Urban Commuter Campus Students' Perspectives on Sexual Violence: Implications for Response and Prevention

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Abstract Sexual violence victimization is unacceptably common in the US, with nearly half of women and one in five men reporting lifetime sexual coercion and/or unwanted sexual contact; much violence occurs in campus settings. The majority of sexual violence prevention programs designed to date were not developed around the needs of urban commuter campus students. The present study explored qualitatively how these students conceptualize sexual violence and

prevention. Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with students on how they recognized sexual violence and understood prevention. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and analyzed. Commuter students used “gut feelings” to identify sexual violence, reporting minimal direct consent communication. Intersecting social identities and multiple, concurrent roles limit the potential impact of existing prevention programs. Further research to design and evaluate tailored sexual violence prevention programming for urban commuter campus students is needed.

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Introduction

Sexual violence victimization is unacceptably common in the United States (US), with 18.3% of women and 1.4% of men reporting lifetime experience of sexual assault, defined as attempted or completed forced penetration or alcohol/drug-facilitated completed penetration; 1.1% of women experienced this in the past year [1]. Almost half of women (45%) and one in five men (22%) report lifetime sexual coercion and/or unwanted sexual contact [1]. The physical and mental health effects of sexual violence victimization include physical injury, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attempted/completed suicide, substance abuse, and sexually transmitted infections [1]. Sexual violence has been estimated to cost individual survivors

nearly 125 thousand dollars; the population economic burden is estimated to be over three trillion dollars, driven in part by physical and mental health treatment costs, lost work productivity, and property loss and damage [2]. For young people in college, sexual violence experiences have serious academic consequences [3]. The recent wave of disclosures of sexual violence, including Emma Sulkowicz's "Carry That Weight" endurance performance art, Tarana Burke's #metoo movement and Time's Up, has renewed public discourse around chronic sexual assault, harassment, and coercion of women and sexual minorities as an "open secret" in many fields and spaces.

College campuses are one such space [4]. Among women who report lifetime sexual violence victimization, 37% first experienced it between 18 and 25, often while attending college [1]. According to 2015 US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) data, sexual violence complaints on campus increased more than 1000% between 2009 and 2014 [5, 6] reflecting an increased willingness to report sexual violence, due perhaps to more university-based reporting mechanisms as well as survivors' unwillingness to maintain the secrecy upon which sexual violence perpetrators depend. In response, national- and state-level policies to prevent and respond to sexual violence emerged, with some requiring prevention training for students, faculty, and staff. Although the evidence based on prevention programs for college students is limited, key mediators and interventions include socio-relational skills, consent, bystander behavior, and empowerment [7]. Just three campus-based prevention programs for men have been rigorously evaluated [8–10] and some bystander-focused programs and a social marketing campaign have shifted bystander intervention attitudes, intentions, and behavior [11–14]. Rape resistance/self-defense has shown efficacy for women [15, 16] but has not been tested among men.

Although design and evaluation of sexual violence prevention programming has increased, the majority of evidence-based prevention programs were designed for and evaluated in residential and non-urban college settings, where the majority of students reside on campus and are white. Of all but one of the programs described above, the percentage of non-white students in the samples ranged from 10 to 32%. RealConsent was tested on a sample of less than 50% white students, with a third

being Black/African-American or Latino/a/x students and though the setting was urban, it was not a predominately commuter campus. Many evaluations of sexual violence prevention programming do not report the proportion of sexual orientation and/or gender identity minority (often referred to as LGBTQIA+) students, although some do [17]. As we develop our understanding of urban commuter campus student experiences of sexual violence [18], there is an urgent need to focus on sexual orientation and gender identity minority students in general [18]. A major gap in the prevention research base is that there are no sexual violence prevention programs designed specifically for urban, commuter-campus students, who are more likely to be simultaneously racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, LGBTQ+, and/or gender non-conforming.

In addition to occupying multiple, often marginalized, identities, urban, commuter campus students have qualitatively different experiences of "student life" and often feel less connected to their campus [19]. Greek life has less prominence on commuter campuses, and organized athletics may also have different influences on students' social lives [20]. Socializing is more likely to happen at bars and clubs or at off-campus parties and student engagement is different and may be weaker [20, 21]. Some empirical research exists suggesting that the urban commuter campus setting merits focused study. When *Bringing in the Bystander* [11] was tested among male students at an urban university with a high percentage of commuter students, efficacy was diminished perhaps due to decreased feelings of connectedness to the campus and student community [22]. Urban commuter students may require tailored approaches [22], with focused research exploring sexual violence and sexual violence prevention among urban commuter campus students. The Commuter Campus Student Perspectives on Sexual Violence Study (CCSV) is a qualitative in-depth interview study designed to begin to fill the gap in the literature and explore how urban commuter campus students conceptualize sexual violence and imagine prevention programming working in their lives.

