

ENGAGING MEN PART 2: MEASURING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

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Abstract

There is an urgent need in higher education to research prevention education programming that educates and empowers young men to be a part of the solution to sexual violence on college campuses. In 2022, It's On Us released "[It's On Us Engaging Men: National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Research Report](#),"¹ which found that college men perceive most existing sexual assault prevention education trainings to be ineffective. This qualitative, interview-based study demonstrated a need for comprehensive training to give young men the tools necessary to be active bystanders in their communities.

To better understand what more effective sexual violence prevention training should look like on college and university campuses around the country, It's On Us conducted first-of-its-kind research to gather information from college men. In [Part 1](#), It's On Us led qualitative interviews with college men across the country. To take a deeper dive into the values and attitudes expressed in [Part 1](#), this follow-up quantitative research study Engaging Men Part 2: Measuring Attitudes and Behaviors (Part 2) collected a wider breadth of opinions from a larger audience. It's On Us worked with data collection firm YouGov to facilitate a 12-minute survey with 1,152 college men across the United States, using the findings from [Part 1](#) to inform the survey design. This report outlines the findings from Part 2.

To ensure a thorough examination of the survey responses, this study focuses on an exploration of the foundational understandings on sex and relationships of men in college through the Baseline Findings section. Across samples, the majority of respondents reported having strong relationships with women in their lives, with those identifying as LGBTQ+ the most likely to have these relationships. Additionally, while the majority of respondents were able to identify potentially problematic behaviors in a relationship, those involved in Greek life did so at a lower rate than their peers. Despite the legal requirement institutions have to provide sexual assault prevention training for all students attending their college or university,² many respondents did not recall receiving formal training on the topic while in school, and a concerning minority displayed a lack of understanding of when sexual assault can occur and who can be a survivor of sexual assault. Unfortunately, sexual assault topped the list of the respondents' biggest safety concerns on campus.

The patterns in the attitudes and behaviors outlined in the Baseline Findings focus on the following themes: consent, awareness, institutional trust, and a desire to learn.

The study found that even when men receive consent training, it does not prepare them to intervene in potentially harmful situations or unhealthy relationships before they become violent. The information young men are taught on sex and relationships varies, demonstrating a

¹ Zenteno, S., & Hauck, C. (n.d.). IT'S ON US ENGAGING MEN: NATIONAL CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS RESEARCH REPORT. https://www.itsonus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022_IOU_Campus-Attitudes-and-Behaviors-Research-Report-3.pdf

² S.47 - 113th Congress (2013-2014): - Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (2013, March 7). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/47>

need for sexual violence prevention programming that is inclusive of comprehensive sexual health and relationship education for students when they first arrive at college. The research found that a majority of men believe they should be expected to protect others from verbal or physical harm, but only a minority are being given the knowledge and skills to do so. Additionally, the research found respondents lack trust in various institutional departments' concerns about and responses to incidents of sexual assault on campus, illustrating a need for reforms in how college faculty, staff, and administrators publicly engage with students on this critical public health and safety issue.

This report includes recommendations for three groups It's On Us believes can make an impact on this topic: Students, Campus Administrators, and Policymakers. Students must normalize accountability within their friend groups and put their mental health first. Campus administrators and other leadership staff can advocate for additional bystander intervention training, and work to increase the effectiveness of consent trainings. Campus administrators should also communicate quickly and be transparent about the processes for responding to sexual assaults, and all crimes, in their communities. Policymakers should establish a uniform definition of sexual consent for institutions of higher education on a national level, require institutions of higher education to implement comprehensive and inclusive sexual health education, and advocate for additional funding for qualitative research that can better capture the unique stories of respondents.

Background

1 in 5 women, 1 in 13 men, and 1 in 4 trans or gender nonconforming students are sexually assaulted during their college experience. Sexual violence can affect a student's physical and mental health and can have negative impacts on a student's ability to socialize and develop professionally. Additionally, the ability to learn suffers when a student fears for their safety.³

Sexual violence is the most underreported crime on and off college campuses. Fewer than 10% of college survivors report their assault to their college, university, or law enforcement. With prevalence rates this high and reporting rates so low, it is critical to educate and engage all members of a campus community to create large-scale attitude, behavior, and culture change.

Research indicates that the vast majority of sexual assaults on campus – more than 90% – are committed by only 5-6% of male students who are repeat offenders,⁴ meaning the majority of college men are not committing acts of sexual violence. However, these non-violent young men have historically been left out of conversations surrounding sexual assault prevention⁵ and are often regarded as part of the problem.

³ Lacoë, J. (2016). Too Scared to Learn? The Academic Consequences of Feeling Unsafe in the Classroom. *Urban Education*, 55(10), 004208591667405. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916674059>

⁴ Lisak, David, and Miller, Paul M. (2002) Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists https://time.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/repeat_rape.pdf

⁵ Foubert, John D., Clark-Taylor, Angela., and Wall, Andrew F. (2019) Is Campus Rape Primarily a Serial or One-Time Problem? Evidence From a Multicampus Study. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1077801219833820?journalCode=vawa>

In [Part 1](#) of this research, It's On Us found that college men are not aware of the extent of sexual violence on campus and many do not see how it affects them. The findings of [Part 1](#), a qualitative study that consisted of 20 hour-long interviews with college men representing a diverse sample of institution types and geographic locations, were used to inform the design of the survey that resulted in the findings outlined in this report. It's On Us conducted this study Engaging Men Part 2: Measuring Attitudes and Behaviors (Part 2) to collect a wider set of opinions from a larger sample of students.

Founded in 2014 as a White House initiative by President Obama and then-Vice President Biden, It's On Us is now an initiative of Civic Nation, a nonprofit ecosystem for high-impact organizing and education initiatives working to build a more inclusive, equitable America. It's On Us's mission is to build the movement to combat campus sexual assault by engaging all students, with an emphasis on young men, in prevention education, and activating the largest student organizing program of its kind. For more information on It's On Us, please visit itsonus.org.

Overview

In March of 2013, Congress enacted The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) which included the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act). Under Campus SaVE, institutions are required to provide all of their enrolled students with the following education on an annual basis: primary prevention programming, consent education programming, training on safe and positive options for bystander intervention, information on recognizing the warning signs of abusive behavior, and risk reduction education.

Although prevention training requirements exist, there is no nationally recognized program that incorporates evidence-based best practices on ways colleges and universities can implement prevention training that will be effective for their students.

In 2022, It's On Us conducted [Part 1](#) of this research to develop a deeper understanding of the attitudes and behaviors college men have on the prevention of sexual violence in their campus communities. [Part 1](#) found that college men believe current training programs are ineffective, boring, and not reflective of their campus experience or environment. The study also highlighted that building awareness of campus sexual assault among young men requires more than just training – they need non-male friends and role models in order to see female peers as people, rather than objects. Finally, [Part 1](#) found that the men in the study viewed themselves as “good people” and expressed a desire to help others avoid committing or experiencing sexual assault, but that existing prevention programs do not equip them with the skills to do so.

To better understand the needs and perceptions of men in athletic communities, It's On Us conducted a follow-up research study, “[Prevention is a Team Sport: Empowering Male Student Athletes in Your Game Plan for Campus Sexual Assault Prevention](#)” ([Prevention is a Team Sport](#)),⁶ to explore how to uniquely engage male college athletes in sexual assault prevention education.

⁶ Zenteno, S. (n.d.). Prevention is a Team Sport: Empowering Male Student Athletes in Your Game Plan for Campus Sexual Assault Prevention.

https://www.itsonus.org/wp-content/uploads/ItsOnUs_PreventionIsATeamSport_Report_2023.pdf

It's On Us conducted 38 focus group sessions with 710 male athletes from Division I, Division II, Division III, community/junior college (JUCO), and Club Sports teams nationwide. This study found that an athlete's initial experience learning about sex had a lasting impact on their attitudes and behaviors towards sex, consent, relationships, and gender norms. Second, the study confirmed the findings of [Part 1](#) that male athletes find existing awareness and prevention education programs conducted by their institutions to be ineffective.

Engaging Men Part 2: Measuring Attitudes and Behaviors was conducted to explore whether the opinions of a large and diverse group of college men would validate the findings of [Part 1](#). Communities surveyed in Part 2 include men of color, men in the LGBTQ+ community, men at community colleges (CC), men who participate in NCAA, JC/NAIA, and club/intramural athletic programs, and men who participate in Greek life.

Methodology

Survey Methodology

It's On Us partnered with YouGov to design and field a quantitative survey targeting college men to gauge their views on sexual assault and domestic violence with the goal of measuring their prior prevention education, current attitudes, and future aspirations to do and learn more about these complicated and difficult issues.

The survey was designed to take approximately 12 minutes, covering these topics in as much detail as the time allowed. The full survey questionnaire is available in the *Appendix*. It was deployed online across YouGov's in-house panel and multiple other vendor panels contracted through YouGov in order to achieve a representative sample of 18-24 year old male-identifying⁷ college students.

Three groups were oversampled in order to achieve sufficient representation to allow It's On Us to draw meaningful conclusions: people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and community college students. In this survey, a respondent is identified as a person of color (POC) based on their response to a question about race, as well as a question about Spanish, Latino, or Hispanic origin or descent, classifying anyone who reported a race other than "White" or self-identified as "Hispanic" as a member of the POC sample. As with the POC sample, respondents are identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community based on their responses to two questions: 1) identifying as gay, bisexual, or other on the sexual orientation question; or 2) identifying as transgender when asked. For the final sample, respondents were asked, "With regard to school, are you currently enrolled at any of the following?," with anyone responding "2-year or junior college or community college" identified as a "community college student (CC)."

⁷ In this research, the use of male is inclusive of transgender individuals who self-identify as male. While 95.9% of the sample did not identify as transgender, 2.0% identified as transgender (with 2.1% selecting "prefer not to say").

Representativeness for this population is based on data from the 2021 CPS School Enrollment Supplement, voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey. Potential respondents were screened prior to survey administration to ensure they qualified as the population of interest,⁸ and were explicitly asked for their consent to participate in this research. Responses were also monitored for quality, checking for inattention (via completion time and attention checks) and for the possibility of bots (using free-form responses and attention checks).

Heartland IRB granted IRB approval for this study on April 20, 2023, which can be viewed in the *Appendix*. The survey was in the field from April 25, 2023 to June 6, 2023. In order to oversample subgroups of interest and due to the difficulty in reaching this age group, the survey stayed in the field for a longer time than is typical.

Potential COVID Impact

The COVID pandemic had drastic effects on the college experience for many, if not all, of the students included in this study. Students may have had a portion of their college experience disrupted, conducted online, or under strict social distancing restrictions that affected their engagement with their larger campus community. They may even have deferred their enrollment at the peak of the pandemic.⁹ Additionally, they may have received sexual assault awareness training online, rather than in person. Since the effect of the pandemic on higher education is just starting to be studied¹⁰ but sexual assault on college campuses continues to be a problem that must be addressed immediately, this research was commissioned knowing that our collective understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the college experience continues to grow and evolve.

Understanding what results might be attributable to the pandemic, as detected by class year, state, and other demographics of the respondents, was a specific focus throughout the analysis of this data. The detected impacts were few, but are noted throughout. Due to the

⁸ For the LGBTQ+ oversample, the methodology differed slightly than what was implemented for the rest of the sampling. The sampling process for this subgroup involved sampling a universe of nationally representative men who are currently enrolled in a college or university in the United States and are between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, capturing responses based on key demographic variables to ensure we had a representative sample. Then, respondents who indicated they were not members of the LGBTQ+ community based on a standard sexuality question and transgender self-identification were screened out. For respondents who screened out, their demographic data was kept. All nationally representative respondents were weighted according to education, race, voter registration status, presidential vote, and US Census region based on the 2021 CPS School Enrollment Supplement, voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey, as well as 2020 Presidential vote. Then, the respondents who indicated they were not members of the LGBTQ+ community were dropped and weights were recentered.

⁹ Christian Rodriguez, "College interrupted: Many students chose to take time off instead of remote learning during the coronavirus pandemic," *CNBC*, published June 9, 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/09/many-college-students-chose-time-off-over-remote-learning-during-covid.html> on July 10, 2023.

¹⁰ Kasia Kovacs, "The Pandemic's Impact on College Enrollment," *Best Colleges*, published May 6, 2022. Accessed at: <https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/covid19-impact-on-college-enrollment/> on July 10, 2023.

widespread impact of the pandemic and the attention paid to creating a robust, representative sample, the conclusions of this research should hold despite the universal environmental impact on the population of interest.

Sample

On behalf of It's On Us, YouGov surveyed 1,152 male-identifying college students ages 18-24 between the months of April and June 2023. Because of the desire to gain insights not just about male college students, but also about specific subgroups within that population, YouGov pursued oversamples for respondents identifying as people of color (POC), members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and ace (LGBTQ+) community, and community college (CC) attendees. These subgroups were selected for oversampling through a combination of identified need for research on these populations and the feasibility of achieving a sufficient sample through the survey methodology utilized.

1,152 overall respondents <i>(male-identifying college students, ages 18-24)</i>		
644 POC respondents	159 LGBTQ+ respondents	250 community college respondents

While the overall margin of error for the sample was +/- 3.5 percent, the subgroup oversamples have larger margins of error due to smaller sample sizes. As the largest oversample, the margin of error for POC respondents was +/- 4.3 percent. With smaller sample sizes for both LGBTQ+ and community college respondents, those margins of error were larger: +/- 8.7 percent for LGBTQ+ respondents and +/- 6.9 percent for community college respondents. While these higher margins of error indicate that caution should be exercised when making conclusions about these subgroups, there are still significant learnings for these subgroups in this research.

In addition to contextualizing the insights of this work with the margin of error, weighting ensures that all conclusions accurately reflect what is known of the population itself. It's On Us and YouGov weighted the sample according to education, race, voter registration status, presidential vote, U.S. Census region (based on the 2021 CPS School Enrollment Supplement), voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey.¹¹ These weights help analyze the survey results by providing the most representative findings possible for both the base sample and the subgroup oversamples.

¹¹ While this survey is not political in nature, it is important for the sample to be balanced to the population with regard to voter registration status and turnout (in the 2020 election), as well as political ideology (as measured by the respondents' report of who they voted for in the presidential race in 2020, if eligible to vote).

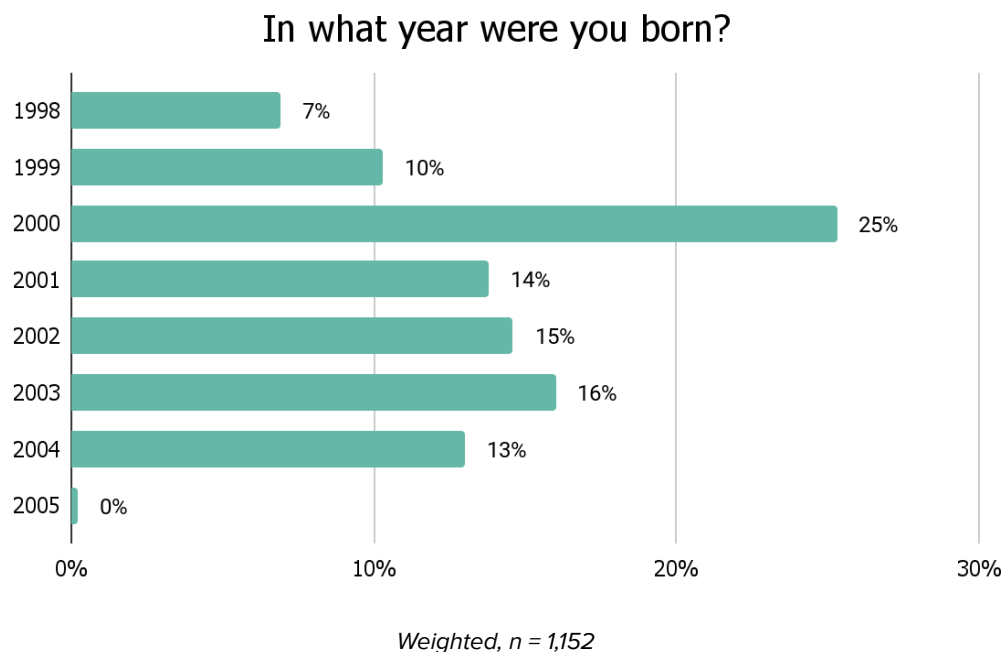
Overview of Respondent Demographics

Before diving into the findings, it is helpful to further contextualize the nature of the survey sample by exploring the demographics of the respondents.

Age

The population for this study was limited to male-identifying college students ages 18-24. Potential participants were screened to ensure that they satisfied that criteria, and they were additionally asked to provide their birth year to offer more granularity into the age of the participants. It is not possible to extrapolate birth year into age due to the timing of survey fielding.

Chart 1: Respondent Birth Year



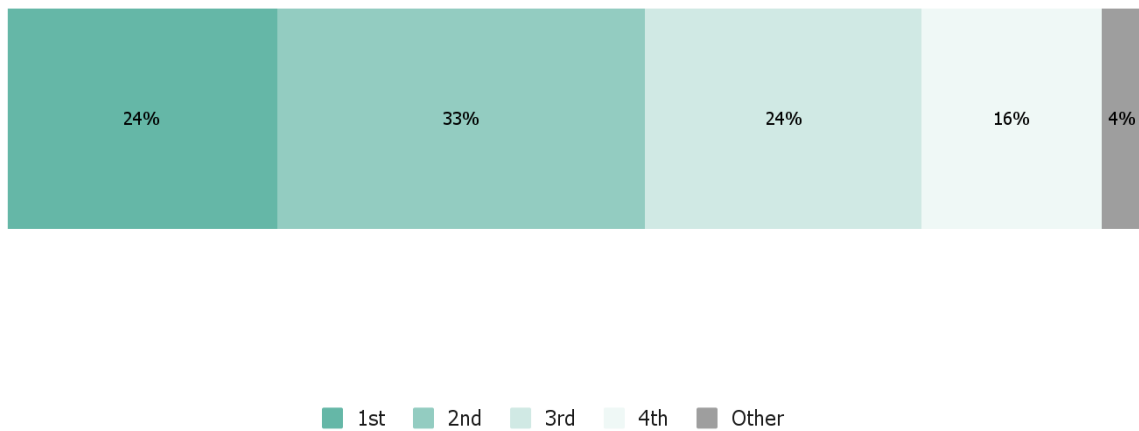
Class Year

Second-year students were the largest group in the sample, which could be due to the impact of COVID discussed above, as some students deferred their enrollment at the height of the pandemic, leading to a larger first year class size in Fall 2021. It could also be partially attributed to the timing of the survey administration falling right at the end of the year for many students, which may have led to them reporting themselves as second-years despite having just finished their first years. This phenomenon may be more pronounced with first-year students having a desire to no longer be perceived as a first-year or “freshman.” In addition, the youngest

men in the sample were the hardest to reach, with more of them taking the survey later in the administration window.

Chart 2: Respondent Class Year

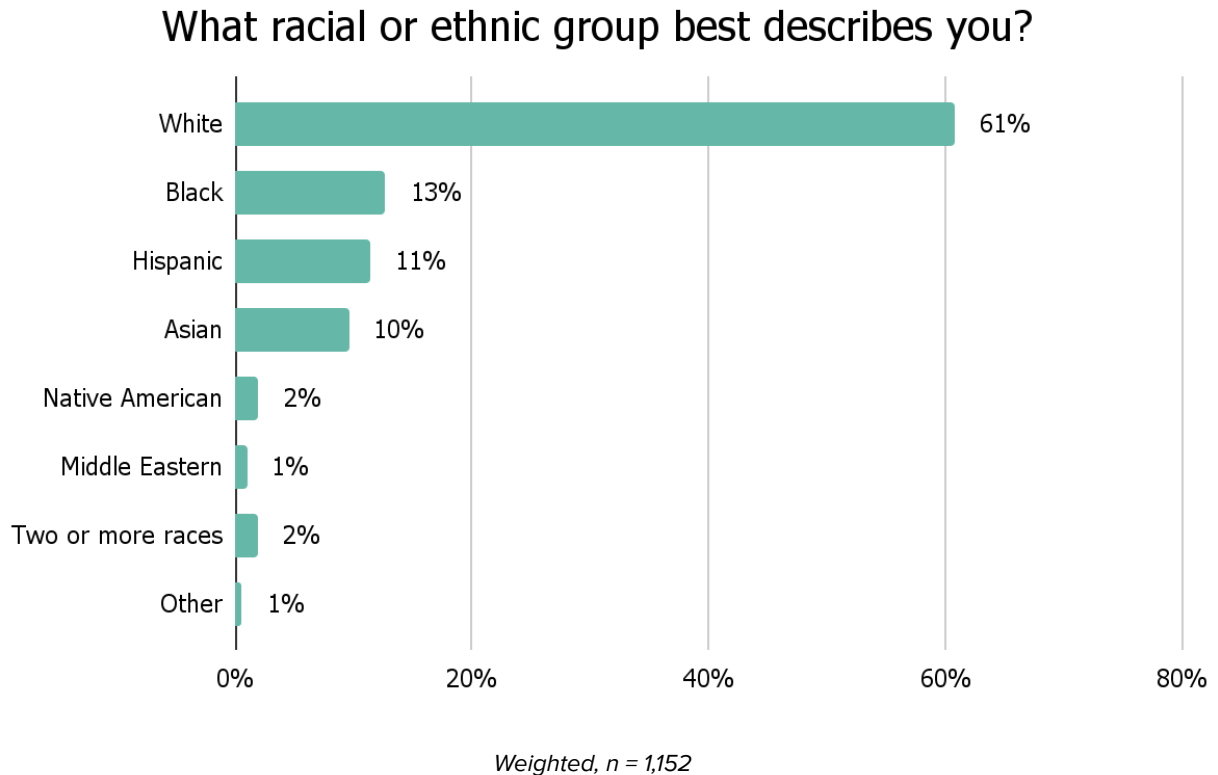
What year are you currently enrolled in at college or university?



