STUDENT BARRIERS AND MOTIVATORS TO BYSTANDER INTERVENTION IF WITNESSING POTENTIAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

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ABSTRACT

STUDENT BARRIERS AND MOTIVATORS TO BYSTANDER INTERVENTION IF WITNESSING POTENTIAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Jaquenette G. Lochrie

Bystander intervention has received increased attention as a potential sexual violence prevention strategy, primarily to address campus sexual assault (McMahon et al., 2017). Shifting the focus from potential victims and perpetrators, the bystander approach engages all members of a campus community to act by increasing positive attitudes and behaviors related to sexual violence and greater willingness to intervene in pro-social ways. This study examined associations between college students' bystander intervention behavior and three key factors: (a) perceived self-efficacy, (b) a sense of responsibility to act, and (c) the relationship between the student bystander and the victim or perpetrator. The researcher provided insights into the complexities surrounding perceived motivators and barriers to this critical issue through a comprehensive examination by employing a case study approach with a population of students who have participated in bystander intervention leadership training. Through interviews, focus groups, and a review of bystander intervention leadership training materials, this study explored the contextual aspects influencing students' decision-making processes when witnessing potential sexual assault. The study was conducted at a private institution with 15 students and three training facilitator participants through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The student participants were seven male and eight female

undergraduate students with varying class years, majors, and resident status. Purposive and convenience sampling was used to select all participants. Findings revealed that self-efficacy, sense of responsibility, and relationships with the parties involved are the primary motivators and barriers to student bystanders intervening when witnessing a potential sexual assault. Future research could build upon this study by focusing on the failure of student bystanders to notice potential sexual assault. This failure is often rooted in a complex interplay of factors, including student apathy and the victim's race. These factors can impact bystander intervention and are worth future focus.
Keywords: bystander intervention, sexual assault, college community, self-efficacy, responsibility, relationship to victim, perpetrator

DEDICATION

I dedicate this accomplishment to all who have supported me throughout this journey—my mom, family, and friends who encouraged me along the way. I dedicate this dissertation also to the immeasurable number of students who have impacted me throughout my years in Student Affairs, and those yet to come. I am grateful for the opportunity to assist you in overcoming remarkable obstacles as you achieve academic and personal success.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Sexual assault is a severe public health problem on college campuses, and yet the prevalence of sexual assault has not substantially changed in over 30 years (American Psychological Association, 2018; Fisher et al., 2000). Approximately one in five women, one in thirteen men, and one in four gender non-conforming students are victims of sexual violence during their college experience (Coulter & Rankin, 2017). Campus sexual violence can affect students' physical and emotional health by significantly impacting their ability to achieve academically, develop and maintain social relationships, and grow professionally (Carey et al., 2018). Equally concerning, sexual violence is a highly underreported crime, with less than 10% of college students reporting their victimization to their college or law enforcement (Fisher et al., 2000). The high prevalence and low reporting rates increase the need for comprehensive violence prevention programs that influence campus culture.

According to the Department of Justice (2014), the risk of sexual assault is three times higher for students between the ages of 18 and 24 than for other at-risk groups. In 2014, Congress passed the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act) due to increased sexual assault prevalence rates. Campus SaVE requires institutions to provide enrolled students with annual prevention programming, consent education programming, safe and positive options for bystander intervention, information on recognizing warning signs of abusive behavior, and risk reduction education. Ecological approaches to sexual assault suggest that prevention programs move from interventions focused on individuals to programs that engage communities (Banyard et al., 2005).

Prosocial bystander-based sexual assault prevention is one approach that teaches students to intervene before, during, and after this violence has occurred (Banyard, 2015). By shifting the responsibility of sexual assault prevention to the larger community, this approach changes community norms by increasing the sense of campus responsibility to intervene and assist fellow students (Banyard, 2015). When students are treated as active participants in the solution instead of as victims and perpetrators, student resistance to programming is reduced (Banyard, 2015).

Prosocial bystander intervention programs can provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to intervene and prevent sexual assault on college campuses (Exner & Cummings, 2011). According to Coker et al. (2011), student bystanders are more likely to be present than any campus authority when these acts occur. They are poised to take actions that can prevent or reduce harm to their peers, such as de-escalating violence, supporting the victim, calling outside resources for help, and providing direct support (Coker et al., 2011). Banyard et al. (2007) reported bystander intervention for sexual violence has changed knowledge and attitudes and increased the efficacy of bystander behaviors in college men and women. However, deeper understanding of the importance of bystanders, the rise of bystander prevention programs related to sexual violence, and the effectiveness of these programs can help researchers and practitioners determine the factors that make college student bystanders more or less likely to intervene (Banyard, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

Much research has examined factors that predict bystander behavior for emergencies, but gaps exist in understanding the factors that predict bystander behavior

for sexual violence. Sexual violence is a significant problem on college campuses nationwide (Jordan et al., 2010). Approximately 20% of women and 6% of men report experiencing sexual assault in college (Krebs et al., 2007). Victims report various mental, physical, and health problems that can affect their academic, social, and professional pursuits (Krebs et al., 2007). Historically, the approach to preventing such harm was discussing beliefs about consent and coercion and teaching self-protection strategies (Borges et al., 2008; Hollander, 2014). The results of these methods have proven unsuccessful and have been described as victim blaming, consequently putting the onus on victims to prevent the assault (DeGue et al., 2014). More recent successful trends focus on individuals who witness violence or potentially violent interactions (Banyard, 2008; Banyard et al., 2009a). Bystander prevention programs support witnesses' capacity to change beliefs, but researchers have little evidence that they lead to more responsible behavior.

This study aimed to examine perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in bystander intervention leadership training (BILT). The study explored how skills learned through training can identify prevalent barriers and motivators to college student bystander intervention if witnessing potential sexual violence. More specifically, this study explored BILT within a private, four-year institution of higher education and the role this training has in the potential creation of a culture that engages in intervention to prevent sexual violence.

Bystander intervention on college campuses can be the most powerful tool in preventing sexual assault and supporting survivors. Effective prevention and intervention training that encourages bystander involvement can be developed by understanding the

factors contributing to effective bystander intervention. Results from this study may contribute to creating safer environments for all college community members.

Theoretical Framework

The bystander effect theory and social norms theory guided this study. Research on bystander intervention has produced many studies showing that the presence of other people in a critical situation reduces the likelihood that an individual will help (Fischer et al., 2011). Diffusion of responsibility, where an individual feels a decreased sense of responsibility to act when in a group rather than alone, may be due to audience inhibition or the fear of being embarrassed in front of other people (Latané & Nida, 1981). Particularly in ambiguous situations, the bystander looks to others for social cues; when observing others who do not respond, the bystander also models inaction (Nickerson, 2014). Influenced by research on human social behaviors, this study examined barriers affecting a bystander's likeliness to intervene in potentially harmful sexual assault scenarios and was driven by bystander effect and social norms theories.

The bystander effect, also known as bystander apathy, is a social psychological theory that individuals are less likely to help a victim when others are present. Simply put, the greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that one of them will help, suggesting this phenomenon occurs because each witness feels less responsible for helping—a process referred to as the "diffusion of responsibility" (Darley & Latané, 1968). According to Darley and Latané (1968), five characteristics of emergencies affect bystanders: emergencies involve the threat of harm or actual harm; emergencies are unusual and rare; the type of action required in an emergency differs from situation to situation; emergencies cannot be predicted or expected; and emergencies require

immediate action. Subsequently, the situation model proposed by Latané and Darley (1970) includes five essential steps to intervening: noticing the event, identifying the situation as intervention-appropriate, taking intervention responsibility, deciding how to help, and acting to intervene. With this in mind, Darley and Latané (1968) found that bystanders go through cognitive and behavioral processes: *notice* that something is going on; *Interpret* the situation as being an emergency; *degree of responsibility* felt; *form* of assistance; and *implement* the action choice.

Darley and Latané (1968) identified bystander effect theory as instrumental in sexual assault prevention education, providing a lens on how and why students respond when faced with potentially harmful situations. Equally as significant is the impact of social norms in influencing student behaviors where willingness to intervene is reliant on the community setting in which the potential threat of harm is present. Understanding what motivates students to intervene, with respect to community expectations, is vital in shaping bystander education on college campuses.

Social norms theory explains how a community endorsing or ignoring bystander intervention efforts can shape how likely community members are to intervene when witnessing potential sexual violence (Banyard, 2011). Berkowitz and Perkins developed the social norms theory in the 1980s to understand the relationship between individual behavior and social norms, and it is also relevant to bystander intervention research. This theory 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 (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986). Social norms create unwritten rules defining socially acceptable attitudes and behaviors within a group or community. They shape human behaviors

through anticipated positive or negative reactions from group members, including those related to bystander action (Batson & Powell, 2003). The approach has been applied to a range of healthy behaviors. Social norms theory assumes that individuals overestimate or underestimate their peers' attitudes and behaviors, and these misperceptions are associated with increased or decreased personal engagement in behavior. Interventions that correct these misperceptions by providing informational feedback on the reported norm will promote behavior change (Perkins, 2003b).

Developed initially to identify normative influences regarding alcohol and tobacco use, social norms theory is now used to address various health and social justice issues, including sexual assault and violence (Berkowitz, 2003b). The social norms approach suggests that peer pressure is the primary influence on shaping people's behavior. However, many behaviors are shaped by incorrect perceptions (Lee et al., 2007). Social marketing approaches have been utilized to engage men and boys as allies in violence prevention. Social marketing campaigns have also been applied more broadly to college campuses as a strategy for violence prevention (Potter, 2012). Berkowitz (2003b) suggested that social norms efforts be used to address overall campus sexual violence intervention strategies and provide examples of intervention programs that can reduce bystander apathy.

Both bystander effect and social norm theories guided the literature review in this study and influenced design decisions because they provide a foundation for human behavior in potentially dangerous situations. Bystander intervention theory suggests that individuals are more likely to intervene in a potentially harmful situation when they perceive that they have the skills, confidence, and social support to do so. In that vein of

social support, social norms theory suggests that individuals are more likely to intervene when they perceive that most of their peers would also intervene in a similar situation. Research on college student bystander intervention in sexual assault situations can use these theories to guide the design of interventions that increase skills, confidence, and social support for bystander intervention, changing social norms on campus to make the intervention more normative. This can include providing training on how to intervene safely and effectively, as well as increasing awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault and the importance of intervention.

Bystander intervention and social norms approaches exemplify how theory and research-driven interventions can be designed, implemented, and elevated to address sexual violence prevention effectively. This is clear because peers who witness potential sexual assault can intervene and prevent violence. Individuals overestimate peer support of violence while underestimating peer support of bystander intervention (Fabiano et al., 2003). Bystander intervention and social norms theory incorporate new insights into the campus environment's critical role in sexual violence prevention. It understands the nature and impact of student peer influence, the need for intervention training tailored to college students, and the design of comprehensive environments that can foster change. As a result, these theories can help predict what factors influence a bystander's likelihood to intervene and shift campus culture toward promoting defending behaviors among student witnesses to prevent sexual assault. These findings are critical as higher education works to create environments that reduce sexual assault. Additionally, in this study, the researcher used these theories to identify possible barriers to bystander intervention and develop targeted campaigns to change these norms.

Significance of Study

This study explored perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in BILT. The researcher focused on students' perception of learned skills and what deters and motivates them to intervene as trained bystanders if they see potential sexual violence. This is important because understanding what drives students is essential, as it could provide universities with the rationale behind why bystanders intervene and can shape training to address those factors, change campus culture, and decrease instances of sexual violence.

Prior research has focused on bystanders' impact and the impact of sexual violence on college campuses. Bystander-focused research includes the perceived consequence of action when intervening and how that affects bystanders' decision to act. Additional bystander research has focused on barriers, including the failure to notice risky behavior, the lack of self-efficacy to intervene, and a sense of responsibility. Equally important is bystander gender role research, which has identified how men and women perceive intervening and how the impact of gender roles acts as a barrier and motivator. Research on the effects of sexual assault on college campuses shows an estimated 19–27% of college women and 6% of college men will be sexually assaulted (Anderson et al., 2015). The astounding volume resulted in the Campus SaVE Act calling campuses to administer bystander intervention training. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the bystander approach to preventing campus violence emerged (Banyard et al., 2009a). Related research focused on how bystander prevention models can reduce sexual violence on campus (Bennett et al., 2014) and intended to inform higher education

leaders on what they could do to make campuses safe through educating and empowering students.

Beyond recognizing the prevalence of sexual assault on university campuses, Campbell et al. (2009) found these crimes' consequential effects on victims. Notably, intimate partner violence, stalking, rape, and psychological aggression have harmful impacts on women's health (Campbell et al., 2009). Further, Briere and Jordan (2004) found that most forms of experiential-induced mental stress are associated with these forms of personal victimization. Examples of long-term effects of sexual violence include confusion, fear, agitation, and social withdrawal (Herman, 1992). Additional findings have identified the detrimental impact of post-traumatic stress disorder, including depression, anxiety, and suicidality (Campbell et al., 2009; Jordan et al., 2010). Carey et al. (2018) found that 12% of first-year women reported at least one incident of sexual assault during the first semester in college. Profound adverse mental health effects of those experiences support findings that sexual assault amplifies the likelihood that female students will end the semester with clinically significant depression and anxiety (Carey et al., 2018).

The aftermath of sexual violence may also include cognitive impairment resulting in an inability to concentrate, organize sets of facts, and remember details in academic courses (Jordan et al., 2014). Specifically, depression and anxiety can diminish the focus and energy needed to commit to academic work and decrease the victim's ability to engage with peers due to fear, shame, or embarrassment (Jordan et al., 2014). Subsequently, sexual victimization has an identifiable impact on academic success, as pre-college victims tend to enter college with lower grade point averages (GPAs);

specifically, victims of sexual violence are three times more likely to have a GPA below 2.5 than non-victimized women (Jordan et al., 2014). Women sexually assaulted during their first semester of college followed the same pattern with falling GPAs (Jordan et al., 2014). The Jordan et al. (2014) study made it clear that a woman entering college with an average GPA who was sexually assaulted in her teens or during the first semester of college is likelier than a woman without trauma to have a lower GPA by the end of her freshman year. When the assault was forcible rape during the first semester of college, 14.3% of the women ended the semester with a GPA below 2.5 (Jordan et al., 2014). This pattern of below 2.5 GPA continued through the end of the second semester, putting them at a distinct disadvantage concerning their ability to achieve academic success and remain matriculated (Jordan et al., 2014). Brunsden et al. (2000) found students possess specific pre-college characteristics that contribute to their likelihood of staying at their university through graduation. Similarly, predicted attributes and experiences may place a student at risk of dropping out, including depression due to sexual violence (Brunsden et al., 2000). Duncan (2000) found that specifically, over four years, 50% of sexually abused students left college versus 39% of those without abuse; those who reported multiple forms of childhood maltreatment (sexual abuse, physical abuse, and psychological maltreatment) were most likely to leave college (65%). These findings clearly distinguish a woman's physical safety and ability to persist to graduation.

Last, the economic impact of sexual violence is staggering. In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a study "Lifetime Economic Burden of Rape Among US Adults" in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. The purpose was to estimate the lifetime per victim and total population economic burden of

rape among adult men and women in the United States (Peterson et al., 2017). Data sources include previous sexual violence research, administrative data systems (e.g., health care, criminal justice), and surveillance data from the CDC's 2011 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). In addition to criminal justice-related expenditures (i.e., investigation, adjudication, incarceration), the CDC's estimate included costs of health conditions (e.g., injuries, depression, PTSD, substance abuse, cervical cancer, and rape-related pregnancy) linked to rape victimization. Using these methods, CDC estimated that the per-victim lifetime cost of rape is $122,461.

The research helped improve higher education institutions by framing bystander intervention training and educating campus communities on the prevalence and severity of campus sexual assault. These results demonstrate that preventing sexual assault on college campuses is vital to students persisting to graduation. This dissertation topic is grounded in bystander theory and the factors influencing the likeliness to intervene in potentially harmful situations. Corresponding findings highlight the importance of student perceptions and consistency in bystander behavior. Furthermore, the research explored factors that act as barriers and motivators to college student bystander intervention if witnessing potential sexual violence. This study highlights the importance of student perceptions of barriers and motivators to intervention and existing data, which indicate a positive correlation between bystander motivators and decreased sexual violence on college campuses.

Vincentian Influence

The Vincentians are a Roman Catholic society of priests and brothers founded by St. Vincent DePaul in Paris in 1625 (Britannica, 2019) to preach mission to the poor.

Vincentians are united in an international charity society by their spirit of poverty and humility and witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice.

As noted on the St. John's University website, the Catholic institution is committed to its mission, social justice, and creating a campus climate free from sexual discrimination and harassment. The university aims to develop and sustain positive behavior change and a cultural shift among students, faculty, staff, and community members toward a trauma-informed and safe campus community. Guided by its mission, the university increases dialogue and engages all individuals in prevention, education, and intervention efforts surrounding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It sees these actions as effective pathways to elicit a positive impact and reduce incidents of violence and victimization. The findings in this research will contribute to effective bystander training creating a safe campus community and decreasing sexual violence.

Research Design and Questions

The researcher used a case study design based on the methodology Stake (2005) describes as an exploration of a "bounded system." Specifically, the researcher conducted the study with participants who completed bystander intervention training during the Spring 2023 semester over time through details, in-depth data collection, and involving multiple sources of information, each with its own sampling, data collection, and analysis strategies. Case study is the most suitable design as this study is contextually based, and this type of design allows for a holistic understanding of a phenomenon within a real-life context from the perspective of those involved (Stake, 1995). A case study draws attention to the question of what can be learned about a single case and is best suited to

research that asks “how” and “why” questions (Stake, 2005). For this reason, a case study design allowed the researcher to increase their understanding of bystanders’ perception to intervene if witnessing potential sexual violence and how the barriers and motivators predict intervention in the context of interviews and focus groups.

Guided by Stake’s (1995) recommendation, this case study has three evolved research questions to structure multiple data collection points. The researcher focused on the participants’ perceived barriers to and motivators for intervening if witnessing a potential sexual assault, specifically how bystander intervention training influences their action or inaction at a private Catholic institution in a large metropolitan city in the northeastern United States. The following research questions drove the study:

1. What factors influence college students’ decision-making process to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault situations, and how do these factors align with the tenets of the bystander theory?
2. How do college students perceive their roles as potential bystanders if witnessing potential sexual assault, and what factors impact their willingness and ability to intervene as bystanders?
3. What role, if any, do training facilitators have in engaging in a postsecondary environment that supports student bystander intervention?

Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of key terms that the researcher used for this study.

Attrition:

The number of students who leave a program before actually completing the program (Duncan, 2000).

Barrier:

Perceived facilitators that hinder intervening when there is a risk for sexual violence (Bennett et al., 2014).

Bystander:

An individual who observes or witnesses a situation of discrimination or violence committed by a perpetrator toward a victim and has the opportunity to either condone, intervene, or do nothing (Rodenhizer-Stämpfli et al., 2018; Banyard, 2011, as cited in Henson et al., 2019).

Bystander Intervention:

The decision of a third party to take action in a perceived, ongoing, or completed sexual assault to assist the victim (Gray et al., 2016).