Methods

Procedures

The study was conducted in spring (February to May) 2017 at a public, predominately commuter, 4-year

college in a major urban university system in the US. Both print and on-line media outlets were used to recruit eligible participants. Flyers were placed where students congregate at the focal college and on other college campuses in the same urban university system. Participants who saw the flyer or clicked on the on-line ad were redirected to the anonymous on-line survey, where the study was described; interested participants engaged in a web-based consent process, before completing the survey. Eligible participants had to: [1] attend/have attended one of the urban college or university system's colleges in the past 24 months; [2] be between 18 and 24 years of age; [3] reside in the focal metropolitan area; [4] report a recent (past year) sexual experience that meets criteria for sexual coercion, harassment, or violence; and [5] communicate in English. Sexual coercion, harassment, or violence was defined by responding yes or maybe to the following questions: "have you ever had sexual contact (kissed, touched, or done anything sexual) that you consider to be unwanted or without your consent in any way?" and/or "has anyone ever tried or made you have sex with them, when they knew you did not want to?". If eligible, potential participants then completed the on-line contact card, collecting minimal contact information (name, phone number, and/or email address), so that an appointment could be scheduled. Of the 463 individuals who responded, 20% ($N = 94$) were eligible and left contact information; of these, 19% ($N = 18$) made an appointment and engaged in an in-depth interview. Upon arrival at the research site, participants completed the written informed consent process and then engaged in the interview with a trained female interviewer in a private room. All interviews were digitally audiotaped and transcribed professionally. Victim support and mental health resources were offered to all participants and support in accessing them was provided as needed. City University of New York Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the study. Using these methods, we conducted 18 in-depth interviews.

Interview Content

The in-depth interview guide focused on several areas, and was organized into three areas: social identity and life; sexual experiences and definitions of sexual violence; and response to sexual violence. In the first area, we explored participants day-to-day life and experiences as a student (e.g., employment status; socializing preferences, social life;

commuting vs. living in the dorms; participation in student groups/clubs/Greek life; social identity (gender identity, sexual orientation) and the impact of their identities on various life domains (e.g., family, friends, work environment). In the second area, we focused on: sexual experiences (e.g., current sexual and romantic life, first sexual experiences); how participants defined the spectrum of sexual experiences (e.g., good/bad, wanted/unwanted, coerced/not coerced, forced/not forced); how they knew when someone is "crossing the line"; factors that influence how students conceptualize sexual violence; the role of alcohol and substance in sexual violence. Finally, we explored student experiences with and thoughts on support services access, sexual violence prevention, and experience with prevention programs.

Analysis

Thematic analyses (Miles and Huberman, 1994) were conducted to identify and describe the main themes that emerged from the data and analyze patterns in the data. First, after each interview, to contextualize the data, a transcript summary and a qualitative memo, describing the interview context and immediate impressions, were developed by the interviewer or project coordinator (the first author, who observed all interviews). All transcripts were read by the first and last authors. Next, in order to categorize the data, coding was conducted by the first author using QSR International's NVivo 9 qualitative software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 9, 2010), guided by conceptual maps that reflected the interview and focus group guide question domains. As new domains or areas emerged, new codes were added; if an existing code needed sub-codes to reflect better the nuance of the text, sub-codes were created. Next, queries were run to group same-code text from different transcripts; these were read by the analytic team to identify the themes. The analytic team met regularly to discuss the data and aggregate codes into major themes. The team re-read all of the transcripts to ensure that the coding and themes identified were congruent with the data and refinements were made as needed. Next, a matrix was created reflecting the major themes and key insights identified with coded text to support each area across all interviews.