Weighted, n = 931

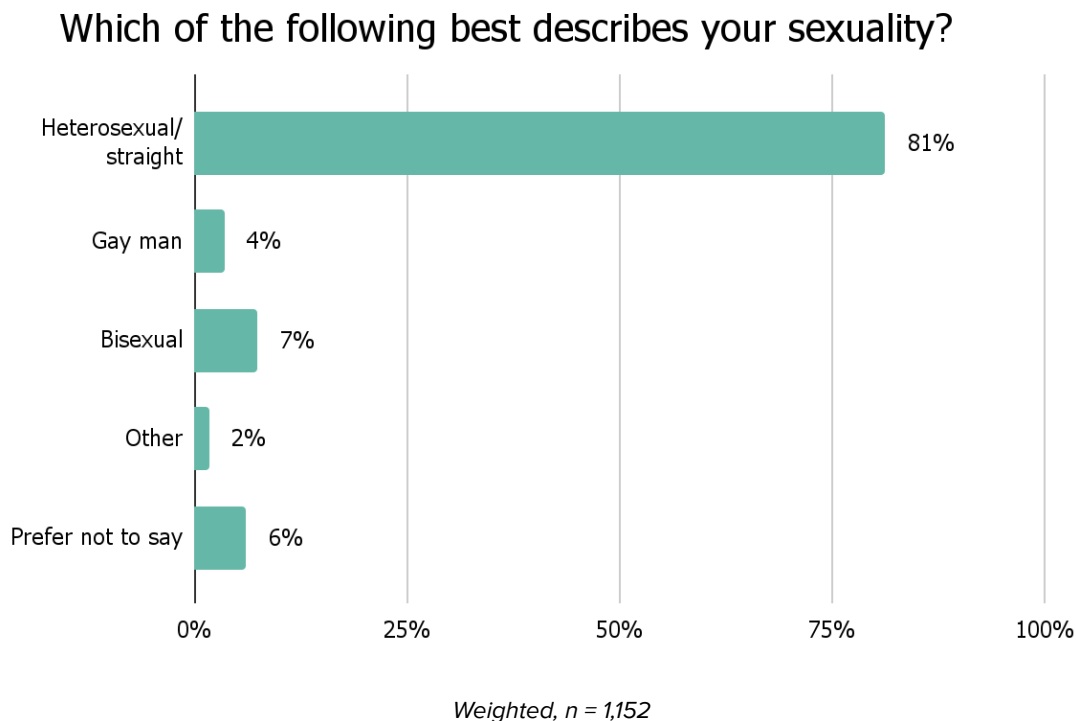
Race

As discussed above, ensuring the sampling strategy yielded enough respondents identifying as a person of color (POC) was a key criteria for this research. In addition to the identification of respondents for the POC oversample, the survey also offered more insight into the overall racial and ethnic makeup of the sample, as shown in Chart 3. The weighting system included race to ensure the sample reflected the population, and the survey weighting informed the distribution. While predominantly white, there was representation across races, and the oversampling efforts helped focus on the POC community specifically.

Chart 3: Respondent Race/Ethnicity

Sexual Orientation

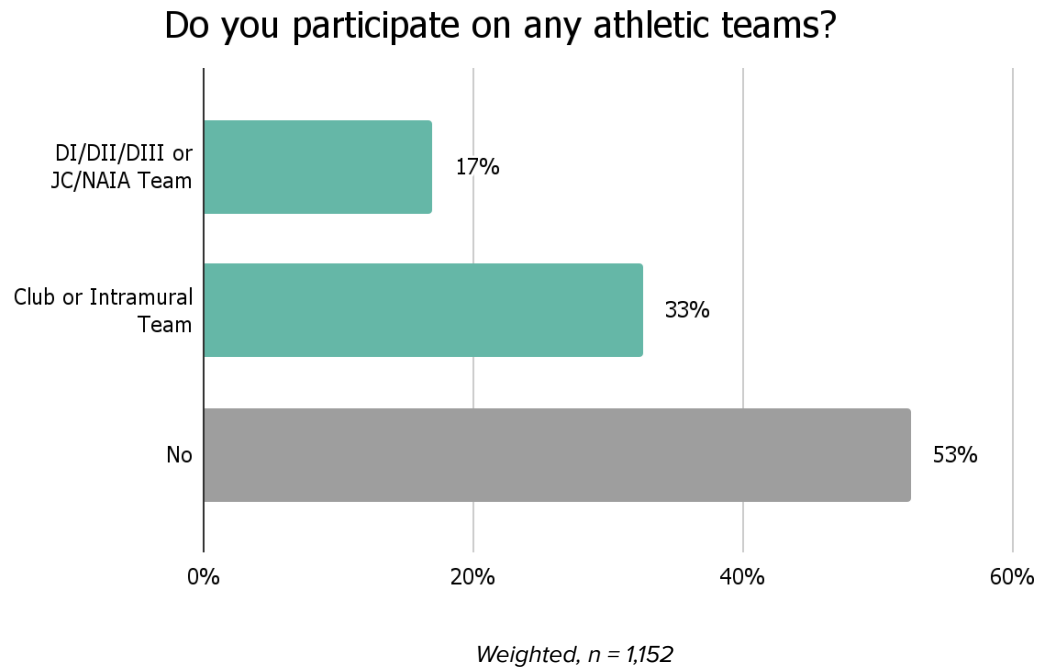
As with race, ensuring that the sample had enough respondents identifying as members of the LGBTQ+ community was crucial to this research. The survey design also provided the opportunity for a nuanced understanding of the data in regard to respondent sexual orientation, as shown in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Respondent Sexual Orientation

Involvement in Athletics

Given It's On Us's past research into the specific needs of male athletes and the importance of this group to sexual assault prevention, it is crucial to examine the survey results from the lens of athletes versus non-athletes. While the sampling frame was not explicitly designed to achieve a certain number of athletes, the sample contains enough athletes (17% identified themselves as NCAA or Junior College [JC]/NAIA athletes, as shown in Chart 5) to analyze the data along these lines, including delineation between DI/DII/DIII or JC/NAIA and club/intramural athletes. For context, in 2022, only 4.8% of students across the country participated in NCAA teams.¹² While this statistic does not include JC/NAIA athletes, there is reason to believe that the proportion of athletes in this study is higher than the national average. As noted, this feature of the sample provides the opportunity to examine athletes in comparison to non-athletes, but also raises a question about the representativeness of the sample in this regard.

¹² NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report. (n.d.). https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/research/sportpart/2022RES_SportSponsorshipParticipationRatesReport.pdf

Chart 5: Respondent Participation on Athletic Teams

Involvement in Greek Life

Similar to athletes, students involved in Greek life constitute an important population for sexual assault prevention, and this group is intentionally included in the analysis. Respondents were asked about membership in a fraternity or sorority to identify this group and to examine how the experiences of those who participate in Greek life differ from those who do not.

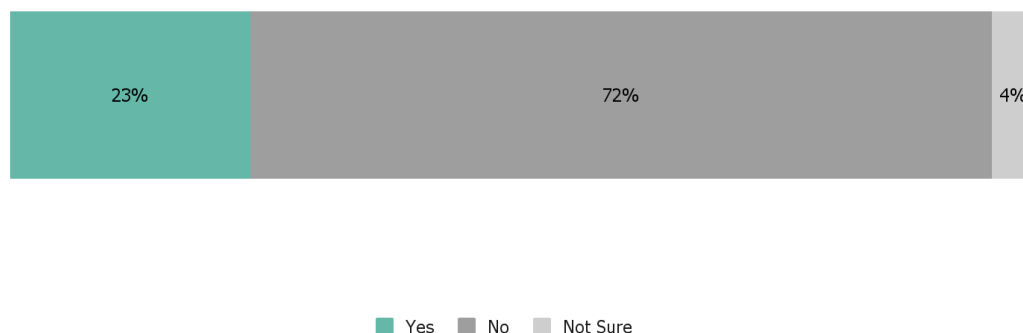
According to research from the University of Oregon, students who participate in Greek life while in college are at a higher risk of sexual violence due to an environment of sexual exploitation.¹³ Nationally, many fraternities and sororities provide additional sexual assault prevention training and education to their members, which creates an opportunity to compare the attitudes of those involved in Greek life versus those who are not. This comparison can provide insight about the impact of these specific interventions.

In the sample, 23.4% of respondents indicated that they were a part of their school's Greek life, as seen in Chart 6 below.

¹³ Barnes, M. L., Adams-Clark, A., Rosenthal, M. N., Smith, C. P., & Freyd, J. J. (2021). Pledged into Harm: Sorority and Fraternity Members Face Increased Risk of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment. *Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.23860/dignity.2021.06.01.09>

Chart 6: Respondent Participation in Greek Life

Are you a member of a Fraternity or a Sorority?



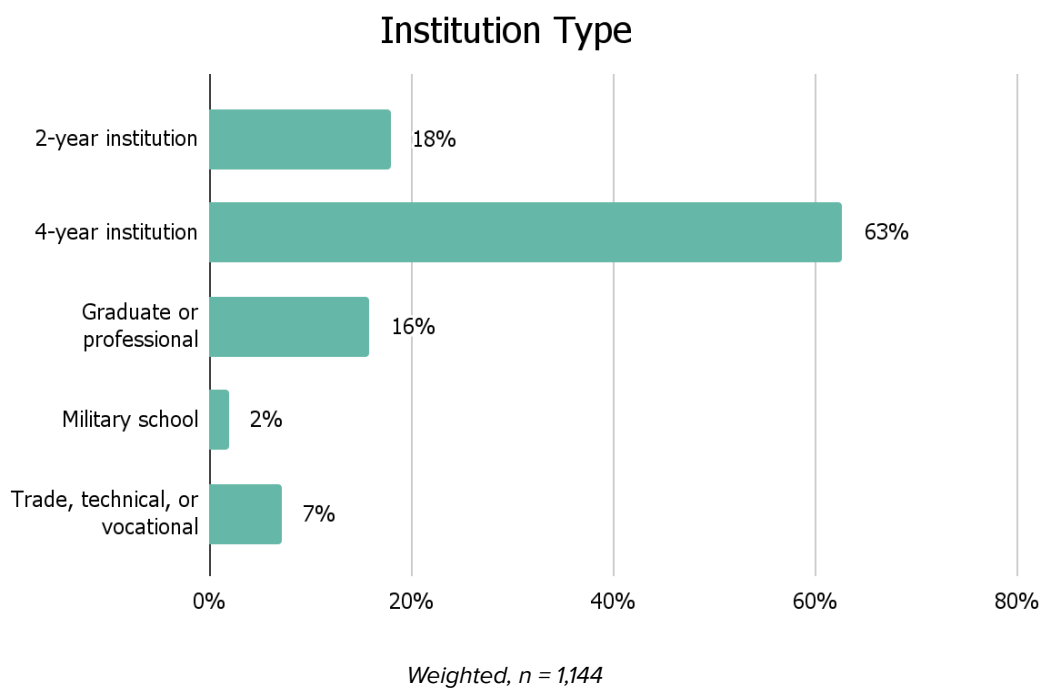
Weighted, n = 1,150

Participation in Greek life varies widely by institution, and a reliable estimate of the overall participation of the population of college men is not available. To allow for exploration of how campuses with substantial Greek life may differ from those without this element, respondents were also asked to identify if their campus communities had a large Greek life presence.

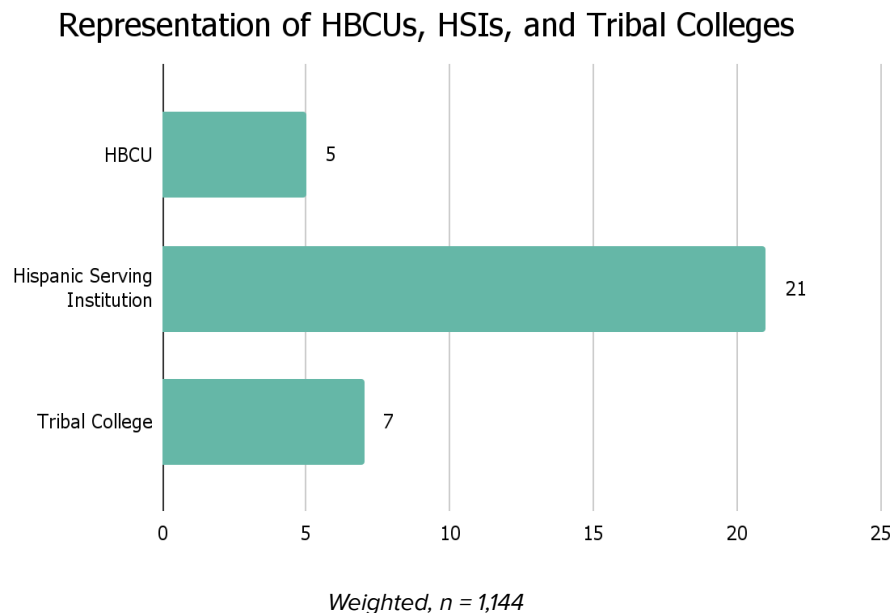
Overview of Institution Attributes

In addition to understanding the characteristics of the individual participants, it is also important to examine the attributes of the institutions the respondents attended. Rather than presenting respondents with a series of discrete questions about the institution that they attended at the time of the survey, the survey presented respondents with a list of attributes that could apply to their institutions, such as institution type (2-year, 4-year, etc.), if it was a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), the presence of Greek life, and if the campus was rural or urban. This gave respondents the flexibility to describe their institution quickly without compromising the anonymity of the survey.

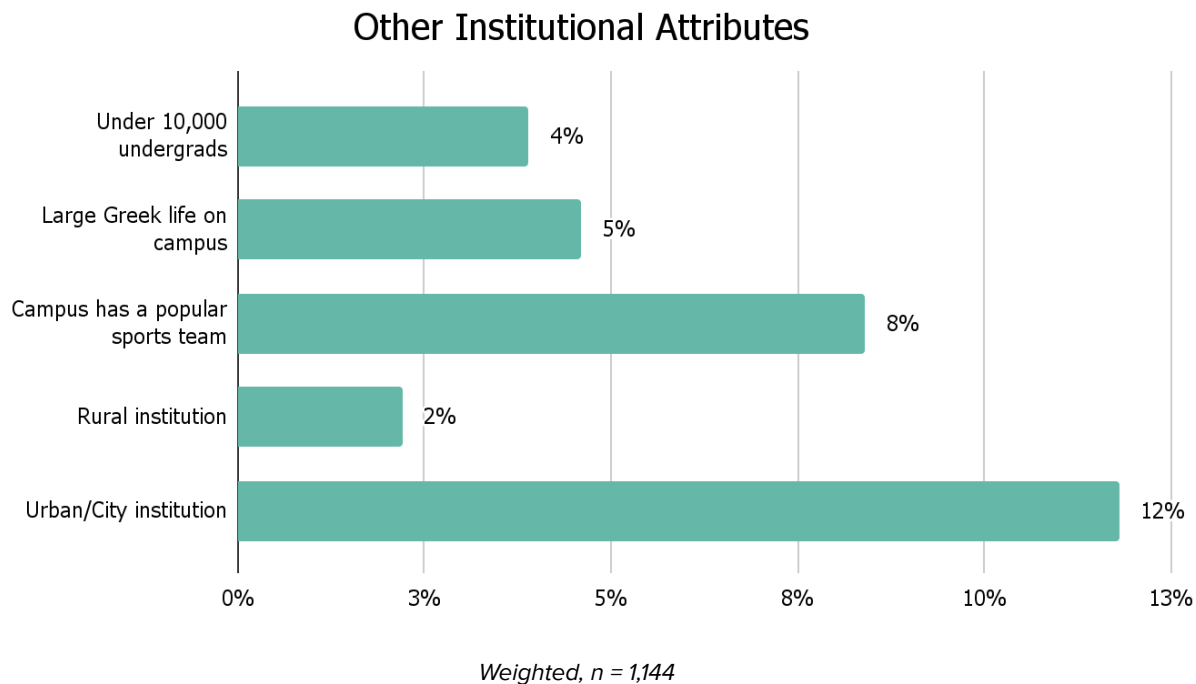
While the majority of respondents attend 4-year institutions, there is also representation of 2-year institutions, graduate/professional programs, military schools, and trade/technical/vocational programs. Having respondents from this variety of institution types is reflective of the representative nature of a sample of male-identifying college students between the ages of 18 and 24.

Chart 7: Institution Type

There is representation of HBCUs, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges in the sample, as reported by the respondents and displayed in Chart 8. While more representation of these types of institutions would have been ideal, given the challenges in surveying this age group and the desire for the sample to be nationally representative of the population of male-identifying college students ages 18-24, it was not possible to include more attendees of these institutions. As will be discussed elsewhere in this report, it is crucial that future research efforts seek to further understand the experience and needs of students at these institutions.

Chart 8: Representation of HBCUs, HSIs, and Tribal Colleges

In addition to the representation of various institution types, it is also important to consider other attributes that might have informed the experiences of the survey's respondents. For example, the experience of a student at a small institution without Greek life is likely to be very different from that of a student at a large institution with substantial Greek life and a popular sports team. While this data was self-reported and likely not fully reflective of how all of the institutions would be formally categorized, it provided some insight into these differing experiences.

Chart 9: Other Institutional Attributes

Findings

Baseline Findings

Since the population of male-identifying college students has not been previously examined with the goal of understanding student needs around sexual assault prevention education, the presentation of the findings begins with offering a baseline understanding of this group's perceptions of relationships, their understanding of sexual assault, and their awareness of and concern for this pervasive problem in their campus communities. Just as it was important to understand the demographics of the sample and the institutions represented, exploring this group's foundational understanding of the issues at hand allows for more thoughtful and nuanced examination of the substantive findings around consent, awareness, institutional support and resources, and the desire to learn (and do) more.

Relationships

Past research by It's On Us found a connection between the relationships young men have and their subsequent views on sexual assault and its prevention.¹⁴ Specifically, this work determined that the more comfortable that young men are discussing relationships with others and the more connections they have with women, the more likely they are to have a strong understanding of healthy relationships and sexual assault.

Comfort Level

Exploring young men's comfort level with discussing relationships began with a general question:

When it comes to the subject of dating, relationships, and sex, some people are comfortable discussing these subjects with others, while some people are not. If you had to choose, would you say...

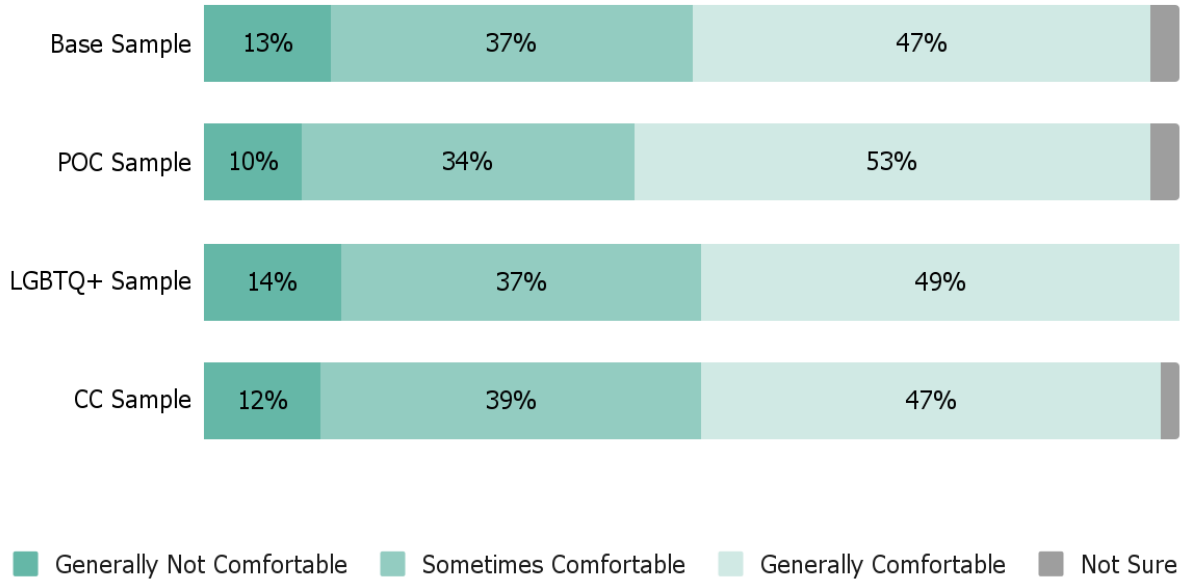
- I am generally not comfortable discussing subjects like that with others*
- I am sometimes comfortable discussing subjects like that with others, but only under specific circumstances*
- I am generally comfortable discussing subjects like that with others*
- Not sure*

Most respondents (85% in the base sample) were generally or sometimes comfortable discussing these subjects with others. The POC sample shows slightly higher levels of being generally comfortable, but the combination of generally and sometimes comfortable for this sample is about the same as the base sample (86%). While this may provide some evidence of this subgroup differing from the base and the other groups, it could also be attributed to the margin of error. As shown in Chart 11, respondents affiliated with Greek life were generally more comfortable discussing relationships with others.