Bystander Intervention Leadership Training (BILT):

Training used in post-secondary education institutions to prevent sexual assault focused on teaching skills to interrupt a potentially harmful situation, especially regarding sexual violence (RAINN, n.d.)

Motivator:

Perceived facilitators to intervening when there is a risk for sexual violence (Bennett et al., 2014).

Sexual Assault:

Sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim (RAINN, n.d.).

Sexual Assault Prevention Programs:

> Programs intended to improve societal response to sexual violence and promote strategies that reduce the incidence of victimization for rape or sexual assault (New York State Department of Health, n.d.).

Summary

Despite years of study and multiple intervention strategies, sexual assault on college campuses remains a significant problem (Koelsch et al., 2012). National studies spanning two decades indicate that 15% of college women have experienced rape (Kilpatrick et al., 2007). Messman-Moore and Brown (2006) found that 50% of women have experienced some form of sexual victimization during their college enrollment. To combat the crisis of college sexual violence, there has been support for the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs in general (Breitenbecher, 2000) and bystander intervention programs (Banyard et al., 2007). Utilizing bystander and social norms theories as a theoretical framework, this study aimed to understand human behaviors influencing college student barriers and motivators to intervening if witnessing potential sexual violence. As college sexual assault victims experience lower GPAs, decreased retention rates, and long-term mental and physical health problems (Jordan et al., 2014), institutions of higher education must establish environments conducive to peer intervention. Using Stake's (2005) case study methodology, this study was a "bounded system" to allow for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of intervention within the real-life context from the perspective of college students. As such, the research questions are designed to capture data about the barriers and motivators that influence intervention if witnessing a potential sexual assault, about how training affects those behaviors, and to gather perceptions from campus constituents and training facilitators.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

This chapter will provide the reader with literature related to the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses and the role of student bystander intervention. The researcher will begin by discussing the theoretical framework relevant to the study, including bystander intervention and social norms theory. The chapter will conclude with the literature review, research findings, and how the researcher identified this study will fill a gap.

Theoretical Framework

Bystander Effect

The idea of bystander intervention was founded by the work of social psychologists John Darley and Bibb Latané (1968) following the 1964 murder of Catherine "Kitty" Genovese. According to Darley and Latané (1968), Ms. Genovese was the victim of a stabbing outside the apartment building where she lived. The investigators discovered that 38 witnesses saw or heard her attack. Still, none came to her aid or called the police (Darley & Latané, 1968). Cieciura (2016) stated their work originated as one of the most replicable and robust social psychological experiments. Darley and Latané were the first psychologists to formulate and study the bystander effect. They defined the phenomenon in which bystanders influence an individual's likelihood of helping someone in an emergency (Cieciura, 2016). Specifically, Darley and Latané (1968) believed that as the number of people present in an emergency increases, the less likely it is that any person will assist someone in need. Furthermore, the bystander effect was the

original framework for bystander intervention that guided researchers' examination of social behavior.

Bystander intervention is the decision of a third party to take action in a perceived, ongoing, or completed sexual assault to assist the victim (Banyard, 2015). Gray et al. (2016) shared that the primary goal of bystander intervention is to prevent sexual victimization before it is perpetrated. Ideally, a bystander will notice and intervene before an assault occurs. Darley and Latané (1968) identified five stages bystanders go through before deciding to intervene. These stages include: *notice* that something is going on, *interpret* the situation as being an emergency, *degree of responsibility* felt, *form* of assistance, and *implement* the action choice. Albeit, this ideal does not always exist. Darley and Latané (1968) indicated that diffusion of responsibility, audience inhibition, pluralistic ignorance, and confidence skills hinder an individual's willingness to intervene. Diffusion of responsibility entails feeling less personally responsible for taking action when others are present, assuming someone else is responsible for taking action or has already acted to do so (Darley & Latané, 1968). Audience inhibition is associated with fear or embarrassment (Darley & Latané, 1968). Plural ignorance is a phenomenon attributed to scenarios where most bystanders privately reject a norm but assume most accept it (Darley & Latané, 1968). Last, Darley and Latané (1968) considered the individual's confidence level in their ability to intervene effectively. These factors can be common challenges when understanding a college student's motivation to intervene in a potential sexual assault situation in social environments.

Bystander effect theory provides essential insight into how and why student bystanders respond in the presence of potential sexual assault. This theory is a valuable

tool to explain bystander behaviors to intervene and can influence higher education leadership concerning bystander intervention training on college campuses.

Social Norms

Perkins and Berkowitz first used the social norms theory in 1986 to address student alcohol use patterns. As a result, the theory, and subsequently the social norms approach, is best known for reducing socially harmful behaviors, including alcohol consumption and alcohol-related injury in college students (Kaufman & Berkowitz, 2010). The approach addresses many public health topics, including tobacco use, driving under the influence, seat belt use, and, more recently, sexual assault prevention (Berkowitz, 2003a; Perkins, 2002, 2003a). College students tend to be the target population for social norms approaches. Efforts to end sexual violence and exploitation must include strategies for changing the environments in which violence and exploitation occur (Dempsey et al., 2018). Thus, while violence prevention efforts focus on perpetrator behavior and the risk factors that render victims vulnerable, they must also incorporate methodologies that foster more comprehensive environmental change (Dempsey et al., 2018). To this end, environments and the individuals within them can be encouraged to support prevention efforts by acting to reduce risk factors and identify problems before violence occurs (Kaufman & Berkowitz, 2010). One promising tool for this purpose is the social norms approach, a theory and evidence-based methodology for addressing health and social justice issues to foster environments that resist and intervene to prevent violence (Kaufman & Berkowitz, 2010). It has documented success in reducing alcohol and tobacco use in college and high school populations and has shown promise for empowering individuals to prevent violence in several preliminary studies

(Berkowitz, 2003b). Social norms theory and research suggest that individuals misperceive the attitudes and behaviors of relevant others in ways that reduce willingness to intervene to prevent violence (Berkowitz, 2003b). In particular, misperceived attitudes and behaviors of violence inhibiting peers and other community members are perceived as less healthy than one's attitudes and behaviors. This phenomenon is known as "pluralistic ignorance" (Miller & McFarland, 1991; Toch & Klofas, 1984). Social norms theory fits this study because the researcher sought to understand how social settings influence student bystanders' responses in the presence of potential sexual assault. Social norms theory is valuable in framing this study, as it aims to discover perceived social expectations and the reality of peer beliefs.

Both social norms theory and bystander effect theory are useful theoretical frameworks that can be applied to studying bystander intervention on college campuses when witnessing potential sexual assault. Social norms theory explains how individuals' behavior is influenced by the social norms that exist in their environment. In contrast, the bystander effect theory explains why individuals may not intervene in emergencies, such as a sexual assault, when others are present. As such, using these theories, the researcher investigated how social norms regarding sexual assault on college campuses affect the likelihood of intervention and how the presence of multiple bystanders may reduce the possibility of any one person intervening. Overall, the combination of social norm theory and bystander effect theory can provide a comprehensive framework for understanding bystander intervention and devising effective strategies to promote it in potential sexual assault situations on college campuses.

Review of Related Literature

Selection Criteria

This research review is drawn from educational literature and peer-reviewed journals. The literature discusses the study's guiding theoretical frameworks, bystander theory, and social norms theory, focusing on three key themes that emerged and selection criteria. This section will summarize what the literature review and research findings revealed, specifically with respect to bystander intervention if witnessing a potential sexual assault.

Background of Bystander Intervention

Sexual assault is a severe and pervasive problem facing college campus communities, with estimates that one in four to five women experience an attempted or completed sexual assault in their college career (Fisher et al., 2000), resulting in survivors experiencing a host of negative mental and physical health consequences. This highlights the importance of colleges and universities having prevention and intervention programs in place to reduce the incidence of sexual assault on campus and to provide survivors with the services and support they require. Sexual assault prevention programs, including those based on a bystander approach, have increased on college campuses, emphasizing the importance of understanding the role of bystanders in intervening to prevent peer assaults (Banyard et al., 2009b). Such programs encourage individuals to intervene when witnessing incidents or warning signs of violence (Kettrey & Marx, 2021). According to a popular skill acquisition model, witnesses to sexual assault must demonstrate the following to intervene: (a) notice the event, (b) identify the situation as warranting

intervention, (c) take responsibility for acting, and (d) know strategies for helping (Kettrey & Marx, 2021).

With the growth of campus-based bystander approaches to sexual violence prevention, research has yielded promising findings for the effects of in-person education programs on attitudes and behaviors, such as perceptions of the wrongfulness of coercive behaviors, reduced association with sexually aggressive peers, and increased bystander efficacy, and intent to intervene as an active bystander (Katz et al., 2011). Correspondingly, bystanders are often the direct witnesses to potential sexual assault on college campuses, and friends are often the first and only people a student will tell about their experience as a victim (Kettrey & Marx, 2021). This underscores the importance of engaging college community members in being effective bystanders to change campus culture positively (Banyard et al., 2009b), making campuses free of sexual violence.

Failure to Notice

Sexual assault is a significant problem among adolescents and college students in the United States and across the globe (Kettrey & Marx, 2021). Failure to notice risky behaviors is a barrier to sexual assault intervention that extends beyond the United States, as noted by Kania and Cale (2021) in their study at a large university in Australia. The authors explored perceived barriers to specific missed opportunities for intervention in situations with a risk for sexual violence with college-aged participants. The results showed that a higher intention to intervene resulted in an increased likelihood of actual intervention and a lower chance of missed opportunities. Most overlooked opportunities were associated with a failure to identify the behavior as a risk for potential harm and were associated with failure. Across the sample of missed opportunity barriers, a failure

to identify a situation as high risk and ignorance of sexual assault risk markers was the most common barrier (40.6%). This was followed by failure to notice the situation (i.e., respondents did not consider the risk for sexual violence; 20.4%). A failure to take any intervention was the least reported barrier (1.9%). The most notable finding consistent with others' (Koelsch et al., 2012) research is the participant's likeliness to intervene to help a friend in distress. Kania and Cale's findings suggest awareness campaigns to increase students' abilities to identify risky situations should precede bystander programs that focus on other barriers, such as specific skills deficits. Likewise, promoting a collective campus culture of responsibility for preventing sexual violence may enhance the effectiveness of intervention programs and campaigns.

Similarly, research by Haikalis et al. (2018) reinforces the significance of situations where college student bystanders missed intervention opportunities to prevent sexual assault. The study utilized an incident-specific approach based on reports from 427 college-age female sexual assault victims. Results indicated that bystanders had a chance to intervene before 23% of sexual assaults, and several factors were more common in situations involving missed intervention opportunities. These factors included observable unwanted sexual advances, victim discomfort in the perpetrator's presence, and the victim's relationship with the perpetrator and bystander. That is, bystanders are less likely to intervene when the victim or perpetrator is a stranger. Among the most significant findings of Haikalis et al. is that approximately one-fourth of sexual assault involves bystander opportunities for prosocial intervention. Victim–bystander relationships, sexual objectification, unwanted sexual advances by the perpetrator, and victim discomfort were related to bystander opportunity to intervene (Haikalis et al.

2018). Furthermore, many victims reported that the perpetrators engaged in unwanted sexual advances while in the presence of bystanders (Koelsch et al., 2012). Together, these results suggest that bystanders often have the opportunity to witness and intervene in low-severity assaultive behaviors (e.g., unwanted sexual advances). When bystanders had the opportunity to intervene, the most common response was to remain passive (Koelsch et al., 2012). These results stress the importance of intervention at the first signs of sexual risk rather than waiting for the escalation to more severe assaultive behaviors.

Similarly, Burn (2008) conducted a study of undergraduates (378 women and 210 men) at a Central Coast California university via an anonymous questionnaire measuring five barriers identified by the situational model of bystander intervention (Latané & Darley, 1970) and bystander intervention behavior based on bystander intervention in sexual assault situations. Like the findings of many other researchers, Burn's findings demonstrate that most individuals are reluctant to take action because they are uncertain about the situation or concerned about the consequences of intervening. Burn also found that people are more likely to intervene if they have been trained to recognize potential assaults, and they are more likely to act if they clearly understand what constitutes a dangerous situation. These findings have important implications for preventing sexual assault and increasing bystander intervention. Burn articulated the psychological and social factors contributing to a failure to notice. As a result, it may be possible to design interventions that overcome these barriers and encourage more people to act in the face of potential violence.

Failure to Take Responsibility

Research findings related to questioning responsibility as a barrier to bystander intervention are supported by Yule and Grych (2017). In their research, Yule and Grych studied 650 students randomly selected from the first-year class at a midsized private university in the midwestern United States. Their results showed that the most common barrier to bystander intervention that students reported was the belief that it was not their responsibility to intervene. Specifically, they thought someone else would step in. In addition, several students reported that they failed to identify the circumstances as potentially risky. This perception supports previous research that cited a diffusion of responsibility as a primary obstacle (Burn, 2008). Given the question of responsibility, other research has shown a failure to notice and identify situations as potentially harmful (Bennett et al., 2014) as barriers to intervention. Equally important is Yule and Grych's research that sampled 281 first-year college students specifically regarding experiences that may present an elevated risk of sexual or physical assault since arriving on campus and whether they had done something to intervene. Their research is essential as it assessed situations that students had experienced rather than asking about hypothetical situations or behavioral intentions. If they had not intervened, they were asked to identify the barriers that had inhibited them. Most participants intervened in most situations, but only 27% intervened in every situation they encountered. Men and women differed in the barriers they identified most frequently across situations, with men endorsing a perceived responsibility more often than women (Carlson, 2008). The findings underscore the need to understand and address the factors inhibiting responsive bystander behavior. In like manner, the results suggest that existing bystander intervention program efforts can be

improved by fostering a greater sense of collective responsibility in students and teaching specific intervention behaviors (Carlson, 2008). Continuing his research on gender, Carlson (2008) conducted a qualitative study of 20 college men ages 18 and 19 at a West Coast university. The author's analysis was to examine the relationship between masculinity and bystander intervention in crises. Focus group interviews concluded that men felt they must not appear weak and that the pressure to act masculine plays an essential role in young men's decision to intervene in violent situations. The participants' need to act masculine influenced the researcher to look at other studies that investigated negative and positive responses.

Understanding the perceptional impact of intervening as a bystander also sheds light on barriers to intervention. Moschella et al. (2016) studied 525 undergraduate students enrolled in a psychology course at a northeastern university to investigate what bystanders reported as perceived outcomes and actual consequences of their bystander actions in response to risk for sexual assault. Using a 7-point Likert-type scale, survey results showed that overall, perpetrator negative and victim positive were the two most common responses reported when the perpetrator was "mad, angry" at the bystander and the victim was "happy, relieved, thankful." These results demonstrate that the bystander can often receive both negative and positive responses in the same situation and must prepare for both types of feedback (Moschella et al., 2016). Both men and women reported that receiving negative feedback from perpetrators was not a barrier to intervention. Moreover, perceived feelings of thankfulness from victims outweighed expression of negative feelings from perpetrators (Moschella et al., 2016).

Self-Efficacy

Bystander efficacy among undergraduate students is also recognized in the literature as a barrier to intervention. Exner and Cummings (2011) studied a convenience sample of 188 students from four undergraduate classes at a northeastern university to assess bystander efficacy attitudes among undergraduate students. Using a one-line survey, Exner and Cummings found male participants had a moderately high degree of efficacy related to violence prevention. Both Carlson (2008) and Exner and Cummings suggested that gender roles present barriers to intervention as males and females internally struggle with the decision to intervene due to self-efficacy, social constructs, and relation to the perpetrator and victim. Gender differences observed were specific to females. Females were more likely to intervene when the victim was someone they knew. However, they reported being more likely to be concerned overall and have specific fears around decision-making, physical harm, and losing friendships (Exner & Cummings, 2011).

Many factors determine how males and females internally struggle with the decision to intervene, including social constructs and relation to the perpetrator and victim (Carlson, 2008). This evidence raises the question: What are the benefits of changing attitudes toward intervention using bystander training? Studies have shown that work in changing attitudes about sexual violence and the role of the bystander is the most effective way to prevent sexual assault (Cares et al., 2015). Cares et al. (2015) used an experimental design with pre- and post-test surveys of 1,236 first-year college undergraduates at a New England university. Compared to the control group, the results concluded a significant change in bystander attitudes for male and female participants

who completed Bringing in the Bystander training. Additionally, many initial changes in attitude lasted at least 12 months post-program. Cares et al. (2015) finding demonstrates that prevention of sexual violence focuses on changing community attitudes and norms and providing all community members a role to play. In addition to changing community attitudes, other research looks at helping behavior.

Bennett et al. (2014) studied 242 first-year college students at a New England university. Participants completed an online survey within the first three weeks of the semester after participating in bystander intervention training during new student orientation. Participants were invited back during the last three weeks of the semester to complete the second online survey. This study looked at barriers and facilitators of bystander intervention of helping behavior in the context of sexual violence among first-semester college students following bystander intervention training. Barriers did not correlate with helping behavior directed at friends. However, weightier perceived barriers (i.e., failure to take responsibility and failure to intervene due to skill deficit) were related to lesser self-reported helping behavior directed at strangers. These attitudes may be essential targets for bystander-focused prevention programs.

Coker et al. (2011) chose a random sample of 2,000 University of Kentucky students from each class (first-year students, sophomores, juniors, and seniors). The sample participated in Green Dot bystander intervention training, a peer training model, and completed pre- and post-test surveys. The researcher found that those receiving Green Dot training reported significantly more actual active bystander behaviors and more observed bystander behaviors when compared with students receiving no intervention. Additionally, findings showed that Green Dot-trained students were likelier

to report observing functioning bystander behaviors than those who received no intervention (Coker et al. 2011). This suggests a diffusion of intervention through students' social networks such that those trained are more likely to report observing active bystander behaviors in their environment, including those in their social network. This study by Coker et al. demonstrated that bystander intervention training programs can influence bystander behaviors and attitudes. Using bystander intervention for sexual violence prevention changed knowledge and attitudes and increased bystander intervention behaviors in college men and women (Coker et al. 2011).

