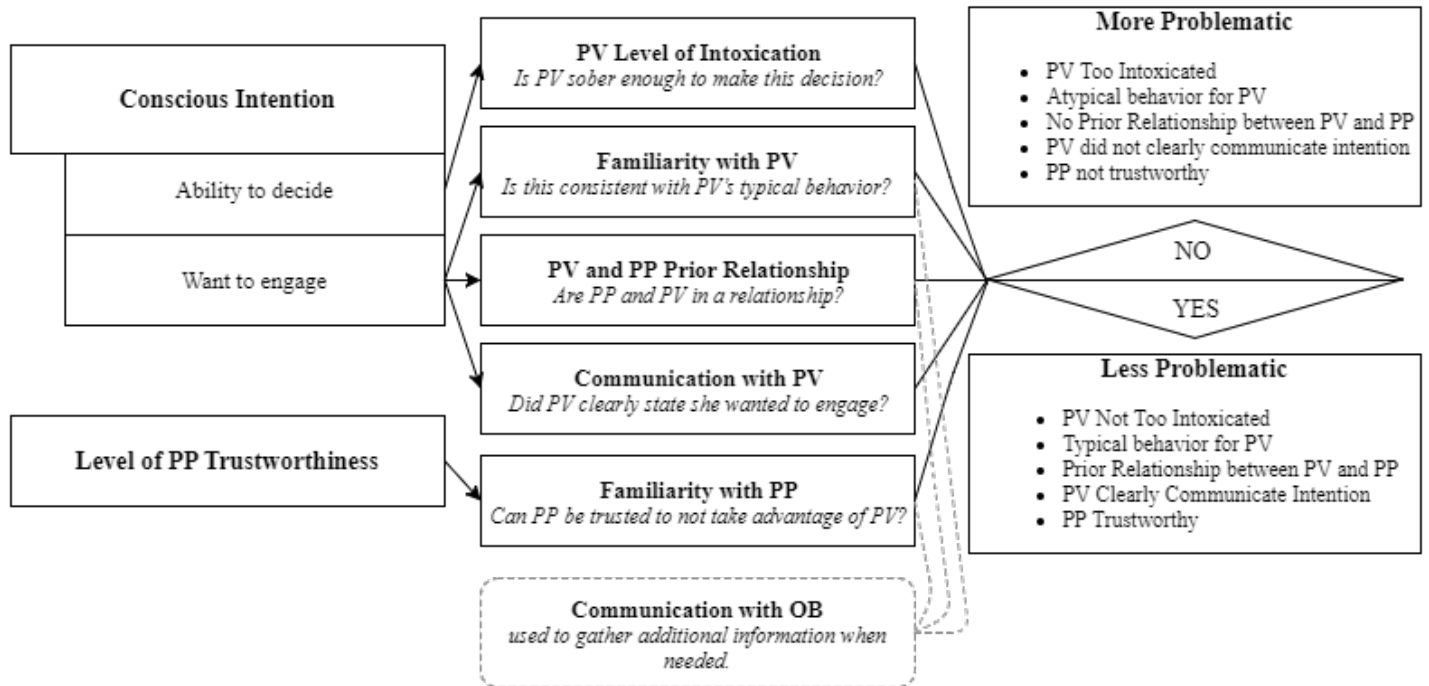
In most of these scenarios, one or both people involved were heavily intoxicated and therefore unable to consent to sexual activity. Based on Illinois law, such situations would be considered sexual assault; however, generally, this is not how interview participants conceptualized it. Therefore, to better reflect participant perspectives, the term *sexual situations involving alcohol* is used to describe these scenarios. Within sexual situations involving alcohol there were two types of sub-situations: ones in which the participant bystander witnessed sexual activity was about to happen or already happening, and ones in which the participant heard someone state that they planned to engage in sexual activity while the other person was drinking in the future.

While participants generally expressed some degree of heightened concerns regarding consent and sexual violence with alcohol involved sexual activity, various social norms influenced the extent to which they perceived these situations as problematic. Figure 1 presents these social norms, how participants communicated and interpreted social cues that informed their perceptions of social norms, and how their perceptions of these social norms influenced the extent to which they recognized the situations as problematic. I will discuss each in the following sections.

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Figure 1

Impact of Social Norms and Cues and Communication on the Extent Sexual Situations Involving Alcohol were Perceived as Problematic



Crossing the line. Participants described their perception of a line of acceptable behavior (i.e., a social norm) that, once crossed, might be considered problematic. Situations involving alcohol and potential or actual sexual activity often involved an initial escalating event in which participants believed the situation “crossed a line” from being normative and non-threatening to potentially risky and problematic. These escalating events typically involved the increased intensity of the observed sexual activity (e.g., when two people progress from dancing to kissing or “making out”) or behaviors that usually proceed sexual activities in isolated or private settings (e.g., two people that had been flirting or engaged in some sexual activity going home together or entering a private room at a party). For many participants, these escalating events were the initial “red flags” that prompted them to identify the situation as having potential to lead to SV.

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To determine if the situation was problematic from there, participants considered additional information such as the degree to which the individuals involved were aware of what they were doing and wanted to engage in the sexual activity, and whether they were too intoxicated to make that decision. In the following excerpt, the PB, “Joanna”, was at a fraternity party with her sorority sisters. Joanna described how the situation with one of her sisters, Jackie (PV), was getting progressively more extreme, with Jackie eventually going upstairs into a private bedroom with a man (PP):

"But the sister that I mentioned earlier she was, well she did try to get me to drink first of all but she was already like out of it. Because she had, she had a decent amount to drink. And then um, then like next thing I know like she's dancing really close to several guys. And I'm like oh my gosh, I don't know? And so, I was like okay I'll just let her be. And then there was one particular guy that she like it was like, it was like oh, get a room type thing. And so, I was just like oh gosh I don't know what to think about this. And then the next thing you know I see her walking upstairs with this guy. And I was just like oh shoot. And so, I didn't really know what to do."

Joanna explained how she noted when Jackie was dancing with the PP, but decided to “just let her be” until the situation crossed a line when Jackie and the PP went into a private room at the party. That escalating event caused Joanna to consider the extent to which the situation was problematic. The following sections discuss how various social factors were weighted by participants to determine the extent to which sexual situations involving alcohol were problematic.

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PV conscious intention to engage sexual activity. While participants recognized the increased risk for sexual violence in sexual situations involving alcohol, many explained sexual activity while intoxicated is normative among college students and therefore often not seen as problematic. Additionally, participants indicated social norms that value women's sexual autonomy and explained that they did not want to prevent women from making the choice to engage in sexual activity. Despite sexual activity involving alcohol often being viewed as acceptable and wanting to support women's sexual freedom and exploration, alcohol related sexual situations were sometimes perceived by participants as problematic. The results presented here will discuss the factors that lead participants to perceive instances of intoxicated sexual activity more or less problematic under certain circumstances.

Participants' perceptions of potential victims' (PV) conscious intention to engage in the sexual activity was imperative to determining the extent to which the situation was problematic. Perceived *conscious intention* is comprised of two components: 1) whether the PV wanted to engage in sexual activity (i.e., does the person want to do this?) and 2) if they were sober enough to make that decision given their current state in a way that that they would not regret later (i.e., is the person capable of making this decision?).

Generally, the more participants perceived PVs' conscious intention to engage in the sexual activity the less problematic the situation was. However, participants reported ambiguity regarding one or both components of PVs' conscious intention to engage in sexual activity. Participants discussed how they interpreted social contextual cues in attempts to reduce ambiguity. The results presented here will discuss what these social contextual factors were and how they impacted participant to perceptions of occurrences intoxicated sexual activity as problematic under certain circumstances while not in others. First, I will discuss how the PV's

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level of intoxication influenced the extent to which the PB thought they were sober enough to consciously make this decision in a way that they would not regret later. Following that, I will discuss the social indicators of whether or not the PV wanted to engage in sexual activity, including communication with the PV or other bystanders, their familiarity of the PV's typical behavior, the prior relationship (or lack thereof) between PV and PP. Lastly, the impact of how trustworthy the PB perceived the PP was will be discussed.

PV conscious intention: ability to make decision.

PV level of intoxication. While participants acknowledged that alcohol consumption has the potential to inhibit individuals' ability to make rationale or reasonable decisions, they explained it is normal to engage in sexual activity while drinking among college students. Therefore, some levels of intoxication during sexual activity were not perceived as concerning. One factor that influenced the extent to which the situation was problematic was how intoxicated the individuals involved were perceived to be.

Level of perceived PV intoxication was the primary factor influencing the extent to which the PB saw them as able to make the decision to engage in sexual activity, given their current state. Part of their assessment of the PV's ability to make the decision was whether they believed that the PV was making a decision that they would regret later. Some level of PV intoxication was not necessarily seen as problematic, but participants became concerned if the PV crossed into a more extreme level of intoxication and/or if they believed the PV would regret the decision later.

Participants used a variety of social cues to determine how intoxicated the PV was. For example, PBs determined how intoxicated the PV was based on how much they were observed drinking (i.e., how many drinks they literally saw the person have) or the person exhibiting

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specific behaviors that would indicate the level of intoxication. Some behaviors, such as being slightly more outgoing or talkative, were perceived to indicate that the PV was mildly inebriated. Other behaviors, such as stumbling or slurring words, indicated to participants that the PV was heavily intoxicated. Participants used these cues to determine if the person was intoxicated to the point of concern regarding their ability to consciously decide if they wanted to engage in sexual activity.