¹⁴ For more detail, please review: [It's On Us Engaging Men: National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Research Report](#), and [Prevention is a Team Sport: Empowering Male Student Athletes in Your Game Plan for Campus Sexual Assault Prevention](#).

Chart 10: Comfort Level Discussing Relationships with Others

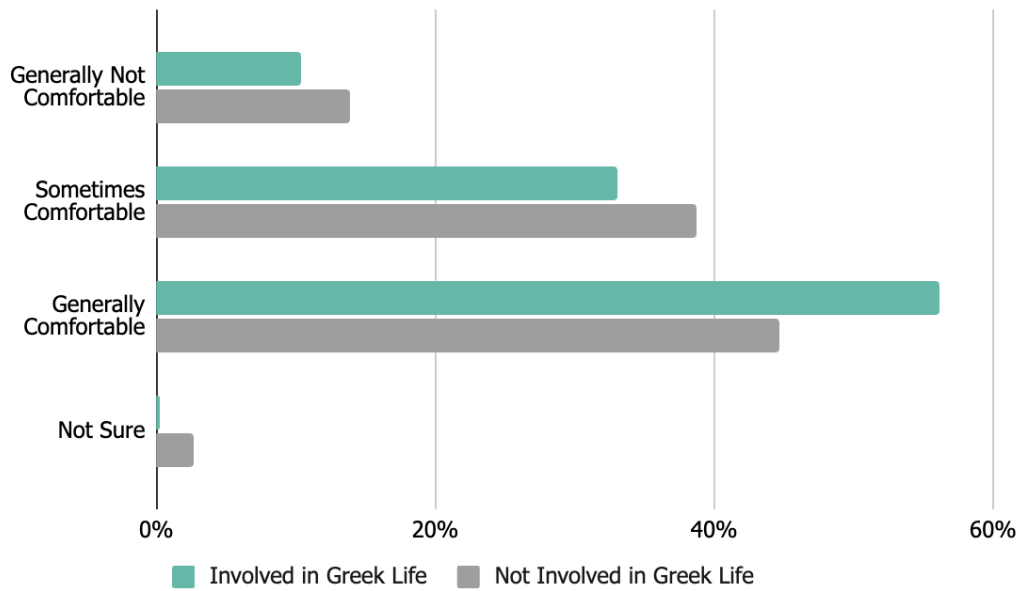
Comfort Level Discussing Relationships with Others



Weighted

Chart 11: Comfort Level Discussing Relationships with Others by Involvement in Greek Life

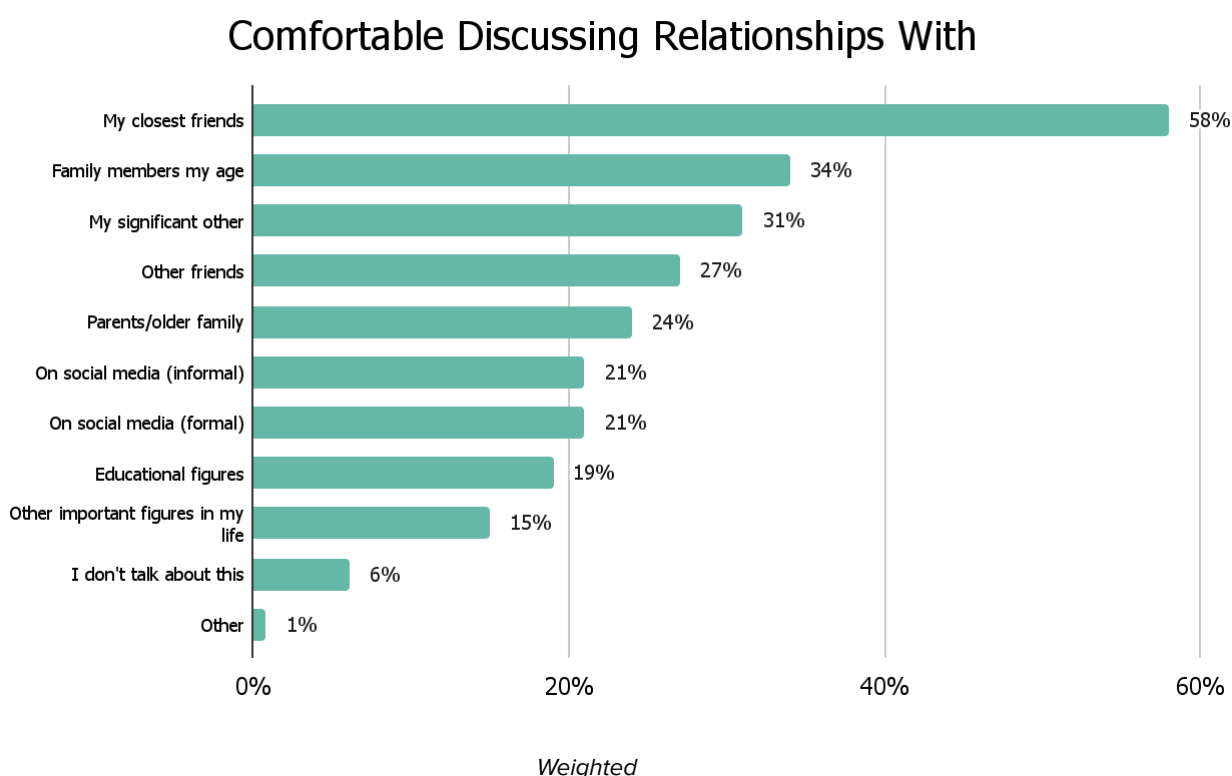
Comfort Level Discussing Relationships with Others by Involvement in Greek Life



Weighted

The questionnaire went on to ask respondents about the people with whom they talk about dating, relationships, and sex, offering them the opportunity to select all that applied. The majority of respondents reported that these conversations occurred with their closest friends (58%), with about a third (34%) also identifying family members their age, like siblings or cousins. Using the subgroup lens, LGBTQ+ respondents overwhelmingly reported (70%) that these conversations occur with their closest friends. It is important to note that this subgroup also seemed to have these conversations with more people in their lives: 43% selected “my significant other;” 39% chose “family members my age, like siblings or cousins;” and 36% selected “parents/older family,” all at higher rates than observed in the sample overall.

Chart 12: With Whom Do You Discuss Relationships with Others?



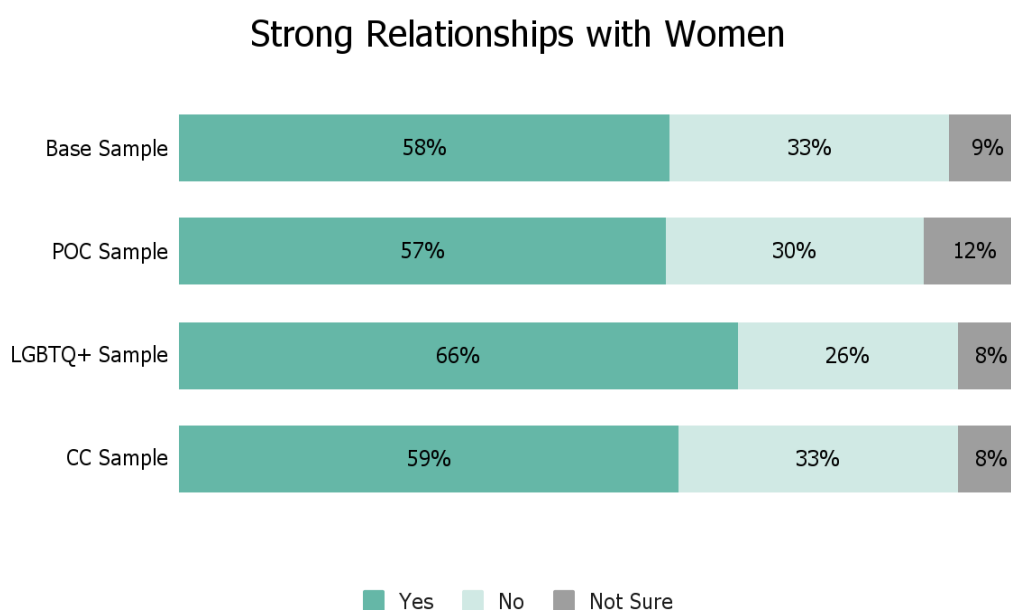
Overall, only 21% of respondents noted discussing these topics on social media (informally or formally¹⁵). For those affiliated with Greek life, the incidence was 36% informally and 32% formally, as compared to 17% and 18%, respectively, for respondents who did not participate in Greek life. While this was not the most popular option selected for this subgroup, (as discussed for the groups above, “my closest friends” remained the most popular option for those in Greek life), it is notable that social media played a larger role as a venue for these conversations for this population than for others.

¹⁵ “On social media (informal)” is shorthand for those selecting the option of “on social media, including social media venues not specifically dedicated to these subjects,” while the formal option indicates selection of “on social media, specifically social media venues specifically dedicated to these subjects.”

Relationships with Women

Past work from It's On Us also uncovered that having strong relationships with women as another key factor in college men's understanding of sexual assault and its prevention.¹⁶ This quantitative study presents the opportunity to examine this phenomenon using a representative sample of male-identifying college students. As shown in Chart 13, the majority of respondents (58%) affirmed that they have strong relationships with women peers or mentors in their lives. Interestingly, LGBTQ+ respondents responded "yes" at a much higher level (66%). While the affirmative responses are important, examination of those who replied that they did not have these relationships will also be significant in subsequent analysis below.

Chart 13: Strong Relationships with Women



Weighted

Understanding of Unhealthy Relationships

In [Prevention is a Team Sport](#), It's On Us discovered a troubling inability of many male college athletes to identify unhealthy relationship behaviors, particularly when the victim of the unhealthy behaviors identified as male. Given the complexity of measuring respondents' understanding of unhealthy relationship behaviors in a brief online survey compared to prior longer-form, qualitative research, respondents were presented with a series of scenarios, and they could indicate if they thought the person's behavior was a bad sign or not. The question framing was as follows:

¹⁶ For more detail, please review: [It's On Us Engaging Men: National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Research Report](#), and [Prevention is a Team Sport: Empowering Male Student Athletes in Your Game Plan for Campus Sexual Assault Prevention](#).

Next, you will see scenarios where one partner in a romantic relationship exhibits behavior that some people might consider “red flags” or a bad sign for a relationship becoming abusive, but that others might consider standard behavior in a relationship. For each of those, please say whether you consider the behavior is a bad sign that a relationship is becoming abusive.

The scenarios varied in the degree to which and manner in which the behavior was problematic, ranging from failing to communicate to tracking the other person’s devices to physically testing the other’s boundaries.

The below quote from a male athlete included in [Prevention is a Team Sport](#) highlights the confusion expressed by some participants around “red flags”:

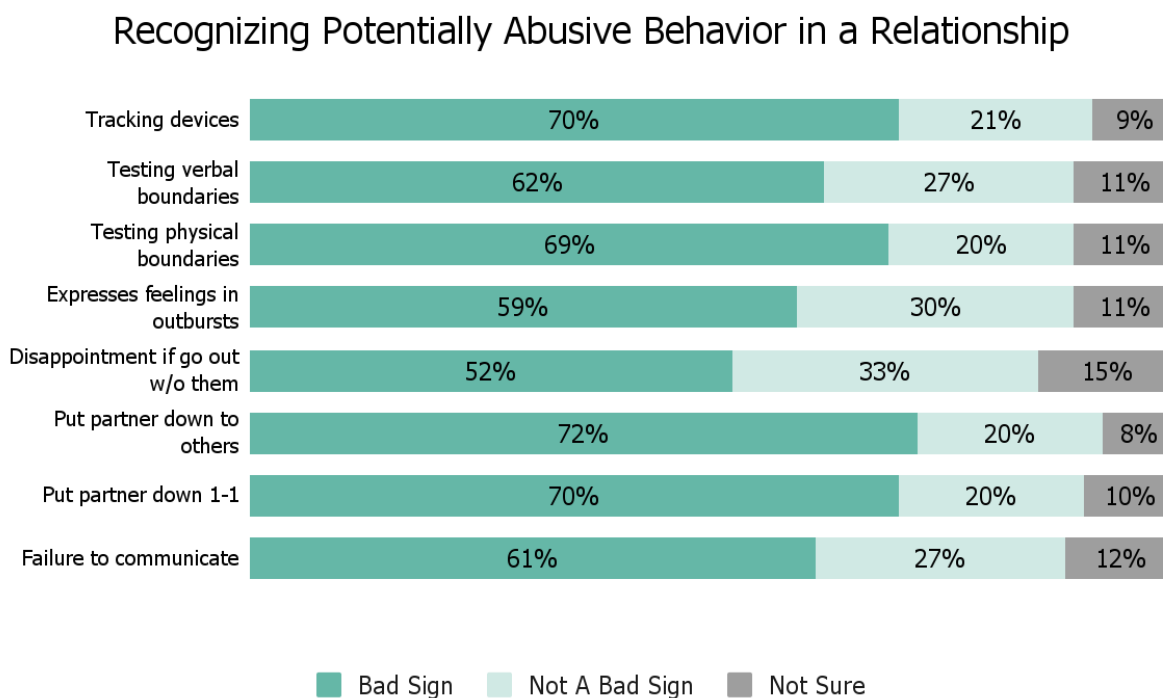
“Yeah. Because in an instance saying like...you with a girl and she like at first like you trying to talk to touch her and stuff, and she’s saying no, but letting you do it - is that still a case of sexual assault? Like saying ‘no, no, chill,’ but she’s still letting you touch her and stuff like that.”

— Male Athlete¹⁷

While these scenarios were hypothetical, phrased as being about “Person A” and “Person B,” they reflect the desire to ground respondent attitudes in actual, real-life situations, opposed to completely hypothetical ideals.

As shown in Chart 14, the majority of respondents agreed that all of the scenarios indicated a bad sign about the behavior of Person A towards Person B. While a majority consistently identified the behaviors as problematic, variations occurred across the scenarios.

¹⁷ [Prevention is a Team Sport](#), Page 15.

Chart 14: Recognizing Indications of Potentially Abusive Behavior in a Relationship

Weighted

Digging into the data by subgroup in Chart 15, both POC respondents and those identifying as LGBTQ+ were more likely to accurately identify attributes of unhealthy relationships. On the other side, as shown in Chart 16, while a majority of those in Greek life still saw these behaviors as problematic, they did so at lower rates than their peers in all but one scenario (for disappointment if Person B goes out without Person A, 59% of respondents participating in Greek life identified this as a bad sign, while only 51% of those not claiming Greek life affiliation did so). As shown in Chart 17, men participating in athletics also struggled with identifying problematic behaviors as compared to the base sample, although not always to the degree of participants in Greek life.

Chart 15: Recognizing Indications of Potentially Abusive Behavior in a Relationship

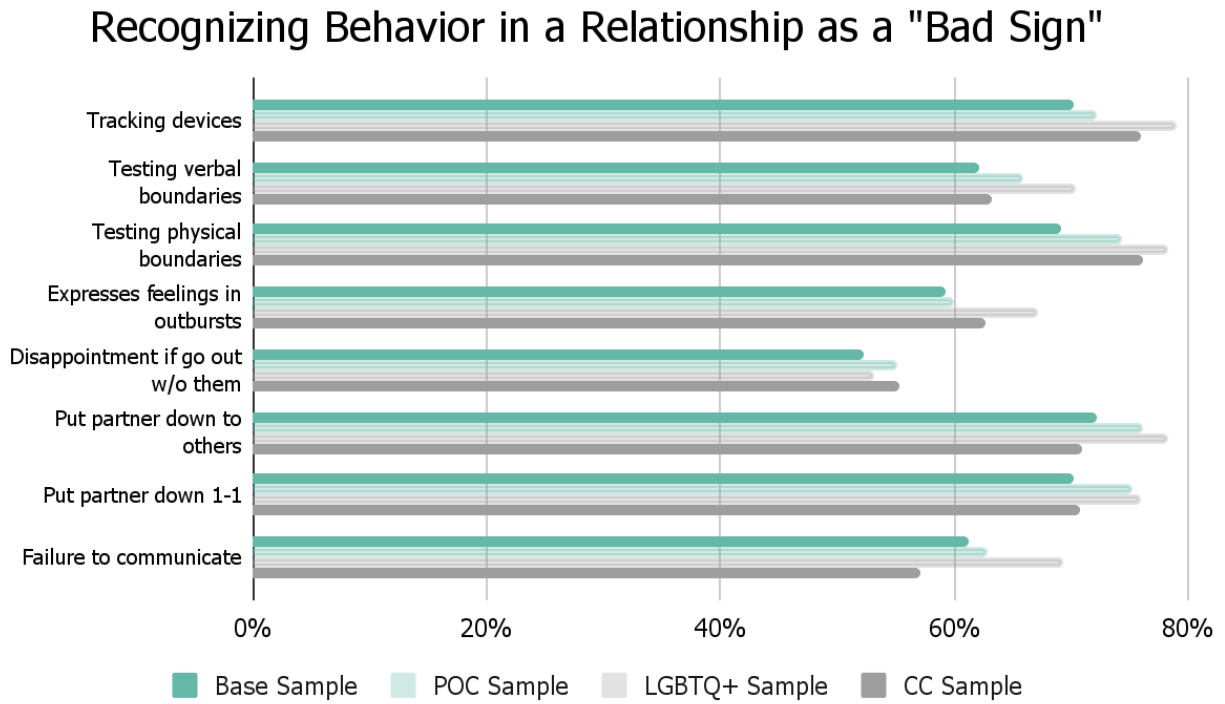
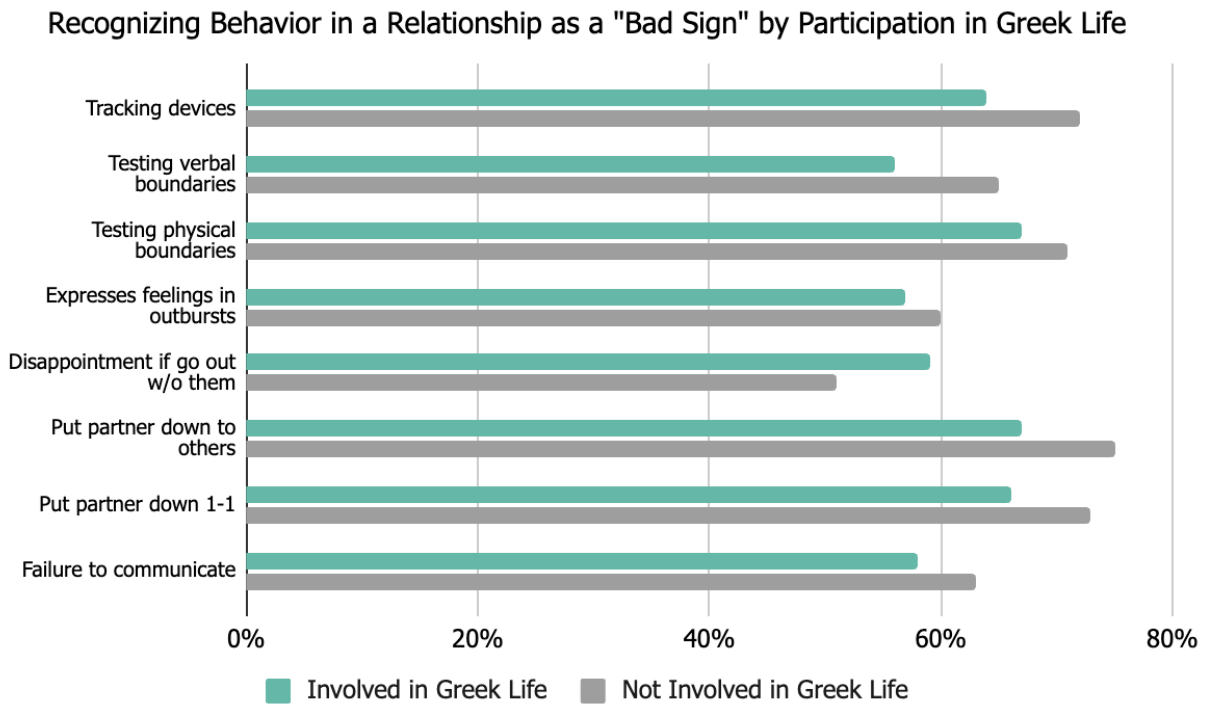
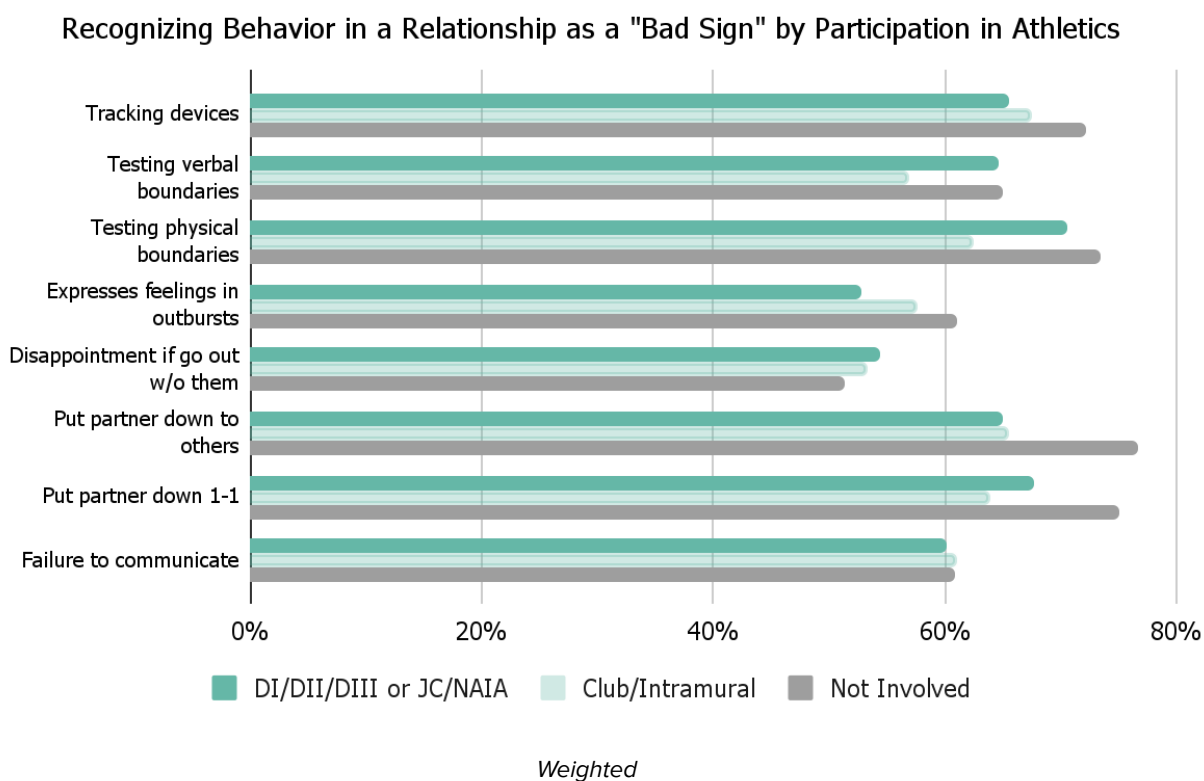


