Learning to Prevent Campus Violence, EKU-Safe: A Bystander Intervention Training Program

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Abstract

EKU-SAFE is a campus outreach violence prevention program funded through the Department of Justice. One aspect of the project was to design and implement Bystander Intervention Training for all first year students at Eastern Kentucky University, a regional university with an enrollment of 16,000 students. Literature in violence prevention with college campus populations indicates that significant behavior and personal accountability can arise from Bystander Intervention Training (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). The purpose of this article is to report on changes in participants' perceptions and interpretations of violence prior to and following Bystander Intervention Training at Eastern Kentucky University and to assess the program's potential effectiveness for changing campus culture in terms of attitudes towards violence. Findings from this study will constitute a baseline for continued assessment of program efficacy. Possible future evaluation will assess the extent to which anti violence norms are retained one to three years after initial exposure to program materials. Ongoing efforts are necessary to facilitate broader culture change within the university; this change cannot be accomplished or sustained until a substantial number of individuals commit themselves, through action, to intolerance of violence against women and victim blaming, and support of women's safety.

Keywords: EKU, campus, violence prevention, bystander intervention, women's safety.

Introduction

Research indicates that nearly one in four women experience sexual violence by an intimate partner, and up to one-third of adolescent girls report that their first sexual experience was forced (Abma, Driscoll, & Moore, 1998; World Health Organization [WHO], 2002). Researchers have found that only one-third of actual incidences of sexual assault are reported (Department of Military Affairs & Public Safety, 2000). In particular, a study by the U.S. Department of Justice (2002) found that in the United States between 1992 and 2000, only 26 percent of rapes, 34 percent of attempted rapes, and 26 percent of sexual assaults were actually reported to police (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002).

Of all groups, college women are at greater risk for rape and other forms of sexual assault than women in the general population or in comparable age groups. One of the most comprehensive research efforts examining campus crime against women found an incidence rate of rape of 35.3 per 1,000 students (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Of particular concern is that fewer than 5% of the college women in the study reported the victimization, a far lower report rate than for the general population of adult women (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000).

According to findings from self-report studies, the prevalence of rape and sexual violence on U. S campuses continues (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Foubert, Brasfield, Hill & Sehhey-Tremblay, 2011). To eliminate the incidence of violence toward women, college campuses have initiated Bystander Intervention programs with the goal of eliminating rape and sexual violence through an emphasis on collective

responsibility. Because college students are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault, specific prevention programs are needed that are culturally relevant and address the college population. In this paper, we will review the literature on engaging students as bystanders in violence prevention and present the results of an exploratory study with students who participated in a bystander prevention educational program.

Prevention Programming

Over the past 20 years, there has been a steady shift in violence prevention programming. Past prevention programs aimed at reducing crimes against women focused primarily on changing the behavior of potential victims (through self-defense and 'risk reduction' strategies). However, research began to demonstrate that these programs do not actually prevent sexual assault but simply reduce the risk of victimization. As a result, the focus of prevention efforts has shifted from simply changing the actions of potential victims to helping stop the perpetrators from committing the offense in the first place (Meyer, 2000; CDC, 2004).

Bystander Prevention

Prevention efforts have shifted from a potential victim focus only to eliminating perpetrator behavior. Research findings suggest that community norms that tolerate behavior that leads to sexual violence may contribute to higher rates of sexual violence, particularly in communities such as college campuses (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 2000). Bystander intervention involves individuals "who see… [a negative behavior] occurring but are not

directly involved in the incident…take action to stop it or prevent future incidents" (Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005, p. 288). The approach is based on the idea that that sexual assault is *everyone's* issue, not just a victim and perpetrator concern; if sexual assault is rooted in culturally-endorsed social norms, then change can occur by offering everyone in the community a specific role in preventing the community's problem of sexual violence (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004).

New preventive based behavior can be learned, including interrupting situations that could lead to assault before it happens or during an incident, speaking out against social norms that support sexual violence, and using skills to be an effective and supportive ally to survivors. While the responsibility for sexual violence perpetration rests with the offenders, research has identified risk factors and social contexts that may increase the likelihood of sexual victimization and facilitate or hinder support of survivors. The bystander model has been endorsed as an innovative approach to the widespread problem of sexual violence prevention across campuses and other communities (DeKeseredy, Schwartz, & Alvi, 2000; Foubert, 2000; Berkowitz, 2002).