Generally, what was perceived as mild levels of PV intoxication were not seen as a cause for concern by participants. In one scenario, Ada (PB) was at a house party with her friend Ruby (PV). Ada described her initial concern that Ruby wanted to go home with a man (PP) because she knew Ruby had been drinking. However, the Ada noted that Ruby was not exhibiting behavior that indicated she was too drunk to make this decision, so Ada concluded she was fine and the situation was not problematic:

“And I’m like, she wasn’t drunk but she was kind of buzzed, which was why I was concerned. I’m like does she really know what’s doing? But like she was walking fine and she seemed to have coherent conversations so I think she was fine.”

Ada had initial concerns about Ruby leaving the party with the PP because she was drinking and Ada was not sure if she was sober enough to make this decision. Ada saw Ruby’s ability to walk fine and have coherent conversations as indicative of her being sober enough to make that decision.

In situations in which the PV was perceived to be heavily intoxicated, the PB was typically more concerned. In the following excerpt, Abdul (PB) was leaving a party with his friends, including his friend Maddy (PV) who was heavily intoxicated. Abdul explained he was concerned when Mady said she wanted to walk home alone with Toby.

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“And then we left around 2:00 in the morning. And I knew she was very, very drunk. And I was as well at the time. But I think she was worse off because she’s like lighter and she’d drunk basically as much as I had. Um... And so, we were walking out and then we had gone to the cross off point between like we had to go to the opposite direction to get our apartment. She had to go the other way to get to hers. This was like right off campus. Like the apartment was like probably like three minutes away from like the center of campus. Um... And then I was, like I said, I’m just going to go; I’m not going to worry. And the other guy was like oh I’ll walk you back. And that’s when like the red flag went up.”

Abdul explained that he was concerned because he knew Mady must have been drunk because she had as much to drink as he had, but was lighter, therefore he thought even more intoxicated than himself. This caused Abdul to be concerned when he realized Mady intended to walk home alone with Toby.

While typically the more intoxicated a potential victim was, the more concerned the participant was, higher levels of intoxication were perceived as less problematic if the PV communicated to the participant directly that she wanted to engage in sexual activity. In other words, PBs’ concerns regarding PVs’ ability to consent were decreased if the PV reassured the PB that it was something she wanted to do. This is described in-depth later in the “Communication with Potential Victim” section.

PV conscious intention: wanted to engage. Ambiguity regarding PVs intention to--or the degree to which the PV wanted to--engage in sexual activity increased PBs’ initial concern that the situation may be problematic. Participants explained this initial concern involved whether or not one of the people involved will regret their behavior later, or the extent to which both parties wanted to be doing what they are doing. In the following excerpt, Abdul expressed his initial concern about whether Mady wanted to engage in the behavior:

“...these things happen unfortunately kind of often so I just wanted to make sure that this was something she wanted to do. And not something that like you know, she would, like her feeling taken advantage of.”

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Abdul explained how they wanted to check in with Mady to make sure she wanted to be doing that and did not feel taken advantage of.

Therefore, to determine if the situation was problematic, PBs needed to reduce ambiguity regarding PVs' intentions. To do so, participants considered multiple social norms and cues including: communication with the PV or other bystanders, their familiarity of the PV's typical behavior, the prior relationship between the PV and PP.

Communication with PV. Communication between the PB and PV was often critical for the PB to be able to determine if the situation was problematic. The PB's perceptions of a woman's intentions to engage in sexual activity were directly linked with communication. This theme indicates clear, direct communication of intent between the PV and the PB decreased their concern, whereas a lack of direct communication increased participant bystanders' concerns. Communication between the PV and the PB included direct verbal or non-verbal communication, and took place in multiple platforms including face-to-face, texts, or phone calls.

A lack of clear communication with the PV typically led the PB to perceive the situation as more problematic. In a few scenarios, PBs explained their initial concerns were intensified by a lack of clear communication with the PV. In one such example, Aneta and Melina had gone to a party together. Melina met a stranger with whom she was flirting, and the situation progressed to them going outside together to make out. Aneta described a nonverbal exchange with Melina just before she went outside with the PP for the first time. Aneta described how it was not clear what Melina had intended to communicate:

“Um, so then she goes outside. ...I make eye contact with her as she's going outside. I'm like, like I show her this hand motion, I'm like what's going on? And she's like, like

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waves me off. And she's like go. And I'm like, very vague statement like go away, go with me? Go? I'm like oh. I was kind of concerned. Um, and then after half an hour she didn't come back inside."

There continued to be a lack of communication between Aneta and Melina throughout the night, which increased Aneta's concern. The situation progressed when Melina left the party with the PP, without having communicated her plans. Aneta was even more concerned when Melina did not answer her phone.

"Like initially I was very fearful. I'm like oh no, they were like kissing a few minutes ago. And now they're gone and I'm like ohhhh. Um, but then I texted her and called her and she wasn't responding. I'm like now I'm really concerned."

So, while Aneta was initially concerned about Melina and the PP going outside together and apparently leaving the party together, she became even more concerned when Melina did not answer her phone calls.

Typically, if the PV directly communicated, either verbally or non-verbally, to the PB that she wanted to engage in sexual activity, the situation was perceived as less ambiguous and therefore less problematic. For example, in Abdul's situation where Mady was going to walk home alone with an unknown PP, Abdul's concerns were lessened by Mady verbally reassuring him she would be okay, and that she would call him once she was home safely.

"And so, I was just making sure, and they, she was like oh no, he's fine. And he's a cool guy and he like made promises to me as well, like, and made sure that she would um text me back. She didn't immediately so I was pretty worried for a little while. But she just forgot to check her messages. Um, she ended up messaging me around 3:00 in the morning. Yeah, so I was a little worried for a while, but it ended up being fine."

While Abdul was initially concerned because Mady was not returning his texts, he was not concerned once she did finally respond.

In the scenario where Melina and the PP left the party without having communicated her plans, Aneta explained how Melina eventually texted her back and stated her intention to stay

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with the PP.

“Um, but she texts back she’s like I’m fine. I’m with him, I’m just going to stay with him tonight. So, it was, I thought it would be a bad situation. And then I was really concerned for her safety. But there was consent on both sides. Um, and then it turned out to be okay. And they went on a couple dates since um, so it’s like evolved into something else. But at the time it just didn’t look good, because he was a little bit older and like he kind of, they both left the party without really communicating it to anybody... So like I was initially very concerned but then she communicated to me. She’s like I’m fine. I’m with him, like I want to stay with him at his place tonight. So, there was consent on both sides so I’m like okay, then it will be okay.”

Once Melina texted Aneta back and communicated her intentions, it relieved Aneta’s previous concerns.

The typical pattern observed in the data (and described in the last scenario) was that situations were perceived by PBs as less problematic if the PV clearly communicated their intention to engage in sexual activity. Such direct communication could even assuage a PB’s concerns about the situation even when the PV was showing signs of extreme intoxication.

Participant bystanders were also able to reduce ambiguity in PVs’ intentions by using their prior knowledge or familiarity of PVs and their relationship with the PP to determine if the PV’s behavior in the situation was typical as opposed to something the PV might only have been doing because they were intoxicated and was therefore likely to regret.

Prior knowledge and familiarity of PV. The more PBs knew about the PV and their typical behaviors prior to the situation, the more PBs felt they could judge what the PV would or would not intend to do. How closely the PV’s behavior in the situation aligned with what the PB perceived as the PV’s typical behavior influenced PBs’ perceptions about whether the PV really wanted to engage in sexual activity or not.

The PB’s understanding of the PV increased their level of concern when the PV’s behavior was seen as out of the ordinary for the PV, potentially indicating they did not have the

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intention to engage in sexual activity. Having prior relationships with PVs provided PBs with the knowledge of what is typical behavior, enabling them to more readily recognize atypical behavior as something the PV might regret and was only doing because they had been drinking. For example, in one scenario, Tamara (PB) was aware that Winona (PV) had a boyfriend. Tamara explained how she was confident Winona would not want to sleep with Johnny (PP) because she had a partner and would not want to cheat on him.

“Tamara: And, um... and she had a boyfriend, so I was like okay, this isn't, like, what she would want.

Interviewer: And... and why, um, would that, like, concern you?

Tamara: Um, just... just because, one, they were both drunk and, like, consent... like you can't give consent when you're drunk, so, um... yeah. With both of them being drunk there would be no consent whatsoever and... yeah, it just... yeah, like I said, just... and the fact that she had a boyfriend, that's a huge thing.”

In another situation, Natalie (PB) had seen Briana (PV) drunkenly make out with someone at a bar in a previous incident, which Briana had later expressed regret over. So, in a later situation, when they were at a bar together and Briana started to make out with a man (PP), Natalie was confident this was problematic because Briana likely was not aware of what she was doing and would regret it again.

“And, but my friend she was a little kind of drunk and so we were all just like dancing with each other and then he like comes over and like uh, starts dancing with her and just like, this is fine. Like it's kind of like a dungeon anyway, like we're all having a good time. Then like I saw them making out...And this like reiterated like the position that she's in and like she'd done it again at a different bar one time and was like making out with this guy like the entire time. I'm like, let's not pull another...like, I forgot his name, but like don't pull another, that guy, like you know, let's just dance and have a good time. And she's like yeah, let's do it. So, like when we...everything was fine after that, but it's kind of like, girl, like not right now.”

Based on how Briana had regretted making out with someone at a bar in an earlier situation, Natalie was confident she would not want to do it again in the later situation discussed above.

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In other situations, the PVs behaviors were perceived as typical, which lead the PB to be less concerned the situation was problematic. For example, Abdul reflected on the fact that Mady went out more often than he and his other friends. So, despite his initial concerns about her being walked home from a party alone with the PP, Abdul concluded that this was something she did often and was therefore was not problematic.

“But it was definitely different with this one friend who does to go parties without us more often. So, I’m like imagining, yeah, she does this all the time, she knows what she’s doing, she’s more savvy than me, in the situation.”