Chart 16: Recognizing Indications of Potentially Abusive Behavior in a Relationship by Participation in Greek Life



Weighted

Chart 17: Recognizing Indications of Potentially Abusive Behavior in a Relationship by Participation in Athletics



Understanding of Sexual Assault

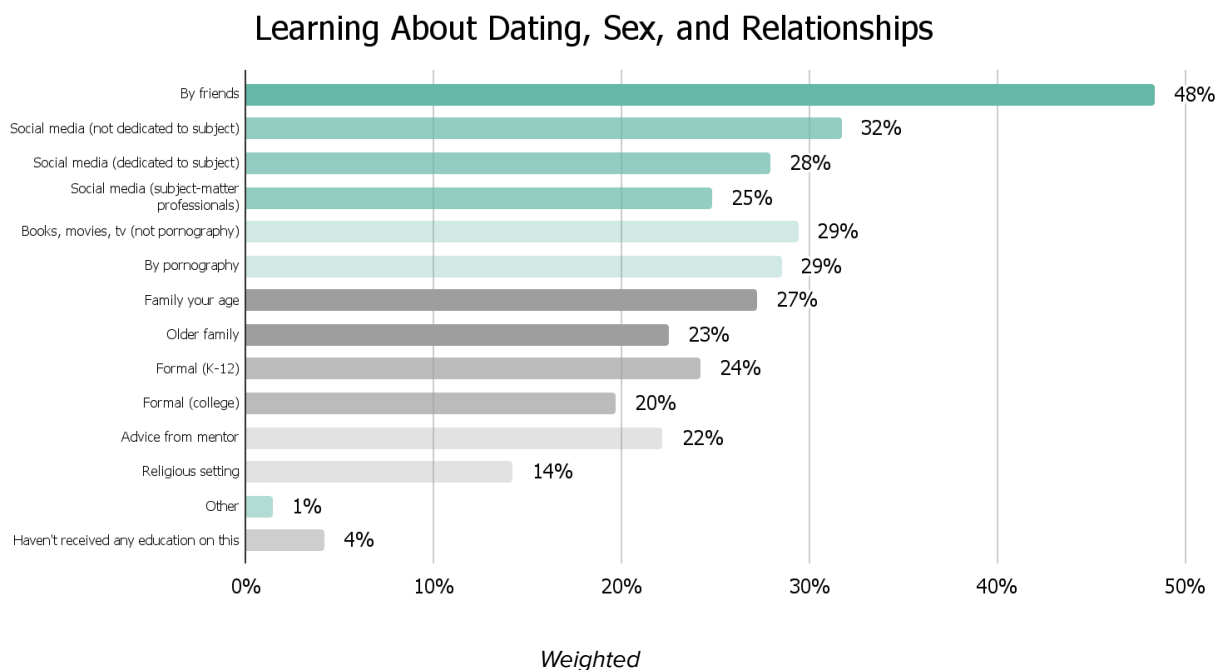
In addition to the respondents' perspectives on relationships, their understanding of sexual assault is another important baseline to explore. Before asking respondents about the topic of sexual assault, the survey first explored how students were educated in this area and their comfort levels discussing topics related to sex, relationships, and sexual assault. After exploring respondents' current understanding of sexual assault, analysis focused on the context of their proximity to sexual assault and how that may have impacted their responses.

Education

One's understanding of sexual assault is deeply related to their education on dating, sex, and relationships. Before delving into questions about sexual assault, the survey asked respondents: "And thinking broadly, how have you learned about dating, sex, and relationships? Please select all that apply." In *Prevention as a Team Sport, It's On Us* explored how male athletes first learned about sex, finding that they were most likely to learn from family or friends, although pornography also factored heavily as a source of learning. The survey results, shown in Chart 18, align with and expand upon this finding with the question's wider focus both in topic and in scope beyond initial learning. In the chart of the survey responses, similar responses have been

grouped together but should not be summed because respondents were invited to select all that apply.

Chart 18: Learning About Dating, Sex, and Relationships



Overall, this widened lens into how male-identifying college students learn about dating, sex, and relationships continues to highlight the importance of friends, family, and pornography, while also pointing to social media as a significant place of learning. Looking at subgroups within the sample, while friends continue to top the list, athletes on DI, DII, DIII or JC/NAIA teams were less likely to rely on friends (36%) than other groups. In addition, mentorship was one of the top modes of learning for those involved in Greek life (29%). It is also notable that, despite the requirement for colleges to provide prevention education, only 20% of the sample recalled that they had received this education, and 4% of respondents stated that they had not received any education on this topic. The relationship between the legal requirement for prevention education and respondents' retention of content from prevention trainings will be expanded upon in *Thematic Findings* below.

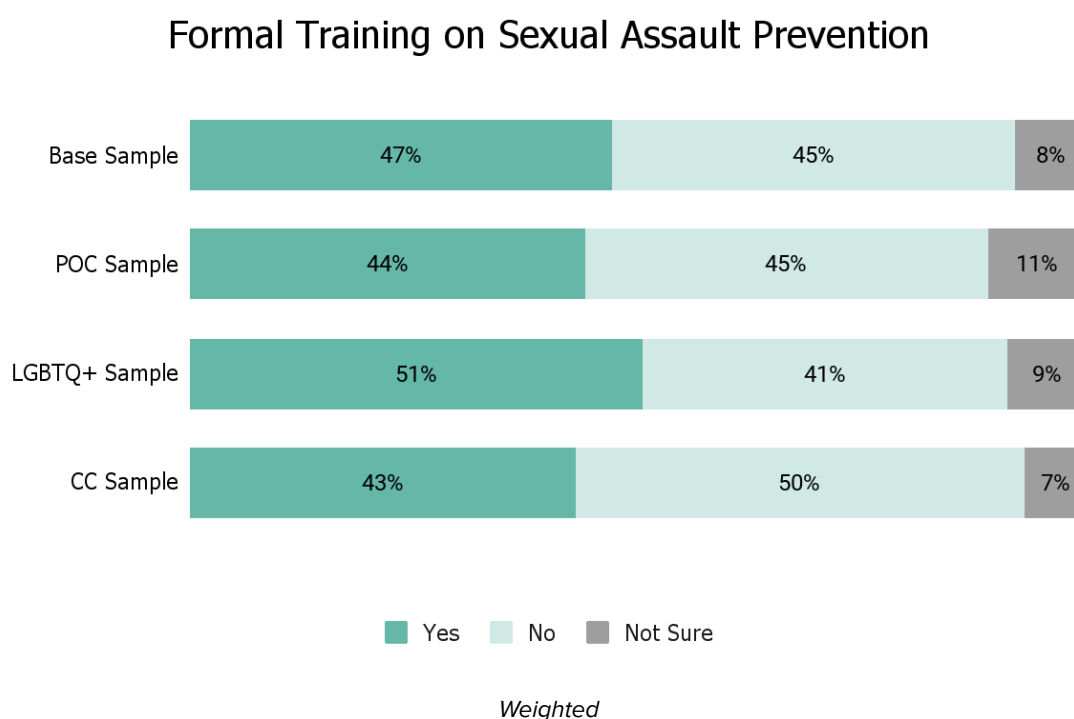
45% of respondents answered “no” when asked, “Have you ever had any formal training focusing on sexual assault prevention in school?” (see Chart 19). The LGBTQ+ community was the only oversampled subgroup where greater than half of the respondents (51%) said that they had received such a training. Those who participate in Greek life were significantly more likely to report receiving formal training in this area (62% for those who participate in Greek life versus 42% for those who do not), which aligns with existing efforts by fraternities and sororities to address the problem of sexual assault.¹⁸ The impact of participation in Greek life was even more

¹⁸ Lundgren et al., 2001; Pornari et al., 2013

pronounced on community college campuses, with 78% of community college respondents who participate in Greek life saying they have received formal training. The dearth of widespread sexual assault prevention training outside of the Greek life community does not seem to vary by respondent class year. Therefore, it may be a result of the respondents not having received the training yet or having forgotten that they received it years later.

Similar to those involved in Greek life, athletes were also more likely to have reported receiving this type of training (57% for DI/DII/DIII or JC/NAIA athletes and 59% for intramural or club sport athletes). This may be a result of more strict requirements for institutions to train their athletes by the NCAA.¹¹ For example, in 2022, NCAA policy required athletes to receive “timely implementation of educational programming at or around relevant campus and athletics events throughout the student-athlete college experience, including orientation.”

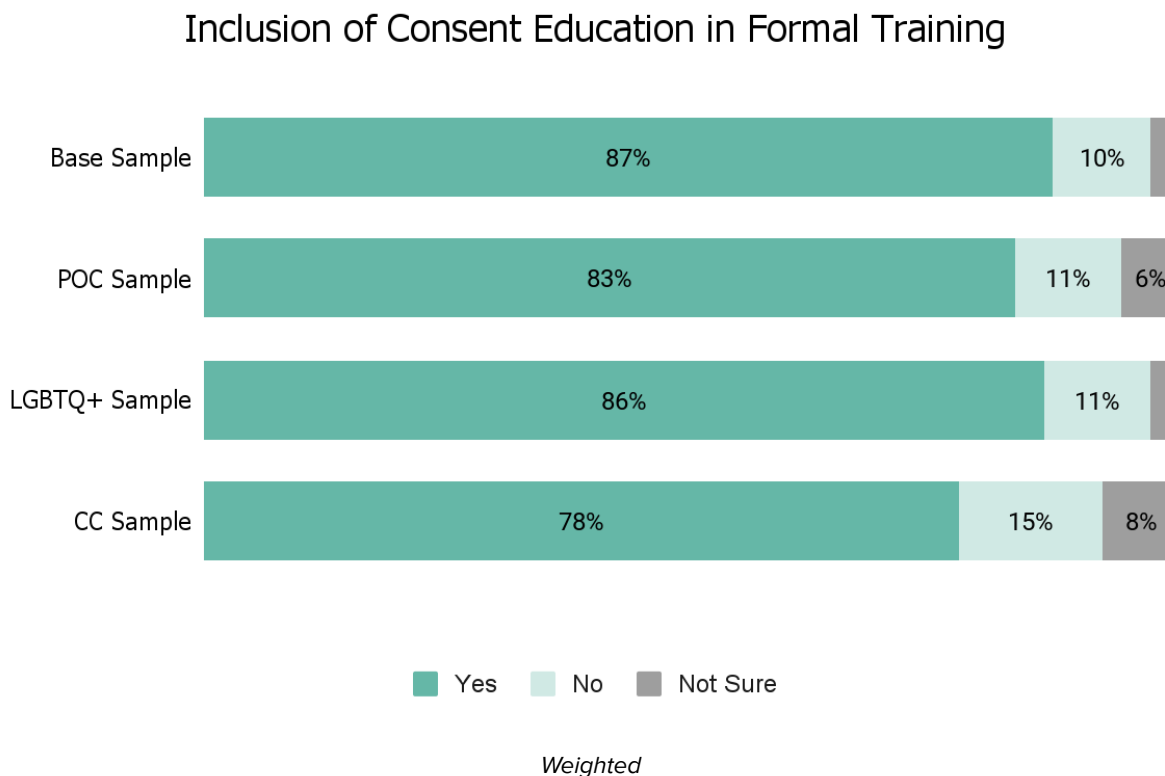
Chart 19: Formal Training on Sexual Assault Prevention



Reassuringly, of those who reported receiving formal training on sexual assault prevention, an overwhelming majority (87%) stipulated that their training included detailed education on consent (see Chart 20). It is important to note that, as compared to the overall sample, the number of respondents here is much smaller because it was only presented as a follow-up question to those who replied that they have received formal training. This will be explored more fully in the *Thematic Findings*. An additional follow-up question asked specifically whether respondents felt that that training prepared them to understand consent in real-world situations, a shortcoming that had been uncovered in past research.⁶ Almost 90% reported that it did prepare them. For both of these questions, due to the limits of a brief quantitative survey, it is

not possible to assess the degree to which the respondents fully understood consent or the veracity of their self-assessment of real-world proficiency.

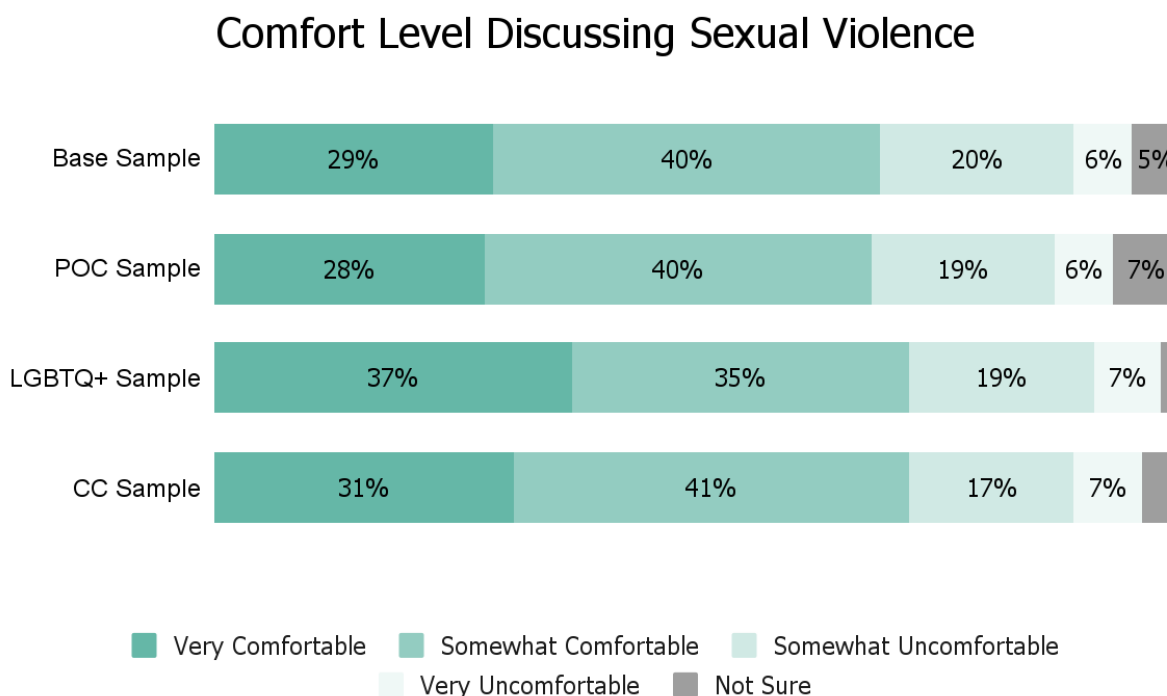
Chart 20: Inclusion of Consent Education in Formal Training



Comfort Level

While survey respondents were explicitly asked to consent to participate given the subject matter of the study,¹⁹ it is still necessary to explore the various levels of comfort these men reported regarding discussing sexual violence. The question was phrased as follows: “Some people are comfortable discussing certain sensitive topics, and others are less comfortable. Generally speaking, how comfortable are you discussing sexual violence and its prevention?” Overall, most respondents (69%) were at least somewhat, if not very, comfortable discussing sexual violence. Both the LGBTQ+ and community college communities seemed to be slightly more comfortable discussing these matters. Those involved in Greek life were also more likely to be at least somewhat comfortable discussing sexual violence (78%), which is likely at least partially a result of their stronger likelihood to have been educated on this topic. Across subgroups, only a very small subset reported that they were very uncomfortable, despite consenting to participate.

¹⁹ The full consent language is provided in the *Appendix*, as well as this study’s IRB approval.

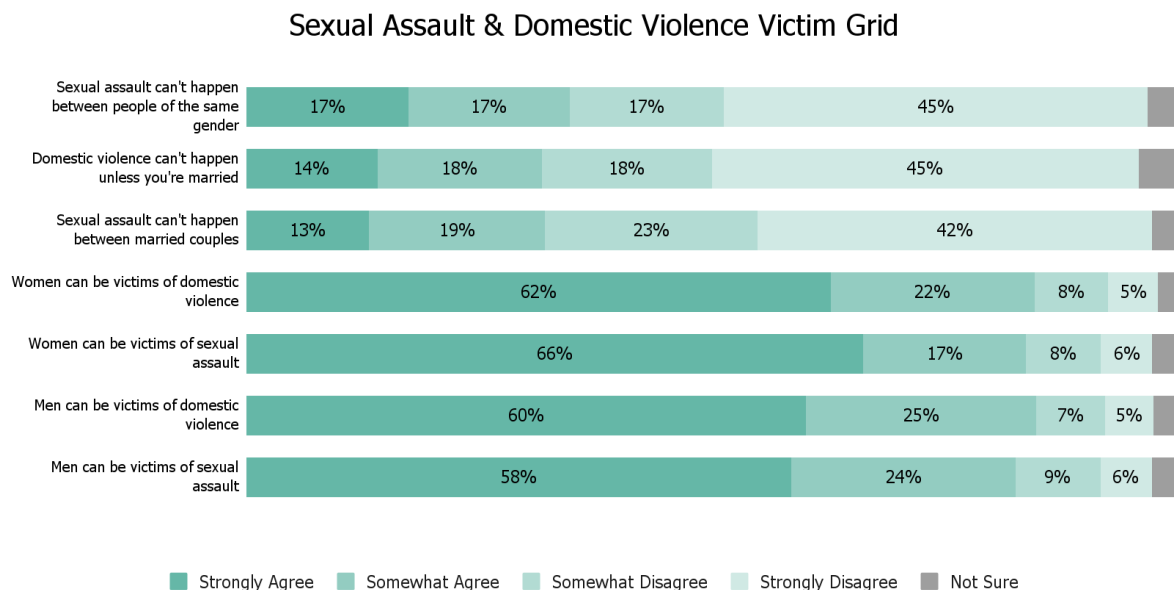
Chart 21: Comfort Level Discussing Sexual Violence

Weighted

Understanding of Sexual Assault

It is challenging to gauge individual understanding of sexual assault through a brief online survey. The survey assessed the foundations for potential understanding by asking about the education respondents previously received and their comfort levels talking about this and related issues, which are both factors known to be determinants of the level of understanding an individual possesses. Next, similar to the approach taken with identifying unhealthy relationship behaviors, the survey asked respondents two sets of questions to assess their levels of understanding of the nuances of sexual assault.

The first set of questions presented the respondents with a series of statements about who can be a survivor of sexual assault and under what conditions, asking them to agree or disagree (depicted in Chart 22). It is important to note that the correct responses to each statement vary: the first three statements (all phrased as X “can’t happen” in Y condition) should result in knowledgeable respondents disagreeing with the statement, while the following four statements (all phrased as X “can be victims of” Y) should result in knowledgeable respondents agreeing with the statement. The visualization of responses shows overall a division between agree and disagree responses for the two groupings of statements.

Chart 22: Sexual Violence & Domestic Violence Victim Grid

Weighted

The majority of respondents agreed that anyone can be a survivor of sexual assault; however, there was a substantial and concerning minority displaying a lack of understanding of who can be a survivor. For example, almost a third of respondents (32%) agreed to some extent with the statement: “Sexual assault can’t happen between married couples.” When subgroups are overlaid onto these findings, those involved in Greek life seemed to be more skeptical of who can be survivors of sexual assault. For the first grouping of questions about situations where sexual assault and domestic violence can occur, the number of respondents stating that they “strongly disagree” dropped about 15% across the board. Additionally, those in Greek life were almost twice as likely to agree that sexual assault can’t happen between people of the same gender. Past research has identified sexual violence being used as a tactic in hazing rituals, underscoring how concerning these numbers are. Despite university attempts to ban these practices, hazing has included sexual acts for decades. For more on attitudes towards the Greek community on campuses, please see the *Thematic Findings* section.

