

APA RESOLUTION on Campus Sexual Assault

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WHEREAS 40% of young adults aged 18-24 are enrolled in institutions of higher education (IHEs) (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.) where campus sexual assault affects up to 30% of women in this group (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016; Hipp & Cook, 2017);

WHEREAS sexual assault on campus is not a new problem (Kanin, 1957) and the prevalence of sexual assault has not changed in over 30 years (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Hipp & Cook, 2017, Jessup-Anger, Lopez, & Koss, 2018);

WHEREAS psychology has led the field in measuring the nature and scope of victimization (Cook, Gidycz, Koss, & Murphy, 2011) and risk factors for victimization (Krebs, Linquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2009; Messman-Moore, Coates, Gaffey, & Johnson, 2008);

WHEREAS there is a great need to understand further the campus sexual assault experiences of diverse groups, particularly those who are marginalized such as gender and sexual minorities including transgender men and women, ethnic minority women, and women with disabilities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; Bryant-Davis, Ullman, Tsong, & Gobin, 2011; Carey, Durney, Shepardson, & Carey, 2015; Coulter et al., 2017; Findley, Plummer, & McMahon, 2016; Martin, Fisher, Warner, Krebs, & Lindquist, 2011; Mellins et al., 2017; National Council on Disability, 2018; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013), and of those who have not typically been considered at risk but are marginalized in the literature, such as men;

WHEREAS psychology has documented factors that predict disclosure (Ahrens & Aldana, 2012; Ahrens, Stansell, & Jennings, 2010; Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Self, & Barnes, 2001; Dworkin, Newton, & Allen, 2016; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Kirkner, Lorenz, & Ullman, 2017; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012; Orchowski, Untied, & Gidycz, 2013; Smith & Cook, 2008; Ullman, 2010) and reporting of sexual assault (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2010; Neville & Pugh, 1997; Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014);

WHEREAS sexual assault is a significant barrier to academic achievement given its links to a range of negative psychological outcomes and creates a hostile learning environment (Baker et al., 2016; Banyard et al., 2017);

WHEREAS psychology has identified risk factors for sexual assault perpetration (Tharp et al., 2013; Zinzow & Thompson, 2015), and is at the forefront of illuminating the multifaceted ways in which alcohol and other substances are involved in the majority of campus sexual assaults (Abbey, 2017; Dir, Andrews, Wilson, Davidson, & Gilmore, 2017; Swartout & White, 2010; Testa & Cleveland, 2017);

WHEREAS psychological research on campus sexual assault has documented mental health consequences for the victim (Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009; Dworkin, Menon, Bystrynski, & Allen, 2017; Pegram & Abbey, 2016) and is beginning to document consequences to the perpetrator (Brennan, Swartout, Cook, & Parrott, 2016);

WHEREAS mental health treatment offered to sexual assault survivors and perpetrators should be grounded in evidence-based and trauma-informed principles (Arttime & Buchholz, 2016; Halstead, Williams, & Gonzalez-Guarda, 2017; Russell & Davis, 2007);

WHEREAS psychology has led the field in developing interventions to reduce risk through awareness and empowerment and ameliorate mental health consequences (Hassija & Turchik, 2016; Koss, White, & Kazdin, 2011; Senn et al., 2015; White, Koss, & Kazdin, 2011);

WHEREAS psychological research is dismantling previous accepted knowledge about the nature of sexual assault perpetration; documenting the diversity in patterns of perpetration and potential outcomes of perpetration (Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Brennan et al., 2016; DeGue & DiLillo, 2004; Seabrook, Ward, & Giaccardi, 2016; Swartout, 2013; Swartout et al., 2015; Thompson, Kingree, Zinzow, & Swartout, 2015);

WHEREAS the developing literature points to the promise of preventing campus sexual assault by changing social norms (Banyard, 2015; Coker et al., 2017; McMahon, Postmus, & Koenick, 2011; Salazar, Vivolo-Kantor, Hardin, & Berkowitz, 2014), the role of peers (DeKeseredy, 2017; Kaczowski, Brennan, & Swartout, 2017; Jacques-Tiura et al., 2013), and the physical environment (Taylor, Mumford, & Stein, 2015; White & Sienkiewicz, 2018);

WHEREAS general prevention principles identified by psychological research have not been applied to primary prevention of campus sexual assault, few interventions target

the most consistent risk factors (Nation et al., 2003; Tharp et al., 2013), but progress has been made in ameliorating risk (Gidycz et al., 2015; Gidycz & Dardis, 2014; Hollander, 2014; Senn et al., 2015, 2017);