Abdul used his prior knowledge that Mady went out and drank frequently to conclude she was savvy in the situation and therefore capable to safely make the decision to go home alone with the PP.

Prior knowledge of relationship between PV and PP. Prior knowledge of the relationship between the PV and PP also helped PBs determine the extent to which they perceived the situation as problematic. Knowledge of the PV and PP’s relationship led to increased concern in some situations and decreased concern in others. Typically, in situations in which the pair were not in an ongoing romantic relationship, the PB had additional concerns about whether the PV was sure about what she was doing and might regret it later. In the situation at the fraternity party (discussed earlier) in which Jackie, one of Joanna’s sorority sisters, was going upstairs with a man she met that night (the PP), Joanna explained how the fact that neither she nor Jackie had known the PP prior to that night made her concerned:

“We did not know him [PP] at all. She did not know him at all either. That’s why I was just like oh shoot. Like is that what she’s going for? I don’t know? So that’s why I just wanted to make sure, because it was this house filled with fraternity guys I did not know. The only ones who knew them were our sisters from [college] and that was it.”

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Later in the same interview, when asked whether she thought others would have reacted similarly to the situation, Joanna explained:

“I guess it depends, like maybe some people would be like oh well we'll just leave them be, sure. Um yeah, I guess it just depends on the person. But a lot of the times you would think like people would not do anything I guess because it's a party and it's somewhat expected happening at parties. Um, the only reason why I decided not, or I decided to step up was because it was a guy that we did not know and she did not know for sure. So, I just wanted to make sure that everything was okay with that. And that's what she wanted to do.”

Joanna articulated how the absence of any prior relationship between Jackie and the PP played a significant role in her questioning if going in the room with the PP was “what [Jackie] wanted to do” and her concern about the situation being potentially problematic.

PV conscious intention: Conflicting factors. The degree to which the PB perceived the PV was aware of and wanted to engage in sexual activity (i.e., conscious intention) directly influenced the degree to which they thought the situation was problematic. PBs considered multiple social norms to determine if the PV had conscious intention, including: communication with the PV, their familiarity of PV's typical behavior, and the prior relationship between the PV and PP. In general, the PBs were less concerned when the PV directly communicated their intention whereas a lack of direct communication increased their concerns. Additionally, PBs were more concerned when the PVs behavior was seen as out of the ordinary, potentially indicating PV did not have awareness of what they were doing or the intention to engage in sexual activity, but were less concerned when the PVs behaviors were perceived as typical. Typically, in situations in which the pair were not in an ongoing romantic relationship, the PB had additional concerns about whether the PV was sure about what she was doing and might regret it later.

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In any one situation, the PBs often focused on more than one of these social norms to determine the PV's level of conscious intention to engage in sexual activity. In some cases, various norms conflicted with one another, making it challenging for the PB to ultimately determine the extent to which the situation was problematic. For example, in one scenario, Sabina (PV) clearly stated her intention to get drunk and have sex with a mutual friend, Aiden (PP), later that evening while sober. However, Sabina became heavily intoxicated prior to the sexual activity taking place. Additionally, Sabina was a virgin at the time, making the behavior uncharacteristic for her, increasing Vanessa's (PB) concern. These two factors minimized the degree to which Sabina's stated intentions reassured Vanessa, resulting in her feeling conflicted about the extent to which the situation was problematic. In the following quote, Vanessa explained how she felt conflicted because she wanted to respect Sabina's decision to engage in sexual activity, which was made while sober, with the fact that she was so intoxicated:

“And like we all knew she had way too much... And there was no like sexual violence, but I definitely think that the guy took advantage of the fact that she was drunk when they hooked up. And so, I don't think that it should have actually like taken place, but I also... like I was confused because I was like okay, she made this decision already and then she wanted to act on it when she was drunk. So, like I don't know if that necessarily... like I don't know what that means...I think it's more so about like the fact that... and her... like her mindset originally like was set on... while she was sober on doing this. And I think that like over and over again you ask someone if they're okay, and me like... I mean you trust the guy and the girl, but it's almost like you realize that like it's probably not the best situation to be happening between them. And so, like it's confusing in the sense like you don't want to like take away something that like they want.”

In this situation, Vanessa explained being torn over whether she should have prevented Sabina from engaging, despite finding the situation problematic, due to the fact that Sabina clearly stated her intention prior to drinking. This situation illustrates the complexity in which social norms around intention and ability to consent play out in real life scenarios. In addition to the various social cues PBs used to inform their perceptions of the PV's conscious intention, PBs used prior

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knowledge of the PP and extent to which he was perceived as trustworthy to determining the situation was problematic.

Prior Knowledge of PP. PBs' prior familiarity of the PP influenced the extent to which they were concerned the PP would "take advantage" of the PV. When participants were friendly and familiar with the PP, some reported being less concerned about the PV's well-being because they were confident the PP was a "good guy," suggesting he is trustworthy enough not to take advantage of the PV. In one example, Patrice (PB) was close friends with both Roxanne (PV) and Carter (PP). Despite the fact the Roxanne and Carter had not shown romantic interest in one other prior to that evening and that they were both heavily intoxicated, Patrice explained that she was not concerned because Carter "isn't a bad guy" who would take advantage of Roxanne.

Patrice described when she and other mutual friends first saw the Roxanne and Carter kissing:

"...And we'd be like watching them, and like someone would be like oh my gosh, like look at [Roxanne] and [Carter]. And be like oh, like weird, just because like it's like funny too. Because they're your teammates, they're your friends. Like obviously we know that [Carter] isn't a bad guy. Like he's not going to totally take advantage of her if she's been drinking...I mean the only problem that I would have, like it was a little bit concerning is that she had drank a lot. And she had never really drank before. So, she was getting pretty drunk. So, I was more concerned with like her just like being safe more than just her and like whatever relationship was going on with [Carter] at the time. Like um, just because like I do know [Carter] pretty well. And so like even if she was really drunk, I know he'd like make sure she'd get home safe. Or like, so I was kind of just like more concerned over like oh is she going to be sick at this party? Or like is she like, something like that?"

So, while Patrice perceived Roxanne as heavily intoxicated and intending to engage in sexual activity, they did not perceive the situation as problematic because they were confident Carter was a "good guy" and would not engage in sexual activity on the more extreme end of the spectrum, such as sexual intercourse, while Roxanne was so intoxicated. They were instead concerned about Roxanne getting home safely or potentially getting sick at the party.

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When the PB had little to no prior knowledge of the PP (i.e., PP was a stranger), the situation was perceived as more problematic. Participants explained that without prior knowledge of the PP, they were unable to accurately determine what his intentions were or if he was trustworthy. In the following excerpt, Aneta described Melina leaving a party they were both attending with a man they both had met that night, Leo (PP). Aneta explained she felt uncertain about whether Leo could be trusted:

“And just because we were talking to [Leo], well we met him that night, and like he seems like a nice guy from my conversation. But at the same time, anybody can put on a happy or you know, fake face for a couple of hours. Um, and it was just him and her walking out together. And my mind just jumped to different scenarios that could happen. I’m like oh this could be bad. Like um, the fact that they were alone together that it was just them going out. Like if it was a group of friends, I would have been more comfortable. But it was just them.”

Not having known Leo prior to that night, Aneta was more concerned about Melina being alone with him. Without their own prior knowledge of the PP, the PBs in these scenarios sometimes had to use other communication and social cues to determine the extent to which the situation was problematic, such as communication with other bystanders (OB).

Communication with OB. When the PB had limited prior knowledge of the PV, PP or the relationship between them, they reported ambiguity about the PVs intention to engage in sexual activity and/or whether or not the PP might “take advantage” of her. In these situations, communication between the PB and other bystanders (OBs) was used to reduce ambiguity and ultimately determine if the situation was problematic.

In situations in which the PP was unknown to the PB, participants communicated with the PV or OBs to gather additional information about the PP. While PBs reported initial concerns due to limited knowledge of the PP, these concerns decreased if the PV or OBs told them he was a good guy. In the scenario described above, in which Aneta was concerned that Melina left a

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party with Leo, a man they both had met that night, Aneta needed additional information about Leo from other bystanders who knew more about him. Aneta asked them for information about Leo once she realized he and Melina had left party. Other bystanders explained Leo was a “good guy.” However, without knowing him or the OBs providing the information, Aneta was slightly reassured but was concerned when she heard Leo was older than Melina:

“Um, but then after asking around, people at the party they’re like yeah he’s a good guy. He’s just a little bit older, the fact that he’s a good guy that kind of calmed me down.”

Aneta explained that she was less concerned about Leo after the OBs told her he was a “good guy.”

Another participant gave an example of situational ambiguity stemming from her not knowing either the PP or PV or their relationship with one another. Ursula (PB) explained the PV and PP were clearly heavily intoxicated and entering a bedroom together at a party. Although initially concerned, she felt unable to determine if the situation was problematic without additional information. She specifically mentioned being concerned that the PP and PV did not know each other, because she had not seen them together or talking earlier, and that the PP was taking advantage of the PV:

“Um, like I said they both seemed like pretty intoxicated... I was like oh like because I mean like I said, like there was a pretty good familiarity in the [group of friends attending the party]. But there were a couple people like me, who like didn’t really know anyone. And didn’t really know um, like didn’t really know anyone there. We’re just kind of there for the party. And so, um, like I guess I just felt like oh maybe, because I hadn’t seen them talk beforehand I guess? Or [hadn’t see that they] were, like, together...”

