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University of HUDDERSFIELD

Creating an Information-Sharing Programme to Improve Societal Attitudes Towards Victims of Sexual Violence.

By:

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Sexual assault and rape are prevalent worldwide. Within the UK alone, it is estimated that 2.9% (618,000) women and 0.7% (177,000) men were sexually assaulted between April 2019 and March 2020 (ONS, 2020). Many people who experience sexual violence are not only harmed by the assault but are also subjected to secondary victimisation by the people to whom they turn for help. That is, survivors' disclosures of sexual victimisation are often met with a myriad of unhelpful negative responses that can compound their recovery in the aftermath of sexual victimisation. While educational programmes have been developed to help prevent sexual violence and to challenge such negative bias against survivors of sexual violence, much of this has focused on the American college context. Consequently, there is little empirical evidence to inform the development of interventions suited to the UK context. Additionally, the development of very few of the existing programmes have been informed by survivors' input which is essential given that they are the primary intended beneficiaries and those most likely to be harmed by ill-conceived interventions. To bridge this gap this study was undertaken to develop a new information-sharing programme to raise public awareness about sexual victimisation with the aim of enhancing attitudes towards survivors and hence improving responses to their disclosures. The study involved four phases in the production of the programme; identification of the potential content and format was informed through a review of the literature and focus group discussions with twenty-nine UK university students. In response to one of the key findings from the focus groups, interviews were conducted with survivors about their experiences of disclosing which both aided the refinement of the programme content, ensured that the intended programme was appropriate and provided narratives of lived experiences of secondary victimisation. Finally, the refined programme was subjected to a preliminary outcome evaluation utilising an experimental study employing mixed methods of data collection. Thematic analysis and content analysis were employed to analyse and code the qualitative data, and an ANCOVA was used to analyse the quantitative data. The hypothesis being that participants who were exposed to the educational programme would demonstrate a reduction in rape myth acceptance in comparison to the non-exposed control group. Overall, no significant effects were evident from the quantitative analysis, however, thematic analysis of the qualitative feedback suggests that programme exposure led to increased understanding about the different contexts and potential victims of sexual assault, about the scale of the problem and increased victim-empathy.

Table of abbreviations:

CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
ONS	Office of National Statistics
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales
TCSEW	Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
SDS	Standard Determinate Sentence
NCRS	National Recording Standards
NCA	National Crime Agency
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, plus
CDC	Centre for Disease Control National Centre of Injury and Prevention
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
SARCs	Sexual Assault Referral Centres
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMCPSI	Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
IRMAS	Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale
CARE	Campus Acquaintance Rape Education Programme
AMMSA	Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression Scale
ANCOVA	Analysis of Covariance
RSE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education
RMA	Rape Myth Acceptance
CFIR	The Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research
SSS	Supporting Survivors and Self Programme

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What is Sexual Violence?

The definition of 'sexual' as seen within the Sexual Offences Act 2003, denotes that "penetration, touching or any other activity is sexual if a reasonable person would consider that: a) whatever its circumstances or any person's purpose concerning it, it is because of its nature sexual, or b) because of its nature it may be sexual and because of its circumstances or the purpose of any person in relation to it (or both) it is sexual" (Crown Prosecution Service [CPS], 2020). However, under the legislation there are varying offences an individual could be charged with; most seen within the courts in England and Wales are 'rape', 'assault by penetration', and 'sexual assault'. The terms used to define these offences have evolved to replace non-specific terminology and to include new offences in the legislation. 'Rape' in the UK was re-defined in 2003, under the Sexual Offences Act, 2003 which came into force in March 2004, to state that it involves penetration of the vagina, anus, or mouth by a penis, therefore, rape cannot legally be committed by a woman (Lowe & Rogers, 2017). The ambiguous concept of 'indecent assault' was reframed in the UK into two less indistinct acts; 'assault by penetration', which incorporates all penetration by any object and can be committed by either gender. This offence carries the same maximum imprisonment penalty as rape – life (CPS, 2021a). Although rape still cannot legally be committed by a female, by introducing the act of assault by penetration, a female who commits a penetrative offence, can receive a comparable sentence to that of a male sexual offender (Lowe & Rogers, 2017). 'Sexual assault' was integrated into the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and is defined as any unwanted touching by another person (CPS, 2021a). The 2003 Act also saw forced, non-penetrative sexual acts added to the legal definition of sexual assault – this was accompanied by a maximum prison term of 10 years (Sentencing Council UK, 2014). The most recent change that has been seen within English and Welsh law occurred in 2020; this saw the introduction of those being convicted of serious sexual offences, including rape, being sentenced to a standard determinate sentence (SDS) of more than seven years. Additionally, persons convicted of sexual offences must now serve at least two-thirds of their sentence within custody, which represents an increase from the

previous minimum term in custody from the midway point of the sentence (Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021). The rationale for this change in legislation was to increase the publics' faith in the justice system and in response to the proportion of victims who have reported feeling let down by a system that allowed sex offenders to be back within society after just serving half of the allotted sentence (GOV.UK, 2021).

Although legislation in England and Wales has changed and adapted over recent years, it does still appear to fall behind that of its international counterparts who similarly adopt the adversarial justice system. Canadian, Australian and US laws on sexual violence do not discriminate on the basis of gender. Their legislations, albeit different, do not necessitate penetration by a penis for an assault to be classified as rape. Thus, regardless of an offender's gender, they can be charged with rape or the countries equivalent (Lowe & Rogers, 2017). Nevertheless, the changes that have occurred over the last 30 years in English and Welsh legislation have endeavoured to empower victims of sexual violence by allowing a legal reinforcement to the allegations of non-consensual sexual acts, which have been widely appreciated. For example, in 1992 sexual violence within marriage became illegal, which allowed individuals the legal right to prosecute their offending spouses. It did, however, take another two years for male rape to become illegal and for removal of the offence of 'non-consensual buggery' from the statute (Fisher and Pina, 2013), and indicated that male rape was given equal status to that of female rape for the first time; albeit categorised under different terminology. Additionally, it was not until 2003, when the Sexual Offences Act was amended that the law was extended to include oral and anal rape (CPS, 2021a). Changes in law and legislation have also been evident in the US legal system (O'Donohue & Schewe, 2019). For instance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's legal definition of rape had been unchanged since 1927, however, in 2012 it was amended to "the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim (United States Department of Justice, 2012). Despite

the changes to English and Welsh legislation surrounding sexual offences, the notion of rape as a gendered crime persists.

Historically, sexual violence was only seen as a crime because it damaged a man's property, that man being the head of the household – father, husband (O'Donohue & Schewe, 2019). Women who were assaulted and/or raped were viewed as responsible for the offence which led to the prevalence of victim-blaming (Bernat, 2002). Women were also viewed as unreliable and thus allegations they made of rape were treated with suspicion (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; McMillan, 2018; Roos & Jones, 2020). It was in the late nineteenth century when sexual assault was raised publicly as a social problem in the US, by Ida B. Wells. As an investigative journalist, Wells focused her career mostly on anti-lynching campaigns, however, recognised and voiced the connection between lynching and sexual violence (Wells-Barnett, 1995; Bevacqua, 2000). She openly discussed the stereotypical image that was portrayed – a black man as a rapist, a black female as sexually promiscuous. The consequences of such stereotypes were pointed out; black women being raped and sexually assaulted by white men was most often overlooked, and black men were more often charged with rape compared to white suspects, even if the allegations were false. Unfortunately, due to the times and the nature of the debate Wells' concerns were disregarded (Bevacqua, 2000; Brownmiller, 1975; hooks, 2014). It would not be until the 1940's that one courageous African American woman gathered her community and spoke to the press in response to sexual violence against Black women, perpetrated by White men (McGuire, 2010). However, the increased media attention that followed led to intensified death threats and attacks on African Americans and therefore resulted in increased silence about racially motivated crimes of sexual violence at the time (McGuire, 2010).

Decades would follow and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, the women's libera-tion movement, and Feminism for there to be public recognition of sexual violence (Bevacqua,

2000). Activists sought to transform societal attitudes on sexual violence, its victims[1], and its perpetrators. They challenged preconceived ideas and brought the topic to a variety of public domains – they gave rise to the anti-rape movements (Bevacqua, 2000). As the years have progressed society has seen a gradual shift in the legal system judicial response to sexual violence; however, this has not always translated into reality. Although clear legislation now exists, offering a somewhat unpolarised stance on what constitutes sexual violence, societal expectations and assumptions have not always followed. As will be discussed in Chapter 2 rape myth acceptance, belief in widespread false allegations and victim-blaming are still very prevalent and are the foremost contributors to the limited number of sexual assaults reported to the police and prosecutions (Lisak et al.,2010; Persson et al., 2018).

The extent of sexual victimisation

An accurate numerical representation of the levels of sexually violent offences is difficult to ascertain due to the lack of reporting of offences to authorities and the common practice of victims not disclosing allegations (Hohl & Stanko, 2015). Nonetheless, statistical information is available to indicate the incidence of sexual assault and rape offences. The common method for obtaining data on sexual offences is considered by detailing the number of reported offences to the authorities; this does have its disadvantages due to limited reporting rates of this offence category (Sleath & Bull, 2017). Additionally, self-report data, which assess annual, or lifetime prevalence of sexual victimisation are used to supplement this due to low reporting rates. However, this also has its difficulties, individuals may categorise their assaults as sexual offences, which would have otherwise been seen as a different crime by authorities. Regardless, it does allow for a personal viewpoint and enables individuals that may not have felt able to report/disclose, to share some details of their experiences (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007).

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[1] The terms victim and survivor will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis. Both terms are used throughout current and past literature and therefore, will be here to ensure consistency.

There are limited platforms that bring together Worldwide statistics, and which offer a view on the current status of sexual violence across the global population. However, in 2021 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published a report based on an analysis of obtainable prevalence data between 2000 and 2018 (WHO, 2021). Research bodies tend to focus on particular areas, which do offer merit in their own right (for example violence against women and violence against children), however, there is a failure to address the other half of the population – males, as well those who conform to a non-binary gender-identities. Nonetheless, it is estimated that approximately 35% of women worldwide have experienced some form of sexual abuse in their lifetime. Less than 40% of women who experience sexual violence seek help, and less than 10% seek assistance from authorities (World Population Review, 2021). Unfortunately, there are limitations of not only international reporting statistics but the exclusion of victims of sexual violence who are not female; this can be seen when assessing the Global figures. A vast majority of the research within the field is conducted within the US, which is unsurprising given the increasing numbers of rapes and sexual assaults. RAINN (2021) notes that although the frequency of assaults varies from state to state, it is averaged that every 68 seconds an American is sexually assaulted. Additionally, women aged 16-19 are four times more likely to be assaulted than other populations, as are transgender people and those with disabilities, who are twice as likely to be victims. In 2019, over 652,679 American women were victims of rape; an annual increase of 2.9% has been seen within this area for the last decade. It was also suggested that only an estimated 19% of rapes completed or attempted are reported to the authorities (RAINN, 2021).

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) is the leading force in crime analysis in the UK. The ONS' main responsibilities are collecting, analysing, and disseminating statistics about the UK's economy, society, and population. To explore crimes committed within England and Wales, ONS utilises the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW); this covers populations living in households and offers a self-completion method to the data collection. Respondents eligible for the self-completion module are now aged between 16 to 74; the upper age range

was increased in 2017 from 59 years of age. The CSEW aims to supplement the levels of recorded crime by the police to provide a more accurate picture of crime in society. Although offering a supplementary nature to the reported crime figures, the sampling method of the CSEW does exclude large populations that are known to experience disproportionate levels of sexual violence, for example, those living within institutions (prisons, care settings, psychiatric in-patients), and those who are homeless. Therefore, the CSEW under-estimates the true extent of sexual victimisation within society. Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to meet with respondents in person was suspended in March 2020 and a Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) was introduced. Unfortunately, those methods of data collection were not directly comparable due to the differing ways in which participating members of the public were interviewed and afforded the opportunity to answer questions. Also, in relation to the data on sexual offences; concerns arose around confidentiality and the restrictions in safeguarding abilities for the respondent. Therefore, limits in the types of questions asked in the TCSEW were employed. As a result, the ONS were unable to provide TCSEW estimates on sexual offences for the year ending June 2021. Therefore, figures from the previous face-to-face self-report household survey data set year ending March 2020, (CSEW, 2020; ONS, 2021) were utilised when relevant. Nevertheless, police recording statistics were gathered for the year ending June 2021 and have explored the impact of the pandemic on sexually violent offences.

Figures confirm the pervasive problem that continues to exist surrounding sexual assault and rape in England and Wales, with rape convictions falling to a reported all-time low in 2020 for England and Wales, with only 2.6% of cases reported to police ending in conviction (Topping & Barr, 2020). ONS (2021) highlights 164,763 sexual offences were recorded by police in the year ending June 2021. Of those, 61,158 were rapes; this was a 10% increase compared to the previous year. Interestingly, the year prior had seen a reduction in reported rapes and sexual assaults. March 2020 to March 2021 saw a 10% overall reduction in reported sexual assaults, and a 6% reduction in reported rapes. These reductions in figures could be a

product of COVID-19 restrictions that had been implemented during the initial part of the recording timeframe and contributed to a substantial reduction in recorded sexual offences. During the lockdown period from April to June 2020, there was an overall 24% decrease in sexual offences when compared with April to June 2019 (ONS, 2020). It is noteworthy, however, that before the outbreak of COVID-19, recorded figures of sexual assaults were continuing to rise. In support of this, it was highlighted that when lockdown restrictions were eased from July to September 2020, the number of sexual offences returned to similar levels to those that were recorded in the same period in 2019.

The ONS reported that between April 2016 and March 2017, there were a total of 121,187 sexual offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. This figure was an increase of 14% compared to the previous year (ONS, 2017) and was the highest increase recorded at that time since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) in April 2002 (ONS, 2017). Although the numbers do and did continue to increase, the majority of those recorded came from individuals disclosing historic incidents of sexual abuse. The rise of historic cases being reported to authorities has seen an increase since the implementation of police investigations such as Operation Yewtree, 2012 (Metropolitan Police, 2011) and Operation Stovewood, 2014 (National Crime Agency, 2020). These police investigations were launched with the sole purpose of tackling childhood sexual exploitation and abuse. Importantly, these operations were victim-focused and the publicity surrounding them encouraged more victims of childhood sexual abuse, both historic and recent, to report to the authorities.

However, research indicates that the police recorded figures do not reflect the true extent of sexual assaults and rapes in England and Wales; with the CSEW, 2020 suggesting that fewer than 16% of women who stated they had experienced assault by rape or penetration since the age of 16, reported their assault to the authorities. Of those who disclosed to someone other than the authorities, 40% noted embarrassment as a rationale for their non-disclosure, 38% did not think the police could help, and 34% believed the process would be

humiliating (CSEW, 2020). Of those who reported to the police, the reasons given for doing so were primarily to prevent it from happening to others (47%), believing it was the correct thing to do (44%), and wanting punishment for the perpetrator (43%). Additionally, it was noted from the year ending March 2020 report (CSEW, 2020) that older victims appeared to report their experiences to police more frequently than younger victims: just 10% of 16–19-year-olds reported to the authorities compared with 27% 35-44-year-olds. Although the CSEW does hold a breadth of data regarding sexual offences, it does not include the comparable information surrounding data on males that chose to not disclose. However, this can be found in the work of Pino and Meier (1999), although dated and reflecting the views of American males, does offer an estimation suggestive of even lower rates of males reporting to the authorities with only 4% of those who indicated surviving sexual violence disclosing to authorities (Pino & Meier, 1999). In the UK, it is estimated that only 15% of reported sexual offences involve male victims (Home Office, 2013).

Overall, only 17% of victims of sexual offences or rape stated they reported to the police in the year ending March 2017 (ONS, 2017). Reasons for the reticence against reporting to the authorities include the fear of not being believed, feeling ashamed (Wood & Stichman, 2018), the fear of the stigmatised (Bachman, 1998), and being blamed (Egan & Wilson, 2012).

The internalisation of these negative notions of victims is one of the factors associated with the attrition of sexual violence cases as they progress through the legal system. Attrition refers to the phenomenon whereby cases fall out of the legal system at a number of key decision points in the system. Such areas of exit could be situated within the police service, Crown Prosecution Service, or in the court process. While all offences have some attrition due to several factors (such as victims not wishing to press charges, the desire not to continue with the criminal process, or the lack of evidence), the rate of attrition for cases of sexual violence is above that of other crimes (Lea et al., 2003; Roberts, 1996). With regards to the outcomes of police-recorded sexual offences, only 3.3% of the case were charged/summonsed of which 1.4% were rape cases in the year ending March 2021 figures;

this was a reduction when compared to the year ending March 2018 figures, when 2.9% of rape case were charged/summonsed. Additionally, 14.6% (34,526) of sexual assault cases were not continued with due to 'evidential difficulties' although the suspect was identified, and the victim supported all action. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) offers information of the number of prosecuted cases, for the year ending March 2021, 1,557 cases had been prosecuted this was down on the previous year by 30%; however, challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic were suggested for some of the discrepancy (CPS, 2021c).

The low rate of reporting indicates that the police figures, whilst inflated by the inclusion of historic offences, are still an underestimation of the true extent of sexual victimisation in England and Wales. This is further evidenced by the ONS (2020) figures produced through the CSEW, that estimated 2.9% (618,000) women and 0.7% (155,000) men experienced sexual assault between April 2019 to March 2020. This was characterised as being of no significant change to previous years, and when the self-reported data is explored at the side of the levels of police recorded figures for sexual assault the levels are astoundingly incomparable (773,000 and 164,763 respectively). Additionally, it was reported that at the year ending March 2020 an estimated 5.9 million adults had experienced some form of sexual assault since the age of 16, and 3.3 million adults had experienced rape (CSEW, 2020).

Although the CSEW/ONS is widely regarded to produce statistics, they do not collect data every year. Therefore, the figures provided are from the latest self-reported survey in the year ending March 2020; therefore, limitations in the comparability with police recorded figures can be sought as they were recorded for the year ending June 2021.

Societal attitudes and biases towards rape victims, and indeed the perceptions of the victim themselves are contributory factors for many individuals deciding not to report their assaults (Egan & Wilson, 2012) to authorities or indeed disclose to anyone. Many victims decide not to disclose sexual violence due to the fear of the stigmatisation that is so often associated with rape and sexual assault victims (Bachman, 1998; Brownmiller, 1975). There is the additional anxiety that victim-blaming schemas will be held, rape myth acceptance will

be adhered to, and many will be held accountable for their assault (Egan & Wilson, 2012; Hohl & Stanko, 2015). Although research continues to explore the negative impact of rape myth acceptance and the consequences these can hold, society perseveres in exhibiting negative and pervasive views that discourage the reporting of sexual offences.

In a bid to respond to the negative connotations surrounding the topic of sexual violence and in the hope of reducing the prevalence of offences, several prevention programmes have been developed, some of these include The Men's Programme, RealConsent, Haven, CARE and many more. Most scholars have focused the attention of this work on US college campuses and police officer training (Darwinkel et al., 2013; Garrity, 2011; Hamilton & Yee, 1990; Heppner et al., 1995; Jordan, 2008; Lonsway et al., 2001). Scholars have not established how these US college programmes translate to a UK population and if, indeed, they can. The higher education culture and ethos between the UK and US are greatly different in terms of the structure that is set out for students. Colleges in the US adhere to a structure of fraternities and sororities, and all have their own sets of values and beliefs that are not mirrored in the UK University system. It could, therefore, be inferred that the individuals who are targeted by the interventions in the US, would hold beliefs surrounding the topic of sexual violence would be influenced by traditions and values of the sector they belong to. It is also important to note that some form of sexual violence intervention is mandatory within the US college system. Students must undertake education on the prevention of sexual assault and rape when they enter college. This, however, has not been converted to UK Universities with only a small number of universities making this compulsory (Gender & Policy Insights, 2018). It is also noteworthy, that although many areas within the interventions do translate, for example, notions around rape myths; the legal systems in the US and the UK define sexual violence differently, and there is a vast disparity in the post-conviction sentencing of perpetrators (MOJ, 2021; RAINN, 2021). US laws also differ depending on the state in which the crime was committed (Criminal Defense Lawyer, 2020; Crown Prosecution Service, 2017). Therefore, when looking to educate people around the legal issues of sexual violence;

interventions that have been constructed for a US population would not transfer to the UK population without revisions.

Previous research has highlighted contentious views on the effectiveness of rape prevention interventions (Darwinkel et al., 2013; Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Foubert et al., 2010a; Lonsway et al., 2001; Sleath & Bull, 2012; Tharp et al., 2011); with some debating the effectiveness of prevention programmes on improving victim empathy (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Kettrey et al., 2019; Klaw et al., 2005). However, most past authors have chosen to utilise target populations as research subjects instead of collaborators in the development of their interventions; therefore, eliminating the prospect of gaining knowledge from those most likely to benefit from an intervention. The current project not only utilised this benefit, but also the views and opinions of survivors themselves. This formative research and co-production approach has not been seen by any other sexual violence intervention developed. Furthermore, the main focus of previous interventions has been on the prevention of sexual assault and/or rape; paying little attention to the detrimental consequences that negative assumptions and attitudes can have on those who become victims of sexual violence. The current work looked to develop an intervention whose primary focus is not on prevention, but on helping increase appropriate schemas towards sexual violence and dispelling adherence to damaging rape myths. By utilising Consolidated Framework Implementation Research (CFIR) as the conceptual framework for which the thesis will draw from (Damschroder et al., 2009); the intervention developed could be evaluated not only at the end point, but also at multiple stages throughout the process of its development (Nilsen, 2020). CFIR will also allow for influencing factors to not only be concentrated at an individual level, but to explore these at organisational or boarder societal levels (Birken et al., 2017). The potential findings drawn from the current work will highlight the importance of awareness and education around rape myth acceptance and the consequences of holding negative attitudes not only on victims of sexual violence but also on the disclosure and reporting of the offences.

Aims of Research

With the continuous rise of sexual assault and rapes being seen amongst UK society (CSEW, 2020; ONS, 2020) the current research aimed to develop and explore the effects of an online information-sharing programme to increase appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards survivors of sexual violence. This aim was achieved through the following objectives:

a. To review the literature to explore the disclosure experiences of survivors of sexual violence.

b. To explore community members' perspectives on what information and format they think would be beneficial in an information-sharing programme that aims to improve attitudes and behaviours towards survivors of sexual violence.

c. To co-produce, with survivors of sexual violence a new online resource to help people develop a more empathic awareness of sexual victimisation.

d. To assess the perceived efficacy and acceptability of the new intervention.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Rape Myths

Rape myths have been commonly endorsed within society for decades; these misconceptions are most frequently known for victim-blaming and shaming. However, they do differ depending on victim characteristics as there are different myths depending upon race (Curry, 2019), gender (Chapleau et al., 2008; Lowe & Rogers, 2017), and sexuality (Coulter et al., 2017; Mortimer er la., 2019). Although most of the literature focuses on heteronormative assaults by a male assailant against a female victim.

The concept of rape being a myth was first posited in 1948 by Ruth Herschberger, a feminist writer and poet, who proposed the question, *'is rape a myth?'* (Herschberger, 1948). The foundation for the feminist conceptualisation of rape was borne from the work of Herschberger. Her philosophy of sexual assault ascribed diametrically opposing views, to societal interpretations of male sexuality as being aggressive, and female sexuality as being

submissive (Herschberger, 1948). What is also astonishing and forward-thinking for the time, Herschberger claimed "rape is a form of violence involving the personal humiliation of the victim" (Herschberger, 1948, p.19). The association of rape with violence and not being in response to sexual urges, is commonly accredited to the work of Brownmiller in 1975, however, can be seen was first referenced as early as 1948 (Bevacqua, 2000). Nonetheless, the concept of rape myths was first introduced in the 1970's with the works of Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1974) and Brownmiller (1975), proving pivotal. These authors highlighted victim-blaming attitudes, perpetrator empathy and led to the development of the 'real rape' stereotype. There are widespread misconceptions about what a 'real rape' victim (Estrich, 1987) should act like, and what events should occur during a 'real rape' situation (Chapleau & Oswald, 2010; Estrich, 1987; Hazelwood & Burgess, 1995). It was proposed that misconceptions of the 'real rape' included that all rapes involve females attacked by a male stranger with a weapon, in an outdoor location, where the victim fights back and sustains defensive injuries, and reports the crime immediately. These notions are improbable and do not concur with either research findings or statistics of sexual offences (Parratt & Pina, 2017; Sleath & Bull, 2012). These misperceptions appear to be informed by several prevalent myths about rape. Attitudes towards rape victims and the notion of rape myth acceptance has been a highly researched topic within academia; with researchers attempting to identify the underlying assumptions made by individuals when passing judgements upon rape victims. Rape myths were defined by Burt (1980) as 'prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists' (Burt, 1980, p. 217). The notions inherent to rapes stem from a disbelief in the allegation, diminishing the seriousness of sexual violence, a need to exonerate the perpetrator, a tendency towards holding the victim responsible for the crimes against them and a disregard for the severity of the emotional impact of such a crime. Over the years many scholars have offered their own variation to the definition of rape myths (Burt, 1980; Brownmiller, 1975; Estrich, 1987; Horvath & Brown, 2013; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Spohn & Tellis, 2014), however, each agree on the fundamental points that fallacies are prominent within the topic of sexual violence. Those misconceptions have long-lasting

implications, not only for victims but also for the wider social constructs around offending (Bohner et al., 2009; Hine & Murphy, 2019; Merken & James, 2020; Walfield, 2021).

Nevertheless, some scholars argue that the literature surrounding rape myths is hegemonic and essential reduces it to a single notion (Reece, 2013; Gurnham, 2016). Reece (2013) contends that rape myths are an amalgamation of opinions and facts developed from negative interpretations of ambiguous and multifaceted accounts. She claims that the theory of rape myths is over-stated and may be challenged on several grounds, including the impression that they are not widespread, they are not always about rape itself, and finally, some attitudes are not actually myths (Reece, 2013). Reece argued that the disturbing feature was that "we are in the process of creating myths about myths" (Reece, 2013, p.446). In agreement with this was Gurnham (2016), who suggested that studies exploring rape myth acceptance did nothing but frame apparent mutual and familiar attitudes and sexual relations in terms of rape myths. Recent work has also shown a skew in data towards rejecting the stereotypical rape myths (Beshers & DiVita, 2019). Although, this shift has not been explored unequivocally; one study observed a significant decrease in rape myth acceptance over seven years. This was particularly salient in the areas of false allegations and victim appearance (Beshers & DiVita, 2019). There is, however, some questions as to the veracity of the shift, and whether this is a true sense of a decline in attitudes or whether individuals are becoming aware that the expression of such perceptions is taboo and therefore, less willing to endorse and offer ownership of such beliefs (Thelan & Meadows, 2021).

Female Rape Myths

As noted, many scholars focus work on rape myth acceptance around male-on-female offences. The notions derived can be catalogued into four categories disbelief in the allegations of rape, blameworthy victims, exonerating the perpetrator, and rape is not that bad.

Disbelief in allegations of rape

Sexual violence rarely occurs the way in which people expect it (Bongirono et al., 2016). Individuals are under the impression that rapes are perpetrated by strangers, people unknown

to the victims (Grubb & Harrower, 2009); however, statistics discredit this notion, showing an estimated 85% of all sexual offences are committed by an acquaintance or someone known, in some way, to the victim (ONS, 2020). There is also the presumption that a victim should behave in a specific way and exhibit certain behavioural characteristics after an assault. For example, they should present as traumatised and report to the police straight away (Davis & Rogers, 2006). It is suggested that appearing in this way, would enhance the veracity of an allegation. However, studies have highlighted that victims of sexual offences do not always exhibit the characteristics that are typically associated with trauma (Davis & Rogers, 2006; Grubb & Harrower, 2009). Divergent victim presentation against these preconceived ideas about sexual violence, can and does, inherently place doubt on the allegations made.

Not only are rape myths an important aspect of whether a third party will accept and validate an alleged sexual assault and/or rape. They are the undercurrent of rapists' belief systems (Ryan, 2004); suggesting that rape myths help 'men' rationalise and justify sexual aggression and increase rape proclivity (Bohner et al., 2006; Ryan, 2004). Schewe et al. (2009) explored the relationship between rape myth acceptance and sexual aggression within college males. Although, they noted that rape myth acceptance was not correlated to a temptation to use force; they did conclude that men who were sexually coercive or aggressive demonstrated a greater belief in the manipulation of women (Schewe et al., 2009). Furthermore, male college students who accepted rape myths demonstrated reduced consent seeking intentions (Schewe et al., 2009), and reported an increased likelihood of engaging in sexually coercive behaviours (Young et al., 2017).

Rape myths are not only endorsed by others but are also internalised by the victim of the offence themselves. The impact of such internalisation prevents them from acknowledging that a sexual assault or rape has been committed against them (Koss, 1989; Weis & Borges, 1973; Wilson & Miller, 2016). In 1973, it was argued that rape was the perfect crime to commit and not be arrested for, due to cultural norms and beliefs that delegitimised the victims (Weis & Borges, 1973). Although a very under-researched area, rape acknowledgement can be seen to be extremely important – with approximately 60% of women who experience sexual

violence that meets the legal definition of sexual assault, not labelling it as such (Byrne et al., 2021; Wilson & Miller, 2016). Often, individuals use labels that refer to themselves in a non-victimised manner and report that the incident arose due to 'miscommunication' (Khan et al., 1994; Littleton, et al., 2006, 2007) and place blame upon themselves. Such self-labelling can have harmful repercussions for victims of sexual violence (Kline et al., 2018; Peter-Hagene & Ullman, 2018). Cognitive behavioural theories of trauma recovery (Lewis et al., 2020; Resick et al., 2014) propose numerous latent rationalisations for the links between self-blame and negative psychological outcomes. Resick et al. (2014) suggested that post-traumatic stress symptoms were more prevalent when victims struggled to merge the incident with their existing schemas. Therefore, they assimilate their thinking to adhere to cognitive distortions about themselves and the world (e.g., something bad happened to me, therefore I must have caused it) (Resick et al., 2014).

Further work in the field has also concluded that college women who strongly endorsed rape myths are less likely to disclose or report an assault or rape (Lemaire et al., 2016; Peterson & Muelanhard, 2004). Rather, they would endorse myths and either not conceptualise the event as an act of sexual violence or would feel responsible for the incident and fear they would be attributed blame (Lemaire et al., 2016; Peterson & Muelanhard, 2004).

Rape acknowledgement should be a high priority, as it is found that survivors of unacknowledged rape are less likely to report the offence or seek support for the impacts of the assault on their well-being (e.g., mental health, medical, emotional) (LeMaire et al., 2016; Walsh et al., 2016; Wilson & Miller, 2016; Wilson et al., 2017). As stated, rape myth acceptance is an influencing characteristic to the acknowledgement of sexual violence, and therefore the ultimate levels of disclosed sexual victimisation (Holland, 2020). Furthermore, the decision of whether to report/disclose is commonly influenced by the anticipation of others' reactions to the disclosure, particularly the fear of being blamed (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011; Spencer et al., 2017). Rape myth acceptance can interfere with an individual's ability to label

an event as a sexual assault and/or rape and for their help-seeking behaviour. Rape myth acceptance, therefore, can have detrimental implications for the physical and psychological health of a victimised individual (Byrne et al, 2021; Ulman, 2010, Wilson & Miller, 2016). Where a victim blames themselves for their experience, it can delay their acknowledgement, and disclosure of the assault and thus impede their healing process (Ullman, 2010).

'Blameworthy' victims

Contributing factors that are known to influence the negative connotations surrounding sexual violence involve individuals concluding that the victim provoked the attack, or that they should accept some level of responsibility for the assault (Demming et al., 2013; King and Roberts, 2011; Szymanski et al., 2021). There are several themes within rape myths that include an array of assumptions such as judging the victim's appearance, clothing, attitude, personality, and past sexual history (Demming et al, 2013).

Statistics have shown that most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victims. Furthermore, research completed within the field has continued to support the notion that where the perpetrator is known to the victim, a disproportionally large attribution of blame is placed upon the victim (Gravelin et al., 2018; Hockett et al., 2016; Persson et al., 2018). This was demonstrated in an experimental study conducted by Frese et al., (2004). Their study in which the participants were presented rape vignettes in which the relationship between the victim and perpetrator were manipulated found that when the perpetrator was known the highest indicators of victim-blame were found. The authors, however, did not observe gender differences in victim-blaming attributions. Indeed, Persson and Dhingra's (2020) meta-analysis of 47 individual studies confirmed higher levels of victim blame in acquaintance rape, compared to stranger rape. These findings concur with the findings of Viki et al., (2004) who investigated assigned responsibility, by asking participants to recommend prison sentence length to the culpable party. Conclusions suggested that less blame and shorter prison sentences were assigned to offenders of acquaintance rape, than those of perpetrator stranger rape (Viki et al., 2004). It has been suggested that the inferences for the discrepancy in blame dependent on the relationship to the perpetrator, could be a result of

traditional sexist beliefs. For example, women who are willing to be alone with men should expect some form of sexual attention (Persson & Dhingra, 2020).

It is evident that explicit bias and negative assumptions have been drawn upon to place greater blame upon victims of acquaintance rape (Gravelin et al., 2018; Hockett et al., 2016; Persson et al, 2018; Persson & Dhingra, 2020). Unconscious bias and implicit victim-blaming negatively impact attributions made towards victims of sexual violence, regardless of their relationship to the offender. Unconscious bias is a human condition, that unfortunately is a part of human nature (Emberton, 2021); whilst not attempting to overtly assign blame to victims, many do so with the language and terminology they use (Boyd, 2015; Tosh & Phillips, 2009). Many individuals, including media outlets, conceptualise victims in a negative light – choosing to use language that assumes blame. Most recently this has been witnessed in the media coverage of the death of Sarah Everad. On 03 March 2021, serving police officer Wayne Couzens, kidnapped Ms Everad and subjected her to a brutal rape before killing her (CPS, 2021b). Although the case saw an outcry for reform against violence against women, the initial media response was to express victim-blaming attitudes, "… walking alone…", "… breaking COVID rules…" (Sky News, 2021).

A concept borne out of the idea of rape myth acceptance is that of contributory negligence. Contributory negligence pertains to rape and sexual assault cases all over the world (Adler, 1987). Factors associated with perceptions of contributory negligence include whether the victim had consumed alcohol prior to their assault or factors related to their overall character. Prior research has suggested that approximately half of all sexual assaults involve alcohol consumption whether it is by the perpetrator, the victim or both parties (Abbey et al.,2002). Scott-Ham and Burton (2005) examined 1,014 cases of suspected drug-assisted rape in the UK and concluded that alcohol was the most prevalent substance used, with it being found in 46% of the cases analysed. However, it is then remarkable, that higher levels of victim-blaming are attributed when alcohol has been consumed before an assault, which is what Girard and Senn (2008) summarised. This was further analysed within the work of Grubb and Turner in 2012. Their exploration of assigned blame within rape cases depending upon

whether the victim and/or perpetrator was intoxicated, suggested that higher levels of offender empathy were sought when the victim had consumed alcohol, and more lenient appraisals were given in those cases (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Victim intoxication is an area frequently used to justify blameworthy views (Davis et al., 2004; Girard and Senn, 2008; Gunby et al., 2013; Scronce & Corcoran, 1991). Grubb and Turner's (2012) work supported this assumption by concluding that the attribution of responsibility for an assault was placed more on the victim after alcohol had been consumed, and more lenient evaluations of the offender were given (Grubb & Turner, 2012). This is consistent with the findings from Sims et al. (2007), who reported that when a female victim had consumed alcohol, she was regarded more responsible for the attack than if she had not. The significance of these findings is troubling since half of all sexual assaults are reported to involve the consumption of alcohol in some form (Abbey et al., 2002; Scott-Ham & Burton, 2005). Scronce and Corcoran (1991), whose work investigated alcohol consumption and date-rape victims ascertained that participants were more likely to blame a victim for the attack if they had consumed alcohol prior to the assault. Additionally, the participants perceived intoxicated victims as being more promiscuous and sexually provoking than victims who had not consumed alcohol prior to an assault. It is surmised that when alcohol consumption has been reported by either victim or perpetrator; individuals attribute more blame and demonstrate substantially greater negative views towards the victims of sexual violence. Although dated, this work is still highly applicable and translates to society today, with some nuances.

Recent findings have explored other contextual cues, such as an alleged victim accepting a drink from a perpetrator, as being an influencing factor to their interpretations of responsibility (Lynch et al., 2013; Romero-Sanchez et al., 2017). Regardless, Henry et al. (2021) suggested that there may be a shift in people's perceptions when assigning blame, especially when alcohol is a factor. Henry et al. (2021) investigated the effects of victim and perpetrator alcohol intoxication on assessments of campus sexual assault in the US. It was noted that contrary to the findings from past research, the participants blamed victims less and

more strongly considered the incident rape when victims were reported to be highly intoxicated. Additionally, perceptions were most punitive toward sober assailants whose reported victims were extremely intoxicated (Henry et al, 2021). It could be inferred that the shift in thinking is confounded by the existing social movements, such #me too and high-profile sexual assault cases (e.g., Harvey Weinstein, R-Kelly) bringing about a renewed awareness of the topic and allowing for salient discussions to take hold (Henry et al, 2021). Additionally, university campuses emphasise the importance of consent with sexual relations, whereas previous legislations have focused on the level of physical force used against a victim (Henry et al., 2021).

Explanations for this victim-blaming tendency

According to McMahon and Farmer (2011) conventional and widespread rape myths are 'she asked for it', and 'he didn't mean to'; reflecting responsibility towards the victim and exonerating the perpetrator (Hockett et al., 2016; McManon & Farmer, 2011; Saucier et al., 2015). In Davis and Rogers' (2006) literature review on the perceptions of male rape, they discussed Janoff-Bulman's (1979) theory of victim-blaming. It was proposed there are two categories of victim blame; behavioural blame, which is endorsed when an individual's behaviour and actions are perceived as a causal factor, and characterological blame, this concept is attributed when a person's character, personality and disposition is assessed; blame is placed on the victim due to the type of person they are. Anderson (1999) illustrated this by assessing how male and female victims of rape are assigned responsibility. Utilising Janoff-Bulman's (1979) theory of behavioural and characterological blame, the findings argued that more behavioural blame was attributed towards both male and female victims, and that male rape victims were assigned less blame than female victims. This is in direct contrast to the determinations of Davis and Rogers (2006) who inferred that male rape victims are assigned more victim responsibility than females based on behavioural blame characteristics. Claiming that due to gender stereotypes and bias a male victim should have the strength and physicality to resist an attack, and therefore, absolving the offender of

responsibility (Hockett et al., 2016; Rollero & Tartaglia, 2019). Victim blame has also been conceptualised as a result of defensive attribution theory (Walster, 1966); in which individuals are compelled to blame victims of sexual offences in a bid to alleviate their feelings of vulnerability that they too, could possibly face such victimisation (Amacker & Littleton, 2013; Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2020; Savage et al., 2017). The assumptions posited by defensive attribution theory can be reinforced by Janoff-Bulman's (1979) account of behavioural blame when directed at the self. Both theories ascribe culpability and fault for an attack to the victim, based on behavioural actions; therefore, it is hypothesised that by doing so individuals are distanced from experiencing such events, as they believed they are fundamentally different from the victim (Finch & Munro, 2007; Laufer & Gillespie, 2004; Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2020).

Victim-blaming serves to exonerate perpetrators

The factors that are exploited within the above theoretical frameworks are derived from rape schemas (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Those components noted within Janoff-Bulman's (1979) characterological and behavioural blame categories and the elements of defensive attribution theory (Walster, 1966) are grounded within rape myths; notions that a victim's appearance or actions contributed to a sexual assault or rape and therefore vindicates an offender from their actions trivialises sexual violence, nevertheless, serves as a form of protection for observers (Klement et al., 2019). Klement et al. (2019) explored the relationship between rape myth acceptance and accountability. It was concluded that those with higher rape myth acceptance generally reported greater complainant blame, lower perpetrator responsibility and lower victim trauma (Klement et al., 2019). Research has demonstrated that shifting blame from perpetrators to victims has been widely observed to affect the appraisals of sexually violent cases – both in reality and within experimental research settings (Bieneck & Krahe, 2011; Mehta, 2016). Holding victims accountable for the offences is a known contributor to the attrition rates in sexual assault and rape cases (Hester & Lilley, 2017; Lea et al., 2003). Studies have shown that when a case scenario deviates from the 'real rape' stereotype, individuals are quick to assign blame to a victim and subsequently reduce the

liability of an offender (Dobbin & Gatowski, 1996; Estrich, 1987; Hammond et al., 2011; O'Neal, 2017). This can be seen in numerous studies that have explored victim and perpetrator relationships (Gravelin et al., 2018; Hockett et al., 2016; Krahe et al., 2007; Persson & Dhingra, 2020; Persson et al., 2018; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Viki et al., 2004), where considerable victim-blaming and offender exonerating attitudes are noted. A possible explanation for this victim-blame is said to include the discernment that women who are willingly alone with a man, should expect sexual advances to be made (Gravelin et al., 2018). It can be seen through the non-acceptance of offender responsibility and an incontrovertible notion that sexual violence does not affect victims confounds the essence of rape myths.

Male Rape Myths

It has been concluded that male victims will take significantly longer to seek medical help, disclose to informal sources (friends/family) and seek help for mental health challenges, than female victims if they do at all (Walker et al., 2005). There is also the added barrier associated with male victimisation of a lack of support services available to those who do require them (Page, 2010; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Twenty years ago, it was estimated that research and support for male victims were more than twenty years behind that of female victims (Davis & Liddel, 2002). The inequality in the availability of services for male victims can be inferred because of the myths and fallacies perpetuated towards that the male survivor population. However, in 2014, those discrepancies between the availability of services were made forefront and the Ministry of Justice created the Male Rape Support Fund (MOJ, 2014). Twelve organisations across the UK were successful in securing funding totalling over £600,000 over two years (GOV.UK, 2014). Although funding was supplied and many support services developed that targeted male victims of sexual violence, barriers were still evident to males reporting and disclosing victimisation. A research study concluded five areas that determined men's reluctance to seek support, these were: the perception of the services target demographic; shame and/or embarrassment; denial of the incident; fear; and concern of stigmatisation (Tsui et al., 2010). It was also, suggested that support services could

unintentionally or intentionally exclude victims from the LGBTQ+ community (GOV.UK, 2021), and when services are not clear about what they offer and who their target demographic is, minoritised victims do not reach out to them (GOV.UK, 2021).

Several academics have studied this area to establish themes when it comes to adhering to male rape myths. In 2006, Davis and Rogers completed a literature review on the perceptions of male rape, which found that male rape victims are attributed more blame than female victims based on behavioural blame characteristics. Claiming that due to gender stereotypes a male victim should have the strength to physically resist an attack. White and Kurpius (2002) supported this assumption, suggesting that male participants assigned more fault when the victim of the assault was a man rather than a woman. Overall, male participants believed rape is less likely to transpire when the victim substantially resists, giving the assumption that male victims are more to blame as they did not resist hard enough. This was emphasised by Sleath and Bull (2010), who investigated the relationship between male rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and sex-role equality with victim-blaming and perpetrator blaming. They concluded that there were comparisons with the research into female rape myth acceptance, in terms of the amount of resistance shown throughout the attack. The study determined that resistance is an important factor in ascertaining whether the attack would be classified or judged as rape. Harris and Weiss (1995) claimed that if there is no physical trauma after an assault, it will lead to assumptions being made regarding consent and undermine their allegation of rape. Chapleau et al.'s (2008) findings from an experimental study suggested that if a man was known to have been raped then he is perceived to have shown weakness and a lack of assertiveness.