Conclusions and Implications

Sexual assault is a significant problem on college campuses (American Psychological Association, 2018; Fisher et al., 2000). This review revealed that a lack of responsibility is perhaps the most frequently cited barrier to bystander intervention to prevent sexual violence (Moschella et al., 2016). Bennett et al. (2014) and Yule and Grych (2017) also supported the lack of responsibility and failure to notice potentially harmful situations surfacing as the leading barriers to college student bystander intervention. According to Darley and Latané (1968), if there are numerous witnesses to an assault, it can be challenging to determine who should intervene. Observers might assume someone else will act (Darley & Latané 1968). In addition, according to Cieciura (2016), failure to recognize an assault in progress is a significant barrier to intervention. Bystander sexual assault prevention programs are intended to combat a general "bystander effect" that diffuses responsibility for action in group settings (Darley & Latané 1968). Unfortunately, a sizable proportion of college-aged students are frequently exposed to socially acceptable and stereotypical behaviors, so it is questionable whether

they can recognize sexual assault when it occurs (Kettrey & Marx, 2021). To intervene as a witness to sexual assault, an individual must observe the event, identify it as requiring action/intervention, assume responsibility for acting, and demonstrate a sufficient level of self-efficacy (Darley & Latané, 1968). According to studies, young witnesses of sexual assault frequently fail to meet these criteria (Banyard, 2008; Bennett et al., 2014; Burn, 2008; Casey & Ohler, 2012; Exner & Cummings, 2011; McCauley & Casler, 2015; McMahon, 2010; Noonan & Charles, 2009). Equally notable is that men and women react differently to sexual assault scenarios and often process information differently internally (Carlson, 2008). While each individual expresses an intention to intervene, perceptions of that intervention by friends, the victim, and the perpetrator pose obstacles to their intervention (Carlson, 2008). Collectively, these findings indicate that broader dissemination of bystander training programs or improvement of existing ones can substantially impact public health, mainly when bystanders are present and can intervene in situations where sexual assault is likely to escalate. Through training to reduce missed bystander opportunities and, when risk is identified, by encouraging bystanders to persist in their intervention attempts, intensify their intervention, or employ alternative strategies if their initial attempts fail, prevention could be enhanced. The literature on barriers affecting the failure to intervene provides valuable insight into the factors contributing to this phenomenon (Banyard, 2008; Bennett et al., 2014; Burn, 2008; Casey & Ohler, 2012; Exner & Cummings, 2011; McCauley & Casler, 2015; McMahon, 2010). The research of Latané and Darley (1970) and Burn (2008) emphasizes the significance of group dynamics and the role of uncertainty and fear in determining whether individuals will act

in response to a possible sexual assault. It may be possible to increase bystander intervention and reduce the incidence of sexual assault by addressing these obstacles.

The effectiveness of bystander training in preventing sexual assaults on college campuses is supported in the research (Bennett et al., 2014; Casey & Ohler, 2012). Reducing sexual assault on campus can be accomplished by persuading peers to respond and providing them with the skills to do so safely. This evidence suggests that higher education institutions should encourage students to participate in bystander intervention training. These opportunities provided during the first semester of a student's first year will have a lasting effect throughout their college career. Students should have opportunities to learn their role as bystanders, specifically taking responsibility and recognizing potentially dangerous situations. Particular attention should be paid to the social dynamics and the processing of conflicting emotions regarding how the victim and the perpetrator will perceive their actions and the social consequences of those actions. Future research should continue identifying obstacles to bystander intervention in potentially dangerous situations within campus subcultures. These subcultures have extensive effects on campus culture and are frequently linked to sexual violence. Understanding the barriers to intervention and gaining the "buy-in" of these subcultures could significantly reduce sexual assault among college students. This study was intended to advance the literature in these areas, ultimately promoting practices that lead to a campus culture of responsibility and safety.

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the methodology and procedures for data collection. As discussed in previous chapters, sexual assault is a crisis on college campuses (American Psychological Association, 2018; Fisher et al., 2000). Understanding barriers and motivators to intervention in students post bystander training is critical to reducing sexual violence (Bennett et al., 2014). There is support for the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs, particularly bystander intervention programs (Banyard et al., 2007). Evidence has shown that college students are willing to intervene under certain conditions to prevent potentially unwanted sexual activity (Koelsch et al., 2012). The theoretical framework of Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander effect that identified the five characteristics of emergencies, and social norms theory (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1987), identifying the relationship between individual behavior and social norms, provide a foundation for the findings. This chapter will focus on the methodology that guided this study.

Research Design

The researcher used a case study methodology for this study to demonstrate varying perspectives within a real-life, contemporary context of the impact of perceived barriers and motivators influencing college student bystanders if witnessing a potential sexual assault (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case study is a research approach used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context (Stake, 2005). It is an established research design used extensively in various disciplines, particularly in the social sciences, to *explain*, *describe*, or *explore* events or

phenomena in everyday contexts (Stake, 2005). The case study approach lends itself well to capturing information on more explanatory *how*, *what*, and *why* questions (Stake, 2005). Stake (2005) saw qualitative case study researchers as interpreters and gatherers of interpretations, who report their rendition of the constructed reality they gather through their investigation. As Creswell and Poth further indicated, case study research is a qualitative approach that allows the researcher to explore bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. As Stake (1995) maintained, a case study allows insight into a particular issue or phenomenon from a bounded representative sample (bystander training participants). Stake (1995) further explained that the chosen cases are less important than selecting cases that allow the researcher to investigate an issue or phenomenon (perceived barriers and motivators to intervention). Accordingly, the consequences of bystander intervention in preventing sexual assault deserve attention.

Case study research involves exploring a case or cases within a bounded system; bounded by setting, time, or place (Stake, 1995). The bounded system of the case in this study consists of a college campus located in the northeastern United States during a bounded time frame, post-intervention training. Additionally, the case bounded by demographic elements depicts its geographic region (e.g., the northeastern United States), which the researcher will explain in the forthcoming setting section. Although case constraints reduce generalizability, the objective of this study was not to generalize to the public but rather to choose a group with specific experience in bystander intervention through purposive sampling. Limiting participants allowed a greater understanding of the group and the resources accessible to this community (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1991).

Using the case study approach, the researcher developed an in-depth understanding and identified the factors influencing student bystander perceptions that would influence intervention if witnessing sexual violence.

As Stake (1995) indicated, two principal uses of case studies are to obtain the descriptions of others and to obtain the interpretations of others. Since the case is not seen the same way by each participant, interviews (individual and focus group) provided a blueprint for multiple perspectives in this study. Both Stake (1995) and Merriam (1991) relied solely on qualitative data sources (i.e., interviews, observations, and document review) and mandated that data analysis take place concurrently with data gathering (Yazan, 2015). Congruently, the researcher explored bystander intervention training within the case study through detailed and in-depth data collection methods involving multiple sources (e.g., students and training facilitators) and methods (i.e., interviews, focus groups, and document analysis) of information gathering.

This study adhered to the case study methodologies suggested by Stake (1995) and Merriam (1991), which emphasize knowledge development through interaction (Yazan, 2015). Both Stake and Merriam adhered to a constructivist methodology in which the researcher considers that knowledge arises through social interaction and diverse perspectives must be represented. Therefore, the researcher's objective is not to explain the phenomenon of bystander intervention barriers and facilitators but to provide a detailed description (Merriam, 1991). This detailed account explained the barriers to intervening as a bystander when witnessing a potential sexual assault. Still, the meaning and comprehension remain rooted in the study's time and setting (Stake, 2005). Moreover, the study provided insight from different stakeholder perspectives (students

and training facilitators) within the case constraints, facilitating an understanding of bystander intervention's impact in the boundedness of location and time frame.

Research Questions

This study examined students' perceived barriers to and motivators for intervening if witnessing a potential sexual assault. The following research questions guided this study's purpose.

1. What factors influence college students' decision-making process to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault situations, and how do these factors align with the tenets of the bystander theory?
2. How do college students perceive their roles as potential bystanders if witnessing potential sexual assault, and what factors impact their willingness and ability to intervene as bystanders?
3. What role, if any, do training facilitators have in engaging in a postsecondary environment that supports student bystander intervention?

Setting

The researcher chose a private Catholic university in the northeastern United States for this study. It was founded to provide higher education opportunities for Catholic students in the area and serve the broader society by educating future leaders. The university aims to provide a transformative education that prepares students for lives of leadership, service, and achievement. It is committed to educating the whole person. Its academic programs foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, ethical awareness, and a commitment to social justice while creating a campus climate free from sexual discrimination and harassment. Throughout its history, the university has remained true

to its mission of serving students from diverse backgrounds and providing access to education for all. The university has expanded its academic offerings to include three local campuses and a global presence, offering a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs.

This study took place on the main campus, organized into six colleges providing degree programs in liberal arts and sciences, business, professional fields, education, pharmacy and health professions, and law. At the time of the study, the student population was 17,000+, including 13,000+ undergraduates and 4,000+ graduates. Primarily a commuter campus, 25% of students live in university-managed residence halls. Of students, 55% identify as female, and 69% of the undergraduates receive financial aid. Finally, the university takes pride in its diverse student body, of which 47% identify as racially and ethnically diverse.

The university provides students with various co-curricular opportunities to engage outside the classroom through student clubs and organizations, service opportunities, leadership opportunities, and experiential learning. These experiences help students develop essential skills, build relationships, and positively impact their communities. For example, over 180 student-run clubs and organizations cover various interests, from academic and professional to social and cultural. These clubs and organizations allow students to connect with like-minded peers, develop leadership skills, and engage in activities that align with their passions and interests. Additionally, the university firmly commits to service and encourages students to engage in service activities. Students can participate in service projects throughout the year, many for academic credit, including service trips during breaks, tutoring programs, and community

outreach events. These opportunities allow students to positively impact their communities and develop a sense of social responsibility domestically and through study abroad programs that allow students to learn about different cultures and broaden their perspectives. Leadership programs enable students to develop the skills and confidence to become influential leaders. Additional leadership roles within clubs and organizations help them to develop valuable leadership experience. Last, the university emphasizes experiential learning opportunities through its many internship and co-op programs, allowing students to gain hands-on experience in their fields of study and build their resumes.

Overview of the Case

This case study examined perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in BILT. Several complementary agendas are intended to prevent sexual assault on campus. As potential witnesses to sexual assault, students play a crucial role in preventing these incidents from happening. However, students may face several barriers that prevent them from intervening if they witness a potential sexual assault. Administrators play a critical role in creating and maintaining a safe campus environment and are responsible for ensuring that students can intervene if they witness a potential sexual assault. Training facilitators are critical in delivering bystander intervention training programs to students. Finally, Title IX coordinators enforce federal regulations prohibiting sexual harassment and violence in education.

Through interviews, focus groups, and document analysis, the study explored bystander barriers to identify ways to encourage students to take action. It captured student perspectives on bystander intervention to identify ways to enable this critical

behavior in the student body. The study exposed training facilitators' experiences and perspectives to identify best practices for training delivery and areas for improvement. Finally, the study examined training materials to reveal an emphasis on skill building, demystifying social norms, and endorsing peer ownership in creating a safe campus culture.

Overall, this case study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence bystander intervention behavior on a university campus. By examining the perspectives of students, administrators, and training facilitators, as well as a review of training materials, the study aimed to identify best practices for promoting skills learned in bystander intervention training and understand areas where barriers to intervention exist. Ultimately, this case study sought to contribute to developing effective strategies for preventing sexual violence through skills learned and promoting a safer and more inclusive campus community for all.

Participants

Students

Student participants were recruited through email (Appendix F) from a pool of students who participated in BILT during the 2022–2023 academic year. As seen in Table 1, the student participants were of seven males and eight females; five of the participants were in a fraternity or sorority organization. Table 1 outlines the participants' class year, age, academic major, and ethnicity. The participants participated in in-person semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The researcher shaped questions based on perceptions of bystander intervention training influencing their role as bystanders if witnessing a potential assault.

Training Facilitators

In addition, the researcher recruited three training facilitators via email (Appendix G) and conducted semi-structured interviews to determine how they perceive bystander intervention training skills influencing students to intervene if witnessing the potential sexual assault. The interviews were also intended to assess the impact of the training on the campus community to create a culture committed to preventing sexual violence. As seen in Table 2, the training facilitators were one administrator and two graduate assistants with varying numbers of years at the institution and years in violence prevention education. All participants confirmed they understood the distributed protocol and signed a consent to participate (Appendix A).

The researcher used convenience sampling when relying on their judgment to choose members of a population to participate in their study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and used purposeful sampling to identify participants for the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) described convenience sampling as utilizing participants who are easily accessible to the researcher. The researcher used purposeful sampling due to the knowledge of the population and the study's specific purpose by recruiting participants from a pool of students who participated in BILT (Fraenkel et al., 2018). In case study research, the sample size is typically small, often involving only one or a few cases (Stake, 2005). According to Stake (2005), case study research aims not to generalize to a larger population but to understand a particular case in depth. Therefore, the sample size is chosen based on a rich and thorough understanding of the case rather than statistical considerations. Stake (2005) argued that this approach allows the researcher to uncover

the complexity and uniqueness of the case and to develop new theories or insights that can contribute to a broader understanding.

Table 1

Student Participant Demographics

Participant	Class Year	Gender	Major	Ethnicity	Age	Fraternity or Sorority
Luis	3	Male	Criminal Justice	White	20	Fraternity
Cid	3	Male	Pharmacy	Hispanic	20	No
Beth	2	Female	Accounting	White	19	Sorority
Ben	3	Male	Sports Mgt	White	20	No
Danielle	4	Female	Accounting	Black	21	Sorority
Heather	2	Female	Pharmacy	Black	19	No
Nicole	3	Female	Marketing	Asian	20	No
Michelle	3	Female	Education	White	20	No
Megan	4	Female	Education	White	21	Sorority
Lucy	2	Female	Journalism	Black	19	No
Amber	2	Female	Pol. Science	Hispanic	19	No
Jerry	2	Male	Mar Com	White	19	Fraternity
Andrew	3	Male	Marketing	White	20	No
Vincent	3	Male	Marketing	Hispanic	20	No
Joe	4	Male	Hospitality Mgt.	White	21	No

Table 2

Bystander Intervention Facilitators Demographics

Participant	Status	Years at University	Years in Violence Prevention Education
Hannah	Admin	2	7
Gwen	Grad Assist	3	3
Jaime	Grad Assist	3	3

In the following subsections, the student participants will be introduced.

Participant Profiles

Luis. Luis is a male rising junior from New Jersey. He is involved in his fraternity and a few other organizations on campus. He is a resident student seeking a resident assistant (RA) position this academic year. Luis was eager to share his thoughts in the interview. He mentioned the importance of the topic of sexual violence, and he encouraged the rest of his fraternity to respond to my recruitment email.

Cid. Cid is a male rising junior commuter student from New Jersey. He is president of the gaming club and requested bystander intervention training after several female members felt harassed by male members. He is a self-described advocate for his peers and is particularly interested in making the gaming club a space for all students to feel welcomed and appreciated.

Beth. Beth is a female rising junior from Queens. She lives off-campus in a private house with other members of her sorority. Beth holds a recruitment chair position in the sorority and requested bystander training for all of her sorority sisters to attend. She invited another sorority to join. Beth feels that fraternities and sororities as a community have a responsibility to look out for each other.

Ben. Ben is a male rising junior resident student. Ben is from Long Island and lives with two other students in the sports management major. Ben went to many parties and did not notice signs of potential sexual violence until he participated in the training. He recruited his roommates to attend the training as well.

Danielle. Danielle is a female rising senior from Maryland. She is a sorority member and in student government. She is a resident student living in an off-campus university-managed property. Danielle's sorority president organized a training for the

members of her sorority, and she appreciated the opportunity to participate. She drew a direct connection to training and taking responsibility for fellow students.

Heather. Heather is a female rising sophomore commuter student from the Bronx. She is not that social and spends most of her time studying, working, and helping at home. Her family relies on her to assist with younger siblings when she can. Heather shared that she had a high school friend who was assaulted at a graduation party and would have wanted someone to intervene. She attended bystander training to learn skills to use if she ever witnessed potential sexual violence herself.

Nicole. Nicole is a female rising junior commuter student from Nassau County. She is a peer mentor and orientation leader who participated in the training as a requirement during orientation leader training. Nicole participated in orientation skits on sexual violence and actively engaged in educational awareness programs like Take Back the Night and the Clothesline Project.

Michelle. Michelle is a female rising junior resident student from Washington, DC. Michelle had started field-based learning at the time of this study. She associated the bystander skill with any scenario that needs intervention and is glad to know how to intervene if she witnesses any unsettling behavior in a school setting. As secretary of the Education Club, she organized the training for her members after she participated herself.

Megan. Megan is a female rising senior who commutes to campus from Manhattan. She is in the education club with Michelle and participated in the training with the rest of the members. She is a tutor and peer mentor. Megan is in a sorority and has witnessed a few instances where she felt a sister was being given alcohol to get her drunk and unaware of what was going on so that another student could assault her.

Lucy. Lucy is a female rising sophomore resident student from New Jersey. Lucy is a writer for the school newspaper and is interested in the #metoo movement, campus sexual assault prevention, and campus culture around sexual violence. Lucy participated in training and joined the student peer educators, who create and run programming around sexual violence education and prevention.

Amber. Amber is a female rising sophomore from California. She is a resident student and an RA who participated in the bystander intervention training part of RA training. She held two violence awareness programs on her floor and asked the trainers to present at a roundtable discussion on sexual assault and safety planning on campus.

Jerry. Jerry is a male rising sophomore commuter student. Jerry is involved in the gaming club, and has an on-campus student worker job in the laptop shop. He learned about the intervention training through a post on the university wellness Instagram page and attended independently.

Andrew. Andrew is a male rising junior resident student from Long Island. He is in a fraternity and attended the intervention training with his brothers. Andrew is responsible for new member education within the fraternity and plans to continue training for the next group of brothers. He is also involved in student programming board and campus activities.

Vincent. Vincent is a male rising junior resident student from Texas. He is active in student government and campus ministry. Vincent often serves as a student leader for community service projects and retreats provided through campus ministry. He participated in the training at the request of a friend who saw the training advertised on social media.

Joe. Joe is a male rising senior resident student from Maryland. Joe is a member of the hospitality club and completed an internship in the spring. He is on target to graduate in May. Joe attended the intervention training with friends in a fraternity, although he is not a member. Joe has since recommended to the rest of the hospitality club that they coordinate a training so all the members can attend.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher applied multiple qualitative data-collecting methodologies to identify barriers to bystander intervention if witnessing a potential sexual assault from the perspective of critical stakeholders. This study's data were collected post-training. Individual student interviews, a focus group with students, and one focus group of training facilitators were used to answer the research questions. In individual and focus group interviews, semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were used. After participants volunteered for the interview, the researcher gave each a letter of consent and a brief questionnaire (collecting demographic data). Before the interview session, participants were instructed via email to review and sign the consent form and complete the questionnaire.

In addition, a review of the university climate survey provided insight into overall campus attitudes and perceptions about sexual violence and offered a broad context of student perceptions about the frequency of assaults and their knowledge of reporting options, resources for victims, and intervention training. Also, a review of materials used in bystander intervention training, including dialogue, scenarios, format, and skills, was performed to understand what the student participants have experienced and what the trainers facilitated.

Interviews

Stake (1995) conducted a case study to examine the use of interviews in qualitative research. He emphasized that interviews are a valuable tool for gaining insight into the experiences and perspectives of the studied individuals. The researcher used interviews to discover how student bystanders determine to intervene if witnessing potential sexual violence and the influence of bystander intervention training in their decision. According to Stake (1995), it is assumed that each respondent would have distinct experiences and tales to share. Stake argued further that a qualitative interviewer should develop a brief set of questions to elicit from interviewees descriptions of an event, a connection, or an explanation. Before conducting individual interviews, the researcher devised a methodology or guide for conducting interviews (see Appendix C). The interview protocol helped the researcher organize their ideas on issues such as a list of questions, question prompts, information about participant rights, confidentiality, and information about beginning or finishing the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Specifically, the researcher employed an interview protocol with (a) eight interview questions at its core; (b) an introductory statement outlining the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and participant rights; and (c) a concluding statement thanking participants for their participation and offering a follow-up email for member checking (see Trustworthiness section). The research questions are specific to behaviors in which the participant would engage as a bystander, and the influences on these actions were addressed using responses from individual interviews with students. This supports Stake's (1995) argument that the interview should be tailored to the research question and the individuals being interviewed.