As a result of not knowing many people at the party, including the PV or PP, Ursula was not able to determine their relationship to each other and if it was problematic they were going into a bedroom together while intoxicated. To get additional information so that she could determine

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the extent to which the situation was a problem, Ursula communicated with another bystander, Ezra, her close friend with whom she came to the party. Ezra explained that the PP and PV were in a dating relationship (i.e., boyfriend, girlfriend), which led Ursula to determine the situation was not problematic. As Ursula explained:

“[Being informed the two were dating] helped because I mean most of like I would say a good chunk of the time, majority of the time, you would think like people in relationships have like a relationship of trust and respect. And stuff like that. So, you know, like hearing that they were in a relationship um, made me think that okay so you know, there is like familiarity between them. And like you know, maybe they do probably have that relationship of trust and respect. And like knowing each other’s boundaries and like all that kind of stuff. So, like maybe not, but my mentality was like a good chunk of the time, they do, so let’s hope for the best.”

Ursula concluded the situation was not problematic because the PP and PV were dating and most likely had outlined trust and respect, which led her to be optimistic there was not a risk of SV, despite their level of intoxication.

Men’s Expectations for Sexual Activity

Two participants reported distinct sexual situations involving alcohol in which men PP’s stated their intentions to engage in sexual activity in the future. While other sexual situations involving alcohol included scenarios in which the PV and PP were either currently engaged in some form of sexual activity (e.g., kissing) or behavior that was perceived to typically proceed sexual activity (e.g., going home together from a party, entering a private bedroom), these two scenarios were unique in not having either of those features present when the PB became involved. Therefore, these scenarios were conceptually different from other sexual situations involving alcohol due to where in the progression of the potential risk situation the PB became involved. Examples of *men’s expectation for sexual activity* include plans to go to a party later that night with the intention finding a person to have sex with. Both situations involved men who

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stated their intentions to engage in sexual activity with women and in both situations the PBs, who were also both men, discussed the men who stated their intentions as the potential perpetrators. In one situation, the PP identified a specific person they were hoping to engage in sexual activity with, while in the other, the PP just stated a general desire to engage in sexual activity with a woman they would find later.

PBs in both scenarios were concerned by what they perceived to be the PPs endorsing problematic social norms, such as men's expectations for sexual activity and the objectification of women, that lead men to perpetrate sexual assault. In the following excerpt, Santiago (PB) talked to his roommate's friend Cole (PP) as he and the roommate got ready to go out for a night of drinking. Santiago explained how Cole stated his intention to get drunk and find a drunk woman to have sex with.

"They were hoping, you know, to come back with a, you know, drunk individual... you know, a drunk female. And I said, you know, that's... that's what you're hoping to look out for like a... you know, that's what you're hoping to have... be the outcome of your night? And he said, you know, something to the effect of, you know, like what... you know, if I go out, what's the point if... if that doesn't happen?"

Santiago challenged the Cole's statement, and asked him about whether that was a healthy goal to have and whether he had considered issues of consent. Then, Cole defended that this was normal. Santiago described his reaction:

"You know, I was just kind of confused. And I was like well, you know, do you consider that consent? Like do you consider that girl enjoying that moment if that were to happen... And really, do you think her plans are to go get drunk and go home with some guy? Like do you think that's her plan?... when he was sort of defending himself like well, yeah, that's what all college guys do... I was like And I was just like what you're describing is like rape in some context, and it's not consent and like that's just ugly to come out of your mouth."

Santiago reflected on how he explained that sexual situations involving alcohol could be SV or rape in some contexts.

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Unwanted Sexual Attention

Six participants identified situations involving unwanted sexual attention. *Unwanted sexual attention* refers to scenarios in which the bystander believed a victim was subjected to the unwanted verbal (e.g., sexual jokes or comments) or physical (e.g., close dancing, touching) sexual attention of a perpetrator. As opposed to the sexual situations involving alcohol discussed previously, these scenarios involve one sided sexual advances made by the PP that were unwelcomed and unreciprocated by the PV. In all of these scenarios, the PBs perceived the PP as in pursuit of sexual interactions with the PV, while the PV was not interested. All but one of the situations took place at a social setting in which alcohol was involved, such as at a house party or bar. The one exception took place on public transportation. In every case, the PP was a man and the PV was a woman. All the scenarios were seen as problematic to some extent (i.e., the PB expressed some level of concern), but the degree to which varied based on various social norms. The social norms that influenced the degree to which PBs perceived these situations as problematic will be discussed.

Participants explained sexual advances in highly sexualized social settings (e.g., bars and parties), even when unwanted, are normal and unavoidable occurrences for college women. Despite the normalcy of these instances, some participants explained these situations were problematic because they are a part of broad unhealthy social norms related to men's sexual entitlement to women. Other PBs explained that the fact that the sexual advances were unwanted made them problematic. In order to conclude the advances were in fact unwelcome, PBs used verbal and nonverbal communication from the PV in the moment, as well as their familiarity with the PV (or what they understood to be PV's typical behavior). Additionally, some PBs noted the degree to which these situations were perceived as problematic was influenced by the

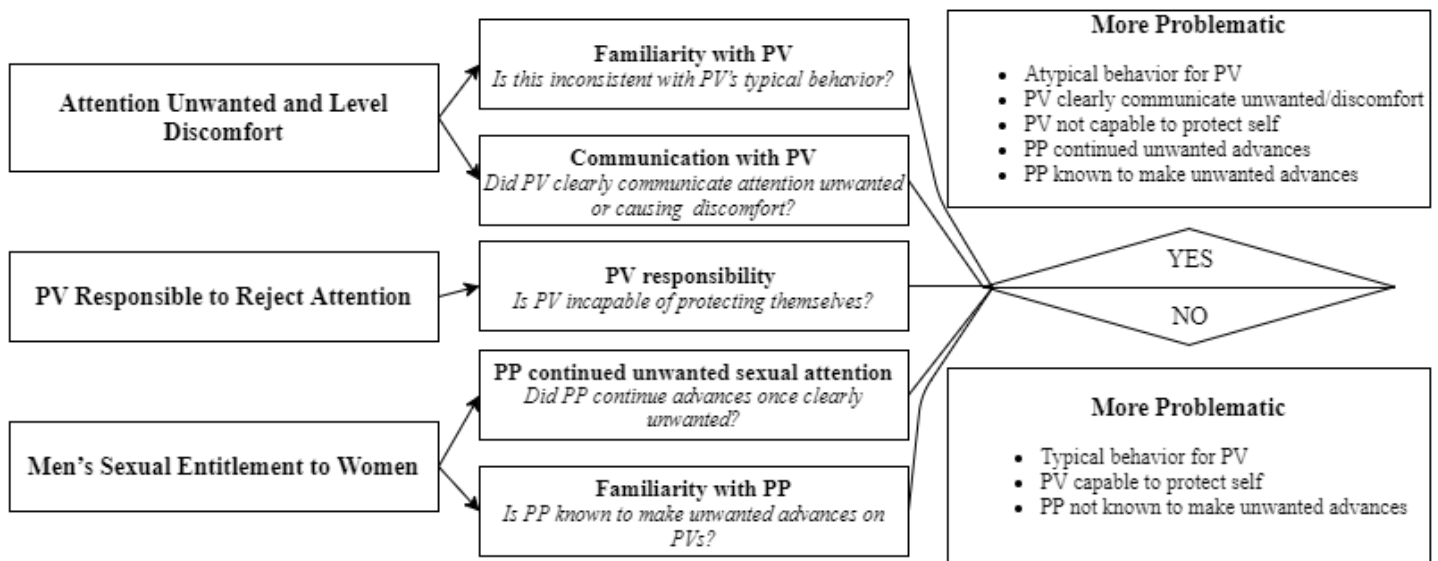
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extent to which the woman was being made uncomfortable by the advances. Communication with the PV also allowed the PB to determine their level of discomfort. The PBs also relied on their familiarity of the PP to determine the extent to which they were concerned he would continue to make sexual advances, even if they were unwanted by the PV. Situations were seen as increasingly problematic if the PP continued to make sexual advances after having been made aware it was unwelcomed by PV. Finally, PBs found situations less problematic when the PV was perceived as capable of and responsible for rejecting the unwanted advances.

Figure 2 presents these social norms, how participants communicated and interpreted social cues that informed their perceptions of social norms, and how their perceptions of these social norms influenced the extent to which they recognized the situations as problematic. I will discuss each in the following sections.

Figure 2

Impact of Social Norms and Cues and Communication on the Extent Unwanted Sexual Advances were Perceived as Problematic



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Men's sexual entitlement to women as problematic. A few participants explained they generally found social norms related to men's entitlement to make sexual advances toward women to be problematic because they are a part of broad unhealthy social norms, despite how common these types of advances are. One participant, Elisha, explained how men often do not recognize how uncomfortable their unwanted attention makes women feel:

“Because she's, I mean in general, um, I feel like a lot times, I don't think trying to make her uncomfortable, but I feel like on transportation, a lot of times when guys start talking to like a woman, um, they don't realize that they're making her uncomfortable. And kind of like, they're just not aware of what they're doing. But they should be aware of what they're doing.”

Elisha explained PPs should be aware of the potential negative consequences unwanted sexual attention has on PVs. In some situations, the PBs perceived any unwanted sexual advances as problematic, and used social cues to determine if that was the case. The PBs were often able to determine the advances were unwelcome, and therefore problematic, based on their prior knowledge or familiarity of the PV.

Prior knowledge/familiarity of PV. The more PBs knew about the PV and their typical behaviors prior to the situation, the better they were able to judge if the situation was problematic. When the behavior was seen as atypical for the PV, the PB was better able to recognize the advances as unwanted and label the situation as problematic. A few PBs explained they knew the PV was in a committed relationship and typically did not dance with other men. As a result, in situations where the PP tried to dance with the PV, the PB was more readily able to recognize the situation as atypical for the PV and concluded the attention was unwanted and problematic. For example, Della (PB) explained that she and her close friend Julia (PV) were both in long-term relationships, so they have a sort of agreement to only dance with each other when they go out.