Results

In-depth Interview Sample

We screened 426 individuals via an anonymous web-based survey; of these, 113 reported experiencing sexual violence in their lifetimes and were eligible for interview. Of these individuals, half (50%; $N=57$) reported that they had also experienced it in the past year and were eligible for interview. Of this group, 18 participated in the in-depth interviews. Twelve participants self-identified as straight females, one self-identified as queer female, and one identified as straight male. One identified as bisexual female, two as gay male, and one as bisexual male. The average age was 21, with the youngest participant being 18 and the oldest 22. Five participants self-identified as White or Caucasian and another five as Latino or Hispanic; four identified as Black or African-American and two as Asian. One identified as bi-racial and one did not identify in terms of race or ethnicity. All participants were current college students, 8 of them also had a job. Sixteen lived in the metro area; two lived just outside the city. Interview participants did not differ significantly in terms of age, race/ethnicity, or sex/gender, as compared with individual who screened eligible for the study.

Thematic Analysis Results

Here, we present thematic results in three broad areas. The first are the general experiences and perspectives as commuter students that may be relevant to the development of sexual violence prevention programming, including “commuter student life” and “social identity”. The second is how commuter students defined and identified sexual violence. The third area is their thoughts on and experiences with support services and prevention programming. To enhance confidentiality and because of the small number of interviews, no descriptors and only numeric codes are used to label participant quotes.

Commuter Student Life

Overlapping Roles

The majority of the students interviewed stated that “every day is on campus” (ID 137) and that they spent “a lot” (ID 101) of time there. The students’ day-to-day schedules were reported to be “pretty hectic” (ID 129),

with some stating that they spend the rest of their time either at work or attending groups or clubs. Thus, “it’s always either school or work” (ID 212) and sleep “when they get the chance” (ID 211). About half the sample reported holding a job and another half reported being involved in student groups/clubs either on- or off-campus. Just one participant reported being part of an on-campus fraternity. Most of the students in the sample lived off-campus but it was clear that there were two different experiences reflecting the distinct social contexts each set of students inhabited. Five out of 18 interviewees lived in the college dorms and two split time between the dorms and their family homes; the remainder commuted. Both commuter and dorm students highlighted the significant difference in the student experience between living in the dorms and commuting to school, as well as the difference between the groups of students who live in the dorms and those who commute.

Participants who lived in the dorms described it as “fun” (ID 105), saying it was “a good experience” that helped them “meet a lot of new people, and make friends” (ID 101). Several students noted that “people who live in the dorms are kind of in a closed circle” (ID 155); another saying that everyone had their own “circles” (ID 129). Three of the five students who lived in the dorms reported that they usually socialized with other people from the dorms. Some students who lived in the dorms noted the difficulty of socializing with commuter students; one noted “right after class they leave because it takes them two and half hours to get home” (ID 301). Another student noted that commuter students had very busy schedules and no time to socialize; commuter students “are always running from different places and like different schedules” (ID 177). Commuter students also reported difficulty making friends; one participant said “since it’s a commuter school, it’s hard to make friends ... because people just come here and they just leave because they’re just here for school and that’s it” (ID 101). Difficulties in socializing with their peers and on campus emerged for commuters because of both the distance and time that commuting demanded, as well as the insularity of students who either lived in or had a “home base” in one of the campus dorms. When commuter students socialized, students reported socializing in a range of spaces. About half reported that they usually “hang out” in the neighborhood; two reported socializing in the dorms (e.g., living room, friends’ room) and the remainder in various places such as downtown and/or midtown and other

popular areas of the city. Just two commuter students reported that they have friends from classes past and present. Some commuter students reported not having time to “hang out;” one reported “I just do all my work here and then I go home once I’m done” (ID 223). Commuter students traveled into the campus neighborhood from a wide area, with one student noting that commuters tended to be “really scattered” (ID 161). Students commuted from within the campus’ subarea, as well the other subareas of the city, and two key suburbs. Commutes to some of these areas represent an hour plus each way.