Focus Groups

Using focus groups is equally informative to data collection in a case study. Stake (1995) discussed the use of focus groups in qualitative research, stating that focus groups can provide valuable data on group dynamics and social processes and help explore and understand collective experiences and perspectives. According to Berg and Lune (2012), focus group interviews allow for rapid information collection from large groups of people. As a validity check for the findings, focus groups are typically utilized in conjunction with individual interviews (Berg & Lune, 2012). Under this guide, the researcher used focus groups to discover the training facilitators' perceptions of bystander intervention training influencing bystander decisions to intervene. Stake (1995) emphasized that focus group composition is essential and should be considered with the research question. In addition to the student focus group, bystander intervention training facilitators were chosen to represent the sample and offer a unique perspective as they teach students the skills to act as bystanders. This meets Stake's (1995) suggestion that the participants in a focus group should be selected based on their relevance to the research question and their ability to provide insightful information. During the student focus group sessions, an interview protocol (see Appendix C) comprised of (a) four interview questions; (b) an introductory statement outlining the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and participant rights; and (c) a concluding statement thanking participants for their participation.

The researcher devised several guidelines for conducting productive group interviews within the training facilitator focus group (Appendix E). The four questions focused on the training facilitators' perceptions of the training's impact on a student

witnessing a potential sexual assault, supporting Stake's (1995) argument that the interview should be tailored to the research question and the individuals being interviewed.

Document Analysis

Studying the bystander intervention training materials presented the researcher with various methods for triangulating data. Stake (1995) emphasized the significance of document analysis in qualitative research. He suggested that researchers analyze documents critically and in their original context to comprehend their importance. Stake (1995) indicated that document analysis in qualitative research is a valuable technique that can yield abundant and insightful data. However, ensuring that the data obtained from document analysis are accurate and meaningful requires thoughtful contemplation and critical thought.

The training is delivered through PowerPoint and includes an introduction to statistics of sexual assault and a mindfulness exercise, "Why are we here?," to get initial thoughts and feelings on intervention to the participant's top of mind in "temperature check." Then follow sexual assault statistics and common barriers to intervention, including self-efficacy, social consequences, and failure to recognize risky behaviors. Last, the training includes many written scenarios that prompt conversations about risk, the opportunity to interview, and how.

Table 3

Alignment of Interview Questions and Research Questions

Student Interview Questions	Research Questions
How has participating in the bystander intervention leadership training impacted your awareness and understanding of sexual violence on campus?	2
How has your perception of your role as a bystander changed since completing the training?	1, 2
In what ways do you feel more equipped to intervene in situations of sexual violence after completing the training?	1, 2
How have the skills learned in training affected your ability to recognize and respond to potentially dangerous situations?	1, 2
Can you describe a specific situation where you used the skills you learned in training to intervene as a bystander in a potential sexual assault?	1, 2
What aspects of the training did you find most helpful or impactful?	2
How do you plan to use the skills you learned in training if witnessing potential sexual violence?	1, 2
What barriers may prevent bystanders from intervening if witnessing potential sexual violence, and how can they be addressed?	1
How do you think bystander intervention can be effectively promoted and encouraged on college campuses beyond the training program?	2
How effective do you believe bystander intervention leadership training programs are at equipping students with the skills they need to intervene in cases of sexual violence?	3
Can you provide any examples of students successfully intervening due to the training?	3
Have you seen any measurable outcomes, such as decreased sexual violence on campus, due to students participating in bystander training?	3

Student Interview Questions	Research Questions
Have you seen any changes in the campus culture around sexual violence as a result of bystander intervention training?	3
How have learned skills through bystander intervention training impacted students' willingness to intervene if they witness potential sexual violence?	3
How do you think the bystander intervention skills learned in training aid students in intervening as bystanders?	3
Have you noticed any differences in the effectiveness of skills learned among different groups of students?	3
How do you believe bystander intervention training can help students feel more empowered to intervene in situations of sexual violence?	3

Trustworthiness

Reliability, validity, and credibility are essential to the quality of qualitative research. As such, the researcher employed multiple tactics Miles et al. (2014) suggested to confirm significant findings. According to Miles et al. (2014), triangulation supports a finding by showing that at least three independent measures agree with a determination. Similarly, Golafshani (2003) asserted that triangulation is typically a strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of results. Moreover, triangulation can be done by data source or method (Miles et al., 2014). I will demonstrate data triangulation by utilizing three data collection methods (individual interviews with students and administrators, focus group interviews with training facilitators, and document analysis) to confirm the study's findings on bystander intervention barriers (Figure 1). Miles et al. said this contributes to a greater three-dimensional understanding of the phenomena. According to Miles et al., the primary objective of triangulating data sources is to eventually select sources with distinct

viewpoints and capabilities to complement one another. Essentially, triangulation enabled the researcher to obtain “repeated verification” and “corroboration of findings” from three distinct sources and methodologies, which “enhances the credibility” of the findings and analysis (Miles et al., 2014, p. 298).

Checking outliers’ significance is another way to evaluate and validate the researcher’s results. According to Miles et al. (2014), most findings include exceptions, and the researcher may attempt to explain any anomaly if it needs further investigation. According to Miles et al., a thorough examination of the exception not only “tests the generalizability of the finding” but may also assist the researcher in “building a better explanation” (299). Because outliers might be unstable, the researcher must determine if what is present in them is absent or different from other instances (Miles et al., 2014). In doing so, the researcher maintains an open mind toward the possibility that the found outlier has information pertinent to their conclusion. According to Golafshani (2003), the purpose of qualitative research is to participate in research that seeks “deeper knowledge as opposed to evaluating superficial aspects” (p. 603).

While developing topics for this study, the researcher further evaluated the data by weighing the evidence. According to Miles et al. (2014), robust data can be given greater weight in the conclusion. Miles et al. further asserted that, depending on the context of the research, the findings from certain persons are “better” or “stronger” (p. 298). Last, the researcher checked the accuracy of interview transcripts by obtaining feedback from interview participants to corroborate their replies using a member-checking technique. According to Miles et al., one of the most credible sources of confirmation is persons with whom the researcher has spoken. It is helpful to have

participants check their interview transcripts to verify whether they were correct and confirm the implications of their comments. Then, according to Miles et al., the researcher may "link to the participant input, comprehend it, and apply it to their perspectives" (p. 309). As a result, the researcher validated the correctness and significance of each participant's interview transcripts and established the credibility of the obtained interview data.

Due to the researcher's role at the university and connectedness to the study, the researcher was very careful to consider the potential for bias. According to Stake (1995), establishing reliability, validity, and credibility in qualitative research is crucial for ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings. Stake (1995) suggested using multiple data sources, having inter-rater reliability, and triangulating data sources to achieve reliability. To establish validity, Stake (1995) emphasized the importance of trustworthiness in research design, thick description, rich data, and considering alternative interpretations of the data. In terms of credibility, Stake (1995) emphasized building a relationship of trust with participants, establishing the researcher's perspective, and using prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Stake's strategies for establishing reliability, validity, and credibility in qualitative research involve focusing on multiple data sources, the research design's trustworthiness, and building relationships with participants. To reduce prejudice and any of its effects on the study, the researcher clearly delineated their role as a university administrator and as a researcher. Additionally, the researcher sought colleagues unassociated with the research to provide interpretations and understanding of the findings.

Table 4

Strategies for Establishing Reliability, Validity, and Credibility

Strategy	Description
Triangulation	Collect data through interviews, focus groups, and documentation.
Checking Outlier Significance	Account for unusual or unexpected cases, such as where participants provide particularly rich or unique data or where a particular theme or pattern emerges that is not typical of the rest of the data.
Weighing Evidence	Validate research to strengthen data by using semi-structured interviews and focus groups.
Member Checking	Provide a raw recorded audio transcript of the interview sessions to each participant for review of accuracy upon request.

Note. Strategies adapted from Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Johnson, 1997; Polkinghorne, 2007.

Research Ethics

Protecting the participants who consented to participate in this study is paramount. As such, the researcher prepared and had consent forms completed before the data collection process and ensured all levels of consent and confidentiality were communicated before interacting with participants. The researcher explained the study in full detail to each participant and informed them that participation is voluntary, following Creswell and Poth (2018), who stated that addressing ethical issues in research means respecting participants' privacy and ensuring the consent process is transparent. All participants received a consent form in advance via email and were presented with a hard copy to sign at the time of the first interview. Participants understood that they could withdraw any time and were reminded of

this at the start of interviews. Due to the sensitive nature of interview questions, they could opt out if they felt uncomfortable.

Because the researcher has a prominent role on campus and because of the convenient, purposive sample of the study, the researcher explained their role as a researcher to reduce potential bias. The researcher protected the identity of all participants. Participant names were substituted with pseudonyms and used to address participants in the research. All interviews were recorded via a recording app, transcribed, and saved in a secure password-protected One Drive location. Interview transcripts were uploaded and safeguarded on a password-protected web-based platform, Dedoose.

Data Analysis Approach

Qualitative analysis is the best approach to answer the research questions guiding this study, as the research aims to explore and understand the meaning individuals ascribe to a social problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach, supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), maintains that qualitative studies allow researchers to study things in natural settings while trying to understand or interpret phenomena and what they mean to people. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), when a case is chosen to study, a typical strategy is to provide a detailed description of the case followed by an analysis of the themes discovered. For this study, the researcher used a case study methodology aligned with the research purpose (Stake, 1995). Specifically, the purpose was to shed light on the stories and perception of how bystander intervention training influences students to intervene if witnessing potential sexual violence. As described by Stake (2005), case study inquiry is a method of research in which an instance or event is studied in depth to understand the underlying principles of the more significant phenomenon. Stake (1995) also highlighted the importance of using multiple forms of data to validate findings from interviews, such

as survey data or observations. Triangulating data from various sources can help to increase the validity and reliability of the conclusions of the interviews (Stake, 1995).

Interviews

Interviews are a crucial source of data in case study research, and the quality of the analysis of interview data can greatly impact the overall findings of a case study (Stake, 1995). Correspondingly, Stake (1995) emphasized the importance of careful and thorough analysis of interview data to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of individuals within the case study context. The researcher gathered and analyzed audio recordings and transcripts during interviews to collect data and fill emerging gaps (Miles et al., 2014). In addition, field notes comprised meaningful interactions, body language, and nuances of the participants' responses during interview conversations (Miles et al., 2014). For the researcher to listen closely, observe participant feedback, and be prepared to prompt questions, all interview sessions were recorded and transcribed using a password-protected phone application, Otter.ai. Transcriptions were copied into a Microsoft Word document for editing and cross-referenced against the interview recording several times for accuracy. The researcher saved each document securely in a Microsoft OneDrive file requiring dual authentication. According to Miles et al. (2014), one of the most logical sources of corroboration is the people with whom the researcher has spoken. In this regard, the students interviewed partook in member checking to ensure the accuracy of their interview transcriptions. Once member checking was complete, the researcher uploaded transcribed documents into Dedoose, a software program that analyzes documents and maintains codes. After the initial coding, the researcher continued reviewing and tightening the codes for meaningful data collection.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are a valuable data source for case study research because they can contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of individuals within a specific context (Stake, 1995). Stake argued that focus group data can provide rich and detailed information about group dynamics and individuals' collective views and perspectives within a group. Stake (1995) suggested that focus group data be analyzed systematically and rigorously, similar to the analysis of interview data. He suggested that researchers should start by transcribing the focus group data and then move on to coding the data to identify key themes and patterns within the data. During focus groups of students and training facilitators, the researcher simultaneously gathered and analyzed audio recordings and transcripts (Miles et al., 2014). For the researcher to listen closely, observe participant feedback, and be prepared to prompt questions, all the focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed using the password-protected phone application Otter.ai. Transcriptions were copied into a Microsoft Word document for editing and cross-referenced against the focus group session recording several times for accuracy. The researcher saved each document securely in a Microsoft OneDrive file requiring dual authentication. According to Miles et al. (2014), one of the most logical sources of corroboration is the people with whom the researcher has spoken. In this regard, students and training facilitators partook in member checking to ensure the accuracy of their focus group transcriptions. Once member checking was complete, the researcher uploaded transcribed documents into Dedoose, a software program that analyses documents and maintains codes. Stake (1995) emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive and robust coding scheme that accurately captures the

experiences and perspectives of the individuals in the focus group. In addition, the researcher noted essential interactions, body language, and subtleties from participants in the focus group. After the initial coding, the researcher continued reviewing and tightening the codes for meaningful data collection.

Document Analysis

Simultaneously with interviews and focus groups, the researcher reviewed bystander intervention training materials to triangulate the data. Stake (1995) emphasized the importance of validating findings from multiple data sources; thus, the training materials provided a perspective to compare to interview and focus group findings.

Researcher Role

Because I am an administrator on campus, it was critical for me to clearly distinguish between my role as an administrator and my current role as a researcher when selecting participants. I clarified to participants that I intended to separate these two roles, and I stressed the importance of doing so. It was crucial that I disclose my connection to the university as a full-time administrator, working in a leadership position with students daily and attending high-profile events and programs that provide extensive exposure to the student body. I am also a member of the administration team that oversees sexual misconduct, including education on reporting, resources, and university support. Last, at the time of this study, I was a doctoral candidate at the university, which provides exposure to colleagues and faculty across the institution.

The participants' perceptions of a researcher's positionality may differ. Banks (1998) described four roles that researchers play and the impact of how study participants perceive them. The researcher must comprehend that their lived experiences, both personally and professionally, influence the positionality and how they conduct their research and with

whom. According to Banks, “the biographical journeys of researchers greatly influence their values, research questions, and the knowledge they construct” (p. 4), and often, the constructed knowledge mirrors the life experiences and values. As a result, Banks developed *A Typology of Cross-Cultural Researchers* to help researchers identify their researcher status as they explore a community of participants. According to the typology, there are four types of researchers: indigenous insiders, indigenous outsiders, external insiders, and external outsiders. Using Banks’s typology, I took on two roles for this study: indigenous insider and external insider. I identified as an indigenous insider because a person in this position can be “perceived as a legitimate member of the community by significant others and opinion leaders within the community who has a perspective and knowledge that will promote the well-being of the community, enhance its power” (Banks, 1998). Considering the external insider positionality, I recognized that my role could provide an external perspective. Still, I had more of an insider positionality due to my current beliefs aligning more closely with the participants and the given community.

There were also risks associated with conducting research at a university where I work full-time as an administrator. Being too immersed in and familiar with the campus environment may have increased the risk of bias. Furthermore, my connection to the topic and passion for this student population may have influenced my ability to reduce bias. Given my role as an administrator, students who participate in the study and who have interacted with me previously may have difficulty adjusting and distinguishing between the roles of researcher and administrator. This may influence how the participants answer questions and impact the reason for which they participate.

For the purposes of this study, I considered whether to conduct research at the university where I work and the advantages and disadvantages of doing so. I specifically chose to conduct the study at the university where I had established relationships and

understood the potential risks and the importance of clearly distinguishing my role. As Gleason (2018) indicated, it is critical to modify one's actions as needed to ensure the study's success and collection of required data. I informed each participant of the decision to conduct research at this university and how my role as the researcher would have no bearing on the work and conversations that were taking place outside the study. My relationships on campus, understanding of the student demographic, and familiarity with campus resources are all factors behind my decision and are strengths of this study. Bias was reduced by distinguishing my role as administrator and researcher and emphasizing the importance of the research findings.

Conclusion

This chapter described an overview of the case study analysis methodology used in the qualitative study. Specifically, it addressed how data were collected through interviews with students, focus groups with students and training facilitators, and an analysis of training materials that explore the influence bystander training has on student bystanders witnessing a potential sexual assault. The data collected and analyzed through the methods described in this chapter are the foundation for the study's findings and conclusion.

CHAPTER 4

Overview of the Case

This case examined the motivation and barriers to student bystander intervention at a private 4-year Catholic university in the northeastern United States. Commuter students make up a significant portion of the largely diverse student body, and a sense of community and inclusivity defines the campus culture. Greek life plays a prominent role in the campus culture, offering students opportunities for leadership development, philanthropy, and social engagement. The university is home to 15 Greek organizations, each with unique traditions and values, providing students with a sense of belonging, community, and social opportunity that extends beyond the confines of the campus. Sports culture is another integral aspect of campus life at this Division 1 university, with a rich tradition of athletic excellence and national notoriety stemming from basketball and soccer. Students prioritize their well-being and strive to balance academic responsibilities and social activities. Because of the large commuter population, the university is not known as a "party school"; however, party culture is primarily linked to Greek organizations and athletes. The university culture embodies the importance of responsible decision-making and respect for campus policies regarding alcohol and substance use.

A review of the bystander intervention training materials revealed an emphasis on the importance of active engagement and a commitment to creating a safe and supportive campus community. The training is required of students in mandated reporting roles, including resident assistants, orientation leaders, and wellness peer educators. Through role-play, interactive engagement, self-reflection, practical examples, and open dialogue,

participants learn to identify early warning signs and potential indicators of harm, developing a heightened awareness of their surroundings and the dynamics at play in various social situations. The 90-minute peer-led training addresses the critical components of bystander intervention, including:

1. Education and Awareness: Students gain an understanding of the different forms of harm from sexual assault and the impact of such behaviors on individuals and the broader community, fostering empathy and a sense of responsibility to intervene.
2. Risk Assessment: Students learn how to assess the level of risk in a given situation and evaluate the potential consequences of taking action or choosing not to intervene, including understanding power dynamics, cultural norms, and personal safety concerns.
3. Effective Communication: Students learn to communicate assertively and effectively when intervening; specifically, they learn de-escalation techniques, active listening, and non-confrontational approaches to engage the person at risk.
4. Empowerment and Support: Students are empowered to trust their instincts and take the initiative when they witness potential sexual assault behavior and emphasize the importance of seeking support from others, including other peers present, bartenders, bouncers, and university personnel.
5. Practice and Role-Playing: Students apply the skills learned in simulated situations through interactive exercises and role-playing scenarios to build confidence and reinforce learning by providing practical experience in bystander intervention techniques.

The case revealed findings in a real-life context that investigated the phenomena of student bystander intervention to understand the motivators or barriers influencing a student bystander to intervene when in the presence of potential sexual violence. This contrast is characterized by comparing bystanders who intervene, exemplifying self-efficacy and a sense of responsibility, and bystanders who do not intervene because of their lack of relationship with the potential victim or perpetrator. Through a qualitative data approach, this study examined student participants who attended BILT training during the 2022–2023 academic year, the BILT training facilitators, and the BILT training materials. The setting, participants, and time maintain focus, control, and relevance throughout the research process, contributing to the credibility and validity of the findings.

This chapter will review the findings regarding data collected through the student and training facilitator voices and a review of training materials, culminating in three themes, which revealed the impact of intervention training on self-efficacy, their understanding of the responsibility to act, their relationships with the potential victim or perpetrator, and the prime motivators and barriers to intervention.