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“Like we have boyfriends. We don’t dance with anyone but each other. And if we see us dancing with someone that is not us or our boyfriend, we definitely cut in and be like hey, stop, what you doing? ...Let them know like that that’s not okay.”

Because Della knew Julia was in a long-term relationship and did not dance with other men, she was able to immediately recognize Julia would not want to be dancing with the PP. Della goes on to explain that because she and Julia typically dance together, she immediately recognized when Julia was suddenly missing from dancing.

“We’re the only ones not dancing with guys. We’re dancing with each other. She gets separated from us like of course I’m going to notice it because I was the one who was paying the most attention to her, so it just seemed like... I’m just like what, where’s my partner? And then I see that she’s been stolen by sketch-man [PP].”

Della also went on to explain how her knowledge of the Julia’s relationship status and typical behavior lead her to immediately recognize Julia likely did not want to be dancing with this man, and therefore concluded the situation was problematic. Other PBs explained that a major factor that impacted the extent to which they found the situation problematic was if they perceived the sexual attention was causing the PV discomfort.

Communication with the potential victim and perceived discomfort. Generally, the more PBs recognized that the PV was uncomfortable with the unwanted attention, the more they saw the situation as problematic. Participants used a variety of social norms and cues to determine whether the PV was uncomfortable. Similarly to situations involving alcohol, PBs relied on verbal and nonverbal communication from the PV to determine the PV’s level of discomfort.

The more communication the PB had with the PV in the moment, the more the PB was able to recognize if the PV was uncomfortable and identify if the situation was problematic. In some situations, the PB had direct communication in which the PV stated her

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discomfort through verbal or non-verbal communication (e.g., making faces, mouthing the word “help”). In other instances, the PB could recognize that the PV was uncomfortable based on their observation of her body language or other indirect non-verbal signals. In the following excerpt, the Della described perceiving Julia’s body language and non-verbal communication as indicative of her discomfort:

“I could tell by her body language she was uncomfortable, and her nervous laugh that she was very uncomfortable...She just looked like her eyes were like really big, and she was just like... she was doing the thing where she... she has this like smile that she’ll do where she’s just like ‘ughhh’.”

Della understood the Julia’s behaviors such as facial expressions (i.e., making big eyes) and nervous laughter as communicating her discomfort with the PP’s unwanted advances. In addition to PVs’ level of discomfort, the PBs’ familiarity of the PP was another factor that influenced the extent to which the situation was perceived as problematic.

Prior knowledge/familiarity of PP. The PB’s prior familiarity of the PP influenced the extent to which they were concerned the PP would continue to make unwanted sexual advances towards the PV. When PBs were familiar with PP, it decreased their concern in some situations and increased it in others. The PBs who were less concerned reported they were confident the PP would not continue making unwanted advances. For example, one situation involved two friends, Mia (the PV) and William (the PP), of Dylan (the PB) dancing at a concert. Mia told Dylan that William had started to touch her in a way she did not want. While Dylan was somewhat concerned that Mia felt uncomfortable, he was less concerned because he knew William and felt confident he would not continue to touch her if she told him she did not want him to. The participant told Mia she had two the following two options:

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“I was like either, A, if you want to keep dancing with him just tell him to stop [touching you]. And he will because I know him. Or, B, just stop dancing with him.”

Dylan expressed confidence that William would stop if Mia told him to. Later, Dylan further clarified this confidence was due to his prior knowledge of William, and stated he would have been much more concerned if William was a stranger:

“If [William] was like a random guy, I'd be like ten times more skeptical. I would probably be just like ‘don't go back to him’. Or do the same thing with two options, but it'd be a lot more like sketch if it was a random guy. But I know the guy so that's why like I know, like I have faith that he wouldn't do anything stupid you know? ... The fact that I know my friend and he wouldn't like do anything to hurt her or anything. You know? I just had faith in that...”

Because William was a friend of Dylan's, he saw the situation as less problematic because he trusted this friend would not do anything “stupid” or to “hurt” Mia.

However, in another situation, a PB was more concerned due to their knowledge of the PP's history of predatory behavior. This PB, Leah, explained that she was “keeping an eye” on Nolan, the PP, because he was known to make unwanted advances on women:

“Because like I was kind of like keeping an eye on him because I was... I knew like he could be up to stuff. And then like I noticed, like when people are uncomfortable, so I noticed like she looked uncomfortable. And I was like oh...”

Because she was watching for potential predatory behavior from Nolan, Leah noticed the situation and that PV was uncomfortable right away. In addition to PBs prior knowledge of the PP, the PBs were more concerned if the PPs persisted after the PV made it clear the sexual attention was unwanted.

PP continued unwanted sexual attention. Typically, PBs saw situations as more problematic if the PP did not stop making sexual advances after the PV's conduct clearly demonstrated it was unwelcome. In the example with Della (PB) and Julia (PV), Della explained

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that the PP came back again after Julia directly told him she did not want to dance after he first tried:

“And we, um, were dancing, and some guy... I don’t even know who he was... just like comes up and like starts like trying to like grab her and talk to her. And she’s like no... like so she didn’t want to dance with him, and like she told him no the first time. And then a little bit later like same guy comes back... comes back around, and she’s like there he is, there he is. And I’m just like what?... And like I turn around literally for a second, and I turned back around and he’s right there in her face like trying to like, I don’t even know what he was saying to her, but like she just was like uncomfortable... we’re just going to move you away from this situation because he was creepy. Especially if [Julia] told him once and then he comes back... like what did you think, I forgot?”

Della explained the PP’s behavior was “creepy” because he was trying to dance with Julia a second time after she clearly indicated the sexual attention was unwanted by verbally asking him to stop once. While some PBs explained how factors such as repeated attempts to make sexual advances increased their concern, others reported being less concerned because they perceived that the PV was capable of rejecting the unwanted advances.

PV responsibility to reject attention. In other situations, PBs saw the situation as less problematic if they believed the PV was responsible and capable of taking the initial actions to protect themselves and stop the unwanted attention. For example, in one scenario, Paisley (the PB) saw her friend Violet (the PV) being hit on by Aaron (the PP), who was an acquaintance of theirs, at the bar. While Paisley was somewhat concerned because she perceived that Violet did not want to be talking to Aaron and that “there wasn’t really any way out” of the situation, Paisley saw the situation as less problematic because the unwanted attention was normal Violet could protect herself if the situation escalated:

“Um, and, like, I knew that she like... she might not have, like, been happy with talking to him, but, like, she was... she could deal with it... I mean I’m sure she didn’t want to [talk to him], but ... if he was going to do something that she didn’t want at all, like, she would have done something to stop it.”

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Paisley was less concerned because they perceived Violet as competent enough to handle the situation herself.

Discussion

To be effective bystanders, it is critical that students are able to complete the initial bystander intervention stages in which they recognize what the risk of SV looks like in the context of their lives and be able to identify these situations as problematic and intervention worthy. Social norms and peer communications are particularly important in these initial stages to help student bystanders address situational ambiguities that challenge their ability to identify problematic SV risk situations.

The present study utilized qualitative interviews with 17 undergraduate students from a midsize university in Chicago, Illinois to examine how social norms and peer communication influenced the degree to which the student bystanders perceived SV risk situations as problematic. This study was unique in that it asked students about their actual, rather than hypothetical, bystander experiences. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews allowed researchers to hear directly from participants how social norms influenced their perceptions during an actual bystander experience.

Key findings

Participants described two primary types of situations: *sexual situations involving alcohol* and *unwanted sexual attention*. Within each scenario type, patterns of perceived social norms and peer communications that influenced the participants' determinations of whether a situation was problematic were identified. While participants acknowledged the potential risk for SV in sexual situations involving alcohol, they described intoxicated sexual activity as socially normative and endorsed the desire to support women's sexual autonomy. In any one situation,

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the PBs discussed various social norms that influenced the extent to which the situation was perceived as problematic. Most notably, PBs questioned if the situation was problematic when there was ambiguity about the PV's conscious intention to engage in sexual activity in the following ways: 1) whether the PV wanted to engage in sexual activity and 2) was sober enough to make that decision. To reduce this ambiguity, PBs utilized the following sources of information: communication with PV or other bystanders, their familiarity of the PV's typical behavior, the prior relationship (or lack thereof) between the PV and PP. In addition to the PVs conscious intentions, the degree to which the PB perceived the PP as trustworthy impacted the extent to which they saw the situation as problematic.

In situations involving unwanted sexual attention, participants also described men's unwanted attention toward women as commonplace, particularly in social settings involving alcohol such as a bar or party. However, such advances were often seen as part of an unhealthy norm related to men's sexual entitlement to women that results in problematic situations in which a woman is being made uncomfortable by unwelcome sexual advances. The degree to which each situation was perceived as problematic was influenced by multiple social factors, including: the PB's communication with the PV, their prior knowledge of the PV and/or PP, if the PP continued their advances after it became clear it was unwelcome, and if the PV was believed to be capable of handling the situation on their own.

Consistent with prior literature, this study indicates that college students have difficulties identifying instances of SV in the context of drinking due to often conflicting social norms messages. Many participants described situations in which one or both people involved were intoxicated and therefore unable to consent to sexual activity. Based on Illinois law, such situations would be considered sexual assault. However, the prevalence of "intoxicated sexual

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activity” on college campuses has led to it become a normalized part of college life for many students. Research indicates, because it is so common for college students to engage in sexual activity while drinking, it is difficult for students to identify such instances as sexual assault, and instead perceive these occurrences as consensual encounters in which their peers are “actively and willingly seeking alcohol-fueled sexual encounters” (Pugh et al., 2016; p. 413). Participants’ responses in this study showed similar patterns in which situations were not labeled as SV despite meeting the legal definition of sexual assault. Participants often acknowledged the effects of alcohol on decision-making and the risk that individuals may have been acting in a way they would not have if they had been sober and expressed concern about the possibility the PV would regret their behavior later. It was less common, however, for participants to explicitly acknowledge that one cannot consent while intoxicated for that reason. Prior research has shown the normalization of these instances make it harder for students to recognize the occurrence of SV within hypothetical vignettes unless the situation clearly fits cultural stereotypes of rape, such as stranger rape (Deming, 2013). In line with prior research, participants in this study were better able to identify problematic alcohol involved SV risk scenarios as such if it fit extreme cultural stereotypes about SV, such as individuals being so intoxicated they cannot walk or talk properly.