Social Identity

The role of students’ social identities, both sexual and gender and race/ethnic identities, emerged strongly as salient to both students who commute and who lived in dorms; social identity acted as a lens through which they filtered their experiences in general, on campus and, at times, of violence. Two-thirds of participants identified skin color or race/ethnicity, specifically identifying as Black, Latino/a/x, or white, as important to them. Three participants self-identified as being “a product of immigrants,” highlighting the relevance of immigrant status to self-identity at a university system in a city that is 40% foreign-born or born outside of the US. Some students also emphasized how important gender is to their identity and experiences; “gender is a huge part of my identity” said one female student (ID 217). Further, some participants noted that they are experiencing a stronger awareness of their race/ethnicity and/or sex/gender in the current US socio-political climate, noting that race and ethnicity is important “especially right now” (ID 311), “in today’s day and age” (ID 223); one female participant said that she is having “conversations that I never had before about femaleness that I do have now” (ID 137). Many of the female respondents, particularly those who self-identified as children of immigrant parents, noted that they had been raised in “traditional” or “patriarchal” ways by their parents who encouraged them to be “girly girls.” One student noted that “people’s view of me as a white person, as well as being a white male, is interesting” (ID 155). Several identified how intersections among their race/ethnicity and gender influenced their lives and how they are treated on campus; for example, one respondent noted: “if you are a woman of color you kind of have, in my opinion, you kind of have a double, you know, double the adversity to get

through” (ID 217). Another female respondent noted that “I feel like I always have to work like extra hard to prove myself, because like I’m a minority, because I’m a girl” (ID 199). And one female student noted how her ethnic identity was sexualized, “as a Latina woman especially, we’re often like sexualized. There was – I wasn’t dating this guy, but I was talking to a guy, and the guy was like, ‘Oh yeah, you know, I’ve never been with a Latina girl.’ And I was like, okay...”.

Recognizing and Defining Sexual Violence

We explored how commuter students recognized and defined sexual violence by asking them when they “knew” that the person they were interacting with sexually was “crossing the line” or when the sexual encounter was moving from wanted to unwanted. Several participants mentioned using their feelings to guide the recognition and labeling process. For example, one student said “whenever you start to feel uncomfortable and not safe” (ID 217). Of particular importance were “gut feelings” in recognizing that boundaries had been crossed in some way; one student said “it’s usually, I guess, a gut feeling. In a moment like that, you shouldn’t feel angry, so if you start feeling that emotion, even if you’re not able to I guess identify what exactly caused it, that’s when you know something is wrong” (ID 315). Another student said, “even if you’re not exactly sure how they crossed the line or why they crossed the line or how you should react, I think there’s always something in the back of your mind that you know something’s not right” (ID 155). Students noted that even “subtle feelings” were important; “that 5% could mean that something went wrong” (ID 101). The timing of recognizing and acting on your feelings was also raised by students. One stated that “if something is wrong, you know it immediately, and there’s something... You just feel it. So, I think when there is something wrong, you know it immediately” (ID 155); another said “your feelings are just mostly what determines that” (ID 105); another underlined the role of feelings in recognizing sexual violence, not only in the moment but also afterwards (ID 223).

Explicit communication, establishing agreements around acceptable behavior, and the role of consent emerged for some, but not all, students. Two students stated that crossing the line might be when the other person does what they want to do, without paying attention to what you said and say during an encounter.

Some students underlined the importance of agreeing and consenting prior to the sexual encounter, by saying that crossing the line is when the sex partner does something that you have not consented to, and that if a sexual act—that wasn't agreed upon—was enacted, the line has been crossed and a violation has occurred. Just one participant described the dynamism of sexual interactions and the role of giving consent or not to each step or aspect of it, in order to make it fully consensual and enjoyable for both parties. They said "I mean, you can first consent to something, but – which might excite the other person and basically get more into it and get more intense, I would say, which would later - like a consenting experience would become a forceful experience just because you've basically leveled up, like that person kind of made it more intense." (ID 219). This student went on to say that a good sexual experience could "turn bad if a person's behavior ... is not expected from the other person, and is not experienced well from the other person". This was the only student who described the role of consent in the escalation of sexual activity, suggesting a diverse sexual repertoire that could benefit from specific consent agreements. Other participants suggested that consent could be "implied;" for example, when a guy "takes a girl out", "pays for the dinner and the gas", and then invites the girl to his house. In such situations, the guy would "try to initiate something" (ID 212) and would then expect "something in return." Some students said then that they would "feel like you have to" (ID 315) because you are already in that kind of setting (ID 137), as if by doing all the previous steps, especially "going to his house", consent to the sexual encounter was given.