White and Kurpius' (2002) assumption that male victims are perceived as more blame-worthy due to gender bias corresponded with the male rape myths identified by Kassing et al. (2005). White and Kurpuis (2002) identified six categories of male rape myths: 1. A man's physical size and strength mean they are unlikely to be overpowered, 2. Men initiate sexual activity and would not be targeted, 3. Men who are victims are not seen as 'real men', 4. Male

rape is uncommon, 5. Men can emotionally cope with being raped, and 6. Men only get raped in prisons. These ideas stem from traditional stereotypical gender bias about the male role. Sleath and Bull (2010) suggested that the acceptance of such myths was a persuasive indicator of male rape victim blaming behaviours. White and Kurpius' (2002) postulation that male victims are more emotionally able to cope with rape and therefore inferring that they would not be as traumatised as female victims have been refuted. For example, Mitchell et al. (2009) explored the effects of offender motivation, participant gender and victim gender on the perceptions of rape. Participants were randomly given vignettes describing an alleged sexual assault in which the gender of the victim was manipulated., They found that participants believed that all victims, regardless of gender, would have encountered high levels of trauma.

Chapleau et al.'s (2008) exploration examining male rape myths concurs with the work of Mitchell et al. (2009). They assessed whether male participants were less tolerant of rape myths that implied male victims would not be as psychologically harmed as female victims. They found that while male participants attributed more responsibility to male victims over female victims and held more pro-rape myth attitudes, they did not condone the myth that male victims would not be traumatised after a sexual assault and were least accepting of the notion that men cannot be raped.

LGBTQ+ Rape Myths

Statistics show that most sexual violence is perpetrated by cis-gendered men, against women. It is, therefore, somewhat understandable that high levels of research within the field is focused on that population. However, as a consequence of this singular focus, both scholarly and societal efforts to aid in the prevention of sexual violence are lacking in their consideration of those who do not follow heteronormative lifestyles (Coulter et al., 2017; Girshick, 2002; Menning & Holtzman, 2014), despite existing research indicating that LGBTQ+ individuals face increased rates if sexual violence and significant barriers to seeking support and justice (Coulter et al., 2017; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). Additionally, very few studies explore the ways

in which myths and stereotypes regarding rape and sexual assault might impact LGBTQ victims or the ways they are responded to.

The limited work with LGBTQ women and transgender victims demonstrates that gendered, hetero- and cis-normative discourses significantly influence how they understand sexual violence. For example, Girshick's (2002) exploration of woman-to-woman sexual violence, demonstrates gendered stereotypes about women being 'passive' and homophobic stereotypes about women not having 'real sex'. A 2015 community study by Munson and Cook-Daniels, revealed the profound impacts of cis-normative narratives of 'real rape' on transgender and gender diverse victims' lives. This study included transgender victims' accounts of family members and health professionals blaming them for their experiences of sexual violence because of their gender identity, while others reported fearing similar reactions, and so they did not seek support.

Mortimer et al., (2019) conducted a study investigating people within the LGBTQ communities' experiences of sexual violence and support seeking. It was established from the work that there was a fundamental lack of understanding about LGBTQ people's experiences of sexual violence. Often, this was attributed to the limited and problematic cultural narratives about what sexual violence looks like, with several participants pointing out how narratives of sexual violence predominately feature cisgender men's violence towards cisgender women (Mortimer et al., 2019). Discussions around whether penetration occurred and how this affects the perception of an assault was discussed. This misconception affects all survivors who have experienced acts of sexual violence other than penetration (regardless of their own or the perpetrator's gender or sexuality). And how it can be for a person who has experienced a form of assault that is often dismissed as less harmful (e.g., oral assault) to be taken seriously by police, referred to a sexual violence service and offered a forensic medical examination. The assumptions of gender roles reveal underlying narratives about what rape looks like (it must involve a penis) and why it happens (because victims are physically overpowered). This shows how 'classic' rape myths can be fused with hetero- and cis-normative understandings of

gender, sexed bodies, and sexual acts to further blame victims and minimise their experiences. Biphobia and stereotypes surrounding bisexual women were highlighted. Participants mentioned stereotypes about bisexual women as 'promiscuous', 'untrustworthy' and 'likely to be unfaithful' in relationships. Some participants discussed how these stereotypes could be used by abusive partners to justify physical and sexual violence against bisexual women by saying they were acting out of 'jealousy'. Several participants also raised this issue of queer men being blamed for sexual violence because of assumptions about their 'risky' and 'deviant' lifestyles. The 'asking for it' template of rape myths is frequently used to blame cisgender heterosexual women for their experiences of sexual violence by focusing on what they were wearing, how they were behaving, how much they were drinking etc. rather than perpetrator behaviour (Mortimer et al., 2019; Munson & Cook-Daniels, 2015). For queer men, homophobic schemas have been added to this formula and used to blame men, victims/survivors, for violence by 'putting themselves at risk' or 'asking for it'.

Homophobia or biphobia can also drive sexual violence in very direct ways outside of intimate relationships. For instance, several sexual violence support workers told stories of women who identified as lesbians or as queer and had been sexually assaulted by men who wanted to 'turn them straight'. This relies on the homophobic myth that women 'claiming' to be lesbians 'need a man to have sex with them and show them what it's like' (Menning & Holtzman, 2014).

Rape Myths Associated with Black Females and Males

In the United States, statistics show that Black women are one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to sexual victimisation. The Centre for Disease Control National Centre of Injury and Prevention (2017), noted 67.9 per 100,000 Black women had been a victim of either attempted or completed sexual assault, this was in comparison to 33.7 per 100,000 for White women (CDC, 2017). There are also reports in the UK that suggest, for every Black woman who reports her assault to authorities, fifteen Black women will not (Hart & Rennison, 2003);

this again is a higher rate when compared to White women, of whom one in six reports the assaults against them (ONS, 2017).

Disclosing sexual violence has the potential to offer the victim vital tools in healing; however, the historical and existing experiences around sexual victimisation present unique challenges for Black women due to what can be deemed as societal marginalisation (Long & Ullman, 2013; Slatton & Richard, 2019; Carmody & Washington, 2001). It was not until 1959 in the US, that the first reported case of White men being convicted for the rape of young Black women. However, this was not straightforward and was fraught with controversy. Four White men were convicted and sentenced to life (with mercy); however, supporters of the perpetrators claimed the young victim had "probably been with a dozen men before" (McGuire, 2004, p. 929). Another asked for leniency for the offenders and claimed, "Negro women like to be raped by the White men" (McGuire, 2004, p. 929). Although this case occurred just over sixty years ago, the negative assumptions and opinions are still seen within today's society (Slatton & Richard, 2019). In 2008, Irving published an analysis of the Philadelphia Police Department's rape cases between 1995 and 2000. Irving (2008) declared that accounts from the most vulnerable women – women who were Black, poor, homeless, and/or sex workers – were most commonly defined as unsubstantiated and rejected as the officers felt they were not worth following up. The same police officers, however, did take seriously the disclosures from White, middle-class women, who lived in wealthy neighbourhoods. It is therefore argued that the rejection seen by the police officers, portrayed a legal system that did not support disclosures from Black women, and therefore did not offer them the same protection (Irving, 2008). There are additional struggles facing Black women when considering disclosing, especially if the perpetrator was also Black. A sense of community and unity is learnt from a young age within Black communities, that's why so often a sense of conflict regarding whether to disclose is seen (Simmons, 2016). Individuals are taught that race should come first, and therefore, a need to protect a Black man from legal ramifications. It has been seen that when a Black victim does make the difficult decision to report the assault by a Black perpetrator, she

risks secondary victimisation and further trauma by those in her community for going against the Black community (Slatton & Richard, 2019). There has been many high profile, media-rich examples of this abuse against victims. Recent and past allegations made against musician R Kelly, saw numerous Black women receiving negative and vicious backlash from the claims they made. These allegations led to a televised docuseries *Surviving R Kelly,* this programme detailed the abuse victims suffered both as children and as adults (Leung & Williams, 2019). However, it also highlighted the popularity and support that R Kelly continued to hold over the decades after numerous allegations regarding child pornography and sexual relations with underage Black girls. Nevertheless, those who did speak out against him were invisible or blamed for their own victimisation. It was not until the documentary aired that a varied view began to form, however, it still highlighted the camaraderie and willingness to cover up the actions of this man in an attempt to preserve some essence of a reputation for the Black community (Blackmon, 2018; Sadeque, 2019).

Research indicates that disclosures have the potential to start the process of healing, and aid in the prevention of re-victimisation. It is, therefore, a fundamental right that everyone has the opportunity to engage in this process and knows that this is an option (Tillman et al., 2010). Despite this, literature uncovers the unsupportive environment afforded to Black women for disclosures; it has been communicated to Black women that their victimisation does not matter, and their claims are worthless (Slatton & Richard, 2019).

Albeit different, stereotypes and assumptions can be seen when Black males are found to be victims of sexual violence. This was never so prominent and brought to public attention as when Terry Crews – a Black male actor, presenter and former professional athlete announced on Twitter in 2017 that he was sexually assaulted at a Hollywood function, by a Hollywood executive (Curry, 2019). He discussed how the #metoo movement and the outcry against Harvey Weinstein had triggered his memories. After his announcement Crews received a mountain of scrutiny; questioning why he did not defend himself, asking why he did respond violently to stop the assault – he was blamed for the assault (Curry, 2019). In June

2017, Crews gave testimony before the U.S. Senate in a bid to expand the sexual assault Survivors Bill of Rights, during the testimony he explained

> "… as a Black man in America, you only have a few shots at success. You only have a few chances to make yourself a viable member of the community. I'm from Flint, Michigan. I have seen many, many young Black men who were provoked into violence, and they were imprisoned or they were killed. And they're not here …. My wife, for years, prepared me. She said: "If you ever get goaded, if you ever get prodded, if you ever get anyone trying to push you into any situation, don't do it, don't be violent."
> (Kelly, 2018, pp. 4-5).

Crews explained that no matter the precursor if he was defending himself against sexual aggression, any aggression he showed would be interpreted with him as the attacker. He continued that his physical appearance would set the illusion that he is the threat and not the man that is demonstrating sexual victimisation (Curry, 2019). Whilst it can be seen from the account Crews gave that there is a non-acceptance of Black male victims, conforming with the gender stereotypes that are so commonly attributed to all male victims – however when Black males are explored particularly the repercussions of potentially fulfilling those stereotypes are realised and discussed.

Black males also face prejudices not only in terms of being victims of sexual violence but also surrounding the sexual predator stereotype, this has been found to be particularly prevalent within university settings due to increased media coverage of sexual assault and rape within those environments (Phillips, 2018; Zounlome, et al., 2019). Reports suggest that Black men are 3.5 times more likely to be convicted of sexual violence than white males (Gross et al., 2017); in addition, to hosting an array of negative schemas (i.e., being sexually violent) that their white counterparts do not (Wong et al., 2013).

Prevalence of Rape Myths

As seen the prevalence of sexual violence is at an all-time high and rape myth acceptance is an area that is thought to be a contributing factor as to why many victims do not report and/or disclose their assaults. The incidence of rape myths is thought to be extremely prevalent amongst society (Stabile et al., 2019; Walfield, 2021), with polls such as the one completed by British Amnesty International in 2005 highlighting the pervasive nature. The poll was completed as part of the British Amnesty International's Women's Rights Campaign, it was evident from the results that a culture of blame was present, this was with respect to attitudes regarding appearance, alcohol intoxication, perceived promiscuity, and clarity of consent (Amnesty International UK, 2005). The poll concluded that 26% of those asked placed responsibility towards the victim if they were believed to be wearing revealing clothing, and 22% blamed the victim if they had multiple sexual partners previously, therefore conforming to the stereotypical rape myths (Burt, 1980; Amnesty International UK, 2005). These views have appeared to remain relatively consistent, with more recent research echoing those findings (Dinos et al., 2015; Gunby et al., 2013).

Theories of rape mythology have not been exclusively focused on one concept (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Over the years they have developed to incorporate changes not only in societal perspectives but also in technology and media. One of the early theories posited was that of Ambivalent Sexism, this was presented by Glick and Fiske (1996, 1999, 2001); according to the authors due to the basic structure of traditional male-female relationships, power differentiation exists. This results in sexist attitudes that embody ambivalence towards the opposite sex (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Glick et al., 2015). The theory hypothesises that men are attributed more power and status than women; men and women are distinguished based on societal norms, and sexual relations are determined by reproduction and intimacy. It was suggested that these three factors create hostile and benevolent attitudes towards the opposing sex (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1999, 2001). Hostile sexism offers an antagonistic view, in which women are viewed as seeking to control and

appropriate men's power. Benevolent sexism idealises women as naïve individuals who need protection (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Glick et al., 2015; Yamawaki, 2007). Research that is epitomised by this theoretical underpinning suggests that individuals who endorse gender stereotypical attitudes exhibit higher rape myth acceptance (Rollero & Taraglia, 2019; Gosetti & Manoussaki, 2021). In 2021, Gosetti and Manoussaki, concluded that benevolent sexism significantly predicted rape myths acceptance, however, contrary to previous work, (Glick & Friske, 1997; Glick et al., 2015; Yamawaki, 2007) hostile sexism did not. It was felt that advances in societal views on sexual violence and the updated scales used within the study may have accounted for the differences in findings (Gosetti & Manoussaki, 2021).

The determination of the relationship between the just-world belief theory and rape myth acceptance was explored by Hayes et al. (2013). The just-world belief purports that individuals believe that everyone gets what they deserve and that any adverse consequences are a result of the individual's actions; this links to victim-blaming notions (Lerner, 1980; Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2021; Thomas et al., 2016). Research suggests that in an attempt to understand sexual violence people may try to justify the incident, for example adhering to rape myths (e.g., the accuser was intoxicated, they did not fight back, they asked for it); therefore, illustrating their desire to believe in a just world (Dalbert, 2009; Duff & Tostevin, 2015; Hayes et al., 2013; Whatley, 2005). Underlying, the illusions of rape myths may be a sense of safety and security for those who conform to them. Perceiving the perpetrator as only partially accountable or non-blameworthy can give the fictitious idea that these crimes are not serious due to them being incited by the victim or more worryingly that the crime itself does not exist Pinciotti & Orcutt, 2021).

More recently media effects theories have been prominent when exploring the prevalence of rape myths. One theoretical framework within this is cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1969; Wright, 2018); this theory suggests that heavy television viewing will result in views that are portrayed on the television. Therefore, media outlets have the power to 'cultivate' opinions among their observers (Gerbner, 1969; Wright, 2018). When this is employed to rape myth

acceptance, it is noted that consumption of media containing such fallacies, will promote higher levels of rape myth acceptance (Seabrokk et al., 2019). Hedrick (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of different media outlets and their relationship to rape myth acceptance. It was concluded that media consumption was significantly correlated with higher levels of rape myth acceptance. This was particularly dominant for the sub-categories of media; violent pornography, general pornography, and sports media (Hedrick, 2021). The application of cultivation theory suggests that pornography may be depicting content that aims to normalise behaviours associated with rape myths (Bridges et al., 2010), however, this was contradicted by Klaassen and Peter (2015), who found after examining pornographic material that behaviours consistent with rape myths were rare in those sources of media.

Attrition in Rape and Sexual Assault Cases

Over recent years there has been a fall in the number of offences that have been dealt with by charge or summons outcomes (from 13% in the year ending March 2016 to 6% in the year ending March 2018, then falling even further to 3.9% in 2021). This also reflects the number of people being charged with sexual offences, this has decreased from 17,571 in the year ending March 2016 to 11,491 in the year ending June 2021, whilst the number of police recorded cases has increased from 106,383 in 2016 to 164,763 in 2021. The Crown Prosecution Service has also recorded a decrease in convictions for rape cases (10,721 in the year ending March 2017 to 9,654 in the year ending March 2018, to 1,557 in March 2021 this was down 30% on the previous year). Research has shown that many factors contribute to the high attrition rate of sexual assault cases; most recently one contributing factor for the low rates has been that of the COVID-19 pandemic (CPS, 2021c). Nonetheless, this can only account for a small portion of the discrepancy over the last two years, and not the steady decline that has been witnessed over many decades. The Crown Prosecution Service and those prosecuting cases make decisions on the likelihood of gaining a conviction (Henry & Jurek, 2020). As a result, prosecutors give special consideration to characteristics that may influence those responsible for making judgements on the case (i.e., judges and jurors). Those

characteristics that are deemed relevant to the success of gaining conviction for the sexual assault/rape case stem from rape myths (Henry & Jurek, 2020; O'Neal & Spohn, 2017) and contribute to the high attrition in cases. Scholars have argued that rape myths can inform the views of those involved within the Criminal Justice System at any given time, which in turn affects their decision making and the subsequent progression and outcome of cases. Consequently, endorsement of rape myths contributes to the disparity between the number of reported sexual assaults and rapes and the number of those convicted (Henry & Jurek, 2020; Krahe et al., 2008; O'Neal & Spohn, 2017).

To illustrate and assess the problem of attrition of sexual violence cases within the Criminal Justice System Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), part of the UK government, developed and organised the Rape Monitoring Group. The multi-agency group was established in 2007, with the aim to improve the response to rape within England and Wales (Rape Monitoring Group, HMICFRS, 2020). Data is published each year by the Rape Monitoring Group; they combine data from the different police forces, the CPS, and the Ministry of Justice, and outline the outcomes of rape cases at different stages of the Criminal Justice System. The data demonstrate the trends in outcomes for the rape cases that are going through the Criminal Justice System at that given time. The data indicates that only 1.40% of recorded rapes in 2019/20 were given a charge summons outcome. This is a substantial decrease from 2017/18 when 4.15% of cases resulted in charges or summons and even lower than 2015/16 when figures were 10.83% (Rape Monitoring Group, HMICFRS, 2020).

Many scholars and Government research projects have endeavoured to investigate the problem of attrition and the discontinuation of rape cases within the legal system. In 2005, A Home Office Research Study was published by Kelly et al. which aimed to do such that. The data was sourced from three Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs); the data included details of the victims who had used the service and their experiences throughout the legal process. Also, included were results from questionnaires and qualitative interviews with those

who had utilised the SARCs (Kelly et al., 2005). In total, 2,643 cases were analysed; however, only 2,244 were reported to the police. Of those 26% (575) were 'no crimed' by the police, 39% (882) were undetected, and 35% (787) were detected by the police. Only 467 cases out of the cases progressed past the investigative stage. Of those 467 cases, two resulted in a caution, in 9% (40) the victim withdrew, 13% (59) were terminated by the CPS, 15% (72) were pending trial at the time of the report, 22% (104) had led to an acquittal, and 39% (183) resulted in a conviction. The overall conviction rate for the sample was 8% (Kelly et al, 2005).

In 2012, a joint exploration was completed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI), examining rape investigations and prosecutions. It was noted that a number of improvements had been observed within police forces in England and Wales, noticeably call handling systems had become more reactive, specially trained officers had been introduced, training for both officers and prosecutors had improved, access to SARCs was either in place or planned, and the use of early evidence kits was widespread (HMIC/HMCPSI, 2012). It was, however, suggested that there were still some areas for improvement – intelligence gathering was deemed poor and in need of improving, as was the ability to analyse information surrounding rape cases. Related to this was the issues with performance management initiatives. It was said that such initiatives place emphasis on high conviction rates and therefore, might account for the reluctance some officers have to 'crime' cases they feel have a limited chance of obtaining a prosecution. Therefore, more emphasis could be placed on gathering the intelligence and enabling the offence to be investigated properly, leading to a greater number of recorded crimes. Finally, it was observed that there was a lack of reviews undertaken on severe rape and/or sexually motivated investigations. Carrying out said reviews would enable lessons learnt approach and aid the development of improvement plans (HMIC/HMCPSI, 2012). Additionally, increasing the availability and accessibility of SARCs was noted to be half the likelihood of a victim withdrawing from the investigative process (Hohl & Stanko, 2015).

The exploration of attrition of sexually violent offences has been studied for many years; with work utilising case reviews as their method for investigation (Gregory & Lees, 1999; Hester & Lilley, 2017; Kelly et al., 2005). Although conducted many years earlier, Gregory and Lees' (1999) introductory work allowed for corresponding conclusions with that of the 2012 exploration by HMIC and HMCPSI. It was noted from a case review of 109 London Metropolitan Police rape cases, that rape was effectively decriminalised due to the low levels of prosecutions expected and attained (Gregory & Lees, 1999). It was also determined that cases of stranger rape and that where physical violence was also used, were more likely to result in a conviction – adhering to the 'real rape' stereotype (Gregory & Lees, 1999). In agreement was Jordan (2004), who examined rape allegations in New Zealand. It was found that the 'real rape' stereotype was prevalent throughout the investigative process (Jordan, 2004). More recently, Hester (2015) examined 87 rape cases from three UK police forces; through both victim and professional interviews it was observed that historical cases were most likely to result in a charge and those involving an acquaintance were least likely – confirming what was established in 1999 from Gregory and Lees. Additionally, it was suggested that officers' perceptions of different types of cases resulted in them undertaking different investigative strategies due to them perceiving them to have different evidential issues (Hester, 2015). With a number of both academic and government studies being completed over the last two decades exploring attrition, it is clear that the same conclusions appear to be drawn – those cases that follow the 'real rape' stereotype are most likely to be followed through the legal system. Furthermore, when criminal justice professionals perceive cases will fall short of conviction, then they are more prone to being dropped by the CPS.

In response to the ever-growing number of sexually violent offences perpetrated, and the ever-lessening number of sexually violent offences being prosecuted; the Government commissioned the End-to-End Rape Review in March 2019 intending to understand and try and remedy the reasons for the attrition and lack of progress through the legal system of sexual assault and rape cases (Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021). The review

confirmed that less than 20% of those subjected to sexual violence report to the police (ONS, 2021), and tragically, only 1.6% of reported rapes result in someone being charged (Home Office, 2021). Although the reporting of sexual offences has increased in recent years (24,093 in 2015/16 to 43,187 in 2019/20), only 3% received an outcome by the police of charged/summonsed in 2019/20 (ONS, 2021), this was down from 13% in 2015/16 (Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021), therefore, mitigating the need for said review. The review determined that there were several multifaceted and comprehensive reasons for the increase in cases being dropped prior to the court phase of the legal process. These included delays in the investigative process, difficult relationships with different members and/or parts of the criminal justice system, digital data being requested, insufficient specialist resources available, and unreliable support options (Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021).

It is acknowledged that reporting sexually violent offences is extremely difficult and takes a lot of courage; therefore, it is incomprehensible that the legal process can be traumatising and frustrating. The End-to-End Rape Review highlighted the failures within the criminal justice system and how it is almost established so that victims will retract allegations and withdraw from the process. Consequently, it was observed that in 2019/20 that in 57% of adult rape cases the victim felt unable to continue with the case, and withdrew (Home Office, 2020); noted rationales for renunciation were feeling disbelieved or judged by members of the criminal justice system, negative impact on mental health, and the anxiety and fear that giving evidence in court caused (Victims' Commissioner's Office, 2020). Reflections could be drawn to earlier conclusions surrounding the need for adequate and specialist support services, those services could aid victims through every stage of the legal process, offering a means of sufficient communication as well as emotional support. As a result of the findings of the review, the UK Government invested an additional £176m to increase support for sexual violence and domestic abuse victims (Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021).

Not only do rape myths and negative attitudes lead to case attrition from the criminal justice system, but they can also impact the level of criminal compensation awarded to the

victim. In 2008 a decision was made by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority to reduce the amount of compensation rape victims receive if they had consumed alcohol. In 2008, the details of a rape victim being awarded criminal compensation at a 25% reduced figure were published. It was noted that the individual's compensation request was markedly reduced due to the fact that she had been raped after she had been out drinking alcohol and was told: "the evidence shows that your excessive consumption of alcohol was a contributing factor to the incident" (Independent, 2008). As a result of the bias that surrounded the case, the victim's lawyer was able to successfully argue that it was wrong to regard alcohol consumption as a contributing factor in rape cases. It was later confirmed by the Ministry of Justice that this was not a standardised policy and support the view that a victim of rape is not culpable due to alcohol consumption (Independent, 2008). Albeit this was after the case was publicised and great scrutiny was placed upon the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority for reform (Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme Review, 2020).

Reporting to the Police

Police officers are seen as the first point of reference to the criminal justice system for victims of sexual offences (Kelly, 2001). The police have discretionary power to establish whether to investigate the allegations and make an arrest (Frazier & Haney, 1996; Spohn & Tellis, 2012). The attrition of reported incidents of sexual assault has been linked to negative perceptions and victim-blaming attitudes, which are bestowed upon those who have experienced sexual assault and rape, from the very individuals tasked with investigating and seeking justice for them (Egan & Wilson, 2012). Reports have demonstrated that it is at this initial stage of an enquiry that most rape cases fall out of the legal system (Bargen & Fishwick, 1995; Kelly, 2001). A loss of confidence in the police has been noted as a factor that discourages victims from reporting or continuing with their allegations (Bargen & Fishwick, 1995). Feist et al. (2007) conducted of review of recorded rape cases in England and Wales in the year 2003/04, collecting data on a total of 676 cases from across eight different police forces. Feist et al. (2007) confirmed that 70% of the cases evaluated were dropped between

the victim's allegation and a suspect being arrested, despite the fact that in nearly ninety percent of the cases, a suspect had been named. 35% of the cases were closed due to the victim withdrawing their complaint and 40% were lost due to the police having insufficient evidence to charge a suspect (Feist et al., 2007). The results revealed regional differences in the number of cases where the victim withdrew their allegation, which impacted conviction rates. The report highlighted that conduct within the police investigation may have a quantifiable impact on victims pursuing their allegation and subsequently, conviction rates (Feist et al, 2007). Supporting this assumption was the report submitted by Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service (HMIC/HMCPSI's) in 2007 on rape investigations and prosecutions. The findings suggested that an improvement in conviction rates amongst force areas ran parallel to the improvements in the standards of investigations, enhanced management of cases and the monitoring of performance (HMIC/HMCPSI's, 2007). Although the HMIC/HMCPSI's (2007) report proposed these regional differences were due to the implementation of robust policies and superior investigations; criticisms in the application of these policies were made by Stern (2010). Stern (2010) noted in her review of how rape complaints were handled, that the policies and procedures were robust, and have changed the way in which cases are conducted for the better, however, 'The failures are in the implementation' (Stern, 2010, p.8). It was suggested that police forces were not employing the recommended procedures outlined by previous reports and therefore failing the victims of those crimes (Stern, 2010).

Police officers' scepticism and their attitudes towards victims of sexual offences have been suggested to be an influencing factor as to why recommended policies and procedures are not followed. These negative representations can result in poor victim satisfaction and ultimately lead to the withdrawal of allegations (Sleath & Bull, 2017). Research has concurred with that summation and proposed that victims of sexual offences experience low levels of satisfaction when dealing with the police, report receiving poor treatment, and being met with scepticism (Jordan, 2008; Parratt & Pina, 2017; Sleath & Bull, 2017). Walker et al. (2005) mirrored this response; their sample of 40 male rape victims concluded that only five reported

their assault to the police. Four of those stated afterwards that they regretted their decision to report the crime due to the insensitive and disinterested response of law enforcement. One of the victims interviewed had his case presented at trial; the victim from that case stated the court process was more traumatic than the rape itself, proposing that more blame was placed on him for the assault over the perpetrator (Walker et al., 2005). The work of Walker et al., (2005) provides evidence of victims' concerns regarding re-traumatisation and a fear of being held responsible for the assault, in addition, it highlights that rape myths can affect the legal system and jury decision making. A similar study by Scarce (1997) implied that male rape victims commonly experience negative police responses. Frequently noted complaints from male victims, suggested that they were met with scepticism, ridicule, homophobia, or an amalgamation of all three from police officers (Scarce, 1997). It is not just male victims that have reported these concerns; Myhill and Allen (2002) determined that 22% of female rape victims sampled were extremely dissatisfied with the police conduct, with only a third stating they were very satisfied (Myhill & Allen, 2002). There have, however, been completed works that have contradicted those findings; with victims reporting their experiences with the police as positive, and the officers involved being sympathetic and non-judgmental towards their circumstances (Temkin, 1997; Jamel et al., 2008; Maddox et al., 2011).

In determining whether police officers do hold negative schemas towards rape victims; researchers have investigated their propensity to endorse rape myths (Burt, 1980). There are widespread misconceptions about what a 'real rape' victim (Brownmiller, 1975; Estrich, 1987; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) should act like, and what events should occur during a 'real rape' (Estrich, 1987; Chapleau and Oswald, 2010; Hazelwood & Burgess, 1995). Previous studies have supported the view that a police officer's individual beliefs are integral to whether they will believe a victim's allegation of rape (Edward & Macleod, 1999; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). With studies concluding that some police officers do support these stereotypical myths and hold negative attitudes toward victims of sexual offences (Hine & Murphy, 2017; Lee et al., 2012; O'Neal, 2017; Sleath & Bull, 2017; Temkin, 1997). Page's (2008) work reinforces that viewpoint. Her study noted that police officers who endorsed high rape myth acceptance were

more likely to believe a victim who conformed to the 'real rape' stereotype. One drawback of Page's (2008) work was the lack of qualitative information captured. The results focused on scales to obtain police officers' positions; this however does not allow for participants to expand on their responses. Therefore, it is uncertain if there are specific elements of the stereotype that police officers agreed with, rather than supporting the entire assumption. Nonetheless, work completed by O'Neal (2017) endeavoured to determine how judgements regarding a victim's credibility were formulated by police officers and how those affect the advancement of the case (O'Neal, 2017). Although still utilising a quantitative approach, 400 cases were reviewed from the LAPD. Investigations noted that when cases resembled the 'real rape' scenario, they were more likely to be perceived as credible. Whereas it was concluded that certain victim characteristics were indicators for victim blame; those were, a delay in reporting, questionable reputations, mental health difficulties, and inconsistent statements. It was also suggested that if the victim was intoxicated or voluntarily went to the perpetrator's residence then their credibility also diminished (O'Neal, 2017). It was therefore determined, that when those perceived negative indicators were present, investigations were less thorough and resulted in fewer of those cases progressing through the legal system (O'Neal, 2017).

Various researchers have aimed to establish whether individual differences or victim characteristics can be determinants in rape myth acceptance amongst police officers (Hine & Murphy, 2017; Sleath & Bull, 2017; Tasca et al., 2013; Venema, 2016). The existing accounts suggest the victim's level of intoxication, is a characteristic that is commonly used to undermine the legitimacy of an allegation. (Goodman-Delahunty & Grahman, 2011; Grubb & Turner, 2012). Schuller and Stewart (2000) assessed this feature with police officers; they established that the suspect's level of intoxication does not affect the police officers' evaluations of the crime, however, the intoxication of the victim did. It was concluded that the more intoxicated the victim was perceived to be, the less blame was attributed to the perpetrator, and more likely they were to believe the victim consented (Schuller & Stewart, 2000).

Most studies have failed to ascertain whether there is a causative link between an officer's experience within the service and their propensity to endorse rape myths (Lea et al., 2003; Page, 2007; Sleath & Bull, 2012). One study that did account for this variable was completed by Page (2007); she deduced that less experienced officers supported rape myths at a higher level, compared to those with more experience within the police force (Page, 2007). This supposition was not however supported by Sleath and Bull (2012), who concluded no relationship between the length of a police officer's service and victim-blaming attitudes (Sleath & Bull, 2012).

Nevertheless, previous examinations have found evidence to contradict these negative assumptions, with some concluding that police officers displayed empathy and compassion towards victims of sexual offences (Lea et al., 2003). One such study was that of LeDoux and Hazelwood (1985), who analysed 2170 officers' attitudes towards rape through attitudinal questionnaires, noting low support of rape myths: with police officers viewing victims as innocent, and holding strong positive viewpoints (LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985). This was also recognised by Page (2008) who reported that 65% of police officers did not agree with rape myth assumptions. Also, suggesting that police officers' acceptance of rape myths was in conjunction with that of the general population (Page, 2008). Further support for this conclusion was found in the analysis by Koppelaar et al. (1997). They established police officers did not hold more negative opinions towards rape victims than do the general population; additionally, they found that officers were less stereotypical, less biased and more sympathetic than a sample of law students (Koppelaar et al., 1997). Nevertheless, Koppelaar et al., (1997) also argued that judgements made regarding rape were done so based on police officers' own stereotypical beliefs; suggesting that greater rape myth acceptance was associated with more victim-blaming characteristics (Koppelaar et al., 1997). More recently, Sleath and Bull (2015) examined the relationship between police officers' rape myth acceptance and that of UK University students; by utilising the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS) (Payne et al., 1999), it was determined that rape myth acceptance was generally low across all samples, although male participants did show higher levels of

endorsement than women (Sleath & Bull, 2015). When individual sub-categories were examined, it was observed that the police sample did acknowledge rape myths that refute a rape occurred, although University students sanctioned myths that sought to absolve the existence of rape at greater levels. On the whole, it was reported that there were insignificant differences between police officers and University students' perceptions towards victims of sexual violence (Sleath & Bull, 2015).

There is conclusive research to suggest that police officers' attitudes can be sympathetic and instil positive expectations for the victims (Jamel et al., 2008; LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985; Lea et al., 2003; Maddox et al., 2011; Temkin, 1997); however, these conclusions have been challenged, with Campbell et al. (2001) arguing that interactions with law enforcement can contribute to secondary victimisation (Campbell et al., 2001). The process employed to take statements has been found to include victim-blaming questions and provoke many victims to be critical of the interview process (Kelly, 2001; Temkin, 1999). These initial reports and allegations are taken by the police officer, tactics that leave a victim believing others hold them responsible could result in the non-disclosure of the full details of the assault, or a full withdrawal of the complaint (Tasca et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, it is not just the initial stages of the investigative process where demonstrated rape myth acceptance is exhibited; it is also seen within courts and does influence jury decision making (Dinos et al., 2015; O'Neal, 2017). It has often been suggested that the low level of rape prosecutions is a result of many individuals conforming to and adhering to stereotypical believes about sexual violence and rape myths, thus influencing decisions correspondingly (Dinos et al., 2015; Henry & Jurek, 2020). Due to the nature of sexual violence, convictions generally rely on the contradictory accounts of the alleged victims and perpetrators (Leverick, 2020; McKimmie et al., 2014; Temken & Krahe, 2008). It has been suggested that when this occurs, those in a position of validating the allegations (i.e., jurors, judges, and anyone that an individual has disclosed to), will fall back on their pre-determined schemas and stereotypes to aid in evaluating the information presented (Daly & Bouhours, 2010; Leverick, 2020; McKimmie et al., 2014; Stuart et al., 2019). There is overwhelming

evidence from the research conducted within the field of jurors and rape myth acceptance (Chalmers et al., 2019; Ellison & Munro, 2010; Leverick, 2020; Stuart et al., 2019) that jurors' prior beliefs and stereotypes are influencing factors when issuing verdicts on cases of sexual violence (Leverick, 2020). An analysis of both quantitative and qualitative work assessing this showed that from the 28 studies identified, all but three found a significant relationship between jurors' rape myth acceptance and their arbitrations of guilt in given sexually violent cases or scenarios (Leverick, 2020). This was also confirmed by Lundrigan et al. (2019), who assessed 394 stranger-rape cases to establish whether certain factors could be determined between convicted and acquitted cases. It was concluded that convictions were predetermined by factors relating to the 'real rape' stereotype (Burt, 1980; Estrich, 1987); suggesting that participants may have considered cases based on expectations held in line with rape myth acceptance (Lundrigan et al., 2019).

Barriers to Reporting

The persistent and oppressive nature of sexual violence has been discussed, including the problems with the reporting rates of this offence typology. The detrimental and pervasive notions that are vocalised regarding sexual assault and rape place a barrier between the victim and them being able to report the offence to authorities (Anderson, 1999; Davis, 2002; Davis & Rogers, 2006; Hodge & Canter, 1998; Javaid, 2017; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Stemple & Meyer, 2014; Walker et al., 2005).

These concepts are not just restricted to female victims of sexual offences but are inclusive of the male victim population also (Javaid, 2017; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Stemple & Meyer, 2014). Research on male sexual violence has been hindered as a result of the incorrect notion that it rarely occurs due to low disclosure rates (Stemple & Meyer, 2014); nevertheless, inferences suggest that males are more likely to not report the crime than females; and one of the notions posited as to why this may occur is due to the assumptions that are held within society regarding masculinity and gender bias (Hockett et al., 2016; Rollero & Tartaglia, 2019). Those gender stereotypes are prevalent throughout rape mythology research. They deter

male rape victims from reporting assaults to the authorities. Doherty and Anderson (2004) examined accounts from male victims; these accounts suggested that public notions about masculinity dissuaded men from reporting their assaults to the police through fear of re-victimisation and being labelled weak. This was corroborated by Walker et al. (2005), from a sample of forty male rape victims, it was established that only five reported their assault to the police. Four of those five stated afterwards that they regretted their decision to report the crime due to the insensitive and disinterested nature of the police. In addition, from the one case that did go to court, the victim suggested that the court process was more traumatic than the rape itself, proposing that he was blamed for the assault over the perpetrator. The work of Walker et al. (2005) evidences victim's concerns of re-traumatisation and a fear of being held responsible, it additionally, highlights that rape myths can affect the legal system and jury decision making as discussed and shows the barriers that are in place to an individual being able to report (Bachman, 1998; Egan & Wilson, 2012). Misleading connotations and perceptions are precipitating factors as to what impedes an individual's decision to disclose their assaults and are continuing barriers between the formal sources and victims of sexual offences. The fear of stigmatisation is often associated with victims of sexual violence (Egan & Wilson, 2012); this includes worry about believability, or if they will be held responsible for the assault.

Not only are these factors relevant for male victims of sexual violence, but the fear of stigmatisation and concerns surrounding how they would be perceived by others is also especially prominent for African American victims of sexual violence (Gjika & Marganski, 2020). Tillman et al., (2010) appraised the barriers to disclosure for African American victims, the prominent factors that were raised were, cultural expectations about protecting perpetrators from the criminal justice system, the potential harm that could be brought to the family and community, in addition, to the typecast role women are placed into (Tillman et al., 2010). Further discriminatory factors were evident such as socioeconomic factors (e.g.,

finances, limited health care provisions, lack of trust in the legal system) (Gjika & Marganski, 2020; Tillman et al., 2010).

Further barriers that commonly include both cognitive and emotional barriers endorsed by both men and women, including shame, lack of acknowledgement that an offence occurred, concerns of confidentiality being breached, fear of not being believed, and fear of being blamed – all common rape schemas (Hahn et al., 2020; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). There is also the additional anxiety for victims, surrounding how they will be perceived and treated throughout the criminal justice system (Cohn et al., 2013). Reporting a rape or sexual assault requires the individual to recount the event numerous times, possibly undergo an extremely invasive and personal medical examination, potentially face the perpetrator, and endure questioning about their character (Downing et al., 2020; Hahn et al., 2020), overcoming those obstacles requires high levels of self-efficacy, (Bandura, 1999), self-belief and determination, which someone at the point of trauma may struggle to manifest (Reich et al., 2021). The work by Reich et al., (2021) examined victims' reasons for not reporting utilising social media posts that included the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport. The work found seven themes that were associated with non-formal disclosures: concerns surrounding the reactions of others, internal reactions, perpetrator issues, rape myths, observed negative reactions from others, protection of others, and a perceived lack of evidence (Reich et al., 2021). Proving to be extremely salient were factors relating to perceived blame, this was a hindrance to reporting as victims felt they did not have the evidence to prove that an offence had occurred and therefore would not be believed and blamed for the sexual act occurring (Dolev-Cohen et al., 2020; Reich et al., 2021).

The Impact of Rape Myth Acceptance

Disclosures

So, why is it that victims do not disclose? Statistics suggested that fewer than 16% of women and 4% of men who had been raped, reported their assault to the authorities (CSEW, 2020; Pino & Meier, 1999). As discussed, rape myth acceptance plays an integral role in the

acknowledgement of sexual violence, if an individual does not perceive an incident to match their preconceived ideas as to what a sexual assault or rape should entail, then they are unlikely to report to the police (Gidycz & Kelley, 2016; Wilson & Miller, 2016). Furthermore, there are a number of notions posited regarding the non-disclosure of sexual violence which will be explored (Ahrens et al., 2007; DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017; Sabina & Ho, 2014; Wood & Stichman, 2018), given that increasing disclosures could prove fruitful in the bid to reduce offending (Zeuthen & Hagelskjaer, 2013).

Discussing the details of a traumatic event is encouraged by survivors of traumatic events, as it is seen to lead to more positive psychological outcomes (Peter-Hagene & Ullman, 2018; Walsh et al., 2021). However, studies that have focused on the disclosing of sexual violence, have noted several factors that not only influence an individual's decision to disclose, but also the outcome of the disclosure (Walsh et al., 2021). There are several demographic factors and schematic beliefs that are known to influence the disclosure decision. Race is a factor known to be associated with the determination to disclose an assault – white women were found more likely to report than both African American and Latina women (Ahrens et al., 2010; Jacques-Tiura et al., 2010). Furthermore, an individual's age was an influencing factor, with those who were older at the time of the assault being more likely to discuss the events that occurred (Hunter et al., 2012). Personal schemas surrounding 'real rape' was also suggested to influence the decision to disclose; those who were assaulted by a stranger were more likely to discuss the offence than those who fell victim to an acquaintance rape (Ahrens et al., 2010; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012). Giving an illusion of conformity to the stereotypical rape myths that so often are associated with the notion that acquaintance rape is seen as more defensible, and less serious than stranger rape.

In 2011, Miller et al. investigated 144 undergraduate females, all of whom had experienced sexual trauma – of which only one had reported the incident to the police. The study aimed to explore the reasons for nondisclosures to formal sources, such as the authorities (Miller et al., 2011). The study suggested five overarching categories which

determined disclosure. Firstly, it was noted that individuals minimised the event or thought that it was not serious enough to report. Secondly, self-blame and believing the victim should have prevented the assault. The third category was related to the reactions of others and believing they would be stigmatised if they were to report. The fourth category, related to perpetrator empathy and victims not wanting the offender to receive punishment, and fifthly, also suggesting empathy for the offender, was victims believing that the perpetrator did not mean any harm (Miller et al., 2011). These findings were replicated when help-seeking behaviours were examined by Wood and Stichman in 2018. They conveyed that women did not report sexual violence as a result of not acknowledging the event as such, for concerns surrounding their loved ones finding out, and a worry that they would be blamed for the incident and not believed (Sable et al., 2006; Wood & Stichman, 2018). As noted in the aforementioned work, rape myths severely impact an individual's decision to report and disclose the event (Holland, 2020). Two variables that are commonly associated with rape myths are intoxication and physical injury; in 2011 Wolitzky-Taylor et al., established that college women were more likely to report sexual violence when physical injuries were present, and less likely to report when intoxicated (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). It was additionally, indicated that feelings of shame and concerns surrounding victim-blaming were factors for non-disclosures (Spencer et al., 2017).

Most scholars focus on the disclosure to formal sources, however, there is a growing body of work that explores disclosures of sexual violence to non-formal sources, such as family and friends. It's reported that after an incident of sexual violence many victims will turn to informal sources within their social networks for assistance (Ahrens et al, 2007; Dworkin et al., 2016). Most victims turn to informal agencies in the hope of obtaining support, compassion, and perpetrator accountability (Dworkin et al., 2016; Iles et al., 2021). However, this need for support and validation is discouraged by recipients of disclosures when the reactions are less than favourable (Ahrens, 2006; Muldoon et al., 2016). Responses that have been quantified as stigmatising, victim-blaming, condescending, and minimising, have been habitually

witnessed when victims of sexual violence have disclosed (Muldoon et al., 2016; Iles et al., 2021). When such reactions are witnessed, further distress and victimisation occur (Ahrens et al., 2006). These negative reactions from informal sources can and do jeopardise disclosures to formal sources, such as the authorities and medical professionals and therefore hinders any medical treatment needed and judicial progress (Dworkin et al., 2016; Iles et al., 2021). The End-to-End Rape Review that was published in 2021, reported that access to early and continuing support was an essential factor in enabling victims to engage, and remain engaged within the legal system – this includes informal sources. In a bid to improve reactions to disclosures of sexual violence and reduce the self-blaming attitudes of victims, an intervention titled Supporting Survivors and Self (SSS) was developed for college students (Edwards et al., 2020). The primary target was to improve social reactions to disclosures of sexual violence, with a secondary aim of reducing psychological distress in participants who find themselves, subsequent victims. The evaluative study observed favourable results for the intervention, showing improved social reactions to disclosures (Edwards et al., 2020). However, conformity to rape schemas was still evident; participants offered fewer negative reactions when the depicted rape included a stranger compared to a current partner (Persson & Dhingra, 2020). The SSS intervention was noted as the first to explore healthy ways individuals can respond to disclosures of sexual abuse and intimate partner violence, it was designed to ultimately decrease negative social reactions, and increase positive social reactions to disclosures (Edwards et al., 2020). However, as noted this is the only intervention model that has focused on this area, with others opting to concentrate on the legalities of the offences (e.g., legal definitions, statistics), and educating men how 'not to rape' or intervene when they see others doing so, and teaching women how to protect themselves and to spot 'risky' situations. The current programme aimed to incorporate the factual information of the legalities associated with sexual violence and offer information surrounding the skills required to offer emotional support when an individual discloses.

As can be seen, there is an abundance of research exploring why individuals *do not* disclose sexual violence; however, this preoccupation with why not, appears to have eclipsed the question, why *do* people report (Brooks-Hay, 2020; Demers et al., 2017; Patterson & Campbell, 2010). The reasons for reporting and disclosing sexual violence are diverse and do not always fit within the narratives that society suggests – justice-seeking or false allegations (Brooks-Hay et al., 2019; McGlynn, 2011). Brooks-Hay (2020) completed interviews with female rape and sexual assault victims in Scotland. She concluded that few participants noted seeking punishment for the offender as a motivating factor to disclosure. Furthermore, reports were often made with a degree of reluctance, or after being initiated by a third party (Brooks-Hay, 2020). The findings also indicated that the overarching reason for disclosure was to protect other women and due to the moral responsibility of the victim to "do the right thing" (Brooks-Hay, 2020, p. 189). Amongst those interviewed a remarkable finding was the weight of third part influences. Of the 24 people interviewed, 14 were reported by, or steered by a third party and a further five chose to report after consultation with a third party (Brooks-Hay, 2020). This highlights that it is not always a victim's initial choice to report and therefore, when a victim chose to disengage from the legal process this could be a result of them not truly wanting this action to be taken in the first place, or a lack of support throughout the process (Burman & Brooks-Hay, 2018; Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021). Although usually with the best of intentions, third party reporting or initiated reporting can have immeasurable implications for the victim involved, this is especially true in Scotland, wherein 2018 the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS – Scotland's prosecution service) amended their policy on dealing with reluctant complainers in cases of sexual violence to allow victims to be compelled to court to give evidence, regardless of their wishes (COPFS, 2018). The justification for the revised policy was due to an obligation to protect members of the public and a responsibility to take positive action to protect the rights of those who are subjected to rape and serious sexual violence. Although the premise was agreed upon, the actions taken was disputed by various political members and Rape Crisis Scotland. During the Parliamentary meeting on 01 May 2018 in which the motion to refute the policy changes were

discussed, one Parliament member asked whether a rape victim must "ultimately have the right to refuse to give evidence". The Solicitor General disagreed with this statement, citing an obligation to others (Meeting of Parliament, 2018). Objections were quashed, and the revised policy passed. Nevertheless, the policy does state that the complainer's views are a "significant factor", however, the threat of being compelled to testify could result in less reporting to authorities should victims feel the limited control they were afforded within this process has now been taken away (Brooks-Hay, 2020). This does, however, reinforce the need to offer specialised support to victims of sexual violence. Research has shown that offering specialised support, such as from an Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA's) will mean that a victim is 49% more likely to remain engaged with the criminal justice system (Walker et al., 2019). Therefore, this could eliminate the need to compel individuals to testify, as they will feel supported enough to progress with a court case. However, the End-of-End report explored the provision of said services across England and Wales (Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021), it was found that inconsistent support was offered across the country and is not often tailored to the needs of the victims, additionally, there is not enough available (Ministry of Justice and Home Office, 2021).

Impact on Victims' Well-being

The repercussions of sexual assault and rape have deleterious consequences for those who find themselves victims of such offences (Lanthier et al., 2018). Negative health outcomes have been reported from victims of sexual violence (Du Mont et al., 2013; Resnick et al., 2000); including acute physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, gynaecological complications, and mental health difficulties (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)) (Bhuptani & Messman, 2021; Ullman & Brecklin, 2003). Despite the significant and overarching health implications, rape and sexual assault remain extremely underreported, as discussed in Chapter 1 (CSEW, 2020; Hohl & Stanko, 2015; ONS, 2021; Sleath & Bull, 2017). Nevertheless, most victims do disclose to someone, usually an informal source such as friends and family (Ahrens et al., 2010; Dworkin et al., 2016; Iles et al., 2021).

Expectations when offering a disclosure are of such social and emotional support that will help individuals cope with their experiences (Iles et al., 2021; Littleton & Henderson, 2009). However, this expectation of support remains unfulfilled when negative reactions are substantiated (Ullman et al.,2007; Muldoon et al., 2016). Informal recipients of rape and sexual assault disclosures have been found to react in manners consistent with rape myth acceptance (Ahrens, 2006; Muldoon et al., 2016; Iles et al., 2021); unsupportive, stigmatising, victim-blaming, minimising and doubting (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2015; Paul et al., 2014). Receiving such negative reactions can lead to behavioural intentions, such as social isolation (Ahrens & Campbell, 2000; Goffman, 1963; Ullman, 2010). The reaction of marginalisation immediately follows perceived and/or actual stigmatisation, as such may result in the devaluation of interpersonal relationships and therefore increase social isolation (Goffman, 1963). Therefore, depriving the victim of their social network and much needed support whilst recovering from the trauma (Ahrens & Campbell, 2000; Ahrens & Aldana, 2012; Iles et al., 2021; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2015). Additionally, negative reactions from informal sources could then result in further disclosures to formal outlets (i.e., authorities) being less likely (Ahrens et al., 2007; Dworkin & Allen, 2018).

Both positive and negative attitudes towards rape victims and indeed the self-blaming thoughts that victims hold can have pernicious consequences for those who find themselves victims of sexual offences (Egan & Wilson, 2012). This is perpetuated through the responses from those who were privileged to receive a disclosure, and the often negative and unhelpful reactions they in turn gave the disclosing individual (Wilson et al., 2021). However, when listened to and believed victims of sexual violence are found to exhibit fewer negative physical and psychological symptoms (Campbell et al., 2001; Wilson et al., 2021). In 2014, Ullman and Peter-Hagene surmised that when positive social reactions were received by victims they felt increased control over their recovery, which resulted in fewer posttraumatic stress symptoms (Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014). Equally, increased negative social reactions have been associated with greater levels of self-blame amongst victims (Dworkin & Allen, 2018; Ullman,

2010; Wilson et al., 2021). In support of this was the work completed by DeCou et al. in 2017, which established that increased posttraumatic stress symptoms were increased when negative social reactions were observed (DeCou et al., 2017). The validation that is received when positive reactions occur can safeguard against the long-lasting and severe mental health difficulties that can ensue. Particularly, responses that communicate emotional support can help victims increase their perceived control, develop adaptive coping strategies, and aid in emotional and cognitive processing (Ullman, 2010).

In the literature reactions that have been characterised as incorporating nuanced associations with victim-blaming and stigma has been referred to as a 'turning against' response (Gottman & Driver, 2005; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). Therefore, indicating that disclosure recipients, are relying on rape mythology to minimise and justify the actions taken by the alleged perpetrator; leading to a belief held by the victim that the recipient is against them (Gottman & Driver, 2005; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). Those reactions have been described as hurtful by victims and are often associated with social withdrawal, decreased assertiveness, and increased depression (Katz et al., 2010; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). Conversely, inappropriate reactions indicated by blame and controlling reactions were correlated to avoidant coping, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and increased self-blame (Ullman et al., 2007; Relyea & Ullman, 2015).

However, it is not just informal sources that these negative responses are received from. Individuals often seek out health care providers post-sexual violence (WHO, 2013), they are uniquely positioned to play a central role in assisting victims– offering immediate healthcare, gatekeeping to secondary organisations (e.g., counselling, legal services, social care) (WHO, 2013). It has, however, been suggested from those who do disclose to health care providers that the responses received were not supportive and exhibited characteristics associated with rape myth acceptance (Baker et al., 2012; Lanthier et al., 2018). Negative responses to disclosures from health care providers have been attributed to greater levels of posttraumatic stress, depression, and are predictive of maladaptive coping styles (Baker et

al., 2012; Du Mont et al., 2014; Lanthier et al., 2018; Sit & Schuller, 2018). Lanthier et al. (2018) completed a systematic review of the literature focusing on healthcare providers responses to disclosures of sexual assault and rape. It was confirmed that there was a consensus upon what the appropriate response should be. It was concluded that the provision of emotional support, was extremely helpful, and offering tangible information and signposting to other agencies was beneficial when used in conjunction with emotional support (Dunleavy & Slowik, 2012; Lanthier et al., 2018; Lessing, 2005). Unhelpful responses received from healthcare providers were commonly reported to be associated with victim-blaming responses, minimising the event, dismissing allegations, interacting differently with the victim after disclosure, disbelieving the victim, and displaying indifference (Lanthier et al., 2018).

Given the possible ramifications of perceived negative reactions and responses to disclosures of sexual violence, it appears prudent that people are educated on this matter. Informing individuals of the consequences of questioning victims' behaviours or asking what they could have done differently; instead, discussing the benefits of being supportive and offering tangible aid (Sit & Schuller, 2018).

What Can be Done to Challenge Rape Myth Acceptance?

The End-to-End Rape Review (Ministry of Justice & Home Office, 2021) supported the notion that prevention and early intervention were and are vital to reducing sexually violent offences. The implementation of the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) curriculum was noted to help guide the focus on healthy relationships and discuss how to recognise and disclose the abuse for children of primary and secondary school age (Department of Education, 2021). However, it was identified that more needs to be done to challenge the ingrained assumptions of others.

There have been several different approaches utilised to reduce sexual violence, and explore the reduction of negative attitudes towards victims, the majority of which have focused on prevention programmes targeting university and college students (Choate, 2003; Klaw et al., 2005; Foubert, 2011; Salazar et al., 2017). These have primarily been situated within

American colleges, although the outspread of these programmes has not translated to Universities within the UK. The number of different programmes that have been established is vast, with a variation in theoretical approaches, delivery modalities, and length of programme, programme content, who they are delivered to and by, and the resources utilised. Nevertheless, those that have been evaluated have shown some promising results in altering negative attitudes (Bonar et al., 2019; Foubert and Perry, 2007; Kettrey et al., 2019; Salazar et al., 2014).

One intervention programme that has been repeatedly evaluated through experimental testing is Foubert's (2011) *The Men's Programme.* Foubert's work with the implementation of *The Men's Programme* is evidenced as indicting both attitude change and enhanced empathy towards victims of rape. It was also noted that there was a decrease in the likelihood of male college students perpetrating sexual offences (Foubert & Newberry, 2006). *The Men's Programme* (Foubert & Perry, 2007) integrates two theoretical models of behaviour change: belief system theory (Grube et al., 1994) and the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Belief system theory is a design that is comprised to contain participants' antecedent self-suppositions (Grube, et al., 1994). To incorporate this, *The Men's Programme* addresses participants as helpers with the propensity to intervene should they witness a sexual assault and does not refer to them as potential rapists (Foubert & Perry, 2007). The elaboration likelihood model explains that behaviour and attitude change will transpire when the participants are motivated, the information being discussed is pertinent to their circumstances, and when it is understandable (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The emphasis of *The Men's Programme* was to encourage bystander intervention when or if participants witness a potential sexual assault, and to heighten empathy towards survivors of sexual assault. Evaluations of the programme have identified its efficacy in behaviour and attitude change (Foubert & Newberry, 2006); with results also showing sustained attitude change (Foubert & Perry, 2007; Foubert et al., 2007; Foubert et al., 2010b). To investigate the sustainability of attitude alteration Foubert, et al. (2010b) revisited sophomore students who had previously

completed *The Men's Programme* two years earlier. Through utilising a qualitative approach, the participants were requested to answer four questions concerning their attitudes and behaviours since their completion of the programme. Foubert et al. (2010b) concluded the former programme participants had maintained both changes to their perceptions and behaviour. Additionally, the implementation of the programme was attributed to the reduced number of rapes. Nevertheless, *The Men's Programme* has faced criticism due to the lack of rigour within its evaluation (Tharp et al., 2011). Even though, Foubert's and colleagues' investigations have utilised pre-and post-intervention designs in their evaluations they have been critiqued on the grounds that the methods employed violated randomisation and did not include control groups (Tharp et al., 2011). For example, in Foubert et al.'s. (2010b) evaluation, the positive results were from participants two years' post-programme completion, however, the results were analysed in comparison to participants who had undertaken a mandatory rape prevention programme but failed to include a non-programme control group. It is also reasonable to infer those respondents may have subscribed to socially desirable responses due to the sensitive nature of the research and the data only being collected via self-report measures. It is, however, prudent to acknowledge that US colleges must offer some form of sexual assault and rape prevention education for all students; therefore, the potential for a no-intervention control group has been lost.

The Men's Programme (Foubert, 2011) has been researched within college campuses numerous times and has yielded positive results. However, these were unable to be general-ised and translated to a female population due to the design of the programme being for an all-male audience; and predominantly focusing on increasing men's empathy towards women who experience rape, and how they can help if a woman comes to them and discloses a sexual assault (Foubert, 2011). Foubert, therefore, developed *The Women's Programme* (Foubert, 2011). The programme utilises the same theoretical foundation; belief system theory and elaboration likelihood model, and again aimed to increase women's willingness to prevent

rape from happening to other women when they themselves are in a bystander role. The programme additionally included aspects surrounding personal safety and how to spot high-risk situations. In 2010a Foubert et al. completed a study investigating two hundred and seventy-nine female college students. One hundred and eight-nine women participated in *The Women's Programme* and the control group comprised of ninety women. The results concluded that there was a significantly greater increase in anticipated bystander behaviours seen from those who had completed the programme; in addition to a reduction in rape myth acceptance (Foubert et al., 2010a). Although pre and post-test measures were utilised, no follow up was completed, therefore the longevity of the changes are unknown. Additionally, further research has not been undertaken on *The Women's Programme* therefore it is unknown whether these findings can be replicated.

The notion of bystander intervention and its application within rape prevention programmes has become more popular over recent years; with its supposition that treating participants as potential helpers in risky situations instead of potential perpetrators will aid in the efficacy of prevention programmes (Foubert et al., 2010a; Kettrey et al., 2019; Kleinsasser et al., 2015; Lawson et al., 2012; Salazar et al., 2014; Senn & Forrest, 2016; Zapp et al., 2021).

In 2019 Kettrey et al. published a systematic review and meta-analysis of twenty-seven studies which investigated the effects of bystander intervention programmes on the prevention of sexual assault. They looked at studies carried out between 1997 and 2007 and established that bystander programmes do influence knowledge and attitudes for some outcomes. The most prominent effects were on rape myth acceptance and perceived bystander efficacy (Kettrey et al., 2019). Additional conclusions sought that the effects of intervening were also present one to four months' post-intervention. It is noteworthy however that there was little or no evidence of effects on victim empathy or on sexual perpetration itself (Kettrey et al., 2019). Although the authors (Kettrey et al., 2019) did conclude there was no evidence for a reduction in sexual violence after a bystander intervention programme, Salazar et al.'s (2014) work contradicted this deduction. Through still employing a bystander approach the programme utilised by Salazar et al. (2014) was the *RealConsent* programme. This intervention was based on

several theoretical models; social cognitive model (Bandura, 2004), social norms theory (Fabiano et al., 2003), and the bystander model (Banyard et al., 2007), as well as formative research with the target population (Salazar et al., 2017). The *RealConsent* intervention had two primary goals; to increase intervening behaviours that would reduce the risk for sexual violence and prevent sexual violence towards women. Two hundred and fifteen participants were recruited to participate in an online programme with one hundred and twenty-three completing the experimental intervention. Salazar et al. (2014) reported that the intervention group described significantly more prosocial intervening behaviours at the six-month follow-up compared to the control group. Furthermore, those who had completed the *RealConsent* intervention reported experiencing significantly less sexual violence at the six-month follow-up than the control group. The findings highlighted that offering an online intervention was as effective as other approaches which were delivered through face-to-face teaching. However, there was a significant amount of attrition throughout the online programme which was less common in face-to-face interventions.

Bonar et al. (2019) evaluated another face-to-face programme known as the *Relationship Remix*. The *Relationship Remix* endeavours to educate participants to intervene before sexual violence occurs. It hopes to increase protective factors, decrease risk factors and promote positive social change. The programme is underpinned by self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and belief systems theory (Grube et al., 1994). From these theoretical perspectives, the programme sought to associate the participants' behaviours and attitudes concerning sexual health, relationships, and consent to their personal belief systems, whilst enriching their communication skills (Bonar et al., 2019). As a result of the *Relationship Remix* participants reported positive changes in attitudes and knowledge concerning knowing how to ask for consent and relationship communication. It is noteworthy to mention however, there was no control group to compare the effects of the programme against therefore it lacked scientific rigour. Additionally, most participants answered questions regarding knowledge and sexual assault positively before being exposed to any experimental condition. This could have been

a result of the previous contact with prevention programmes or a tendency toward socially desirable responses.

As suggested, there are a number of different approaches that researchers utilise when examining rape prevention and differing theoretical underpinnings for these methodologies. Hillibrand-Gunn et al. (2010) subscribed to the hypothesis of empowering men to be active participants in the prevention of sexual assault rather than passive bystanders; and from this, they explored the *Men as Allies* programme within a high school environment. A quasi-experimental approach was used to assess rape myth acceptance, rape preventative behaviours, and peer behaviours. Findings suggested that rape myth acceptance in male participants was associated with an unwillingness to engage in preventative actions if they witnessed a potential sexual assault; as well as perceiving their peers to hold these same views. (Hillenbrand-Gunn et al., 2010). Male participants who engaged in the intervention demonstrated lower levels of rape myth adherence after completing the programme. Furthermore, those participating in the intervention saw a positive shift in the assessments of their peer's rape supportive perceptions; this was maintained at the follow-up stage four weeks after completion (Hillenbrand-Gunn et al., 2010). Although the study offers applications of validity to real-life settings due to the locality in which it was conducted; some considerations could not be controlled for. There was a lack of randomisation when assigning participants to the assessed groups, as this was established based on the male to female ratio in the given classes. Additionally, it was unknown whether there were interactions between the two conditions, allowing for the possibility of the experimental condition to share information learnt with the no-intervention control group.

Irrespective of these limitations positive change in rape myth acceptance was found and was supported by Kernsmith and Hernandez-Jozefowicz (2011). Evaluations were conducted on *The First Step Peer Education Programme,* which was designed in conjunction with domestic violence and sexual assault agencies and high school staff. The goal of the programme was to provide peer education to male high school students, again placing emphasis

on their roles in the prevention of sexual assaults and aiming to decrease rape myth acceptance, stereotypical attitudes and victim-blaming (Kernsmith & Hernandez-Jozefowicz, 2011). A significant change in attitudes from the completion of the rape prevention programme was reported, these changes were also sustained at a three-month-follow up. It was also noted that these attitude changes were seen for both male and female participants (Kernsmith & Hernandez-Jozefowicz, 2011).

These two studies were conducted within a high school environment, however not all research completed at this target population has yielded the same positive results. Baiocchi et al. (2017) investigated thirty primary schools in the Nairobi region of Kenya, with participants ranging from ten to sixteen. They utilised gender-specific interventions, although only evaluated the intervention aimed at females. It was concluded that self-efficacy was improved after the completion of the invention and reports of single assaults were reduced. This was not consistent however for what was deemed 'high risk' situations, and no clarification was given as to what would be classified as a 'high risk' situation (Baiocchi et al., 2017). It has been proposed that promoting rape prevention work in secondary/high schools would be an ideal time, as only raising this issue when young men and women reach college age may unintentionally miss the auspicious time to instil rape supportive attitudes (DeGue et al., 2014). Further support for this comes from the ONS (2016) where it was reported that in the UK 12,253 under sixteen's were victims of completed rapes in 2016 alone. Therefore, when 40% of victims reach college, they will have already encountered their first experience of sexual violence (Black et al., 2011). Although some researchers have begun looking at employing prevention programmes pre-college/university there has yet to be follow-up evaluations implemented to establish whether these changes continue into college life, which is a consideration for future research.

Continuing with the research into prevention strategies for college campuses was Klaw et al. (2005) their examination of challenging rape culture through acquaintance rape education established "fundamental changes in students' world view, self-concept, and interpersonal patterns of relating" (Klaw et al., 2005 p.58) is from where action against rape

emerges. Their work took on a different perspective to the bystander approach and embodied feminist identity development (Downing & Roush, 1985). This postulates that effectively changing rape-related actions and attitudes can be accomplished through the stages of feminist identity development (Downing & Roush, 1985). Stage one of the theory is, *passive acceptance*, this suggests that women accept or actively refute sexism within society. Stage two, *revelation*, offers a belief that women become to understand that discrimination is prevalent, and this leads women to change their perspective. In stage three, women tend to get involved in female-orientated networks, this stage is known as, *embeddedness-emanation* and it is during this stage that women gain an understanding of the oppression of gender equality. The final stage, stage four known as *active commitment*, sees women inserting their new feminist identity into social activism (Downing & Roush, 1985; Klaw et al., 2005). Klaw et al. (2005) embedded this theory within the *Campus Acquaintance Rape Education (CARE)* programme. The focus of *CARE* was to connect the cultural context of gender inequality with the issue of sexual violence. By applying a qualitative approach Klaw et al. (2005) extracted themes from the participants' responses during a group discussion and reaction papers. Those reactions papers included participants' experiences of the *CARE* programme at different intervals during a semester. The first reaction paper was completed two months into the semester, the participants were asked to respond to how the programme had affected their life. On the final, day of the course participants completed another reaction paper, this time they were asked to evaluate the *CARE* programme and describe their experiences (Klaw et al., 2005). Awareness, emotion, and action were three themes that stemmed from the subsequent analysis. Evaluations highlighted strong effects within the cognitive field of change; with participants placing persuasive emphasis on the awareness of the existence and prevalence of sexual assault once completing *CARE* (Klaw et al., 2005). Throughout the analysis, the authors summarised that the most prominent emotional reactions noted were those of helplessness, anger and frustration, with some participants detecting an increase in their empathy towards victims (Klaw et al., 2005). Although this particular conclusion was critiqued by Anderson and Whiston (2005), as they inferred a lack of significance for

intervention programmes on rape empathy. Nevertheless, Klaw et al. (2005) determined that *CARE* participants possessed superior coping skills relating to acquaintance rape and a greater motivation to tackle this. Resulting from these themes it can be extrapolated that *CARE* fostered positive reactions to the concept of sexual victimisation and to those that encounter sexual assault (Klaw et al., 2005).

As noted, most prevention programmes have been evaluated against and targeted for a university population; however, in 2016, Smith et al. examined rape myth acceptance of campus police officers in Texas. Campus police officers were requested to attend training on victim sensitivity and the role of drugs and alcohol with sexual violence and complete the IRMAS. It was concluded that those who attended the training were significantly less likely to advocate rape myths than those who had not (Smith et al., 2016). It was, however, confirmed that rape myth acceptance had the most influence on perceptions of culpability and case progression (Smith et al., 2016).

The main focus of prevention methods has been on exploring the abundance of secondary and tertiary prevention methods; however, primary prevention methods are also employed and are often seen in the form of poster campaigns and adverts (Carline et al., 2018). Although the target audience for prevention interventions are generally mixed-gendered, there are a number of scholars that have offered a variety of single-gendered interventions (Camp et al., 2018; Salazar et al., 2017), primary prevention campaigns, especially those within the UK, are commonly tailored towards a female population, reinforcing the notion that sexual violence can be prevented by women acting is a risk-averse manner (Stern, 2010; Carline et al., 2018). However, Carline et al. (2018) examined Liverpool City Council's campaign which was solely targeted at young men, aged 18-24 and aimed to reduce alcohol-related sexual violence. Through posters being displayed in male toilets and coaters placed in the city's Student Unions and other student-frequented bars and clubs; the campaign aimed to bring awareness to the topic of consent, especially concerning consent whilst intoxicated, and to raise awareness of the impact of rape and sexual assault (Carline et al.,

2018). Six focus groups with a total of 41 male participants were conducted, in addition, to on-street surveys of 321 male participants: all aged 18-24. It was concluded that some participants did engage in stereotypical thinking in relation to sex; there was an expressed uncertainty concerning the definition of consent, with some discussing how to convince an individual to have sex (Carline et al., 2018). Although the campaign's male-focused was positively noted, the poster itself was deemed somewhat negative and accusatory by participants. Nevertheless, there were observed masculine schemas present including participants noting victim-blaming discourses. These findings resonate with prior research (Camp et al., 2018; Choate, 2003; Foubert et al., 2010b; Salazar et al, 2017). Discussions surrounding the possibility of being 'led-on', or 'alcohol consumption' were noted as contributing factors that participants suggested needed to be accounted for (Carline et al., 2018).

As seen, there has been numerous differing perspectives and theoretical approaches used in a bid to understand and prevent sexual violence. However, few have chosen a method whereby they have asked those who will be become potential participants what content and delivery methods they feel would be most beneficial. It has become apparent over recent years with the growing number of student protests surrounding sexual assaults, the importance and need of utilising this approach. In 2017, students from a UK University placed underwear featuring quotes written by survivors of rape and sexual assaults around their campus in a bid to gain additional support for those who became victims. They aimed to have introduced dedicated rape support services which were advertised to the campus population (England, 2017). From this, the significance of giving a voice to those who are affected by sexual assault and rape can be seen, and it is clear that students want to be heard and their views implemented. One research team that have exploited this avenue were Salazar et al. (2017) when developing the *RealConsent* programme. Focus groups were conducted with undergraduate males to identify themes that would inform an online sexual violence prevention programme. Salazar et al. (2017) summarised that negative views emerged that contribute to

the occurrence of sexual violence. Prominent themes that arose were around consent concerning alcohol consumption, and this was viewed with a negative connotation. Overall, Salazar et al.'s (2017) findings were consistent with previous research (Camp et al., 2018; Choate, 2003; Foubert et al., 2010b) and highlighted the themes around sexual encounters and a lack of communication, misinterpretations and incorrect conjectures. Consequently, the *RealConsent* programme was developed in conjunction with the social cognitive model (Bandura, 2004), social norms theory (Fabiano et al., 2003) and the bystander model (Banyard et al., 2007). Camp et al. (2018) also employed this approach as a foundation for the enhancement of rape prevention strategies. Their overall conclusions highlighted the need to treat the problem of sexual perpetration to all students and not single out men as offenders and women as potential victims. Additional, credit was given to not just utilising single sessions, but that continuous awareness is imperative especially around the complexity of consent (Camp et al., 2018).

The current exploration exercised this approach and aimed to determine what attitudes UK University students believed society holds towards victims of sexual assault and rape, as well as ascertaining a foundation for the development of an information-sharing programme. With the UK currently employing a new mandatory Relationship and Sex Education curriculum for schools which were implemented in September 2020, this was felt especially relevant at this time. The guidelines suggest that all primary school-aged children should be taught the basics of positive relationships, and this would then be built upon in secondary education with further relationships and the addition of sex education (Department of Education, 2021). The guidelines state that during sex education pupils will be informed about the legal perspectives relating to sex; this will include consent and the definitions of rape and sexual assault. Although ensuring these areas are taught to young people in the UK is an encouraging step forward and will hopefully instil pupils with positive attitudes regarding relationships and sex, the guidelines offer no clear direction as to how this education should be implemented. Suggestions are made to incorporate aspects of the education into already established

classes, taught by those familiar to the pupils (Department of Education, 2021). This teaching method has been found by some researchers to lack the desired outcome when evaluating rape-related attitudes and behavioural intentions (Vladutiu, et al., 2011).

It is clear from the aforementioned work, that the majority of intervention programmes focus on the prevention of sexual violence, rather than exploring how individuals respond to disclosures of sexual violence and perceptions of rape schemas. As a result, the Supporting Survivors and Self intervention (SSS) was developed (Edwards et al., 2021), in a bid to increase positive social reactions and reduce negative reactions to disclosures of sexual violence, with the secondary aim of decreasing self-blame in victims. The intervention was delivered online to a total of 1,268 student participants in the US. Results indicated overall improved social reactions, albeit, still present was rape schemas in the form of increased negative reactions when scenarios included an intimate partner assault rather than a stranger (Edwards et al., 2020). A follow-up study completed in 2021 (Edwards et al., 2021), explored the effects of the programme on subsequent victims of sexual violence. No intervention effect was reported for levels of self-blame amongst the participants, however, there was an overall reduction in levels of posttraumatic stress symptoms, this included avoidance strategies suggesting that intervention participants were more likely to seek social and professional support post-assault. It was determined that the SSS intervention may help individuals who are later victimised not internalise victim-blaming attitudes (Edwards et al., 2021), it could therefore be theorised that any victim of sexual violence regardless, of whether this occurred after the proposed intervention would benefit from the engagement and result in increased support seeking behaviours (Senn et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2021).

Whilst it is clear that there is popularity for rape prevention programmes in the US and this has become mandatory for colleges to offer some form of education; the UK University system is somewhat trailing behind in this field. There have been many individual institutions that have introduced workshops and training sessions, primarily focusing on consent, with all but two offering them as non-compulsory options. Additionally, the education

offered received mixed reviews especially from male attendees; with some claiming that the workshops were patronising and accusatory (Gender and Policy Insights, 2018). This conforms with the notions that some researchers have concluded, suggesting that training and interventions should take an approach in which participants are seen as potential helpers, not perpetrators (Foubert, 2011). Although as noted, there has been little in the way of intervention work within UK universities, there has been several campaigns and research conducted aiming to specifically target the concerns of sexual violence within UK Further and Higher education (National Students Union, 2019; National Students Union, 2021; University of York, 2022). In 2019, the National Students Union (NUS) completed a report assessing sexual violence in Further Education. The report utilised two approaches to understand students' sexual violence: a survey of 544 UK-based students in colleges and three focus groups at colleges within the UK (N=25). The survey categorised unwanted sexualised behaviours and experiences into four areas: 1) sexual harassment, 2) domestic abuse, 3) sexual assault, and 4) rape. Overall, seventy-five percent of respondents reported at least one unwanted sexual experience. Forty-eight percent of participants stated they had experienced unwanted sexual comments at least once, and thirty-seven percent said these remarks were received via social media or text messages, and seventeen percent noted they have been stalked. Of those surveyed one in seven had experienced attempted rape, with one in eight having experienced completed rape, and half of those noted hey had experienced it more than once (National Students Union, 2019). While it was indicated that seventy-five percent of the students surveyed had experienced some form of unwanted sexual violence, only fourteen percent suggested they reported it to anyone. The overwhelming rationale for non-disclosure was "they did not think it was serious enough" (National Students Union, 2019, p.8). A fifth of those who did not report their experiences to anyone noted it was due to a fear of not being believed and twenty-five percent said they felt too embarrassed (National Students Union, 2019). The report confirmed that experiences of sexual violence were heavily gendered with women significantly more likely to experience any form of unwanted sexual behaviour than others (National Students Union, 2019). Although, this piece of research was a much-needed assessment of

the problem of sexual violence within UK further education, the sample size was small in comparison to the number of UK further education students at the time; in the year 2019/20 there were a total of 2,697,000 (HESA, 2022) individuals enrolled within the UK's further education system and this NUS report surveyed 544 students, therefore rendering generalisability improbable. It could also be suggested, however, that students enrolled with Further Education tend to be younger (aged 16-18) and live within the family home, therefore rendering the likelihood of sexual assault lower. Nevertheless, as a result of the highlighted issue, the University of York launched a campaign to address the campus-based sexual violence. *The Last Taboo* (University of York, 2022) was founded in November 2020 by two University of York students and aimed to address the issues of sexual assault and harassment at UK Higher Education institutions. *The Last Taboo* also aims to update and inform university policy, improve the experiences of reporting, and educating students around the topic of sexual violence (University of York, 2022). As the conversation started to achieve the interest of others, *The Last Taboo* has expanded to not only focus on those at the University of York, but it has grown into a national campaign. The co-founders of the project encouraged others to establish branches within their own institutions, giving them a format and framework from which to work (University of York, 2022).

As discussed previously, there are many reasons as to why a victim may choose to not disclose their experiences of sexual victimisation (Ahrens et al., 2007; Dworkin et al., 2016; Lorenz et al., 2017)), with many scholars noting the fear of the reactions from those they disclose to being at the forefront (Orchowski et al., 2013; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2015). It is reported that in general many victims choose to disclose their assault to family, friends, and significant others instead of formal sources, such as the authorities (Ahrens et al., 2007; Campbell et al., 2011; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). Whilst it is suggested that responses from formal sources are perceived more positively than from formal sources, there are still those who engage in overtly undesirable social reactions (e.g., victim-blame, rape myth acceptance) (Lorenz et al., 2017; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). Lorenz et al. (2017) explored the dynamics of

social support and relationships from both the perspectives of disclosers and the informal recipients using face-to-face interviews. Thematic analysis was used to extrapolate themes from the obtained data; these were coded between the different relationship types (e.g., family, friend, or significant other) (Lorenz et al., 2017). Lorenz et al.'s (2017) work concluded that friends provided more positive reactions overall compared to family and significant others. When the reactions of significant others (e.g., spouses, long-term partners) were assessed, it was found that survivors appeared to justify the negative reactions of their significant other, and rationale their responses even when they were completely victim-blaming (Lorenz et al., 2017). The characteristics of male spouses and long-term partners responses to disclosures focused on victim-blaming attitudes – questioning whether the discloser asked for the assault to take place, and condemning disclosers for their actions (Lorenz et al., 2017). These assertions can be attributed to Janoff-Bulman's (1979) theory of behavioural blame characteristics; in which she describes a notion by which an individual assigns blame based on the behaviours and actions of the victim. Although these behavioural blame characteristics were present, Lorenz et al. (2017) reported that victims excused those assertions and appraised reactions as better and more optimistic than they actually were. This victim behaviour was also interpreted by Ahrens and Aldana (2012), who speculated that due to the nature of intimate relationships, people are motivated to see the best in their spouses and significant others, and therefore, will aim to translate responses positively to others (Ahrens & Aldana, 2012). Ahrens and Aldana (2012) interviewed 103 victims of sexual victimisation, 76 of whom had disclosed to an informal source of support. Findings concluded that positive social reactions from informal sources were healing, however, negative responses were upsetting (Ahrens & Aldana, 2012). However, when reactions received were reported as a mixture of both positive and negative reactions, with those negative assertions being interpreted as supportive when received from close social contact (Ahrens & Aldana, 2012). This is in support of the finding from Lorenz et al. (2017) who highlighted that victims would consider negative responses as positive when from a significant other. Therefore, confirming that victims contemplate the nature of the relationship dynamic when interpreting the social

reactions they receive in response to disclosure. Other works exploring disclosure recipient factors and victim factors (Edwards et al., 2020) have contributed to the knowledge that behavioural characteristics (Janoff-Bulman, 1979), and victim characteristics (e.g., gender, race) are significantly associated with negative social reactions. It is important to note that initially receiving negative social reactions can lead to survivors being silenced and stopping the reporting to authorities (Ahrens et al., 2006; Lorenz et al., 2017). These findings underscore the need for intervention programmes with prospective informal disclosure recipients to address the consequences of negative social reactions and rape myth acceptance. It is important to improve knowledge around sexual violence, allowing potential disclosure recipients the ability to offer tangible support as well as emotional.

With this in mind, the current study aimed to develop an educational information-sharing programme to enhance attitudes towards victims of sexual violence so that recipients of disclosures are better prepared to respond in non-traumatising ways. This aim was achieved through the following objectives: a) to review the literature to explore the disclosure experiences of survivors of sexual violence; b) to explore community members' perspectives on what information and format they think would be beneficial in an information sharing programme that aims to improve attitudes and behaviours towards survivors of sexual violence; c) to co-produce, with survivors of sexual violence a new online resource to help people develop a more empathic awareness of sexual victimisation; and finally d) to assess the perceived efficacy and acceptability of the new intervention.

Chapter 3: Methodological Approach

Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of the Project

The theoretical framework that rationalises, influences, and shapes the methodological approach employed in this study, the epistemological and ontological position is first detailed. Ontology is concerned with what exists in the world about which humans can acquire knowledge (Mason, 2002). The ontological aspects studied in the current research are the insights, estimations, and evaluations of the participants. An epistemology is a framework or theory for the study of knowledge and explores how knowledge is gathered (Stanley & Wise, 2002). This study can be considered as adopting the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) epistemological and ontological framework to inform the methodology (Damschroder et al., 2009; Jolley, 2020; Safaeinili et al., 2020).

There are many implementation theories available for use when translating research to practice (Breimaier et al., 2015; Damschroder et al., 2009; Pollastri et al., 2020), and many of those have proven effective in healthcare-related research (Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Leeman et al., 2007). Theories of implementation allow for the evaluation of not only the ultimate outcome of an intervention but to assess an intervention at multiple stages throughout the process (e.g., delivery, patient level, provider level) (Damschroder et al., 2009)

The CFIR is a meta-theoretical framework that was developed to guide efficient implementation of evidence-based practices from design to evaluation and is frequently cited in the appraisals of single mediations (Safaeinili et al., 2020). There are five domains of the CFIR, 1) Intervention characteristics: this is concerned with the implementation of the intervention, whether internal or external. Additionally, the quality of the intervention is assessed. Also, this first construct explores the design of the implementation; ensuring an evidence-based approach to the design has been followed, in addition to making sure that it is adaptable to different settings and circumstances. It also considers the aesthetics of the intervention – ensuring it was well presented and clear to contributors. 2) Outer setting: the interests are with external influences, such as the needs of those participating, or whether the

intervention is influenced by outside agencies or due to an identified need. 3) Inner setting: this domain explores the quality of the communication, what norms or values may influence the intervention and the perceived importance or the implementation, and accessibility. 4) Characteristics of individuals: points from this area are related to the attitudes towards and knowledge of the intervention, belief in the ability to implement the intervention, and any personal attributes which may affect the implementation. 5) Process of implementation: this is the final domain that explores the stages of implementing the interventions – planning, implementing, reflecting, and evaluating (Jolley, 2020; Safaeinili et al, 2020). Damschroder et al. (2009) reported that researchers utilising the CFIR can select constructs from the model that are most applicable for their particular work and use those to guide "diagnostic assessments of implementation context, evaluate implementation progress, and help explain findings" (Damschroder et al., 2009, p2). The constructs can be used as implementation and evaluation principles in three different ways, firstly to raise awareness for potential influencing factors, secondly, to enable the analysis of methods and outcomes, and finally, to aid in the explanation of the outcomes (Breimaier et al., 2015). Since the publication of the CFIR in 2009 (Damschroder et al., 2009) it has been applied by a number of scholars to help understand outcomes of research (Damschroder & Lowery, 2012; Damschroder & Hagedorn, 2011; Sorensen & Kosten, 2011). In 2012, Damschroder and Lowery used CFIR to analyse the success of a weight management programme run within a Veterans' centre in the US, it was also observed how the CFIR could locate influential components from the implementation process, and could, therefore, offer examples to clarify the distinctions between constructs that were recognised as being related during the CFIR application (Damschroder & Lowery, 2012). It was concluded by Ilott et al. (2013) that the CFIR was easily accessible and demonstrated high applicability within a variety of health care settings; as well as being able to locate the nuances within the contexts being observed (Ilott et al., 2013).

The current study aims to utilise the CFIR framework to design and evaluate a novel online information-sharing programme. The basic tenet of this approach indicates that the

information-sharing programme will alter participants' views upon sexual violence (e.g., increase individuals' appropriate attitudes towards survivors of sexual violence and the ways in which they respond to disclosures of sexual victimisation). The use of theory-based and pre-specified constructs will aid in generalising outcomes and integrating them with the outcomes of others within the field. The CFIR provides a catalogue of defined constructs that can influence the implementation of programmes, as noted those constructs are categorised into five domains, and when applied to this study can be explained by: the characteristics of the Information-sharing programme (e.g., evidence-based, formative research completed for the design, survivor involvement); the outer setting (e.g., subject group need, prevalence of sexual violence within the UK, negative experiences received when disclosing); the inner setting (e.g., online intervention, accessible, perceived importance of intervention due to statistics of under-reporting); characteristics of the individual (e.g., knowledge and attitudes of the participants towards the intervention, focus groups, interviews with survivors, evaluative questions, feedback on the efficacy and acceptability of the programme); and the process used to implement the programme (e.g., quality of planning – focus groups, piloted by survivors, feedback obtained from participants).

Chapter 4: Phase 1: Focus Groups

The aim of phase 1 of the project was to utilise a community sample to gain insights into their thoughts on sexual violence intervention programmes. This was achieved through the objectives of considering what content should be included within an information-sharing programme, how an intervention should be delivered and by exploring the effects such a programme would have on attitudes towards victims of sexual violence.

Methodology

Design

Qualitative data was gathered using both mixed-gendered and single-gendered focus groups, where participants engaged in facilitated discussions about what material they believed should be included within an information-sharing programme, as well as how best to deliver the said programme. A qualitative design was chosen to allow for the exploration and development of understanding of the central phenomenon being discussed (Creswell & Guetterman, 2020). By utilising focus groups, the research was able to guide the discussion without, asking specific group members questions; this therefore, allowed for the interactions within the group to be observed and generate conversations (Smithson, 2000). Participants also explored both their thoughts and feelings on sexual violence, in addition to how they believe the public perceive victims. The video-recorded focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim and then subjected to thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This method of analysis allowed for themes within the text to be extrapolated and greater meanings to be inferred (Clare & Braun, 2017; Creswell & Guetterman, 2020).

Participants

Twenty-nine undergraduate psychology students (23 females, 6 male) participated in one of five focus groups in return for course credit. Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling techniques. The details of the research were advertised on the University's research participation system, which permits interested students to sign up

for participation. This information was listed on the University's research participation system for one month giving prospective participants time to read the information and decide whether they would like to participate. This timeframe was used due to the time constraints of a PhD project. The groups were offered at set times and dates and participants chose their desired group, this therefore, generated the number and gender mix of participants within each focus group. As a result of only one male participant volunteering to participate within the elected timeframe, and additionally a male only focus group was delivered to increase the representation of males within the study. The study was introduced by detailing the aims of the research - to explore what material should be included within a specialised online information-sharing programme on the effects of and attitudes towards sexual assault and rape.

The Focus Groups

There was a total of five focus groups; the sample size for each group was seven, seven, four, six and five respectively, with each group discussion lasting between 50 to 75 minutes. The first four groups were conducted in person and on campus. Three were all female and the fourth consisted of a mixed-gendered group. The fifth group was male-only and was completed via Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions not allowing for in-person meetings at the time. As noted, the male only group was considered due to the underrepresented number of males that had participated up to that point (n=1), due to the time limits of the project a male only group was used to gather as many male participants as possible. However, by including a male only group, dominant masculine discussions became prominent, which may have otherwise been masked by the original recruitment strategy.

Materials

A focus group topics sheet (appendix 1) was utilised throughout all the groups to ensure continuity between the groups. This listed the different subjects to be discussed within the focus groups – general attitudes towards victims of sexual violence, scenarios, a

descriptive overview of established programmes, final thoughts on what should be included in a new programme. The topic sheet was developed with the CFIR constructs in mind (Damschroder et al., 2009) characteristics of individuals, inner setting, outer setting, intervention characteristics, and process. For example, the characteristics of the individuals were noted were exploring participants views on the vignettes; the inner setting explored the method in which the programme is delivered (i.e., online, face to face); the outer setting discussed societal views on sexual violence and the impact of this; the fourth construct intervention characteristics were explored when the previous interventions were included, discussing the pros and cons of such interventions; and finally, process was considered when requesting feedback from participants on what, overall, should be incorporated within such a programme. Also, participants were shown written depictions of five rape scenarios (appendix 2), so that initial thoughts and feeling surrounding illustrated sexual violence could be elicited and discussed. One presented an allegation of a rape being made by a female after she had been intoxicated on a night out. The second depicted a male being raped in a homophobic attack, which also included a physical assault. The third scenario portrayed a female who had met a male online and during the first date went to his hotel room for what she thought was to collect his wallet when he raped and physically assaulted her. The fourth scenario presented a female being raped by a stranger in an alley and receiving threats against her life if she disclosed the assault. And finally, the fifth scenario illustrated a male being raped by his friend after his romantic advances were rejected. Although the accounts used were fictional, they were developed by the researcher from a consolidation of different reported narratives the researcher had heard whilst working at a UK Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). Individuals can attend a SARC to receive support following sexual violence (Mountain Healthcare, 2005). These vignettes were formulated to offer different offence, perpetrator, and victim characteristics; as well including some stereotypical rape myths. These vignettes offered a thought-provoking manner in which to elicit information from participants on the topics noted and stimulate discussions.

The participants were also given an overview of two established rape prevention programmes: *The Men's Programme* and *The Women's Programme* (Foubert, 2011) (appendix 3). By affording participants the opportunity to review two already established and researched programmes, they could discuss and comment on the elements that they felt worked well and those that they felt did not work. It was hoped that by completing this task new and novel ways of challenging an individual's thinking around sexual violence could be highlighted; as well as confirming how best to deliver such as intervention.

Procedure

Prior to the focus groups commencing participants were advised of the sensitive nature of the research and topic being discussed, and to be mindful of the potential experiences of the other participants in the room. This had also been highlighted in the participant information sheet that was given to all participants ahead of the group session.

Informed consent was sought from all participants. After informed consent was obtained the focus groups commenced using the structure of the focus groups topics sheet. Participants were firstly asked to generally describe their views and what they believe society's views are towards victims of rape and sexual assault. The second stage of the focus groups was to work through each of the sexual assault scenarios and look at what assumptions may be drawn concerning each; why these views may be held and what impact they might have and on whom. The third stage of the focus groups examined the aforementioned Men's and Women's Programmes. Participants were asked to describe what aspects they thought were useful and what they thought might be missing. Finally, the focus groups were asked how best they thought an intervention should be delivered and what components could be included to have the greatest impact on improving attitudes towards victims of sexual violence.

Ethical considerations

Before the commencement of the focus groups participants were fully informed of the sensitive nature of the topic being discussed. An overview of the project and its purpose was

included in the advertisement placed on the University's research participation system, as well as on the participant information sheet (appendix 4) outlining the purpose of the research before consent being sought. All participants were required to complete an informed consent form (appendix 5), indicating their decision to continue with the research and their understanding of their right to withdraw and leave the group at any point. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw their individual statements by contacting the researcher, up until 01 May 2020 when transcriptions would be completed, and the analysis would have commenced.

With regards to anonymity, participants were informed that their identity would only be known to the researcher and those who were present in their groups. Additionally, no identifying information was requested during the focus groups and participants were referred by numbers throughout the transcripts. At the end of each focus group, all participants were given a debriefing statement (appendix 6) which included contact details of support organisations and was also informed that the researcher was available for discussions should anyone feel they needed to ask questions about any of the content from the focus group discussion on a one-to-one basis. However, this was not requested by any participants.

Planned analysis

Thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) was the chosen qualitative method used to analyse and interpret the data gathered from the focus groups. It is argued that thematic analysis is a qualitative method that can be used across a range of epistemologies and research questions (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is useful for summarising the key components of large data sets – it compels the researcher to take a structured approach to review the data, ensuring that not only are the patterns within it identified, but also encompasses a method for analysing, structuring, portraying, and conveying the themes derived within a data set (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher concluded that thematic analysis provides comprehensible and systematic procedures for producing codes and themes from a given data set. Initial codes provide a framework for

themes to be generated, and patterns of meaning to be explored. This methodology enables an analysis of participants' lived experiences, opinions and perceptions, and the behaviours which they exhibit (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017).

From the current data set obtained via the focus groups, the data were interpreted into several reoccurring themes, this process was completed by a single coder – the researcher, however, this was a PhD project and therefore, common practice. Interpretation of the data began by transcribing the data and gaining a familiarisation with the data. Initial codes were generated which related to the research questions of what attitudes are currently held by society about sexual assault and rape victims, what material should be included within an intervention and how should an intervention be delivered. These codes were then collated, and potential themes were generated. The next stage of the analysis included ensuring these themes supported all aspects of the transcripts, and as a result, sub-themes were developed. Finally, the decisive themes were arranged in accordance with the data gathered and supporting extracts obtained (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017) (appendix 7 demonstrates the thematic analysis). By utilising thematic analysis, the underpinning connotations and complexities within the material could be inferred, without the limitations and restrictions of a rating scale (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Phase 1: Interpretation and Analysis

Four themes originated from the data which co-existed within each group. These were rape myths and negative attitudes with the sub themes of victim blaming, notions of 'real rape', male stereotypes, and intoxication, the second theme was consent with the sub-theme perpetrator empathy, the third theme derived was media, this was separated in two additional sub-themes; social media and news, and public safety versus fear, and the final theme was education with the two sub-themes of general education and awareness. Initially, it was felt that the data could be interpreted and analysed in concordance with five themes, the additional theme being perpetrator empathy. However, after further exploration the data that indicative of a tendency to exonerate perpetrators, it was considered best analysed as a sub-theme of

consent due to the context in which participants discussed it. As a result, four themes were subsequently settled upon. Participants of the groups were clear throughout that some of the comments made were not necessarily views and opinions held by themselves but ones they felt are held within society.

Rape Myths and Negative Attitudes

Throughout all the focus groups a salient point raised was the tendency for individuals to blame victims of sexual violence. There was a clear association between victims of sexual assaults and rape and that of negative attitudes; as well as the assumptions derived from stereotypical rape myths. This theme was therefore categorised into four additional sub-themes; victim-blaming, notions of 'real rape', male stereotypes, and intoxication.

The groups indicated that society places blame upon those who have fallen prey to perpetrators of sexual assault suggesting that negative connotations are held in association with their character, behaviour, and the way they dress.

"…well she was asking for it, she had a short skirt on or you know she was flirting too much…" - focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

"… I think a lot of people view them as its their fault…" – focus group 4, participant 23 (male).

It was also indicated that victims would be left with the label of being a 'victim' and this would then translate into their new identity. Highlighting this notion was the postulation that the victim of assault would, therefore, be shamed and treated differently by society due to reporting and disclosing their ordeal.

"… I think we do criticise the people that are going through this… somehow, we are blaming them and somehow I think it is their fault as well…" – focus group 3, participant 16 (female).

These ideas of victim-blaming were particularly prevalent within scenario three. This scenario explored a woman who had met a man she had been talking to via an online dating website. He had told her he needed to go to his hotel room to get his forgotten wallet, where he proceeded to assault her physically and sexually, resulting in rape. The focus group participants stated that they believed a sexual assault occurred, however, they felt that pessimistic and destructive beliefs could be held concerning the victim. It was deemed that the victim involved would be looked upon negatively due to placing trust in someone that she had only spoken online, as well as accompanying him to his hotel room.

"… I do think some people would think she is partly to blame as she went to meet someone she'd never met before…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

"… I think she's been clearly very naïve" – focus group 1, participant 3 (female).

"… well she needs to take responsibility for her actions. She went to his hotel" – focus group 3, participant 15 (female).

"… this will be seen badly. People will think 'why did you go to his hotel room?'" – focus group 5, participant 27 (male).

Although the focus group participants did indicate they believed society's substantial conformity to rape myth acceptance in terms of victim-blaming; they have also highlighted the adherence to the 'real rape' (Estrich, 1987) stereotype – sexual violence occurs in dark alleys, committed by a stranger and physical injuries will be seen. This was shown through the suppositions made about the scenarios that depicted physical assaults as well as sexual assaults and that of a young female being raped by a stranger, at night, and enduring threats to her life (scenarios two and four respectively).

"… I don't think there would be too much victim blaming at all. You know she's young as well, it's the classic case as well… I think she would get more support than in some of the other classic instances…" – focus group 3, participant 19 (female).

"… Yeah, it only happens down a dark alley by a complete stranger…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

"… This one reminds me of when you hear the word rape, this is what comes into your head…" – focus group 1, participant 4 (female).

It was also highlighted that when an assault occurs in a way that conforms to the stereotypical format there would be less room for doubt as to whether a false allegation was being made.

"… I think when it's violent it's easier to have evidence, so those people that doubt him there's physical evidence…" – focus group 4, participant 23 (male).

"… as well he's hit him in the face so it's going to be quite visible to him and to everyone else whether he's embarrassed by it or not, or whether he just puts down to an assault people can see something so that automatically makes it better for him…" – focus group 4, participant 19 (female).

Throughout the theme of negative attitudes and rape myths, it was identified that participants were recognising traditional male stereotypes within the context of scenarios (scenarios two and five). The notions that were constructed emphasised the points of male victims being unable to disclose their assault for fear of the ramifications to their masculinity; and what society perceives they should have done in those situations.

"… He might not want to tell anyone cos he's thinking I should have been able to fight him off, stand up for myself…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

"... men don't do that. You know, we're strong, we don't need to talk about that you know if it's happened to you people won't take it as seriously cos people don't see you as vulnerable as a woman…" – focus group 1, participant 7 (female).

Additionally, it was felt that male victims are placed with an unrealistic sense of what masculinity is, and if they are not deemed to respond in an 'appropriately' aggressive manner then they did not do all that was necessary to avoid the situation.

"… they think that all men have this masculine, fighting side and will or should be able to physically defend themselves and when this does not happen the doubt and judgements will most likely set in" – focus group 5, participant 26 (male).

The focus groups also demonstrated victim-blaming attitudes within the sub-theme of male stereotypes. It was suggested that male victims may be perceived as precipitating an assault, or due to homophobic beliefs, it was noted as a probable consequence to their actions and lifestyle.

"… people see men as always wanting sex so they might say he wanted it…" – focus group 4, participant 23 (male).

"… well what does he expect you know…" – focus group 1, participant 7 (female).

"… I think there could be some homophobic stereotypes, saying well it's just what you wanted" – focus group 5, participant 26 (male).

Victim blaming could also be seen in the final sub-theme, intoxication. The focus groups drew attention to the scepticism that would be placed upon the victim's allegation of an assault due to being under the influence of alcohol.

"… I think other people might see that she's saying it because she was drunk and regrets it…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

"… people could think well you were drunk, or well I haven't remembered it so I might have been spiked. So, if you're in a relationship people might think it's an easy get-out cos she's done something wrong…" – focus group 4, participant 20 (female).

It was explained that confusion and uncertainty would arise when alcohol is a contributory factor, with participants offering both blame towards a victim for becoming overly intoxicated and a perpetrator for potentially taking advantage of someone in a somewhat vulnerable state. These viewpoints continued and became contentious when discussing scenario one and resulted in the second theme of consent being drawn.

Consent

The participants only discussed consent in terms of when under the influence of alcohol. They suggested that this was an extremely delicate and subjective area, which was situation specific as well as down to an individual's interpretation of a situation.

"… if she's too drunk to say yes then it is rape and I think guys might not be overly aware of that and just think well if she's drunk then she's still consenting and it is probably difficult for them too…" – focus group 1, participant 3 (female).

"… it's probably cos during her intoxicated state she consented to it in some way…" – focus group 3, participant 16 (female).

Nevertheless, there was a consensus that when intoxicated, people are more vulnerable, and the participants believed that due to the level depicted within the scenario consent would not have been able to be given.

"… he shouldn't have gone into her house because she wouldn't have been able to say she wanted him there…" – focus group 4, participant 22 (female).

"… people will think that she can't consent to anything sexually cos she's pissed" – focus group 5, participant 25 (male).

The concepts that fall within the theme of consent do also play a pivotal role within the sub-theme, perpetrator empathy*.*

It was noted that although consent could not be obtained from the victim due to intoxication levels, there would also be the same issue from the alleged perpetrator. As the scenario that was being discussed depicted both being out drinking alcohol together, participants noted that if one individual could not consent then how could they know whether the other could.

"…He might have been too drunk that she was not feeling comfortable or said no or tried to push him off a little bit, but he might not have noticed that…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

"… Were both of you able to make sensible decisions…" – focus group 1, participant 3 (female).

"…I think if [male] knew she was pissed he should have just left her alone. But also, he was probably pissed too if they were on a night out, so how can she be too drunk to consent and him not be" – focus group 5, participant 25 (male).

"… he could have been drunk, so who's fault is it" – focus group 5, participant 29 (male).

The focus groups continued to emphasise the point that if someone cannot remember what has occurred when under influence then how do they know they did not consent or are accusing someone of something they did not do, this appears to be neglecting the point that capacity to consent can be compromised when intoxicated, and therefore the difficulty is in identifying the point of incapacitation rather than consent per se.

"… she claimed that he raped her, but she doesn't know that he did, so equally she could be accusing him of something that he didn't do like neither way do we know what happened? But then, if she can't be held responsible for what she does when she is drunk, then I bet he was drunk cos it was a night out. Then how could he be held responsible for what he was done when he is drunk…" – focus group 4, participant 22 (female).

A male participant further reinforced the point that it is something that young males are aware of when engaging in casual sex when intoxicated.

"… we go out all the time and get drunk and that, and there is that small fear that you could be accused of something if you end going home with a lass after a night out. But

also, you have to hope that not all lasses are going to think that men are scum and would do that. So just have to be respectful and hope for the best, I guess..." – focus group 5, participant 28 (male).

Media

The next theme that was interpreted from the data was media; this was separated into two additional sub-themes, social media and news and public safety versus fear.

Victim blaming initially was prevalent within the social media and news sub-theme, with participants suggesting that some victims may be reporting assaults due to the recent rise in media attention around the subject. As a result, a number of these allegations have the potential to be false and for purposes of personal gain.

"… with everything on the news people might just think well you're just jumping on the bandwagon…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

It was also suggested in relation to scenario three, that how a person expresses themselves online is completely different face-to-face and the victim was naïve for trusting someone they had only spoken to online. It did, however, recognise the ease of deception through social media and dating sites.

"… I think it's strange the false sense of security you get after talking to someone online. It says that she thought she knew him; she could trust him just cos she'd spoke to him online. But it just shows you that online is completely different to real life but it is strange that you can be tricked just by thinking you can know someone cos you've talked to them online…" – focus group 1, participant 5 (female).

When the second sub-theme of personal safety versus fear was established, it was noted that although sexual assaults and rape occurred in the past, there were not the media platforms that there are today to publicise these crimes as widely. Society was therefore not given the

information around the number of assaults that were occurring and seeing a different one each day on a different media outlet.

"… it's all over social media it's all over the news. And 20, 30 years ago it still happened and it probably still happened in the same volume but people didn't speak about it cos it wasn't spoken about…" – focus group 1, participant 7 (female).

The focus groups discussed this further and questioned whether the media helps society stay safe or just elicits fear.

"… I think the fear has increased with the internet and the new ways of accessing people…" – focus group 1, participant 3 (female).

"… There wasn't as much fear put into the parents and then that fear wasn't put into the kids…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

It was also noted that media outlets do not report on sexual violence against male victims, however, when a crime is committed against a female victim it is highly publicised which reinforces the stigma associated with male victims of sexual violence.

"… you also don't really see anything to do with men getting sexually assaulted in the media, so it puts out that it doesn't really happen" – focus group 5, participant 29 (male).

Education

The final theme derived from the data collected was education. This theme was split into two additional sub-themes, general education and awareness.

From material analysed surrounding the already established programmes – both *The Men's Programme* and *The Women's Programme*, the focus groups made several evaluations around the general education that is given to those receiving the training. It was felt that there were several negative and concerning assumptions made in terms of those that could be potential perpetrators.

"… The first sentence is identify men's potentially high-risk behaviour…" – focus group 4, participant 19 (female).

It was suggested that the programme gender-stereotyped, and placed boundaries between potential male and female recipients.

"… They've immediately gender-stereotyped just by having a man's guide and a woman's guide…" – focus group 1, participant 7 (female).

"… it does seem like it is scare mongering in a way. Teaching women men's high-risk behaviours and how to avoid this. Instead of looking how to educate people on how not to rape. It's also really just saying that men rape women and not looking at everything that happens in-between". – focus group 5, participant 26 (male).

The participants believed that a positive aspect of the men's programme was the use of video depicting a male rape survivor. However, this was not available within the women's programme and believed that it would have been beneficial to include videos of both male and female survivors.

"… the good part of it is its showing how to address a situation if women do talk to them about it and opens up about it…" – focus group 1, participant 1 (female).

"…Maybe they could have shown two videos. So, one of what happens to a woman and see how that makes them feel, and then show them the video of a man being raped would maybe make sense to them more. But as a woman why should it be either way, why should it just be a man or just be a woman…" – focus group 4, participant 20 (female).

"… I think these allow a perspective like no other" – focus group 5, participant 27 (male).

When discussing the delivery of training programmes and education surrounding rape prevention, the focus group were unanimous in stating that they believed they should be

delivered by professionals within the field and not parents or teachers. It was summarised that information being delivered on a sensitive subject such as rape and sexual assault by someone known to you may not have the desired impact.

"… it's alright the teacher doing it but they see this teacher every day and it's like oh my teacher is just going on again…" – focus group 1, participant 4 (female).

"… it's better done in schools by people that aren't family, cos your mum and dad are always gonna be like wanna wrap you up and not let you…" – focus group 1, participant 7 (female).

Another aspect around the delivery of programmes that the focus groups noted was they felt they should be conducted within mixed-sex groups. It was suggested that this would help break down stigma and continue conversations around the subject after the education has been completed.

Awareness was the second sub-theme illustrated within the education theme. The focus groups highlighted several factors that they presented as important when looking at developing a programme within this area. It was suggested that online dating is becoming more prevalent within our society and the participants felt that although there is education for parents around online safety, there is nothing accessible for adults and their own personal safety.

"… They talk about young children being groomed but they're not talking about 20, 18, 19-year-olds. They go online to meet people that's what happens. There needs to be more education, be careful, but we're not blaming you…" – focus group 1, participant 7 (female).

"… The risks, suspicious behaviour and tricks that are commonly used. Awareness around that, cos you just might not know…" – focus group 1, participant 2 (female).

As noted earlier within the theme of consent, the focus groups raised attention to the vulnerabilities of intoxication and the inability to consent to sexual acts. It was therefore recommended that consent when under the influence of alcohol be an integral part of any training package.

"… I think as well as being drunk means that you are vulnerable. So, raising awareness to saying that that person is actually vulnerable. I do think it is an awareness thing and people just think she's drunk where having a laugh kinda of thing where they need to realise its more serious than that to have an effect…" – focus group 1, participant 3 (female).

Alcohol consumption was also discussed in terms of the potential for men to be accused of rape or sexual assault after what they felt may have been a consensual act.

"… They've got to be made aware as well, and I'm not saying that they are a victim, but if you could go into that situation thing everything is fine and then you come out of it and you're being blamed for something that's not who you are, that's not what you intended. Now you've got yourself into that position and I think that's something that needs to be addressed. They might think that it won't happen to me…" – focus group 1, participant 7 (female).

Finally, the focus groups again highlighted the importance of utilising mixed-sex groups, stating that it would not only elicit differing perspectives but would increase awareness and encourage people to 'look out for each other more.

Closing comments

At the end of the focus groups, participants were asked the open question of what they think would be most beneficial to include within a programme that is looking to improve attitudes towards victims of rape and sexual assault. The groups suggested including topics surrounding; the debunking of rape myths, statistics on rape and sexual assaults with the UK,

legal definitions, neurological changes during an assault, survivor stories, and information surrounding consent and alcohol.

Phase 1: Focus Groups for Content Suggestions and Administration Proposals Discussion

The focus groups explored attitudes towards victims of sexual offences and the opinions of rape prevention programmes of students from one UK University. Although, focus groups were held allowing for an exchange in communication between participants; the researchers own bias could have unintentionally contributed to interpretations analysed (Buetow & Zawaly, 2021). To limit to the scope for researcher bias to be incorporated, individual interviews were rejected as there was more opportunity for the researcher's own thoughts and opinions to be included and potentially influence the discussions held with participants, as a result focus groups allowed for the transparency of the researcher's bias to made open and for all data to be collected in good faith (Buetow & Zawaly, 2021). Nevertheless, due to the researcher's own characteristics (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity) this may have impacted the responses received from participants. Previous research as shown that there can be a perceived power imbalance between participants and researchers, particular when different characteristic variables are noted (Smithson, 2010). This can manifest in participants either wanting to form a desirable representation of themselves, or just not offering any tangible views on the subject as was witnessed in five of participants within the current study. The offerings given were not able to be examined within the framework of the research, as they did not discuss the topics requested, instead choosing to remain quiet throughout the process. On reflection, the female researcher may have precipitated the male-only focus group's responses within the discussions. Some responses did conform to gender stereotypes and demonstrated an assertion of masculinity within the discussion. Male-only groups have been attributed to approval seeking behaviours and ensuring their reputations are not tarnished (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015); it could therefore be felt that they would not want to disclose potentially negative view towards sexual violence in front of a female researcher. However, due to the online nature of the focus group, non-verbal cues from participants could not be ascertained.

These could offer some indication as to participants' unwillingness to divulge true thoughts if the groups were conducted in person (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2017). There was also an additional concern that the researcher's employment background within victim services (SARC) could unintentionally bias them; this could lead to unfair judgments being placed upon individuals within differing opinions to that of the researcher. However, this potential concern was mitigated through several bracketing methods (Tufford & Newman, 2010); regular supervision with the researcher's doctoral supervisor, which allowed the researcher to uncover any themes that may hinder an unprejudicial reaction and also, trigger any emotional responses. The researcher also maintained a reflective journal throughout the process, this allowed a reflective stance to be continued throughout the thesis process; exploring the researcher's personal values and any personal conflicts that many arise (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Four major themes were extrapolated from the data: rape myths and negative attitudes, consent, the media and education. When exploring the theme of rape myths and negative attitudes the interpretation suggested that society perceived victims of sexual offences as blameworthy and adhered to rape myths. These were particularly prominent when alcohol intoxication was discussed. These findings concurred with the work of Camp et al. (2018), where participants felt the victim was somewhat responsible for an assault if they were intoxicated.

Intoxication and alcohol consumption was a dominant topic throughout the current analysis and was acutely relevant when consent was the subject matter. Although consent should be obtained prior to sexual encounters, it was felt that when alcohol was involved the matter becomes unclear if an assault is alleged. The overarching consensus amongst the participants was that if both individuals were under the influence of alcohol, then the alleged perpetrator could not be held accountable as they too would not be able to consent to the sexual act. It was additionally, noted that the alleged perpetrator may not have been aware that the individual was uncomfortable in the situation and could not discern non-verbal cues.

Support was offered for this by Salazar et al. (2017) who noted more negative themes for consent in the context of alcohol. Furthermore, the findings illustrated a higher proportion of men relied upon non-verbal cues for the consent of a sexual encounter (Salazar et al., 2017). It was suggested in the current analysis that awareness of the vulnerabilities of alcohol intoxication and the inability to consent that has ensued should be an area that is vital to any prevention programme. Foubert (2011) has this concept embedded with the constructs of *The Men's Programme;* and endeavours to communicate sexual consent as part of the teachings. What is, however, noteworthy to discuss are shortcomings that the current participants noted with regards to *The Men's Programme.* It was believed that gender stereotyping and segregating of male participants would not have an overall beneficial outcome. This notion has been fraught with contradictions with Vladutiu et al.'s (2011) systematic analysis concluding that single-gendered audiences were more effective at improving rape awareness, rape empathy, rape knowledge, behavioural intent, and rape myth acceptance. Although the analysis did fail to consider new approaches being suggested in the field, for example, bystander intervention and coeducation interventions as they only evaluated research up until 2005 (Vladutiu et al., 2011). Malamuth et al. (2018) contradicted support for male-only interventions when they explored the potential consequences of integrating 'high-risk' males onto intervention programmes. 'High-risk' males were described as likely possessing general anti-social attitudes (e.g., narcissistic personality, grandiosity) and specific characteristics associated with sexual violence (e.g., arousal to physical force, acceptance of violence against women) (Malamuth et al., 2018). It was noted that such psychological characteristics would leave an individual reluctant to attitudinal, emotional, or behavioural changes. Malamuth et al. (2018) theorised that due to 'boomerang effects' (Bryne & Hart 2006), whereby intervention effects may result in increased endorsement of rape myth acceptance and sexually violent attitudes compared to pre-intervention (Malamuth et al. 2018). The 'boomerang effect' occurs when the intervention includes greater cognitive features of appealing aspects of prohibited activity and increased arousal leaves of said activity follow (Bryne & Hart, 2006). To explore this further, Malamuth et al. (2018) reviewed interventions aimed at male students on college

campuses. They concluded that 'boomerang effects' were noted for approximately 30% of men who were deemed 'high-risk', in the assessed studies. Therefore, claiming that around 30% of the males who completed the interventions and were considered 'high-risk' were at a greater chance of committing a sexual offence post-intervention (Malamuth et al., 2018). These findings are supported by Stephens and George, who in 2009 explored the impact of a rape intervention programme on high and low-risk men. High-risk participants were categorised by their declaration of having engaged in at least one sexually coercive act (Stephens & George, 2009). Findings concluded an overall reduction in rape myth acceptance and increased victim empathy. However, when subgroup analysis was completed, it was noted that these findings could be accounted for exclusively by the low-risk group; the high-risk group showed no attitudinal change as a result of the intervention. It was also determined at follow-up that high-risk men reported greater levels of sexually coercive behaviours post-intervention (Stephens & George, 2009). Whilst the findings from these single-sex approaches examining high-risk males do suggest potentially damaging results with the increase in rape myth acceptance amongst that population. It must be observed whether this pitfall does in fact out way the potential benefits of completing intervention programmes and assessing alternate methods of observer participation. One coeducational method that did oppose the single-gendered approach was Zapp et al. (2021) who utilised the online prevention programme *Haven.* Increased levels of empathy and support for victims were established, as well as significant increases in participants' perceived ability and intent to intervene in a potentially risky situation (Zapp et al., 2021). Although the evaluation highlighted that coeducational programmes could elicit positive change, there was no control group to provide a no-intervention comparison. Therefore, it is unknown whether other external factors or the experience of being part of the study (e.g., the Hawthorn Effect -McCambridge et al., 2014) may have contributed to the change. Nevertheless, the sample population of the current focus groups believed coeducation could aid in reducing stigma and help continue the discussions of the programme outside a formal arena.

With regards to who would be best suited to deliver such educational programmes, Vladutiu et al.'s (2011) systematic review of 102 research articles and dissertations postulated that professionals should be considered for obtaining improved rape-related attitudes and behavioural intentions, however, peer-facilitated programmes should be considered for reducing rape myth acceptance. Similarly, the focus groups participants felt that these programmes would be presented best by a professional if they were to be face-to-face. However, it was discussed that due to the sensitive nature of the topic, utilising an online platform, could enable individuals to explore the presented content more, whereas if in person with other peers, individuals may become too concerned with what others will think of them and therefore succumb to peer pressure.

The vast amount of rape prevention programmes have centred around bystander intervention and challenging negative social norms that can be construed as being shaped by rape myths (Bonar et al., 2019; Foubert, 2011; Salazar et al., 2014; Zapp et al., 2021). Although aiming to achieve the same outcome, several programmes and interventions choose to employ different theoretical underpinnings. However, overall, they have all achieved some positive results demonstrating positive shifts in behaviours and attitudes towards sexual assault victims. Current summations were of the same inference and concurred with the *RealConsent* programme. Both suggest that the dispelling of rape myths and providing information about consent when under the influence of alcohol are pivotal aspects that future prevention programmes need to include. This would allow for the debunking of misconceptions that have been influenced by social interactions and the media.

The current exploration also advocated that informing participants of the neurological changes that occur during an assault, would be favourable. For example, discussing the concept of tonic immobility (Marx et al., 2008), this was initially studied via animals, however, referred to how an animal progresses through a series of defensive reactions, known as the defence cascade, in response to an enclosing predator (Ratner, 1967). Victims of sexual violence often report losing the ability to physically move or to call out for help during an

assault, this has been previously known as 'rape-induced paralysis' (Burgess & Holmstrom; Russell, 1974). However, in 1979, Suarez and Gallup argued that these involuntary reactions contained parallel features to the assumptions of tonic immobility; they argued that sexual violence contained comparable features in a common predator-prey relationship (Suarez & Gallup, 1979). Tonic immobility is not a conscious choice and should not be deemed as such, it is an adaptive function for self-preservation (Marx et al., 2008) that is unlearnt, involuntary, and only occurs when other protective functions have failed. Tonic immobility and freezing during an assault could erroneously be seen as a maladaptive coping strategy due to negative connotations that surround not fighting back. Rape myths exist in this area, where it is believed that if an individual has not fought back, then they allowed the assault to happen or wanted it to happen (Dalbert, 2009; Duff & Tostevin, 2015; Hayes et al., 2013; McCaul et al., 1990; Whatley, 2005), therefore, victims that have experienced tonic immobility could be faced with a backlash of victim-blaming attitudes (Marx et al., 2008; Persson et al., 2018). A study completed in 2007 assessed tonic immobility in victims of sexual assault (Fuse et al., 2007). They found that 41.5% of respondents experienced significant immobility during their assault, and 12.5% disclosed extreme immobility. These findings were then replicated with another female sample in which 41.7% reported significant immobility and 10.4% stated they experienced extreme immobility during their most recent sexual assault experience (Fuse et al., 2007). These findings highlight the pervasive nature of immobility for a victim during an act of sexual violence, and these are confounded by attributions of responsibility that are then laid upon those that experience it (McCaul et al., 1990; Moor et al., 2013). This is an area that has currently not been included within prevention programmes, however, could help society and victims understand why people respond differently when attacked, for example discussing the friend, fight, flight, freeze, and flop responses (Lodrick, 2007) this aid in helping individuals understand the principles of tonic immobility and help in understanding that neurological responses are not conscious decisions. It is suggested that humans have a tendency to respond to trauma in one of five ways: friend, fight, flight, freeze, or flop. These responses are

instigated by the amygdala[2] upon the detection of threat and the resulting response will depend upon which is deemed most likely to ensure survival (Lodrick, 2007; Mason & Lodrick, 2013; Van der Volk, 2014). Friend is the initial defence strategy available when fearful people will draw on their social engagement system. This friend response is seen when people attempt to smile and make conversation with those who are eliciting fear from them, this is likely an unconscious attempt to get the individual causing fear to engage (Lodrick, 2007; Mason & Lodrick, 2013). The second defence strategy is flight. This is whatever actions an individual uses to put space between themselves and the fear-provoking situation. Next is the fight response; this includes blatant aggression or understated behaviours such as saying no (Lodrick, 2007). The freeze response will be activated when the amygdala has deemed that friend, flight, or fight are not likely to be effective. The flop response occurs when freeze fails, and the threat increases. The amygdala will trigger the automatic nervous system[3] and the body will shift from a position of cationic muscular tension (observed in the freeze response) to a state where muscular tension is lost, and the body appears to flop (Lodrick, 2007). These processes indicate that some individuals who experience sexual victimisation will either struggle and resist, run away, or shout for help while others may take a more passive approach, appearing frozen and unable to contest (Mason & Lodrick, 2013). It does need to be reinforced that those acts of submission and freezing or not the individual offering consent; consent is actively and freely given, whereas the notion of freezing and submission could be wrongly assumed as such due to the lack of injuries and fight that so commonly follows such a response (Mason & Lodrick, 2013; Moor et al., 2013).

The current study participants suggested that narratives from victims of sexual victimisation be included within an information-sharing programme. They suggested gratitude would be expressed when observing a survivor account during *The Men's Programme,*

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[2] The amygdala is a cluster of brain cells that regulates whether a sound, image, or body sensation is distinguished as a threat (Van der Volk, 2014)

[3] The automatic nervous system is an element of the peripheral nervous system that controls involuntary processes, including heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, and sexual arousal. It comprises of three anatomically different divisions sympathic, parasympathic, and enteric (Van der Volk, 2014).

(Foubert, 2011) however could not understand why this method was not also incorporated within *The Women's Programme* (Foubert, 2011). Participants felt that these narratives could enlist a more than a theoretical understanding of the notions of sexual violence and enable observers of interventions to put themselves in the real-life contexts that victims have endured (Huemmer et al., 2019).

Chapter 5: Phase 2: Survivor Personal Narratives

The analysis of phase 1 indicated that participants felt that personal narratives from survivors of sexual violence should be included within the content of the proposed information-sharing programme. Such narratives highlight their experiences of facing rape myths and victim-blaming on disclosing their experiences to others. Consequently, in the development of the information-sharing programme three personal narratives were sought from survivors of sexual violence.

The aim of phase 2 of the project was to capture the experiences of survivors of sexual violence to include within the intervention, with the added objective of seeking survivor guidance as to the overall, structure and content of the programme through a pre-pilot survey.

Methodology

Design

To develop the intervention programme, focus groups were conducted which aimed to explore what material should be included within a specialised online information-sharing programme on the effects of and attitudes towards sexual assault and rape. The analysis indicated that participants felt that the experiences of real survivors should be included within the intervention. Such narrative should highlight their experiences of facing rape myths and victim-blaming on disclosing their experience to others. Consequently, in developing a proposed intervention programme, three women volunteered to share the details of the events that resulted in their sexual assaults and/or rapes.

Each of the survivors who volunteered to share their experiences was sent a copy of the proposed intervention material so they could see how their contribution would be used within the context of the programme and given the option to have this removed or amended if they wished. Additionally, they were asked to comment on the rest of the programme material, so that it could be ensured that the material was deemed acceptable by a survivor sample. The rationale for this comes from a recent study by Worthen and Wallace (2021) which

explored survivors experiences of taking part in mandatory sexual violence prevention programmes in the US. The study concluded that survivors found some of the material in the programme insulting, that it rendered their experiences invisible and triggering. Since the proposed intervention programme may also be presented to people who are survivors, this process would help ensure that the same errors were not made (Worthern & Wallace, 2021).

Participants

The details of the research were submitted to the University's research participation system, where then students could sign up for involvement. Additionally, invitation posters (appendix 8) were displayed within the University, with participants being recruited through convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Both the invitation poster and the information presented on the University's research participation system outlined the purpose of the research and participants were being sought who would be willing to share their experiences of being challenged by rape myths; whether this had occurred through self-blame, from friends, family or the police. The invitation for contribution was listed for a one-month period allowing participants time to consider the proposal and contact the researcher, this timeframe was used, due to the tie limitations of a PhD project. Within this timeframe three female participants volunteered to share their accounts.

Procedure

Prior to sharing their survivor accounts, potential participants were given participant information sheets (appendix 9) so that informed consent could be obtained. Once participants had agreed and consented (appendix 10) to participate, they were free to choose the level of confidentiality that they desired for their accounts – each participant was given the choice of delivering their account either via a written account, recording it in their own voice, having it recorded in another's voice, being videoed telling their account and having their identity disguised, or being video-recorded giving their account. All three participants choose to have

their accounts voice recorded and then transcribed into a written account and remain anonymous. Each interview session lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Each participant was asked to give a brief description of their experience of disclosing sexual violence and the impact that experience had on them. Once this was completed and transcribed, the written accounts were sent to the corresponding participant for approval (appendix 11). After this was obtained it was placed within the proposed intervention and this was sent to participants (appendix 12) with a brief pre-pilot questionnaire (appendix 13) to obtain their views, and any concerns and comments were then considered and implemented.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the interview sessions starting participants were fully informed of the nature of the research being completed. An overview of the project and its purpose was included in the advertisement placed on the University's research participation system and the invitation poster, as well as on the participant information sheet outlining the purpose of the research before consent being sought. All participants were required to complete an informed consent form, indicating their decision to continue with the research and their understanding of their right to withdraw and leave the session at any point. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw their individual statements, up until 01 August 2020 when transcriptions would be completed and the analysis would be commencing, by contacting the researcher. Participants also had additional opportunities to withdraw from the research if they so wished. These occurred on two separate occasions – firstly when asked to approve the transcript of their account, and secondly when asked for feedback on the intervention.

With regards to anonymity, participants were informed that their identity would only be known to the researcher; and due to lone working policies, in the event of an incident, the participants were informed that the research supervisor would be able to access the information, if necessary, via a sealed envelope with the details noted inside. As participants were free to choose the format in which their survivor experience was conveyed, the level of

confidentiality was dependant on the format chosen. Participants could choose from delivering their account either via a written account, recording it in their own voice, having it recorded in another's voice, being videoed telling their account and having their identity disguised, or being video-recorded giving their account. Nevertheless, all participants choose to have their accounts voice recorded and transcribed into a written account, therefore maintaining their anonymity within the study.

At the end of each interview session, each participant was given a debriefing statement (appendix 14) which included contact details of support organisations. It also further outlined the purpose of the study and clarification on the withdrawal stages.

Phase 2: Interpretation and Analysis

Participants were sent via email their transcribed survivor accounts; all three participants responded and reported being happy with the accounts with no amendments being required.

"That seems fine to me. I'm happy with what is written. Thank you for listening" – Participant 3.

"I'm happy with that, thank you for sending it to me to check over" – Participant 1.

"Just finished reading this and can I just say thank you so much. This is absolutely perfect and I really hope this helps…" – Participant 2.

Two of the participants completed the pre-pilot questionnaire and sent this back with feedback on the proposed information-sharing programme. Both participants were happy with how their contributions had been used within the programme and noted that their contributions had been treated with respect. It was suggested by both participants that the original programme did not offer enough information about male rape and did not fully convey the complexities that male rape victims may suffer. It was therefore felt that offering a more male-focused aspect within the programme would aid in making it more generalisable and relatable to a greater range of people.

"I love how the programme has been created and built, I think each person's contribution has been well respected and worded perfectly" – Participant 3.

"It's very informative and shows people what's not okay" – Participant 1.

"Maybe a little bit more emphasis on the fact men can be raped too" – Participant 1.

"More focus on male victims would interesting to see…" – Participant 3.

It was also noted from one participant that one of the images used within the programme could be viewed as inconsiderate.

"There is also an 'advert' photo used in the programme that mentions 'real men get raped', I feel that this picture is somewhat insensitive" – Participant 3.

As a result of the contributions of those who shared their experiences of disclosing sexual violence, changes to the programme were made. More male-focused content was incorporated, and the 'advert' image was removed.

Phase 2: Survivor Narratives Discussion

Phase 2 of the study looked to incorporate survivors' experiences of disclosing sexual assault and/or rape, as well as exploring their views and opinions on a developing information-sharing programme. Therefore, the main aim was to determine whether the information-sharing programme was appropriate and relevant to a survivor population; in addition to enabling a space for survivors to share their experiences. This was established by completing individual interview sessions with survivors and then sharing a draft version of the programme with them for them to evaluate and comment upon.

Overall, the survivors appeared to gain a great deal of empowerment from sharing their experiences and were happy with the way in which their accounts were incorporated into the information-sharing programme. It is felt that utilising the experiences of survivors, allowing for a personal and emotive aspect would be brought to the information-sharing programme, that might enhance its salience, memorability and impactfulness. It will ensure that the subject

of sexual violence is no longer discussed in the abstract and participants who either are not survivors themselves or do not know anyone that has experienced sexual violence, will interpret the material on a personal level. In earlier research, Piccigallo et al. (2012) found that individuals who had been a recipient of a sexual assault and/or rape disclosure, changed their perceptions on the issue as it allowed for the experiences and discussions to be brought to life and no longer theoretical (Piccigallo et al., 2012).

When reviewing the programme, the participants offered suggestions for improvements. They commented on areas of weakness, such as the limited information surrounding male victimisation which was subsequently rectified; however, they generally noted positive regard for the programme. It was reassuring that survivors' reactions to the programme were somewhat incongruent to what was noted by Worthen and Wallace (2021) to the campus-based programme they evaluated. They had established that survivors exposed to that particular programme had felt re-traumatised and believed that the survivors' voices had not been heard (Worthen & Wallace, 2021). The contrasting responses could be a result of the current work engaging with survivors and requesting their input in the development of an information-sharing programme and not just evaluating their responses to said intervention. Additionally, Worthen and Wallace's (2021) assessment of survivors' and those who know survivors' reactions to prevention programmes did not include a control group and therefore, the results that are attributed to the survivor group cannot be attributed solely to the intervention programme (Malay & Chung, 2012).

Although survivors and non-survivors are likely to have different reactions to sexual violence-related programmes there is limited literature that exploring survivors' reactions, with only two current studies– one focused on military intervention (Holland et al., 2014) and one established for a US college campus (Worthen & Wallace, 2021), it thought that this is an important area to explore given that research has shown the importance of providing students with a trigger warning when teaching about sexual violence is about to take place (Bedera, 2021; Boysen et al., 2018; Branch & Richards, 2014; Byron, 2017). This could be seen from

one of the participant responses concerning an image that was initially used within the proposed programme. The image mentioned, denoted the phase *'real men get raped',* the participant noted how they and others may find this insensitive, and therefore, this was replaced. Given that it is common practice to offer trigger warnings to those who may encounter sexually violent material within a classroom setting, enabling a judgement-free environment and allowing the ability to leave the space, therefore, reduces the risk of re-traumatisation and potential for posttraumatic stress symptoms to surface (Bedra, 2021; Boysen et al., 2018; Branch & Richards, 2014; Byron, 2017), the critical analysis of sexual assault/rape programmes on survivors remains relatively absent from literature (Worthen & Wallace, 2021); this is despite the fact that these programmes are now mandatory within the US collegiate system under the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act (Thomas-Card & Eichele, 2016) and growing in popularity within the UK (Camp et al., 2018; Gainsbury et al., 2020).

To summarise, focusing on survivors' voices, their experiences, and opinions can help develop an effective and inclusive information-sharing programme, that focuses on responding to sexual violence. From phase 2 of the project, an updated information-sharing programme was developed in accordance with the thoughts and opinions of the survivors that participated in the pre-pilot exercise; included also within the programme was the personal narratives from the survivor group. This then informed phase 3 of the project which surrounded a further evaluation of the updated information-sharing programme.

Chapter 6: Phase 3: Evaluation of The Information-Sharing Programme

The final stage of the project was to explore the effects of a newly developed information-sharing programme with the general population. The programme characteristics explored the legislation surrounding sexual violence, changes in the law over the years, rape mythology, and statistics. Through the process of CFIR, the quality and evaluation of the information-sharing programme were completed. This process allowed for the evaluation of not only the ultimate outcome of the Information-Sharing Programme, but for it to be assessed at several points throughout the development process, as seen at phase's 1 and 2. This enabled the development of the programme's effectiveness, characteristics, and to ensure its relatability and safety to those who could be potential target populations (Birken et al., 2017). This conceptual framework permits evaluations to not only consider influential factors on an individual level, but to also explore the organisational and societal influences that may play a role (Birken et al., 2017).

The aim of phase 3 was to explore the effectiveness of the newly developed online resource. This was achieved through the objectives of investigating whether the information-sharing programme would help people develop a more empathic awareness of sexual victimisation and by assessing the effectiveness and acceptability of the programme through participants disclosed evaluations.

Methodology

Design

This was an online, experimental, pre-programme, post programme outcome evaluation employing a within-between mixed factorial design. The within the aspect of the study was the comparison of the pre-post programme elements and the between aspect was the comparison of the experimental (exposed to the educational material) and control (not exposed to the educational material) groups. The dependant variables were the levels of rape myth acceptance obtained from the vignettes and the scores obtained on the AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007) measure.

Post-programme qualitative data were collected from the experimental group, which was obtained via evaluative open questions.

Materials

All participants completed a number of demographic questions (appendix 15), before moving on to three vignettes which portrayed scenarios of sexual violence, each of approximately 120 words in length. The first vignette presented an allegation of a rape being made by a female after she had been drinking alcohol on a night out with friends, and went as follows:

> *'Shelly is a 19-year-old woman and was on a night out with 3 friends when she met Colin; they hit it off straight way and spent the evening drinking alcohol together and chatting. At the end of the night, Colin walked Shelly home as she was intoxicated. In the morning, Shelly woke up completely naked with Colin laid by the side of her. He thanked Shelly for a good night and left her house. Shelly reports being in shock when she woke and states that she did not ask Colin into her house and claimed that he had raped her'.*

The second vignette looked at a male being raped in a homophobic attack, which also included a physical assault, and the third showed a female being raped by a stranger in an alley and receiving threats against her life if she disclosed the assault. The full vignettes can be seen in appendix 16. The vignettes were fictional accounts, however, were developed from the amalgamation of several accounts the researcher had heard during their tenure working at a UK Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). The SARC is a place where specially trained staff (crisis workers and forensic nurse examiners) can offer medical, practical, and emotional support to individuals who have experienced sexual violence (Mountain Healthcare, 2005).

The vignettes were formulated to offer a variety of victim profiles and offender characteristics, as well as offence circumstances. They also had the potential to include stereotypical rape myths. Vignettes were executed in this manner so that they were thought-provoking and elicited information from the participants regarding their perceptions on the matters reported.

Additionally, all participants completed the Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression Scale (AMMSA, Gerger et al., 2007) (appendix 17). This measure was utilised as it was developed based on criticisms of older scales (Costin, 1985; Payne et al., 1999), and was designed to cover more modern, subtler myths that people may hold in today's societies. Gerger et al. (2007) reported that the content categories proposed for the AMMSA were inspired by the work of Swim et al. (1995), and the classifications for victims of sexual violence as a target group. Items were also designed to reflect previously known rape myths, but to use subtler language to describe and reflect them (Gerger et al., 2007). With this in mind, the overall items were described as reflecting one of five content categories: 1) denial of the scope of the problem, 2) antagonism toward victims demands, 3) lack of support for policies designed to help alleviate the effects of sexual violence, 4) beliefs that male coercion forms a natural part of sexual relationships, and 5) beliefs that exonerate male perpetrators by blaming the victim or circumstances.

The AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007) is a 30-item measure that uses a 7-point Likert-type scale, higher scores indicate a greater acceptance or endorsement of rape myths. To assess the validity of the AMMSA it was administered along with other measures in the area of rape myth acceptance. During these assessments of construct validity by Gerger et al. (2007) it was concluded that there were strong positive correlations between AMMSA scores, and rape myth acceptance as measured by other standardised instruments (e.g., Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale-Short Form (IRMA-SF), Adversarial Sexual Beliefs (ASB), Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence (AIV)). The AMMSA and IRMA-SF were compared across four studies, in which consistent results were found suggesting significant correlations with coefficients ranging from $r = .79 - .88$ (Gerger et al., 2007). In addition, to construct validity, predictive validity was assessed. When observed in relation to victim-blaming constructs, all coefficients were positive and significantly correlated for both male and female respondents ($r = .69$ and $.61$ respectively).

For those within the experimental condition, participants viewed the information-sharing programme (appendix 18), which was followed by ten evaluative post-intervention questions (appendix 19), exploring their thoughts on the information-sharing programme.

The information-sharing programme was developed utilising formative research throughout phase's 1 and 2 of this project. The programme was created utilising Microsoft PowerPoint and consisted of thirty-six slides and take approximately 40 minutes to complete. The learning objectives of the information-sharing programme are:

1. To recognise unconscious bias towards victims of sexual violence

2. To gain knowledge of the explanations for victim blaming and other negative conceptualisations of sexual assault

3. To be able to differentiate between the legal definitions relating to sexual assault, as well key changes to legislation

The prototype programme begins with the participants being presented with an image of a male and female, being asked to answer a question and make a judgment about what they imagined was occurring in the image that depicts a male and female conversing. This is followed by an exploration of consent in both practical and legal terms. The programme offers information regarding what constitutes consent and when consent cannot be given. To further reinforce the message the participants are presented with a survivor narrative that offers an example of consent not being obtained. The topic of consent was an area that the focus group felt would be beneficial to incorporate. The programme moves on to discuss the legislation from the Sexual Offences Act (2003) in relation to sexual assault, assault by penetration, and rape. It then explores the changes in the law over the years (e.g., including oral and anal rape, victims providing pre-recorded evidence) and discusses when several offences became illegal (e.g., rape within marriage, male rape). Participants are asked to click on a year icon and the information related to that year would appear on the screen (e.g., 1994 – male rape became illegal).

A topic area that focus group participants spoke strongly about was the role alcohol within sexual violence; this was therefore included in the programme. Consent when intoxicated is explored and the participants can again complete interactive exercises asking them to make judgements based on the images they are shown. These tasks aim to show the difficulties of determining consent and the problem with making judgments regarding a situation without knowing the facts of what is occurring. This topic concludes with a survivor's account depicting a rape that had occurred whilst they were intoxicated.

The penultimate section of programme focuses on myth-busting, paying particular attention to male rape myths which was an area not only discussed within the focus groups, but also highlighted by the survivors themselves as needing to be more prevalent within the programme. Therefore, the programme highlights the statistics on the prevalence of male sexual victimisation and challenges some of the commonly held myths surrounding male rape and male sexual victimisation. Other areas of focus for myth-busting are the likely relationships between the victim and the perpetrator, the likelihood of sustaining physical injuries, and making false allegations. The programme features the neurological changes that occur during times of trauma and how these can account for responses such as the friend, fight, flight, freeze, and flop responses. The final part of the programme highlights the possible repercussions of holding rape myths (e.g., reduced reporting rates). Participants are asked to guess what percentage of victims of sexual assault that did not report the incident to the police. They are they given forced-choice options between 63%, 73%, and 83%. The programme concludes with a survivor's narrative around alcohol facilitated rape, self-blame, and victim blaming. There is also, a summary of the information presented throughout the programme and the 'Tea and Consent' video by Thames Valley Police (Thames Valley Police, 2015). The information-sharing programme slides can be seen in appendix 18 and can be viewed via the following link https://huddersfieldbss.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3mBzf1QfVmUycR.

Participants

Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling techniques. The details of the research were advertised on the University's research participation system, which permits interested students to sign up for participation in return for course credit, as well as being posted on multiple social media outlets (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). The study was introduced by detailing the aims of the research and explaining to prospective participants the following – *'You are being invited to take part in a research project looking at enhancing positive attitudes towards victims of sexual violence'.* Different media outlets and participant recruitment sources were used so that a range of participants from differing backgrounds could be obtained. This allowed for participants not only from a university population to be recruited, but also those in the general population.

In total 309 people participated, of these 214 submitted usable data. Unusable data included contributions whereby participants did not answer all questions. From the 214, 182 were female, thirty-one were male and one participant choose not to disclose their gender. One-hundred and forty-eight participants fell within the age category of 18-24, twenty-nine were 25-32, nineteen were 33-42, twelve were 43-52 and five were aged between 53 and 62. One participant chose not to disclose their age. Of the 214 participants, 176 reported that they had never worked with survivors of sexual violence. Additionally, 176 participants also reported having never worked with perpetrators of sexual violence. One-hundred and forty-four participants did report that they knew someone that had experienced sexual violence, whereas sixty-two reported not knowing anyone that had experienced sexual violence and eight chose not to disclose. Finally, participants were asked if they had ever experienced sexual assault/rape themselves, sixty-nine reported that they had, 130 reported they had not, and fifteen stated that they would prefer not to say. As research demonstrates that many individuals may not and do not classify their experience as rape/sexual assault, it can be inferred that this is an underrepresented number of self-disclosed victims (Hahn et al., 2020).

Overall, 115 participants were randomly assigned via the Qualtrics programme to the control group and ninety-nine participants were allocated to the experimental condition. Upon

commencement of the analysis missing data within the information became evident and a total of 209 participants offered data that was interpretable (114 – control, 95 – experimental).

Procedure

The information-sharing programme, vignettes, and the Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression Scale (AMMSA, Gerger, et al., 2007) were incorporated within a Qualtrics programme that randomly assigned participants to either a control or experimental group. Both groups were requested to explore their assumptions and thoughts on both victims and perpetrators from the given vignettes; in addition, to completing the AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007). The experimental group had the added task of reviewing the information-sharing programme and answering several evaluative questions, exploring their opinions on the material viewed.

The study started by asking participants a number of demographic questions (appendix 14), before moving on to three vignettes (appendix 15) which portrayed scenarios of sexual violence, each of approximately 120 words in length. The first scenario presented an allegation of a rape being made by a female after she had been drinking alcohol on a night out with friends. The second looked at a male being raped in a homophobic attack, which also included a physical assault, and the third scenario showed a female being raped by a stranger in an alley and receiving threats against her life if she disclosed the assault. In addition, all participants were asked to complete the Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression Scale (AMMSA, Gerger et al., 2007) (appendix 17). This measure was utilised as it was developed based on criticisms of older scales (Costin, 1985; Payne et al., 1999), and was designed to cover more modern, subtler myths that people may hold in today's societies.

For those within the experimental condition, participants viewed the information-sharing programme (appendix 18), which was followed by ten evaluative questions (appendix 19), exploring their thoughts in the information-sharing programme between responding to the vignettes and completing the AMMSA.

The Qualtrics programme commenced with a participant information sheet (appendix 20) which outlined to purposes and obligations of continuing with the study so that informed consent could be obtained (appendix 21) which all participants were required to complete before continuing to the demographic questions. These included questions relating to if they have experience of working with either survivors and/or perpetrators of sexual violence; in addition, to whether they have experienced sexual violence themselves or know someone that has. Three short vignettes followed this, each depicting a different sexually violent scenario. Participants were asked to comment on their assumptions and viewpoints towards vignettes and were utilised as a thought-provoking tool to assess participants' level of rape myth acceptance. It was at this stage that participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control condition. The control condition was asked to complete the AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007) after the exposure to the three vignettes. However, those participating in the intervention engaged with the information-sharing programme. This was followed by a series of ten open-ended questions surrounding their experience of interacting with the information-sharing programme. In addition, each participant within the experimental condition was requested to complete the AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007). A debrief document specific to the condition (appendix 22) was shown to the participants to end the study; this outlined the purposes of the research and offered further support information to participants should they have required them.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the process of the study, there were no breaches in confidentiality. Participants were fully informed of the purpose of the research and its sensitive nature. Demographic information was obtained, however, there were no identifying markers taken, ensuring that anonymity was maintained throughout; the identity of the participants was not known. The information qualitative information gathered was analysed and reported using identifying numbers from the corresponding response sets.

All computerised data was stored under the researcher's university drive and any hard copies of data are stored in a locked drawer and will only be accessible by the researcher. The guidelines and regulations of the University of Huddersfield recommend storing data for 10 years, therefore all data will be stored via the recommended guidelines to ensure the integrity of the research process.

Contact numbers of support organisations were given to all participants on the participant information sheet prior to the commencement of the study, as well as on the debrief sheet at the end of the study. These included Rape Crisis Helpline, Victim Support, SurvivorsUK, CICters (Surviving rape and/or sexual abuse). Additionally, information regarding the universities counselling service was provided to participants who were students at the university.

Planned Analysis

Content analysis was the chosen method to analyse the data obtained from the responses to the vignettes. Content analysis involves the systematic coding of data and is used to establish the occurrence of certain words or concepts within a set of texts. The process of content analysis begins with deriving the coding categories that will be used – these must be empirically characterised to ensure reliability and consistency (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017). In this case, the coding constructs utilised were developed from the AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007) and the content categories that the items from measure were described as reflecting – 1) denial of the scope of the problem regarding sexual violence – people misinterpret well-meant gestures, 2) antagonism toward victims, 3) Lack of support for policies designed to help alleviate the effects of sexual violence, 4) Beliefs that male coercion forms a natural part of sexual relationships, 5) Beliefs that exonerate perpetrators by blaming the victim and/or circumstances. Content analysis allows text to be quantified; it enables frequencies in incidences to be assessed within the meaning of the text (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017). Responses to vignettes allowed for a baseline of rape myth acceptance to

be drawn for all participants, this could then be controlled for when exploring differences between the control and the experimental groups.

An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was chosen to compare the data obtained via the AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007) between the control and the experimental groups, whilst controlling for the baseline scores of rape myth acceptance, which was calculated via the content analysis. This was conducted to ascertain the short-term treatment effect of the intervention. Although, it is only the short-term effects of the intervention that was being evaluated; utilising two different ways of assessing and analysing the data eliminates the threat of common method variance (Tehseen et al., 2017). An ANCOVA allows for the exploration of differences between groups while controlling for an additional variable, that is suspected of influencing scores (Pallant, 2020). So, in the case of the current research, results on the AMMSA will be observed between each group, whilst controlling for pre-existing rape myth acceptance which was obtained via the content analysis of the vignettes.

Thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017) was chosen to analyse the responses to the open-ended, post-intervention questions posed to the intervention group. Themes were drawn from the data to give a deeper understanding of the observed impact of the intervention; paying particular attention to whether there was anything that challenged the participants pre-conceived notions on sexual violence, would participants react differently after reviewing the information-sharing programme if someone were to disclose a sexual assault to them, and exploring their overall beliefs on survivors of sexual violence. This allowed participants to extrapolate their thoughts and opinions without being constricted to a rating scale (Braun and Clark, 2006).

Phase 3: Results

The data was used to investigate the effectiveness of an information-sharing programme on rape myth acceptance amongst the sample population. Firstly, content analysis was utilised to code and interpret the responses to the vignettes that were presented before participants were assigned a grouping condition; this allowed for a baseline of rape myth acceptance to

be established. A deductive coding method was sought as pre-determined codes were being used. These coding constructs were established from the AMMAS (Gerger et al., 2007) and reflected different areas of rape myth acceptance which the scale questions fall into. The coding categories were as follows 1) denial of the scope of the problem regarding sexual violence – people misinterpret well-meant gestures, 2) antagonism toward victims, 3) Lack of support for policies designed to help alleviate the effects of sexual violence, 4) Beliefs that male coercion forms a natural part of sexual relationships, 5) Beliefs that exonerate perpetrators by blaming the victim and/or circumstances. Conceptual analysis at a thematic level was employed to interpret both explicit and implicit data, ensuring that not only the words and phrases used were noted but also, those from which inferences could be made and deduced to fall within the given code (Krippendorff, 2019) (appendix 23 provides an example of the coding).

One pre-determined content category was not supported within the data – 'Lack of support for policies designed to help alleviate the effects of sexual violence'. However, the other content codes were all evident to some extent in the responses from participants. Table 1 indicates the number of times each content code was endorsed by participants throughout the vignette exercise to establish baseline rape myth acceptance.

Table 1: Quantitative representation of supporting evidence for coding constructs.

Variables	Number of times noted within the text
Denial of the scope of the problem regarding sexual violence – people misinterpret well-meant gestures	21
Antagonism toward victims	5
Lack of support for policies designed to help alleviate the effects of sexual violence	0
Beliefs that male coercion forms a natural part of sexual relationships	8
Beliefs that exonerate perpetrators by blaming the victim and/or circumstances	62

Inspection of the descriptive quantitative data forthcoming from this coding process (table 2) suggesting that the experimental group endorsed slightly higher levels of rape myth acceptance at baseline when compared to the control group (experimental – *n = 99, M = 9.35, SD = .92,* control – *n = 115, M = 9.17, SD = .86)*. Additionally, female participants also showed somewhat higher levels of rape myth acceptance than their male counterparts (female – *n = 182, M = 9.32, SD = .88,* male – *n = 31, M = 8.94, SD = 1.03)*. Participants who indicated that they were a survivor of sexual violence, also exhibited slightly higher levels of rape myth acceptance from the scenario-based exercise than those who stated reported histories free of sexual victimisation. This was however, less than those who chose not to answer that question (yes – *n – 69, M = 9.39, SD = .79,* no – *n = 130, M = 9.16, SD = 1.00,* prefer not to say – *n = 15, M = 9.47, SD = .74)*. Regardless of those differences noted, the overall rape myth acceptance inferred from the content analysis was reported to be low and therefore, indicates that participants' adherence to rape mythology was lower than anticipated from the commencement of the experimental condition.

The information gathered from the AMMAS, and the demographic questions were also analysed to obtain descriptive statistics (table 2) and to test for normality within the figures. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was completed indicating a violation of the assumption of normality for data obtained from the AMMSA (Gerger et al., 2007) and the vignettes (*df* (209) = .07, p = .01; *df* (214) = .31, p = .00 respectively), this is also depicted graphically (appendix 24) – however, it is noted that this can be quite common amongst large data sets, and most statistical techniques are robust and tolerant of such violations (Pallant, 2020). Following this, homogeneity of variance was examined using a Levene's test, it was established that all areas analysed, apart from male-only when splitting the files into male and female categories, violated the assumptions equality of variance. AMMSA only = F (1,207) = 11.97, p = .00), AMMSA and whether the participant is a survivor of sexual violence = F (5,203) = 2.23, p = .01), AMMSA and male participants = F (4,26) = 3.83, p = .06), AMMSA and female participants = F (1,178) = 9.32, p = .00), and AMMSA and age = F (9,198) = 2.07, p = .03).

Although the overall, assumptions of homogeneity of variance were violated, Field (2018) suggests that a Levene's test should be used with caution and because the following ANCOVA is a linear model it is the homogeneity of residuals that actually matters and that is not what Levene's test explores.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and group differences in total scores

Variables		*N*	*Mean*	*SD*
Total AMMAS		209	75.59	23.49
	Control Group	114	75.90	20.44
	Experimental Group	95	75.22	26.80
	Male	28	78.75	23.72
	Female	180	74.97	23.47
SV Survivor	Yes	69	76.15	22.07
	No	125	73.86	23.45
	Prefer not to say	15	87.53	27.90
Total RMA		214	9.26	.63
	Control Group	115	9.17	.86
	Experimental Group	99	9.35	.92
	Male	31	8.94	1.03
	Female	182	9.32	.88
SV Survivor	Yes	69	9.39	.79
	No	130	9.16	1.00
	Prefer not to say	15	9.47	.74

The descriptive analysis highlighted only marginal differences between participants within the control and experimental groups on their AMMAS scores (control – *n = 114, M = 75.90, SD = 20.44,* experimental – *n = 95, M = 75.22, SD = 26.80).* However, participants who indicated that they were a survivor of sexual violence themselves endorsed greater rape myth acceptance on the AMMAS than those who did not, although this was lower than participants who chose not to disclose (*n = 69, M = 76.15, SD = 22.07, n = 125, M = 73.86, SD = 23.45, n = 15, M = 87.53, SD = 27.90* respectively). Male participants also exhibited higher levels of pro rape myth attitudes as indicated by the AMMAS, than female participants (male – *n = 28, M = 78.75, SD = 23.72,* female – *n = 180, M = 74.79, SD = 23.47).*

An ANCOVA was completed to analyse the data obtained via the AMMSA (Gerger et al, 2007) between the control group and the experimental groups, whilst controlling for baseline scores of rape myth acceptance. These baseline scores were obtained through the content analysis of the vignettes. Although, it was noted that the violation of homogeneity variance would not influence the effectiveness of an ANCOVA being performed (Field, 2018); it is suggested that further assumptions be explored before its completion. Firstly, the covariate must be independent of experimental effects; therefore, it must be measured prior to the treatment or experimental manipulation. In the case of the current study, the covariate was the rape myth acceptance scores obtained from the content analysis – the vignettes which were explored to derive such results were shown to participants before the information-sharing programme was seen by the experimental group participants, therefore ensuring this assumption was met. The next assumption explores the linear relationship between the dependent variable and the covariate. Graph 1 indicates a linear relationship between the total scores obtained on the AMMAS and the covariate of RMA when observed by the control group and the experimental group.

Figure 2: Linearity of total AMMAS scores and RMA scores when compared against the control and experimental groups.

Linearity of AMMAS and Rape Myth Acceptance compared to group condition
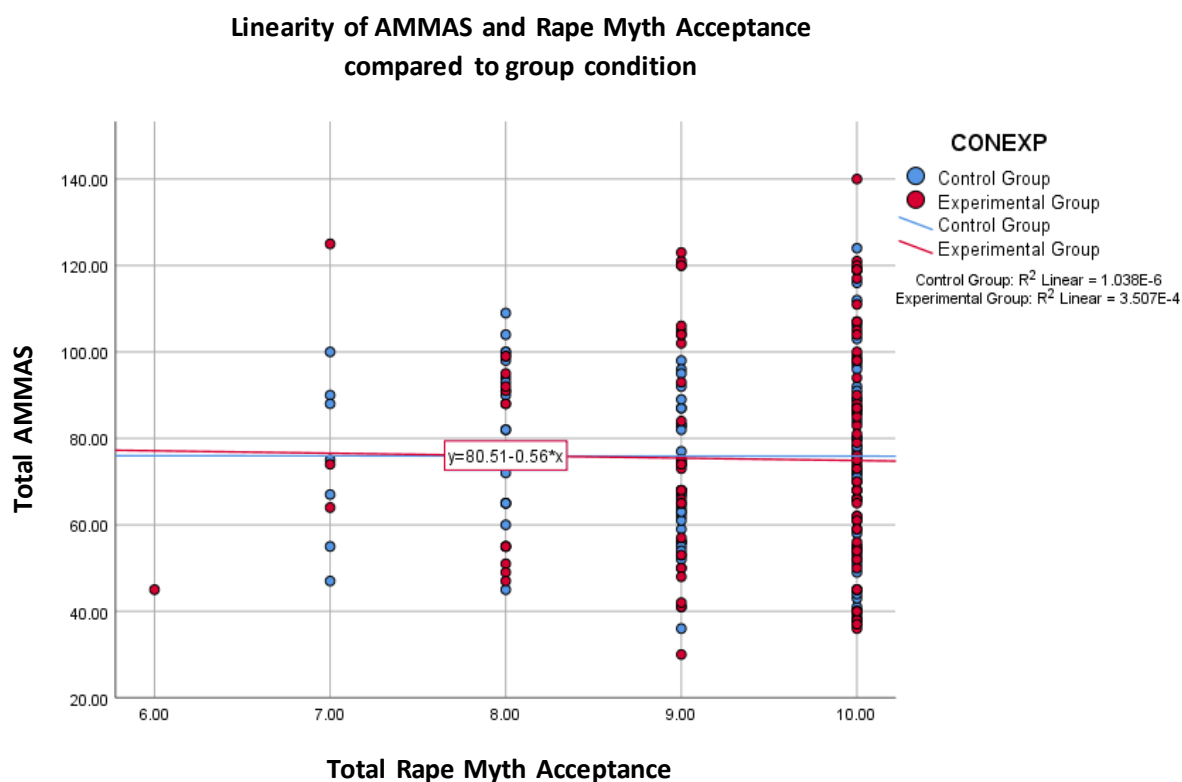
The final assumption concerns the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable; ensuring that there is no interaction between the covariate and the experimental manipulation – homogeneity of regression slopes. CONEXP*TRMA = p = .882 indicated a non-significant result, suggesting that homogeneity of regression slopes was not violated. As a result of the further assumptions being met an ANCOVA was still deemed the most appropriate analysis to be conducted – missing data were not included within the analysis.

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was utilised to compare the effectiveness of the information-sharing programme at improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual violence and helping develop more empathic awareness of sexual victimisation. The independent variable was the condition to which participants were randomly assigned to (control group/experimental group), and the dependent variable were the scores that were obtained from the AMMAS that was collected after completion of the programme for

the experimental group. Participants' responses to the pre-intervention vignettes were analysed using content analysis and used as the covariate in this analysis. Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there were no violations in the assumptions of linearity, homogeneity of regression slopes, or the reliability of the covariate. Results indicated no significant difference between the control group and the experimental group on the AMMAS scores, $F (1,206) = .04, p = .85, \eta^2 = .000$. Comparably, no significant differences were observed between the two intervention groups and whether participants were survivors of sexual violence or not and there AMMAS scores with only 1% of the variance in the dependant variable being explained by the independent variable, $F (2, 202) = .60, p = .55, \eta^2 = .01$. The analysis was also completed separating for reported gender (male/female), and again, no significant differences or strong relationships were witnessed between the two conditions for their AMMAS scores ($F (1,25) = .11, p = .74, \eta^2 = .01, F (1,177) = .05, p = .83, \eta^2 = .000$ respectively).

Phase 3: Interpretation and Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to conduct an interpretative exploration of the data sourced from the evaluative questions (appendix 25). Eighty-nine participants from the experimental group completed the post-intervention questions. Six overall themes were derived from the data, three of which contained sub-themes. 1) the silent survivor, with the sub-themes of male rape and removing stigma/myth-busting. 2) Statistics and figures with the sub-themes of male rape and reporting rates. 3) The impact of disclosures and scenarios. 4) Education with the sub-themes of changes in law, legal definition, target audience, and consent. 5) Future recommendations, and finally, 6) Raising awareness.

The Silent Survivor

The first theme that was obtained from the data was 'the silent survivor' – this explored the misconceptions that surround who and what constitutes a victim of sexual violence. This was described by two sub-themes male rape and removing stigma/myth-busting. Participants

commented on the underrepresented nature of male victims and how the programme highlights that not only females can experience sexual violence.

> "It has changed my views as before I only was aware about female rape survivors as these are the ones that are talked about. This programme has taught me to be more aware about the silent male rape survivors" – Participant 43, female

> "I think it would also impact people's views about male victims as it showed statistics about male sexual assault and many people might think that this does not exist" – Participant 68, female

> "One way in which the programme changed by views is towards male victims, I thought there would be less victims I think this is largely due to the media tending to focus on female victims, Male victims don't share enough of the media spotlight in this topic. none of my views have been challenged" – Participant 75, female

> "I kind of never thought about the fact that men can get raped too, I don't know why I just always think of females" – Participant 27, female

It was additionally suggested how working through the information-sharing programme encouraged participants to reflect on their own schemas towards the subject. However, changing views and opinions can be increasingly difficult due to their ingrained nature. Regardless, it was felt that allowing the space for discussion and creating a space for people to view the topic in a non-judgemental manner would be beneficial. From this the second sub-theme removing stigma/myth-busting can be inferred.

> "Some individual's opinions can be very deeply embedded regarding topics as sensitive as these. However, even helping change, or creating further positive views on victims, of crimes such as these will be a great help to those who need to speak out" – Participant 10, female

> "I think it would impact them for the better and remove the negative stigma that some people may have towards the victims. I think it would broaden the scope for who is a victim as some people have a very narrow perspective towards what a victim actually is" – Participant 24, female

The endorsement of rape myths is something that is so commonly found within society and participants discussed how the programme challenged the stereotypical myths that have been prevalent for many years.

> "Perhaps that rape is a broad spectrum and not all perpetrators grab their victims at night etc" – Participant 1, female

> "… rape or assault isn't because of what someone is wearing or how attractive they are. It could happen to anyone whether they are wearing a bikini or dressed like a nun" – Participant 36, female

> "… it's not always what people assume. for example, a woman flirting with a man doesn't mean she is giving consent for sex… - Participant 38, female

It was very clear from the evaluation that participants found the programme informative; allowing for an understanding that anyone can become a victim of sexual violence, therefore aiding in the reduction of victim-blaming. It was also noted that by offering factual information, not just emotive conjecture, allowed for an intellectual understanding of the matter.

> "I think it would impact them for the better and remove the negative stigma that some people may have towards the victims. I think it would broaden the scope for who is a victim as some people have a very narrow perspective towards what a victim actually is" – Participant 24, female

> "I think that it will help people to understand the subject a lot more. As someone who has both been sexually abused and raped, I think that this is a positive step to combat the misconceptions and myths of this subject" – Participant 43, female

"It's made me realise that anyone can be a victim there isn't a "normal" victim" – Participant 52, female

"I think this is a very efficient programme as it clarifies the different law's relating to consent and rape in the UK, it also busts myths that are thought to be factual giving a broader insight into rape and that it can happen to anyone irrespective of their gender, age, socio-economic status etc" – Participant 75, female

Statistics and Figures

The second theme that originated from the data was statistics and figures; this was separated into the two sub-themes of male rape and reporting rates. When statistics and figures were explored generally individuals commented on how exploring data allowed them to understand the true nature of the problem.

"The statistics as it shows hard data rather than just talking about it so more people could become interested in fighting to stop the offence and raise awareness about it" – Participant 89, male

Participants were also shocked with the rates of acquaintance rape when compared to stranger rapes.

"That 90% of incidents are by people known to the victim. I knew it was more common but not that high and also the sheer number of people who have experienced sexual abuse is staggering" – Participant 14, male

"I was quite shocked at the fact that 90% of people that have raped people are loved ones or someone that the victim knows very well or is close to, it happens in places such as their homes, workplaces or somewhere where the victim feels safe. This fact shocked me as I thought the majority of the fact when people are raped or sexually assaulted it's by strangers but that is only 10%" – Participant 38, female

"The statistic that only around 10% of rapes are committed by strangers, this makes me uncomfortable as you wouldn't expect that almost all rapes are committed by someone you know" – Participant 43, female

As seen within the first theme, male rape is a common factor discussed by the participants – this time it constituted the sub-theme within statistics and figures. The common thread noted was the lack of awareness of male victims, the fact that male victims are not portrayed within the media, this resulted in the figures being so "unimaginable".

"… I was shocked that boy's ratio was higher, but that's because it's discussed less. But in general, it's hard to imagine under 18s faking assault because there is completely no argument that they are 'asking for it'. Unimaginable" – Participant 18, male

"I was surprised with the figures of rape and that there is also a high percentage of men that do become victims, for example, 1 in 4 boys are victims before the ages of high school and 1 in 3 girls" – Participant 31, female

"The statistics of how many people sexual violence affects. especially the statistics on men as this is something that pretty much never gets talked about" – Participant 52, female

It was confirmed that individuals recognised that men could be victims of sexual violence, however, the extent to which was surprising.

"The only thing that I was shocked about was the statistics for men" – Participant 36, female

"The number of males that are also victims of this crime. I knew that it was possible for males to be assaulted in this way, but I didn't realise to what extent" – Participant 73, female

"I was surprised that 1 in 6 males before 18 experience some form of sexual abuse compared to 1 in 4 females, I didn't expect the margin to be as close as the statistics suggest" – Participant 75, female

The second sub-theme reporting rates was incorporated due to the number of participants describing their "surprise" and disbelief at the number of victims who chose to not disclose their assaults to authorities.

"I was surprised by the number of victims who did not report their assault to the police. I knew the number was high I just never realised that 83% of people did not report their assaults to the police" – Participant 62, female

It was considered how the information-sharing programme informed participants of the difficulties that victims may face when considering reporting.

"The information that surprised me was that 83% of victims do not report that they have been assaulted. This surprised me because I thought many people would report the crime and seek help straight away but now, I realise that they might not report it because they feel shame, embarrassment or that they won't be believed" – Participant 68, female

It was felt that the figures highlighted "how bad" the situation surrounding the reporting of sexual violence is, in addition to offering an "impactful" stance on the matter. However, it was also suggested that, although the low reporting rates were surprising, this may have been due to the "confusion" that surrounds consent and what constitutes sexual violence – therefore, this could be unwillingly reinforcing rape myths and victim-blaming.

"… figures showing the lack of people reporting their abuse will show how bad the situation is and the importance of reporting" – Participant 18, male

"it's surprising just how a lot of sexual assault must go unreported due to confusion over consent and what actually counts as assault" – Participant 6, male

Impact of Disclosures and Scenarios

Throughout the evaluative questions, participants continually remarked on the impactful nature of both the survivor narratives and the scenarios that were incorporated within the information-sharing programme. Although participants did note how emotionally difficult and "uncomfortable" it was reading the accounts given by survivors – they did emphasise the importance of incorporating those within such a programme; not only participants of the said programme but also for potential future survivors of sexual violence who may engage in a programme like that.

> "The survivor stories were hard to read... They had the effect of making the factual information more salient to me and I think I'll remember the information more clearly for having an emotional response to it" – Participant 14. male

> "Victims may be able to sympathise with similar stories making them more likely to report their experience" – Participant 26, female

> "While reading these stories the thought that so many people go through this everywhere made me feel super uncomfortable" – Participant 35, female

It was also felt that the survivor narratives highlighted the problem of victim-blaming, not only from others but from victims themselves.

> "The stories of the survivors and how people in their life or they themselves put the blame on themselves and how they evaluated their actions to see what could have brought or led it on" – Participant 36, female

> "The survivor stories as I rarely ever hear about anyone's experiences. It also makes me feel sad that many of them blamed themselves" – Participant 43, female

> "It has helped me understand more why victims may be afraid to report their crime to the police and that it can run deeper than just the fear of being judged" – Participant 55, female

Participants also agreed that the accounts given allowed for a humanistic quality to be given to the statistics and facts; therefore, ensuring the information presented was more relatable.

> "Reading the survivors stories as it humanises the statistics that are put out there is the media and many of the situations people found themselves in are relatable" – Participant 52, female

> "I think reading people's stories really makes this seem so much more powerful than just the facts, I think there is a good balance between the two" – Participant 55, female

> "The victim statements, for me, give the greatest impact. Written in their own words and describing real-life scenarios that a relatable to the reader" – Participant 73, female

The scenarios that were used within the information-sharing programme were also described as being very uncomfortable to read and provoked negative emotions from participants as they could relate the situations to everyday life.

> "Some of the scenarios of the rape/assault I found a little uncomfortable as I see these stories in reality and it sickens me to think people have the mentality in their mind that it is okay to abuse others sexually and do not care that it will stick with the other person for their entire lifetime" – Participant 16, female

> "Some of the scenarios made me feel uncomfortable as I imagined myself being in their shoes" – Participant 30, male

> "The scenarios made me uncomfortable as they are strong replications of real-life incidents… they are good in the sense that an individual who reads them can really analyse their perspective of what rape / sexual assault is and how they feel about It" – Participant 75, female

Regardless, participants did believe the scenarios served a positive purpose within the programme and allowed for a variety of the different ways in which sexual violence can occur to be portrayed.

"It's good, as it shows different scenarios in which sexual violence can occur. It's also quite daunting, as it draws parallels to situations in our society" – Participant 22, male

"Impactful - I believe the scenarios at the start as it covered such a wide range of events and it allowed me to engage with how that actually made me feel. The information at the end way to close it" – Participant 24, female

It was also discussed how exhibiting different scenarios may allow potential victims of sexual violence to feel like they are not alone. Also, suggesting that confidence in reporting could be instilled for victims of sexual violence due to the varied nature represented.

"if someone has been assaulted or been a victim in the past, then it might make them not feel like they're alone" – Participant 22, male

"I think it would be useful to hear these scenarios if you have been sexually assaulted/raped because it will be reassuring to know that there are many different scenarios that are still classed as sexual assault/rape. Many people are confused as to whether they have been assaulted/raped or not" – Participant 77, female

A number of participants made specific reference to the first scenario that was shown within the programme – depicting alcohol-facilitated rape. The fact that participants did not feel that scenario clearly identified that a rape had occurred, and allowed room for speculation was an area of conversation. However, this could also lead to a lack of understanding of consent when intoxicated, as well as victim-blaming attitudes.

"The 1st scenario. I believe it provokes people to think. There are a lot of ways that situation could have been played out differently" – Participant 35, female

"I found scenario one very interesting as I didn't feel it was as cut and dry as the other two which could lead to some great discussions in future" – Participant 89, male

"Possibly, by giving scenarios this allows people to have more understanding of dangers which can potentially make people vulnerable and exposed to perpetrators" – Participant 48, male

However, when also exploring this scenario, one participant did feel that it would inspire confidence in people that have endured this to report, as it is dispelling some of the myths surrounding it.

"It makes me think people will listen to you if something has happened even if you were drunk or on drugs. I feel like the media and things does make out that reporting a crime while intoxicated wouldn't go anywhere legally but after going through [the programme] it makes me more confident that they would" – Participant 52, female

Education

The theme of education was developed from the copious amount of data gathered related to the lack of information that has been readily available to the general public surrounding sexual violence. Participants appeared surprised and shocked when information regarding changes in the law was presented. Additionally, there was an air of intrigue around the legal definitions of sexual violence and what actually constitutes consent. As a result, this theme was separated into four sub-themes changes in law, legal definitions, consent, and target audience.

When exploring the first sub-theme, changes in law, most of the participants were alarmed by how contemporary a number of the laws are.

"… how late laws came in when rape has been around for a long time" – Participant 3, female

"…the timeline of changes in the law had surprised me. How the changes are only very recent" – Participant 13, female

"It was surprising to see how late laws have been changed - it is more recent than expected" – Participant 84, female

Participants referenced how the inability to recognise certain acts as criminal in the past would have resulted in many victims being unable to seek "justice" for the sexual violence committed against them. This was specifically, noted concerning male rape and rape within marriage.

"The fact that rape laws have only been established within the past 20/30 years which means many victims have been unable to get justice" – Participant 43, female

"The fact that male rape only became illegal in 1994 and that isn't a long time ago" – Participant 79, male

"… that the law about rape in marriage was only brought in in 1992. – Participant 14, male

The benefits of offering legal definitions were explored within the second sub-theme, participants noted how prior to undertaking the information-sharing programme they were unaware of the different legal classifications of sexual violence. Additionally, informing people that sexual violence constitutes not only rape, could encourage individuals to disclose when they relate their experience to what has been noted.

"I wasn't aware that there was a definition of rape without it being penetration of a penis. I've had discussions with people before where we weren't sure how rape was established in terms of women raping women" – Participant 18, male

"I think it will help [victims] feel more confident to disclose… even if they are not ready to report it to the authorities yet. I hope that it would make them feel less alone" – Participant 42, female

"establishing the laws relating to this topic could have the most impact as many individuals, if not the majority, may be unaware of the laws relating to this topic" – Participant 75, female

Consent was a prevalent topic discussed within the evaluative questions and therefore resulted in the third sub-theme being developed. The clear guidelines regarding consent were noted to be a particularly positive aspect of the programme, affording the notion that ambiguity surrounding consent is something that is so often judged and utilised when making judgements on sexual assault/rape allegations.

> "Good as it explains in depth what consent is and how it isn't 'set in stone' if consent is given, it can be taken back… Impactful - how consent can be taken back at any point during sex" Participant 18, male

> "Identifying what is classed as consent as most people nowadays still don't know what does and does not classify as full consent which helps prevent certain events from happening" – Participant 25, female

> "…educating people in the different types of non-consent, such as when someone is sleeping is not consent" – Participant 84, female

Participants commented on the importance of educating people around the boundaries of consent regardless of relationships status and ensuring that the limits and what signifies non-consent is introduced.

> "it would make them think that consent is very important regardless if they are in a relationship or not it is important to make sure people have a clear understanding of consent" – Participant 41, female

> "The part about what is consent especially to those who are oblivious to the many ways consent cannot be given" – Participant 36, female

The final sub-theme within the education theme focused on the target audience who the participants believed would benefit most from experiencing the information-sharing programme. Several participants recommended that the programme be introduced in schools and aimed at the younger adult population.

"Excellent should be taught in schools" – Participant 5, female

"It's very good and probably should be delivered at school" – Participant 7, female

"The programme is informative and seems to aim towards younger adults. The facts about the number of sexual assaults reported to the police was eye-opening, as was the number of males who also experience these crimes" – Participant 73, female

"This type of thing should be taught in schools, colleges, and universities" – Participant 85, female

Whereas one participant believed the programme should not only be taught in schools but would also serve a beneficial purpose being shared with perpetrators of sexual violence and those who are victims.

"This should be taught in schools and to all offenders and victims of sexual assault" – Participant 9, female

Future Recommendations

Another theme that was derived from the data explored what amendments should be made to the information-sharing programme and what information participants felt would be most beneficial being included. It was highlighted by several participants that although the programme offered a comprehensive take on male against female and male against male sexual violence, there was nothing that explored females being the perpetrators whether that be against a female victim or a male victim. This would have also allowed for a greater exploration of the sexual violence experienced within LGBTQ+ communities.

"Rape between women… Mainly because that was something, I found difficult to have a definition of…" – Participant 18, male

"I was a victim of a woman sexually assaulting me, when I've shared this information before I've gotten mixed reviews. Maybe a scenario question like this could give you some interesting feedback" – Participant 35, female

"There could perhaps been a scenario about a woman raping a man, as that is more likely to challenge people's preconceived ideas about sexual assault" – Participant 39, female

"More information about LGBTQ hate crime-related sexual assault" – Participant 74, male

It was also suggested that further information be discussed regarding sexual assault – participants noted, as stated within the programme, that sexual violence covers not only rape but a broad spectrum of sexual assaults and it would be valuable to include more information on those; particularly within the scenarios also, as it would allow those who have experienced it to relate with scenarios that are not just in relation to rape.

"More info about sexual assault other than rape and describing what is classed as sexual assault so more people can speak up about their experiences in a hope to prevent it" – Participant 79, male

"Not all survivors get raped. Maybe include some statements from those who have been 'touched up' etc." – Participant 10, female

"Maybe a greater focus on what it is to groom a person to sexually assault them" – Participant 73, female

Several participants wanted further information in a number of different areas relating to the topic. One participant suggested offering guidance on what to do should someone disclose a sexual assault to you, whereas another individual felt it would be prudent to offer more information relating to the prevalence of false allegations. Finally, one participant suggested the programme include what support is available for perpetrators of sexual violence.

"… what you do if someone discloses to you, they have been sexually assaulted or raped. Also, do like a quiz before asking them what they would do then tell them what they should do" – Participant 36, female

"Information on false allegations" – Participant 85, female

"Maybe what support there is for perpetrators" – Participant 13, female

Finally, there were some concerns with the length and complexity of the questions relating to the vignette exercise. It was suggested that the repetitive nature left this tedious and difficult to comprehend, therefore, allowing for shorter and abridged questions could be beneficial. However, there was also contradictory views that felt that the programme was acceptable and required no changes.

"… the questions asked of the scenario as the questions were very repetitive and wasn't that easy to understand whether you made the question simpler and shorter it would be very adequate" – Participant 50, female

"No. I think it's adequate but not too intrusive" – Participant 42, female

Raising Awareness

The final theme developed from the gathered information was raising awareness – this focused upon participants' observations regarding the programmes' ability to promote a conscious understanding of the complexities surrounding sexual violence, as well as the power to dispel the widely endorsed rape myths.

"It's eye-opening, and I have learned new facts about this topic which I had not known. This programme is essential and informative" – Participant 38, female

"I feel that many people don't understand what consent is and how sexual assault and rape has significant effects on people. I hope this helps people to understand and make the topic less taboo" - Participant 42, female

"I think it was a good simple way to help explain the different types of sexual assault that can happen and help to disprove common rumours that are spread around the subject" – Participant 62, female

It was surmised that participants believed the programme offered a sense of reality on the topic of sexual violence, raising awareness of the severity of the problem, and not shying away from the truths.

"I was unsure about it at first as it is a sensitive topic area but in the 21st century it is too naive to think that these things don't happen, so people need to be made aware of it and almost forced to read about what actually happens" – Participant 23, female

"It offers insights that many people may not have. It explains the situations very well and it would definitely make people think before presuming they have consent from another person. I think the fact that it is backed up by examples is very good as it offers a chance for the information to be seen in action" – Participant 24, female

"The programme has opened my eyes to the realities of rape which are not spoken about, but they need to [be] especially in today's society where everything is changing, and more people are speaking up" – Participant 43, female

"I thought this was highly interesting if upsetting programme that really made me think about some of the horrors people go through. It also made me think about the minds of people who commit these horrific acts and how they operate" – Participant 89, male

Comments from several participants accentuated the positive impact the programme could have on victims of sexual violence. It was suggested that working through such a programme, would allow people to be informed of the legalities surrounding sexual assault and confirm incidents that may have occurred as illegal. Additionally, it would inform victims that they are not isolated and there is support available.

"A lot of people would not think they have been sexually assaulted until they read an informative piece" – Participant 12, female

"I think that the biggest part of the programme that can have an impact on others would be the stories of survivors as they can help others gain awareness and this may also

help others to come forward if they have been a victim even if they think it was just one of those things, such as someone kissing you when you don't want to" – Participant 31, female

"As a survivor myself, I don't feel uncomfortable as I want people to understand and be educated" – Participant 42, female

"It's slightly scary to read because I went through something similar but it's comforting knowing many other people have gone through the same thing so you're not alone and that there's a lot of help now for rape victims" – Participant 79, male

The results are briefly discussed in relation to how they relate to the five CFIR domains (Damschroder et al., 2009).

Intervention Characteristics

The characteristics of the intervention were predominately focused upon by participants; it was evident that evidence-based practice had been utilised in the sourcing of the material and the observers of the intervention appreciated the statistics that were incorporated as well as the contributions by survivors of sexual victimisation. It was also reported that the programme was clear and easily understandable, affording to its simplistic design and online facilitation method.

Outer Setting

Participants highlighted the need for such a programme and attributed this to the presented statistics and figures of sexual violence prevalence within the UK. It was commented on the by including survivor narratives within intervention programmes, they are highlighting the pervasive nature of negative responses to disclosures and the ultimate consequences these have on victims of sexual violence.

Inner Setting

The perceived importance of the information-sharing programme was noted from participants, they commented that if interventions like this were more freely available within the public

domain, then more victims would know that they are not alone in their victimisation and subsequently feel more able to report to authorities.

Characteristics of the Individual

It was noted that it could be difficult to change the assumptions of some individuals who hold negative beliefs surrounding sexual victimisation, due to those assertions being ingrained and pervasive. However, it was also suggested that the information-sharing programme offered insights into topics that individuals may not currently hold.

Process of Implementation

There were no participant comments regarding the process in which the programme was delivered or implemented. However, reflections were made for future improvements to the content material. Including a more diverse population of victim and perpetrator mix within the scenarios depicted was feedback. This would include female perpetrators, as well as males and increased information about sexual violence against the LGBTQ+ population. Feedback was given in relation to the programme offering practical support to recipients of disclosures – so it was recommended that a guide on what to do in that situation be included.

Phase 3: Evaluation of Information-Sharing Programme Discussion

Phase three of this thesis was the evaluation of the refined information-sharing programme (appendix 18) which aimed to test the efficacy of the programme to promote positive change in attitudes towards victims of sexual victimisation and the acceptability of the programme, particularly to those who have lived experiences of sexual violence. It was hypothesised that the online information-sharing programme would help people develop more empathic awareness of sexual victimisation, as well looking at the perceived efficacy and acceptability of the newly developed programme. This evaluation utilised both measurements of change in rape myth acceptance and reflections on participants experience of engaging with the programme. To overcome the problem of common method variance the baseline assessment of rape myth acceptance involved open-ended responses to the presentation of written rape vignettes, which were coded and translated into numerical data. In contrast, the post-

programme assessment of rape myth acceptance was measured using the established and validated AMMSA scale. Initial comparison of the baseline levels of rape myth acceptance from the coded responses to the rape vignettes demonstrated that there was a difference between the control and experimental group scores. Thus, the baseline scores were used as the covariate in the analysis to determine whether there were differences in the post-programme scores between the two groups, whilst controlling for their baseline scores. However, it is prudent to note that although, differences in scores were obtained, the levels of adherence to rape mythology were low within the context of the content analysis suggests that participants began the research with low levels of rape myth acceptance, leading to a floor effect and provides an explanation as to why post intervention reductions were not achieved.

The findings indicated that the post-programme AMMAS scores were not significantly different between the two conditions. Therefore, not supporting the hypothesis that a new online resource would demonstrate a reduction in rape myth acceptance. This contrasts with the results obtained by Edwards et al. (2020) who observed noteworthy improvements in negative reactions towards sexual violence when assessing the usefulness of the SSS programme. They utilised a number of different measures to obtain their findings; including asking participants to complete a short questionnaire in relation to receiving disclosures (e.g., In the past 6 months has someone (friend, family member etc.) told you they have experienced any of the following? This was followed by three terms relating to sexual violence). Those participants that reported being a recipient of a disclosure, were asked to complete disclosure characteristics form which asked participants details about the disclosure they received (e.g., relationship to the discloser, whether alcohol was a factor, time since the disclosure, how upset the discloser appeared etc.) All participants then completed the Social Reactions Questionnaire-Shortened (Relyea & Ullman, 2015), participants who had not previously received a disclosure were asked to think about they would respond to someone to a friend or family member telling them they had endured sexual violence. Those who had previously been a recipient of disclosure were asked to reflect on the time they were disclosed to and answered

questions on their actual behaviour. Another measure used explored participants' confidence in their own ability to help a friend/family member that had disclosed to them. They were asked to rate their ability on a 5-point Likert scale. Participants were also asked if they had ever experienced sexual victimisation or intimate partner violence. Finally, participants were asked about their alcohol consumption over the last 30 days (Edwards et al., 2020). Although the overall findings obtained from the work of Edwards et al (2020) suggested an improvement in the appraisals given towards sexual violence, they did find that rape schemas were still present when presented vignettes included stereotypical situations of rape mythology, such as non-stranger rape and victim-blaming scenarios (Edwards et al., 2020). Additionally, findings from Edwards et al. (2020), are likely to correspond with evaluations that participants in the present study observed rape supportive attitudes most frequently when they related to exonerating the perpetrator by blaming the victim and/or circumstances, which was obtained through the analysis of the vignettes and content that participants discussed in relation to those. Edwards et al.'s (2020) research conclude that higher levels of rape myth acceptance are correlated with higher levels of victim blame and perpetrator empathy (Bieneck & Krahe, 2011; Klement et al., 2019 Mehta, 2016). Adapting the same stance as that of Edwards et al. (2020) is Smith et al. (2016). Smith et al. (2016) examined rape myth acceptance amongst campus police. It was concluded that those that attended a training intervention were less likely to advocate rape myths than those who had not. It was also highlighted that rape myths were most influential when culpability for the offence was being determined (Smith et al., 2016). Although the current exploration has not confirmed experimental effects post-intervention, Kettery et al.'s. (2019) systematic review of bystander intervention programmes, did suggest noticeable effects on rape myth acceptance, these effects were also present at follow up stages. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the current study could not employ more follow-up periods within the investigation and therefore, it is unknown whether after a period of contemplation and internalisation of the material whether a difference in rape myth acceptance would be witnessed. This is something that should be explored in future research. As can be seen, most scholarly work has concluded a reduction in rape myth acceptance post-

intervention; however, this was not witnessed in the current exploration. A rationale for this difference could be a result of the outcome measures used to examine this change. The current study did not solely rely upon rating scales and instead explored a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017) of rape vignettes to determine pre-existing rape schemas pre-intervention. This method allowed for participants to explore their thoughts and opinions regarding the depicted scenarios, it gave space for subtleties to be expressed (Erfanian et al., 2020; Skilling & Stylianides, 2018). However, the analysis was completed by just one reviewer and therefore, researcher bias (Chenail, 2011) may have attributed to higher levels of rape myth acceptance being observed in the pre-intervention phase. Additionally, the majority of other intervention studies were completed in person (Edwards et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2016), however, the current work utilised an online method. This could have resulted in a 'disinhibition effect' (Suler, 2004), which determines that online, people tend to self-disclose more freely than would be seen if in-person. Online anonymity allows an individual to conduct themselves in a manner that they would not ordinarily do; disclosing views and opinions that are seen as socially unacceptable, voicing negative/deleterious views (Suler, 2004). It could, therefore, be inferred that the online format of the current study enabled participants to express higher levels of rape myth acceptance than would normally be seen within an in-person setting.

The majority of studies that explore rape myth acceptance find that male participants demonstrate higher levels than their female counterparts (McKimmie et al., 2014; Persson & Dhingra, 2020; Suarez & Gadalla, 2020). The current exploration had contradictory findings throughout on this matter. While the male participants exhibited higher levels of pro-rape myth attitudes as indicated by the AMMAS, than female participants at the post-intervention stage the opposite was found in the coding of the responses obtained relating to the rape vignettes at the baseline stage, which indicated greater rape myth acceptance for female participants than males. However, the observed gender difference in the post-intervention analysis of the AMMAS scores did not attain a level of statistical significance. The responses received by

female participants for pre-intervention vignettes did differ slightly from that of their male counterparts. Female participants offered more content to the responses, giving a more thorough and detailed offering. Deduced from this, therefore, is that women's higher scores could be attributed to the notion that more information was available to be analysed, while male respondents tended to offer shorter single worded answers. Another rationale for higher levels of female rape myth acceptance could be contributed to the female participants engaging in behavioural blame characteristics (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). Behavioural blame occurs when an individual proposes that a person's conduct and actions are a causal factor to a subsequent incident (Anderson, 1999: Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Rollero & Tartaglia, 2019). The vignette reactions did inform behavioural blame, and this was observed at a higher level of female participants. Examples of the content received associated with behavioural blame was: *"I feel worried about … she is too young to drink alcohol…"; "maybe she is telling the truth, but she also had a hangover…"; "… was a young girl and was on alcohol at an early age and then going home alone with a boy whom she just met…"; "… walking alone late at night is not the safest option, especially when taking alley ways…".* Although the current work found that women validated rape myths at a higher level than men, Suarez and Gadalla (2010) found that men reliably validate rape myths to a greater degree than women. This assumption was endorsed by Hockett et al. (2016), who utilised vignettes to illustrate potentially sexually violent scenarios that included the consumption of alcohol, in addition to, rape perception questionnaires. Findings reported that men assigned substantially more perpetrator exonerating attitudes than women did (Hockett et al., 2016). This was, however, contradicted by Grubb and Turner's (2012) literature review around rape myth acceptance, and the present study, both of which report limited sex differences concerning rape myth acceptance. Although, both the current exploration and the study from Hockett et al. (2016) sourced rape vignettes in the methodology of their work; the interpretation of the measures was different and therefore, could be a factor as to why findings differ. The current work examined the content of the vignette responses and placed those within content categories (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017) – this allowed for an in-depth exploration of the content offered.

Whereas Hockett et al. (2016) completed their examination through exploring participants perceptions of the vignettes via rape perception questionnaires, this would have not allowed participants to extrapolate on answers and discuss themes that may not have been included within the questionnaires themselves.

Participants who identified as being a survivor of sexual violence exhibited greater levels of rape myth acceptance from the vignette-based exercise than those who did not; this was, however, less than those who chose not to answer the question on survivor status. These higher levels for self-identified survivors were also evident from the scores on the AMMAS, where survivors demonstrated greater levels of rape myth acceptance than those who reported histories free from sexual violence. However, no significant difference was observed between survivors and non-survivors of sexual violence post-intervention. These results are not unheard of and replicate the notions of self-blaming philosophies (Dworkin & Allen, 2018; Littleton et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2011; Ullman, 2010). Survivors who internalise rape schemas hold cognitive distortions surrounding the behaviours exhibited at the time of assault/rape. Interpreting the event as a mitigating reaction to something they did wrong, allows them to believe in an action and consequence world (Resick et al., 2014). Although, not specific to rape myth acceptance, Worthen and Wallace (2021) noted that survivors were supportive of rape intervention programmes, however, being a survivor was not significantly related to attitudes towards the programme. Although, Holland et al. (2014) stated that survivors were more likely to have negative perspectives about sexual violence programmes than non-survivors (Holland et al., 2014), which was concordant with this study's findings. Edwards et al. (2021) reviewed the effects of intervention participation on subsequent sexual assault and rape victims. Although there was an effect reported for levels of self-blame, concurring with the purported findings of the current study, there was an overall reduction in reported posttraumatic stress symptoms, this included avoidance strategies suggesting that those who had completed the intervention were more likely to seek social and professional support post-assault (Edwards et al., 2021).

From the qualitative examination that was obtained by thematically analysing responses to the open-ended feedback questionnaire, six overarching themes were assimilated, three of which contained corresponding sub-themes: 1) the silent survivor, with the sub-themes of male rape and removing stigma/myth-busting. 2) Statistics and figures with the sub-themes of male rape and reporting rates. 3) The impact of disclosures and scenarios. 4) Education with the sub-themes of changes in law, legal definition, target audience, and consent. 5) Future recommendations, and finally, 6) Raising awareness.

The abundance of information surrounding male rape was credited; it was suggested that the information enabled participants to challenge their existing schemas and explore the topic from a new point of reference. Given the research suggesting the limited availability of support services for male victims (Page, 2010; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; Tsui et al., 2010) it is refreshing to hear that individuals challenged their preconceived notions surrounding male victimisation and became more informed to the ever-growing incidence of the offence (CSEW, 2021). It was, however, suggested that opinions can be embedded and therefore, difficult to alter and modify. Although, Edwards et al. (2020) did find that negative social reactions to disclosures of sexual violence were low, with positive social reactions being more likely; Walfield (2021) discovered that most individuals adhere to male rape myths to some degree. He suggested that any programmes with the intention to decrease male rape myth acceptance should highlight not only accurate information about male rape but also target traditional stereotypes about male sexuality and masculinity (Walfield, 2021). Participants agreed that the statistics surrounding male victimisation was "shocking" and therefore, found this area impactful, it was noted the paucity of media broadcasting on the subject may have attributed to the unintended ignorance surrounding this. This notion is concurred by DeJong et al. (2020) who suggested that the lack of visibility around male rape is due to its inconspicuousness as a "social phenomenon" (DeJong et al., 2020, p. 195).

It was established that offering factual information about the context in which sexual violence occurs and who can become a victim of such a crime was prudent and effective,

participants commented on the myth-busting stance taken, as it allowed the information being presented to be relevant and to real-life contexts. This was one of the approaches Foubert (2011) took when designing *The Men's Programme;* one of the theoretical models embedded within the intervention was the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This model suggests that attitude and behaviour change will only occur when individuals are motivated by the information presented due to its relevance to their situations and its comprehensibility (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). As the current study found, the information-sharing programme was noted to be "impactful" and could be inferred from comments stating about usefulness to be taught within the education system, that it is therefore understandable. It was felt that the information-sharing programme was informative and appeared to be aimed at the younger adult population – secondary school and college level. Intervention work that has been previously conducted within schools has yielded mixed results (Baiocchi et al., 2017; Hillenbrand-Gunn et al., 2010; Kernsmith & Hernandez-Jozefowicz, 2011). Hillenbrand-Gunn et al. (2010) concluded that male participants within a high school environment attributed higher levels of rape myth acceptance to their peers, however, this dissipated upon completion of an intervention programme. There was also an overall shift in male participants' rape myth observance after the programme (Hillenbrand-Gunn et al., 2010). The positive change in rape myth acceptance was witnessed by Kernsmith and Hernandez-Jozefowicz (2011) after the completion of a rape prevention programme within another high school environment.

As noted, participants in the current study noted surprise with the statistics presented surrounding sexual violence; they were particularly concerned with the low reporting rates and mentioned how "confusion" surrounding consent could account for non-disclosures, therefore reinforcing the notion of victim-blaming and rape mythology (Persson & Dhingra, 2020). The topic of consent was discussed frequently throughout the appraisal of the information-sharing programme, so much so that it was afforded its own sub-theme within the category of education. Although negatively commented on initially, consent was suggested as an integral part of the programme, offering an unambiguous description of a concept that is so often

arbitrated and belittled throughout rape and sexual assault cases (Harris & Weiss, 1995; Henry et al., 2021). *The Relationship Remix* programme that Bonar et al. (2019) assessed, explored attitudes associated with relationships and consent. Positive changes in those attitudes and knowledge around how to ask for consent was obtained from the assessment (Bonar et al., 2019). It was felt extremely prudent that consent is explored and included within intervention programmes, not only due to the suggestions that consent is extremely prevalent within rape mythology but also due to the lack of understanding of what consent entails (Carline et al., 2018). During the 2018 investigation of Liverpool City Council's male-focused rape prevention campaign, by Carline et al. (2018) it was established that some participants conveyed ambiguity regarding the definition of consent (Carline et al., 2018). They discussed issues surrounding being 'led-on' and intoxication as contributory factors which could obscure consent (Carline et al., 2018). The lack of certainty surrounding consent could be evidenced in the remarks given for one of the rape vignettes that depicted a scenario involving alcohol intoxication. Participants felt that it could not be clarified from the information that sexual violence occurred and suggested that speculation could be afforded due to the level of intoxication represented. However, the judgements offered could be a result of victim-blaming attitudes and a lack of appreciation of consent when under the influence of alcohol (Henry et al., 2021), and endorsement of rape schemas in this area. The formative research completed by Salazar et al. (2017) determined the foremost themes were concerning consent, especially regarding alcohol consumption, and this was discussed with negative implications. Although, Smith et al. (2016) did conclude that those who participated in prevention programmes were significantly less likely to advocate rape myths than others who had not (Smith et al., 2016). This was corroborated by Kernsmith and Hernandez-Jozefowicz (2011), who also reported a significant change in rape supportive attitudes for both males and females post completion of a rape prevention programme, those changes were also sustained at a three-month-follow up.

Throughout the evaluation, it could be inferred that participants demonstrated victim empathy. The survivor narratives enabled individuals to identify with the victims and offer a

somewhat more than a theoretical understanding of circumstances that could precede sexual violence (Piccigallo et al., 2012). Although, Kettery et al.'s (2019) systematic review and meta-analysis of intervention programmes which overall demonstrated positive impacts on rape myth acceptance, found no evidence for improved victim empathy, the qualitative approach taken in the evaluation of the current study allowed for participants to explore their feelings and compassions surrounding the topic (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Nevertheless, Klaw et al. (2005) did similarly find increased empathy towards victims of sexual violence; it was reported that participants who completed the *CARE* programme enhanced their empathy towards sexual assault and rape survivors. Although this was refuted by Anderson and Whiston's (2005) critique, they deduced from a meta-analysis of 69 studies that represented 102 treatment interventions, that sexual assault and rape interventions did not appear to have an impact on empathy towards victims of sexual violence, due to overall effects sizes not being significantly different from zero (Anderson & Whiston, 2005).

While participants in the current study wrote that the survivor narratives and the rape vignettes made them feel slightly uncomfortable, they offered strong replication to real-life and therefore, allowed participants to contemplate the experiences of those discussed. It was suggested that enabling survivors a space to share their stories would highlight that they are not alone (Huemmer et al., 2019). Foubert (2011) incorporated this element in *The Men's Programme;* however, surprisingly, it was not integrated within *The Women's Programme.* *The Women's Programme* instead focused on risk avoidance and what were deemed to be tell-tale characteristics of potential rapists and risky contexts. *The Men's Programme,* however, did include a video of a male police officer describing an incident where another officer was raped (Foubert, 2011). It is deemed from the different foci of these gender-specific programmes that male participants are in need of building empathy as a means of preventing them from perpetrating sexual assault, and females need to learn how to stop an attack from occurring. However, the current work showed that regardless of sex, all participants found the accounts given by survivors as poignant. It was also suggested that if survivors were

participating in the information-sharing programme, then it would inform the many different ways in which sexual violence occurs and could aid with the acknowledgement of sexual victimisation and reducing the tendency for self-blame (LeMaire et al., 2016; Holland, 2020; Walsh et al., 2016). Camp et al. (2018) surveyed individuals in relation to their expectations of intervention programmes. Overall, the findings indicate that there should be no distinguishing between men and women; so, programmes should not focus on men as potential offenders, and women as being able to prevent assaults (Camp et al., 2018).

There were several recommendations offered during the appraisal for how to improve the information-sharing programme. These recommendations included ensuring the programme was more diverse in terms of the types of sexual violence that was included rather than focusing on completed rapes (Coulter et al., 2017; Girshick, 2002; Menning & Holtzman, 2014; Mortimer et al., 2019). Incorporating the underrepresented area of female perpetrators was reported to be an area that could be advantageous (Turchick et al., 2016). Turchick et al. (2016) investigated the need to conceptualise sexual violence in a gender-inclusive manner, suggesting that current theories whilst allowing for the exploration of most gender combinations, the male perpetrator and female victim ratio is the prominent area included (Turchick et al., 2016). It is felt that offering this gender-inclusive conceptualisation would aid clinical practices, with most support services and material currently aimed at a female population, making these gender-inclusive would remove the need for multiple resources and perhaps unintentionally withholding these from underserved populations (Turchick et al., 2016). So, ensuring that there was a single resource for all individuals regardless of sex/gender (Turchick et al., 2016). It was also suggested that concrete, practical support should be offered on how to support an individual should they disclose sexual violence to you. The SSS programme that was evaluated by Edwards et al. (2020) was designed to increase positive reactions to disclosures. The programme teaches contributors how to respond; by offering individual's opportunities to role-play and discuss scenarios (Edwards et al., 2020). It was noted that whilst the intervention was effective in improving intended social reactions, no

main effects for actual social reactions given to disclosers by recipients, as a result of the intervention were obtained (Edwards et al., 2020). It could, therefore, be assumed that whilst offering this information is practically relevant, there are no benefits in the improvement in individuals' responses to disclosures of sexual violence.

Chapter 7: Reflections and Limitations

Overall, the current project aimed to develop and explore the effects of an online information-sharing programme to increase positive attitudes and behaviours towards survivors of sexual violence and establish a more empathic responses to disclosures of rape and sexual assault. This aim was realised by completing the following objectives: a) to review the literature to explore the disclosure experiences of survivors of sexual violence; b) to explore community members' perspectives on what information and format they think would be beneficial in an information-sharing programme that aims to improve attitudes and behaviours towards survivors of sexual violence; c) to co-produce, with survivors of sexual violence a new online resource to help people develop a more empathic awareness of sexual victimisation and finally, d) to assess the perceived efficacy and acceptability of the newly developed information-sharing programme.

There are limitations to consider with current exploration; the sample selections utilised for each of the phases of the study were relatively small with only twenty-nine focus group participants drawn from a single UK University and three participants from the same UK University for the survivor narrative phase. However, the geographical spread of participants was established for the evaluation of the programme, although the sample size of 214 participants was still considerably small but sufficient to evaluate the information-sharing programme. Therefore, the combination of limited geographical reach and the relatively small sample sizes calls into question the ability to generalise findings more broadly across the UK and beyond. With this in mind, the purpose of phase one was to establish a foundation for a future prevention programme that could then be evaluated on a larger scale, which was achieved. Furthermore, self-selection bias allows a capacity for those who were recruited to hold more auspicious views around the need to pursue and change attitudes surrounding sexual assault and rape (Krumpal, 2013). Additionally, due to the sensitive nature of the topic being discussed individuals may have presented themselves in a more socially desirable manner, reflecting a person's need for social approval and concerns around impression

management (Krumpal, 2012). As a result, participants could underestimate the true prevalence of the opinions and attitudes due to the taboo nature of the subject – this could have been especially predominant within the focus groups (Krumpal, 2012). However, the manner in which the data was collected differed to the way which others within the field have utilised (Carline et al., 2018; Edwards et al., 2021; Foubert, 2011). When the same method of data collection is used participants can learn how to answer repeated questions, and therefore offer what they perceive are more favourable and desirable responses. The current thesis, therefore, used different outcome measures to collect the required data and eliminate the theft of common method variance (Tehseen et al., 2017). The baseline assessment of rape myth acceptance was calculated by obtaining open-ended responses to written rape vignettes, which were coded and transformed into numerical data. In contrast, the post-programme assessment of rape myth acceptance was measured using the established and validated AMMSA scale (Gerger et al., 2007).

There were also only six male participants within the focus groups and thirty-one males took part in the evaluation of the programme; therefore, the study may not have fully gained a representation of the male perspective around the issues being discussed. Additionally, to increase male participation a male-only focus group was established. It is recognised that there are disadvantages to using exclusively male-only groups. Given the hegemonic nature of masculinity, it can be argued that groups that consist of solely males would be thinking mainly about reputation and rivalry (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). In addition, conforming to gender stereotypes and adhering to the expectations of male masculinity would be witnessed (Hollander, 2004). It has been suggested that male-only groups would avoid narratives that serve to undermine their own views and would instead follow the crowd of presumed 'manly' responses (Hollander, 2004), this would therefore, result in an avoidance of answers that could serve to undermine a participant's perceived masculinity. As a result, future research would be recommended to employ mixed gendered focus groups, allowing for a less threatening environment, and enabling opposing views to be discussed. Future research would benefit

from gaining a higher proportion of male participants, in order to obtain a representative opinion. Nevertheless, the qualitative approach the present study undertook allowed for a thorough examination and follow-up of the information being offered.

For behavioural interventions to be effective, it is fundamental to work in conjunction with a target population; this will allow for an appreciation of the issues deemed relevant and develop packages that meet their requirements. Previous scholars have been inclined to utilise the target audience as participants rather than collaborators (Klaw et al., 2005; Foubert, 2011; Worthen & Wallace, 2021). Nevertheless, previous work does posit some interesting notes for future interventions to consider, the current examination, used those the programme would be intended for in the construction and design of a rape and sexual assault programme. It is also said to be particularly important to gain the thoughts and opinions of survivors of sexual violence to inform such a programme (Worthen & Wallace, 2021), which the current work accomplished; therefore, contributing to the gap within the literature. Although this method as noted has many advantages for intervention development, there are difficulties with utilising a co-production method. Caution needs to be taken when integrating solely the opinions and recommendations of a target population, as additional myths, and preconceived ideas from those contributors could then be included within a finished intervention. It is, therefore, prudent that co-production be used in conjunction with best practice and integrated with established research findings (Williams et al. 2020), as the current information-sharing programme did.

Nevertheless, posting trigger warnings at the beginning of the information-sharing programme would have been beneficial (Bedra, 2021; Boysen et al., 2018; Branch & Richards, 2014; Byron, 2017), informing individuals that not only will information be shared surrounding sexual violence, but accounts of rape scenarios and from survivors themselves would be depicted. It would be beneficial for future evaluations to explore survivors' and non-survivors' reactions to participation in the sexual violence programme itself, rather than just focusing on rape myth acceptance as the current study did with this distinction. Such findings could emphasise the personal advantages of participating in such programmes (Edwards et al.,

2009; Edwards et al., 2014; Worthen & Wallace, 2021). When exploring the content of the material presented it is felt that this was not culturally diverse or representative of different sexualities (Worthen & Baker, 2014; Worthen & Wallace, 2017). It was suggested by participants that different variations of sexual assaults were incorporated, additionally, this is extremely important due to the unrepresented nature of LGBTQ+ individuals (Coulter et al., 2017; Girshick, 2002; Menning & Holtzman, 2014; Mortimer et al., 2019) and those from ethnic minorities (Curry, 2019; Hart & Rennison, 2003; Slatton & Richard, 2019; Zounlome, et al., 2019) within intervention programmes and within sexual violence literature in general. However, developing one programme that incorporates all areas of sexual violence and that meets the cultural and social needs of everyone, would be very difficult to put into practice. This intervention programme, would be extremely lengthy and therefore, could result in individuals not wanting to take part in the programme. It could prove fruitful to offer an introductory programme that outlines an overall, basis of sexual violence and then has specialist areas (e.g., males, trans, disabilities, children, ethnic minorities, bisexual, gay etc.); individuals can explore sections that are relevant to them at that given time. The difficulty of introducing such a programme and developing a policy for people to complete training in is recognised. However, the programme developed was designed for the lay person, those who would not ordinarily, in their line of work, be a recipient of a disclosure; and therefore, it is also recognised that statistics, laws, and social norms are constantly changing and that by offering a review period of such training such as every three years could prove beneficial to keep to date. If offering such a training package to staff members could positively affect just one survivor that a staff member happens upon in their workplace, then that is a positive outcome for such a programme.

Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the study's contributions, there are several future areas of investigation that have been identified. Firstly, due to the limited sample size and lack of diversity within it results are

not generalisable to the population. Therefore, future studies should explore this topic among a larger, more diverse sample.

Additionally, the suggestions made from the current study's participants' regarding material content should be explored and incorporated within a future programme and revaluated. Including female on female assaults as well as male rape, will allow for a more diverse population to be represented. As well, the information and statistics should be updated to include LGBTQ+ specific information, and not just stereotyping all males and females within the given boxes.

Moreover, it would prove fruitful to compare the information-sharing programme, not only with the control group but also alongside another alternative intervention programme. It is felt that the recently evaluated SSS programme (Edwards et al., 2021), could be compared due to its similar aims of increasing positive reactions to disclosures of sexual violence (Edwards et al., 2020). This would help determine whether there are benefits to completing intervention programmes and help establish a basis for the content that should be included within. It would also be beneficial, for participants to disclose their previous involvement with such programmes so that it could be established whether prior knowledge aids with future change.

Although the current study only explored the short-term effects of an intervention that was being evaluated, utilising multiple ways as assessing and analysing the data eliminated the threat of common method variance (Tehseen et al., 2017). Regardless, it would prove fruitful to include post-intervention follow-ups (Lynn, 2009), assessing the longevity of intervention effects, delayed effects, or non-effects would be beneficial to the reliability (Lynn, 2009) of the programme and help observe the efficacy and appropriateness of the proposed material within an information-sharing programme.

Finally, it would be advantageous for future appraisals to explore survivors' and non-survivors reactions to participation in sexual violence programmes, rather than just focusing

on a single distinction. Such findings could stress the personal advantages of participating in intervention programmes (Edwards et al., 2014; Worthen & Wallace, 2021).

Conclusion

The main aims of the research were to complete a formative exploration with community members exploring what information and format they felt would be beneficial in an information-sharing programme surrounding sexual violence. As well as to design a new online resource to help people develop a more empathic awareness of the subject and assess the perceived efficacy and adequacy of the intervention. The research also offered a voice to survivors of sexual violence, allowing them to share their accounts of disclosing victimisation and being faced with rape myths. In addition, to gaining a survivor perspective on the new information-sharing programme. This research was needed as few studies have explored the benefits of utilising the target populations as collaborators in the development of intervention programmes, and even less have investigated the reactions of survivors to such programmes. Furthermore, previous intervention programmes have been designed with the sole aim of rape prevention – educating men how to not rape or intervene to prevent others from doing so, and women how to protect themselves, paying little attention to the damaging consequences that rape myth acceptance and negative attitudes have on those affected by sexual violence. The current work looked to help bridge that gap within the literature and develop an intervention whose primary focus was not prevention, but on helping increase appropriate and acceptable schemas towards sexual assault and rape victims and dispel the damaging connotations surrounding rape mythology. Through the use of a mixed-methods approach and the CFIR framework, a contributor informed information-sharing programme was developed, which encompassed accounts from survivors of sexual violence.

For behavioural interventions to be effective, it is fundamental to work in conjunction with a target population; this will allow for an appreciation of the issues deemed relevant and develop packages that meet their requirements. As noted, previous scholars have been inclined to utilise the target audience as participants rather than collaborators (Klaw et al.,

2005; Foubert, 2011). Nevertheless, all previous work does posit some interesting notes for future interventions to consider, the current examination, used those the programme would be intended for, in the construction and design of an information-sharing programme surrounding sexual violence. The findings offer evidence for the acceptance of rape myths and victim-blaming attitudes, which is in line with previous research (Camp et al., 2018). It also demonstrated a need for these misconceptions and unfounded beliefs to be disputed if future victims of sexual violence are to be looked upon more positively. By accounting for this, individuals can be educated about the implications that negative attitudes hold; counteracting the pervasive problem that currently occurs. The ambiguity that is felt surrounding consent and alcohol intoxication is a concerning and essential element for any future intervention to include. Enabling participants to understand the complexities of consent and vulnerabilities that follow alcohol intoxication could prove fruitful; going some way towards discrediting the negative connotations surrounding alcohol facilitated rape. Although past research in this field has exhibited conflicting views upon the effectiveness of prevention programmes each offer plausible evidence for their arguments (Bonar et al., 2019; Camp et al., 2018; Choate, 2003; Edwards et al., 2020; Foubert and Newberry, 2006; Foubert et al., 2010b; Hillibrand-Gunn et al., 2010; Klaw et al., 2005; Salazar et al., 2014; Tharp et al., 2011). However, by raising awareness of the implications negative attitudes pose to the reporting rates of sexual offences, attitude change can be sought; this would enable victims to report their assaults without fear of judgment from those surrounding them. Unfortunately, negative social reactions to disclosures of sexual violence and increased rape myth acceptance are all too common and are known to lead to deleterious consequences for victims (Dworkin et al., 2019). Therefore, an intervention that seeks to improve awareness and empathic responses is of critical importance.

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<u>*Appendices*</u>

Appendix 1 – Focus Group Topic Sheet

Improving societal attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through specialised training

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Focus Group Topics

- How do you think people view victims of sexual assaults and rape?

- You will be given a few scenarios of sexual assault occurring in different contexts, please say how you think other people might view these and what assumptions they might draw. Do you think these assumptions are valid?

- Why do you think people hold these views?

- What impact do you think this has?

- What do you think could be done to challenge negative views or to promote more positive views?

- When discussing an established rape prevention programme aimed at men (The Men's programme, Foubert, 2011), what aspects do you think would be usual in informing men's views of victims of sexual assault and rape?

- What aspects do you think would not be useful? Why is this?

- What do you think might be missing from this programme?

- When discussing an established rape prevention programme for women (The Women's programme, Foubert, 2011), what aspects do you think would be usual in informing women's views of victims of sexual assault and rape?

- What aspects do you think would not be useful?

- What do you think might be missing from this programme?

- How do you think an intervention might be best delivered so that it reaches the widest audience possible?

Appendix 2 – Scenarios

Rape Scenarios

1. Shelly is a 19-year-old woman and was on a night out with 3 friends when she met Colin; they hit it off straight way and spent the evening drinking alcohol together and chatting. At the end of the night Colin walked Shelly home as she was intoxicated. In the morning, Shelly woke up completely naked with Colin laid by the side of her. He thanked Shelly for a good night and left her house. Shelly reports being in shock when she woke and states that she did not ask Colin into her house and claimed that he had raped her.

2. Ryan was leaving the University library late at night, it was extremely dark and he was walking through the car park. Whilst walking Ryan heard another man shouting homophobic obscenities at him. The man was shouting that he knew that Ryan was gay and was going to rape him as he knew that's what he wanted. The man ran over to Ryan and started hitting him till Ryan feel to floor and then he raped him. Ryan fought back has much as he could, however the attacker was much stronger than Ryan.

3. Lucy had been using an online dating website and had been talking to David for three weeks. They decided to meet up for a few drinks at a bar in the local city centre. Un-knowing to Lucy David had booked a room at a nearby hotel, when they met David told Lucy that he left his wallet in the hotel room and needed to go back for it. Lucy felt that she had gotten to know David over the previous weeks and went with him. Whilst in the room David physically and sexually assaulted Lucy in a prolonged at-tack which resulted in the rape of Lucy.

4. Alice is an 18-year-old woman. She was walking home from work one dark night. As she was walking through an alley way, the same way she walked every day, a young-looking man confronted her. She did not recognise the man and just put her head down and carried on walking. The man started talking to Alice asking her for di-rections. She politely replied. Then suddenly the man grabbed hold her and told her if she screamed he would kill her. The man violently raped Alice and afterwards just casually pulled his trousers up and walked off. Whilst walking off he said to Alice that he knew where she lived and if she told anyone he would kill her.

5. Steven is a 22-year-old man, he was at a Carls his friend's house hanging out and playing video games. During the evening, Carl attempted to kiss Steven, he pushed Carl away and told him that he was not gay, and that they were just friends. Carl be-gan to get angry with Steven and hit him in the face disorientating Steven. Carl then began to struggle with Steven and proceeded to rape him. Steven stated that he had attempted to stop Carl during the attack, however he could not get away and was raped by Carl.

Appendix 3 – Overview of established programmes

<u>An Overview of both *The Women's Program* and *The Men's Program (Foubert, 2011)*</u>

The Women's Program

The Women's Program focuses on how to identify men's potentially high-risk behaviour and how women can be effective bystanders to assist their friends in high-risk situations, particularly those involving alcohol. The Women's Program also focuses on how to help a friend recover from sexual assault without blaming the survivor.

Goals of the Program

The Women's Program has three goals. First, The Women's Program was written to enable women to recognize characteristics of high-risk perpetrators. Second, it is intended to enable and empower women to intervene in potentially high-risk situations. The third goal is to enable women to help rape survivors by giving them pertinent information about rape, a victim's recovery from rape, and resources where more information can be found.

The Program Begins

The Women's Program begins by defining rape, mental incapacity and physical helplessness. Next, participants watch a short video, *The Undetected Rapist*. This video illustrates important characteristics of potential rapists by re-enacting an interview between a male college student and a researcher. Program presenters then discuss the interview with the audience, identifying characteristics of high risk men to prepare audience members for situations in the future where they could help their friends avoid high risk men and get out of dangerous situations.

Peer educators then discuss ways participants can help sexual assault survivors and explain that helping sexual assault survivors involves understanding the needs of the survivor as well personal limitations. A strong emphasis in this section is encouragement to avoid blaming the victim. Then they asked audience members to talk about how they could intervene as active bystanders if a potential rape situation were about to occur in their presence. Finally, presenters ask audience members what they personally are willing to do after the program to intervene as bystanders in rape situations.

Peer educators then engage the participants in discussion and talk about how they can help their friends avoid risky situations. Finally, participants have the opportunity to request additional information or clarify key points from the presentation.

Men's Programme

In *The Men's Program,* participants learn what a rape feels like, how to help a woman recover from a rape experience, and how to intervene as a bystander if they observe a situation that could turn into a rape.

The Men's Program is designed as an all-male, peer education workshop and focuses on increasing men's empathy toward women who survive rape and encouraging men to intervene when the see that a rape situation might occur. It convinces men that being raped is a traumatic experience and shows men how they can help women recover from the experience, if a woman comes to them asking for help. Presenters often use pre-printed posters or PowerPoint with pertinent information to reinforce key points. Toward the end of the program, peer educators open the floor for questions.

The Program Begins

The Men's Program opens by establishing the non-confrontational nature of the program. Peer educators give an overview of what will be covered in the subsequent hour, and make sure that everyone knows that they can leave at any time. Participants view a 15-minute video, prefaced by an introduction that it describes "a rape situation" that will help them to better understand how to help a sexual-assault survivor. Participants are not told that the video describes two men raping a *male* police officer. They know only that the video describes a rape situation.

The Video

The video shows a speech by a male police officer who describes another male police officer who is moving a trash can in an alley. Two attackers surprise him and take control of the situation. The police officer is not told to move; he quickly assesses the situation. He ends up submitting to a rape out of fear that greater harm might be done to him. Later, he endures a difficult hospital examination, becomes concerned about sexually transmitted infections, and is subjected to insensitive comments from his colleagues that perhaps he had met his attackers before and that maybe he really wanted the incident to happen. These segments of the video are processed as they relate to experiences commonly had by women who survive rape.

At the conclusion of the video, peer educators break the stunned silence by explaining that a video in which a man is raped by another man was used because it is the closest parallel available for helping men understand what it might feel like to be assaulted. The peer educators use the video to draw parallels from the police officer's experience to experiences commonly had by female survivors.

A pair of peer educators then takes turns reminding the audience of several segments of the video and relating these to common experiences of women who survive rape. These common survivor experiences include having a rape happen in an everyday situation that turns bad, being frozen with fear, eventually submitting to the act to avoid further violence, worrying about long-term physical consequences, enduring a hospital examination, and suffering the questions about why she didn't resist the attack. The message they receive is that rape is a violent crime that is not the fault of the survivor.

Helping a Survivor

At this point in the program, the peer educators note that one in four college women have survived rape or attempted rape. This statistic is used to show the men that learning to help a survivor is relevant to them, as it is likely that someone they know has survived rape. Peer educators review the importance of encouraging proper medical attention, listening, believing, referring the survivor to counselling, and resisting the temptation to suggest further violence.

Other Ways Men Can Prevent Rape

The next section of the program focuses on what men can do to help prevent rape. Men are encouraged to communicate openly during their own sexual encounters, to recognize that cooperation does not equal consent, and to pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues during intimate encounters. Peer educators then discuss the effects of joking about rape and encourage participants to confront other men when they say things that put women down.

Bystander Intervention

At this point in the program, there is much more audience participation. In order to introduce the topic of bystander intervention, men are led through a guided imagery exercise where a woman

special to them experiences rape and a man who is in a position to do something about it does nothing. Attention is focused on the man who does nothing, his responsibility for intervening, and motivating everyone to see the need to intervene in such situations.

Participants are then asked to consider two scenarios involving alcohol related sexual assault. Men are asked what they could do to stop such incidents from becoming sexual assault. Peer educators lead the audience through a lively dialogue where effective bystander behaviour is brainstormed and discussed.

Closing

A question-and-answer period then allows participants to request additional information or to ask for clarification of key points. After answering questions and identifying resources on campus, the program ends on a serious yet solemn tone, noting that if the hour in which the program took place was an average hour in the United States that approximately 114 women would have survived rape (Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti, & McCauley, 2007).

University of HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Improving societal attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape through specialised training

Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a study about improving attitudes towards sexual assault victims. Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study about?

The following research will be used for the purpose of a PhD Research Project; chapters of the final report will also be submitted for publication within academic journals. This research is going to be investigating the sensitive topic of rape and sexual abuse. The overall objective of the project is to develop a specialised online training programme that's aims to improve the attitudes towards both male and female victims of sexual assault and rape.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to complete a consent form, and you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part in the research you will be asked to participate in a 1 hour long focus group. This will be held for the purpose of disucssing what material should be included within an online specialised psychoeducational training programme on the effects of and attitudes towards sexual assault and rape. The discussion themes will be released to all participants one week before the focus group is held; this will include brief points on the topics that will be discussed. There will be approximatly five to seven people in each group, and separate focus group will be held for surviviors of sexual assault and rape. Member checking will be utilised which will allow each participant to srutinise there their individual contribution before finialising. This will be accomplished by sending you a copy of your individual transcript after the completion of the focus groups. At this point you can check the statements you made and ensure you are happy them, make any changes, withdraw any points, or add any additional comments. You are also able to fully withdraw from the study at any point, and can chose to have your transcript removed when this is received for checking up until the

1st May 2021 as this when analysis will be complete. After all trancripts have been approved by their authors; authenticity of the research will be established by sending the findings to willing of members from each group.

Will my identity be disclosed?

Anonymity will be maintained throughout. Only those that are part of your focus group will know that you have taken part in the study. No identifying questions will be asked during the focus groups.

What will happen to the information?

All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure. It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be published in a journal or report. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

How will I be supported throughout the research?

A week prior to the focus groups being held you will receive a list of the topics areas that will be discussed, giving you the opportunity to assess whether you wish to continue with your participation in the research. At the beginning of the focus groups, ground rules will be jointly set by both facilitators and you, ensuring that all all involved know the sensitive nature of the topics about to be discussed. Additionally, debriefs will be provided by the facilitators at the end of the focus groups for you to discuss any issues that may have arisen from the groups; these can also be offered on a one to one basis if required. Finally, contact details of external support services will be provided to you.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you require any further information about the research, please contact me on:

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hud.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 5 – Consent Form for Focus Groups

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Improving societal attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through specialised training

Consent Form

It is important that you read, understand, and sign the consent form. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details please contact the researcher.

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hus.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research as outlined in the information ☐
sheet version 1.2, dated 20/01/2019

I consent to taking part in the study ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time until the ☐

1st May 2021 without giving any reason. (This date is used as this is when transcribing

will be complete).

I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym) ☐

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions for a period of 10 ☐
years at the University of Huddersfield

I understand that no person other than the researchers will have access to ☐

the information provided.

I understand that my identity will be protected and that no written information that could lead ☐
to my being identified will be included in any report or publications

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project, please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence.

Appendix 6 – Debriefing Statement for Focus Groups

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Improving societal attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through specialised training

Debriefing Statement

The purpose of this research was to determine what material should be included within an online specialised psychoeducational training programme on the effects of and attitudes towards sexual assualt and rape.

The overall study aims to develop and evaluate a novel, specialised online information-sharing programme on the effects of sexual assault and rape, through a randomised control study. Whilst assessing whether there is an association between the completion of a specialised programme and attitudes towards rape victims.

Previous research has demonstrated contentious views on the effectiveness of rape prevention/training programmes, with each offering plausible evidence for their arguments. It can be seen from previous work that changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are required to help improve both reporting and conviction rates of perpetrators; and more importantly, potentially reduce the proclivity towards offending. The potential findings drawn from this research will highlight the importance of awareness, training, and education for the public to aid with the reduction in rape myth acceptance and societies negative attitudes towards rape victims.

Thank you for taking part in the study, your data will remain anonymous and will not be traceable to yourself. However, if you do wish to withdraw please do so now and inform the researcher. Additionally, your individual transcripts will be sent to you once they have been transcribed. This will allow you the opportunity to fully withdraw your participation if you wish, or partially remove individual statements you do not want including within the research. It will also allow you to add any further information you think is relevant to the topic of discussion.

If you have any questions with regards to the research and would like to get in touch, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hud.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

If you feel, you have been affected by this study or any other elements during this research then please contact the support services below.

Rape Crisis Helpline – 0808 802 9999

Victim Support – 0808 168 9111

SurvivorsUK – 020 3598 3898

CICters (Surviving rape and/or sexual abuse) – 0238 033 8080

For University of Huddersfield students only:

24/7 online support – Big White Wall

studentwellbeing@hud.ac.uk

student counselling services – ipoint@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 7 – Overview of Thematic Analysis of Focus Groups

Themes

Consent – when under the influence of alcohol

Rape myths and negative attitudes – victim blaming, intoxication, real rape, gender stereotypes

Education – Awareness, general education and current programme

Media – Social media and news and public safety versus fear

Perpetrator empathy

Participants	Consent	Rape myths and negative attitudes	Education	Media	Perpetrator empathy
1	the victim might have said yes drunk, but then regret it in the morning and say or well I didn't say yeah or might not remember saying yeah or they do remember saying it and they are regretting it. So yeah I do think alcohol makes it fuzzy	well she was asking for it, she had a short skirt on or you know she was flirting too much well I must have done something And then there's that thing cos it's happened once there is statistics out there that you are more likely to get raped again 1 - I think it's probably the responsibility of both of them in the sense of should she have got that drunk.	if someone that has been abused is looking at it online and then it might be, they might be looking at it to try and figure out how to tell people that's it happen or like well you shouldn't be speaking me like that it's not my fault so I think you need to be educated but not fearful but if you do it from school and say these are things that you shouldn't do maybe the person that is educating them might pick up on well they are	with everything on the news people might just think well you're just jumping on the band wagon. There wasn't as much fear put into the parents and then that fear wasn't put into the kids	1 - He might have been too drunk that she was not feeling comfortable or said no or tried to push him off a little bit but he might not have noticed that. the person that is getting accused might end up might be completely devastated it might ruin their life, they thought that they were having a really good time

		1 - <mark>I think other people might see that she's saying it because she was drunk and regrets it.</mark> 2 - so he has not provoked him at all. There was no reason for this other guy to have done what he's done at all. 2 - Well they just don't talk about it do they (men) 2 - He might not want to tell anyone, cos he's thinking I should have been able to fight him off, stand up for myself 3 – I do think some people would think she is partly to blame as she went to meet some someone shed never met before. 3 - Yeah some people will be like well you went back to the room. 4 – So I suppose yeah that's what we like to think how	obviously not empathising with the persons situation and might think that well they need a little bit of help Know what rape feels like… how. That's concerning, Is that educating men on how to spot weak women, well weak women in the sense of oh to better pick their victims if there's a one in there, you know if there's a rapist in there But yeah the good part of it is its showing how to address a situation if women does talk to them about it and opens up about it Yeah even just someone of the wording of it is not great Cos then you've got all the effects of people aren't one gender or		

		rape would happen like that	another anymore. You are a sex, you a male or female sex wise but gender wise people identify with I don't even know how may they are		
		4 - Yeah it only happens down a dark alley by a complete stranger	And why should you be separated in it. You shouldn't women see the video of a man raping another man. Why shouldn't we be educated on that?		
		Programme - And it is saying that men rape women	Yeah I think it should be all inclusive		
			I think if the education is to both then you're more likely to carry on the conversation and then they might tell their male friends and I just think it's more likely to spread.		
			(professionals delivery) Yeah cos it's alright the teacher doing it but they see this teacher everyday and it's like oh my teacher is just going on again		

2			The risks, suspicious behaviour and tricks that are commonly used. Awareness around that, cos you just might not know. They could have more than one video		
3	if she's too drunk to say yes then it is rape and I think guys might not be overly aware of that and just think well if she's drunk then she's still consenting and it is probably difficult for them too if she's not in a position to actually say yeah then she's saying no	She's asking for it 2 - They probably find it really embarrassing (men) 2 - I think they would subject to a lot of gossip as well. They wouldn't be able to go out without people staring at them 3 – I think she's been clearly been very naïve	I think as well being drunk means that you are vulnerable. So raising awareness to saying that that person is actually vulnerable I do think it is an awareness thing and people just think she's drunk where having a laugh kinda of thing where they need to realise its more serious than that to have an effect I think there's even less awareness around men being raped isn't they (education at schools) I think it might reduce the grey areas type of like	I think the fear has increased with the internet and the new ways of accessing people.	<mark>Alcohol - Were both of you able to make sensible decisions?</mark>

220

			drunken situations like where someone has raped someone but not really meant to kinda of thing. Whereas someone where it was kinda deliberate that guy clearly set out to do it and don't think you get to that with a bit of education (Video) I thought that was good they have gender stereotyped with the video but I think that they have done it so that men can kinda have like imagine themselves in that situation and see the impact of it. Whereas seeing a video of women being raped might not have affected them in the same way I think having a programme aimed at men and women together as well could help combat stigma by		

| | | | like opening the conversation between the genders rather than separating

(same gender groups) It just increases the awareness. I can just imagine that if a group a people went on course like that and then when they're out there would just be so much more awareness around it and looking out for each other

Teenagers certainly need to be aware by that age

It would be good at a sexual health fair because I think people would pay more attention to do | | |
| 4 | | once you've got the label of someone that has been raped then that will stick with you and then people might think that that will become you new identity and might not be an | I think as well the ownness is always seen to be on the women to protect herself whereas not necessarily teaching the men not to do these things, it's always very much like look after | | |

		identify you want to take on 3 – well yeah but if you go back to someone's hotel room then surly you know what might happen when you get in there 4 – This one reminds me of when you hear the word rape, this is what comes into your head. 4 - Why are you walking down a dark alley a night?	yourself, do this do that and the other and then I think that fills into if you don't do that then others will blame you Yeah cos it's alright the teacher doing it but they see this teacher everyday and it's like oh my teacher is just going on again	
5		it quite hard to not pity then and treat them differently just cos that's happened to them.	I think as long you say give examples just so that everyone knows how serious it is and like what the consequence might be if you go there. Just to know so they can understand exactly how serious it is from a young age, so that's its complete no from a young age so it can't grow	3 - I think it's strange the false sense of security you get after talking to someone online. It says that she thought she knew him, she could trust him just cos shed spoke to him online. But it just shows you that online is completely differently to real life but it is strange that you can tricked just by thinking you can know someone cos you've talked to them online

			Also it's awkward with the teacher cos you already know the teacher		
6					
7		people try and blame that person and because of things that they view can encourage such behaviour my dad might say don't wear that out now he's not built that view cos of people saying if she wears that out she's gonna have something happen 2 – I think it would be men don't do that. You know where strong, we don't need to talk about that you know if it's happened to you people won't take it as seriously cos people don't see you as vulnerable as a woman not that I'm seeing a woman might be. And there's also the homophobia, cos we've got to admit there's people out there that have that view that they might just be like	1 – I feel like men need to make aware it is possible going to be not blamed but it's going to be their issue if they go ahead with this. 1 -They've got to be made aware as well, and I'm not saying that they are a victim, but if you could go into that situation thing everything is fine and then you come out of it and your being blamed for something that's not who you are, that's not what you intended. Now you've got yourself into that position and I think that's something that needs to be addressed. They might think that it won't happen to me 3 – They talk about young children being groomed	it's all over social media it's all over the news. And 20, 30 years ago it still happened and it probably still happened in the same volume but people didn't speak about it cos it wasn't spoken about	Alcohol - If she's not liable to say yes then he's not liable for not understanding. I don't think you're ever going to going to get a black and white.

		well what does he expect you know.	but they're not talking about 20, 18, 19 year olds. They go online to meet people that's what happens. There needs to be more education, be careful, but were not blaming you 3 -I also sometimes think that people this girl might have been like if I don't go with him he might not come back, I still want to talk him. If he's someone that you want to date, and he wants to go and gets his wallet and he'll come back. There needs to be something like that cos I feel like a lot of people feel insecure about having to be with someone having to meet someone yeah I feel like it's better done in schools by people that aren't family, cos your mum and dad are always gonna be like wanna wrap you up and not let you	

			Whereas if it's done in school there's not that emotional connection so it can be educational rather than it be emotional

They've immediately gender stereotyped just by having a man's guide and a woman's guide

Even if it's delivered separately and you have a group of men and you show them a male video and you the women and you show them the women's video. But the actual guide should just be a guide it should be

There's a questions about this being to college students and I think it should be to younger. I don't get parents moaning that they shouldn't be getting this education, their too young. Like they need the education cos this is the | | |

			world we live in and they need to know this from a young ago, and I'm not talking graphic I'm talking any of that. But the facts need to be put out to them and parents are not going to do that themselves cos they don't want to

Bringing someone in is like oh this is new (to do training)

I don't remember much from school but I do remember a police officer coming in talking to us about drug awareness cos it was something different so like you was saying if it going to be someone going in that isn't someone they see all the time | | |
| 8 | | their doing it for attention as well if they speak up about it like it should be closed off to everyone that you should not really discuss it. But if you are open about your | | | |

		experiences it's like she just or he just wants attention victims are under the lamp now instead of the offenders and they have to explain and prove themselves and really it should have to come from both sides			
9		they just assume their lying Sometimes people like really go after the victims a lot.			
10					
11					
12		why did they stay quiet for so long and decide to speak up when everyone else was speaking up. How can you blame someone that's been raped and then, oh yeah she took 10 years to tell us about being raped. I think that culture does play a part in it. You know for examples if people have been sexually assaulted			

		within their home and stuff in family's. I've read about how girls don't speak up because they have been told don't speak up about this family member cos you will be seen as a horrible person and not them. It's like you should speak up cos at the end of the day they just deserve any punishment like jail term or get on that list what's that list called			
13					
14		they precipitated it you know by what they said, what they wore. Or they didn't back their hand away when they put it on their shoulder or that kind of thing. Or they even liked it in kind of away. Or that they are damaged and they are not going to get over it.			
15		3 – Well she needs to take responsibility for her	I think family education is behind as well, because family is a strong side		

		actions. She went to his hotel	which is giving children positive and negative making, helping them to make positive and negative choices and building their will power as well. So if someone is making a mistake so I think there is somehow weakness of family as well.		
16	**1 –** But at the same time her friends, if they really were her friends they would have, probably would have confronted the both of them at some point and if they gave to ok it's probably cos Shelly during her intoxicated state consented to it in some way. one case it could have been Colin taking advantage, or in the other case it might have been her just forgetting she consented.	from what I've seen at least recently. People are more sceptical towards it. I think we do criticise the people that are going through this procedure the victims. I think we think bad about of them as well rather than show them support and kindness we somehow are blaming them. And somehow I think it is their fault as well.			
17	1 - Cos the fact that she needed help going home in the first place shows that she couldn't have given consent.	I think sometimes people can accuse people of rape so that can cause issues so maybe that's why people don't believe then			I think sometimes people can accuse people of rape so that can cause issues so maybe that's why people don't believe then

		I think culture can be an issue too because for example rape in marriages. Some cultures in the east they believe that if it's your partner that sex should be a natural thing between you and you should give that to your partner, but rape is an issue in marriage and some cultures look down on it and look down on it and they don't really and they just ignore it and in that aspect it can be quiet a negative thing on the victim.			
18					
19		its seen as just very trivial, yeah like if a girl seems to be like flirty it's like well you were speaking to them; you were speaking to them. And I think it's usually girls, as soon as you say rape you think of girls and think in relationships it can happen. And there like well you were with them	I think it's the definition of like blaming. The first sentence is identify men's potentially high risk behaviour. Why should we have to identify that, that shouldn't be, I think that's the wrong way to go about the programme errm I think its teaching women how to avoid the situation instead of		

		for so many years or so many months like you decided all the times before what was different and theres a lot background to it **(victim blaming)** I think maybe not so mentioned but if someone was quite outgoing like you know how gay people can be quite flamboyant for instance and him making that known would be well you told everyone this so **1 –** it says that they were like drinking together. It kind of undermines anything she says as soon as some says well she was drunk she couldn't do that; it undermines because he was drunk. I think it's a really cloudy area of well how drunk were you, and how do you determine that. **2 –** I think there's room for people to be saying you should have run away,	teaching men how not to not rape think it's difficult as well to recognise to characteristics of someone that is high risk well then if someone has the totally opposite characteristics and it still happened is that then going then well their not like this they're not forceful you know every day they wouldn't do this so it's got the opposite side of they don't fit the profile		

there was more you could have done.

2 - Or especially cos you're a boy you should have fought back you should have done this and that. Defiantly an expectation that your strong you could have fought it

2 - I think there's quite a lot of shame involved, so shaming him for like being that way

4 – I think that natural stereotypical scenario in itself I don't think there would be too much victim blaming at all. You know she's young as well, it's the classic case as well. You know I think she would get more support than in some of the other classic instances.

5 – I was going to say that as well he's hit him in the face so it's giving to quite visible to him and to everyone else whether he's

		embarrassed by it or not, or whether he just puts down to an assault people can see something so that automatically makes it better for him			
20		**(victim blaming)** being drunk like in relationships and even if like you can even get undressed in front someone and then be like no. But I think some people are like well you were more than willing to do it and then why all of sudden is it a no **1 –** people could think well you were drunk, or well I haven't remembered it so I might have been spiked. So if you're in a relationship people might think it's an easy get out cos she's do something wrong **2 –** because this is around being gay. It could be well you was walking through; you were talking to him	but then what's a high risk behaviour, what's a high risk situation Maybe they could have shown 2 videos. So one of what happens to a women and see how that makes them feel, and then show then the video of a man being raped would maybe make sense to them more. But as a woman why should it be either way, why should it just be a man or just be a woman		

		beforehand. They could be homophobic and making stereotypes saying well it's just what you wanted 3 – So I think people will be like well why did you go back to his hotel and if you did why didn't you make any noise to stop it. So why didn't people hear it 5 – I think people would see at oh well your friends how did you not know that he liked you. how did you not feel unsafe around him before why all of a sudden now		
21		the appearance of the people that are the victims is usually to is part of what people look at when believing them or not **5 –** I think he would struggle to tell people cos he might be embarrassed about what happened cos it's his friend	I think it is good that we are taught stuff cos then if it's does happen we've got more to be like well we can be like well we did this what you told us to, we did this as well, we did this and it still happened what can we do we've done everything you've taught us to do so and we're still getting	

			raped so you need to do something from their side because you've taught us to do this and its still happening so what else can we do		
22	I think this is a difficult one cos you could say both sides cos he shouldn't have gone into her house because she wouldn't have been able to say she wanted him there.	or if you get raped when walking down an alley there's that well you shouldn't have walked that way you put yourself in that situation, you should have done something to avoid it **(victim blaming)** clothes, what women wear 4 – she shouldn't be walking in the dark alone even though she did every day and nothing happened			But at the end it says she claimed that he raped her, but she doesn't know that he did, well she doesn't know that he did so equally she could be accusing him something that he didn't do like neither way do we know what happened but then if she can't be held responsible for what she does when she is drunk, then I bet he was drunk cos it was a night out. Then how could he be held responsible for what he was done when he is drunk
23		I think a lot people view them as its their fault whether they seen trustworthy or not	but then the reality is there are rapists outside and we should be careful and if we aren't then people are going to		**1 –** and also he could have been drunk so who's fault is it

		how they are dressed	blame us so maybe they should teach us		

how they are dressed

or if its boys then they usually seem like they want it. Or if a girls drunk then its her fault cos she drank people say

(victim blaming) just general being alone with someone

2 – I think the media view would be that he's a victim but I don't whether he would have the courage to talk about it cos of how he could be treated it

and I think people see men as always wanting sex so they might say he wanted it

4 – I think no matter what the story is people always doubt first, they be like oh is there cctv footage is there this is there that

5 – I think when its violent it's easier to have evidence, so those people

blame us so maybe they should teach us

(video) the big thing with victim blaming is that they don't understand what it is like to go through, so why didn't they just say no, why didn't you just stop them, so that puts it into perspective, that's why it's useful

		that doubt him there's physical evidence			
24	**1 –** I don't think people will acknowledge that she can't consent cos she was drunk	or like if you wear a short skirt or something then all of sudden its your fault **(victim blaming)** like someone was leading that other person on or like giving them the wrong signals I feel like in media and that that they don't really believe women at all or they just think they are lying or they are just doing it for fame **3 –** people might think she deserve it for stupidly like meeting someone that she had never met before and going up to his room, and but they won't acknowledge the fact that she's actually been rapes I think like people just expect it from men and just	**4 –** I feel like people always find ways to stop women being prevented women from being raped, but they don't actually do anything to stop rapists from being rapist. So teaching men that's its not acceptable to do it men should be taught like about toxic masculinity and the fact that there not just entitled to treat women how they want instead of just teaching women how to prevent it I don't know why you have to increase men's empathy, why don't they already have it		

		look at the women and what she's done			
25	1-I think if Colin knew she was pissed he should have just left her alone. But also, he was probably pissed too if they were on night out, so how can she be too drunk to consent and him not be. 1-I think people will think that she can't consent to anything sexually cos she's pissed	if someone is said to be flirting then it's like well they were speaking to them; they encouraged it. When physical violence is involved with men, people will instantly start discussing why didn't he fight back. Even if he couldn't win the fight, he should have been able to do some harm. People start questioning and judging when its men. I don't think people will really care about the length of time they have known each other online or how long they have been talking for	I agree it's almost like they are saying we are ignorant to it. When in reality I'm sorry but if a female family member or close friend was raped I am sure that I and most men would feel empathy.		
26		I think a lot of people thinks they are to blame people just assume their lying	It does seem like it is scare mongering in a way. Teaching women men's high-risk behaviours and how to avoid this. Instead of looking how to educate people on how		I think this is a difficult one cos you could say both sides cos he shouldn't have gone into her house because she wouldn't have been able to say she wanted him

		I think there could be some homophobic stereotypes saying well it's just what you wanted Yeah they think that all men have this masculine, fighting side and will or should be able to physically defend themselves and when this does not happen the doubt and judgements will most likely set in.	not to rape. It's also really just saying that men rape women and not looking at everything that happens in-between		there. But at the end it says she claimed that he raped her, but she doesn't know what he did, she could be accusing him something that he didn't do like neither way do we know what happened
27		3-This will be seen badly. People will think why did you go back to his hotel I feel like in media and that that they don't really believe women at all or they just think they are lying	I would include victim stories. I think these allow a perspective like no other		
28	we go out all the time and get drunk and that, and there is that small fear that you could be accused of something if you end going home a lass after a night out. But also, you have to hope that not all lasses are going to think that men are scum and would do that. So just have to be	I think a lot of the time they actually think their doing it for attention as well if they speak up about it like it should be closed off to everyone that you should not really discuss it. But if you are open about your experiences it's like she just or he just wants attention			

	respectful and hope for the best I guess.				
29		1-and also he could have been drunk so who's fault is it		you also don't really see anything to do with men getting sexually assaulted in the media, so it puts out that it doesn't really happen.	but then if she can't consent when she's drunk, then how could he be held responsible for what he was done when he is drunk. He surly cant consent either

At the end of the focus groups each group was asked what material they thought would be usual to be included within a training programme.

Legal definitions

Consent when under the influence

Neuro logical changes during trauma

Statistics

Debunking of rape myths

This is an invitation to share YOUR story

Do YOU have personal experience with victim blaming?

Do YOU want share your experiences of rape myth acceptance?

I am looking for individuals who will be willing to share their experiences of being challenged by rape myths; whether this has occurred through self-blame, from friends, family or the police.

I am looking for both males and females to share their experiences in a way that they feel comfortable with. These will be completely anonymous and can be done in any of the following formats:

> ❖ A written account
> ❖ A recorded telephone conversation
> ❖ Audio recording
> ❖ A short video
> ❖ An anonymised audio recording
> ❖ An anonymised video recording

The stories shared will be utilised as part of a PhD thesis and will be included within an online information sharing programme, which is currently being developed to aid in the improvement of attitudes towards victims of rape and sexual assault. Once developed the programme will shared to the general public via SONA and different social media outlets.

If you feel that you have an experience to share or have any questions, then please contact the researcher.

Researcher: Nadia Cox
Email Address: nadia.cox@hud.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager
Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 9 – Participant Information Sheet for Survivors Stories

University of HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through a specialised information sharing programme

Information Sheet

You are being invited to share your experiences of facing rape myths and victim blaming when disclosing your experience to others. Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with me if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study about?

The following research is the second stage of an overall PhD Research Project; chapters of the final report can and will be submitted for publication within academic journals and conference papers. This research is going to be investigating the sensitive topic of rape and sexual abuse. The overall objective of the project is to develop a specialised online information sharing programme that aims to develop more appropriate attitudes towards both male and female victims of sexual assault and rape. This stage of the research is contributing to the content of the programme. The finalised programme will be disseminated for evaluation via the Universities Experiment Participation System and Social Media.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to complete a consent form, and you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part in the research, you will be asked to share your experiences of being challenged by rape myths; whether this was through self-blame or from others such as friends, family, the police, media or percieved blame from others. You can share your experiences in any form you feel comfortable with. This could be a written account, given over the telephone which can then be recorded, an audio recording or a video recording. It also does not have to be your voice used; a voice disguise can be used or someone else can speak instead. You can review your contribution after and decide whether you still feel comfortable sharing this. You will also get the opportuinty to view the finalised training programme prior to dissemination and choose again whether you wish to withdraw your story from the programme, to do this you will be asked to provide an email address so this can be sent to should you wish. At this point, you will also get the opportunity to review the programme and offer any comments regarding the overal programme.

Will my identity be disclosed?

Anonymity will be maintained throughout. Only the researcher will know your identity; due to lone working polices, in the event of an incident the research supervisor will be able to access this information if necessary. No identifying questions will be asked. Only if you choose to share your experiences via a non-anonymised video, will your identity be known to others.

What will happen to the information?

All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure. It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be disseminated through standard academic channels such as journal articles, conference papers or reports. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

How will I be supported throughout the research?

If you feel at any point during the process of sharing your experience you need a break or wish to stop, that is ok. Debriefs will be provided by the facilitator at the end of the session for you to discuss any questions that may have arisen. Finally, contact details of external and internal support services will be provided to you. These are also listed at the bottom of this information sheet.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you require any further information about the research, please contact me on:

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hud.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

Rape Crisis Helpline – 0808 802 9999

Victim Support – 0808 168 9111

SurvivorsUK – 020 3598 3898

CICters (Surviving rape and/or sexual abuse) – 0238 033 8080

For University of Huddersfield students only:

24/7 online support – Big White Wall

studentwellbeing@hud.ac.uk

student counselling services – ipoint@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 10 – Consent Form for Survivors Stories

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through a specialised information sharing programme

Consent Form

It is important that you read, understand, and sign the consent form if you wish to take part in this study. Your contribution to this information sharing material is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate. If you require any further details, please contact the researcher, Nadia Cox, or research supervisor, Dr. Nadia Wager.

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hus.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this training programme that is being created ☐ and how I can contribute to this, as outlined in the information sheet version 1.5, dated 10/11/2019

I consent to giving a personal account of the rape myths/victim blaming I encountered ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my contribution at any time until the 1st March ☐ 2020 without giving any reason. (This date is used as this is when the programme will be complete).

I give permission for my words to be quoted or the audio or video recording of my story to be ☐ used in part or its entirety in the programme material.

I have been given a range of options regarding how I can share my experiences whilst maintaining ☐ my anonymity

I understand that I will be given a chance to look at the training material once it has been developed and I will be able to state whether I approve of my contribution being used in the way that is ☐ intended.

I understand that my experience that I share will be part of an information sharing programme ☐ that will be disseminated to the general public through social media and the Universities Experiment Participation System.

I understand that the information I share will be used in the development of a PhD thesis; ☐ chapters of this can and will be disseminated through academic channels, e.g. journal articles and conference papers.

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions for a period of 10 ☐ years at the University of Huddersfield

I understand that no person other than the researcher and in the event of an incident, the ☐ research supervisor will have access to the information provided.

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project, please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence.

Appendix 11 – Transcripts of Survivors Stories

Participant 1

<u>Extract 1</u>

It was my first real boyfriend and in first year of Uni I got real bad with a drink problem, I started drinking quite a bit. Normally I didn't go back his cos he didn't like us sharing the same space, later I found out it was cos he had other people over that he was sleeping with. One of the times I'd been out drinking I'd gone to his and I remember that we started having 'normal' sex and I was very drunk, I don't remember much of it but I was ok with that. I kept of having snippets when I looked back on it the next day of something pushing on my other hole area. I'd gone to the bathroom the next morning and there was blood in my knickers. So I asked him, 'I know we had 'normal' sex but did we do anything else, I just want to know if anything else happened cos I don't remember' and he told me 'no we just had 'normal' sex, it was a bit fun but you was very drunk so we kinda stopped cos you was very drunk and I didn't want to take advantage of you'. I had this feeling that something had happened and it felt wrong, and then one of our mutual friends came up to me a week later and told me to we had been having anal sex and had been bragging it about it to people. I said I don't remember it happening, so I confronted him and said 'look you've been telling people we did that, I need to know if we did it' he said 'yeah but we're just boyfriend and girlfriend and it just ended up happening'. At that point all I could think about was that I got myself into that situation, I was drunk and I never said stop, I never said no. I think for me I didn't even probably view it as what it was until I spoke to a counsellor about 5 years later. Looking back on it if that had happened to someone else I would be horrified, but when it happened to me I just tried to push it to the back of mind and think it's just something that happens in relationships and some people get it wrong sometimes. I've recently told my mum about it and my mum just said 'well are you sure you're just not making that up, are you sure that's not just something that happened in your mind that your putting two and two together it might not have really happened. He might just be saying that to have some power and control over you and it might not have really happened'. Which then puts even more doubt in my head, did it actually happen, could this be something that head just made up because I can't actually remember. It makes it so much harder not knowing, not what happened.

<u>Extract 2</u>

A week after my 19th birthday I'd gone to the pub and I was a bit tipsy. This guy came in and said 'oh what's a pretty girl doing at by herself'. So we talked and he bought me a couple glasses of wine. When I stood up I was stumbling a bit, so I asked him if could walk me home, at that moment of time I didn't really think about what could happen. So he walked me home and stayed with me whilst I had some water. I did make it clear from before we left the pub that I didn't want to have sex; I made that clear multiple times on the way home that I didn't want sex. So we were just chatting talking about multiple things. Then I brought up the topic of how I jokingly give my friends lap dances. So he jokingly said 'oh well as a way of saying thanks for the wine and walking you home do you want give me a lap dance'. So I did, and we were just laughing and messing about. I got changed into my pyjamas. He then started kissing me and I thought kissing fines, I've already made it clear I don't want to have sex and then he carried on and he started putting his hand on me. I said wait and tried to push him off and he just kept on kissing me. I couldn't speak, I couldn't say no, I could say stop. He then finished and said 'I'm gonna go home now' and just went. I didn't know what to make of it cos my behaviour had encouraged him, but then at the same time I'd told him that I didn't want to have sex, I tried to talk to him during it to say stop. The days after all I could think about was why didn't I fight him off, why could I push him off,

why didn't I hit him. Before going to Uni I did self-defence training, I did martial arts. I knew about the risks and dangers, I couldn't think why I couldn't physically get him off or why I couldn't stop him. Then it just turned into a cycle of me thinking well we were talking about sex in a general conversation, I gave him a lap dance, he did nice things for me, he bought me a bottle wine, he made sure I got home safe so he probably just wanted something to say thanks for doing all that for me. So it just happened. Even though I recognise it was wrong and it shouldn't have happened all I thought was I should have done something different and changed my behaviour. My counsellor mentioned supporting me going to court. If I went to court and said this to them, no bodies going to listen me, no bodies going to believe me cos of my actions and my behaviour cos its led to that, its created that scenario. But I do worry what about if he does it to other young people.

Participant 2

So about a year ago I'd gone out. There was a lad that had, previously I'd had tinder and he'd known me from there, but I ended up getting rid of it. So as I went out I was with some friends and throughout the night two of my friends had gone off, they had found a person to be with. I was with one more friend and throughout the night I hadn't seen him anywhere I was just with my friend having a good time, I had a bit too much to drink. I'd just left the club and my friend was with me and then he appeared out of nowhere and gave me hug, and knew my name and me being drunk was like 'oh hi I'm sure I've met you before, you obviously know who I am'. Then he did somehow manage to get to the taxi rank with us and I remember asking why is he with us and who is he. But he actually managed to find out my friends name so he made it like I knew who he was, he knew my friends, he knew me, he knew where I lived, he had all this research on me. Because I was too drunk to communicate with my friends they were just like well she knows who he is so he can come back with us. Then my friend had taken me to my room and he was still there and I was like why is he still here, I remember just asking why. And that's all I remember. Then I just remember throughout the night waking up and then passing out again and waking up, in and out. And he was still there. When I woke up I didn't have any clothes on and he was still there, it was like he had this impression that he could stay. I left my room and went to another friends flat and explained to her, everyone saw it as I knew this person and he'd go home with her and they were all like did you have a good night. Then I was like actually no and I explained everything and they were like we had no idea. I had a friend and he'd asked if I was ok and I said no, it was one of those things that I wanted to speak to my mum about it but I couldn't cos I didn't really know what was, how do I, she'd know the perfect thin to say but I can't ask her. Then I noticed he was on my social medias so I blocked on everything, but I'd missed him on Instagram, he then messaged me asking why I'd blocked him. I was like look I don't was to communicate, I don't want anything, I genuinely don't know what happened all I know is I'm not comfortable. He made it out like owed him, like you matched me on tinder then we spoke, then you disappeared, and then I met you in person you owed me something. It was like in his eyes we were both drunk but he remembered everything and I was barely conscious throughout it all. So that made me question was I actually assaulted cos he didn't think I was, so may maybe it was like a lot people always say when she's drunk, she will wake up and regret it and then shell cry wolf and I don't want to be that. But at the same time it didn't feel right that I didn't remember anything and I wasn't conscious, but he was. So even if we were both drunk he still had the advantage that he was more functioning. When I spoke to my friend that left him in the room I asked do you know why he came round, she said no but he said he knew you and you were passed out in your bed so I thought she can't do anything. So I know I couldn't have but, he could still have. It was quite frustrating cos if you see your friend passed out, you know she can't do anything but the person who could do something is still there and he is still conscious and awake. So I could see it as preventable steps, but then why didn't any of that happen.

But then you start to question why 'was I that drunk and I shouldn't have been that drunk'. But then really other than that situation the entire night was perfect, it was fun. We were all just having a great time having drinks with friends. This one situation had been taken advantage of. So that became a big topic with people, saying that we shouldn't drink as much next time, and we should just stick with friends next time. These were things that I was already doing and it made me think, I did everything but, yeah maybe I shouldn't have been that drunk but that doesn't give some the right to take advantage of me being that drunk. I was speaking to my mum and dad and I eventually told them, and my dad is like my best friend and it was really difficult for him, and he just sees it as another statistic. So for him I'm just another statistic on that board; which is quite difficult to deal with cos I shouldn't, no one should be just another statistic. It should be an event that needs to be prevented and dealt with.

Participant 3

When I was in middle school I was sat next to this guy, who was someone I wouldn't have normally spoken to cos he was one of the popular guys. He thought it would be funny to say some things to me that weren't appropriate like 'I wanna bang you in that cupboard' it made me feel pretty uncomfortable and then he started to try and touch my leg. Then the lesson ended and I thought it wouldn't happen again. Then the next lesson it did happen and it was worse. This time he punched me multiple times in the arm, he stroked me with his leg on my leg and kept saying more stuff that just wasn't appropriate like 'oh I like this and oh look at that body'. I told him it wasn't alright and to f off. But he didn't really listen and it kinda got me in state, it was the first time I'd really experienced anything like that. I went to my teachers straight away, and I felt really embarrassed about it cos I thought I can't believe I've let that happen to me, that's kinda weak for me. If someone said it's happened to them, I'd have thought 'oh why didn't you just tell them no' but you do, but they just dint listen. It obviously went to higher people and it got sorted out, but he only got lunch time isolation for what he did. So I felt was it not that serious then, even though to me it was to me. It knocked my confidence a lot. If someone brushed passed me in corridor then I just felt like I was being violated in a way. I did feel a bit embarrassed. It was at school and I should feel safe at school, but didn't feel safe after that.

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Slide 7

CONSENT

The Sexual Offences Act (2003) introduced a statutory definition of consent (Section 74).

A person consents if he/she agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Consent is not simply an agreement.
Someone may agree however without the freedom to say yes or no and the capacity to yes or no there is no consent.

For someone to consent they must:
- Have a choice
- Agree to that choice because they want to
- Be free to make that choice
- Be able to make that choice (capacity)

Slide 8

THE LAW

SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION

SEXUAL ASSAULT

RAPE

Slide 9

THE LAW

RAPE

The legal definition of rape in England and Wales, as defined in the Sexual Offences Act (2003):

A person commits an offence if he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (b) with his penis, and (b) does not consent to the penetration, and they not reasonably believe that (b) consents.

This means... a person commits this offence by putting their penis into someone's vagina, anus or mouth, when they don't want them to.

SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION · SEXUAL ASSAULT · RAPE

Slide 10

THE LAW

SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION

The legal definition of sexual assault by penetration in England and Wales, as defined in the Sexual Offences Act (2003):

A person commits an offence if he/she intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (b) with a part of his/her body or anything else, and (b) does not consent to the penetration, and they not reasonably believe that (b) consents.

This means... a person commits this offence by putting any part of their body (e.g. hands, fingers, mouth) or any other object into someone's vagina, anus or mouth, when they don't want them to.

SEXUAL ASSAULT · SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION · RAPE

Slide 11

THE LAW

SEXUAL ASSAULT

The legal definition of sexual assault in England and Wales, as defined in the Sexual Offences Act (2003):

A person commits an offence if he/she intentionally touches another person (b), and the touching is sexual, and (b) does not consent to touching, and they not reasonably believe that (b) consents.

This means... a person commits this offence by sexually touching other person, when they don't want them to.

SEXUAL ASSAULT · SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION · RAPE

Slide 12

SO WHEN DID THINGS CHANGE IN THE LAW?

In the last few decades there has been significant cha...

Click on year to what changed at...

In 1992 rape in marriage became a crime

1992

In 1994 male rape became illegal

1994

In 1999 Section 41 was introduced, this restricted how and when a complainant's sexual history in cases of sexual offence can be used

1999

In 2003 rape law was extended to include oral and anal rape; the law also changed the way in which a lack of consent may be proved

2003

In 2017 victims were allowed to provide evidence in pre-recorded cross-examination, to be played in the jury room the trial begins, rather than have to attend court in person

2017

13

14

15

16

17

18

MORE COMMONLY HELD MYTHS...

- Myth: Men don't get raped and women don't commit sexual offences.

- Fact: The majority of sexual assaults and rapes are committed by men against women and children but women do perpetrate sexual violence. Often people who've been sexually assaulted or abused by a woman worry they won't be believed or their experiences won't be considered 'as bad'. This can make it difficult for these survivors to access services or justice.
- Men are also raped and sexually assaulted.

REAL MEN GET RAPED

25

BOTH MEN AND WOMEN CAN BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AND/OR RAPED

- The Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) (2017) estimated that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 3.4 million female victims and 631,000 male victims.

- In England and Wales an estimated 510,000 women and 138,000 men aged 16 to 59 experienced sexual assault in 2016 (CSEW, 2017).

26

MORE COMMONLY HELD MYTHS...

- Myth: Only young, 'attractive' women and girls, who flirt and wear 'revealing' clothes, are raped.

- Fact: People of all ages and appearances, and of all classes, cultures, abilities, genders, sexualities, races and religions, are raped. Rape is an act of violence and control; the perceived 'attractiveness' of a victim has very little to do with it. There is no excuse for sexual violence and it is never the victim/survivor's fault. What someone was wearing when they were raped is completely irrelevant.

Stop victim blaming

27

MORE COMMONLY HELD MYTHS...

- Myth: People often lie about being raped because they regret having sex with someone or for attention.

- Fact: Disproportionate media focus on false rape allegations can give the impression it's common for people to lie about sexual violence. This is not true. False allegations of rape are very rare. Most victims and survivors never report to the police. One reason for this is the fear of not being believed. It's really important we challenge this myth so those who've been through sexual violence can get the support and justice they need and deserve.

false allegations

28

WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT OF THESE MYTHS?

63%   73%   83%

29

SURVIVOR EXPERIENCE

30

SO WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- A person can only consent if he/she agrees by CHOICE, and has the FREEDOM and CAPACITY to make that choice.
- EVERYONE has the right to CHOOSE whether or not they want to engage in sex or sexual contact.
- There are three different criminal acts; Rape, Sexual Assault by Penetration and Sexual Assault.
- Over the years there have been CHANGES in the law, for the better.
- Alcohol CAN AFFECT someone's ability to CONSENT.
- The BRAIN changes during an assault and helps us respond in a way BEST for our SURVIVAL.
- MEN get raped too.

31

SO WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- People can be victims of sexual violence MORE than ONCE.
- People of ALL genders, ALL ages, and ALL appearances do and can become victims of sexual violence.
- MOST victims of sexual violence never report to the police.
- False allegations of rape and sexual assault are VERY RARE.
- According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales; an estimated 510,000 WOMEN and 138,000 MEN aged 16 to 59 experienced sexual assault in 2016(CSEW, 2017).

- Please click on the link and watch the following video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvzxVsvzQ

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255

Pre-Pilot Questions

1. Are you happy with the way your contribution has been used within the programme?

2. If not, what changes would you like to be made?

3. What are your thoughts on the programme?

4. Are there any changes you think should be made?

5. Is there anything you think has been missed from the programme?

Appendix 14 – Survivors Stories Debriefing Statement

University of HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through a specialised information sharing programme

Debriefing Statement

The reason you were asked to share your experience was to show the real life impact that rape myths have on survivors of sexual assault and rape. A previous study was conducted to determine what material should be included within an online specialised psychoeducational information sharing programme on the effects of and attitudes towards sexual assualt and rape found that survivor stories would be extremely beneficial in the task of challenging negative attitudes.

The overall study aims to develop and evaluate a novel, specialised online information-sharing programme on the effects of sexual assault and rape, through an online study with the general public. Whilst assessing whether there is an association between the completion of a specialised programme and attitudes towards rape victims. The programme will be distributed via the Universities Experiment Participation System and also via social media outlets in the hope of reaching as many people as possible.

Previous research has demonstrated contentious views on the effectiveness of rape prevention/training programmes, with each offering plausible evidence for their arguments. It can be seen from previous work that changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are required to help improve both reporting and conviction rates of perpetrators; and more importantly, potentially reduce the proclivity towards offending. The potential findings drawn from this research could show the importance of dispelling rape myths within popular culture; and how victim blaming attitudes have a negative impact on reporting rates. It will also emphasise the importance of awareness, training, and education for the public to aid with the reduction in rape myth acceptance and society's negative attitudes towards rape victims.

Thank you for sharing your experiences, your story will remain anonymous and will not be traceable to yourself, unless you choose to share your experience through a non-anonymised video. However,

if you do wish to withdraw your story please inform the researcher. Additionally, your individual stories will be sent to you, along with the finalised programme via the email address you have provided. This will allow you the opportunity to withdraw your participation if you wish and also offer any comments on the overall information-sharing programme.

If you have any questions about the research or how the story of your experience will be used, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hud.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

If you feel, you have been affected by this study or any other elements during this research then please contact the support services below.

Supportive Organisations

Rape Crisis Helpline – 0808 802 9999

Victim Support – 0808 168 9111

SurvivorsUK – 020 3598 3898

CICters (Surviving rape and/or sexual abuse) – 0238 033 8080

For University of Huddersfield students only:

24/7 online support – Big White Wall

studentwellbeing@hud.ac.uk

student counselling services – ipoint@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 15 – Demographic Questions for the Evaluation of the Information-Sharing

Programme

<u>Pre-Intervention Questions</u>

Demographics

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Occupation
4. Do you or have you ever worked with survivors of sexual assault/rape?
5. Do you or have you ever worked with perpetrators of sexual assault/rape?
6. Do you know someone that has experienced sexual assault/rape?
7. Have you ever experienced sexual assault/rape?

Appendix 16 – Scenarios for the Evaluation of the Information-Sharing Programme

Vignettes

A. Shelly is a 19-year-old woman and was on a night out with 3 friends when she met Colin; they hit it off straight way and spent the evening drinking alcohol together and chatting. At the end of the night Colin walked Shelly home as she was intoxicated. In the morning, Shelly woke up completely naked with Colin laid by the side of her. He thanked Shelly for a good night and left her house. Shelly reports being in shock when she woke and states that she did not ask Colin into her house and claimed that he had raped her.

B. Ryan was leaving the University library late at night, it was extremely dark and he was walking through the car park. Whilst walking Ryan heard another man shouting homophobic obscenities at him. The man was shouting that he knew that Ryan was gay and was going to rape him as he knew that's what he wanted. The man ran over to Ryan and started hitting him till Ryan feel to floor and then he raped him. Ryan fought back has much as he could, however the attacker was much stronger than Ryan.

C. Alice is an 18-year-old woman. She was walking home from work one dark night. As she was walking through an alley way, the same way she walked every day, a young-looking man confronted her. She did not recognise the man and just put her head down and carried on walking. The man started talking to Alice asking her for directions. She politely replied. Then suddenly the man grabbed hold of her and told her if she screamed he would kill her. The man violently raped Alice and afterwards just casually pulled his trousers up and walked off. Whilst walking off he said to Alice that he knew where she lived and if she told anyone he would kill her.

Vignette Questions – these questions followed each scenario

1. How does this scenario make you feel?
2. What assumptions do you think can be drawn from this?
3. What do you think about the proposed victim in this scenario?
4. What do think about the proposed perpetrator in this scenario?

Appendix 17 – Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression (AMMSA) Scale –

Gerger, Kley, Bohner, and Siebler (2013)

1. When it comes to sexual contacts, women expect men to take the lead.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

2. Once a man and a woman have started "making out", a woman's misgivings against sex will automatically disappear.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

3. A lot of women strongly complain about sexual infringements for no real reason, just to appear emancipated.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

4. To get custody for their children, women often falsely accuse their ex-husband of a tendency towards sexual violence.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

5. Interpreting harmless gestures as "sexual harassment" is a popular weapon in the battle of the sexes.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

6. It is a biological necessity for men to release sexual pressure from time to time.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

7. After a rape, women nowadays receive ample support.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

8. Nowadays, a large proportion of rapes is partly caused by the depiction of sexuality in the media as this raises the sex drive of potential perpetrators.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

9. If a woman invites a man to her home for a cup of coffee after a night out this means that she wants to have sex.

   completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

10. As long as they don't go too far, suggestive remarks and allusions simply tell a woman that she is attractive.

    completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

11. Any woman who is careless enough to walk through "dark alleys" at night is partly to be blamed if she is raped.

    completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree 3

12. When a woman starts a relationship with a man, she must be aware that the man will assert his right to have sex.

    completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

13. Most women prefer to be praised for their looks rather than their intelligence.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

14. Because the fascination caused by sex is disproportionately large, our society's sensitivity to crimes in this area is disproportionate as well.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

15. Women like to play coy. This does not mean that they do not want sex.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

16. Many women tend to exaggerate the problem of male violence.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

17. When a man urges his female partner to have sex, this cannot be called rape.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

18. When a single woman invites a single man to her flat she signals that she is not averse to having sex.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

19. When politicians deal with the topic of rape, they do so mainly because this topic is likely to attract the attention of the media.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

20. When defining "marital rape", there is no clear-cut distinction between normal conjugal intercourse and rape.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

21. A man's sexuality functions like a steam boiler – when the pressure gets too high, he has to "let off steam".

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

22. Women often accuse their husbands of marital rape just to retaliate for a failed relationship.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

23. The discussion about sexual harassment on the job has mainly resulted in many a harmless behaviour being misinterpreted as harassment.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree 4

24. In dating situations the general expectation is that the woman "hits the brakes" and the man "pushes ahead".

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

25. Although the victims of armed robbery have to fear for their lives, they receive far less psychological support than do rape victims.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

26. Alcohol is often the culprit when a man rapes a woman.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

27. Many women tend to misinterpret a well-meant gesture as a "sexual assault".

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

28. Nowadays, the victims of sexual violence receive sufficient help in the form of women's shelters, therapy offers, and support groups.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

29. Instead of worrying about alleged victims of sexual violence society should rather attend to more urgent problems, such as environmental destruction.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

30. Nowadays, men who really sexually assault women are punished justly.

completely disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 completely agree

Slide 7

CONSENT

The Sexual Offences Act (2003) introduced a statutory definition of consent (Section 74).

A person consents if he/she agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Consent is not simply an agreement.
Someone may agree however without the freedom to say yes or no and the capacity to yes or no there is no consent.

For someone to consent they must:
- Have a choice
- Agree to that choice because they want to
- Be free to make that choice
- Be able to make that choice (capacity)

CONSENT
JUST ASK

Sexual Consent only yes MEANS YES

Slide 8

THE LAW

SEXUAL ASSAULT
SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION
RAPE

LAW

Slide 9

THE LAW

RAPE

The legal definition of rape in England and Wales, as defined in the Sexual Offences Act (2003):

A person commits an offence if he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (b) with his penis, and (b) does not consent to the penetration, and they not reasonably believe that (b) consents.

This means... a person commits this offence by putting their penis into someone's vagina, anus or mouth, when they don't want them to.

SEXUAL ASSAULT   SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION   RAPE

LAW

Slide 10

THE LAW

SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION

The legal definition of sexual assault by penetration in England and Wales, as defined in the Sexual Offences Act (2003):

A person commits an offence if he/she intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (b) with a part of his/her body or anything else, and (b) does not consent to the penetration, and they not reasonably believe that (b) consents.

This means... a person commits this offence by putting any part of their body (e.g. hands, fingers, mouth) or any other object into someone's vagina, anus or mouth, when they don't want them to.

SEXUAL ASSAULT   SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION   RAPE

LAW

Slide 11

THE LAW

SEXUAL ASSAULT

The legal definition of sexual assault in England and Wales, as defined in the Sexual Offences Act (2003):

A person commits an offence if he/she intentionally touches another person (b), and the touching is sexual, and (b) does not consent to touching, and they not reasonably believe that (b) consents.

This means... a person commits this offence by sexually touching other person, when they don't want them to.

SEXUAL ASSAULT   SEXUAL ASSAULT BY PENETRATION   RAPE

Slide 12

SO WHEN DID THINGS CHANGE IN THE LAW?

In the last few decades there has been significant change

Click on year to what changed at

In 1992 rape in marriage became a crime

In 1994 male rape became illegal

In 1999 Section 41 was introduced, this restricted how and when a complainant's sexual history in cases of sexual offences can be used

In 2003 rape law was extended to include oral and anal rape; the law also changed the way in which a lack of consent may be proved

In 2017 victims were allowed to provide evidence in pre-recorded cross-examinations, to be played to the jury soon the trial begins, rather than have to attend court in person

1992   **1994**   **1999**   **2003**   **2017**

13

14

15

16

17

18

Slide 19

Myth: Someone who's drunk lots of alcohol or taken drugs shouldn't complain if they end up being raped or sexually assaulted.

Fact: In law, consent to sex is when someone agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a person is unconscious or incapacitated by alcohol or drugs, they are unable to give their consent to sex. Having sex with a person who is incapacitated through alcohol or drugs is rape. No-one asks or deserves to be raped or sexually assaulted; 100% of the responsibility lies with the perpetrator.

Click twice for more information about alcohol and sexual assault and rape…

Myth: Alcohol, drugs, stress or depression can turn people into rapists.

Fact: Drugs and alcohol are never the cause of rape or sexual assault. It is the attacker who is committing the crime, not the drugs or alcohol. Stress and depression don't turn people into rapists or justify sexual violence either. There are no excuses.

If they can't stand up? THE ANSWER IS NO — No consent = no sex

Slurring their words? THE ANSWER IS NO — No consent = no sex

If you don't get a yes THE ANSWER IS NO — No consent = no sex

...you commit rape

Slide 20

SURVIVOR EXPERIENCE

(body text illegible)

Slide 21

Myth: Women are most likely to be raped after dark by a stranger, so women shouldn't go out alone at night.

Fact: Only around 10% of rapes are committed by 'strangers'. Around 90% of rapes are committed by known people, and often by someone who the survivor has previously trusted or even loved. People are raped in their homes, their workplaces and other settings where they previously felt safe. Rapists can be friends, colleagues, clients, neighbours, family members, partners or exes. Risk of rape shouldn't be used as an excuse to control women's movements or restrict their rights and freedom.

LOOK AT THIS IMAGE

Most people believe that these are the circumstances that lead to a rape…

Man, with a weapon, in a dark area, attacking a woman alone…

Do you?

YES

NO

Click your answer

Slide 22

MORE COMMONLY HELD MYTHS…

- Myth: It's only rape if someone is physically forced into sex and has the injuries to show for it.

- Fact: Sometimes people who are raped sustain injuries and sometimes they don't. Someone consents to sex when they agree by choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. There are lots of circumstances in which someone might not have freedom or capacity to consent to sex. For example, rapists will sometimes use weapons or threats of violence to prevent a physical struggle. Sometimes they will take advantage of someone who isn't able to consent, because they are drunk or asleep. Many people who are sexually attacked are unable to move or speak from fear and shock. They may be in a coercive or controlling relationship with their rapist, and/or too young to give consent (under 16). Sex without consent is rape. Just because someone doesn't have visible injuries doesn't mean they weren't raped.
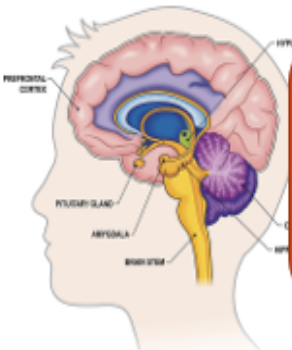
Slide 23

NO INJURIES?

The human brain is wired up in such a way that survival is most important. The amygdala's role in survival is paramount. Every piece of sensory information that enters our brain is routed via the thalamus and then to the amygdala. The amygdala filters the information searching out threats. If any threats are realised, whether real or perceived, the hypothalamus is immediately encouraged to respond. It does so by triggering the release of stress hormones to prepare the body to defend itself. In a split second after the thalamus sends information to the amygdala it begins the much slower process of sending the same information to the hippocampal and cortical circuits for further evaluation. The findings are then relayed back to amygdala (Jendrich, 2007).

Click here for more information

Slide 24

BRAIN CHANGES DURING AN ASSAULT

(body text partially illegible — describes Freeze, Flight, Fight, Flop, Friend responses)

Slide 25: MORE COMMONLY HELD MYTHS…

Slide 26: BOTH MEN AND WOMEN CAN BE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AND/OR RAPED

Slide 27: MORE COMMONLY HELD MYTHS…

Slide 28: MORE COMMONLY HELD MYTHS…

Slide 29: WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT OF THESE MYTHS?

Slide 30: SURVIVOR EXPERIENCE

SO WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- A person can only consent if he/she agrees by CHOICE, and has the FREEDOM and CAPACITY to make that choice.
- EVERYONE has the right to CHOOSE whether or not they want to engage in sex or sexual contact.
- There are three different criminal acts; Rape, Sexual Assault by Penetration and Sexual Assault.
- Over the years there have been CHANGES in the law, for the better.
- Alcohol CAN AFFECT someone's ability to CONSENT.
- The BRAIN changes during an assault and helps us respond in a way BEST for our SURVIVAL.
- MEN get raped too.

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SO WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- People can be victims of sexual violence MORE than ONCE.
- People of ALL genders, ALL ages, and ALL appearances do and can become victims of sexual violence.
- MOST victims of sexual violence never report to the police.
- False allegations of rape and sexual assault are VERY RARE.
- According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales; an estimated 510,000 WOMEN and 138,000 MEN aged 16 to 59 experienced sexual assault in 2016 (CSEW, 2017).

- Please click on the link and watch the following video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrxVavnQ

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thank YOU so much

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Appendix 19 – Post-Intervention Questions

<u>Post-Intervention Questions (Each question had a free text box so participants could write their answer in their own words and offer an explanation)</u>

1. What are your initial thoughts about this programme?
2. Do you think this information-sharing programme would have an impact on other people's views towards sexual assault/rape victims?
3. What part of the information-sharing programme do you think could have the most impact?
4. Was there anything within the information-sharing programme that surprised you? If so, please explain.
5. Was there anything within the information-sharing programme that has challenged the beliefs you held prior? If so, please explain.
6. Has the information-sharing programme changed or challenged your views of survivors of sexual assault/rape? If so, please explain.
7. What impact do you think this would have if someone was to disclose they have been sexually assaulted/raped in comparison to before?
8. Was there any part of the information-sharing programme that you found uncomfortable? If so, please explain.
9. Is there anything that you think needs adding or changing to the information-programme?
10. If you have any further comment please write them below.

Appendix 20 – Participant Information Sheet for the Evaluation of the Information-Sharing

Programme

University of HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through a specialised information-sharing programme

Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project looking at enhancing negative attitudes towards victims of sexual violence. Before you make your decision, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the study about?

The following research is the final stage of an overall PhD Research Project; chapters of the final report can and will be submitted for publication within academic journals and conference papers. This research is going to be investigating the sensitive topic of rape and sexual abuse. The overall objective of the project is to develop a specialised online information-sharing programme that aims to develop more appropriate attitudes towards both male and female victims of sexual assault and rape.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to complete a consent form, and you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part in the research, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about yourself and answer some questions about your views and opinions on sexual violence. You will see fictional written accounts of sexual violence and will be asked questions about this. The study can take up 30 minutes to complete and you can stop the research at any time. If you wish to withdraw at a later date, please contact the researcher via email (up until the 21 June 2020) and you can have your data removed.

Will my identity be disclosed?

Anonymity will be maintained throughout. Due to this being completed online no one will know your identity, including the researcher. No identifying questions will be asked. You will be asked to provide a four-digit code that is memorable to you only and this is used solely to locate your data should you wish to withdraw from the research after completion of the study.

The only caveat to breaching confidentiality would be if you were to disclose sexual abuse where it was deemed a child or someone else was in danger. In this case, the research supervisor would be notified and relevant safeguarding measures would be taken.

What will happen to the information?

All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure. It is anticipated that the research may, at some point, be disseminated through standard academic channels such as journal articles, conference papers or reports. However, should this happen, your anonymity will be ensured, although it may be necessary to use your words in the presentation of the findings; however this will be done in the form of pseudonyms and your permission for this is included in the consent form.

How will I be supported throughout the research?

If you feel distressed at any point during the process of completing the research you can stop the study. Contact details of external support services are provided to you. These are listed at the bottom of this information sheet and will be again given at the end of the study.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you require any further information about the research, please contact me on:

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hud.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

Rape Crisis Helpline – 0808 802 9999

Victim Support – 0808 168 9111

SurvivorsUK – 020 3598 3898

CICters (Surviving rape and/or sexual abuse) – 0238 033 8080

Appendix 21 – Consent Form for the Evaluation of the Information-Sharing Programme

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through a specialised information-sharing programme

Consent Form

It is important that you read, understand, and tick the corresponding boxes on the consent form if you wish to take part in this study. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate. If you require any further details, please contact the researcher, Nadia Cox, or research supervisor, Dr Nadia Wager.

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hus.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of the research as outlined in the information ☐
sheet version 1.1, dated 19/02/2020

I consent to contributing to this research ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my contribution at any time until the 21 ☐
June 2020 without giving any reason (This date is used as this is when analysis of results will commence)

I give permission for my words to be quoted (by use of pseudonym) ☐

I understand that the research will be used in the development of a PhD thesis; chapters of this ☐
can and will be disseminated through academic channels, e.g. journal articles and conference
papers.

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions for a period of 10 ☐

years at the University of Huddersfield

I understand that no person other than the researcher and in the event of an incident, the ☐
research supervisor will have access to the information provided.

I understand that my identity will be protected and that no written information that could lead to ☐
me being identified will be included in any report or publications

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project, please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence.

Appendix 22 – Debriefing Statements for both the Intervention and Control Groups for the

Evaluation of the Information-Sharing Programme

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Improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through a specialised information-sharing programme

Debriefing Statement

This study aimed to develop and evaluate a novel, specialised online information-sharing programme on the effects of sexual assault and rape, through an online study with the general public; whilst assessing whether there is an association between the completion of a specialised programme and attitudes towards rape victims. The programme was distributed via the University of Huddersfield's Universities Experiment Participation System and also via social media outlets in the hope of reaching as many people as possible. You were asked to participate to contribute to the evaluation of that programme.

Previous research has demonstrated contentious views on the effectiveness of rape prevention/training programmes, with each offering plausible evidence for their arguments. It can be seen from previous work that changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are required to help improve both reporting and conviction rates of perpetrators; and more importantly, potentially reduce the proclivity towards offending. The potential findings drawn from this research could show the importance of dispelling rape myths within popular culture. Also, show how victim-blaming attitudes have a negative impact on reporting rates. It will also emphasise the importance of awareness, training, and education for the public to aid with the reduction in rape myth acceptance and society's negative attitudes towards rape victims.

Thank you for your contribution to this research, your data will remain anonymous and will not be traceable to yourself. However, if you do wish to withdraw please inform the researcher referencing your four-digit code at any time up until the 21 June 2020.

If you have any questions about the research or how your data will be used, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Researcher: Nadia Cox

Email Address: nadia.cox@hud.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

Email Address: n.m.wager@hud.ac.uk

If you feel, you have been affected by this study or any other elements during this research then please contact the support services below.

Supportive Organisations

Rape Crisis Helpline – 0808 802 9999

Victim Support – 0808 168 9111

SurvivorsUK – 020 3598 3898

CICters (Surviving rape and/or sexual abuse) – 0238 033 8080

University of HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Improving people's attitudes towards victims of sexual assault and rape, through a specialised information-sharing programme

Debriefing Statement – Control Group

This study aimed to develop and evaluate a novel, specialised online information-sharing programme on the effects of sexual assault and rape, through an online study with the general public; whilst assessing whether there is an association between the completion of a specialised programme and attitudes towards rape victims. The programme was distributed via the University of Huddersfield's Universities Experiment Participation System and also via social media outlets in the hope of reaching as many people as possible. You were asked to participate to contribute to the evaluation of that programme. You were randomly assigned to one of two conditions; experimental or control group. You were assigned to the control group, and therefore did not actively participate in the evaluation of the information-sharing programme. Instead, your contribution sought to establish whether the information-sharing programme elicited an increase in appropriate attitudes towards victims of sexual violence.

Previous research has demonstrated contentious views on the effectiveness of rape prevention/training programmes, with each offering plausible evidence for their arguments. It can be seen from previous work that changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are required to help improve both reporting and conviction rates of perpetrators; and more importantly, potentially reduce the proclivity towards offending. The potential findings drawn from this research could show the importance of dispelling rape myths within popular culture. Also, show how victim-blaming attitudes have a negative impact on reporting rates. It will also emphasise the importance of awareness, training, and education for the public to aid with the reduction in rape myth acceptance and society's negative attitudes towards rape victims.

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Supervisor: Dr Nadia Wager

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Supportive Organisations

Rape Crisis Helpline – 0808 802 9999

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CICters (Surviving rape and/or sexual abuse) – 0238 033 8080

Appendix 23 – Content Categories used for the Content Analysis of Rape Myth Acceptance

Content Categories	Example phrases noted from the data
Denial to the scope of the problem regarding sexual violence – People misinterpret well-meant gestures.	"this is very surprising" "unclear... not sure" "he might have thought it was ok"
Antagonism towards victims	"she should quit drinking" "as she's only 19, she should think twice before drinking with people she does not know well" "unreliable narrator" "she needs to be more careful about how much alcohol she drinks" "she's jumped to conclusions"
Lack of support for policies designed to help alleviate the effects of sexual violence	
Beliefs that male coercion forms a natural part of sexual relationships	"maybe he slept with her but in his eyes they were both drunk and wanted sex so he doesn't feel like he's done anything wrong or raped her" "what did she expect" "he assumed he had the right"
Beliefs that exonerate perpetrators by blaming the victim and/or circumstances	"she has no prove" "she had too much to drink" "Both may have consented whilst under the influence" "did she just forget" "she needs to be careful of how much she drinks" "just too drunk to remember" "she needs better friends" "feel sorry for him" "don't walk alone in dark places and keep alert" "they got drunk and probably had sex" "she placed herself in a very dangerous situation. Possibly naïve. But a young woman just out to enjoy herself" "she just made a mistake"

Appendix 24 – Graphs Depicting Normal Distributions with the Data Obtained for Total

Scores on AMMSA and RMA

Normal Distribution for Total AMMAS Scores

Mean = 75.59
Std. Dev. = 23.486
N = 209

Total AMMAS Scores

Normal Distribution of Total Rape Myth Acceptance Scores

Mean = 9.26
Std. Dev. = .921
N = 214

Total Rape Myth Acceptance Scores
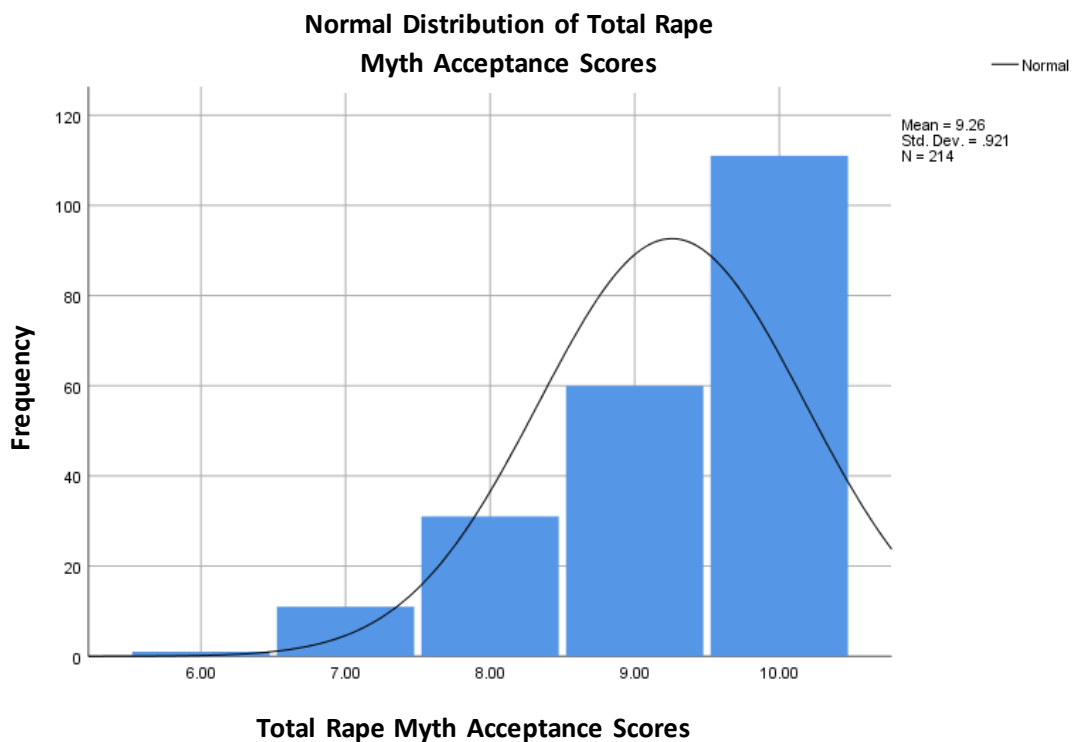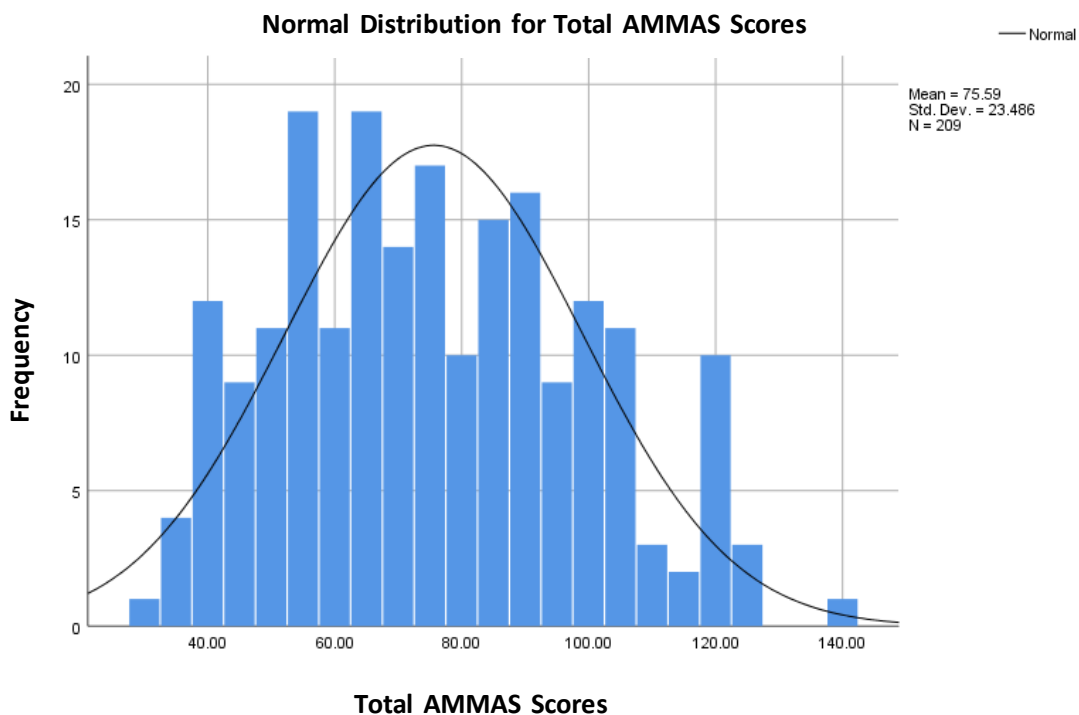
Appendix 25 – Codes and Themes Derived from Thematic Analysis from the Evaluation of the Information-Sharing Programme

Themes and sub-themes

The silent survivor	Statistics and Figures	Impact of disclosures and vignettes	Education	Future recommendations	Raising awareness
Male rape			Changes in law		
Removing stigma/myth busting	Male rape		Legal definitions		
	Reporting rates		Consent		
			Target audience		

P	The silent survivor	Statistics and figures	Impact of disclosures and scenarios	Education	Amendments	Raising Awareness
1	forces you to think about your own attitudes towards rape and sexual violence. Perhaps that rape is a broad spectrum and not all perpetrators grab their victims at night etc					
3	survivors have a voice and deserve to be treated as a human and not be views as the person that got raped			how late laws came in when rape has been around for a long time		
5		The amount of people who don't report rape/abuse – was surprising		Excellent, should be taught in schools		
6		it's surprising just how a lot of sexual assault must go unreported due to confusion over consent and what actually counts as assault	I think it would give them a lot more reason to go ahead and report the assault because they understand the situation more clearly			
7				It's very good and probably should be delivered at school		
9				This should be taught in schools and to all offenders and victims of sexual assault		
10	To some individuals, yes. To some, no. Some individual's opinions can be very deeply embedded regarding topics as sensitive as these. However, even helping chance, or creating		I think it is very good that individuals are speaking out, even if it's anonymously. I have always deemed survivors of sexual assault as being VERY strong. It		Not all survivors get raped. Maybe include some statements from those who have been 'touched up' etc.	

	further positive views on victims, of crimes such as these will be a great help to those who need to speak out.		takes a lot of courage to speak to even one person about their experiences.			
12						A lot of people would not think they have been sexually assaulted until they read an informative piece
13				Not sure - but the timeline of changes in the law had surprised me. How the changes are only very recent!	Maybe what support there is for perpetrators?	
14		That 90% of incidents are by people known to the victim. I knew it was more common but not that high and also the sheer number of people who have experienced sexual abuse is staggering.	The survivor stories were hard to read and reading about the statistics of child vicitms too. However, I don't believe this is a reason to take this information out. They had the effect of making the factual information more salient to me and I think I'll remember the information more clearly for having an emotional response to it.	Yes, that the law about rape in marriage was only brought in in 1992.		
16			some of the scenarios of the rape/assault i found a little uncomfortable as i see these stories in reality and it sickens me to think people have the mentality in their mind that it is okay to abuse others sexually and do not care that it will stick with the other person for their entire lifetime.	It was an interesting research area which stated quite a lot of facts on when consent is not giving to the other individual and how any why consent cannot be given as well as what is classed as consent. How consent is given and what is not classed as consent and the individuals have the right to change their mind when they want		
18		I also think the figures showing the lack of people reporting their abuse will show how bad the situation is and the importance of reporting In general I was shocked that boys ratio was higher, but that's because it's discussed less. But in general it's hard to imagine under 18s faving assault because there is		Good as it explains in depth what consent is and how it isn't 'set in stone' if consent is given, it can be taken back. As I don't think everyone understands the multiple definitions of rape and that consent can be taken back.	Rape between women. The concept. Mainly because that was something I found difficult to have a definition of before I found out there was another definition to rape	

		completely no argument that they are 'asking for it'. Unimaginable Impactful - Figures about the lack of people who report		I wasn't aware that there was a definition of rape without it being penetration of a penis. I've had discussions with people before where we weren't sure how rape was established in terms of women raping women Impactful - and how consent can we taken back at any point during sex		
21	Sexual assault/abuse is always aimed at women being the victim, men suffer too.					
22			It's good, as it shows different scenarios in which sexual violence can occur. It's also quite daunting, as it draws parallels to situations in our society. The response to the scenarios and maybe if someone has been assaulted or been a victim in the past, then it might make them not feel like they're alone.			
23			Surprising - If anything i would have to say when the man raped the man, you never hear about gay rape on the news, it alway plays it as only women being the ones who get raped.		Maybe a scenario in which a guy has been raped by a girl, to show that it can happen that way round too.	I was unsure about it at first as it is a sensitive topic area but in the 21st century it is too naive to think that these things don't happen, so people need to be made aware of it and almost forced to read about what actually happens.
24	I think it would impact them for the better and remove the negative stigma that some people may have towards the victims. I think it would broaden the scope for who is a victim as some people have a very narrow perspective towards what a victim actually is		Impactful - I believe the scenarios at the start as it covered such a wide range of events and it allowed me to engage with how that actually made me feel. The information at the end way to close it.			I think the information provided is very relevant and it offers insights that many people may not have. It explains the situations very well and it would definitely make people think before presuming they have consent from another person. I think the fact that it is backed up by examples is very good as it offers a chance for the information to be seen in action.

						It was concise and I had no problem reading it all.
25	hopefully those who blame victims will start to understand that the only person to blame is the perpetrator			Impactful - Identifying what is classed as consent as most people nowadays still don't know what does and does not classify as full consent which helps prevent certain events from happening		
26			Victims may be able to sympathise with similar stories making them more likely to report their experience.			
27	i kind of never thought about the fact that men can get raped too, i dont know why i just always think of females					
28						
30			Some of the scenarios made me feel uncomfortable as I imagined myself being in their shoes.			good information to raise awareness & educate
31		I was surprised with the figures of rape and that there is also a high percentage of men that do become victims, for example 1 in 4 boys are victims before the ages of high school and 1 in 3 girls.	I think that i feel more understanding towards survivors after hearing their own stories as these are traumatic times in their lives which they will have to cope with everyday going forward, so for them to post their stories online pushes forward the message that we all want change and that rape is not okay. I would be more understanding after viewing the power point and reading others stories as its very uncommon for me to hear anything like that, but i would still be as supportive to the victim and the trauma that they may be dealing with as a result of the incident.			think that the biggest part of the program that can have an impact on others would be the stories of survivors as they can help others gain awareness and this may also help others to come forward if they have been a victim even if they think it was just one of those things, such as someone kissing you when you don't want to.
35			While reading these stories the thought that so many people go through this everywhere made me feel super uncomfortable.		I was a victim of a woman sexually assaulting me, when I've shared this information before I've gotten mixed reviews. Maybe a scenario question like this could give you some interesting feedback.	

			The 1st scenario. I believe it provokes people to think. There are a lot of ways that situation could have been played out differently.			
36	Yes. I think it would make people understand that men and women both get raped or experience sexual assault. Also that rape or assault isn't because of what someone is wearing or how attractive they are. It could happen to anyone whether they are wearing a bikini or dressed like a nun.	The only thing that I was shocked about was the statistics for men.	The stories of the survivors and how people in their life or they themselves put the blame on themselves and how they evaluated there actions to see what could have brought or lead it on. That believing them is always the first step towards hopefully justice.	The part about what is consent especially to those who are oblivious to the many ways consent cannot be given.	I think in the PowerPoint you should include what you do if someone discloses to you they they have been sexually assaulted or raped. Also do like a quiz before asking them what they would do then tell them what they should do.	
37	The information around being drunk and that they cannot legally consent if they are too drunk					
38	Yes, it gives you a more of an insight how the victims had felt and what hey had to go through, and its not always what people assume. for example, a woman flirting with a man doesn't mean she is giving consent for sex. Others may see otherwise.	I was quite shocked at the fact that 90% of people that have raped people are loved ones or someone that the victim knows very well or is close to, it happens in places such as their homes, workplaces or somewhere where the victim feels safe. This fact shocked me as I thought majority of the fact, when people are raped or sexually assaulted it's by strangers but that is only 10%.				It's eye opening, and I have learned new facts about this topic which I had not known. This programme is essential and informative.
39			Reading the survivor stories of people that have suffered sexual abuse. It's hard to read sad, and negative things, especially so many in such a short space of time.		There could perhaps been a scenario about a woman raping a man, as that is more likely to challenge people's pre-conceived ideas about sexual assault.	
40						would make more people aware of rape and experiences.
41				this programme is very useful as it is giving out a clear warning of what consent actually is and how everyone should respect other individuals answers.		

				it would make them think that consent is very important regardless if they are in a. relationship or not it is important to make sure people have a clear understanding of consent.		
42				I think it will help them feel more confident to disclose this information, even if they are not ready to report it to the authorities yet. I hope that it would make them feel less alone	No. I think it's adequate but not too intrusive!	I think this is a very good programme to have in place. I feel that many people don't understand what consent is and how sexual assault and rape has significant effects on people. I hope this helps people to understand and make the topic less taboo.

As a survivor myself, I don't feel uncomfortable as I want people to understand and be educated. |
| 43 | I think that it will help people to understand the subject a lot more. As someone who has both been sexually abused and raped, I think that this is a positive step to combat the misconceptions and myths of this subject.

It has changed my views as before I only was aware about female rape survivors as these are the ones that are talked about. This programme has taught me to be more aware about the silent male rape survivors | The statistic that only around 10% of rapes are committed by strangers, this makes me uncomfortable as you wouldn't expect that almost all rapes are committed by someone you know | It would make them feel less ashamed and more supported as many people are always blamed for being raped but this programme has shown that there are people that you can go to for support and that you should raise your voice and get justice

The survivor stories as I rarely ever hear about anyones experiences. It also makes me feel sad that many of them blamed themselves | The fact that rape laws have only been established within the past 20/30 years which means many victims have been unable to get justice | | I think the programme has opened my eyes to the realities of rape which are not spoken about but they need to especially in todays society where everything is changing and more people are speaking up |
44		I was surprised about the statistics of how many people do not come forward about rape and sexual assault.				
46		yes, it surprised me when it said that 90% of cases come from people that they know instead of 10% being strangers				
48			possibly, by giving scenarios this allows people to have more		scenarios with female perpetrators rather than just men	

		understanding of dangers which can potentially make people vulnerable and exposed to perpetrators.			
49		I think I have become more clear on what a survivor may think about their trauma and I can comfort them more easily			
50		it did make clear that everyone situation is different and the scenario leading up to the rape/sexual assault or extremely different and could because in many different ways. most impact on the people taking part would be the scenarios, as it makes them think about the situation and could put them in the same mindset as a victim/perpetrator to realise their actions.		I felt that I needed to change to the information program would be the questions asked of the scenario as the questions were very repetitive and wasn't that easy to understand whether you made the question simpler and shorter it would be very adequate.	
52	Its made me realise that anyone can be a victim there isn't a "normal" victim	The statistics of how many people sexual violence effects. especially the statistics on men as this is something that pretty much never gets talked about	It makes me think people will listen to you if something has happened even if you were drunk or on drugs. I feel like the media and things does make out that reporting a crime while intoxicated wouldn't go anywhere legally but after going through that it makes me more confident that they would Reading the survivors stories as it humanises the statistics that are put out there is the media and many of the situations people found themselves in are relatable			
55			I think reading peoples stories really makes this seem so much more powerful than just the facts, I think there is a good balance between the two.			I have noticed recently on TV programs that if anyone is going to have sex they now ask 'is this ok' 'do you want to do this' 'are you sure'. I especially noticed this on normal people. People need to check that the other person is consenting at all times.
60	Makes you more aware of your surroundings and makes you					

	realise assault can happen anywhere it makes you think what people actually experience and shows how anyone can be a victim					
62	I do not think I realised the number of myths there are around sexual assault and how many people may actually believe these myths	I was surprised by the number of victims who did not report their assault to the police. I knew the number was high I just never realised that 83% of people did not report their assaults to the police.	It has helped me understand more why victims may be afraid to report their crime to the police and that it can run deeper than just the fear of being judged.			I think it was a good simple way to help explain the different types of sexual assault that can happen and help to disprove common rumours that are spread around the subject.
68	think this programme is very informative and useful because it disproves some of the myths about rape and informs people about the importance of consent. I think it would also impact people's views about male victims as it showed statistics about male sexual assault and many people might think that this does not exist.	The information that surprised me was that 83% of victims do not report that they have been assaulted. This surprised me because I thought many people would report the crime and seek help straight away but now I realise that they might not report it because they feel shame, embarrassment or that they won't be believed.	I do think it would impact their views in a positive way because in the future they will be more likely to believe the victims and not question the validity of their story			
69	Yes, it would emphasise that this can happen to anyone at anytime, making people more understanding of those who are victims		Thinking and talking about how the victim would feel/made you feel has impact, it puts you in their shoes and gives you that greater perspective and understanding of these situations and therefore hopefully encourages people to be more considerate when handling these situations			
73		The number of males that are also victims of this crime. I knew that it was possible for males to be assaulted in this way but I didn't realise to what extent.	The victim statements for me give the greatest impact. Written in their own words and describing real-life scenarios that a relatable to the reader.	The programme is informative and seems to aimed towards younger adults. The facts about the number of sexual assaults reported to the police was eye-opening, as was the number of males who also experience these crimes.	The clicking on the picture to uncover facts was a bit clunky. Maybe a greater focus on what it is to groom a person to sexually assault them.	
74					more information about LGBTQ hate crime-related sexual assault	
75	I think this is a very efficient programme as it clarifies the different law's relating to	I was surprised that 1 in 6 males before 18 experience some form of sexual abuse compared to 1 in 4	yes , the scenarios made me uncomfortable as they are strong replications of real life incidents.	establishing the laws relating to this topic could have the most impact as many individuals if not		

	consent and rape in the UK , it also bust myths that are thought to be factual giving a broader insight into rape and that it can happen to anyone irrespective of their gender , age , socio-economic status etc. one way in which the programme changed by views is towards male victims , I thought there would be less victims I think this is largely due to the media tending to focus on female victims , Male victims don't share enough of the media spotlight in this topic. none of my views have been challenged.	females , I didn't expect the the margin to be as Close as the statistics suggest.	I would say change the scenarios however they are good in the sense that an individual who reads them can really analyse their perspective of what rape / sexual assault is and how they feel about It.	the majority may be unaware of the laws relating to this topic.		
77			I think it would be useful to hear these scenarios if you have been sexually assaulted/raped because it will be reassuring to know that there are many different scenarios that are still classed as sexual assault/rape. Many people are confused as to whether they have been assaulted/raped or not.			I think just the idea of bringing more awareness/educating people on sexual assault/rape will have the most impact
79				yes it gives insight into what is allowed and what isnt eg. consent is needed the fact that male rape only became illegal in 1994 and that isnt a long time ago	more info about sexual assault other than rape and describing what is classed as sexual assault so more people can speak up about their experineces in a hope to prevent it	its slightly scary to read because i went through something similar but its comforting knowing many other people have goone through the same thing so youre not alone an that there s a lot of help now for rape victims
82		The percentage of women who do not report their sexual assault/rape. I didn't think it would be this high.				
84				educating people in the different types of non-consent, such as when someone is sleeping is not consent		

				It was surprising to see how late laws have been changed - it is more recent than expected		
85	i think it could really help reduce victim blaming and increase people to speak up against their friends when they see this behaviour			this type of thing should be taught in schools colleges and universities	information on false allegations	
87		That males being raped is one to six as you would expect a smaller chance as you don't hear about it as much as females being raped. The statistics as it shows hard data rather than just talking about it so more people could become interested in fighting to stop the offence and raise awareness about it.				
89			I'm not sure. I found scenario one very interesting as I didn't feel it was as cut and dry as the other two which could lead to some great discussions in future.			I thought this was a highly interesting if upsetting programme that really made me think about some of the horrors people go through. It also made me think about the minds of people who commit these horrific acts and how they operate.