This study identified additional factors that influenced the degree to which students evaluate sexual situations involving alcohol as problematic within actual bystander experiences. As previously mentioned, students often only recognized these situations as problematic SV risk situations when there was an extreme lack of clarity about the PV’s intention to engage in sexual activity due to a lack of communication between the PV and the PB and/or there were serious concerns about the ability to consent due to extremely high levels of intoxication.

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Within sexual situations involving alcohol, students used numerous social cues to determine if the situation was problematic, one of which was often the bystander's perception of the PV's conscious intention. Prior literature also indicates that students face challenges in determining whether or not a situation had a risk of SV due to ambiguity around potential victims' intentions and ability to consent (Abbey, 2002; Deming, 2013; Pugh, Ningard, Vander Ven & Butler, 2016). Additionally, PBs had difficulty identifying the line between sexual activity in which the PV had been drinking (i.e., "drunk sex") but was perceived as being able to provide consent and situations in which the PV was too intoxicated to possibly consent. Students struggled between these two, in which they recognized the PVs had been drinking and were at risk of regretting their behavior, although participants did not explicitly conceptualize this as SV.

In addition to the PV's perceived level of intoxication, the current study moves beyond prior literature to identify other social contextual cues to determine whether or not they saw the situation as problematic, including knowledge of PVs typical behavior and relationship to PP, and their knowledge of the PP. To develop effective bystander intervention programs, is it critical to understand what factors are identified as important and how bystanders weigh them to conclude whether or not they believe there is risk of SV.

Previous research indicates how communication with other bystanders can help individuals identify problematic situations. Misavage and Richardson (1974) found group size was negatively correlated with bystander action only when there was not communication among, indicating the importance of verbal communication among bystanders to allow for accurate evaluations of each other's reactions, reinforcement of helping norms, and providing other useful information. This study highlighted the role of peer communication, including other bystanders and the PVs and PPS, to help PBs identify if the situation is problematic during the initial stages

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of intervention. One empirical contribution of this study, is the importance of bystanders' communication with the individuals directly involved (i.e., PV and PP), rather than solely OBs. Study participants often relied on communication with PV to determine the extent to which the situation was problematic. This study also found that in some situations, OBs helped confirm there was a problem, while in others they were used to disconfirm notions that there is a problem (e.g., if the OBs say the PP is a good guy).

Prior research has shown college students believe women are responsible to act in a way that keeps them safe from SV. Using vignettes depicting hypothetical instances of SV, Deming (2013) found that women students believed other women were responsible to “construct and navigate ‘safe’ social situations in which she was protected from sexual victimization”. Participants explained women should behave in appropriate ways in order to avoid victimization, and blamed the victims in the vignettes based on their alcohol consumption, previous relationships, and varying degree to which consent was communicated while excusing the perpetrator's behavior. Pugh et al.'s (2016) qualitative study looked at the potential impact of student perceptions of alcohol use and SV on hypothetical bystander behaviors. The study found students tended to focus on characteristics of the potential victim rather than the situation when determining if it was intervention worthy. Interestingly, when it came to situations depicting intoxicated victims, half of the participants indicated they viewed intoxicated victims as vulnerable and worthy of help while the other half was more likely to attribute blame to an intoxicated victim. The latter, victim blaming group of participants acknowledged the potential victim was “at risk”, but were responsible for the situation due to their past sexual promiscuity or level of intoxication and therefore not worthy of help.

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This study provides new insights as to how similar patterns of victim blaming and responsibility play out in actual bystander scenarios, and how these patterns are impacted by social norms such as victim blaming and perceptions of intoxicated sexual activity. In both types of scenarios (i.e., sexual situations involving alcohol and unwanted attention) participants typically looked to the PV for indicators of a problem using social cues such as the PVs level of intoxication, typical behavior, prior relationships, and communication of conscious intent. As reported by Pugh et al. (2016), participants in this study tended to focus more on the history and behavior of the PV, rather than the characteristics of the actual situation. For example, in situations in which PBs were concerned about an intoxicated PVs conscious intentions to engage in sexual activity, the PB typically was more focused on interpreting the PVs “decision” using communication and prior knowledge of PV, often regardless of PVs level of intoxication or the actions of the PP. Therefore, PBs primarily were concerned with PVs decision, rather than concern that PP was taking advantage of PVs vulnerable state. While some participants in this study mentioned additional characteristics of the situation, such as prior knowledge of the PP, participants largely used their perceptions of PV to determine the extent to which the situation was problematic. Future research should work to continue unpacking the complexity of how perceived social norms related to rape myths and sexual situations involving alcohol influence bystanders’ ability to identify SV risk scenarios as problematic and intervention worthy in real-world social contexts.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study provides several beneficial insights into how social norms influence college students’ actual bystander experiences, but is not without limitations. The first limitation is the types of bystander situations participants encountered and potential limitations to the

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generalizability of the findings. In particular, every situation depicted by participants involved heterosexual pairings in which the potential victim was a woman and the potential perpetrator was a man. This limitation did not allow for considerations of how student bystanders' abilities to identify situation as problematic play out in conditions involving men who are victims, woman perpetrators, or situations with same-sex PP/PV pairings. Future research would benefit from examining a wider variety of risk situations with more diversity in the pairings of the PV and PP (e.g., same-sex PP/PV, inclusion of non-gender binary PV or PP) to further explore student bystander behaviors in more gender diverse settings.

Additionally, because all participants were recruited from a sample of students who either self-selected or were mandated through their student leadership position to attend the bystander intervention workshop, the sample may not be representative of the larger student population. This may have affected the study findings in that many of the participants were more knowledgeable about issues of SV and more easily able to identify situations as problematic or are members of social groups with pro-social norms around SV as a serious issue. Future research should recruit a more representative sample of the general student population.

This self-report procedure was also subject to issues of social desirability in that participants were more likely to identify situations in which they took action. As a result, the participants must have seen the situations as problematic to some degree. This may have affected the findings by producing a biased sample of scenario types or bystander behaviors, and not an accurate representation of common bystander experiences that students did not notice, identify as problematic or take action in. Alternative methodological approaches, such as mixed methods that utilize both quantitative responses to scenario exposure and qualitative interviewing, could better capture bystander experiences in which participants did not intervene in order to better

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understand how barriers to recognizing a situation as problematic and taking action played out within real-world experiences.

Implications for Practice and Policy

In addition to the importance of bystanders being equipped with skills to take effective action, our study highlights the importance of bystanders being equipped with the skills to determine if a situation is problematic in the first place and how students are influenced by social norms and peer communication in actual bystander situations.

The findings identify clear patterns in which participants are unable to identify situations as problematic, even though these situations meet the legal definition of SV due to PV intoxication. This study implies that bystander intervention programs should equip students with a clear, operational understanding of what SV is and the ability to recognize instances of SV in the context of their own lives. Additionally, students must be able to identify how social norms can normalize and continue to perpetuate the minimization of issues related to SV in college contexts (e.g., the ability to recognize how rape myths like “she wanted it” perpetuate victim blaming in the social contexts of their lives).

In situations where the level of risk is ambiguous, students need concrete and actionable strategies for engaging in a process of information gathering in order to identify problematic SV risk situations. For example, if a student bystander witnesses a sexual situation involving alcohol but is unsure how intoxicated the individuals involved are, and therefore unable to determine if it is problematic, having the tools gather such information is critical. These strategies could include identifying what information they need (e.g., the PV’s level of intoxication), who the PB should communicate with to get this information (e.g., PV, PP, OB), and what conversational tone to use (e.g., stern, concerned, care-free). Students could also benefit from being prepared with

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specific phrases to (e.g., “Hey! Did you have any of that liquor? How much did you have?”) to elicit this information.

Conclusions

Bystander intervention approaches show promise as an effective way to combat campus sexual violence. However, there is still work to be done to understand how to best implement these programs. In order to effectively intervene, student bystanders must be able to successfully navigate through the stages of the bystander intervention model. Students’ ability to move on to effective action in the later stages of the model hinges on their ability to complete the initial stages of recognizing risk of SV and identifying these situations as problematic and worthy of intervention. The current study helped to illuminate patterns of communication among peers and perceived social norms that influenced participants’ determinations of if a situation was problematic within their actual, rather than hypothetical, bystander experiences. Participants reported two primary types of SV risk scenarios: sexual situations involving alcohol and unwanted sexual attention. While participants described both scenario types as commonplace, various social contextual factors that influenced the degree to which they perceived the situation as problematic.

Within sexual situations involving alcohol, the PV’s level of intoxication influenced the extent to which the PB thought they were sober enough to consciously make this decision in a way that they would not regret later. Participants determined whether the PV wanted to engage in sexual activity based on communication with PV or other bystanders and their knowledge of PV’s typical behavior and the relationship (or lack thereof) between PV and PP. Additionally, the PBs prior knowledge of the PP influenced whether or not he was perceived to be a “good guy” who could be trusted not to “take advantage” of the PV. Finally, in the two situations in

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which the PPs stated their future plans to engage in sexual activity, the PBs perceived the PPs expectation for sexual activity as a problematic endorsement of unhealthy social norms that enable the perpetration of SV.