When asked how they knew that a sexual experience is "good/bad, wanted/unwanted, forced/not forced, coerced/not coerced" some participants, focusing on what was "good" or "not good," identified "trust" as an important factor in order to label a sexual experience as a good one. For some, trust was intertwined with feeling good, either "physically and emotionally" (ID 101); for others, it was connected to the ability to be "open" and "voice things out" with the sexual partner (ID 101 and 145). One student said "when it's 'wanted' and when it's what you consider 'good' and you're happy about it, there's not that kind of small thing in your head saying, 'something is not right. I don't know if I want this'." (ID 155). Some students described "unwanted" sexual experiences as ones when "something happens and you don't want to, but you let

it happen anyway" because you "don't know how to say no" (ID 217). Another described it as something that "you do just to make the other person happy" (ID 177). For some, it seems that even if "you don't want to do what you're doing" they would not say no because they want to "get together" with the person or have a relationship with them (ID 217). Other experiences that qualified as "unwanted" included ones where the students did not feel comfortable saying no, for example in the past when they were younger, so they tried to just go through it without expressing their feelings (ID 300 and 212). A clear definition of an "unwanted" sexual experience involved being intoxicated and/or not being aware of what is happening,

Support Services Access and Reporting

Just less than half of participants never accessed any sort of support service in their lifetimes (e.g., therapy, counseling, support groups). One participant reported accessing only "health checks" (ID 311), while another two mentioned having a very good support system (e.g., friends, mother, siblings). Regarding their sexual violence experiences, one student stated that they tried to "deal with it" by themselves (ID 219); another reported having never thought about reaching out for support services. Half, though, reported having accessed support services for general reasons; most reported that "it was really helpful" (ID 217), helping them "learn about themselves" (ID 145). One proponent of support services noted: "getting support is always the best thing to do, and nobody should ever face anything that they feel bad about on their own" (ID 155). However, one participant described the stigma that still surrounds accessing support services; in fact, in some cultures "it means you're weak or like the mentally ill" (ID 129). Of the participants who described their experiences of sexual violence and/or coercion during the interview and reported accessing services, two did not disclose the violence experience to the therapist. One reported that they "sort of pushed that particular experience to the side" (ID 315); the other reported that they did not realize how "bad it was" (ID 129). Another participant stated that it took a while to open up and disclose their experience with the therapist, and that they were not really listened to until they said that they were sexually assaulted (ID 300).

When asked about how and where to access sexual violence support services, should they be needed as a

student, fully half of the participants stated that they would not know where to go or what to do, either on- or off-campus. Of those who had ideas about where to go, they mentioned a range of options, including reaching out first to public safety; another two said that they would research it on-line first; two identified the on-campus counseling center; another mentioned on-campus self-defense classes; finally, one student stated Planned Parenthood. Two emphasized the importance for a service to be anonymous and to protect people's identities. One student stated that the on-campus support services have "really inconvenient hours" (ID 177). When asked if they would report a sexually violent experience, no students immediately indicated they would report without qualification. One stated that they encouraged a friend who has been sexually assaulted to file a police report, and that they would definitely encourage somebody else to reach out to "support services" for such a traumatic experience. In considering reporting, two participants pointed out the difference between being assaulted from an acquaintance or a stranger: "if I was walking down the street and like a guy just raped –or a guy like, you know, forced himself on, raped me or whatever, I would definitely go. But like, you know, I wouldn't – and it sounds so messed up, but if it was like – not a friend, but if I was someone that I knew. Like, I didn't report him" (ID 101). Another student said "if it's some random person I guess, yeah, I'd report it. But then, if you were in a relationship, somebody wouldn't really want to report that, just because they may love the person or whatever" (ID 105). Another participant stated that they would not report it and would not even tell their parents, if the perpetrator was an acquaintance, because they would blame them for being in such situation. They said: "if it was someone I knew, I honestly don't think I would tell my parents. But if it was someone I didn't know, I would tell my parents". The student went on to say "I feel like they would say, well, why were you in that situation?" This would trigger "that feeling of like it's your fault kind of thing" (ID 137).

Commuter Students' Views on Prevention

When asked if, in their opinion, it would be possible to prevent sexual violence, the majority of the participants responded no, with three saying that it is "not possible" to prevent sexual violence or in the "grand scale of the world" (ID 300). Others were more qualified noting that

it is "hard to say" (ID 315), or that sexual violence could only be prevented "to a certain extent" (ID 212). When asked how it could be prevented, one participant stated that they would attend a self-defense class, because that it is the only way to prevent sexual violence, other than "not socializing, not doing anything, and staying in a bubble for the rest of my life" (ID 223). Another said that a way to feel a "little safer" would be carrying pepper spray as a precaution. Three students emphasized the role of the individual, saying "you can't control what people do all the time" (ID 105), or it is "basically within each individual" (ID 219) with risk varying from "person to person" (ID 300).