Literature in violence prevention with college campus populations indicates that Bystander Intervention Trainings have the potential to effect change in participants' behavior and sense of personal accountability (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). Data from bystander intervention programs indicates some success in changing attitudes about the context of rape, rape acceptance myths, and self-

efficacy in intervening in potentially threatening situations (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007).

Because of high risk for college women's violence, the Office of Violence Against Women made funds available to campuses to address prevention and awareness programming. Although a variety of strategies have been employed on campuses, most experts agree that a comprehensive approach to ending violence against women is effective. The Office on Violence Against Women's "Minimum Standards for Establishing a Mandatory Prevention and Education Program for all Incoming Students on Campus," indicates that programs should have a mandatory student education program addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking for all incoming students.

Findings from the empirical literature contain accounts of programs targeted exclusively to men (Foubert, 2000; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Foubert, Brasfield, Hill & Sehhey-Tremblay, 2011) and of programs aimed at both men and women (Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn& DeBord, 1995). While there is no clear consensus in findings from the literature about the efficacy of men only vs. both gender bystander intervention training, recent findings indicate that training that emphasizes women and men as potential bystanders to behaviors related to sexual violence is more effective than training that treats men as potential perpetrators and women as potential victims (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007); although a meta-analysis of 153 rape prevention programs indicated that men in mixed gender groups tended to experience less attitude change than men in single gender groups (Brecklin & Forde, 2001).

Taken together, these findings indicate possible considerations for implementation of rape and violence prevention programs in the future. There are lacunae in the literature along the following lines. First, these analyses focus on heterosexual rape and discount the possibility of men as potential victims. Second, the extensive use of the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale as a dependent variable (Burt, 1980), while a consistently reliable measure across studies, may need to be elaborated to include the possibility of rape acceptance in a broader culture of acceptance of violence in general. Our assessment begins this process with the inclusion of measures of tolerance of sexual violence as depicted in mass media.

Research documenting the effectiveness of reducing sexual violence through prevention training suggests that bystander approaches that view both male and female students as potential bystanders of an incident of sexual assault or dating violence reduces defensiveness and brings a sense of collective responsibility for each other's safety. Approaching prevention through bystander intervention increases openness to learning about sexual assault and dating violence where students believe that they can take steps daily to intervene. Given that bystander intervention programming must be culturally appropriate and tailored to individual campuses across the country; it is necessary to document the effectiveness of these individualized programs. The

following provides a description of the Bystander Prevention programming developed by Eastern Kentucky University's (EKU) SAFE program.

EKU's SAFE Program: Community-Based Violence Prevention Approach

Background Demographics. Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) is one of eight public universities in Kentucky and serves a student population of over 15,000. It is located in Madison County (population 70,872 and 440.68 square miles). However, the service region of Eastern Kentucky University is comprised of 22 rural Appalachian counties in southeastern Kentucky, an area that constitutes one of the most impoverished and undereducated regions in the nation. Approximately 25% of the regional population lives in poverty, compared to 15.8% of.4% nationally. The "poorest" counties in Kentucky are located in EKU's 22 county service region. In Fall 2007, Eastern Kentucky University reported a total student population of 15,839. Women comprised 60.6% of the total enrollment in Fall 2007. Few racial minorities reside in the area, with whites making up approximately 97% of the service region. This is reflected in the EKU student body. Of 15,839 students enrolled in the Fall 2007 term, 91% were white and only 699 (4.4%) identified themselves as African American, 138 (.9%) as Asian or Pacific Islander, 125 (.8%) as Latino, and 43 (.3%) as American Indian.

A large majority of EKU's student body is from Kentucky (88 % in Fall 2007). Over half (51.3%) of first-time freshmen enrolled full-time in Fall 2007, were first-generation

college students. In summary, a large majority of Eastern Kentucky University students are white, female, first- generation college students from rural Appalachia.