While participants also described men's unwanted sexual attention towards women as common occurrences, each scenario was perceived as problematic to some extent (i.e., the PB expressed some level of concern). Some participants saw them as a problematic symptom of broad unhealthy social norms related to men's sexual entitlement to women. Other participants perceived the situations as problematic when the attention was clearly unwanted and making the PV uncomfortable, which they recognized through communication with PV and their prior knowledge of the PV's typical behavior. The PBs also relied on their familiarity of the PP to determine the extent to which they were concerned he would continue to make sexual advances, even if they were unwanted and/or making the PV uncomfortable. PBs saw the situation as more problematic if the PP did not stop making sexual advances after the PV's conduct clearly demonstrated it was unwelcome. Finally, PBs found situations less problematic when the PV was perceived as capable of and responsible for rejecting the unwanted advances.

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Appendix A: Scenario List

Please mark if you have seen any of these things in the last 3 months.

	1. See someone who looks drunk and s/he goes to a room with someone else at a bar or party
	2. See a friend who is taking a drunk person back to his/her room at a party
	3. See a friend who looks drunk and s/he gets in a cab with someone they don't know
	4. Hear a friend plans to give someone drugs or alcohol to get sex
	5. See a friend who is hooking up with someone who was passed out
	6. Hear rumors that a friend has forced sex on someone
	7. Hear a friend has committed a rape
	8. See someone touch another person inappropriately without permission.
	9. See a person hitting on someone who appears to be uncomfortable or uninterested.
	10. Hear or see a friend being very jealous or trying to control what their significant other can or cannot do.
	11. Hear or see potential warning signs that someone is in an abusive relationship.
	12. Hear or see someone saying yelling at, degrading, or putting down their significant other.
	13. Hear or see something that made you suspect a friend or acquaintance may be in an abusive relationship (as either the abuser or the person being abused).
	14. Overhear a couple's argument that is or may become violent.
	15. Hear about or see someone manipulating or sabotaging his or her significant other (e.g., intentionally causing financial, academic, or social strain).
	16. Hear a friend make a sexist joke
	17. Hear someone make a sexist joke
	18. Hear someone use "ho," "bitch," or "slut" to describe girls when I was with my friends
	19. Hear someone make a joke about sexual assault or relationship violence
	20. Hear someone objectifying a woman's body

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Appendix B: Agree to be Contacted Form

The purpose of the form is to let us know whether you are willing to be contacted about an in-depth, confidential interview about your experiences with this workshop. Interview participants will receive \$30 as a thank you for their time. Agreeing to be contacted does not mean that you have to participate in the interview or that you are guaranteed an interview. It just means that it's ok if we ask you to participate. We will begin contacting people in about 3 months.

Please indicate your choice below:

_____ I DO NOT AGREE to be contacted by the research team about the interview.

→ Put your completed form in the envelope, seal it, and hand it in.

_____ I DO AGREE to be contacted by the research team about the interview. I understand that I can say no to participating in the interview at any time.

→ Please complete the entire section below, to ensure that you have the opportunity to participate.

First and Last Name	

Preferred Email Address	

Secondary Email Address	
(____) ____-_____	cell / home / work
Primary Telephone Number	Circle One
(____) ____-_____	cell / home / work
Secondary Telephone Number	Circle One

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Can we leave the message below with someone else or on your voicemail?

YES NO

“I am calling for _____(your name) about a research study at DePaul we are doing about student experiences attending the Bystander Intervention workshop. Please have _____(your name) call Kelly back at (773) 325-7145”

What are the best days and times to call you?

Put your completed form in the envelope, seal it, and hand it in.

Appendix C: Sample Telephone Recruitment Script

If Student Answers:

“Hello NAME! My name is Kelly and I’m calling because you took part in a Sexual Assault Bystander Intervention workshop here at DePaul a while back, called Take Care DePaul. At the time you filled out a form saying that you might be interested in participating in an interview about your experiences.

So I’m calling to see if you would like to help us improve the workshop by participating in an in-depth interview. We want to hear your valuable feedback.

During the interview, we’ll ask you questions about what you thought about the workshop, how you have or haven’t used the information in the workshop, and any feedback you have on improving the workshop for the sake of other DePaul students.

We’d pay you \$30 as a thank you for your time. The interviews are confidential and we’ll schedule it for a time that is convenient to you. The interviews last about an hour to an hour and a half—it depends on the person.

Do you want to participate?

If Yes- Great! (see below)

If No- Okay. Would you mind telling me a little bit about why you’re not interested?

[Address any questions or concerns. Thank them for their time.]

When would be a good time to schedule the interview?

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[Talk with participant to schedule the interview]

What is your primary telephone number and email address?

If it's ok with you, I'd like to send you a reminder the day before the interview. Is phone or email better? [Verify contact information]

When is the best time to call or email you with the reminder?

If Voicemail:

“I am calling for _____(your name) about a research study we are doing about student experiences attending the Bystander Intervention workshop. My name is [name] and I'm calling you because you filled out a form a while back saying you might be willing to participate. We are conducting interview to learn about how to improve the workshop for DePaul students. The interviews are confidential and we will give you \$30 as compensation for your time. Please call our team back at (773) 325-7145 or email us to schedule an interview or ask any questions that you may have.”

Appendix D: Sample Recruitment Email

Hello NAME,

Thank you for agreeing to be contacted by our research team about an in-depth interview to help improve the Take Care Bystander Intervention workshops!

If you remember, you helped our study by completing the surveys during the workshop back in DATE OF WORKSHOP. The surveys you filled out that day have already helped us learn more about what students want from the training.

To learn more, we are asking a select group of about 20 students to participate in these more in-depth, confidential interviews. These interviews will give us stronger information on how best to improve the trainings. You will receive \$30 as a thank you for your time.

Interviews will last approximately 1 to 1.5 hours and can be scheduled at a time that is convenient to you. We will ask you about your thoughts about the workshop, whether you have used the information in your life, and how you think the program can be improved.

Please reply to this email or call us at (773) 325-7145 if you are interested in completing the interview, or have any questions, concerns, or comments. Please let us know if you would like us to call you at a specific number or email you at a different email address.

Thank you very much for your time!

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Gendered Violence Research and Action Team

Kelly Collins, Project Director

Kcolli33@depaul.edu

(773) 325-7145

Appendix E: Consent Form
ADULT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Evaluation of Bystander Intervention at DePaul: Follow-up Interview

Principal Investigator: Dr. Megan Greeson

Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Department (School, College): Psychology, College of Science and Health

What is the purpose of this research?

We are asking you to participate in this research study because we are trying to learn more about the Sexual Assault Bystander Intervention workshop here at DePaul. The information from this study will be used to improve the program for other students.

The study is being conducted by Dr. Megan Greeson and her research team in the Psychology Department at DePaul University. The study is being done in collaboration with the DePaul Office of Health Promotion & Wellness. The Office of Health Promotion and Wellness will not receive data that could identify you (like your name or email).

We hope to include about 20 to 30 people in the research.

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Why are you being asked to be in the research?

You are invited to participate in this study because you attended DePaul's Sexual Assault Bystander Intervention workshop. The goal of the study is to learn in-depth information about: (1) your perceptions of the workshop, (2) how the information from the program has or has not been applied in your life, and (3) what improvements you think could be made to the program.

The results will be used by the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness to improve the workshops. You must be age 18 or older to be in this study. This study is not approved for the enrollment of people under the age of 18.

What is involved in being in the research study?

In this part of the study, we are asking you to participate in one confidential in-person interview. We estimate the interview will be 1.5 to 2 hours long; it varies from person to person. You will receive \$30 as a thank you for your time.

If it's ok with you, I'd like to audio record the interview in order to get an accurate record of what you said. The recording will be stored on the secure university network server.

Are there any risks involved in participating in this study?

A potential risk is that you may feel uncomfortable answering certain questions. In the interview, I will ask you to tell me about whether or not you have encountered any situations that made you think a sexual assault might occur and if so, how you handled that situation. This

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could potentially be upsetting. Remember that you do not have to answer any question you do not want to. You can also take a break or end the interview at any time.

Are there any benefits to participating in this study?

There may be no direct benefit to you, but you may enjoy the opportunity to provide feedback on the workshop. The data we collect will be used to improve DePaul's Sexual Assault Bystander Intervention workshops.

Is there any kind of payment, reimbursement or credit for being in this study?

You will receive \$30 cash for completing the interview.

Can you decide not to participate?

Your participation is voluntary, which means you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences, penalties, or loss of benefits if you decide not to participate or change your mind later and withdraw from the research after you begin participating. Your decision whether or not to participate in the research will not affect your relationship with DePaul University or the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness.

Who will see my study information and how will the confidentiality of the information collected for the research be protected?

The research records will be kept and stored securely. Your name and other identifying information is stored in a separate, secure place so that we can contact you for the remaining follow-up surveys. Once data collection is finished, that file will be destroyed.

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The audio recording of this interview will be stored in a secure folder that only research team members have access to. We will then transcribe the recording. The transcription will be de-identified, meaning we will remove references to information that could be used to identify you.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study or publish a paper to share the research with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. We may share quotes from your interview, but we will not share information that could be used to figure out who provided the quote.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone else who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. However, some people might review or copy our records that may identify you in order to make sure we are following the required rules, laws, and regulations. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board may review our files. If they look at our records, they will keep your information confidential.

Please be aware that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence during the course of research does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response. If you are seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul or are looking for confidential resources related to sexual or

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relationship, we are happy to review information about how to do so at the end of the study. This information is also available at the bottom of this consent form

What if new information is learned that might affect my decision to be in the study?