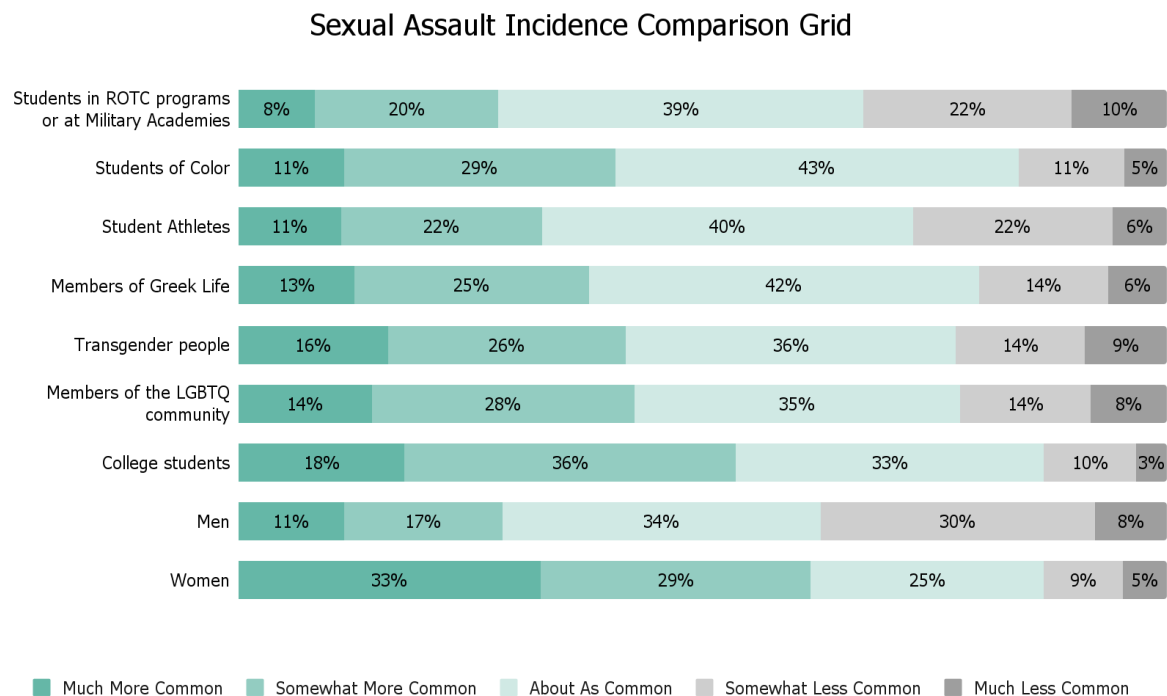
In contrast, respondents within the POC oversample paint a more encouraging picture of their attitudes and beliefs, with POC respondents more likely than the overall sample to strongly disagree across questions by approximately 8% .

While the existence of a substantial and concerning minority of respondents displaying a lack of understanding of sexual assault occurred less with the second grouping of statements, it remains concerning that **15% of respondents still were not sure if men can be victims of sexual assault**. In this set of questions, those involved with Greek life once again demonstrated their skepticism about who can be a victim, with “strongly agree” responses around 10% lower than the overall sample. Similar to observations from the first set of questions, POC respondents were slightly more likely to strongly agree with those statements by 5% or more than what is depicted

in Chart 22 for the overall sample. For both sets of questions, a respondent having a strong relationship with women peers or mentors correlated with the respondent being more likely to give the correct response than those who do not have these relationships.

The second series of questions probed their understanding of comparative incidence of sexual assault (shown in Chart 23). The question posed to respondents was as follows: “Next, you will see various groups. For each of those groups, please say *how much more frequent or less frequent* you would say it is for people in this group to be victims of sexual assault *compared to other groups*.” The majority of respondents believed sexual assault against women is much more common than among others. This is reflective of actual incidence rates on a national level.

Chart 23: Sexual Assault Incidence Comparison Grid



Weighted

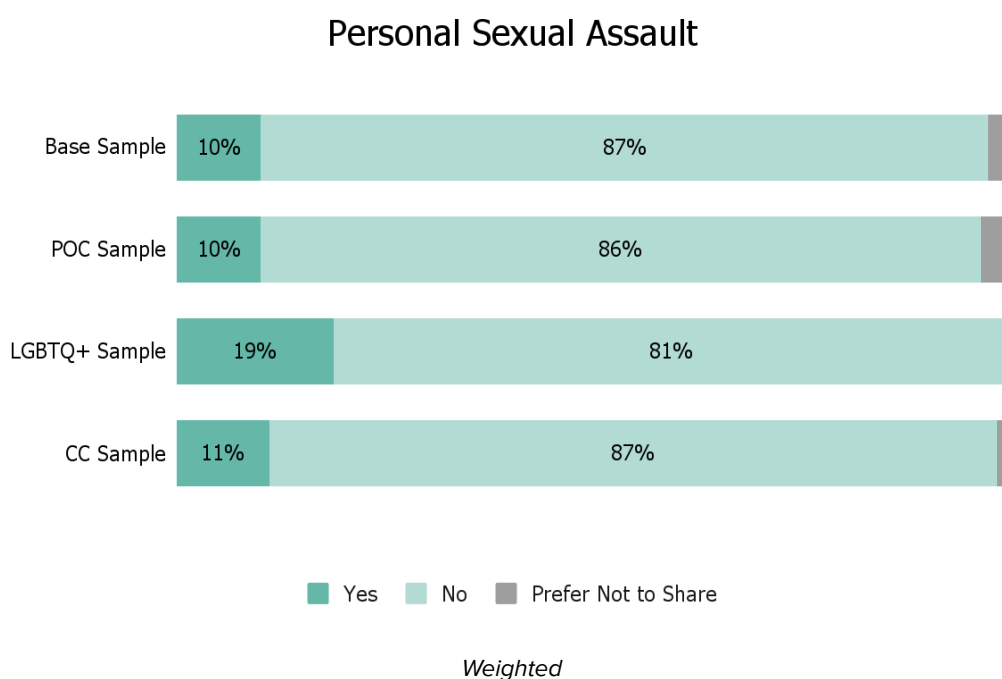
Personal Exposure to Sexual Assault

In addition to respondent relationships and past trainings, another baseline understanding required to more fully understand the survey results is personal exposure to sexual assault. To gain this understanding the following series of questions was asked:

1. *Have you ever been sexually assaulted?*
2. *Has someone you know ever been sexually assaulted?*
3. *Do you personally know someone who has been sexually assaulted in your campus community?*

The accepted incidence rate for sexual assault for undergraduate men (although some subgroups may have a higher rate) is 6.8%.²⁰ Overall, in this survey, 10% of male-identifying college students ages 18-24 reported being sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. Past research has shown the risk of sexual assault to be higher for members of the LGBTQ+ community,²¹ a data point that this research supports, with 19% of LGBTQ+ respondents responding that they have been sexually assaulted. The incidence rate of sexual assault was also higher among those who participate in Greek life, with 16% of that group saying they have experienced sexual assault. This data aligns with past research showing the risk to be higher for students who participate in Greek life.²²

Chart 24: Personal Sexual Assault



When asked to identify their exposure to the sexual assault of others, respondents reported a higher incidence rate. A third of respondents (34%) stated that they have known

²⁰ Cantor, D., Fisher, B., Chibnall, S., Harps, S., Townsend, R., Thomas, G., Lee, H., Kranz, V., Herbison, R., & Madden, K. (2020, January 17). *Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on sexual assault and sexual ...* aau.edu.

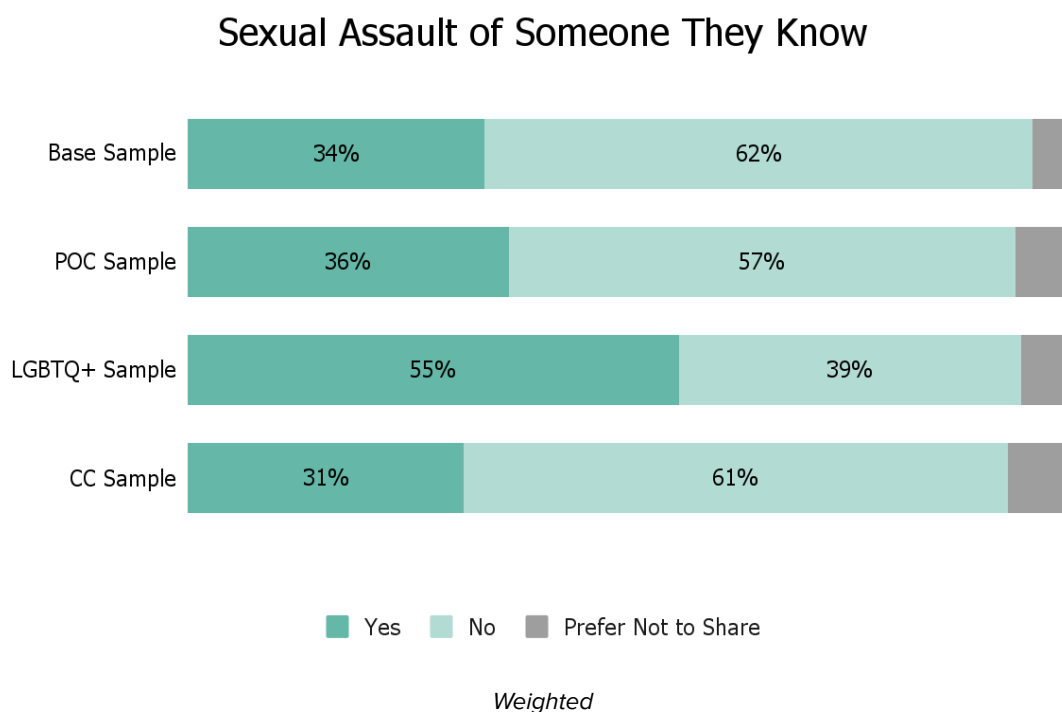
<https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Campus-Safety/AAU-Campus-Climate-Survey-FINAL-10-20-17.pdf>

²¹ Tillewein H, Shokeen N, Powers P, Rijo Sánchez AJ, Sandles-Palmer S, Desjarlais K. Silencing the Rainbow: Prevalence of LGBTQ+ Students Who Do Not Report Sexual Violence. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 Jan 22;20(3):2020. doi: 10.3390/ijerph20032020. PMID: 36767386; PMCID: PMC9915559.

²² Canan SN, Jozkowski KN, Crawford BL. Sexual Assault Supportive Attitudes: Rape Myth Acceptance and Token Resistance in Greek and Non-Greek College Students From Two University Samples in the United States. *J Interpers Violence*. 2018 Nov; 33(22): 3502-3530. doi: 10.1177/0886260516636064. Epub 2016 Mar 3. PMID: 26944340.

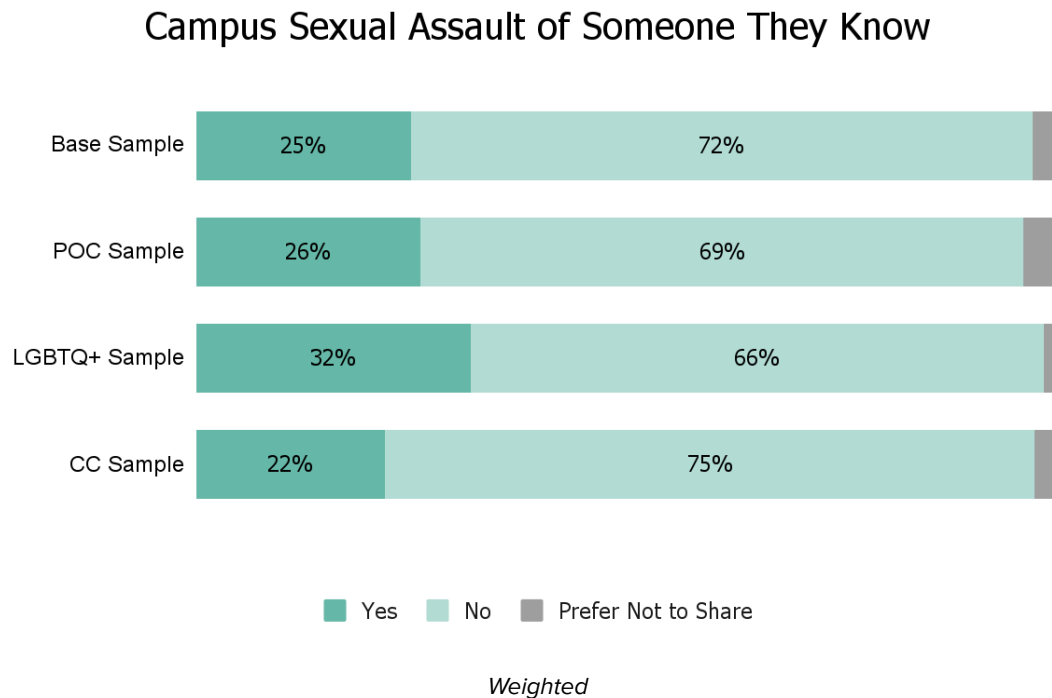
someone who has been sexually assaulted in their lifetime. The maximum age of respondents in this survey was 24, highlighting how pervasive the issue of sexual assault is for people of all ages, but particularly for young people. When looking specifically at the LGBTQ+ community, this number increases to 55%, meaning that over half of the respondents in this student population know someone who has been sexually assaulted.

Chart 25: Sexual Assault of Someone They Know



When asked specifically if they know someone who has been sexually assaulted in their campus community, a quarter (25%) of the sample responded affirmatively. Within the LGBTQ+ oversample, this number was again higher at 32%. This is reflective of the national incidence rate that one in four women will experience sexual assault before graduating college in the US.²³

²³ Cantor, D., Fisher, B., Chibnall, S., Townsend, R., Lee, H., Bruce, W., & Thomas, G. (2015). Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct1500 Report on the AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct ii Acknowledgements. https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/%40%20Files/Climate%20Survey/AAU_Campus_Climate_Survey_12_14_15.pdf

Chart 26: Sexual Assault Within Their Campus Community

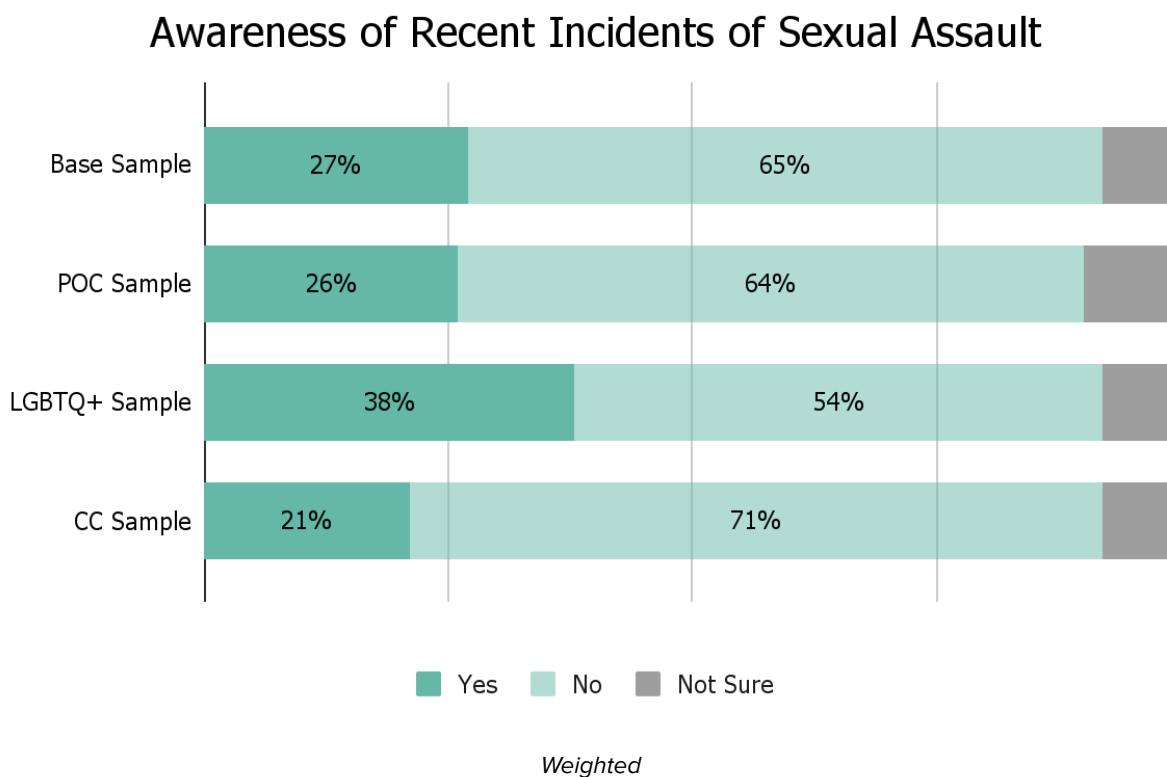
Concern About Sexual Assault

The prevalence of sexual violence has been well studied both on the national level and the campus level. While there are plenty of existing statistics on the severity of sexual assault in campus communities, it was important to understand the respondents' perceptions of the extent of this problem within their own communities. The survey asked questions about the college men's awareness of recent incidents of sexual assault in their campus communities and their perceptions of their campus administrations' responses, as well as their beliefs regarding the frequency of false accusations of sexual assault. In addition, the survey asked respondents broadly about their campus safety concerns, contextualizing their concern about sexual assault among other worries about safety.

Awareness of Incidents

After sharing their campus safety concerns (discussed below), respondents were subsequently asked if they were aware of any recent incidents of sexual assault in their campus community. While respondents knew that the survey was about sexual assault prevention, starting with questions about campus safety broadly helped get an accurate, holistic picture of the campus communities before diving into the focus area. Slightly more than a quarter of respondents (27%) reported being aware of a recent incident of sexual assault on their campus community. Within the LGBTQ+ sample, this statistic rose to 38%. However, when looking at community college attendees, this statistic dropped to 21%.

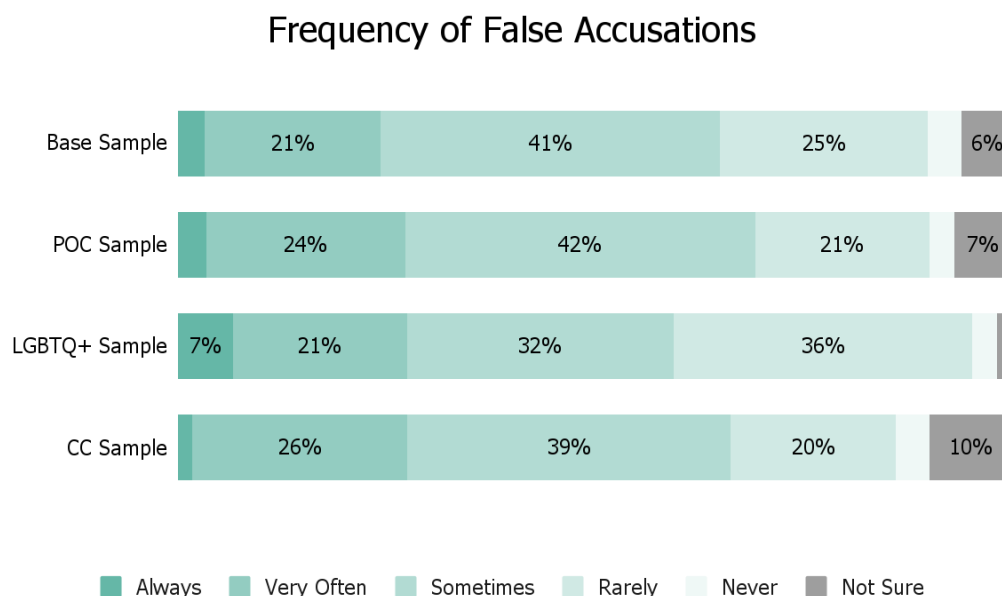
Chart 27: Awareness of Recent Sexual Assault Incidents in Their Campus Community



Perception of False Accusations

In addition to the respondents' awareness of incidents of sexual assault in their campus communities, their perceptions of how often false accusations of sexual assault occur also inform their levels of concern about this problem. It's On Us's prior research found male athletes believe false accusations occur much more frequently than they actually do, highlighting the importance of more education on the subject.⁶ While false accusations are actually quite rare (an estimated 4.5% of formally reported sexual assault and domestic violence accusations are false),²⁴ nearly two-thirds of the respondents believed them to occur sometimes, very often, or always. Members of the LGBTQ+ community were the most likely to correctly identify false accusations as occurring rarely (at 36%). For more on false accusations, see *Thematic Findings*.