The EKU SAFE Program. A Bystander training was developed by the SAFE program in conjunction with partners in the campus/community coalition. The model was designed to foster an increased sense of individual responsibility and ownership of women's safety and provide a public mechanism for positive peer pressure. The training included information about the following: a) Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault b) stalking and the myths about the causes of violence against women; c) Campus policies and procedures including policies related to violence against women, d) how to file a complaint either through campus disciplinary and judicial procedures or with local law enforcement, sanctions for offenders, and the student code of conduct; e) the availability of resources for victims including national, local, and campus resources; f) How to support peers who are victims, and; g) the benefits of reporting crimes of violence against women. These trainings were offered through a variety of venues to attempt to reach as many students as possible. Specifically, training was offered through campus orientation and first year student venues such as New Student Days, Orientation, "Colonel Camp," and Freshmen orientation classes. "New Student Days" is the official intake program for freshman and transfer students. All new first year students, including transfer students with fewer than 30 hours, were expected to attend. Eastern Kentucky

University also has a required Orientation Program for all new freshmen.

The Orientation Program socializes students new to EKU to local campus culture, including violence prevention. The 'Colonel Camp" program provides a similar socialization experience, and all students must complete a Freshman orientation course during their first two years at EKU. This is required of all students and is a semester-long 1-hour seminar. Each of these venues provides an opportunity for anti-violence socialization.

Participants and Setting. The participants in the study were selected from the programs outlined above and were college-aged students at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). In Fall 2007, Eastern Kentucky University reported a total student population of 15,839. Women comprised 60.6% of the total enrollment in Fall 2007. Few racial minorities reside in the area, with whites making up approximately 97% of the service region. This is reflected in the EKU student body. Of 15,839 students enrolled in the Fall 2007 term, 91% were white; 699 (4.4%) identified themselves as African American, 138 (.9%) as Asian or Pacific Islander, 125 8%) as Latino, and 43 (.3%) as American Indian. A majority of EKU's student body is from Kentucky (88 % in Fall 2007). Over half (51.3%) of first-time freshmen enrolled full-time in Fall 2007, were first-generation college students. In summary, a large majority of Eastern Kentucky University students are white, female, first-generation college students from rural Appalachia.

Bystander Training. Bystander Training was offered to twelve First Year Student Orientation courses. The sessions were 45 minutes in length and were administered to various sized groups ranging from 30 to 170 participants per group. Staff, peer educators, and student employees served as facilitators for these sessions with scheduling availability serving as the determining factor for assignment. Session content remained constant for each presenter. Prior to training students were administered a pretest to determine their baseline knowledge of sexual violence; training began with an overview of both national and campus-specific violence statistics followed by the description of what a bystander program is intended to accomplish. Students are provided content explaining the continuum of healthy to unhealthy and even violent relationships; after a content overview, students receive examples of types of abuse and are asked to respond to a selection of five scenarios.

Participants are then provided with a series of sequential action steps, specific actions designed to thwart emerging potentially violent behavior, and are encouraged to think in these terms. The sequence of these steps is as follows: first, the participant notices a potential event; next, the participant takes responsibility for changing the course of problem behavior associated with the event by identifying the event as intervention program effectiveness.

Data Collection. First Year Students participated in the bystander training as part of their involvement in Colonel Camp, Orientation Courses, New Student Days, and Freshman Orientation Classes. All subjects

participated on a voluntary basis. Subjects were asked to fill out Part I the survey prior to the training and advised not to complete Part II until after the training ended. Once the training concluded, subjects were given time to complete Part II of survey.

Sample and Method. Data is from the administration of the EKU Safe Bystander Intervention evaluative survey, administered in Fall 2010 in conjunction with the training being administered to first year classes at EKU. Table One describes responses to the EKU Safe Bystander Intervention Training survey. The survey was administered before and after respondents participated in the training. There were 910 respondents; some questions had less than full participation. Response rates ranged from 892 to 910.

A paired sample T-test was conducted to compare the effect of bystander intervention training before and after exposure to training materials. Table One describes means for pre and post participation responses. Each of the responses to the survey statements described in Table One is based on a six point scale, with 1=" disagree completely" through 6= "agree completely." Mean scores in Table One are based on this range of responses for each statement.