Theme 1: Self-Efficacy as a Motivator to Intervene

The central theme of self-efficacy arises from the findings, further elucidated through two key subthemes. First, personal competencies and confidence (coded as "self-confidence" and "skills") underscore that students who believe in their capacity to make a difference, possess essential skills, and have confidence in their abilities are more likely to intervene. Second, collective efficacy and social norms (coded as "community support" and "norms") highlighted the influence of a supportive community environment

and shared norms emphasizing intervening and discouraging harmful behavior. These subthemes exemplify how individual and collective self-efficacy plays a crucial role in motivating students to proactively address potential sexual assault incidents.

Personal Competence and Confidence

A strong sense of personal competence and confidence increases the likelihood that bystanders will step in to prevent sexual assault as they are confident in their abilities to have a beneficial impact. This subtheme underlines how crucial it is for people to feel in control of the circumstance and secure in their capacity to help prevent harm. Most participants interviewed widely mentioned knowing intervention skills as an essential factor in intervening if witnessing potential sexual assault. Specifically, having practiced using the direct, delegate, and distract intervention tools and sharing ways to incorporate them in real-life scenarios during training were mentioned most often. Upon investigation of the training materials, it was noted that the skills of direct, delegate, and distract are repeatedly emphasized, with many examples and opportunities for discussion on comfortability and sharing ideas on how to incorporate the techniques in various scenarios. Through individual interviews, Luis, a third-year criminal justice major and fraternity member, and Beth, a second-year accounting major and sorority member, referenced that knowing intervention skills made them feel like they would intervene because they knew what to do to help. Luis stated: “I learned ways to break it up in a comfortable way.” He continued to say,

> I felt uncomfortable at parties when I saw certain things happening, especially with frat guys I knew. I don’t think they would ever take advantage of a drunk girl, but something didn’t sit right in my gut. And it wasn’t just me; we all knew

> what was happening but didn't know how to handle it. It's bro code and all, especially with the brothers. I feel I would know how to step in now. I have examples from the training to step in without making it weird.

Luis's example demonstrates how the skills learned during training add to his confidence to intervene in a way that is comfortable for him. Adding to his example in support of the sub-theme of self-efficacy is Beth, who made specific statements in her interview about knowing what to do and feeling confident she could intervene in a way that empowered her. Beth said, "I didn't know how to step in without fear of being ignored or making a scene." She went on to say,

> I am confident I will step up now that I know some examples of how to do it. I could check in with the girl, even if I didn't know her. Making an excuse to use her phone or asking for a charger is good. I didn't know what to do or feel confident enough even when I knew something was wrong. My sorority sisters can also approach together if we lack confidence.

Beth's response demonstrates her knowledge of skills specific to directly intervening or seeking help from another, which grounds her ability to intervene in a few ways with confidence.

Danielle, a graduating senior accounting major and sorority sister of Beth, contributed to supporting the importance of self-efficacy during her interview: "My takeaway from the training is that I can make a difference." She added,

> I was too scared to confront a guy who pressured a girl at a party. I would look for someone else to say something because I needed more confidence in intervening without it being weird. What excuse would I use to start a conversation with the

> girl to see if she was OK? Now I know I have a few ideas; I especially like asking for help finding my phone, like I think I lost it near where she is if she is on a couch. And I can always ask for help from someone else, too. The training made me realize many of my peers feel the same way, and now feel we can make a difference and stop something before it goes bad.

Danielle's statements clearly define skills learned to intervene alone and support the impact of self-efficacy learned in training that instills in the students the confidence to act. Upon review of the training materials, specific role-play opportunities are apparent and serve as practical opportunities for students to try out skills in a safe space. The scenarios allow for peer feedback and discussion as well as sharing ideas to further instill confidence to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault.

The final examples of the self-efficacy subtheme from focus group discussions are Michelle, a third-year education major, and Megan, a graduating senior education major and sorority member. Both acknowledged newfound confidence in the skills learned after attending the training. Specifically, the distraction techniques made them feel they would intervene if they witnessed a potential sexual assault. Conversely, Michelle's responses in the focus group discussion showed that the lack of self-efficacy to intervene effectively in a way that does not put them at risk socially was glaring. This is on trend with the responses of all the female participants. To this point, Michelle shared,

> It's hard wanting to say something and not come off like a jerk or a mom. Some friends like to be flirty and say, "I want to hook up tonight," and that's fine. But I know when they are not in control, or a guy can tell they are easy prey. So, if I

> said something, I was afraid they would be mad or think I was jealous. Or everyone at the party will think I am causing a problem, especially the guys.

Michelle's feelings highlight the barrier present when students lack the confidence to intervene. The example Michelle presents specific to social stigma in intervention demonstrates the paralysis to act when confidence is missing. Megan echoed this concern during the focus group, noting that "no one wants to be labeled as the sex police." She shared,

> It was hard to imagine saying something without all the stares and social stigma. But hearing the other people in the training say they felt the same way, I realized many of us are out there, especially in my sorority. So, I have the confidence to either ask other sisters for help to say something to the guy or go up to the girl directly and ask if I can talk to her for a second and physically guide her away. I don't feel I would worry about what others think, and I would intervene if in the situation again.

Megan illustrated how the impact of minimal self-efficacy results in the inability to intervene. However, she went on to indicate the skills learned have left her intending to act in the future. She spoke with confidence, as her self-efficacy is apparent. These collective voices demonstrate that when students possess a strong sense of self-assuredness, they are more likely to trust their judgment and abilities in challenging potential sexual assault situations. This self-assurance enables them to overcome doubt or fear that might deter them from intervening. In essence, personal competence and confidence act as powerful catalysts for proactive bystander intervention.

In line with emphasizing personal efficacy, in the focus group discussion Megan mentioned asking peers for help. This behavior, also known as *collective efficacy and social norms*, was reflected in many other students as they expressed the skills learned that increase their perception to intervene if witnessing potential sexual harm to another person. Self-efficacy, driven by personal competence and confidence, plays a pivotal role in motivating students to intervene when they witness potential sexual assault. When students believe in their ability to make a difference and possess the necessary skills, they are likelier to overcome hesitations and act. This empowerment fosters a proactive response in bystanders, increasing the chances of preventing or addressing incidents of sexual assault and contributing to a safer, more supportive community.

Collective Efficacy and Social Norms

Bystanders are more likely to intervene when they perceive strong collective efficacy within their community or social circle. They are more likely to act when they believe their peers and community members are committed to preventing harm. This subtheme underscores the influence of social norms and the belief that bystanders' actions align with the values and expectations of their social group. Along this sub-theme, Lucy, a second-year journalism major, said during the focus group that she perceived relying on others to "talk through what I'm seeing and be sure someone else feels that something is not right." Lucy continued, "I trust my gut, but when I may need someone else's support to intervene with me, I plan to ask a friend, 'Do you see what I'm seeing?'" Lucy further discussed in the focus group the skills learned and how she intends to use them in a setting where sexual assault could potentially happen:

> I know myself and wouldn't have the courage to act alone, but I know I can ask someone to go with me to check in on the girl to be sure she's OK. We could make an excuse to break her away from the guy. We all see it, but someone needs to step up. And hearing everyone in training speak up on what they would do, I know it's cool to do something and not ignore it.

Lucy's understanding of how to seek others' help in the same situation to intervene indicates the importance of collective efficacy. She knows her limitation in acting alone, but she sees finding a friend to step in with her as a reasonable step.

Continuing the subtheme of collective efficacy, training facilitator Hannah was confident during the focus group discussions, specifically about the intentional examples, and dedicated time to reviewing scenarios that reveal ways to seek the assistance of others seeing the same concerning behaviors. Hannah reiterated the attention on teaching students to seek help from another person and not act alone if they are concerned. Upon examination of the training materials, the researcher substantiated Hannah's contribution and identified tangible examples of open discussion opportunities. These opportunities prompted training participants to share how they could seek the collective help of another bystander to intervene if witnessing a potential sexual assault.

The interview responses of Amber, a second-year political science major, interview reflected a similar thought: "Everyone knows someone who could be a victim of assault, and having a few of us working together to plan how to intervene is more secure for me." She further provided an example:

> I can ask if she [the potential victim] wants to get some water or something to eat, and yeah, I could do that because I know not every girl is in control when they are

> drinking. It's cool to step up now, like we all need to take accountability for each other. I'm not worried about anyone giving me a hard time doing the right thing. I want someone to help if it is my friend or me. We all feel that way now.

This contribution from Amber directly supports the concept of social norms, as she specifically emphasized the need to take accountability for each other. Perceptions of harmful behavior imposed on a vulnerable person are valuable in creating a campus climate that promotes students looking out for one another as a collective.

An example of a male participant sharing efforts to use collective efficacy is from second-year fraternity brother and marketing major Jerry, who mentioned during his interview how the brothers could "take turns scanning the parties, each like 15 minutes at a time, so we know everyone is safe":

> It's important that our fraternity does not get a bad reputation from other organizations. They all know what frats are sketchy because we don't have many. I don't want to name names, but a few are known for dirtbags making moves and drugging the punch. I know the girls in certain sororities. Me and the guys feel responsible that nothing happens on our watch. We don't go to certain parties. We avoid the drama.

It was noted how adamant Jerry was during the interview and that he spoke about the social settings that embrace actively looking out for others as socially normal. Additional support for shifting social expectations is apparent through the consistent messaging in the BILT training that includes statistics on sexual assault and shifting campus culture. Student participants are exposed to a decrease in sexual assault on campuses with a

collective mindset that sexual assault is not OK, and that bystanders play a role in changing the social norm.

Equally aligned with the sub-theme of collective efficacy were the responses of Andrew. Andrew, a third-year marketing major, also in a fraternity, notably said during the focus group discussion, “Everyone in the frat takes [sexual] assault seriously.” He went on to discuss,

> It happens at [redacted], for sure, and it’s not cool. It’s mostly freaks that come to the parties and think sorority girls are loose and easy when they drink. Since the training, we started organizing our efforts and working as a team. If we spot someone who looks predatory, all handsy, and leaning on girls, making them uncomfortable, we can check in with her. If we see guys that go for open containers or offer to refill cups, that’s a huge no! We check in with the girls to ensure they are having a good time; if not, we distract the guy and give her a chance to find friends. We believe we are stronger together and are not worried about what others think.

Andrew is a clear example of how he and his fraternity perceive putting into practice skills learned as a group to promote a collective effective intervention strategy and establish social standards that make preventing sexual assault the new normal.

Cid, a third-year pharmacy major, is another student who shared during the focus group how he sets social norms to meet the objective of an environment free from sexual harassment. Cid said, “We have an understanding in the gaming club; it’s open to all, and women are big competitors; we are better with them in the club, especially at competitions, but they will quit if they feel uncomfortable.” Cid went on to share more:

> Gaming is predominately a male sport, but the best teams have women. They take it seriously, and it's a sport where gender does not affect the level of skill or ability. Most users can't tell the gender of their opponent anyway because we make screen names. Women are constantly sexualized in certain games. It's not cool. Since the training, I am more aware of others and even caught myself a few times. Since then, we have changed the environment in the club. We make it easier for members to let us know if they feel harassed, and we don't tolerate any member degrading or making sexually explicit comments to anyone. Our club webpage has a direct link to reporting Title IX complaints and how to contact the counseling center. We are a newer club at [redacted] and want our reputation to be known for breaking stereotypes.

Cid's awareness of the impact social norms have on the female participants in the gaming club grounds the concept of students creating a safe and harassment-free environment for students, particularly in a male-dominated club. As the students and training facilitators illustrated during personal interviews and focus group discussions, utilizing collective efficacy and social norms effectively encourages college students to intervene as bystanders. Collective efficacy emphasizes a community's ability to address issues together. By fostering a sense of shared responsibility, students are more likely to step in when witnessing harmful situations, as they trust their collective power to effect change. Social norms are pivotal in shaping students' behavior through peer influence. Highlighting positive intervention to prevent sexual assault as the norm can motivate students to align their actions with those they perceive as socially accepted. These strategies create a supportive environment that empowers students to intervene when

witnessing potential sexual assault, ultimately promoting a safer, more responsible college community committed to preventing sexual violence.

Theme 2: Sense of Responsibility as a Motivator to Intervene

Two key subthemes underpinned the overarching theme of responsibility. First, ethical and moral obligation (coded as "morals" and "the right thing") reflects how students, driven by their deeply ingrained principles and the pursuit of justice, feel an ethical duty to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault. Second, empathy and compassion (coded as "feeling" and "care") emphasize the role of empathy and a compassionate disposition, which motivates students to offer support, safeguard victims, and take action. Together, these subthemes underscore the pivotal role of a sense of responsibility in guiding students to address potential sexual assault incidents.

Ethical and Moral Obligation

Bystanders who recognize an ethical and moral obligation to help are likelier to intervene in potential sexual assault situations. They feel a sense of duty to uphold fundamental human rights, prevent harm, and promote the well-being of others. This subtheme emphasizes recognizing the inherent responsibility to act when another person's safety is at risk. Students with an ethical and moral compass grounded in social responsibility to aid others were most likely to intervene when in the presence of a potential sexual assault. Individual interviews and focus group responses revealed most statements from students sharing a desire to do the right thing, which increases the likelihood that bystanders will step in to prevent sexual assault. The students' words are consistent with understanding right and wrong and acting when someone is harmed because it's ethically the right thing to do. This subtheme of responsibility was trending

through student voices, which presented significant contributions to support the theme. For example, Vincent, a third-year marketing and communication major, interview responses referenced a sense of responsibility directly connected to ethical decisions. Vincent stated, “If I am faced with someone making moves on a drunk woman, I can’t sit back. It’s not right.” He goes on to share.

> I’ve always been wired with the angel and the devil on my shoulders. Ever since I was a little kid, I was the one who got anxious if we were breaking the rules. My parents were strict and religious, so I think it was engrained from a young age. Doing unto others was a motto in my house. Me and my sisters were taught it early. Living in a Hispanic neighborhood, you were expected to help your neighbor because it was right. If you saw someone struggling, you stepped up immediately. If I am ever in a situation where I am witnessing a woman in danger, especially something sexual, I will say something to her, like “Are you OK? Is the person bothering you?” I couldn’t sleep if I ignored it. Too many people let it happen and don’t care.

Vincent reflected on his life experience and the ethical obligation to help someone in harm’s way. He expresses the personal responsibility to do the right thing as fundamental.

Through her interview, Heather, a second-year pharmacy major, shared a personal experience from high school where a friend was assaulted at a graduation party, and “no one helped, they all knew, and everyone ignored the signs.” She elaborated,

> I was most hurt because they knew the guy was up to no good, and my friend was drunk and could barely walk. It’s like we know how to help someone, to step up; everyone just watched as it happened. They took a video! They forgot how to be

> human; they were void of any clue or sense of the right thing to do. If I am ever in that situation, I know how I feel inside; my character would not let me ignore something that bad. I know I will say something to stop it.

Heather shared a deep passion for intervening as someone close to her was assaulted, and no one assisted. She described the direct result of a lack of empathy and how equally impactful that can be as a barrier to intervention.

Andrew echoed the subtheme of a responsibility to intervene during the focus group, referencing his fraternity's "obligation and the values all brothers must adhere to" "Part of being a brotherhood is like-mindedness," he said. He went on,

> We all hold certain truths and are loyal to our oaths at initiation. I take it seriously. Honor is a big one. Our character is our strength, and how we conduct ourselves and manage those around us is how we hold one another accountable. The men follow a code of ethics that puts others first and consistently seek to be correct and just. We are responsible for hosting a safe party. I will always intervene if I see a woman being set up.

Here, Andrew shared the connection to a code of ethics that bonds him and his fraternity brothers to an ethical obligation to act when witnessing potential harm. The collective thought that sexual violence is ethically wrong and must be prevented carries through his response.

When witnessing a potential sexual assault, students often feel a moral obligation to intervene due to their inherent sense of right and wrong. This compels them to protect the well-being and dignity of others and transcend fears. Ben spoke of what "drives him to overcome personal discomfort and stand up for potential victims." During Ben's

interview, he shared, “By speaking up, I hope to prevent harm, challenge norms, and uphold [redacted] University’s values of respect.” Megan contributed to the focus group decision, saying, “Our generation isn’t afraid to use their voice to speak up for what’s right.” This is a trend among many students interviewed, who witnessed the prevalence of sexual assaults through social media when they were in high school. For example, Lucy and Amber added to the focus group discussion that they have seen a tremendous activity on TikTok after assaults in their hometowns. They expressed that they are confident they will “speak up” because it is “the right thing to do.” Both referenced, in some way, being the voice for their peers and advocating for “good.” The students’ voices describe a collective sense of moral duty to stop instances of sexual violence. Nicole’s interview response references an “understanding of consent and respect” reinforced through intervention training that she perceived will motivate her to “stop unwanted behaviors.”

A sense of ethical and moral obligation significantly influences students when they witness a potential sexual assault. This concept is noted in the review of the training materials and shows an emphasis on responsibility as a key component of a campus culture free from sexual violence. Specifically noted are trainer-facilitated group discussions on what it means to be a part of a campus community and a sense of responsibility to peers that provoke thoughts and sharing of experiences. Deep-seated principles of right and wrong compel students to step in and prevent harm. This innate moral compass guides them to protect the vulnerable and ensure the well-being of others. Students driven by these values feel a profound responsibility to intervene, support victims, and hold perpetrators accountable, ultimately contributing to a safer and more responsible community response to potential sexual assault.

Empathy and Compassion

Bystanders who are empathetic and compassionate are more inclined to act. They can connect with the potential victim on a personal and emotional level, which motivates them to step in and prevent harm. This subtheme highlights the role of empathy in fostering a solid desire to help and protect others, especially in distressing situations like potential sexual assault. It underscores that a sense of responsibility goes beyond mere bystander status. Individuals who genuinely empathize with the potential victim are more likely to overcome barriers and take action to prevent sexual assault. Empathy and compassion can be critical in shaping bystander behavior and fostering a safer environment. As noted, Amber's responses in her interview included feeling words when sharing her perceptions of intervening if witnessing potential sexual harm:

> I am compassionate, especially for those who cannot speak up for themselves. I will intervene if a victim is manipulated into doing something against their will. I'm good at looking for another person to help me. I hang out with a lot of other resident assistants. We all went to the training together and learned to use distraction techniques to get a victim away and check in. The fact that the victim may not realize they are being taken advantage of, and a lot of people are watching, makes me sad. Like that's not who we are.

Amber's statement expresses an empathetic connection to a victim and how that causes an emotional reaction to feeling sad. Her words demonstrate the impact empathy for another person can have as a motivator to intervene. With this empathy, Luis spoke of two younger sisters who "guide my decisions on how I treat women and how I want them to be treated in my presence." During his interview, Luis shared,

> Especially as a frat, we look out for women at our parties. It's weird, but I don't care; I think about that being my sister, like they say in the training. I'd want someone to step in if it was them. I feel responsible for the FSL (fraternity sorority life) community at [redacted]. We are small and know everyone. I care about the community, even men, not in my frat; I don't want anyone getting in trouble or being accused. And I don't want the women hurt.