²⁴ Spohn, C., White, C., & Tellis, K. (2014, January 27). *Unfounding sexual assault: Examining the ...* - wiley online library. Wiley Online Library. Retrieved March 28, 2023, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/lasr.12060>

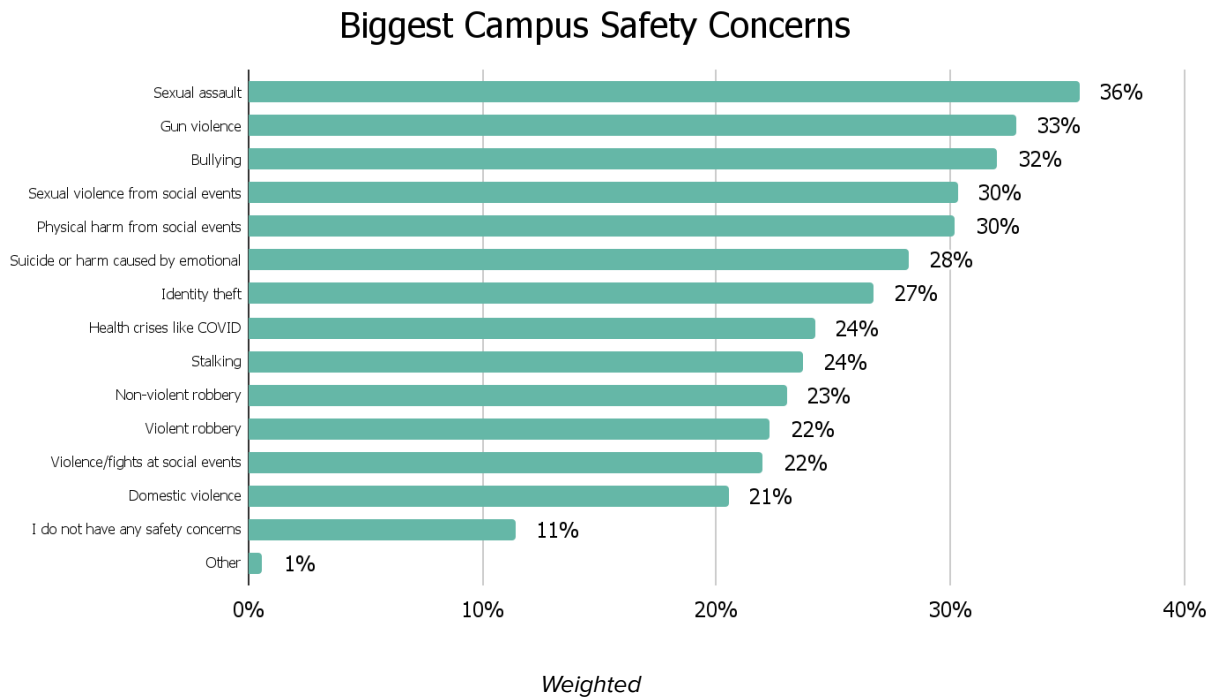
Chart 28: Beliefs Regarding the Frequency of False Accusations

Weighted

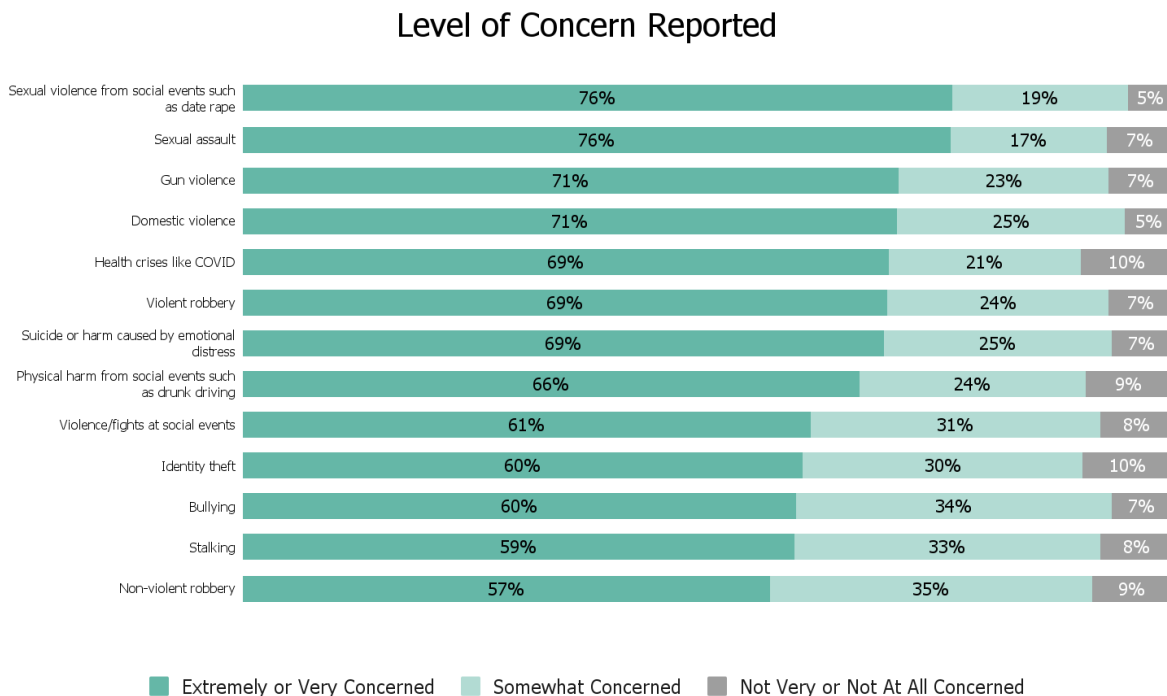
Comparative Concern

As stated above, the survey first featured questions about general campus safety to ensure that respondents' answers were as holistic as possible. The survey asked, "What are your biggest safety concerns in your campus community?" and encouraged respondents to select all that applied from a list. They could also select "other" and enter a concern that was not listed. After identifying issues from the provided list, respondents ranked their levels of concern on each of the items on the list from "extremely concerned" to "not concerned at all."

As seen in Chart 29, sexual assault topped the list of biggest campus safety concerns at 36%. Gun violence and bullying came in second and third at 33% and 32%, respectively, followed by sexual violence and physical harm from social events at 30%. The levels of concern about these issues did not vary much by group, with the exception of athletes and people of color. For DI/DII/DIII or JC/NAIA athletes, rather than sexual assault being the top concern, "physical harm from social events such as drunk driving or overdosing" topped the list at 42%. For this group, sexual violence from social events came in fourth and sexual assault bumped down to 6th at 30%. For respondents of color, gun violence was the top concern, with 40% being extremely concerned, followed by sexual assault at 39%.

Chart 29: Biggest Safety Concerns on Campus

To hone in on these safety concerns, respondents indicated their levels of concern with the topics on the list. The 5-point scale of concern is condensed in Chart 30 into a 3-point scale to more clearly show the consensus around sexual violence and assault. 76% of respondents selected that they were extremely or very concerned about the problem of sexual assault, followed by gun violence and domestic violence (both at 71%). These percentages increased for respondents in the LGBTQ+ community, with those extremely or very concerned about sexual assault at 88% and with sexual violence from social events coming in second at 84%.

Chart 30: Level of Concern Regarding Safety Concerns on Campus

Weighted

Thematic Findings

The patterns in the attitudes and the behaviors outlined in the *Baseline Findings* can be narrowed down to the following themes:

- Even if men receive consent training, it does not prepare them to identify and intervene in potentially harmful situations/unhealthy relationships before they become violent;
- The information young men are taught on sex and relationships varies; therefore, colleges need to start everyone with the basics when they first arrive on campus.
- Campus faculty, staff, and administrators have work to do to build and maintain trust with their student populations as it pertains to their campus sexual assault prevention and response efforts.
- A majority of men believe they should be expected to protect others from verbal or physical harm, but only a minority receive the knowledge and skills to do so.

Consent

This study found that even when men receive consent training, it does not prepare them to intervene in unhealthy relationships before they become abusive. Consent education is the practice of understanding the emotional and physical boundaries of an individual and creating

agreements for any verbal, emotional, or physical activity that occurs, checking in at each step of the way.

There is a direct relationship between de-escalating unhealthy relationships and preventing sexual abuse before it occurs. Nationally, one in three women will experience a violent relationship in her lifetime, and the risk of relationship violence is three times higher for college-aged women.²⁵ A study by the National Institute of Justice focused on women who had been physically assaulted by an intimate partner found that two-thirds of the women had also been sexually assaulted by that partner.²⁶

Of the 47% of respondents who received sexual assault prevention training, 87% reported learning specifically about consent. Therefore, **only 34% of the total sample received formal consent training.** This indicates that the number of men who receive formal consent training while in college is much smaller than it sounds. Not all young men learn about consent (see Chart 20), and of the students who do, their understanding of where consent applies and who it applies to varies drastically.

This is reflective of the findings in [Prevention is a Team Sport](#), including the below quote from an athlete about trainings:

“But that was my junior year. We had already been through all of the prevention training and I still didn’t know what any of the definitions were [or] how to talk about it.”

— Male Athlete²⁷

The lack of consistency in respondents' recollection of their college or university's prevention training, and, in turn, their consent education, can affect their individual behavior in their own relationships and their ability to intervene in potentially harmful situations around them.

It is important to note that of those respondents who reported receiving consent education, 90% said they felt the information prepared them to apply consent in the “real world.” Past qualitative research in this area offers contradictory evidence around male college athletes’ understanding of consent and may be a more appropriate method for assessing male students’ actual level of knowledge on consent.⁶ Consent is a complicated topic, and although many men feel they are well informed on consent, the education they receive on the topic is not uniform or comprehensive.

Participants' understanding of the association between consent and healthy relationships differed in the study, as shown by the varying answers to scenarios in the survey. As an example, in Chart 21, 66% of men reported that they believe you can be a survivor of sexual assault if you

²⁵ “Escalation”: A Tool to Combat Relationship Violence | United Educators. (2021, August 6). [Www.ue.org. https://www.ue.org/risk-management/sexual-assault-and-misconduct/escalation-a-tool-to-combat-relationships-violence/](https://www.ue.org/risk-management/sexual-assault-and-misconduct/escalation-a-tool-to-combat-relationships-violence/)

²⁶ Sexual Assault in Abusive Relationships. (n.d.). National Institute of Justice. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/sexual-assault-abusive-relationships>

²⁷ [Prevention is a Team Sport](#), Page 16.

are married. This unfortunately means that a third of this population believes you cannot be sexually assaulted if you are married to an abuser.

Men in Greek life were the least likely to identify unhealthy relationship behaviors (see Charts 15 and 16). They are, however, more likely to receive supplemental sexual assault prevention trainings during their time at school, meaning the information they receive is not effectively retained or is disregarded.

Awareness

Young men learn about sex and relationships before they get to college from a variety of sources (see Chart 18). **Therefore, it is important to start at the most elementary level when students first arrive on campus in order to establish a baseline understanding of the topics.**

In 2014 the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault found that culture change can only happen when more men engage in conversations around sexual assault prevention on college campuses around the country.²⁸ This study found that young men in the LGBTQ+ community are more comfortable having conversations around sex and relationships than the base sample (see Chart 10). The level of comfort of this community in discussing sex and relationships had a direct relationship with the likelihood of members of the LGBTQ+ community to correctly identify healthy and unhealthy relationships.

While members of the LGBTQ+ community were the most likely to correctly identify potentially abusive behavior in relationships, men in Greek life were the least likely to correctly identify these behaviors (see Chart 16). Unfortunately, research has found that fraternity men are three times more likely to sexually assault a woman than non-affiliated classmates.²⁹ Institutions and communities must better engage men in Greek life in order to change culture and prevent sexual violence on college and university campuses long-term.

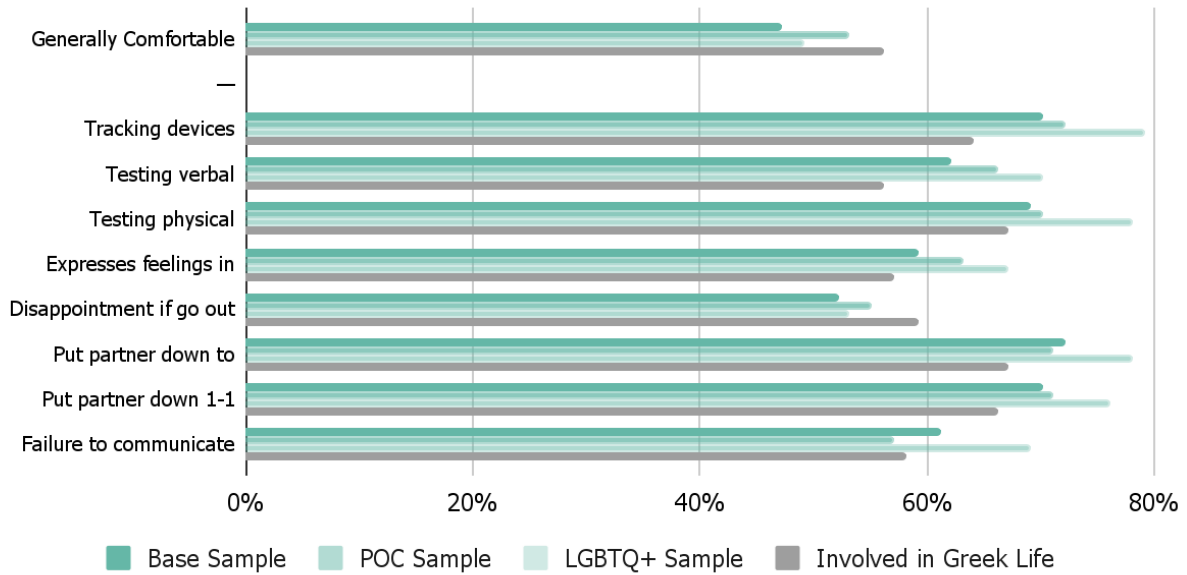
There was a notable relationship between the level of comfort respondents had discussing sex and relationships and their ability to identify whether a scenario was healthy or unhealthy. Responses to both of these sections varied between the subgroups that were surveyed (the POC and LGBTQ+ oversamples as well as participants in Greek life, as compared to the base sample). A summarized comparison is available below in Chart 31, but detailed views of the full distributions are available in Charts 10, 11, 15, and 16. Compared to the base sample, men of color and those in the LGBTQ+ community were more likely to correctly identify unhealthy and healthy relationships.

²⁸ NOT ALONE The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault. (2014). <https://www.justice.gov/archives/ovw/page/file/905942/download>

²⁹ Foubert, J. D., Newberry, J. T., & Tatum, J. L. (2007). *Behavior Differences Seven Months Later: Effects of a Rape Prevention Program*. ResearchGate; De Gruyter. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230687915_Behavior_Differences_Seven_Months_Later_Effects_of_a_Rape_Prevention_Program

Chart 31: Comparing Comfort Level Discussing Relationships and Ability to Identify Potentially Abusive Behavior As a “Bad Sign” Across Groups

Comparing Comfort Level Discussing Relationships and Ability to Identify Relationship Behaviors as Problematic



Weighted

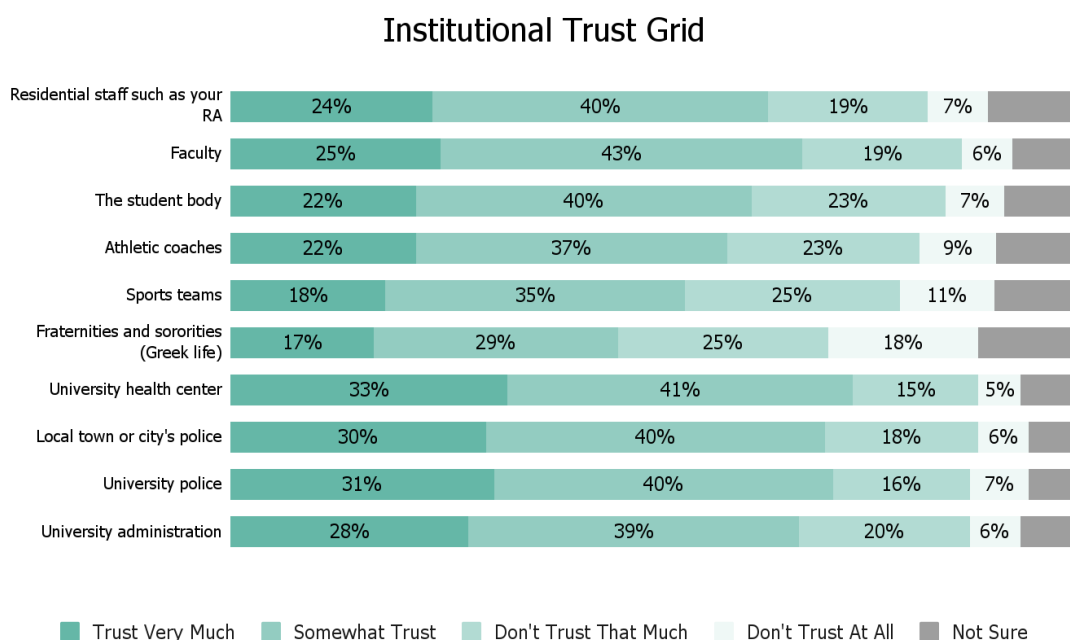
It is important to note that **a significant minority of men did not agree on who can be a victim of sexual assault. Many respondents maintained a view that only women can be survivors of sexual violence, and one-third of respondents did not believe sexual violence can happen if a victim is married.** Students of all identities, regardless of race, sexuality, gender identity, religion, class, or age, must receive a baseline understanding of sex and relationships; however, the results of the study remind us that prejudice still exists in many campus communities across the United States and must be addressed. See the *Recommendations* section for ways to take action.

Trust in Institutions

All campus communities have specific cultures that shape the actions, attitudes, and beliefs of each community member. Each member of a campus community is a stakeholder in sexual violence prevention and can be a part of eliminating the culture of violence within their community and replacing it with one of trust and safety.

As shown in Chart 32 below, although students reported higher trust in their institutions than other entities, these responses still only made up one-third of the base sample.

Chart 32: Institutional Trust Grid

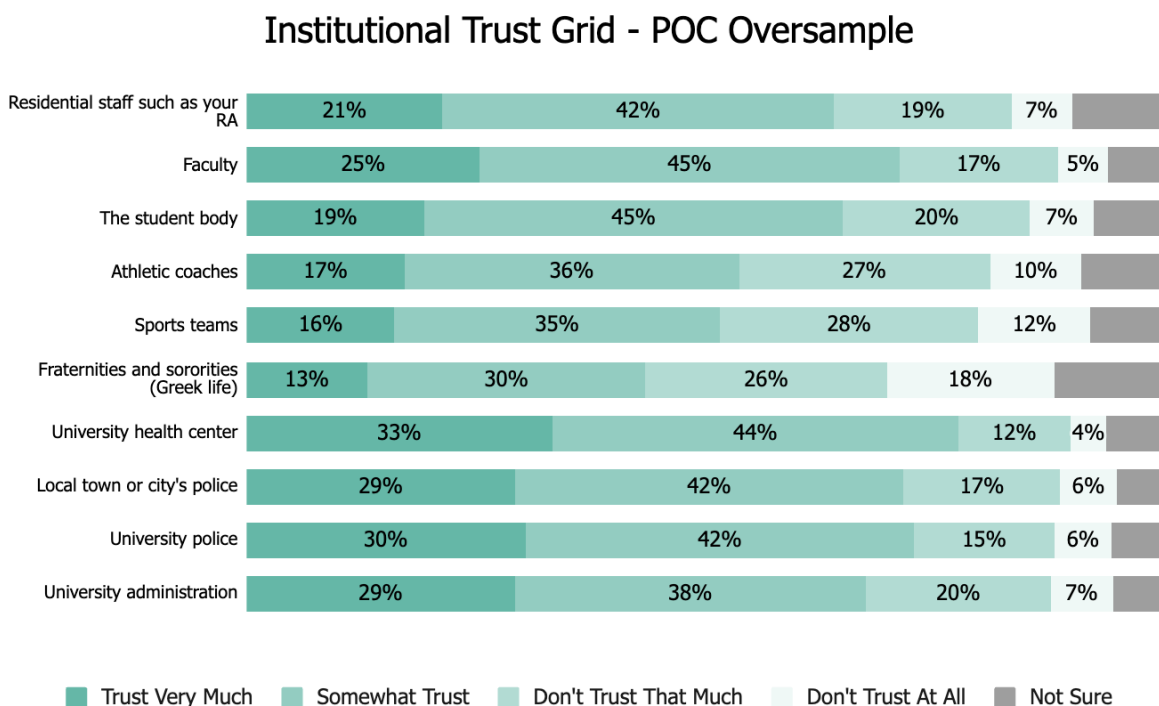


Weighted

When broken down by community (see Chart 33), men of color reported lower levels of trust in their institutions, in contrast to the high levels of trust in the base sample. As described in

the *Sample* section, 52% of the 1,152 respondents in this study identified as white. It is therefore possible the smaller sample of men of color contributed to a lower the higher average of trust.

Chart 33: Institutional Trust Grid - POC Oversample



Additionally, as stated in the *Understanding of Sexual Assault* section, gun violence was the top safety concern for respondents of color, followed by sexual assault and bullying. It is possible that the lack of institutional trust in both university administration and university police in this community is related to the concern for gun violence, due to recent increases in school shootings. Last year, students experienced the highest rate of school shootings in the country in the past twenty years.³⁰ This violence had a disproportionate effect on men of color.

Many athletes who participated in [Prevention Is A Team Sport](#) felt similarly towards law enforcement:

“I guess it's a culture clash that happens cuz a lot of people don't even feel comfortable and a lot of people don't feel comfortable calling the cops. Something happened, you know? And we don't feel comfortable reaching out to people who can help you in their higher positions...”