Analysis

Table One describes respondents' pre and post-program answers. Differences in mean score responses, before and after, for each statement are statistically significant except for "violence is a result of the heat of the moment." Mean scores for *this* statement indicate that respondents have

a strong negative response to this statement *before* and after exposure to program materials, with responses ranging from "disagree completely (1)" to "disagree a lot (2)."

For all other statements in Table One, the results indicate that exposure to EKU SAFE Bystander intervention training materials has a substantial positive effect on attitudes about sexual violence and appropriate responses to it. Specifically, our results suggest that when respondents are exposed to EKU SAFE Bystander Intervention material, their support for anti-violent attitudes and behavior increases."

Discussion

This analysis assesses the initial implementation of the EKU SAFE bystander program. Our findings indicate the need for possible future research. Follow up studies at incremental periods after the administration of this program may assess the degree to which program variables have had a continuing impact on anti-rape and sexual violence attitudes within program cohorts. Our findings serve as a baseline for comparison of additional waves of program participants as the program is administered to new cohorts.

There are still ongoing challenges in changing the culture of violence on college campuses. There is still work to be done in changing perceptions of acceptability of violence and abuse within dating and acquaintance relationships. An additional dynamic involves the prevalence of "hook-ups" among students without long-term relationships that take place without effective communication to determine relationship boundaries. As a result,

Table 1: Pre and Post Bystander Intervention Training Responses, EKU –Safe Bystander Intervention Training

	Pre-presentation Mean (SD)	Post-presentation Mean (SD)	Mean Difference	t- score	p-value (2-tailed)
I know what to do if a friend tells me they have been stalked/abused/ assaulted	4.54 87 (1.1 8)	5.43 04 (.94 8)	- .74 5	-21.019	.00 0*
Violence is a result of the heat of the moment	1.9 2 (1. 25)	1.8 5 (1. 44)	.0 69	1.5 28	.1 27
Men are more violent than women	3.7 89 (1.3 9)	3.5 34 (1.6 6)	.2 51	4.7 42	.00 0*
Rape victim might have precipitated the incident	1.4 83 (1.01 1)	1.6 33 (1.34 0)	- .15 0	3.5 61	.00 0*
Violence is present in the media	5.17 68 (1.097	5.29 17 (1.16 9)	- .11 5	- 2.78 4	.00 5*
There is no individual control over violent media content	3.67 92 (1.4870 9)	3.28 08 (1.7435 5)	.3 98	7.1 25	.00 0*
There are things people can do to help prevent violence	5.18 27 (.9410 9)	5.01 22 (1.2959 4)	- .19 0	3.8 29	.00 0*

Words and actions can help prevent violence	5.0100 (1.03972)	5.3818 (.97335)	-.371	-11.322	.000*
I can make a difference every day to prevent violence	4.7280 (1.12878)	5.2453 (1.07739)	-.517	-13.944	.000*
I speak out when I see or hear violent content	4.2752 (1.24236)	4.7998 (1.31115)	-.524	-11.234	.000*
If I observe a violent situation it is none of my business	2.7399 (1.31795)	2.4148 (1.70314)	.325	5.521	.000*
If I were in a violent situation I would want help	5.2584 (1.17293)	5.3998 (1.10914)	-.142	-3.988	.000*

N=910

students may feel ambivalence about what behavior constitutes sexual assault. A student may feel that if a person does not physically resist the sexual act, that this constitutes consent; of course, a person must be able to consciously and without undue influence of drugs and alcohol give this consent.

Conclusion

Our findings reiterate earlier research evidence that indicates the efficacy of community based normative programs (Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn & DeBord, 1995; Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004); and suggests that there is reason to continue these programs, given the effectiveness of EKU SAFE as a potential deterrent. Possible follow up research will focus on two campus subpopulations. First, a continued emphasis on first-year students, through programs specifically targeted at first year students, will continue. Findings from this study will constitute a baseline for continued assessment of program efficacy.

Another possible line of evaluation may focus on cohort follow up research to determine if the information imparted via EKU SAFE's anti - sexual violence normative socialization has been retained one,

two, or three years out from the initial exposure to program materials. Continued work is essential in that broader culture change within the university cannot be accomplished or sustained until a substantial number of individuals commit themselves, through action, to intolerance of violence against women and victim-blaming, and support of women's safety.

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