Luis showed how empathy is reflected through a commitment to justice and refusing to tolerate harm within the community. Participants reflected that "their voices matter" and they found a sense of solidarity and mutual responsibility among their peers. This sentiment was echoed by Cid during the focus group:

> We are a small club on campus, but we make a difference in caring for our members. We are concerned about our members feeling welcome and part of the team. Gaming can be isolating and also male-dominated. I want to use our messaging to impact other clubs, especially those that need to make a place for women and their contributions. We can make a difference in having women feel safe. Since the training, we have an awareness to create a space so everyone is heard. We stop negative or sexist attitudes by speaking up and making it known that it's not cool.

Cid's concern for the women in the gaming club feeling safe has a compassionate lens, as all members of his club matter. He holds a unique role in ensuring that women in the club feel welcome and recognized for their contributions and not subjected to a sexist culture. In the same way that Cid's leadership role impacts his sense of compassion for his female members, Beth holds much responsibility as the recruitment chair of her sorority. In the

interview, she spoke about her role in "assuring the women go through a safe new member education process." It's the responsibility for the safety of the women that lends her to feel empathy "because they trust her." She explained,

> During this time, they are not permitted to go to parties, but we practice sober sister rules once through initiation. Two sisters volunteer not to drink or leave any sister behind at a party. We work in pairs, looking out for each other and for anyone trying to take advantage of one of our sisters. We seek others to help intervene, mostly other sisters or frat guys at the party if they know the guy causing a problem. We care about each other in the Greek community, and that feeling makes us act.

Beth's compassion for the women she is responsible for, particularly at parties when harm can occur, was freely expressed. Her words echo the understanding of the responsibility of her role and the steps she takes to ensure women's safety, which is driven by the compassion she has for the women whose safety is entrusted to her.

As demonstrated in the interview and focus group dialogue, a sense of responsibility significantly influences a college student's motivation to intervene when witnessing a potential sexual assault, with ethics and empathy playing pivotal roles. In addition, the training dedicates significant time to participants imagining a victim being their girlfriend, sister, mom, or other loved one in their life. This stark reality immediately heightens an awareness of empathy for victims and a sense of responsibility to act. Ethically, students shared a moral duty to prevent harm to their peers. They recognize sexual assault as a violation of dignity and feel compelled to intervene as responsible campus community members. Empathy deepens this commitment to potential victims, as

the students understand their fear and vulnerability. This emotional connection drives a desire to protect and support those who may be victims of sexual violence.

The sense of responsibility translates into the student participants' intent to intervene directly or seek help from those nearby when they witness a potential assault. Overall, a sense of responsibility, rooted in ethics and empathy, empowers college students to actively intervene in potential sexual assault situations, contributing to a safer and more compassionate campus environment.

Theme 3: The Lack of Relationship With the Victim/Perpetrator as a Barrier to Intervene

Intervening in a situation involving potential sexual assault can be challenging for college students, particularly when they do not know the victim or the perpetrator. Several factors contribute to the theme of the relationship to the victim or perpetrator, including the fear of making things worse for the victim or misinterpreting what is happening (coded as "making it worse" and "getting it wrong"). Other barriers include the presence of bystanders (coded as "other people there"), causing a person to think someone else knows the victim and will intervene (coded as "someone else will step up"), and fear of retaliation from the perpetrator or their friends (coded as "fear" and "afraid"). While the students did not reflect on each barrier enough for these barriers to qualify as subthemes, their anecdotal reflections make the overall theme of the relationship to the victim or perpetrator relevant.

The first example regarding not making things worse is Joe, a graduating senior hospitality major, who said during his interview, "We are all students at [redacted] and need to look out for one another, but it's hard if it's strangers." Joe explains,

> The bystander training was good because we practiced scenarios that caused us to think, “What would you do? Would you step up and take responsibility when you know something is wrong? What if you don’t see the person?” I may have difficulty intervening if I don’t know either person. Stepping up to strangers is hard. I have no problem if I know the victim or the perpetrator, but if not, I need to think. What if I make it worse for the girl, especially if an argument is heated? I don’t want her to get it worse, so most people look away. I would. Even with the training, I am not comfortable approaching strangers or even asking someone else ’cause I don’t want it to escalate.

Joe’s response shows the concern for the victim, as he fears potentially causing further harm if he intervenes. Not wanting to make things worse when witnessing potential harm is a barrier not easily overcome, even with training, as Joe said. Upon further review of the student discussions, it is clear that Joe is not alone in his concern about intervening between strangers and fearing things worsening as a result. Most participants interviewed reflected a challenge with intervening “if it is people they don’t know.” While the training provides role-play opportunities for participants to hone skills to intervene indirectly through a bouncer, bartender, or other at a party, the students most likely do not use learned skills in these situations. During his interview, Jerry, a second-year marketing and communication major and fraternity member, shared a similar concern about not wanting to make it worse for the victim: “If I say something, Will he go after her more? Or, more specifically, What if I’m not reading the situation right?” Jerry doesn’t want to “Make it a thing if it isn’t.” Jerry went on to state,

> If I'm in a situation that could be potentially bad, like a guy making moves on a girl, but I'm not sure, and I don't know them, maybe it's not that bad. It would be awkward if I made a scene and made it worse 'cause I was presuming. Or if the woman likes the guy, I don't think I'd do anything. People get weird if you presume, and I don't want to be the sex police.

Jerry relayed the social stigma associated with intervening with strangers and the potential residual harm that can come from the potential victim not wanting to make the situation worse. Similarly, Andrew added to the focus group discussion, "It's hard having good intentions and knowing what to do (after the training), but when it's strangers, it's not the same, especially if you are worried about making something small into something big." Megan shared the same concern in the focus group:

> I know some girls want to hook up, so if I don't know the people involved, I'm afraid of reading it wrong. Or even worse, pissing off a guy because you assume he's a predator. If it's my sorority sister, I'm intervening, or a frat guy, I'll get one of the other guys to talk to him. But if I don't know you, I'm not getting involved.

Megan shared the potential harm of accusing a stranger of predatory behavior. Her concern about the accused becoming angry at her is a barrier most participants can relate to. The notion of fear of making things worse was also supported during the trainers focus group when Jaime spoke about awareness that students are uncomfortable intervening when they don't know the people involved because they fear they will worsen the situation. Jaime spoke to the specific way bystander intervention training addresses this barrier:

> It's not uncommon for student bystanders not to intervene with strangers. They are concerned it will be worse for the victim. The perpetrators will get more aggressive if they step in. If the bystander makes a scene by checking it with the victim, what if they get angry or embarrassed? What if the woman likes the guy or the attention, and the bystander ruins that? During training, we intentionally discuss scenarios and have students practice comfortable ways to intervene, especially with strangers. We review methods to directly intervene by offering the victim water, taking a walk, or less intrusive examples like asking to borrow a phone charger or asking if they know where the bathroom is. There is no accusation in the later examples, but it offers an opportunity to break up whatever is happening and allow the student to get away if they seek help.

As a trainer, Jaime reflected on the impactful barrier a lack of relationship with the potential victim or perpetrator can have and the increased importance the trainers place on teaching intervention skills to use when faced with strangers in harmful situations. This is supported through the training materials with a clear and delineated focus on role-play specific to intervening when the victim or perpetrator is a stranger. Examples of safe ways to intervene, like starting a casual conversation or asking for phone chargers, are interventions without judgment or inference of potential harm that are reinforced and practiced. Another challenge posed in the discussions is that the more people present, the more a barrier to intervening if the victim or perpetrator is unknown. This is common as the increased number of onlookers directly relates to feelings of less responsibility—the feeling that "someone else knows the individuals" involved and will "step up." Lucy

mentioned during her interview being at parties and not knowing anyone but the friends she came with:

> I'm like, these are all frats and sorors (sororities); they must know the person in trouble. One of her friends will check on her. Why would you be at a party without a friend? No one does that. I mean, since high school, we all go with someone. It's more fun anyway when you go with people, and someone always looks out for the rest of us. I won't feel comfortable going up to a stranger when so many others see the same thing go down.

Lucy's words reflect a direct example of the bystander effect that is apparent when more people witness potential sexual violence. She is not alone in her feelings; the more bystanders that witness a behavior grow, the less likely one will step up. Michelle's comments in the focus group support the theme that the more people present, the less likely anyone will intervene. She said that she's "confident in putting to practice the skills she learned in training." Still, it depends on "other people there to step in first." The more people present, the "less likely I will say something" if it's people I don't know. Michele shared,

> If I noticed a situation at a party that made me uneasy, like a guy was getting too close despite a girl's attempts to create space, I would want to intervene, but I would wait for someone else to step in since so many people were around—someone there must know her or the guy, that can help her out to break I up. If I knew them, I would, but if it's strangers, I'm not comfortable. Their friends can step in.

Michelle's voice supports the notion that students will wait for someone else to step in and selectively push the responsibility onto others who must know the victim. Luis added a male perspective during the interview when he mentioned, "It's harder for guys." He shared,

> When you're out and see a guy harassing a girl, and she's clearly not into it, it's awkward to say something to the guy if he isn't with you. I know we went through scenarios on this to intervene, but I seriously don't see myself doing it if there are a lot of people around. One of his boys will notice and step in to save his ass. I know me and my brothers respect girls, but if one of us gets a little too pushy, we always check in. Like, bro, stop. It's like a code; we have each other's backs when we go out. We like to have a good time but still look out, especially if a brother is drinking heavily. The other people at the party need to do that with their friends. The more people there, the more I know someone has got to be with the guy. His friends will check on him.

Luis talked about the responsibility of friends to step in and his role to do so if he sees someone he knows misbehaving. Like most students, Luis continued to reflect on the responsibility of the friends and his apparent concern about intervening when he does not know the people involved.

Finally, comments in the interviews showed a reluctance to intervene when the people involved are strangers due to fear of retaliation from the perpetrator or the victim. For example, the students voiced worry about becoming a target themselves or facing negative consequences from their peer group. Putting themselves out to help comes with perceived social risk. Andrew's interview comments describe his concern about getting

involved with strangers as he would risk having "one of them or their friends turn on him." Andrew went on to explain:

> I want to help, but it's different when you don't know the girl or the guy. If you intervene, they can turn on you, especially the guy, if he's embarrassed. And then his friends can cause trouble. The funny thing is, the more of a scene they make, the more likely they were up to no good and needed to save face. The training showed us how to seek others' help, but what if the bouncer or bartender doesn't see it like I do? Then I'm a troublemaker, and then the focus is on me and not the creep (perpetrator).

Andrew's words reflect the concern of retaliation from the potential perpetrators when they are called out on their actions. When there is no relationship, the accused person may become defensive and embarrassed and cause the bystander harm. Nicole was similarly concerned with the focus turning on her, as voiced during her interview: "My concern about stepping in is the energy and the focus is on me." Nicole gave an example of the potential retaliation when she approaches someone she doesn't know, continuing to support the theme:

> I feel responsible for intervening. I know what to do. I have been through bystander training as a peer mentor and orientation leader. I am part of the sexual violence prevention team doing educational tabling and campus programs. We train in safe ways to intervene when you don't know the victim or perpetrator. My concern is the attention deflects to me, and I am afraid of retaliation from others at the party. The men can be ruthless; I've seen it happen. Their friends gang up and

> make you anxious; women can be worse. Especially if the guy's girlfriend finds out, she is embarrassed cause her boyfriend is cheating. It's just a bad spiral.

Nicole, a third-year marketing major, noted a woman's fear as she reflected a personal safety concern when the accused is a male stranger. Her words show the fear of harm and the domino effect her well-intended actions can cause. Vincent told of fear of being "physically hurt by the one being accused" and not wanting to "get into a fight, especially if the guy is drunk and not thinking clearly." However, Vincent doesn't think that is a genuine concern and talks more about social retaliation, as mentioned in his interview:

> I'm worried about frat guys getting angry if I intervene, and it's hard to get anyone else to help for the same reason. They can be intimidating, especially if you are involved in a lot of clubs and see them all the time. I'm not friends with them, but you always see the same people around campus. But the real concern is social fallout. Intervening can lead to being cut off by certain groups or friends who may be associated with the perpetrators. It seems shallow, but the fear of social isolation is real.

Vincent provided a unique but equally noted example specific to the fear of retaliation through social impact. To Vincent, the social stigma and isolation that could be caused by intervening with a stranger are enough to prevent him from acting as a bystander when he has no relationship with the victim or perpetrator. Furthermore, there is the concern of legal and administrative consequences. Students worry about getting involved in a situation with strangers that could lead to legal trouble or disciplinary action by the college or university, even if they were trying to help. Cid mentioned this in the focus

group, stating the concern of getting involved "leading to having to deal with [redacted] administration" if the situation is escalated:

> If I don't know the people, I'm not risking getting in trouble. I'm sorry. I've heard these get complicated, and I don't want to ruin someone's life because of what I thought was happening. If I don't know the people involved, it can seem like I'm trying to get someone in trouble when I only want to have them chill. I think it's best if their friends say something, then it won't escalate.

Cid's description of the fear of additional consequences supports the many reasons why college students do not intervene when witnessing a potential sexual assault, especially when it involves unknown people.

As most participants noted, students often face significant challenges when considering intervening in potential sexual assault situations, especially when they have no prior connection to the victim or the perpetrator. Students revealed in situations where many peers are witnessing the same concerning behaviors, the phenomenon known as the bystander effect leads individuals to assume that someone else will intervene. The participants gave a perspective that notes the diffusion of responsibility among students can result in inaction, even when multiple people are present and witness the same incident. Participants also stated that the fear of retaliation from the perpetrator or their friends is a pervasive concern. If students intervene, they worry about personal safety or potential social consequences for themselves, preventing them from taking action. The training facilitators also recognize this concern and affirm the barrier to intervention specific to the relationship between the potential victim and perpetrator, as well as the purposeful skills incorporated in the training materials to empower bystanders to

intervene. These collaborative responses bring light to the impact of the inaction of bystanders when the victim and perpetrator are strangers.

Conclusion

This study explored student perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in BILT. The student voices revealed specific findings, all of which are crucial motivators and barriers to intervention: the impact of self-efficacy, understanding their responsibility to act, and the potential victim or perpetrator being strangers. This study's key theme and compelling finding was that after completing training, students are more confident and perceive their own responsibility to act when they are bystanders in a potential sexual violence situation.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the major findings from a case study of 15 undergraduate college students at a private 4-year Catholic university in the northeastern United States, examining the perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in BILT. The chapter will discuss the findings and connection to prior research, research questions, and theoretical framework. Finally, this chapter will discuss the study's implications for future research and practice.

Discussion of Findings

Student bystanders are credited with preventing sexual violence on college campuses by changing campus culture, challenging social norms, and promoting a safer and more inclusive campus environment. The findings of this study revealed that self-efficacy, sense of responsibility, and relationships with the parties involved are the primary motivators and barriers to student bystanders intervening when witnessing a potential sexual assault.

One of the most prominent findings in the research is the theme of self-efficacy—a bystander's belief in their ability to make a difference. Findings showed that college students with high self-efficacy regarding intervention are more likely to believe that they possess the skills and competence to make a positive difference in preventing or addressing sexual assault. This study highlights that students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to intervene when they witness potential sexual violence. A sense of responsibility emerges as another central finding in this study. Students who feel a strong sense of responsibility toward their peers and the campus community are more inclined to

act when witnessing potential sexual violence. This underscores the importance of fostering a culture of shared responsibility. Findings demonstrated that students with a strong sense of responsibility feel morally obligated to act when confronted with wrongdoing. This sense of responsibility is often fueled by a deep understanding of the potential harm caused by sexual assault and a commitment to fostering a safe and respectful community. In college, students develop a sense of responsibility by understanding the importance of looking out for one another. Findings showed that the motivators of self-efficacy and a sense of responsibility work synergistically to empower college students to intervene when witnessing sexual assault. A student who believes in their ability to make a difference (self-efficacy) and feels a moral duty to act (sense of responsibility) is more likely to overcome barriers such as fear of social consequences or uncertainty about the situation. Moreover, the belief that their actions can contribute to creating a safer environment reinforces their commitment to being active bystanders.

Findings recognizing barriers to intervention are equally vital. The study sheds light on the fears and hesitations that can prevent student intervention when witnessing potential sexual assault. Specifically, this study showed that when the victim or perpetrator involved in harmful behavior are strangers, student bystanders can face uncertainty about intervention. Findings noted that one primary obstacle is the ambiguity surrounding the situation. In a college environment with a diverse and constantly changing population, students may lack familiarity with those involved, making it challenging to accurately interpret the dynamics at play. The uncertainty about the nature of relationships or the context of the interaction can create hesitancy and reluctance to intervene, as students may fear misjudging the situation. Another finding to support the

barrier of witnessing strangers is the diffusion of responsibility, as students tend to assume that someone else is better suited or more obligated to intervene. They feel less personally responsible for taking action because they believe others will step in. In a crowded or public setting, this diffusion can be particularly pronounced, leading to a collective bystander effect where everyone assumes someone else will intervene. Findings also showed a fear of retaliation or personal harm associated with intervening with strangers that can evoke concerns about personal safety, as the dynamics of the situation are unpredictable. Students worry about becoming targets of aggression by the individuals involved or facing negative repercussions from peers who may disapprove of intervention.

Finally, while fraternities have unfortunately been associated with instances of sexual assaults on college campuses, it's crucial to recognize that Greek life organizations also have the potential to play a positive role in fostering a culture of bystander intervention and care within their communities. Participating in Greek life can offer numerous benefits beyond social activities and networking opportunities. One significant advantage is the sense of belonging and camaraderie of being part of a fraternity or sorority. Members often form close bonds and develop a strong support network within their Greek organization, creating a community where individuals look out for one another's well-being. Within Greek life, this sense of community can serve as a powerful motivator for bystander intervention. Members are more likely to feel a sense of responsibility and accountability for the safety and welfare of their fellow brothers or sisters. This commitment to looking out for one another can encourage proactive intervention when someone may be at risk of harm or experiencing distress. Moreover,

Greek organizations can implement bystander intervention training and educational programs as part of their chapter activities. By promoting awareness and providing members with the necessary knowledge and skills to recognize and respond to concerning situations, fraternities and sororities can empower their members to take action and intervene effectively. Participating in Greek life also affords individuals a platform to advocate for positive change within their organizations and throughout the broader campus community. By promoting a culture of respect, consent, and accountability, Greek organizations can actively work to prevent instances of sexual assault and misconduct. This includes fostering open dialogue, challenging harmful attitudes and behaviors, and supporting survivors seeking justice and healing. Ultimately, the potential benefits of participating in Greek life as a motivator for bystander intervention and care for the overall community on a college campus underscore the importance of promoting a culture of responsibility, empathy, and solidarity within Greek organizations. By leveraging their collective influence and resources, fraternities and sororities can create safer, more inclusive environments where all members feel valued, respected, and supported.

In summary, findings demonstrated that self-efficacy and a sense of responsibility serve as integral components in motivating college students to intervene as bystanders in cases of potential sexual assault. These psychological factors empower individuals to overcome inhibitions, take decisive action, and contribute to the creation of a campus culture that prioritizes the well-being and safety of the members of the campus community. The findings equally showed that witnessing strangers in a potential sexual assault introduces barriers to college students as bystanders. The ambiguity of unfamiliar

relationships, diffusion of responsibility in group settings, and fears of personal harm or retaliation collectively contribute to a challenging decision-making environment.

Connection to Prior Research

Prior research has shown that sexual assault bystander intervention training programs have increased on college campuses, emphasizing the importance of understanding the role of bystanders in intervening to prevent peer assaults (Banyard et al., 2009a). Chapter 2 discussed various research articles that supported related literature on this fact. Additionally, many of the findings in this study coincide with what most of the research base tells us: Student bystanders impact campus climate by reducing sexual assault on college campuses, specifically when bystanders are present and have the opportunity to intervene in situations where sexual assault is likely to escalate (Banyard, 2008, 2015; Banyard et al., 2009a; Fischer et al., 2011; Darley & Latané, 1968; Kaufman & Berkowitz, 2010; Katz et al., 2011; Koelsch et al., 2012). The findings of this study support prior literature and align with the influence of self-efficacy and responsibility as motivators while adding the effects of no relationship to the potential victim and perpetrator as a barrier to intervention.

Findings related to previous literature by Cares et al. (2015) demonstrated the impact of self-efficacy on students' confidence to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault. Cares et al. found that self-efficacy is a powerful motivator for college students witnessing potential sexual assault. It instills confidence, determination, and belief in their ability to make a positive impact, thus encouraging them to act and intervene in these critical situations. An example of findings from this study that supports the research is Luis, a third-year criminal justice major and fraternity member, who

explained how his confidence in using intervention skills replaced uncertainty if he witnesses potential sexual violence. The newfound confidence makes it easier for him to step in and break up the situation without making it awkward. Luis specifically mentioned the skills learned through bystander intervention training that were comfortable for him to put into practice. Like Luis, Beth is a part of Greek life on campus and a sorority member; she also referred to having the confidence to intervene if she felt that a peer was in potential harm. She went on to give examples of the skills learned to directly intervene and move past fear, for example, asking for a phone charger to break up the moment and connect with a potential victim. This recognition of the impact of self-efficacy aligns with the assertions of Exner and Cummings (2011), who found a moderately high degree of self-efficacy directly related to violence prevention by peers. Bennett et al. (2014) identified failure to intervene due to skill deficit as a key barrier to bystander intervention. This was demonstrated by Michelle, who attends parties with her education club friends, shared that the lack of self-confidence to say something at a party is the hardest part, especially when everyone is watching: “I am the only one to intervene.” These findings directly relate to the research of Moschella et al. (2016), which shows that students with high self-efficacy are better equipped to overcome barriers, such as fear, uncertainty, or social pressure. Furthermore, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to persevere and take the necessary steps to intervene because they believe in their capacity to handle the situation (DeGue et al., 2014).

A sense of responsibility is another critical finding in the college student decision-making process to intervene when confronted with potential sexual assault situations. Prior research has revealed that bystanders often grapple with feelings of accountability;

specifically, when students feel responsible for the well-being of their peers, they are more inclined to act (Robinson et al., 2022). Coker et al. (2015) conducted research that emphasized the significance of fostering collective responsibility among college students. This concept of shared responsibility is vital in preventing sexual assault and is supported by the findings of this study, as noted by Vincent. Vincent is involved in campus ministry and community service initiatives on campus, and he referenced a sense of responsibility directly connected to ethical decisions. Vincent's self-described moral obligation to stop a potential sexual assault if a woman is intoxicated and being taken advantage of was also shared by other students in the study. Heather, a commuter student not involved on campus due to family obligations, also shares the sense of responsibility to act. Her family values and having a friend who was assaulted at a party is what draws her to intervene. Heather referenced her character and values as prime motivators to not ignore a potential assault and say something to stop it, which is recognized in research by McMahon et al. (2020). Specifically, when bystanders perceive themselves as part of a community where everyone is responsible for each other's safety, they are more likely to intervene and challenge harmful behaviors. Finally, Megan supported the finding of responsibility as a motivator. Megan is in a sorority, and she admitted to witnessing behaviors that could have resulted in sexual assault. She described her generation as unafraid to speak up for what is right. She attributed an understanding of consent and respect to a collective sense of moral duty to stop instances of sexual violence. These findings support research by Banyard (2008) that college students who feel a sense of responsibility understand the moral and ethical obligation to ensure the safety and well-

being of their peers. This moral duty can be a powerful motivator to intervene and prevent potential sexual assault.

Bystanders' relationships with the parties involved in potential sexual assault scenarios also influence their intervention decisions. A qualitative study by Banyard (2015) revealed that bystanders are likelier to intervene if they have a personal connection to the potential victim or perpetrator. These relationships may create a sense of duty or a more robust emotional response, motivating them to act. Conversely, bystanders may hesitate to intervene if they are not already friends with the potential perpetrator, as Bennett et al. (2014) noted. The findings from this study support how bystanders' relationships with the parties involved are a motivator or barrier to student intervention when witnessing potential sexual violence. One such example was provided by Joe, who attends a lot of parties with his fraternity friends, although he is not a fraternity member himself. Joe described the barrier to intervening if the victim or perpetrator are strangers, noting his concern about making things worse for the victim. Joe expressed worry that the perpetrator may respond to an accusation with violence toward him or the victim and escalate the situation negatively. Conversely, Joe described the motivating factor of knowing the people involved and feeling comfortable intervening because he has a sense they will listen or he can get the victim away without a scene. Additional findings that support the research come from Jerry, a second-year marketing and communication major and fraternity member who shared a similar concern about not wanting to make it worse for the victim while questioning whether his perception of what he witnessed was correct. Jerry also relayed the social stigma associated with intervening with strangers and the potential residual harm that can come from the already potential

victim not wanting to make the situation worse. This barrier is noted in research by Berkowitz (2002), who noted the direct correlation between bystander intervention between strangers and the risk of becoming a social outcast. Furthermore, the peer pressure to not stand out and make a scene is remarkably stronger than the social responsibility to intervene, particularly when the victim or perpetrator is a stranger, and there is little confidence in how the response will play out.

This study did not find support for prior research that shows a failure to notice a situation as potentially harmful as a barrier to bystander intervention. While college students' failure to recognize a situation as potentially leading to sexual assault presents a significant obstacle to effective bystander intervention, it was not a finding throughout the 15 participant interviews in this study. Research has shown that individuals, especially college students, often do not intervene in situations where they perceive a risk of sexual assault because they may not fully grasp the severity of the situation or underestimate the harm that may occur (Burn, 2008). This lack of recognition can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as social norms, peer pressure, and the influence of alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgment. In a study published in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (Banyard et al., 2007), researchers found that college students who failed to recognize these situations often lacked the appropriate information to respond effectively, thus making the lack of support for this finding concerning.

This study supports prior research demonstrating our understanding of college student bystander intervention in potential sexual assault situations. Self-efficacy, responsibility, and relationships with the parties involved are essential themes shaping students' intervention decisions and align with the empirical evidence that suggests that

bystander intervention training can enhance self-efficacy while fostering a sense of shared responsibility can encourage proactive bystander behaviors. Additionally, students' personal relationships with the parties involved play a crucial role in determining whether they choose to intervene, as supported by the findings of this study. Sexual assault education prevention on college campuses is constantly evolving with increased rates of sexual violence. It is essential to continue ongoing research on the topic of sexual assault prevention and to keep up to date with the evolving trends in the area of bystander intervention.

Connection of Findings to Research Questions

Through a series of semi-structured individual interviews with each of the 15 student participants, two focus groups with student participants and training facilitators, and a review of the bystander intervention training materials, the findings revealed three overarching themes: self-efficacy, responsibility, and relationship to the victim or perpetrator. The following research questions drove this study:

1. What factors influence college students' decision-making process to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault situations, and how do these factors align with the tenets of the bystander theory?
2. How do college students perceive their roles as potential bystanders if witnessing potential sexual assault, and what factors impact their willingness and ability to intervene as bystanders?
3. What role, if any, do training facilitators have in engaging in a postsecondary environment that supports student bystander intervention?

The first research question revolved around the factors influencing college students' decision-making process to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault and how these factors align with the tenets of the bystander theory. Findings were consistent among participants: Most referenced their ability to be effective and confidence in their capacity to prevent harm as a motivator to intervene if witnessing potential sexual violence. The data analysis found that participants' confidence level in intervention skills made individuals more likely to intervene when they perceived themselves as capable of making a difference and believed that intervention aligned with their values and social norms. As was referenced, a key motivator for participants to intervene in potential sexual assault situations is self-efficacy, referring to their confidence in their capacity to prevent harm. For example, participants with a higher level of self-efficacy indicated greater inclination toward intent to act if they witnessed signs of potential sexual violence, aligning with the core tenets of the bystander theory. Bystander theory also accounted for participants acknowledging the presence of barriers that can deter individuals from intervening. In support of this finding, participants indicated the diffusion of responsibility, which occurs when more bystanders are present specifically, as the most notable barrier, resulting in the decreased likelihood of any individual intervening. The findings convey that the bystander effect is attributed to a diffusion of responsibility among participants, as each assumes that someone else will act. Consequent analysis shows that even when participants possess the self-efficacy and motivation to intervene, the presence of more bystanders can act as a significant barrier. Also supporting this finding is the participants' demonstrated alignment of self-efficacy

while recognizing the inhibitory effects of multiple bystanders, which consistently underscores the importance of fostering confidence among students to intervene.

Data analysis also found that the absence of a relationship with the victim or perpetrator profoundly impacted the participants' willingness to intervene regardless of confidence or self-efficacy skills. Participants indicated that when witnessing a potential sexual assault as a bystander, not knowing the victim or the perpetrator can create significant barriers to intervention due to fear of misinterpretation as they worry about misjudging the situation or exacerbating it by intervening inappropriately. Findings showed that the absence of a personal connection can lead to a diminished sense of responsibility as participants feel detached from the situation, reducing their motivation to intervene. For example, participants referenced that someone else should step in, falling victim to the bystander effect. Participants reflected that safety concerns also play a role, as they worry about potential retaliation or personal harm, especially when they do not have prior knowledge of the individuals involved. Additionally, the lack of a clear social role or norm in such situations is noted throughout the review of the results, adding concern and making the bystander unsure of what action to take.

The second research question focused on how college students perceive their roles as potential bystanders if witnessing potential sexual assault and what factors impact their willingness and ability to intervene as bystanders. Most participants consistently demonstrate the sense of responsibility perceived if witnessing potential violence. Specific results show that most students perceive their roles as bystanders in potential sexual assault situations through a moral lens. As most participants mentioned, moral responsibility encompasses their belief in a duty to intervene when they witness potential

harm—so much so that many students view bystander intervention as a moral imperative driven by a sense of responsibility to protect the well-being of their peers. The participants recognized that ignoring potential sexual assault is wrong and were motivated by wrongful behavior to intervene. Additionally, the findings support student beliefs that they have a responsibility to uphold ethical standards and safeguard the dignity and safety of their peers, aligning closely with the belief that bystanders should act according to their values and social norms. Intervening because it is the right thing to do is also referenced through how participants see themselves. Specifically, findings recognize participants' perceived roles as bystanders, acknowledging that their actions can profoundly impact the well-being of others. Many students view intervening in potential sexual assault as an ethically responsible obligation that creates a safer and more respectful campus environment.

In addition to the ethical dynamic aspect of responsibility, findings also show a relationship to empathy toward the victim as a motivator to intervene when witnessing potential sexual assault. Participants demonstrated how a sense of responsibility through empathy plays a significant role in their decision-making process as they place themselves in the victim's shoes and imagine the emotional and physical suffering the victim may endure. Notably, for many participants, empathy fosters a deeper connection with the victim, compelling them to take action to prevent harm. An example to support this finding is that the participants recognize that their intervention can alleviate harm to a victim, potentially preventing long-term physical and psychological trauma. As was referenced by most participants, an empathetic perspective is consistent with the idea that bystanders are more likely to intervene when they perceive themselves in the victim's

place of vulnerability. The broad motivator of responsibility to intervene was demonstrated in findings aligned with ethical values and a sense of empathy for the victim's experience. Results determine that the participants' perceptions of their roles as bystanders in potential sexual assault situations are multifaceted beyond the skills learned to intervene to encompass ethical and empathetic considerations. The results of the findings point toward empathy for the victim as a powerful motivator for intervention, as students recognize the profound impact they can have on preventing harm.

The third research question focused on the role of training facilitators in engaging in a postsecondary environment that supports student bystander intervention. A data review demonstrated that all participants willingly participated in bystander intervention training provided at the university, and many encouraged other peers or social organizations to hold subsequent trainings. Furthermore, data showed that training facilitators are pivotal in fostering an environment that supports student bystander intervention. Participants credited training facilitators with equipping them with the knowledge and skills to recognize situations where bystander intervention is necessary. Moreover, participants reflected an understanding of the value of the skills learned to intervene and the impact confidence and knowledge have as a motivator to act. Further analysis of trainer data reflected the responsibility to educate students to understand the signs of sexual violence and recognize where there are gaps, as noted, for example, when the parties involved are strangers. Participants spoke about a campus culture of looking out for one another and being sure students are safe, which is evident through the impact the violence education office has on campus and the culture it creates to foster a safe community.

A review of the training materials demonstrated a specific purpose to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to intervene effectively in situations that may lead to sexual violence or harassment, thereby creating a safer and more respectful campus environment. An analysis revealed that the training includes a range of topics, including recognizing signs of potential harm, understanding the importance of consent, and bystander intervention strategies. Additional review found that the training emphasizes the role of social responsibility and community awareness in preventing sexual violence. Intended learning outcomes from training are clearly established, noting that participants will develop a heightened awareness of the issues surrounding sexual violence, gain a deeper understanding of consent, and learn practical strategies for intervening safely and effectively when they witness potential sexual violence. Evidence from participants' collective voice supports the training purpose to educate a student body where students become advocates for a culture of consent and respect within their campus community, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of all members, leading by example, and encouraging others to do the same.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

The findings align well with the theoretical frameworks used to guide this study. The bystander effect posits that the presence of other bystanders can inhibit an individual's action when witnessing an emergency or potentially harmful situation. Individuals tend to assume that someone else will intervene, leading to diffusion of responsibility. Social norms theory, on the other hand, highlights the powerful influence of perceived social norms on behavior. It suggests that individuals act according to what they perceive as the prevailing social norms within their peer groups. Understanding

these theories is crucial for comprehending the dynamics that influence student bystander intervention in the context of sexual assault on college campuses.

This study found that student self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in determining whether a student will intervene in a potential sexual assault situation and directly aligns with a study by Banyard et al. (2007), who investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and bystander intervention in potential sexual assault scenarios. The research found that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy were more likely to act when they witnessed a potential sexual assault. The findings align with the bystander effect theory, as the diffusion of responsibility may influence individuals with higher self-efficacy. Specifically, students' confidence in their ability to intervene can overcome the tendency to assume that others will act. Furthermore, the social norms theory is at play when students with higher self-efficacy act as role models, potentially shifting the perceived social norms within their peer groups toward intervention. The concept of a student's sense of responsibility is a critical finding in this study to understand student bystander intervention in potential sexual assault situations. A study conducted by Brewster and Tucker (2016) delved into the role of responsibility in influencing bystander behavior. The research revealed that individuals who felt a strong sense of responsibility toward the potential victim were more likely to intervene when witnessing a potential sexual assault. This sense of responsibility could be tied to a connection with the victim, a general commitment to ethical behavior, or a belief in protecting the well-being of others. These findings resonate with the Bystander Effect theory, as a student's heightened sense of responsibility may counteract the diffusion of responsibility that often occurs in group settings. Students who feel a personal obligation to help are more

likely to overcome the bystander effect and act. Regarding the social norms theory, students prioritizing responsibility may influence their peers to perceive intervention as a socially accepted and expected behavior.

Finally, the findings of this study focus on the nature of a student's relationship with the potential victim and perpetrator and how that impacts their likelihood of intervening in a potential sexual assault situation. A study by McMahon and Banyard (2012) explored the influence of relationships in bystander intervention. The research found that individuals were more likely to intervene when they had a close relationship with the potential victim. However, when the perpetrator was a friend or acquaintance, the likelihood of intervention decreased, potentially due to loyalty conflicts or the fear of social repercussions. These findings underscore the interplay of both bystander effect and social norms theories. When the potential victim is known to the students, the diffusion of responsibility may be lessened, as a personal connection creates a sense of duty to protect them. On the other hand, when the perpetrator is within a student's social circle, the perceived social norms within that group may discourage intervention to avoid upsetting the established relationships and dynamics.

The purpose of this study was to understand the motivators and barriers to student bystander intervention in potential sexual assault situations, which is crucial for preventing sexual violence on college campuses. The findings from this study exploring self-efficacy, responsibility, and relationships with the parties involved highlight the complex dynamics at play. Self-efficacy and a sense of responsibility are key motivators that can counteract the bystander effect. At the same time, relationships with the potential victim and perpetrator can encourage or discourage intervention based on the nature of

those connections. Theoretical frameworks like the bystander effect and social norms theories offer valuable insights into these dynamics. The diffusion of responsibility, influenced by the presence of others, can be mitigated by higher levels of self-efficacy and a strong sense of responsibility among students to act. Furthermore, social norms within peer groups can encourage or discourage intervention, depending on the relationships between the bystander and the parties involved.

Limitations

This case study on the motivators and barriers to bystander intervention when witnessing a potential sexual assault, especially within the confines of a majority commuter population at a Catholic university, presents several inherent limitations that could affect the reliability and generalizability of its findings. These limitations become even more pronounced when the researcher conducting the study is closely connected to the research topic. Understanding these constraints is essential for accurately interpreting the study's outcomes and assessing its broader implications.

First, the issue of self-selection bias among participants is a significant concern. Individuals who voluntarily participate in the study may possess specific characteristics or motivations that differentiate them from non-participants. For instance, they might have a heightened awareness of social issues or a predisposition toward intervention, which could lead to an overestimation of bystander intervention rates. Consequently, the limited sample size does not represent the entire student population at the university, limiting the study's validity.

One impactful example is the lack of student-athlete participation and the missing contribution from their perspective. The small size of the sample may further exacerbate

the problem of detecting meaningful patterns or trends in bystander behavior. Additionally, the findings may not capture the full diversity of perspectives and experiences within the mostly commuter population, diminishing the study's ability to draw robust conclusions about bystander intervention dynamics in this context.

Furthermore, the researcher's close proximity to the research topic introduces potential biases that could undermine the study's objectivity and credibility. When the researcher has a personal stake or strong interest in the subject matter, there is a risk of confirmation bias, where preconceived notions or beliefs influence the interpretation of data in a way that confirms the researcher's expectations. This can lead to the selective presentation of evidence or the downplaying of findings that contradict the researcher's perspectives, ultimately compromising the study's integrity. Moreover, the researcher's close connection to the research topic may inadvertently influence the study design and data collection process. For example, the researcher's familiarity with the subject matter might lead to the inclusion of biased or leading questions in surveys or interviews, potentially skewing participants' responses and distorting the study's findings. Another limitation of conducting a case study on bystander intervention within a Catholic university population is the inherent contextual specificity of the setting. Religious beliefs, cultural norms, and institutional policies unique to this environment can shape individuals' perceptions and behaviors of bystander intervention in ways that may not apply to other populations or settings. As a result, the study's findings may have limited generalizability beyond the specific context in which it was conducted.

Implications for Future Research

Sexual assault on college campuses is a pervasive and profoundly concerning issue, with numerous incidents going unnoticed or unreported. One critical aspect of this problem and an opportunity for future research is the failure of student bystanders to notice potential sexual assault. This failure is often rooted in a complex interplay of factors, including student apathy and the victim's race. Both apathy and race are dynamics that contribute to the failure of students to notice sexual assault. These factors can impact bystander intervention and are worth future focus.

In the context of college campuses, bystander apathy plays a significant role in the failure of students to notice potential sexual assault. For example, hook-up culture can create an environment where the lines of consent are often unclear, making it easier for potential sexual assaults to go unnoticed. In such an environment, students may be less attuned to identifying signs of discomfort, reluctance, or non-consent, making it easier for sexual assault to go unnoticed. In a campus culture that values casual encounters, there may be less accountability for sexual behavior, leading students to assume that both parties are willing participants, even if one party is experiencing coercion or non-consensual actions. This fear of disrupting the status quo can lead students to inaction and a failure to notice or report sexual assault incidents. Students may be less likely to intervene due to the normalization of ambiguous situations, fear of intruding, and the influence of peer pressure and stigmatization. Understanding these issues requires research on boundaries and consent, raising awareness of bystander intervention, and challenging the norms perpetuating apathy in potential sexual assault situations.

In addition to bystander apathy, another needed area of future research is how the race of the victim can significantly affect whether students choose to intervene in a potential sexual assault situation. Understanding racial biases and stereotypes plays a role in shaping college student bystanders' responses when witnessing potential sexual assault. Specifically, bystanders may hold stereotypes or biases that affect their perception of the victim's credibility or vulnerability based on their race. These stereotypes can influence the degree of empathy and concern that bystanders feel toward the victim. For example, research by Hackman et al. (2017) showed that Black women may face more significant skepticism and victim-blaming compared to their White counterparts when reporting sexual assault, which can discourage bystanders from taking their claims seriously. Additionally, students may fear that intervening in a situation involving a racially different victim or perpetrator could lead to accusations of racism or racial profiling. This fear may lead to hesitation or inaction as individuals grapple with the potential social repercussions of their involvement. This fear can create reluctance to report or intervene in cases of potential sexual assault, particularly when racial dynamics are at play. Last, the intersection of race, gender, and other identity factors further complicates the issue. Victims who belong to marginalized or intersecting identity groups may face even greater barriers to student bystander intervention. Intersectional discrimination can result in victims experiencing compounded bias, making it even more challenging for bystanders to notice and respond to their distress.

The failure to notice potential sexual assault on college campuses is a multifaceted problem that involves student bystander apathy and the influence of the victim's race. This offers an opportunity for further research to identify barriers to

bystander intervention on college campuses specific to apathy and victims' race. There is a need for research focused on how apathy, driven by the diffusion of responsibility and fear of social consequences, often results in inaction and the failure to notice incidents of sexual assault. Additionally, racial biases and stereotypes can exacerbate this issue, affecting bystanders' perceptions of victims and their willingness to intervene. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing sexual violence on college campuses and the failures in noticing and responding to sexual assault. This further research is vital for the education, awareness, and intervention programs considering the intersection of bystander behavior, race, and the dynamics of campus life. Identifying barriers and motivators for college student intervention can create safer college environments where sexual assault is more likely to be noticed, reported, and prevented.

Implications for Future Practice

As sexual assault continues to plague colleges and universities, these findings can contribute to bystander intervention training formation and guide future educational programs and training facilitators by providing the tools necessary to prevent and address sexual assault and empowering students to act when they witness potential harm. The findings of this study shed light on three overarching themes: self-efficacy, a sense of responsibility, and the relationship between the student bystander and the victim or perpetrator. By examining these findings, we can better understand how to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively intervene and create safer campus environments.

The findings identify self-efficacy as the first theme, highlighting the importance of belief in one's ability to influence a situation, which plays a pivotal role in student

bystander intervention. To strengthen self-efficacy among college students, future practice should focus on colleges providing comprehensive education and training programs that equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to intervene effectively. These programs should not only educate students about the signs of potential sexual assault but also train them in various intervention strategies, such as direct confrontation, distraction, and delegation. Simulating realistic scenarios that students may encounter on campus can help build self-efficacy. Practice in controlled environments allows students to develop confidence in their ability to intervene effectively when faced with real-life situations. Including specific scenarios and role play designed to be as realistic to the college party scene as possible will provide real-world skill building that potential bystanders can draw upon when faced with potential sexual assault. Incorporating role models and influential peers, such as student-athletes, student leaders, and students with social influence, into bystander intervention programs can significantly boost self-efficacy. When students witness their peers successfully intervening in problematic situations, they are more likely to believe in their ability to do the same. Moreover, providing constructive feedback and acknowledging successful interventions can enhance self-efficacy. Students who receive positive reinforcement are more likely to continue intervening.

Another implication for future practice from the findings of this study is harnessing the sense of responsibility as a critical component of bystander intervention. To encourage students to embrace this responsibility, future practice must create a culture prioritizing active bystander intervention. This involves fostering an environment where everyone understands their role in preventing sexual assault and acknowledges the

collective responsibility to maintain a safe campus. Universities can begin the education process during first-year orientation, ensuring that new students understand from the very beginning the importance of their role in preventing sexual assault. This sets the tone for the rest of their academic journey. Universities can also communicate institutional policies on sexual assault and reporting mechanisms and ensure that students know how to report concerns and that they will be protected from retaliation when they do so. Knowing that institutional policies support student actions and that they can report concerns without fear of retribution can motivate students to intervene. Utilizing peer educators and mentors to lead bystander intervention programs can strengthen the programs, since students often relate better to their peers, and these role models can help convey the importance of intervention in a relatable way. Universities can foster a sense of community and responsibility through campus-wide initiatives, clubs, and events that promote awareness of sexual assault prevention. Engaging with local organizations and supporting community events focused on the same goal can help strengthen the culture of campus safety. Running awareness campaigns through various media, including social media, lawn signs, digital displays, and events, in high traffic and popular hangout locations on campus can educate and engage students throughout the year, not only during theme weeks or months. Students should be educated about the potential consequences of not intervening. Understanding the far-reaching impact of sexual assault on victims, perpetrators, and the campus community as a whole can further motivate students to take action. It is crucial to ensure that bystander intervention programs are inclusive and consider the diverse needs of students. Addressing the unique challenges

marginalized communities face and providing culturally sensitive training can help students from all backgrounds feel a sense of responsibility in intervention.

Last, findings show the need for future practice to address the barrier of bystanders not intervening in situations where the victim or perpetrator is a stranger to them. Addressing the barrier of not intervening when the victim or perpetrator is a stranger involves a multi-faceted approach that combines education, awareness, policies, and a supportive campus culture. It is essential to create an environment where individuals feel empowered and responsible for the well-being of their fellow community members, whether they are strangers or not. Building a solid sense of community on campus can encourage bystanders to feel responsibility for the well-being of others, even if they are strangers. Programs that promote inclusivity, foster connections, and provide peer support can create an environment where students are inclined to look out for one another. Universities may emphasize the importance of responsible citizenship as part of their educational mission, which can include teaching students about the values of empathy, compassion, and social responsibility, motivating bystanders to intervene when necessary. Universities should research student behavior to better understand the factors that influence intervention and inform the development of more effective bystander intervention programs and strategies. Also, universities need to recognize that faculty and staff members play a crucial role in creating a culture of intervention by providing training and resources to ensure a consistent approach to responding to sexual assault. Incorporating topics related to bystander intervention, empathy, and social responsibility into the curriculum can help create a culture of active citizenship and encourage students to be more proactive in looking out for one another. Another approach is to share stories

of successful bystander interventions to inspire other students to take action. Universities can use these stories to showcase the positive impact of intervention and reinforce the idea that individuals can make a difference. Finally, incorporating community partners and external organizations that specialize in sexual assault resources, bystander intervention, gender equity, safety, and community building can provide additional resources and expertise to address this issue effectively.

Bystander intervention is a powerful tool in combating sexual assault on college campuses. Enhancing self-efficacy, strengthening the sense of responsibility, and addressing bystander and victim or perpetrator dynamics are crucial steps in ensuring the effectiveness of future practice. To create effective bystander intervention programs, colleges and universities must consider these findings. Such programs should aim to boost students' self-efficacy, foster a sense of responsibility, and address the complexities of relationships within their communities. By doing so, institutions can empower students to become active and effective bystanders in the fight against sexual assault, ultimately creating safer and more supportive campus environments.

Conclusion

This study divulged findings that developed consistently through students' voices, focusing on the barriers and motivators to intervene if witnessing potential sexual violence, specifically following their participation in the university BILT. After listening to students' stories through interviews and focus groups, hearing bystander training facilitator feedback through a focus group, and reviewing the bystander intervention training materials, the researcher identified several conclusions on students' perception of intervening when they witness potential sexual assault. The findings of this qualitative

research case study reveal the importance of self-efficacy and responsibility in motivating student bystanders to intervene when witnessing potential sexual violence, especially in situations involving strangers. Specifically,

1. Students' perceptions of self-efficacy to use skills learned to intervene if witnessing potential sexual violence and their ability to apply the skills learned to stop the potentially harmful interaction is an essential motivator to intervene.
2. A sense of responsibility aided students' realization of their obligation to stop potential harm from occurring to their peers when they were witnessing morally and ethically wrong behaviors. Participants also reflected on empathy and compassion for the victim through the lens of social norms and the responsibility to create a community safe from sexual violence.
3. The student's relationship with the perpetrator and victim, where they feared the impact of strangers acting in a potentially harmful way, caused a barrier, with more students indicating they would not intervene if they did not know the perpetrator or the victim.

These findings amplify significant motivators and barriers to intervention when students witness potential sexual assault. Students are most likely of all campus community members to be present when sexual violence occurs. Students' likelihood of being bystanders makes it essential that their viewpoints be recognized and purposefully targeted; this study was conducted in this way to create a more robust depiction of perceived factors that cause students to act to stop potential violence or not to take action.

This research underscores the need for a multifaceted approach that combines training, awareness campaigns, and cultivating a sense of collective responsibility within

the campus community. Sexual assault on college campuses is a pressing issue with far-reaching consequences. It not only devastates survivors but also undermines campus safety and educational pursuits. With a paradigm shift toward bystander intervention training as a vital solution on college campuses to combat the epidemic of sexual assault, a deeper understanding of barriers and motivators to student intervention when witnessing potential sexual assault is necessary to continue to appreciate the significance of empowering students to intervene in potentially harmful situations, disrupting the cycle of violence. By focusing on these themes and addressing barriers effectively, educational institutions can create safer and more supportive environments where students are empowered to prevent sexual violence and protect their peers.

APPENDIX A CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

You have been invited to participate in a research study to learn more about the barriers and motivators of intervening as a bystander after participating in bystander intervention leadership training if witnessing potential sexual violence. This study will be conducted by Jaquenette G. Lochrie, Doctoral Student at [redacted]. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Take part in one semi-structured interview focusing on your perception of how learned bystander skills can help identify prevalent barriers and motivators to college student bystander intervention if witnessing potential sexual violence.

Your interviews will be audio recorded using a Voice Memos iPhone application and stored in a secure Microsoft 365, OneDrive location that is password protected. You may review these audios and request that all or any portion of the recording be destroyed. Interviews will take place in person.

Participation in this study will involve up to 1 hour of your time, including 10 minutes to complete a questionnaire and the remaining time for the in-person interview. Time will allow for adjustments, if needed, and reflection.

No known risks are associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life. Federal regulations require that all subjects be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in the research. [redacted] cannot provide medical treatment or financial compensation for any physical injury resulting from participating in this research project. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to the principal investigator or the Human Subjects Review Board ([redacted]).

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the role skills learned during bystander intervention training and how they impact bystanders to intervene if witnessing potential sexual violence.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by keeping all audio recordings and transcribed files in a secure, password-protected Microsoft 365 OneDrive file. All transcribed files will use pseudonyms as participant descriptors, as names will be changed. Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report suspicion of harm to yourself, children, or others to the appropriate authorities.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, questionnaires, or surveys, you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer. Nonparticipation or

withdrawal will not affect your grades or academic standing or result in losing resources to which you are otherwise entitled.

If there is anything about this study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Jaquenette G. Lochrie at [redacted].edu, or Dr. Katherine Aquino, at [redacted]edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, [redacted], Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair, [redacted].edu, [redacted] or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, [redacted].edu, [redacted].

____ I allow the investigator to use my participation and recordings from our interview in her dissertation, presentations, or future publications.

____ I would prefer not to participate.

Agreement to Participate

_____	_____
Subject's Signature	Date
_____	_____
Researcher's Signature	Date

APPENDIX B IRB CERTIFICATION

fhi360
THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

FHI 360

certifies that

Jackie Lochrie

has completed the

RESEARCH ETHICS TRAINING CURRICULUM

February 7, 2020

APPENDIX C INTERVIEW PROTOCOL STUDENTS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study about perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in bystander intervention leadership training. Through interviews with current college students who participated in bystander intervention leadership training, the researcher seeks to understand the students' perception of the skills learned and what deters and motivates them to intervene as trained bystanders if they see potential sexual violence. Additionally, the researcher looks to see how students perceive their responsibility as bystanders if, in the presence of others observing the same behavior.

For this study, we define intervention as taking action by distracting, delegating, or directly confronting the parties when witnessing behavior that could lead to sexual violence. In this interview, I want to hear your perceptions of the skills learned through bystander intervention leadership training influencing your actions if witnessing a potential sexual assault and the influence of others seeing the same behavior.

Thank you for letting me interview you about your experiences.

1. Please start by telling me a little bit about yourself.
2. How has participating in the bystander intervention leadership training impacted your awareness and understanding of sexual violence on campus?
3. How has your perception of your role as a bystander changed since completing the training?
4. In what ways do you feel more equipped to intervene in situations of sexual violence after completing the training?
5. How have the skills learned in training affected your ability to recognize and respond to potentially dangerous situations?
6. Can you describe a specific situation where you used the skills you learned in training to intervene as a bystander in a potential sexual assault?
7. What aspects of the training did you find most helpful or impactful?
8. How do you plan to use the skills you learned in training if witnessing potential sexual violence?
9. What barriers may prevent bystanders from intervening if witnessing potential sexual violence, and how can they be addressed?

10. How do you think bystander intervention can be effectively promoted and encouraged on college campuses beyond the training program?
11. Would you like to add any final comments?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about bystander intervention with me. Your story will aid in helping me explore how the skills learned in training play a role in facilitating bystander intervention if witnessing potential sexual violence.

APPENDIX D FOCUS GROUPS PROTOCOL

STUDENT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study about perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in bystander intervention leadership training. Through focus groups with students, the researcher seeks to understand their perception of the skills learned and what deters and motivates students to intervene as trained bystanders if they witness potential sexual violence.

For this study, we define intervention as taking action by distracting, delegating, or directly confronting the parties when witnessing behavior that could lead to sexual violence. In this interview, I want to hear your perceptions of the skills students learn through bystander intervention leadership training influencing student actions if witnessing a potential sexual assault and the influence of others seeing the same behavior.

Thank you for participating in this focus group.

1. What common barriers prevent college students from intervening when they witness potential sexual assault?
2. What strategies could be effective in encouraging college students to take action and intervene when they witness potential sexual assault?
3. How do you think [redacted] University can better educate students on taking action in potential sexual assault situations?
4. What factors influence your decision to intervene in a potentially dangerous situation, such as a potential sexual assault?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about bystander intervention with me. Your story will aid in helping me explore how the skills learned in training play a role in facilitating bystander intervention if witnessing potential sexual violence.

APPENDIX E FOCUS GROUPS PROTOCOL

BYSTANDER TRAINING FACILITATORS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study about perceptions of intervening as a bystander if witnessing potential sexual violence after participating in bystander intervention leadership training. Through focus groups with bystander intervention training facilitators, the researcher seeks to understand their perception of the skills learned and what deters and motivates students to intervene as trained bystanders if they witness potential sexual violence. Additionally, the researcher looks to see how the training facilitators perceive students' responsibility as bystanders if observing the same behavior in the presence of others.

For this study, we define intervention as taking action by distracting, delegating, or directly confronting the parties when witnessing behavior that could lead to sexual violence. In this interview, I want to hear your perceptions of the skills students learn through bystander intervention leadership training influencing student actions if witnessing a potential sexual assault and the influence of others seeing the same behavior.

Thank you for participating in this focus group.

1. What specific skills or knowledge are most important for students to learn through bystander intervention training?
2. In what ways have you seen the bystander intervention training impact students' perceptions of their role in preventing sexual violence on campus?
3. How do you think the bystander intervention skills learned in training aid students in intervening as bystanders?
4. How do you ensure students learn and understand these skills in your training sessions?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about bystander intervention with me. Your story will aid in helping me explore how the skills learned in training play a role in facilitating bystander intervention if witnessing potential sexual violence.

APPENDIX F STUDENT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Student ([redacted])

My name is Jaquenette G. Lochrie, and I am an Advanced Standing Doctoral Student in the Instructional Leadership program in the School of Education at St. John's University. I am writing my dissertation on the barriers and motivators of intervening as a bystander after participating in bystander intervention leadership training if witnessing potential sexual violence.
I am reaching out today seeking participants for my research study.

As a recent participant in bystander intervention training, you meet the criteria I am seeking in my participants. Participation in this study will include one 30-minute interview and focus group, which will all take place in person. Should you choose to participate, consent forms will be signed in advance, indicating that your personal information will remain confidential and that basic demographic information will be collected.

I would greatly appreciate it if you were interested and willing to participate. Please feel free to respond to this email or call me at [redacted] should you have any questions.

Thank you,
Jaquenette G. Lochrie
Doctoral Candidate
St. John's University

APPENDIX G BYSTANDER INTERVENTION TRAINING FACILITATOR RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Title ([redacted])

My name is Jaquenette G. Lochrie, and I am an Advanced Standing Doctoral Student in the Instructional Leadership program in the School of Education at St. John's University. I am writing my dissertation on the barriers and motivators of intervening as a bystander after participating in bystander intervention leadership training if witnessing potential sexual violence.
I am reaching out today seeking participants for my research study.

Because you are a bystander intervention training facilitator at the university, you meet the criteria I seek in my participants. Participation in this study will include one 60-minute focus group interview, which will all take place in person. Should you choose to participate, consent forms will be signed in advance, indicating that your personal information will remain confidential and that basic demographic information will be collected.

I would greatly appreciate it if you were interested and willing to participate. Please feel free to respond to this email or call me at [redacted] should you have any questions.

Thank you,
Jaquenette G. Lochrie
Doctoral Candidate
St. John's University

APPENDIX H DOCUMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

1. Develop a coding scheme: Develop a coding scheme that will allow the categorized and analyzed content of the documents.
2. Read the documents: Read the documents carefully, paying attention to the content relevant to the research questions. Take notes to help remember important points and begin categorizing the content.
3. Code the data: Use the coding scheme to categorize the content of the documents. It is essential to be consistent in coding so that there is an opportunity to compare and analyze the data going on.
4. Analyze the data: Data analysis can begin once the documents are coded. This may involve identifying patterns or themes in the content or comparing and contrasting the perspectives of different authors or sources.
5. Interpret the findings: Interpret the findings of the analysis in relation to the research question.

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