It is your choice whether you want to participate in this interview. If we learn of new information or make changes to any portion of the study, and the new information or changes might affect your willingness to stay in this study, the new information will be provided to you. If this happens, you may be asked to provide ongoing consent (in writing or verbally).

Who should be contacted for more information about the research?

If you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, you can contact the primary investigator, Dr. Megan Greeson at mgreeson@depaul.edu or (773) 325 4092.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the DePaul Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Compliance, in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

You may also contact DePaul's Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

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After going through consent form, ask the following questions before having them sign:

- -What do you see as the benefits of this research?
- -What do you see as the risks or downsides to participating?
- - What are some options you have if you feel uncomfortable answering a question or feel uncomfortable participating in the research at all?

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent from the Subject:

I have read the above information. By signing below, I indicate my consent to be in the research.

Signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Are you willing to have this interview audio-recorded?

_____ Yes _____ No

How to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul:

If you are seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul, you should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: [773-325-7777](tel:773-325-7777); Loop: [312-362-8400](tel:312-362-8400)) or the Dean of

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Students and Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: [773-325-7290](tel:773-325-7290); Loop: [312-362-8066](tel:312-362-8066) or titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu).

Confidential resources related to sexual and relationship violence:

Individuals seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources ([773-325-7129](tel:773-325-7129) or hpw@depaul.edu). More information is available at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html>. Individuals are encouraged to take advantage of these services and to seek help around sexual and relationship violence for themselves as well as their peers who may be in need of support.

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Appendix F: Interview Guide

Bystander Intervention Interview

Thank you again for coming in today. Your feedback is very valuable to us, and we hope to use what you tell us today to improve the Bystander Intervention Workshop for other students.

Section One:

Perceptions of the Intervention

I'd like to talk about your experience with the Bystander Intervention Workshop.

Q1. Why did you attend the bystander intervention workshop?

Probe: How did you hear about it?

Q2. Do you belong to a student organization or residence hall that required or suggested you attend?

____ Student Government

If so, what is your position: _____

____ Fraternity Member

If so, which one: _____

____ Sorority Member

If so, which one: _____

____ Student Athlete

If so, what team: _____

____ Other:

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Probe: Could you tell me a little bit more about your role in (student group)?

Q3. Overall, what was your impression of the bystander intervention workshop?

Q3-Q6 Probes:

Cover the following elements of the workshop:

Workshop-delivery (or style; i.e., mix of presentation, group discussion)

Case scenarios and role-plays

Workshop length

Mixed gender

Familiarity/comfort with other members

Q4. What, if anything, did you think was beneficial? Why?

Probe: What part of the workshop was most important to you? Why?

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Q5. What aspects of the workshop did you not like? Why?

Q6. How can the workshop be improved for other DePaul students?

Q7. One of the things we are interested in understanding is whether students feel that the workshop content and delivery are a good fit for DePaul students. What, if anything, about the workshop made it relevant or relatable to you? Why?

Q8. What, if anything, made it less relevant or relatable to you? Why?

Q9. How could the workshop be improved to better fit the lives and experiences of DePaul students?

Q10. How much do you have in common with the other participants of the workshop you attended? How, if at all, did this influence your experience in the workshop?

Q11. How much do you have in common with the workshop instructors? How, if at all, did this influence your experience in the workshop?

Q12. *If not previously addressed:* How much of a choice did you have regarding the decision to participate in the workshop? How, if at all, did that affect your experience of the workshop?

Q13. Based on your experience, should the workshop be provided to all DePaul students? Why or why not? How would it need to be changed to fit the entire student body?

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Q14. How much, if at all, have you talked about the workshop with other people since attending?

Probe:

On what occasions?

What did you discuss?

Q15. What else would you like people to know about the workshop?

Section Two:

Response to Scenarios

Now I'd like to talk more specifically about your experiences since the workshop.

Q16. Since the workshop in MONTH, have you witnessed a situation in which there might have been a risk for sexual violence?

_____	If YES, skip to Q17.	YES
_____		If NO, continue to Q16a.

Q16a. We are also interested in students' reactions to specific scenarios that they have may have witnessed. (Show list of scenarios); *"Please mark any of these scenarios you've seen in the last three months"*

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Complete Section Two A

-If participant endorses **scenarios in 1-9** (sexual violence)

If they select one, discuss that

If they select more than one, discuss most recent

-If participant does not endorse any scenarios in 1-9

If they endorse **scenario is 15-20**, discuss

If they endorse more than one in 15-20, discuss most

recent

Complete Section Two B

-If participant endorses **scenarios in 10-15** (relationship violence)

If they select one, discuss that

If they select more than one, discuss most recent

Section Two A and B and Go to **Section 3**

Section Two A: Sexual Violence Scenario

Q17. Can you tell me about the situation?

Probe:

Context of the broader setting (e.g., work, a bar, friends house)

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People in broader setting (e.g., college students at party, random strangers on train)

Number of people directly involved in risky situation

Relationship to potential perpetrator and their behavior

Relationship to potential victim and their behavior

Relationship to proximal social group

“Although there may have been other people around, who would you say you were hanging out with the most, or were closest with?”

How would you describe your relationship them?”

Q18. What made you notice the situation?

Probe:

What was your reaction to what was happening?

Do you think the group you were with noticed the situation? [How did they know?]

What communication or interaction did you have with the group about the situation when you first noticed?

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Were you concerned this was a problem? Why or why not?

Was the rest of the group concerned this was a problem?

If anyone, who do you think was responsible to do something in the situation?

If anyone, who did the group think was responsible?

What communication or interaction did you have with the group about responsibility?

Q19. What happened next?

Probes:

Did they or others intervene? If yes, how?

How did the situation end?

Q20. These situations can be complicated and it's helpful to understand what it was like for you to go through it. So next, I'd like to ask some questions about how this happened for you.

Probes

Why they decided to [intervene or not intervene]

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What, if any, concerns did you have about intervening?

What were the possible pros and cons you considered?

How did you feel about your ability to help effectively?

What actions did you consider taking?

What did you think would happen if you intervened?

How did your peer group/what is normal in your friends group influence your thoughts and actions?

What communication or interaction did you have with the group about intervening? Did you discuss what might happen in any of you intervened?

If intervened, why they chose to intervene in that particular way

Q21. How do you think the people you were with, considering their beliefs and what is normal behavior for them, influenced what you were thinking and feeling?

Probe:

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How norms influenced thoughts/perceptions of the situation (including whether they saw the situation as a problem)

How norms influenced interactions/communications with other bystanders

How norms influenced behaviors

Q22. What happened after you (their actions)?

Probes:

How did proximal social group react reaction during, immediately after, and a while after (e.g., next day?)

Potential perpetrator reaction during, immediately after, and a while after?

Potential victim reaction during, immediately after, and a while after?

Reactions of others in setting during or immediately after?

Q23. Afterwards, how did you feel about how you handled the situation? Why?

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Probe:

What, if anything, are you glad you did? Why?

What, if anything, do you wish you had done differently? Why?

Q24. How has that experience influenced what you think can be done to help other students prepare for these types of situations?

Q25. What would a typical DePaul student do in this situation?

Probe:

Would a typical DePaul student notice this situation as a potential problem? Why or why not?

Who would a typical DePaul student say is responsible?

What would a typical DePaul student do in this situation?

Q26. How has that experience influenced what you think DePaul needs to do to help prepare students for these types of situations?

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Section Two B: Relationship Violence Scenario

Q. Can you tell me about that situation?

Probe:

What did they do in the situation?

What happened?

Q26. How has that experience influenced what you think DePaul needs to do to help prepare students for these types of situations?

Section Three:

Skills, Knowledge and Attitude Changes

In this next section, I would like to talk about how, if at all, the workshop influenced you.

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Q27. How if at all, has the workshop affected you? Why?

Q28. What skills and knowledge, if any, did you gain from attending the workshop?

Q29. How has the workshop influenced your thinking or attitudes about these issues?

Q30. How if at all, how has the workshop influenced your behavior?

Q31. *If they identified scenario:* What, if anything about the bystander intervention workshop influenced your actions in [bystander scenario]?

Q32. *What do you see as barriers to intervening as a DePaul student?*

Probe: What would be barriers for you personally?

Q33. What assists bystander intervention as a DePaul student?

Probe: What would assist you personally?

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Q34. How comfortable would you feel intervening as a bystander in the future? Why?

Q35. If a friend of yours experienced sexual or relationship violence what would you do to support them?

Probe: What DPU resources they would/would consider referring them to.

Q36. Is there anything else you want me to know about the workshop? Do you have any last recommendations for how the workshop could be improved?

Section Four:

Demographics and Workshop Histories

This is the last section of the interview. I'd like to ask about some demographic information so that we can make sure our study captures the perspectives of different types of students.

Q37. Have you ever participated in the online bystander education model [Haven]?

Probe: If so, when?

Q38. Now if I could just get some basic information about you:

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Age: _____

Major: _____

Grade:

_____ Freshman

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior

_____ Senior

_____ Other:

Q39. How many full academic years of college have you completed at DePaul?

Q40. You mentioned you are a part of (student organization). Are you a part of any [other] student groups?

Q41. Do you live on or off campus?

_____ On campus: _____ Off campus:

Q42. This information will only be used for your research ID number to link your survey data. We'll destroy it as soon as we link to your survey.

What are the first three letters of your mother's maiden name?

What is day of the month were you born on?

_____ (1st through 31st)

What street did you grow up on?

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Q43. Before we wrap up, is there anything I could do to improve the interview? Please feel free to answer as honestly as possible, we appreciate any feedback you have?

Q44. Thank you very much for answering all of those questions. Before we end, do you have any questions for me, or is there anything else you'd like to add?

Length of Interview: _____ hours and _____ minutes

Notes: