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Creating Lasting Attitude and Behavior Change in Fraternity Members and Male Student Athletes

The Qualitative Impact of an Empathy-Based Rape Prevention Program

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Fraternity members and male student athletes responded to open-ended questions assessing the impact of an empathy-based rape prevention program. All participants reported either lasting attitude or behavior changes; most reported both. Participants reported increased understanding of how rape might feel and attributed this change to seeing a videotape describing a male-on-male rape situation. Participants refrained from telling jokes about rape and reported feeling more effective when helping survivors seeking assistance. These behavior changes were attributed to the videotape and to a section of the program encouraging participants to confront rape jokes and challenge sexist behaviors.

Keywords: *men; prevention; rape*

The overwhelming prevalence of men's violence against women is well documented. For example, research has consistently shown that approximately 1 out of 4 college women has experienced rape or attempted rape since the age of 14 (Douglas et al., 1997; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). To help end this problem, many rape prevention educators have applied theory, research, and outcomes assessment studies to their programmatic interventions.

One theory that has been applied to programs seeking to lower incidents of sexual assault is belief system theory. This theory suggests that lasting attitude change results from interventions designed to maintain people's existing self-conceptions (Grube,

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Mayton, & Ball-Rokeach, 1994). Thus, to be effective, rape prevention programs should appeal to the way men perceive themselves. Although few, if any, men see themselves as potential rapists (Scheel, Johnson, Schneider, & Smith, 2001), many programs approach men as such (Lonsway, 1996) and therefore limit their probability of success.

In addition to belief system theory, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) has been helpful to rape prevention programmers. This model suggests that lasting attitude and behavior change occurs when participants are motivated to hear a message, are able to understand it, and perceive the message as relevant to them (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Such conditions lead to a type of thinking called central route processing, whereby listeners actively process program content and are far more likely to have long-term attitude and behavior change. Applying the ELM to rape prevention has shown signs of success (Foubert, 2000; Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995).

Some prevention programmers have focused their work on addressing populations shown to be at a higher risk of perpetration of sexual assault, such as fraternity members and male student athletes (Chandler, Dewayne, & Carroll, 1999; Larimer, Lydum, Anderson, & Turner, 1999). Both populations have attitudes that are more supportive of rape than other college men (Boeringer, 1999). Men in social fraternities have been found to commit 55% of gang rapes on college campuses. An additional 40% of campus gang rapes are committed by male student athletes (O'Sullivan, 1991). Some fraternity members have been found to have group norms that reinforce within-group attitudes that perpetuate sexual coercion against women (Martin & Hummer, 1989), to have more traditional attitudes toward women than other men (Schaffer & Nelson, 1993), and to be more sexually coercive than other men (Garrett-Gooding & Senter, 1987). Male student athletes are also more likely than other men to physically and sexually abuse women (Chandler et al., 1999). Taken together, these findings point to the need to study which prevention methods are most effective with these high-risk populations.

Several studies point rape prevention programmers in promising directions. For example, a meta-analysis of rape prevention programs found that all-male programs are far more successful than mixed-sex programs (Brecklin & Forde, 2001). Peer education programs have also been found to be more successful than those presented by administrators (Earle, 1996). In addition, as men increase in their empathy with survivors, understand rape trauma better, and have more aversion to rape, they report less likelihood of raping (Hamilton & Yee, 1990; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Low rape proclivity and high empathy toward rape survivors are strongly linked (Osland, Fitch, & Willis, 1996), which suggests that finding ways to increase men's empathy toward survivors may lower their likelihood of raping.

Research on men's empathy toward rape survivors has consistently shown that describing male-on-male rape experiences leads to significant declines in men's likelihood of raping women and to lessening men's belief in stereotyped and false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Marriott,

1997; Foubert & McEwen, 1998; Gilbert, Heesacker, & Gannon, 1991; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Conversely, describing a male-on-female rape experience can increase men's belief in these stereotypes and can lead to increased likelihood of sexual aggression (Berg, 1993; Berg, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Ellis, O'Sullivan, & Sowards, 1992). Thus, recounting a male survivor experience seems necessary to develop the empathy leading to lower likelihood of raping and attitudinal improvement.

Schewe (2002) reports in his review of rape prevention programs that only one program has ever been shown to produce clear, long-term change in men. This program, evaluated in the present study, is commonly referred to as The Men's Program (Foubert, 2005). This all-male, victim empathy-based, 1-hour, peer education rape prevention program is titled, "How to Help a Sexual Assault Survivor: What Men Can Do." Quantitative research on fraternity men has shown that program participants report significantly less agreement with stereotyped and false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists (rape myth acceptance) and less self-reported likelihood of raping for an entire academic year (Foubert, 2000). Qualitative responses to open-ended questions and in focus groups have clarified how men understand and make meaning of their experience with this program. Foubert and LaVoy (2000) found that 7 months after program participation, a clear majority of fraternity members reported lasting attitude changes of increased awareness or sensitivity toward rape. The program component mentioned most frequently as responsible was a videotape in which a male police officer describes the rape of another male officer by two male perpetrators.

More recently, Foubert and Cowell (2004) conducted focus groups with fraternity members and male student athletes immediately after they first saw The Men's Program. They found that participants reported substantially increased empathy toward rape survivors, which participants overwhelmingly attributed to seeing the aforementioned videotape. Participants also reported being more able to help survivors, as better understanding consent, as being less likely to tell and more likely to confront rape jokes, and as being more likely to believe rape survivors' stories.

Foubert and Cowell (2004) left many unanswered questions, particularly with regard to whether the program's effects lasted for more than the day the program was presented. In addition, given that the focus groups immediately followed the program, participants could only report their guesses as to whether their behavior would change, rather than being able to report change in actual behavior. The present study sought to address these questions by asking the same participants, 5 months after seeing The Men's Program, to respond in writing to open-ended questions assessing whether and how their attitudes and behavior had changed since they saw the program and, if so, what about the program led to that change. Therefore, our first research question for the present study queried whether participants' attitudes differed 5 months after participating in The Men's Program. Related to that, we wanted to know how participants accounted for this change. Our next research

question inquired whether and, if so, in what ways participants behaved differently since participating in The Men's Program. Finally, we wanted to know how participants accounted for this change.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were traditional-age undergraduate male students enrolled at a public, southeastern university with an enrollment of approximately 5,000 undergraduate students. Because we were using qualitative methods with a goal of describing the experience of a wide range of program participants, we used purposive rather than random sampling (Borg & Gall, 1989). Participants were either current members of a varsity athletic team, including baseball, football, and gymnastics, or members of 1 of 5 participating fraternities. All were full-time students in good academic standing. All but a few were Caucasian; approximately 75% of these students lived on campus. Participants were 12 fraternity members and 12 student athletes who came from a pool of 26 men who participated in focus groups after seeing the program 5 months previously. The remaining 2 who did not participate in our study were football players who had to be eliminated from being eligible for the present study because after the focus group study conducted by Foubert and Cowell (2004), they subsequently applied for and were accepted into the peer education group ("One in Four") presenting this program. Aside from these 2 participants, our response rate was 24 out of 24.

Materials

Five months after the program, participants responded to the following four questions: (a) "Compared to *before* you participated in this program, are any of your *attitudes* different today as a result of seeing the program; if so, what attitudes?" (b) "What about the program led to this change?" (c) "Compared to *before* you participated in this program, have you *behaved* differently in any situation as a result of seeing the program; if so, in what way did you behave differently?" and (d) "What about the program led to this change?"

Procedure

Participants from an earlier study (Foubert & Cowell, 2004) were originally recruited to attend, through electronic mail to purposive samples (Krueger, 1998) of 100 men, split evenly between members of each fraternity and each athletic team on campus, in the hopes of gaining approximately 25 volunteers. When 25 did not initially sign up, follow-up announcements were made by leaders of fraternities and athletic teams to

their groups, opening up the opportunity to participate to all members. Recruiting of participants stopped when enough fraternity members and athletes for two focus groups of 6 to 7 people from each population were gained. For this earlier study, Foubert and Cowell (2004) offered a prepaid long-distance phone card with 600 minutes or a \$25 campus bookstore gift certificate as a participant incentive for the initial phase.

Volunteers then attended a 1-hour presentation of The Men's Program by thoroughly trained and experienced peer educators, followed by a 60- to 90-minute focus group session. Presenters were college men who had 2 years of experience presenting the program at another university. Selecting experienced peer educators from another campus provided the dual benefit of having presenters who could relate to the audience as peers while removing the bias that might be created by speakers known personally to the audience. Presenters of The Men's Program began by setting a nonconfrontational tone, where participants heard that they would not be blamed for rape, nor would it be assumed that they wanted to rape a woman. Participants were told instead they would learn how they can assist women who come to them for help minutes or even years after being sexually assaulted. This approach was taken to apply belief system theory to the programmatic approach. Instead of approaching men as potential rapists, something even convicted rapists reject as a self-descriptor (Warshaw, 1994), we approached men as potential helpers of women who are recovering from rape, a descriptor that men are likely to have (Scheel et al., 2001).

In addition, men were told about the likelihood that they knew a survivor given the prevalence of rape on college campuses and that it was likely that they would be in a position at some point to offer support to survivors. These emphases were included to follow the recommendations of the ELM to motivate participants to listen to a message they will deem as personally relevant (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). After disclaimers, an overview, and a basic review of rape definitions, presenters told the audience that they would view a videotape that described a rape situation. This tape described a male police officer being raped by two men who were depicted as violent, known previously to the officer, and heterosexual.

At the conclusion of the video, presenters noted that as with most male-on-male rape, the video they just watched depicted two presumably heterosexual men using rape and battery to exert power and control over the survivor. This portion was important because it confronted the homophobic misunderstanding some men may have that male-on-male rape is primarily perpetrated by homosexual men. Presenters then drew parallels from the male police officers' experiences to common experiences of female rape survivors. Participants were then taught basic skills on how to help a woman recover from rape. Next, presenters discussed how to define consent in intimate encounters and how to intervene as a bystander to help change social norms that condone rape. After answering questions, participants were reminded of the prevalence of rape and of the necessity for everyone to end men's violence against women.

Focus groups took place immediately after the program, with all participants, including 2 groups of 6 fraternity members each and 2 groups of 7 athletes each. Participants

responded to questions regarding their attitude and behavior changes and their suggestions for program improvements. For the present study, participants were given the option of responding to the previously mentioned questions over e-mail or by writing down their responses and returning them anonymously. For e-mailed responses, identifying information was removed prior to analysis, as described in their instructions. Given that a shorter amount of time was required of participants in the present study compared to the study by Foubert and Cowell (2004), a less substantial incentive of a 120-minute prepaid phone card was distributed to participants after completing the follow-up survey.

The open-ended questions were analyzed using a multistage inductive analysis (Patton, 1990). This process begins with identifying key phrases or terms used by program participants in their responses, in this case responses to open-ended questions. Second, researchers identified themes that help organize participants' responses to the program in a careful approach to identify what is truly meaningful. Next, consideration of "causes, consequences, and relationships" (Patton, 1990, p. 422) occurred, whereby researchers attached meaning to findings and drew any appropriate conclusions to help illuminate, understand, and extrapolate the data.

Each response to the open-ended questions was typed on a 3 × 5 card, along with a participant number to facilitate matching participant responses if necessary. Both authors followed the process suggested by Patton (1990) for the four open-ended questions. Initially, each researcher followed the process separately. Afterward, the two researchers discussed their coding schemes and came to consensus decisions on a common framework. To enhance the trustworthiness of our interpretations and validity of our extracted themes, we had a fraternity member who was part of the population under study read all of the participant comments and verify the accuracy of our interpretations. His interpretations greatly informed our analysis.

Results

Most participants responded to questions with one main idea or thought. This allowed us to put most responses into just one category or theme. With each question, there were a small number of participants whose responses included material that was relevant to more than one theme. In these cases, their responses are included in both themes; thus, the number of participant responses sometimes adds to more than 24. Themes that characterized one third or more of the responses are classified as major themes. Themes that characterize between one eighth and one third of responses are labeled minor themes. In one instance, a pair of responses that did not fall into a major or minor theme is noted as a point worth mentioning.

The first question asked, "Compared to *before* you participated in this program, are any of your *attitudes* different today as a result of seeing the program; if so, what attitudes?" Answers clustered around one major and two minor themes. The themes are listed in order from those with the greatest to the least number of participant responses.

Major Theme 1: The Program Increased My Understanding of What Rape Feels Like

The 10 responses in this category emphasized a better understanding of what rape survivors go through, increased empathy toward rape survivors, and more sensitivity toward rape as a general concept. Many in this group used the word *understand* to describe their increased sense of empathy toward survivors. A fraternity member best exemplified the responses in this theme:

I now have a much greater understanding for what it must feel like to be in a sexual assault or rape situation. Just from watching the video I was frozen like they said young women are in those situations. I was utterly speechless and shocked. I now understand the importance of being a listener and not trying to make the victim do anything she doesn't feel comfortable doing.

An athlete described his attitude change in this way:

I can't emphasize how incredible I thought the program was. It was nothing like I expected going in, therefore sort of shocking my attitude toward sexual assault. I always previously had trouble relating to the feelings or point of view of a sexual assault victim but the presentation really hit home. My attitude toward the general significance of sexual assault has been raised significantly with the new perspective the program offered.

Another athlete commented,

I think the biggest thing that changed for me is the magnitude of the effect that assault can bring to the women. Consequently, I am far more, I guess sympathetic, but more empathetic too, towards survivors.

Minor Theme 1: I Now Have a Greater Understanding of How to Support Survivors

The seven responses that clustered around this theme emphasized how they now had a better idea of how to help a sexual assault survivor. In each case, participants gave specific examples of supportive behaviors. An athlete noted how he now sees retaliation toward the rapist as inappropriate:

My attitude toward how I would react to someone close to me being raped is one of the big changes. Before the program I believe [*sic*] that if any one of my close friends were raped, I would go out and try to fight the one responsible. But after the program I know that it is better to comfort my friend, the victim, and not make the situation worse for them.

Minor Theme 2: Understanding the Gravity of the Term *Rape*

The six responses that clustered around this theme emphasized how participants developed a newfound appreciation for the misuse of the word *rape* in everyday conversation. An athlete commented,

My attitude towards treating the term rape lightly has changed. I think back to the presentation, whenever someone says “that test just raped me” and how that contributes to a dumbing down of the severity of what rape means.

A fraternity member took things one step further, noting, “I also no longer make any type of rape comments, like ‘that test raped me’ and call out friends that do.”

Minor Theme 3: The Program Strengthened My Existing Beliefs

Three participants noted that the program reinforced and strengthened their pre-existing antirape attitudes. These participants reported that the program gave them more information on why rape is damaging and that they now feel more comfortable speaking out against rape.

Possible Causes, Consequences, and Relationships

Overall, we found it noteworthy that after 5 months, participants were able to clearly articulate lasting attitude changes. The overwhelming majority of participants mentioned that they understood what rape might feel like to a greater degree than they did prior to participating in the program. Their answers suggested that much of this understanding was brought about by seeing a video of a male-on-male rape situation. To some participants, a consequence of this new understanding was that they felt better able to help survivors. For others, an increased sensitivity toward the use of the word *rape* emerged. The depth and application involved in their comments indicated the kind of thinking referred to in the ELM as “central route processing” that is characteristic of long-term attitude and behavior change.

We also noted a pattern of participants using the word *understand*, conveying more than just awareness but a deeper empathy toward survivors. Participants repeatedly mentioned the video as a source of their attitude change, even before being asked to report why change occurred.

The second question asked, “What about the program led to this change?” This question attempted to determine what portion of the rape prevention program accounted for the attitude change they mentioned in their response to the previous question.

Major Theme 1: The Video of a Male-on-Male Rape

Nearly three fourths of respondents (17 out of 24) wrote that the video describing a male-on-male rape situation was the most powerful part of the program. Several individuals within this group noted the effects of how the video was processed—relating the male survivor’s experience to experiences commonly had by female survivors—as influential in changing their perspective on rape. Participants commented that the video “helped emphasize how real and graphic assault really is” and that “the portrayal of a man being raped, a situation I could understand, helped me understand the severity of the event.” An athlete noted that

The story of the male cop who was sexually assaulted remains in my mind to this day. Aside from its shocking and dramatic nature, it has stayed with me because it allowed me to put myself in the position of a sexually assaulted female. By far I feel it was the most memorable and thought-provoking element of the program.

Another athlete added,

The police drama where the police victim was sexually assaulted had the most impact on me. It forced me to place myself in the shoes of an assault victim and to really consider all of the emotional trauma that goes along with sexual abuse. I had never really done this before because as a guy, it is hard to relate to stories of rape and to fully comprehend the emotional baggage that goes along with the crime. This at least gave me a better perspective on the situation.

A fraternity member further noted that the video “set the stage to put you in the shoes of a victim and think about it from a somewhat new and uncomfortable position.” Another fraternity member noted that the video and the empowering tone of the program were influential:

The video had an incredible impact on me as well as the information provided afterwards. I really think the approach 1 in 4 [the group presenting the program] takes of teaching how to help rather than how not to be an offender made me look at this a lot differently. I now feel a responsibility to help rather than just the normal response of “I would never do that, so I don’t really need to listen.”

Minor Theme 1: The Statistics Provided Throughout the Program

Three participants identified statistics on the prevalence of sexual assault as most influential. An athlete noted,

The overwhelming statistics, especially the “one in four” number, shows how widespread sexual abuse is among college-age women. It is not something I had traditionally

thought of as being such an overwhelming problem. Previously, I had conceived of rape and sexual abuse as rare, but major occurrences. Now, I realized that it happens far more frequently.

Minor Theme 2: The Section on Confronting Rape Jokes and Changing Sexist Behaviors

Three participants noted the impact of information on how to change their own behavior, such as

The part of the program where they talked about what we can do in our everyday lives led to the change in how I treat the word “rape.” And I think the portion where we talked about common attitudes towards rape changed how I see a woman’s role in what happens.

Possible Causes, Consequences, and Relationships

The respondents clearly asserted that the video in this study was the cause of the most meaningful attitude change. Fraternity members and athletes made specific connections to how they better understood a rape experience after hearing about a situation in which a man was raped. A consequence of this connection is that they seemed to develop greater empathy toward female survivors. The tone of the program of empowering men to help instead of blaming them for the problem was also mentioned. The relationship between responses to the first and second question for participants affected most by the “helping a survivor” portion of the program was noteworthy in that their responses to the first question gave specific and accurately remembered strategies suggested by the program, such as focusing on listening to and believing the victim and avoiding further violence.

The third question asked, “Compared to *before* you participated in this program, have you *behaved* differently in any situation as a result of seeing the program; if so, in what way did you behave differently?”

Major Theme 1: No More Rape Jokes

Nearly half of the respondents noted that they were either more conscious of or refrained from telling rape jokes. Several added that they had confronted a rape joke told by others. An athlete reported,

Several times I have noticed myself being more conscious of the nature of jokes I was making, the language I was using, and the overall portrayal of rape that has come up in everyday conversation. For instance, if a friend makes a joke or comment about rape, I have said something along the lines of “That’s not cool” or “That’s not funny” in hopes that they will see they are furthering the problem in society of treating rape lightly.

Minor Theme 1: My Behavior Has Not Yet Changed, But I Would Act Differently in the Future

Five participants noted that they had not yet faced a situation in which their behavior would be different; however, they were quick to add that there were situations in which they would act differently. Most often, they mentioned that they would be better prepared to help survivors or that they would react differently to rape jokes.

Minor Theme 2: I Behaved Differently When I Helped a Sexual Assault Survivor

Three participants had helped survivors since seeing the program. Some reported that their first reaction was not to assault the perpetrator but rather to focus on the needs of the victim. Another reported increased knowledge about how to support a survivor. A third reported,

Actually one of my friends told me a few months after the program that a long time ago she had been sexually assaulted by some schoolmates and luckily she was able to get out in time before things got worse. Before the program I feel I would have just asked her questions and not thought too much about it. But since I did go to the program, I felt very sorry for my friend and tried to make her feel comfortable about it and tried to imagine how horrible it must have been for her.

A Minor Point Worth Mentioning

Two participants reported being “more protective of female friends” and that they were “more aware of sketchy situations and advise girls of possible threats and am just more aware of dangers for the girls I’m with.” These responses were of both interest and concern. On one hand, it can be helpful for people to advise their friends of how best to avoid rape situations. Given that the term *protective* was used in one case, this may reflect an overly paternalistic attitude. The portion of the second response, noting more awareness of the dangers for “girls” he is with, while using disempowering language toward women, may suggest that he uses more caution in his intimate encounters.

Possible Causes, Consequences, and Relationships

We found it noteworthy that 5 months after program participation, participants cited specific behaviors that changed as a consequence of seeing the program. The fact that the most common change mentioned was refraining from telling jokes about rape has several implications. First, not telling rape jokes might have been the easiest behavior change for men to admit on a survey. One can confidently assume that men would more readily admit to no longer laughing at rape jokes than to admit that they are less sexually

coercive with women, thereby admitting serious past transgressions. In Foubert and Cowell's (2004) focus group study, participants only mentioned potential changes in their intimate encounters after mentioning that they would react differently to rape jokes and only discussed such changes when probed. In the present study, written questions were open ended, did not specifically address sexually coercive behavior, and of course did not permit follow-up questions. Thus, we do not know whether the program led men to act differently in their intimate encounters with women. Telling fewer rape jokes and confronting them was particularly encouraging, especially in light of research showing that enjoyment of sexist humor correlates with rape myth acceptance, likelihood of forcing sex, and sexual aggression (Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998). We were encouraged that 13% of participants reported helping a survivor in the previous 5 months, accurately applying information taught to them in this program. A potential cause for not using this or other parts of the program was the lack of an opportunity to apply it.

The final question assessed what part of the program changed their behavior that they mentioned in the previous question. Most men reported that they were affected most either by the video shown in the program or by a portion of the program where peer educators encourage participants to confront rape jokes.

Major Theme 1: The Video Changed My Behavior

Eight (33%) of the participants attributed their behavior change to the video. A fraternity member noted how it opened the doors for him to hear the later messages of the program. Specifically, he stated,

The follow-up discussion and presentation was done at such an emotional time after the video and presenters, that making small suggestions about behavior such as that really take effect and get through to you.

Major Theme 2: The Section on Confronting Rape Jokes and Challenging Sexist Behaviors

Another third of respondents (8) identified the portion of the program where presenters discussed how men can help change social norms. These respondents applied a section that encourages intervening when someone tells a joke about or makes light of the term *rape*. An athlete noted that the portion about rape jokes taught him "how such statements grossly underestimate the destructive nature of rape, as well as make those who have been raped feel less important."

Minor Theme 1: The Program in General

Three participants could not point to any particular part as more or less responsible for their change in behavior. A man said, "Not quite sure. The program was just very effective in my mind, and I'm glad I participated in it."

Discussion

The most overwhelming result of the present study is the consistent, passionate, and detailed comments participants made regarding the changes in their attitudes and behavior that they attribute directly to seeing a videotape describing a male-on-male rape situation. Participants said this video helped them believe they could better understand what rape feels like, were able to apply this newfound understanding to what female survivors might feel, and reported connecting this newfound understanding to helping survivors and confronting rape jokes. As one participant mentioned, the video was not only able to help him understand what rape might feel like, but its power, combined with the nonblaming tone in which the program was presented, made him less defensive toward messages regarding how to change his behavior.

Despite the fact that it is a relatively short portion of the program, the section that challenges men to not laugh at and to confront jokes about rape appears effective. In response to an open-ended question, nearly half of the participants singled out the fact that they have either not laughed at or confronted a rape joke since seeing the program. This result suggests that the length of time spent on conveying a particular message does not necessarily correlate with impact. Rather, the right timing, context, and tone of the message can lead participants to report changes in their behavior.

Responses from two men who reported protective, paternalistic responses toward women had multiple implications. On one hand, their increased concern for their female friends was encouraging. Still, the disempowering language used where they felt “protective” of “girls” suggested the need for further education. In that vein, it may be useful for programmers to add material to their programs that encourages men to be involved and concerned for women they know in a way that empowers their friends as equals rather than as young and helpless.

Several comments made by men in the present study confirmed the validity of belief system theory and the ELM. For example, the most prevalent theme to our first question focused on how men reported a much deeper level of understanding about what rape is and how it might feel. This greater understanding men reported fits the emphasis in the ELM on presenting material in such a way that participants develop a deep sense of understanding about the topic. In a similar way, participants reported a deeper understanding of rape in their response to our second question, where they reported that the video describing a male-on-male rape got them to understand rape on a much deeper level than they had experienced before. Comments about behavior change reinforce that participants not only developed greater understanding of the material, but as the ELM suggests is important, they also saw it as relevant enough to them to change their behavior. With regard to belief system theory, responses confirmed the importance of approaching the audience through their existing self-perceptions rather than by targeting them with a label to which they do not subscribe. Specifically, participants noted that they saw the approach taken as effective given that it focused on teaching men how to help survivors rather than on how not to be offenders.

Limitations

Several limitations are apparent in this study and must be considered when interpreting the results. One limitation was the method of survey return. Participants were sent follow-up surveys by electronic mail and were given the option of either replying directly or returning the survey in an unmarked envelope through campus mail. The latter option provided an opportunity for complete anonymity; no participant chose this option. Because participants returned surveys that contained their e-mail address, lack of anonymity might have led some to not answer the questions fully or truthfully. For example, some might have changed their sexually coercive behavior but might not have wanted to admit this on a document containing identifying information. Future research should employ more rigorous safeguards for anonymity.

Other important limitations of the present study were that it took place on one campus with only 24 people, that a small proportion of those who could have attended the program came to participate, and, given its qualitative nature, that the study cannot be confidently generalized. Had all potential participants whose participation was requested attended, we could be more confident that responses were representative of the larger population from which they were taken. Given that few students attended and participated relative to their population, differences in those who did attend could have affected reported results.

Yet the focus of qualitative research is not generalizability but rather contextualization and description (Patton, 1990). The gathered results offer thick descriptions of participant reactions and provide information to extend our understanding of prior research (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Cowell, 2004) and to test in later quantitative research aimed at generalization of findings. Results of the present study do suggest causal relationships, particularly regarding the video, that help breathe life into prior findings and suggest promising future research directions. For example, further quantitative research could assess the specific behaviors where participants in the present study reported changes, such as confronting rape jokes and supporting survivors. Future research should also directly assess if changes in sexually coercive behavior occur.

A main goal of the present study was to shed light on previous quantitative findings that The Men's Program (Foubert, 2005) coincides with long-term attitude changes and declines in men's reported likelihood of raping. Specifically, we wanted to develop thoughtful hypotheses about the way in which the program led to attitude and behavior change and the types of attitudes or behaviors that change months after participants see the program. A benefit of the inductive analysis used in the present study is that we were able to uncover unanticipated outcomes that were free from the limitations of pre-conceived notions. Such a qualitative approach has its strengths in illuminating prior findings, understanding the nature of the individual human experience, and extrapolating that experience to other similar people. However, these strengths are limited in that qualitative methods are not intended to produce causal explanations or generalizations (Patton 1990). Thus, in interpreting the results of this study, we suggest that

the reader take our findings as thoughtful hypotheses and illuminations of the processes by which men's attitudes and behavior might change as a result of seeing The Men's Program. This interpretation should stop short of generalization.

Rather, qualitative research helps in the development of grounded theories about the phenomena under study. Although often criticized for a lack of external validity, one way to strengthen a qualitative research design is to have a sample that is representative of the population from which it was drawn. In the present study, participants were representative of the academic level of their peers. However, a limitation is that we do not know if those who attended focus groups were more motivated than their peers to provide feedback (either positive or negative) or whether those in attendance found the incentives more valuable than their peers for financial or other reasons. Our results should be considered in light of these uncertainties. Internal validity in qualitative research can be threatened largely by experimental mortality (Borg & Gall, 1989). In the case of this study, there was no mortality from the initial focus groups conducted by Foubert and Cowell (2004) to the open-ended questions analyzed for the present study. This aspect of our study supports its internal validity.

An additional limitation of this study is the fact that given its qualitative nature, there are no statistical tests of significance to support our interpretations. Rather, we have only our experience and judgment to report worthwhile findings. Both researchers have a great deal of experience working with college men and rape prevention but have natural limitations to their judgment that make the reporting of our findings imperfect.

An implication of this study is that the program should not be shown without the video used and the processing that followed. To do so would remove the portion that participants say caused the most change. The program evaluated in the present study showed evidence of generating increased understanding among men in traditionally high-risk groups of perpetration for their knowledge of what a rape experience might feel like. In addition, results suggest that the tone, format, and content (including the video used) set the stage for information provided at the end of the program that encouraged changes in behavior. Thus, results suggest that the program is successful in both generating empathy and in enhancing the likelihood of behavior change. Future research might consider adding additional components to the current program and/or showing a follow-up program to capitalize on participants' newfound understanding of the nature of a rape experience.

Ultimately, we found it noteworthy that so many men cited specific changes in their attitudes and their behavior. All participants in this study reported a change in either their attitudes or their behavior. Most participants reported both. These findings offer support for the program and the general approach taken in the intervention evaluated in this study. These findings also support the validity of belief system theory and the ELM, given that a program developed with their underlying principles in mind produced lasting attitude and behavior change and comments cited by participants confirming effective treatment of aspects such as their understanding and perceived relevance of the material.

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