Just five participants described ways to reduce the risk of sexual violence victimization, including having conversations, having a good sense of self-awareness, educating children and adults, addressing societal stereotypes, changing social norms, understanding and discussing consent, teaching girls/women that they can say "no", not blaming the victim, and teaching people that there can be abuse within the queer/non-gender binary community. The majority of participants said that they would be interested in attending a prevention program, because it is "really important" but had "never heard about or done anything like that" (ID 137) and "people still don't know how to prevent it" (ID 105). Students said that they "would encourage people [other students] to go" (ID 301) and would like to bring other students in order to "share the information" (ID 300). One underlined the fact that prevention programming would be helpful especially for a commuter school because "as much as the school might protect while they're in here, I think when people leave campus..." they need the knowledge and skills that programming could provide. They went on to say that "I think there is a lot of like informing of - informing students what the options are, you know, when they're not on campus" (ID 129). When asked for advice in order to plan an effective prevention program, students brought up various suggestions. Almost all said that talking would be important and effective, identifying specific topics, such as "what sex is" and "what sexual violence can be." Discussing consent was identified as critical and activities such as lectures and workshops were highlighted as possibilities. Two students noted the difficulty of talking about sex with adults; one stated that talking about sex is "weird" especially if it is a teacher talking about such topic during classes, which it makes it "hard for students to listen"; they noted "when you feel equal to someone,

it's easier to learn from them" (ID 301), suggesting the desirability of near-peer educators. Another student said that there is still a taboo about having conversations about sex before initiating sex, because it is sometimes seen as unsexy (ID 311), so prevention should address that as a barrier.

Other prevention ideas included self-defense classes, showing video clips, and asking students to identify various situations as and label "red flags" for sexual violence. The importance of holding "planned-out activities" was highlighted, as well as basic educational activities such as distributing information on resources and support. One person said that "we respond to things when they personally hit home" (ID 217) so bringing survivors of sexual assault in the conversations, as well as their friends in order to share and support, would be an effective strategy. Another stated that the key is "making it a topic that is not uncomfortable to discuss" (ID 155). Three participants underlined the importance of identifying and discussing the full spectrum of violence, from physical to sexual to emotional; two students said that they would split discussion groups into different genders (one for females, the other for males). One student pointed out that young people today "have no attention span" so it is difficult to hold their attention; they suggested that a PowerPoint presentation would not be effective and that novel, youth-oriented media would be required. One person said that holding some prevention activity (e.g., spreading awareness, teaching personnel how to respond, distributing flyers) at venues such as bars or clubs would be an effective strategy; in contrast, another participant said that it would be "tricky" as bars often sponsor free entrance for girls so "for them it's business" (ID 129). To recruit students to prevention activities, participants suggested sending e-mails through university accounts, sending "snail mail" to people's homes to reach students who are not on campus often, and distributing flyers. The importance of offering food and beverages was emphasized, but the limits on the time and availability of commuter students were also reiterated.

Comment

The commuter campus students we interviewed held similar perspectives as some non-urban students studied in prior research [23] regarding what constitutes sexual violence. These similarities are noteworthy and suggest

that the foundations of existing sexual violence prevention strategies will be useful for urban commuter campus students. Specifically, the use of "gut feelings" to identify when and how initially wanted and consensual sexual experiences can evolve into unwanted, coerced or violent ones is consistent with studies among young people both on and off university campuses [24]. The lack of clear and specific communication around consent is also consistent with the general literature on sexual violence among college-age young people [25]. This supports the current focus of existing sexual violence prevention programming on clearly describing what constitutes consent, how to communicate around consent, and skills for establishing consensual sexual relations. However, we also identified experiences of urban commuter campus students that may demand specific attention when designing sexual violence prevention programming, including the importance of multiple, sometimes overlapping, contexts, roles, and social identities.