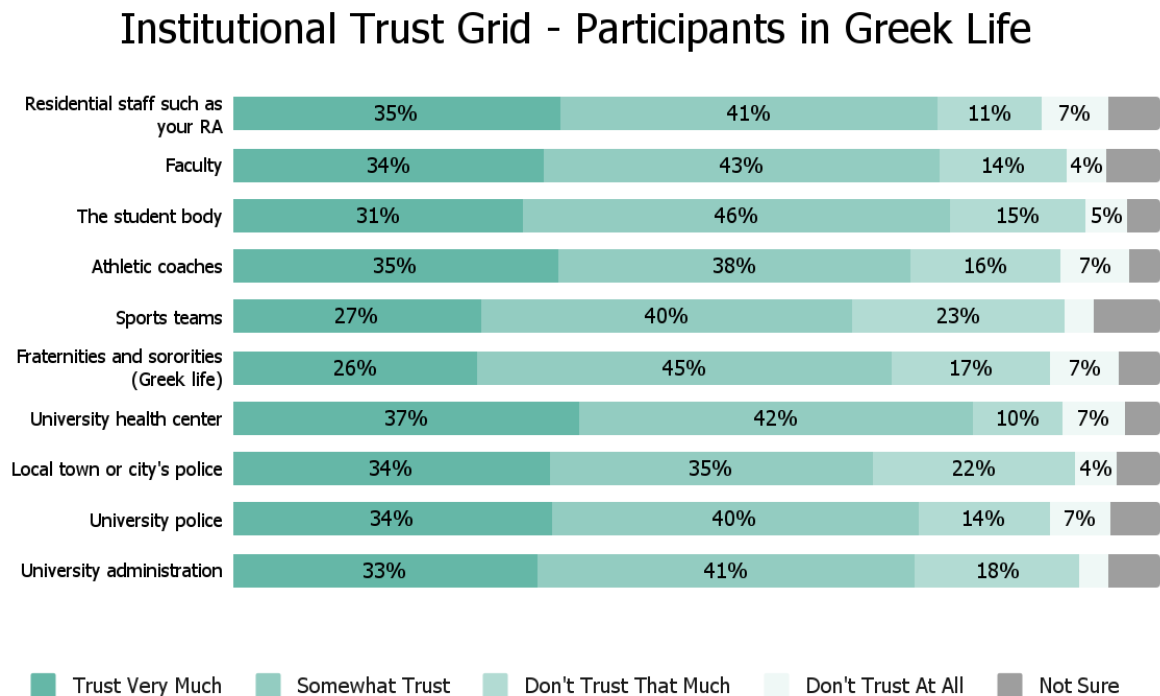
— Male Athlete³¹

³⁰ Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2021. (2022, June 28). Nces.ed.gov. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2022092>

³¹ [Prevention is a Team Sport](#), Page 19.

In Chart 32: Institutional Trust, it is clear that respondents reported the least amount of trust in the Greek communities on their campuses. Chart 34 below indicates the level of trust that men who participate in Greek life have in their institutions. Although respondents affiliated with Greek life reported higher levels than the general population, only 26% of participants reported that they trust fraternities and sororities “very much.”

Chart 34: Institutional Trust Grid - Greek Life



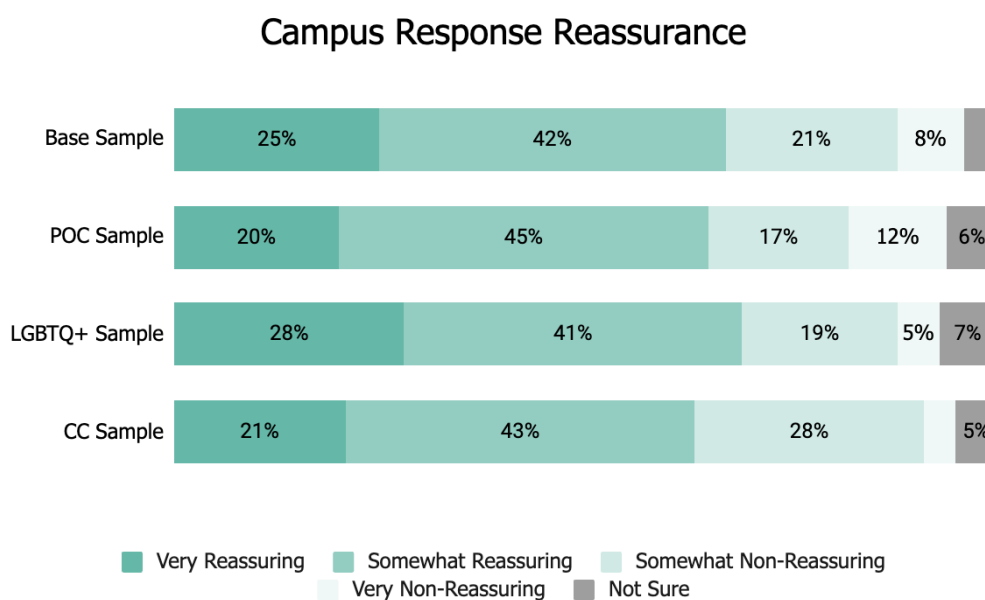
Weighted

Respondents in Greek life were more skeptical about who can be a survivor of sexual assault or whether someone can experience sexual violence if they are married. They were also less likely to correctly identify unhealthy relationships. As mentioned in the *Baseline Findings* section, Greek life organizations are often required by either their colleges or national organizations to provide additional training. With this in mind, it is evident that there is a high need for more effective training modules and programs with this community on campuses across the country.

As stated in the *Understanding of Sexual Assault* section, a respondent having a strong relationship with women peers or mentors correlated with the respondent being more likely to correctly identify situations where sexual assault can occur. When asked how they prefer to learn about sex and relationships in the survey, respondents in Greek life listed mentorship as one of their top choices, at 29%. Moving forward, increasing opportunities for mentorship is critical to bridging the gap in knowledge on this topic.

While the majority of respondents across samples felt that their campus' response to incidents of sexual violence was at least "somewhat reassuring," only a quarter of the base sample found the response to be "very reassuring," as shown in Chart 35. Respondents in the POC and community college samples had the lowest levels of reassurance from their institutions' responses.

Chart 35: Reassurance from Institutions Response to Sexual Violence



Weighted

Although the base sample reported higher levels of institutional trust than expected based on previous research, campus faculty, staff, and administrators still have much work to do to build and maintain trust with their student populations as it pertains to campus sexual assault prevention and response efforts. If students do not trust their institutions' responses, they are much less likely to report a sexual assault in the first place.³² Both institutions and campus communities need to do more to build and maintain trust across all communities. It is important to note that this study did not ask respondents if they have recently had high profile incidents of sexual assault on their campuses, which can have an effect on responses.

Men interviewed in [Part 1](#) felt similarly that institutional trust and culture change go hand in hand:

“The university’s inaction leads to a larger culture of ambivalence.”
 — Northwestern University Student³³

³² Criminal Victimization, 2020. (n.d.). Bureau of Justice Statistics.
<https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/criminal-victimization-2020>

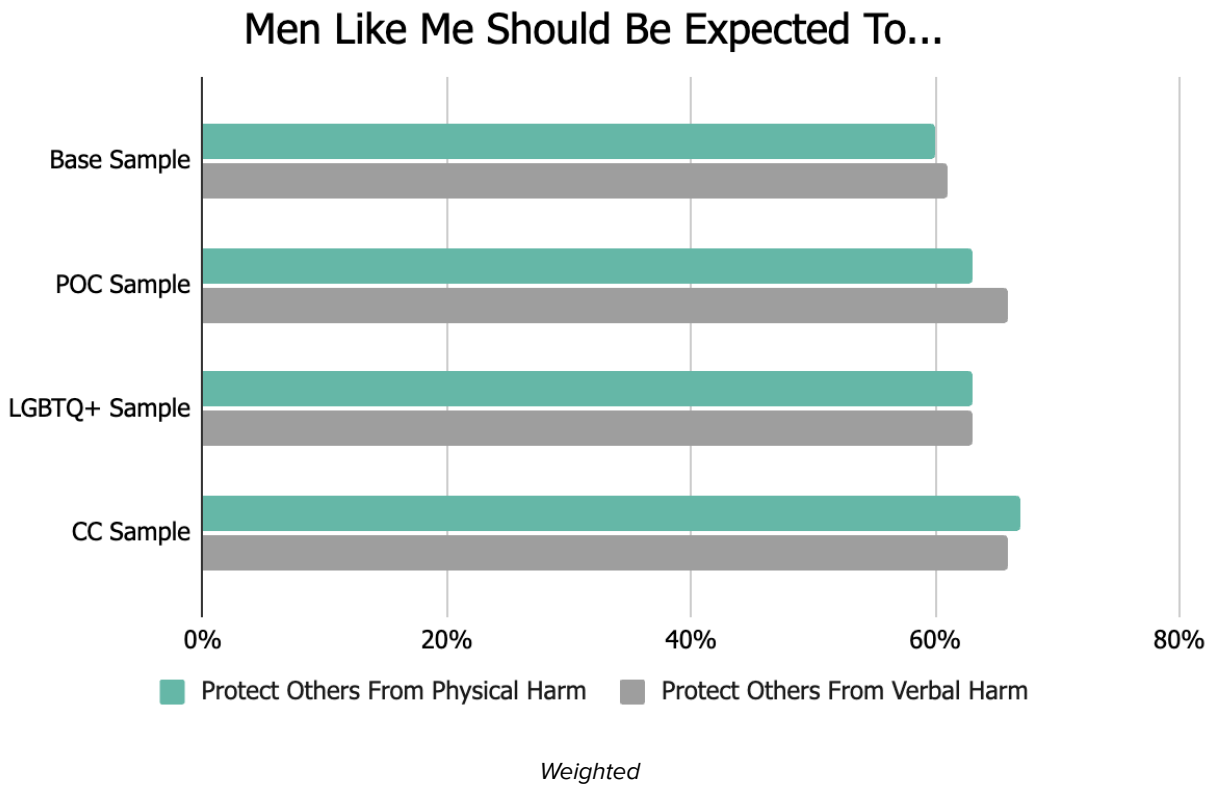
³³ [Part 1](#), Page 13.

Desire to Learn

As shown in Chart 36, the study found that a majority of college men believe they should be expected to protect others from both verbal and physical harm in their community. However, with less than half of respondents recalling receiving formal training on sexual assault prevention, current training and prevention programs only provide a minority of men with the knowledge and skills to do so (see Chart 19).

“I would rather ask and be embarrassed than be wrong...”
 — Northwestern University Student³⁴

Chart 36: Responsibility to Community



³⁴ [Part 1](#), Page 13.

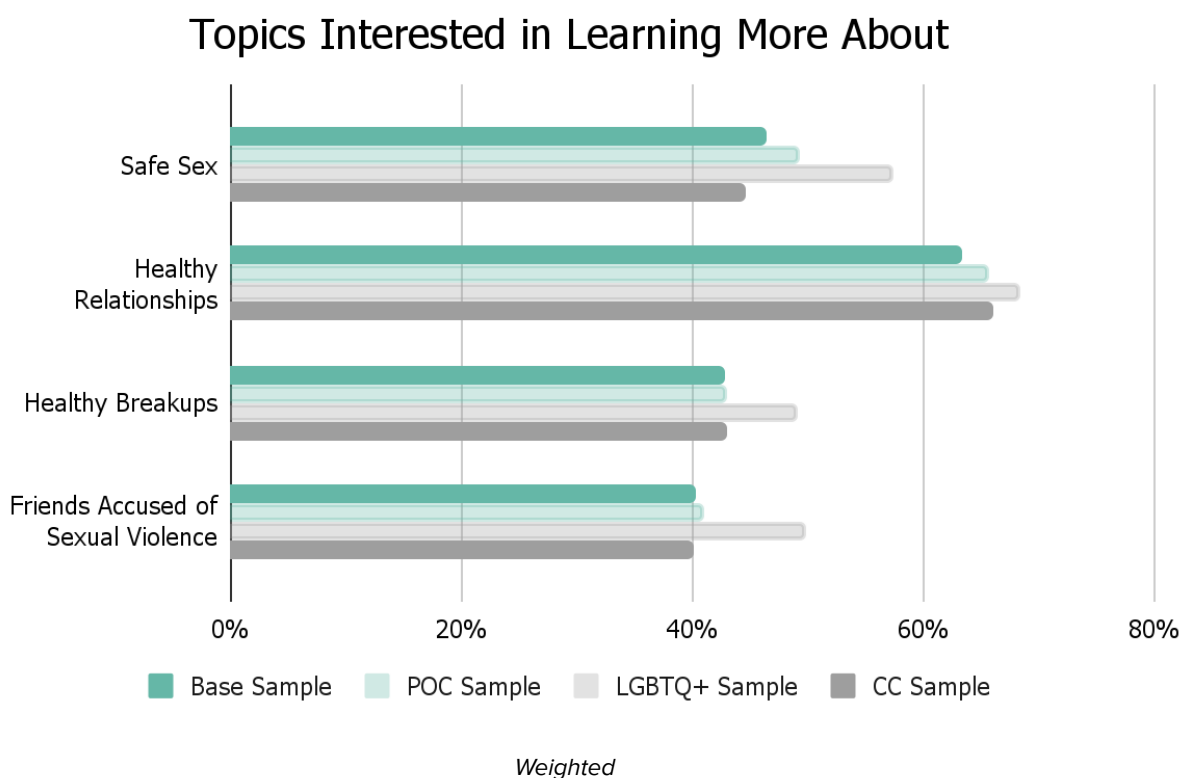
Students interviewed in [Part 1](#) saw similar trends in the effectiveness of the trainings received on campus:

“The topic deserves my respect, but the way they teach it...it’s just easy to dismiss. It’s not something a lot of people take seriously.”

— Northwestern University Student³⁵

Students want to learn more about ways to engage in healthy relationships and prevent unhealthy relationships from becoming abusive (see Chart 37). One way to teach students to hold themselves accountable in relationships, as well as to check in on their peers, is through active bystander education. Bystander intervention is a prevention method used to encourage responsive bystander behavior to spread the responsibility for safety to the community as a whole.

Chart 37: Topics Interested in Learning More About by Subgroups



³⁵ [Part 1](#), Page 11.

An active bystander can be anyone in the community who takes steps to intervene in potentially risky behavior.³⁶ This is an important skill that students can be empowered to use to prevent a potentially harmful situation or start a conversation with a peer. As seen in Chart 31, there is a relationship between a male student's ability to have conversations about sex and relationships and their ability to correctly identify healthy versus unhealthy relationships. Conversations between students about sex, consent, healthy/unhealthy relationships, and sexual assault need to be encouraged in order to achieve long-term cultural change.

While students across the base sample reported conversations about healthy relationships as their top priority, students in the LGBTQ+ community ranked conversations about safe sex very highly as well. **Safe sex is also a method of prevention of sexual violence on campus.** In the event that an assault does occur, using protection can help decrease the likelihood of pregnancy or the spread of a sexually transmitted disease. A truly comprehensive sex education acknowledges the complexities and diversity that exists across gender identities, sexual orientation, and experiences of students on campus. Many students who identify as LGBTQ+ often feel left out of conversations around safe sex, as no state across the country currently requires sex education programs to be inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community.

Recommendations

For Students

→ Ask your school to invest in comprehensive and inclusive sex education:

- ◆ Sexual assault was a top concern on campus for all groups included in this study. However, respondents as a whole felt they were not being prepared to address it through their existing programming and training.
- ◆ For curricula to be comprehensive, it must also include basic sex education, such as methods and resources for safe sex.
- ◆ More specifically, students in the LGBTQ+ community felt the curricula they had received on campus were not inclusive of their community. It is important for students of all gender identities to see their experiences reflected in prevention training to ensure the information provided is relevant to the entire student body.

→ Call on your school to invest in prevention education that includes information on healthy relationship behaviors:

- ◆ As seen through responses to the scenarios in the survey, respondents' definition

³⁶ Perspectives on College Sexual Assault: Perpetrator, Victim, and Bystander. (2015). United States: Springer Publishing Company.

of consent varied substantially and more than a third of the men reported never receiving training on consent in relationships specifically.

- ◆ Additionally, men in Greek life reported the highest levels of training, yet were still unable to identify healthy and unhealthy behaviors in relationships. Relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy behaviors to abusive behaviors. It is possible for a relationship to escalate from unhealthy behaviors to abusive behaviors. See examples below.³⁷

Respects your decisions and tastes	Ignores you on the days when they are angry	Calls you crazy when you reproach them
Accepts your friends and family	Blackmails you if you refuse to do something	"Blows a fuse" when they are unhappy about something
Trusts you	Belittles your opinions and projects	Pushes, pulls, slaps, shakes or hits you
Is happy when you feel fulfilled	Makes fun of you in public	Threatens suicide because of you
Gets your approval when making plans together	Manipulates you	Touches you intimately without your consent
	Is constantly jealous	Threatens to circulate intimate photos of you
	Controls your outings, clothes, makeup	Forces you to watch porn
	Goes through your texts, emails, apps	Forces you to have sex
	Insists that you send them intimate photos	
	Isolates you from your family and friends	
ENJOY	WARNING. SAY STOP!	PROTECT YOURSELF. GET HELP

- ➔ Encourage your schools to implement bystander training as part of your required sexual assault prevention training each year:
 - ◆ Bystander intervention training is widely seen to reduce the prevalence of rape-supportive attitudes and increase feelings of safety on campuses. It is important for us to continue to use bystander training and improve its reach and effectiveness. Even if your state does not require it, it will benefit your community and create more social responsibility among community members.
- ➔ Hold yourself and your fellow students accountable for the prevention of sexual violence on your campus by being an active bystander:
 - ◆ Your community is your team. The long-term prevention of sexual violence requires large scale culture change in our communities. Be a part of this change by stepping in when you see something that may escalate into violent or abusive behavior.
 - ◆ Accountability can be a difficult conversation to have with a friend. Remember that different modes of accountability work for different people. For example, a friend might prefer a one-on-one conversation versus being publicly shamed.
- ➔ Be open to having your assumptions or beliefs challenged:
 - ◆ Respondents were much more comfortable having conversations about healthy

³⁷ IT'S ON US WORKSHOP WTF IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP? (n.d.). Retrieved August 23, 2023, from https://www.itsonus.org/wp-content/uploads/WTF-Is-A-Healthy-Relationship-Workshop_V10_102722.pdf

relationships than they were having conversations about unhealthy relationships, which they were also less knowledgeable about. It is important to remember that college is a place to learn and talk about the things we know less about so that we can evolve. Do not be afraid to have conversations and ask questions about potentially unhealthy behaviors.

- ◆ **Normalize accountability:** Accountability is a critical piece in challenging beliefs and assumptions. Being accountable means being open to learning and receiving feedback, and it can look different in each situation. This applies to every single community member and can range from being a more active bystander to using the correct pronouns when speaking to a peer. Normalize asking, “How do you like to be held accountable?” Reflect with your peers through regular check-ins and conversations. Always remember that accountability and growth go hand in hand.

For Campus Administrators

→ **Include comprehensive sex education that starts at a foundational level for all students:**

- ◆ According to the US Department of Justice, a comprehensive sex education curriculum addresses the prevalence, prevention, and response of sexual violence in the community.³⁸ It’s On Us encourages institutions to provide basic information in all the above areas to all students.

→ **Increase the effectiveness of your required trainings on campus sexual assault by incorporating more bystander intervention:**

- ◆ Bystander intervention training is widely seen to reduce the prevalence of rape-supportive attitudes and increase the feeling of safety on campus,⁴ therefore it is important for schools to continue to use it and improve it’s reach and effectiveness.

→ **Communicate campus resources clearly and regularly:**

- ◆ **It is difficult for students to seek help if they do not know that they have options available to them.**
- ◆ Research has shown that nearly 75% of first post-assault disclosures were to informal support providers, such as a friend or peer.³⁹ In order for this to reach an official source, universities need to provide not just survivors with available

³⁸ Krebs, C., Lindquist, C., Berzofsky, M., Shook-Sa, B., Peterson, K., Planty, M., Langton, L., & Stroop, J. (2016). Bureau of Justice Statistics Research and Development Series Campus Climate Survey Validation Study Final Technical Report. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsfr.pdf>

³⁹ Ahrens CE, Campbell R, Ternier-Thames NK, Wasco SM, Sefl T. Deciding whom to tell: Expectations and outcomes of rape survivors’ first disclosures. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. 2007;31:38–49.

resources when an assault happens, but every single member of a community, in case they receive a disclosure and can be helpful to that survivor. As shown in Chart 39, respondents were very concerned about underreporting from survivors in their community.