WHEREAS psychology has been at the forefront of helping IHEs understand the ecology of sexual assault on campus by developing and disseminating scientifically grounded and comprehensive campus climate surveys on sexual assault (Swartout et al., n.d.; Wood, Sulley, Kammer-Kerwick, Follingstad, & Busch-Armendariz, 2017);

WHEREAS psychological research and theory have informed both institutional responses to reports (Holland, Cortina, & Freyd, 2018) and our understanding of victims' perceptions of betrayal by these actions (Smith & Freyd, 2014), can inform institutional responses to complaints, and has proposed and evaluated alternative resolution strategies such as restorative justice when appropriate (Karp & Sacks, 2014; Koss et al., 2011, 2014; Lamade, Lopez, Koss, Prentky, & Brereton, 2017; Koss, Wilgus, & Williamsen, 2014; Smith & Freyd, 2014);

WHEREAS psychologists play multiple roles on college campuses and are in position to effect change at multiple levels (Karp & Sacks, 2014; Smith & Freyd, 2014; Wood et al., 2017);

WHEREAS psychologists have the skills to assess the effectiveness of training models for campus administrators, safety officers, and faculty; and

WHEREAS psychologists have been trained in public scholarship and advocacy to disseminate research findings to local, state, and federal lawmakers;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association (APA) continues to encourage federal government and philanthropic organizations to fund research that would address gaps or further knowledge related to campus sexual assault including but not limited to:

- A national prevalence study of victimization and perpetration at IHE with a specific focus on underserved and marginalized groups;
- Factors that predict disclosure and formal reports and interventions to ensure that disclosure and reports are received by peers and first-responders in trauma-sensitive ways;
- Academic and related economic correlates of sexual assault victimization and perpetration, including lost opportunities for achievement and economic mobility;
- Continued research on risk factors for sexual assault perpetration and the role of substances, particularly alcohol, including IHE-specific culture on risk and protective factors;
- Academic and psychosocial consequences to students accused of, or found responsible for, sexual misconduct and to victims, survivors, and bystanders;
- The nature of perpetration on college campuses and what features are similar to and what features distinguish campus sexual assault from perpetration in other settings;
- Evaluation, including cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit studies, of developed or developing primary prevention approaches focused on potential perpetrators, particularly those examining the role of campus social norms, peer group norms, norms about heavy alcohol consumption, understanding of consent, and other potentially modifiable risk factors identified in the literature;
- Expanded research on effective-evidence based and trauma-informed treatments for survivors of sexual assault on college campuses across diverse groups;
- Effective methods for disseminating and evaluating evidence-based and trauma-informed services on college campuses;
- Continued evaluation and dissemination research on empowerment-based risk reduction interventions, effectiveness and efficacy of bystander interventions, and setting-level interventions on reducing sexual assault victimization and perpetration;
- Expanded research on the scope and nature of sexual assault perpetration with a focus on uncovering diversity of experiences;
- The incorporation of best practices in prevention into developing primary prevention strategies;
- The use of campus climate surveys to understand the ecology of sexual assault on individual college campuses, further refine the measurement of campus climate, and determine the usefulness of using climate surveys effectively assess prevention and policy strategies;
- The development of a national database of campus climate survey data for open use to the scientific community; and
- The outcomes, acceptance, use, and satisfaction of alternative procedures in student conduct proceedings not modeled after adversarial legal processes, and effective methods of disseminating alternative models and measuring their uptake.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA continues in its commitment to educate the public, promote awareness, and disseminate research findings to the general public, at-risk and marginalized populations, professionals working with at-risk populations, and professionals engaged in prevention, risk reduction, and treatment, and policymakers who need scientific information to reduce uncertainty in their decision-making;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA advocate with governmental organizations such as the Department of Education, National Institute of Justice, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to continue to monitor campus sexual assault incidence, response and prevention efforts, in the interest of protecting potential victims and caring for the mental health of those who have been victimized, particularly the understudied and underserved;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA encourages psychologists to be involved in public scholarship, to develop and serve on interdisciplinary task forces, working groups, etc., and to include IHE student personnel and other professionals in all bodies that provide scientific and practice-oriented input and feedback on legislation and regulations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA encourage professional development training of and evaluation for student affairs professional development, including staff in student conduct, mental health, campus law enforcement agencies, and any other first responders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA promote partnerships to inform meaningful research questions and to advance interventions and prevention, i.e., researcher-practitioner-administrator partnerships that promote community-based approaches, much like psychology has done in integrated health care.

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