One unique aspect of urban commuter campus students' experiences is the lack of a single, consistent, and all-enveloping social context experienced with their campus peers and bounded by campus geography. Urban commuter students do not universally possess strong and focused connections to their school contexts and campus peers, via student clubs, Greek life, sports, living on campus, and time spent on campus. They also often have significant off-campus obligations that limit their ability to spend time on campus. Despite this, students noted that prevention skills taught on campus would be useful off campus, reflecting the importance of portable prevention skills. Further, while some students who live in dorms on campus may experience more campus-based social contexts that offer key sites for prevention work, many commuter students may need to be reached through strategies that travel with them, such as prevention that they can access while commuting or remotely may be critical to these students. For example, online training tools such as RealConsent and Take Care could be adapted as a mobile app that would permit commuter students to engage in the intervention while on a train or bus. Prevention strategies for urban commuter campus students must use examples and promote skills that reflect multiple salient contexts. For example, prevention might focus on educational activities or bystander intervention skills-building while on the commuter campus, but on workplace sexual harassment policies and protections while at work, reflecting

the importance of work and school contexts for many students.

Commuter campus students also enact different social roles simultaneously (student, employee, parent, extended family caregiver, friend) to a greater extent than residential campus students; thus, prevention strategies need to connect with these multiple roles, in addition to the various contexts within which they occur. This may require not only adaptation of current prevention programs but the development and offering of a menu of prevention options, based on context and role, for this group of students. For example, students who are parents may be provided skills for how to communicate with their own children on prevention; students who are siblings may also share prevention lessons with younger siblings. And, although this did not emerge as strongly as we expected, students' roles as children of adult parents living in the community may also need to be addressed. Testa and colleagues (2010) showed the effectiveness of providing resources to parents of incoming college students [26]. Adapting such an intervention for urban, commuter campus students will require significant work to fully understand the connection between urban commuter campus students, their parents, the community, and other salient contexts and roles.

Finally, the intersection of various social identities is crucial to include in the design and adaptation of prevention programs for this group. Students were clear that prevention efforts needed to meet them where and as they are—to show them how it matters to their various roles and intersecting identities. Large urban areas often have population-specific violence prevention or social service provision non-profits and programming, such as those led by sexual and gender minority individuals. These organizations can receive communications from students, who may seek information via university services but may be more comfortable seeking services from such a group. Finding a way to connect students to this diversity of resources in a user-friendly, confidential, portable, and centralized way, could be an important goal for improving campus response. Such organizations can also be involved in the design and implementation of sexual violence prevention programming on campus. As experts in intersectionality and in working across varied community contexts, representatives from such organizations can inform the appropriate adaptation of current evidence-based and informed programming. An urban commuter campus can be a center for a multi-pronged,

multilevel community engagement approach to preventing and responding to sexual violence both on and off campus and for students, staff, and faculty, as well as local community residents; such campuses can organize a tailored, community-based approach in partnership with community leaders, providing knowledge and skills for individual residents and higher-level interventions for groups, organizations, and spaces. This creates an opportunity for a much wider diffusion of prevention, yielding a ripple effect of prevention efforts that are carried beyond the campus and local community. This is both the challenge and the promise of prevention work in this unique context.

Limitations

Our results must be considered in light of several limitations. First, our sample is a purposive one but also one of convenience, recruited using web-based outreach and flyers. While overall, the sample is diverse in terms of ethnicity and age; the size of the sample for interviews is small, particularly given the size and diversity of the underlying population. As well, the study is set in a particular urban area and may not be generalizable to other urban areas. Second, quality assurance and consistency in data collection were achieved by employing a highly skilled interviewer, a comfortable interview environment, and modest incentives; however, some participants may not have been totally comfortable discussing sensitive topics such as sexual violence and help-seeking on campus or with the cisgender female interviewer. Because of these limitations, we reiterate that our results are suggestive and that further research is needed in this area.

Conclusions

Urban commuter campus students reported limited exposure to prevention programming and are in need of the knowledge and skills that evidence-based programming could provide. Reaching large populations of commuter campus students, who often move in and out of the student role and may even attend different campuses across an urban area, is a challenge. In addition, urban commuter campus students have distinct campus experiences, exist in multiple social contexts, and play varied social roles, all of which demand unique attention in the design and adaptation and evaluation of

sexual violence prevention programming. Current programming has not been, to date, designed for them; future prevention programming needs to be tailored to address their unique contexts and lived experiences. Further research is needed to explore in more depth how their intersecting identities and community experiences influence their experience and recognition of sexual violence, as well as their help-seeking behavior. This will inform the design of prevention programming, which must be grounded in their lived experiences, designed in consultation with them, and in relation to campus and other communities important to and representative of urban commuter campus students.

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