- ◆ Meet students where they are: This research found that college men are most likely to get their news from social media sources, such as Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, and Instagram. **It is important to use and engage with social media channels to reach the most students.**

Chart 38: Sources of News

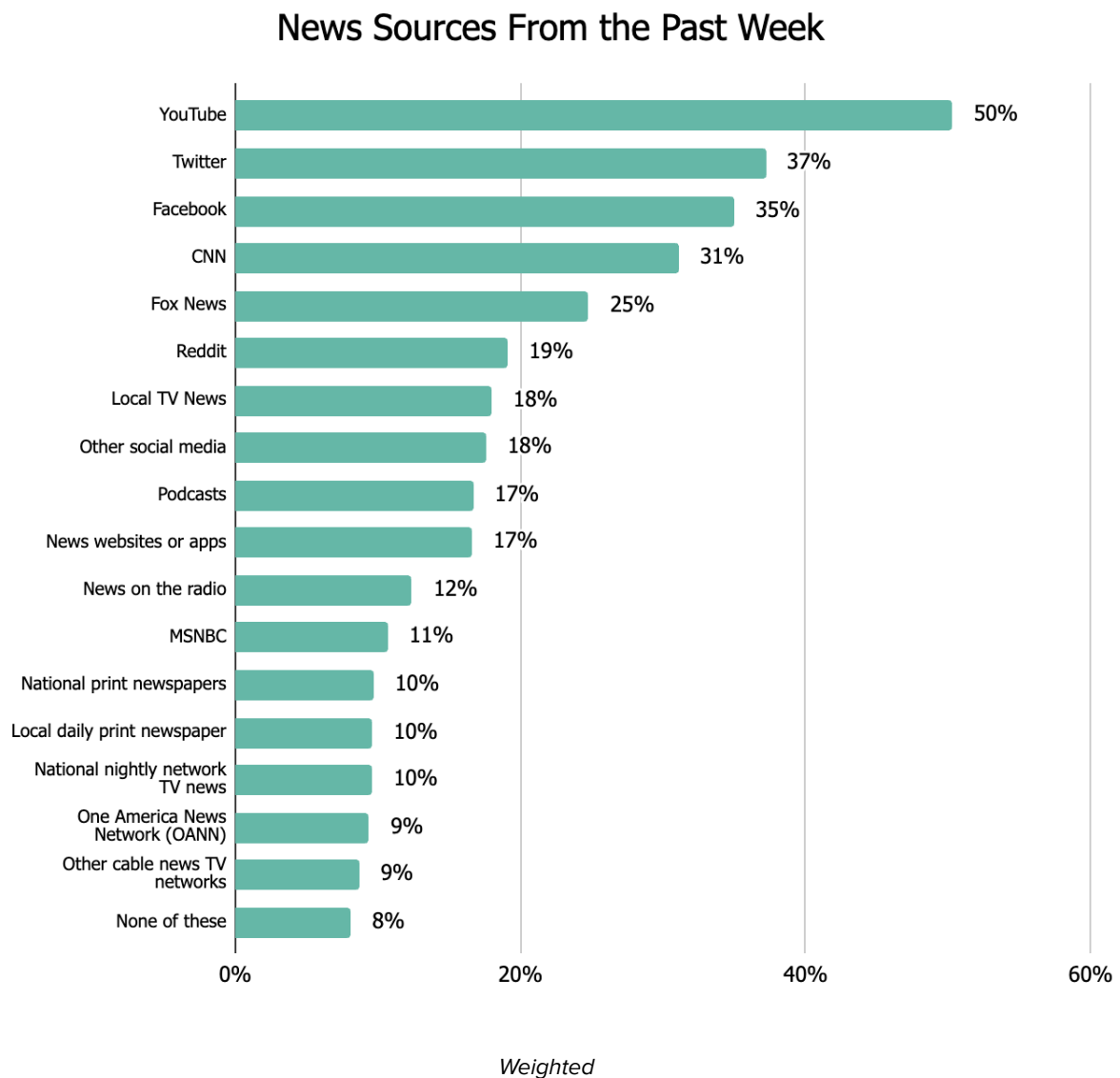
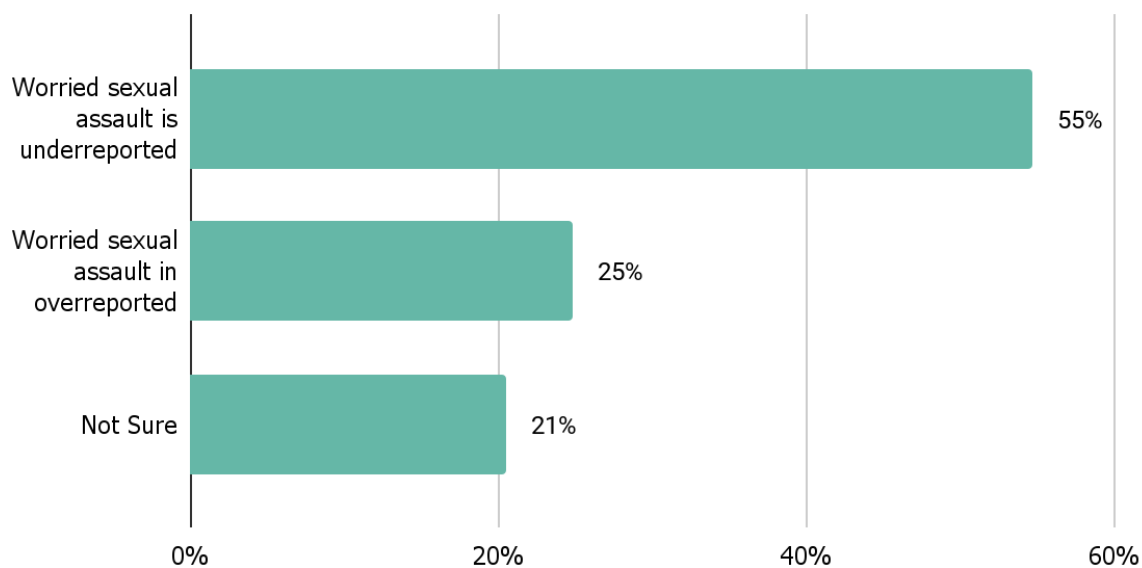


Chart 39: Concerns About Underreporting

Belief Regarding Sexual Assault Reporting in Their Campus Community

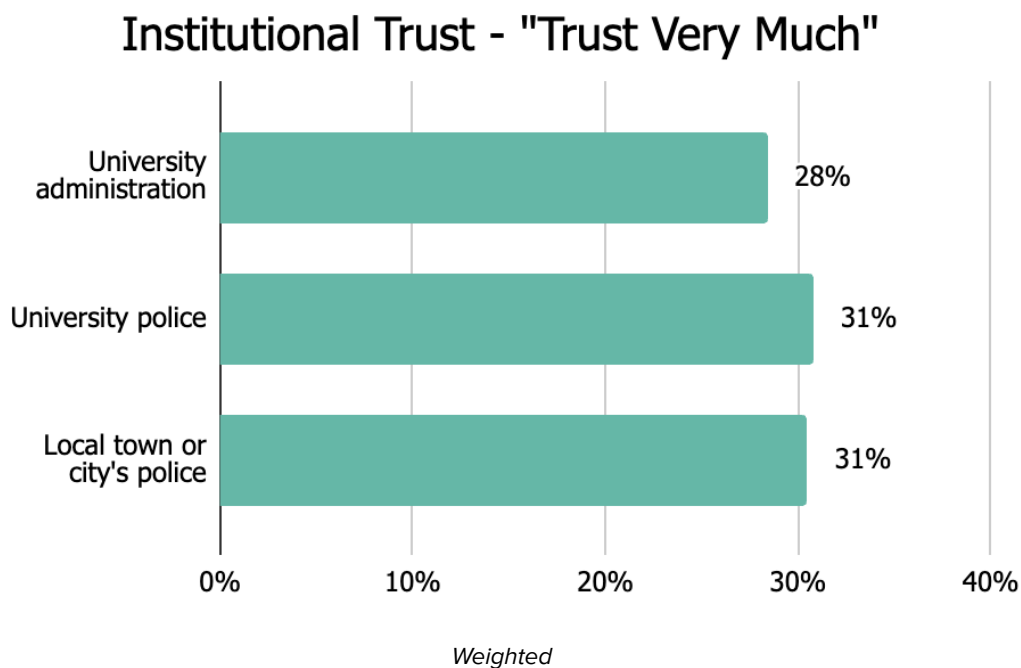


Weighted

→ **Build and maintain community trust:**

- ◆ Although a majority of students reported that they somewhat trusted their institutions, less than a third of respondents said that they “trust very much” in regard to their university police, local police, and university administration (See Chart 40). Building and maintaining trust with the student community is critical. When sexual violence occurs in your campus community, it is essential to communicate quickly and be transparent about the process with students.
- ◆ **It is less likely for the institution to lose the trust of its community long-term if they are transparent about each crime as soon as it happens.** Students know that these crimes are happening. Implementing a transparent process is the best thing you can do to maintain trust with them.

Chart 40: Institutional Trust - "Trust Very Much"



For Policymakers

- **Create a uniform definition of consent:** College men have varying levels of knowledge when it comes to their ability to identify potentially abusive behaviors. They need to be provided uniform definitions of consent and information on ways to intervene in unhealthy relationships before they become abusive.

Men interviewed in [Part 1](#) saw the need for better training on this topic as well:

“They need to do a better job addressing consent...we have like Frogcamp, an orientation which is a notoriously long process...maybe if they could incorporate [sexual assault training] into it.”

— Texas Christian University Student⁴⁰

⁴⁰ [Part 1](#), Page 12.

→ **Require institutions of higher education to implement comprehensive and inclusive sex education curricula as part of prevention education requirements:**

- ◆ Sexual assault was a top concern on campus for all groups included in this study; however, respondents as a whole did not feel prepared to address the crime through their existing programming and training. Additionally, as stated in the *Thematic Findings* above, respondents in the LGBTQ+ community did not feel they have received proper information on what safe sex may look like in their community. A comprehensive curriculum should include educational material on sexual health that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

→ **Fund qualitative research on institutional trust as qualitative studies are often able to delve deeper into the underlying motivations for a response:**

- ◆ Respondents reported much higher levels of institutional trust in this study (see Chart 32) than were reflected in the results of previous research: [“It’s On Us Engaging Men: National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Research Report \(Part 1\)”](#) and [“Prevention is a Team Sport”](#) studies. Both Part 1 and Prevention is a Team Sport were qualitative studies, which are often able to delve deeper into the underlying motivations for a response. **Funding for additional qualitative research on institutional trust may be helpful.**

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to develop a better understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of young men in college or university communities on sexual assault prevention. This study collected quantitative data from a representative group of men to build on the main insights found in [Part 1](#) of this research. In partnership, It’s On Us and YouGov conducted a nationwide online survey of 1,152 college male-identifying students. This data included oversamples of men of color, LGBTQ+ students, as well as community college students to ensure a diverse set of opinions and needs.

It’s On Us will use the findings of this study to make changes to existing programming and create new community-specific programs and trainings on sexual assault prevention. It’s On Us will release two new training programs for students in the LGBTQ+ community and launch an Athletics Playbook in partnership with the National Football League during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It’s On Us will also conduct ongoing evaluation and revision of existing programming, and will continue to identify additional populations for future qualitative research as outlined in *Further Research* below.

Further Research

It is clear that men in Greek life need more effective education and training on this topic. This study confirmed findings from [Part 1](#) that men in Greek life are more likely to receive training on sexual assault prevention, however, it is also clear that existing trainings are not successfully preparing the students to combat the high rates of sexual violence within fraternity culture.

“On campus, Northwestern does not have a good reputation with sexual assault or holding fraternities accountable for their actions.”

— Northwestern University Student⁴¹

Unfortunately, the *Thematic Findings* of this study uncovered that campus communities feel low levels of trust in the Greek community. There is a need to increase both the levels of trust men who participate in Greek life have in their institutions and the trust campus communities have in Greek life. It's On Us recommends conducting additional research on ways to better engage this community in prevention.

Additionally, a 2019 study through the Ohio State University found that friendships developed between first-year college students can endure long-term, helping to bridge divides and broaden worldviews.⁴² These first-year connections are critical as students develop their friendship groups and community on campus. Knowing that relationships with women can increase the likelihood that men on campus are knowledgeable on this topic, research exploring the effects of colleges allowing coeducational, or co-ed, dorms beginning freshman year and their ability to foster friendships with women early in a college career may be beneficial to creating long-term culture change.

As noted when discussing institutional attributes in the *Methodology* section, while this report specifically included efforts to ensure a sufficient sample of men of color, this did not translate into a strong representation of attendees of culturally specific institutions, such as HBCUs, HSIs, and Tribal Colleges. This research has actionable insights about how to serve college men of color, but, in the future, it will be important to deepen those insights by conducting research to understand the attitudes and needs specifically of the populations attending culturally specific institutions, such as HBCUs, HSIs, and Tribal Colleges. These student populations are historically harder to reach (and often excluded for that reason, among others), but their inclusion is crucial to fully addressing the nuances of this problem across communities and institutions.

In addition to the importance of deepening the insights around men of color to include a wider range of institutions, particular attention must be given to Native American college

⁴¹ [Part 1](#), Page 14.

⁴² Rockenbach, Alyssa & Hudson, Tara & Mayhew, Matthew & Correia-Harker, Benjamin & Morin, Shauna. (2019). Friendships Matter: The Role of Peer Relationships in Interfaith Learning and Development. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336221244_Friendships_Matter_The_Role_of_Peer_Relationships_in_Interfaith_Learning_and_Development

students. While the sample included a nominal amount of college men identifying as Native American and attendees of Tribal Colleges, this project was not able to fully investigate the attitudes and needs of Tribal communities (despite a desire to do so) due to the insufficient number of Tribal participants on the data collection panels used for the project. While included in the larger population targeted for this study, this community is smaller and harder to reach, especially with the methodology of a traditional online survey. There are also complexities that must be considered regarding how such data collection has often both fallen short and been weaponized against this community.⁴³ It is strongly recommended that this group receive further, dedicated research to understand the attitudes and needs of men attending Tribal Colleges around sexual assault and its prevention, in partnership with existing efforts within the Tribal community to regain sovereignty over their data and resulting policy. Tribal advocates have expressed that data is being collected in a way that collectively excludes indigenous communities. Researchers must work to foster relationships with Tribal communities that last beyond a research project in order to build sustainable trust.

In addition to the need to expand specific areas of this research as described above, It's On Us also recommends replication of this survey on a 2-4 year basis to explore how the attitudes and behaviors of young men change or evolve to better answer the question in this survey: What prevention education strategies and programs are or are not truly changing the culture of campus sexual assault.

⁴³ A good starting place for learning more about this topic is: *Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Policy*, edited by Maggie Walter, Tahu Kukutai, Stephanie Russo Carroll, and Desi Rodriguez-Lonebear. New York: Routledge, 2021.

Appendix

- a. [About CN](#)
- b. [About IOU](#)
- c. [About YouGov](#)
- d. Definitions
- e. Project Goals/Request for Proposals
- f. Survey Questions
- g. IRB info

ABOUT IT'S ON US

It's On Us is building the movement to combat campus sexual assault by engaging all students, including young men, through grassroots organizing, prevention education programs, and large-scale culture change campaigns. Founded as an initiative of the Obama-Biden White House, It's On Us has grown into the nation's largest student organizing program dedicated to college sexual assault prevention, activating students on hundreds of campuses through awareness and education programs. It's On Us is committed to shifting the culture around campus sexual assault through partnerships with media and brands that engage with millions of college students every day. It's On Us is an initiative of Civic Nation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

ABOUT CIVIC NATION

Civic Nation is a nonprofit ecosystem for high-impact organizing and education initiatives working to build a more inclusive and equitable America. Civic Nation shifts culture, systems, and policy by bringing together individuals, grassroots organizers, industry leaders and influencers to tackle some of our nation's most pressing social challenges. Civic Nation's portfolio of initiatives and campaigns includes: When We All Vote, It's On Us, ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, We The Action, Change Collective, Online For All and SAVE on Student Debt. [Learn more here.](#)

ABOUT YOUNGOV

YouGov is an international online research data and analytics technology group.

Our mission is to supply a continuous stream of accurate data and insight into what the world thinks, so that companies, governments and institutions can make informed decisions.

Our innovative solutions help the world's most recognised brands, media owners and agencies to plan, activate and track their marketing activities better.

With operations in the UK, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, India and Asia Pacific, we have one of the world's largest research networks.

At the core of our platform is an ever-growing source of consumer data that has been amassed over our twenty years of operation. We call it Living Data. All of our products and services draw upon this detailed understanding of our 24+ million registered panel members to deliver accurate, actionable consumer insights.

As innovators and pioneers of online market research, we have a strong reputation as a trusted source of accurate data and insights. Testament to this, YouGov data is regularly referenced by the global press, and we are the most quoted market research source in the world.

For more information, see <https://corporate.yougov.com/about/>.

DEFINITIONS

Accountability

The acceptance of responsibility for honest and ethical conduct towards others. (Oxford)

Abuse

To treat (a person or an animal) with cruelty or violence, especially regularly or repeatedly (Cambridge)

Consent

The permission that is or is not given to engage in sexual activity. Consent can help people understand and respect people's boundaries. (RAINN)

Domestic Violence

Pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship (National Domestic Violence Hotline)

Healthy Relationship

Healthy relationships involve honesty, trust, respect, and open communication between partners and they take effort and compromise from both people. There is no imbalance of power. Partners respect each other's independence, can make their own decisions without fear of retribution or retaliation, and share decisions. (NY.gov)

Institutional Betrayal

Refers to wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution upon individuals dependent on that institution, including failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings by individuals (e.g. sexual assault) committed within the context of the institution. (Freyd)

Physical Violence

A instance or situation in which when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force (CDC)

Relationship Spectrum

All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive, with unhealthy relationships somewhere in the middle. (LevelsRespect)

Sexual Assault

Sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim. This includes rape and unwanted sexual touching. (RAINN)

Trauma

An event that combines fear, horror, or terror with actual or perceived lack of control. Trauma is often a life-changing event with negative, sometimes lifelong consequences. (EVAWI)

Trusted Advisor Abuse

When a person in a position of trust in a community, such as a college campus community, uses that position to abuse a patient or student (Trauma Informed California)

Unhealthy Relationship

A relationship in which one partner tries to exert control and power over the other physically, sexually, and/or emotionally (Youth.gov)

PROJECT GOALS/REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PART 2: It's On Us National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Survey Request for Proposals

About It's On Us

Founded in 2014 as a White House initiative by President Obama and then-Vice President Biden, It's On Us is now an independent 501c3 nonprofit program at Civic Nation. It's On Us's mission is to build the movement to combat campus sexual assault by engaging all students, with an emphasis on young men, in prevention education, and activating the largest student organizing program of its kind. For more information on It's On Us, please visit itsonus.org.

The Problem

In 2021, It's On Us recognized that to date, no major study had been completed to evaluate what prevention programs are in place at colleges and universities nationwide, their level of student participation in, attitudes towards prevention programs, and student actions and attitudes following their participation in prevention programming. It's On Us conducted a [National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Reserch Project](#) (Research Project) to review the **effectiveness of sexual violence prevention training on undergraduate campuses across the country among male-identifying men**. It's On Us partnered with consulting and insights firm HauckEye to conduct in depth, one-on-one interviews with college men. Participants recruited were young men who represented diverse campus communities. Main insights included:

- **Men aren't concerned about the problem:** Most participants were unaware of the extent of sexual violence on campus. While some schools have had high profile incidents, several respondents thought these were all isolated incidents. Framing the issue as solely a Greek life problem means that many participants did not think the issue affected them or their school.
- **Current trainings are inadequate:** The vast majority of participants reported that the prevention trainings they received, often online-only, were boring and ineffective. Positive prevention education experiences were in-person and included an interactive component like a certification. One student spoke highly of a comedian who came to campus and did a stand-up set about her own assault.
- **Men need non-male friends and role models:** The respondents most attuned to the issue of sexual violence had strong friendships with women on campus. Co-ed sports teams, for example, foster an equitable and inclusive environment on campus between participants across the gender spectrum, leading to less objectification. By contrast, respondents reported that male-only groups like fraternities incubate toxic masculinity, such as misogynistic views toward non-male peers.
- **Men don't know how to help:** The men in the study expressed a desire to help but didn't feel they had the right tools to intervene. They expressed interest in training that would teach them how to intervene and deescalate situations involving sexual violence. The

majority see themselves as moral people and want to do the right thing, but they just don't know how.

Overview of Research Project

The [Engaging Men: National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Report \(Part 1\)](#)

collected information on the types of prevention programming schools are conducting, as well as their effectiveness, reach, and possible gaps by using an exploratory qualitative method to better understand the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of young college men. A benefit of qualitative research is its ability to explain behavior that cannot be easily quantified by allowing participants to detail their experiences and feelings, however it is urgent to conduct further quantitative research into the topic of young men's attitudes towards and experiences with sexual assault and its prevention on college campuses. It's On Us will work to conduct a large-scale quantitative survey as a next step (Engagin Men Part 2: Measuring Attitudes and Behaviors).

Part 2 of this study will collect quantitative data from a larger group of men focusing on the main insights found in [Part 1](#) of this research (shown above). **It's On Us is searching for a data collection partner to help conduct a nationwide online survey among 1,000 college male-identifying students. This data will need to include oversamples among Black, Latine, AAPIA, Native American, LGBTQ+ students, as well as community college students to ensure a diverse set of opinions and needs.**

The online survey will follow the below best practices

- Include messaging that is customized to engage men and increase general participation in IOU's mission
- Be brief (less than 15-20 minutes) and accessible on a variety of electronic devices
- Survey should reach male-identifying college students *that are representative* of the national college student population

Part 2: It's On Us National Campus Sexual Assault Attitudes and Behaviors Survey will measure

- The participation rates of undergraduate students in available prevention programming on college campuses around the country
- Are prevention trainings required and informed by students? If required, how often must students participate?
- What is the relevance of prevention programs used by institutions for the most at-risk communities?
- Do students know how to intervene to deescalate a risky situation? If so, where did they learn this and have they done it before? If not, what is their response? Would students intervene more often if they had the training to do so indirectly?
- What does it feel like to be part of your campus's climate and is this affecting your ability to feel safe on campus? What do students wish their school's prevention training would include more of?

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

[See full list of survey questions here.](#)

INDEPENDENT REVIEW BOARD (IRB) CERTIFICATION

Click below for details on the official certification of this project indicating all processes met the DHHS policy guidelines of 45 CFR §46.111.

[Approval for Project](#)